



Extracts from.... **THE VMARS NEWS SHEET**

A publication of the Vintage and Military Amateur Radio Society

The VMARS News Sheet Issue 134 May 2014



Robin Maddison, G0GNE, operating from the Solent Overlord event with his air portable lightweight Landrover



Stuart McKinnon, G0TBI working the Landrover net from his lightweight Landrover at Halfpenny Green airfield

Solent Overlord Exhibition

24th to 26th May 2014

The Solent Overlord Exhibition is the first large military vehicle show of the year, held at Waterlooville, Hampshire, just behind Portsmouth. There were three fields full of tanks, half-tracks, Land Rovers and Uniforms. It was quite muddy this year and I had to use four-wheel drive to get to my position which was alongside Mike Buckley M1CCF's Special Event Station and in the Ex-military Land Rover Compound commanded by John Butcher G4GWJ. There was not much radio stuff in the stalls selling military bits but I collared a very nice Racal PRM4720A Cougar which worked fine once I charged up the battery, fixed the handset connector and worked out how to get it working on split frequency. As the sun returned for a short visit, I happened across G0TBI/P on 7073 kHz in a net which included four Land Rovers, three of which were series-3 Lightweights. A successful QSO (see front page photograph) was had between the Land Rover-based stations: Hans PA3ECG in Holland, Stuart G0TBI Halfpenny Green and myself on a VRC321 using a random length end-fed Kevlar thrown over John Butcher's tent top. Also on the net were Ian M0YMK, Richard M1CFW, Don M5AKY, Jeff LX2JVM and Trevor P14C at the Crash Museum, Aalsmeer which was having a radio weekend. Web links to the event are as follows:

<http://www.solentoverlord.co.uk/blog/>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5OpCWb6icnU>

Robin Maddison G0GNE

RAF Bobbington (Halfpenny Green)

24th and 25th May 2014

Over the bank holiday weekend of 24/25th May, I went along to my local airfield (RAF Bobbington or Halfpenny Green as it is now) to take part in a 'Forties' weekend, Post-forties vehicles were invited so I did not feel out of place. RAF Bobbington had to change its name as there was confusion with RAF Bovingdon.

RAF Bobbington is only two miles from home. I loaded up with coffee, sandwiches and a suitable dipole made that very morning and a Yeoman 5.4 m mast for the centre. The dipole worked well across a range of frequencies with the Racal Synal 2000. This equipment is a fairly modern c. 1985-present solid-state transceiver, with ALE capability and, although primarily a manpack of 20 W output, when attached to the VIU (Vehicle Interface Unit) it produces 100 W via a MA540G AAMTU.

Band conditions were poor and, although I was acknowledged by net-control on the Saturday morning AM net, to say it was a 'wash-out' is an understatement; it rained solidly, with two 5 minute breaks. I sat in the back of the c. 1980 Airportable for nearly an hour, mumbling to myself in between breaks in the QSO. Murphy's Law prevailed as, by 7 p.m., just before I left, the weather took up for a much better day on Sunday. On Sunday, despite a couple of light showers, there were a number of highlights. We joined Trevor Sanderson PA3BOH and members of the SRS on a 40 m net, with good signal reports. As explained by Robin Maddison G0GNE (above), at one time there were

four Land Rovers (three operating /P and one /M) on frequency: Jeff LX2JVM in Luxembourg, Robin GOGNE at the Overlord show, Hans PA3ECT a fellow SRS member was outside of the Crash museum.



We had been informed by Airport Manager Alastair Mackinnon, my namesake but different spelling, that a de Havilland Vampire would be making an appearance, taking off from the former RAF base at North Weald in Essex, en route to display at Llandudno. Airband VHF on 123.000 MHz burst into life at 15:08 hrs and we were treated to two left hand close-in circuits by the Vampire, before a low pass to the tower and a 'wing waggle' cheerio. The last fast jet I heard of, out of North Weald about 12 years ago, was a JP (Jet Provost) that sadly lost its pilot, literally falling with seat out of aircraft whilst doing aerobatic manoeuvres, the seat bolts having come adrift. Small world really, as I had a married quarter in, dare I say it, RAF accommodation at North Weald in 1978 after returning from Hong Kong. On site we had two different Local TA units who had brought along their KAPE trailer and a couple of other wagons. KAPE (Keeping the Army In the Public Eye) is basically a recruiting ploy.

I knew one or two of the guys from the Wolverhampton-based unit who had teamed up with a Military Police Unit from Cannock. The RMP guys had a nice Wolf, and were fully kitted out with 100 W of HF and 50 W of UHF, both the new Bowman System. We had a 'good old chinwag' about the virtues of Bowman vs. Clansman. As can be seen from the photograph, it was a rather slack day for dress code; a Grenadier in mix and match and the TA with hands in pockets. Well you can't blame them these days can you; at least two thirds had been to conflict zones in recent times.



Anyhow, all in all, a good weekend apart from the weather problems, keeping my fingers crossed that we will see the promised wall-to-wall sunshine at Wartime in the Vale.

Stuart McKinnon GOTBI