

OMISSILE

March 20, 2017

Dear Fellow OMISS Members,

I must tell you, I am truly enjoying my first few months as your President. Did you know that we have approximately 24 NCS stations calling the 33 nets we hold weekly? We have about 5 NCS stations that fill in as they can. We need a few more volunteers, many NCS are calling multiple nets per week. Our NCS stations are the heart and soul of OMISS. They are the welcoming voice to new members and they are the "assistant" to our members working for their awards. Did you know we have 32 members that serve OMISS every day and only 9 of them are on the board of directors? That's right, I said 32. That old saying..."it takes a village" couldn't be more true in the day to day operations of OMISS. All of these members spend countless hours weekly dedicating their time to our membership. I want to take this time to introduce them to you.

Our Band Coordinators, Dave-10M, Dave-ABC (temp 15M), Bil-17M, Jim-20M, Jake-40M early and late, Aaron-80M early and late, and Bob-160M. They train, schedule, take complaints, and do the best they can staffing each band.

Our Webmaster, John-K0JDD. I can't possibly tell you how much work this guy does in any given day for OMISS, from the website, email reflectors, forums, and so much more. He is a wealth of information for OMISS and we are lucky to have him. Trustee- Bob N4JTE. He holds the club call license for KN4OM.

Roster- Jim-WB8GCF. He just stepped into this role and will be working hard to keep our rosters up to date. Searching out silent keys and reporting them to the membership chairman.

QSL Bureau Manager (K) Pete-KF5RD. speaks for itself, this job is very demanding!

QSL Bureau Manager (A, N, W, DX) Neil KA8MMI. Neil's wife Charissa jumps in to help when needed.

Parliamentarian- Russ-KA7MPX. Right hand man to the President. Assists to interpret the bylaws as needed, and currently serves as the bylaw chairman.

Club Call Manager- Richard-W4REB, handles all the OMISS Club call correspondence and cards.

Membership Chairman- Pete-KF5RD, as if the K bureau isn't enough, he took on this job as well. Keeping our membership flowing, adding them to website, silent key updates and so much more.

Information Officer- Ken-N4JLT, sends information as needed per the request of our membership.

Editor- Russ-KA7MPX, Russ has been pumping out some fantastic O'Missile newsletters quarterly to our members. No easy task to get pictures, articles, etc. to keep us entertained, but he does it.

Chaplain- Bob-WB8RWM, Bob recently took on this position to continue serving the needs of our membership that was long left vacant. Comforting cards and emails when members need them the most.

Business Agent- Dale-AG4PP, Dale is only the 2nd business agent in the history of OMISS. He makes sure all documents needed are filed. We are lucky to have someone keeping our business interests at the top of his priority list.

Awards- Tim, K9WVL- This is 2-fold as he is not only a board member and votes on all business, but manages all awards, tracking, printing certificates... assisted by Pete-KF5RD

Advisory Chairman- Rich-KK9KK, Rich is a voting member of the board as well and is the voice from the membership to the board of directors. He works with his team, N8SPM, NJ8G, and KE0CRP, to discuss suggestions, complaints and responds accordingly. Certainly not the best job around here. He does a fantastic job both for the board and for you, the membership.

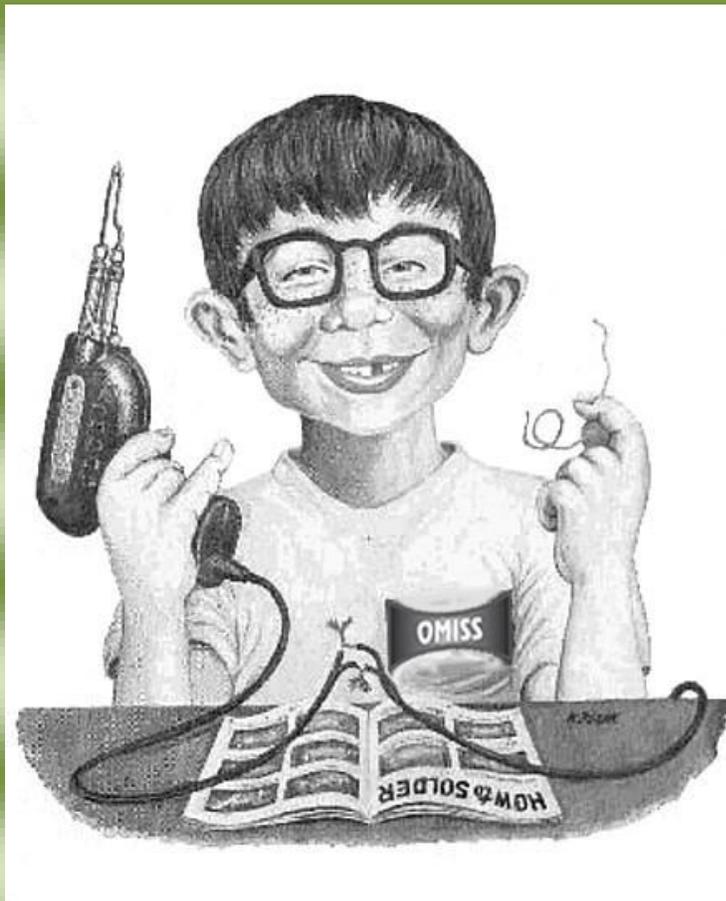
All Band Coordinator- Dave-A10A, he is not only a voting board member, he also is tasked to ensure capable band coordinators are in place and that the guidelines established by the board are followed. He is often the takes the heat for immediate issues on our nets because being the bad guy doesn't always make him the popular guy.

Then you have your board of directors, 2 Directors- Bob-N4JTE and Jim-KJ5IM. Your Secretary, Mike-W7XTZ, Treasurer, John-K5ENA, Vice President, Ed-K6HP, and myself as your President. You elected us to do our jobs and do them well. Besides the normal functions of your board, we have been busy diving right into the business of OMISS. We are in discussions regarding a scholarship, Dayton Hamvention, and our bylaw review. We have an excellent and diverse board, but we would not be successful without the 50 plus members working every day to keep OMISS alive and successful. If you see them on your nets, work them for awards, say hi, and most importantly, say thank you.

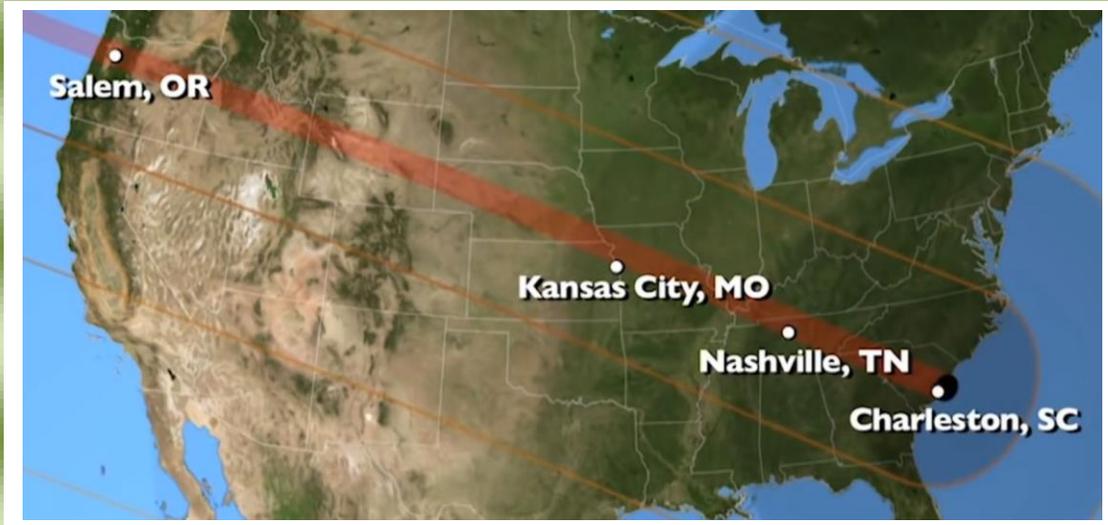
All my best,
Carrie Krueger W9FML
OMISS President

2017 OMISS QSO Party

Radio amateurs from all over took part in the February OMISS QSP Party. Although participation appeared to be down from previous years, those that participated had a fun time and made the best of the weekend. Congratulations to Dave, AI0A, #8641 for taking top honors in this years' event with a score of 27,438! John, KC1EKC, #10885 wrapped up second place with a score of 17,794 and Russ, KA7MPX, #4910 brought home the third place spot with a score of 15,738. Complete results can be found on the OMISS web site. Thank you to all of the OMISS members who took time to participate in this years' QSO party!



SAVE THE DATE! - AUGUST 21, 2017



Total Solar Eclipse 2017 - Path Through the United States

On August 21, 2017, there will be a total solar eclipse visible across the entire continental United States in a very narrow swath. The remainder of the country will see a partial solar eclipse.

Millions of people will be turning their gaze skyward to see this stunning spectacle from work, their homes, on the open road and in the air. Now is the time to start making your preparations to safely observe the eclipse.

Observing the solar eclipse safely is the number one concern of everyone. Failure to do so can result in permanent eye damage.

NASA has a website dedicated to the solar eclipse that provides safe viewing tips for the public as well as a comprehensive explanation, history and science of total solar eclipses. NASA has also put together an events section where you can find out if a library, museum, NASA or other entity is hosting an event in your area.

For the Washington D.C. area, you will experience a partial solar eclipse from about 79 percent of the sun obscured to more than 90 percent. The farther south you are, the more the sun will be obscured.

There are professionally led tours for the eclipse which you may be interested in, just do a quick Google search for them.

As the map shows, I'm sure a number of OMISS members, including this one, will be right smack in the path of the total eclipse!

From Greg Redfern and Russell Pelleberg #4910



***The OMISS Challenge this time is to find the
Black and White Cat***

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Chopmist Hill Listening Post

The bristling antennas, miles of wire and all the technicians are gone now, but the old Suddard Farm on Chopmist Hill in Scituate is still dotted with the ghostly reminders of one of World War II's best-kept secrets.

For it was here on Chopmist Hill in March, 1941, that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) under Commissioner George E. Sterling, established and began operation a top-secret, radio-monitoring station. It was the largest in a nationwide network of 13 similar installations, and due to peculiarities of the terrain and certain atmospheric conditions, it was the most effective. The station on Chopmist Hill could intercept distant radio signals with astonishing clarity, and in wartime, that was a critical advantage.

While Rhode Island joined the nation in home-front sacrifice; severe gasoline rationing, ersatz chocolate and horsemeat instead of beef, to name a few - the band of 40 radio operator-technicians from the FCC's Radio Intelligence Division (RID) conducted a superb spy operation that directly affected the waging, and final outcome of the war.

Personnel in Scituate routinely monitored weather reports that were a key to troop movements and bombing missions in Europe. With uncanny frequency, the station intercepted the radio transmissions of German spies positioned in South America and North Africa. Chopmist's reception of North Africa was so good, in fact, that the station had no difficulty picking up - and turning to good use - radio transmissions between the tanks that comprised the Desert Fox's infamous African Corps. But to this day - 40 years after Japan's devastating attack on Pearl Harbor and 36 years after the war ended - few Rhode Islanders are aware of the spectacular battles fought on the little hill right in their own backyard.

"C'mon, you're pullin' my leg" or "You gotta' be kidding" typify the responses of skeptics when told or asked about the illustrious history of the North Scituate far.

Originally, the station was set up in peacetime to police the airwaves for illegal radio transmissions and to assist in air-sea rescue operations. On one occasion, actress Kay Francis, en route home from a USO tour in Europe, was aboard a plane that was lost off the coast of Florida. No formal radio installation on the seaboard was able to pick up the pilot's signals, but the Chopmist Hill station did, and the monitors in Scituate directed the plane home safely.

As the war intensified, so did the role of the Chopmist Hill station - and the secrecy surrounding it. The installation became a virtual mine-city, complete with its own power-generating station in the concrete blockhouse.

Nearby stood a wooden barracks building that housed the RID crew. Antennas were everywhere, anchored by guid (sic) wires attached to heavy metal plates cemented to the ground.

The station itself was jam-packed with super sensitive radio receivers, transmitters and direction finders, and it was all so top-secret that not even the 40 technicians working there knew its purpose. Armed guards patrolled the area, and even visitors on official business could not approach the farm without a state police escort.

Even the Narragansett Electric Company, which played a key role in establishing the Chopmist Hill station, didn't realize just what it was doing. Company crews were sent to the station with instructions not merely to install utility poles, but to sink them more deeply into the ground than normal, thereby ensuring that the tops of the poles would be below tree-top level and hidden from view outside the farm.

No sooner was the work completed that Thomas B. Cave, who supervised the facility for the RID, ordered all the poles moved to a different spot. "I thought we'd have a revolt on our hands in Scituate," said former commissioner Sterling. He is 87 now and lives in quiet retirement with his wife Margaret, on an island in Maine's Casco Bay. "The folks at Narragansett (Electric Company) thought we were crazy. We called in their utility crews to dig holes and install a whole bunch of telephone poles. Next day, we called them back to move all the poles about two feet." Regardless of how much consternation and confusion the unexplained move may have caused, the relocated utility poles gave the station the optimum radio reception. By the end of the war, the inconvenience was gladly forgiven anyway.

When the role of the Chopmist Hill station was publically explained, a Narragansett Electric Official said, "Hell, if I'd known what they were doing up there, I would gladly have dug holes all the way to Cairo!" But no one knew.

Clandestine messages, encoded cryptographically, were being intercepted and copied verbatim by radio operators working 24 hours a day, who would then relay the messages to Washington D.C., for deciphering.

Commissioner Sterling said during a recent interview that he has never been able to figure out why the United States was caught napping at Pearl Harbor 40 years ago tomorrow. He said that for several months before the December 7, 1941 attack, the Scituate monitors were routinely intercepting Japanese messages that indicated military action was pending.

RID supervisor Cave said that "Every three weeks, like clockwork, a Japanese submarine would surface in Tokyo Bay and broadcast to higher military headquarters the number of foreign ships that went in and out of the bay during the period" Caves recalls.

The Scituate monitors helped thwart the Japanese attempts to bomb the United States with TNT-laden hot-air balloons. To keep track of the silent craft, the Japanese placed radio transmitters on board the deadly balloons.

But the RID eavesdroppers heard the signals, relayed the information to Washington, and US fighter planes were promptly dispatched to destroy the balloons. In the entire course of the war, only a few balloons penetrated the electronic screen; one landed harmlessly in Wisconsin, and others drifted off into the Canadian wilderness.

One of the most important jobs of the Scituate station was to intercept German weather reports from Central Europe. Broadcast in such a frequency that they could not be pick up in England, the signals bounced across the Atlantic Ocean to Chopmist Hill. The information played a vital part in British Planning for bombing raids against Nazi Germany.

Most amazing was the station's ability to intercept virtually all radio transmissions sent by German spies in South America and North Africa. In fact, said Cave, who is now 79 and lives in Holmes Beach, Florida, Wilhelm Hoetti, one of Germany's foreign intelligence area chiefs, affirmed during his interrogation by the US Third Army in June, 1945, that German intelligence had not been able to establish a single wireless connection, either in the United States or England.

It was the Chopmist Hill station that discovered installations of German transmitters on the West coast Africa. Even the British, who had their own monitoring stations in the region, were totally unaware of the existence of the enemy stations. It wasn't long, said Cave, before the British, via Washington, were breathing down the necks of Scituate operators for more information. Little wonder.

During the seesaw battles between British forces and General Erwin Rommel's infamous African Corps, the Chopmist Hill station frequently picked up coded messages containing battlefield strategy from the German military leader to his subordinate commanders. The information was relayed to the British, who under Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery, defeated the legendary Desert Fox at El Alemein.

"That's nothing," Cave said. "At one time, we saved the British liner Queen Mary, from being sunk with more than 10,000 Allied troops on board. The Queen Mary was docked in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil awaiting departure for Australia. German spies in South America learned the ship's sailing schedule and precise Southerly route down that Atlantic, around Cape Horn and across the Pacific Ocean. The information was radioed to Nazi forces in Africa, then relayed to German submarine wolf packs prowling the ocean. Orders went out to sink the pride of England's maritime fleet. "We intercepted the German transmissions, alerted the British, and they ordered the ship change course." Cave said. "Who knows," he said with a chuckle, "maybe there's still a U-boat commander out there somewhere wondering where the hell the Queen Mary is."

On another occasion, the British asked the RID operators in Scituate to determine the nationality of a remote transmitter near the Aleutian Islands. It turned out to be a Russian station and, therefore, was spared the annihilation which was planned for the suspected Japanese facility.

Does it seem far-fetched? Is it asking too much to believe that a secret radio station up on Chopmist Hill in little old Rhode Island could have done so much so efficiently for so many? Early on, the US Army was skeptical too, Cave said, so Army officials challenged the RID operators on Chopmist Hill to prove themselves. RID supervisor Sterling picked up the gauntlet. He told Army brass that his operators could pin down the exact location of any station within 15 minutes from the time it began operating. So, the Army set up a phony station inside the Pentagon, without notifying the FCC, and began transmitting. Sure enough, the team on Chopmist Hill pinpointed and identified the source within seven minutes.

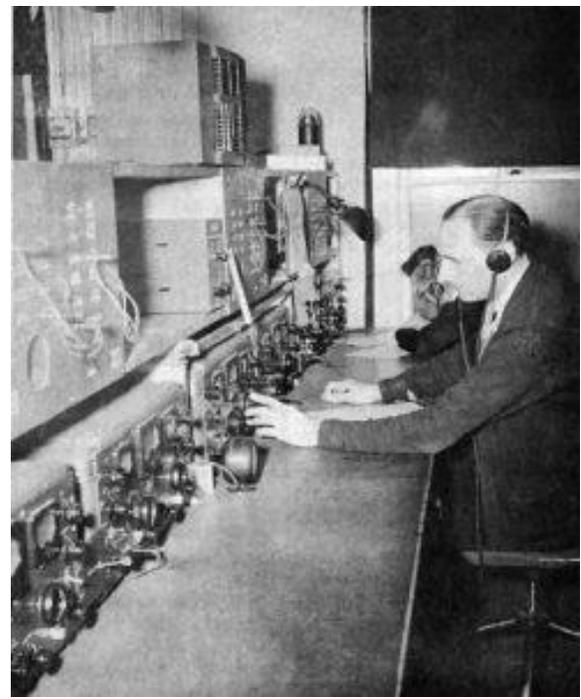
Perhaps, like people, every place has its day in the sun too. World War II was Chopmist Hill's. It could not be so again. "The problem with Scituate now is one of population growth," said Anthony M. Gates, a former Navy radioman now employed by the FCC as a program analyst in Washington. "There are a lot of new homes, buildings and factories in the area, all of which tend to produce extensive interference with radio signals," Gates said. "That was not the case during the '40's."

After the war, the station site was used as headquarters for Rhode Island's office of Civil Preparedness. The agency moved to Providence in 1965. Today, the rusting steel door to the blockhouse groans in protest every time farm owner Frederick Leeder goes inside to get some hay for his small dairy herd. The barracks building is gone, and its cement-slab foundation now serves as a platform for Leeder's large woodpile.

The small concrete blockhouse is there, guarded still by its six-foot barbed-wire topped hurricane fence. And nearby, a few stubby telephone poles still stand in the pasture next to Darby Road, like dedicated sentries ready to carry messages that will never come.

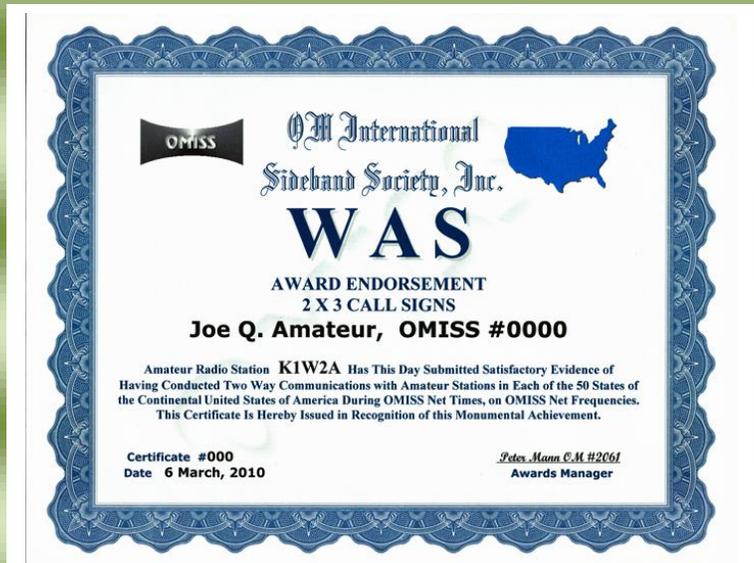


FCC's Radio Intelligence Division top secret radio monitoring facility in Scituate, RI





Check out OMISS on
Facebook



OMISS offers dozens of challenging awards to its members. Make sure to check out the club website for more information on all of the awards that are offered! www.omiss.net

OMISS Officers

President: Carrie W9FML #8420

Vice President: Ed K6HP #7019

Treasurer: John K5ENA #4604

Secretary: Mike W7XTZ #7112

Director: Jim KJ5IM #8016

Director: Bob N4JTE #1440