

## **Columbia Debris Recovery Support By Amateur Radio**

Many had asked me when there would be a report on the 2 hour and 15 minute long debriefing net from February 16 that was held on the Dallas A.R.C. 146.88 repeater and linked via EchoLink. See below.

I will apologize now for any errors or omissions. I used both my hand written notes and tapes of the net but know that one or two made comments that were lost during tape changes. With those exceptions I have tried to fairly present everyone's input.

Best regards,  
Jim Lawyer  
aa5qx

The following is a record of the information presented and discussed during the debriefing net on February 16, 2003. The net which was held on the Dallas Amateur Radio Club repeater, W5FC, 146.880, lasted 2 hours and 15 minutes and included hams from the Dallas/Ft Worth metroplex and hams linked via EchoLink software and the internet.

### **Net format and overview with guidelines regarding comments**

AA5QX, Jim, Dallas - Debriefing Net Control / Moderator

We will be discussing several topics related to the amateur radio operations during the East Texas shuttle recovery. We are linking one or more of the amateur radio leaders from Nacogdoches to this net via Echolink. I would like to first allow some of those hams to provide us with some background and behind the scenes information. For those with Echolink - look for W5FC-R and/or WX\_TALK but please watch for instructions regarding use of the link so you don't inadvertently lock up the room or the Dallas net.. For local hams, please keep comments short and unkey frequently to prevent the various linked repeaters timing out.

### **Overview of East Texas involvement and some background information**

KD5CCH, Kevin Anderson, Nacogdoches, was in charge of support operations for Nacogdoches

On Saturday morning it was:

8:15 a.m. Heard Explosion

8:16 a.m. Hams were on their radios talking about it

8:17 a.m. Found out that the Shuttle had Failed

8:20 a.m. A local net was fully operational

9:00 a.m. Nacogdoches had a net with 18 Operators were involved in the initial assessment

All day Saturday was spent determining the extent of the debris in the three county area. Sunday was more reactionary with people calling in with debris. The Feds were rolling in and plans were being made as to how to proceed. We jumped in with the locals, we still had no idea as to the extent of the services we were going to be asked to provide. As the Feds rolled in they very quickly found out that they couldn't operate over the area they had to cover. Their communications were very limited. There were a lot of different jurisdictions involved and a lot of different agencies in here. The only thing that was truly reliable was ham radio. We had someone shadowing all of the main officials. Only a small portion of the traffic was on the repeater hooked to EchoLink. We passed a lot of the traffic, some was very critical traffic.

As we got into the beginning of the week we realized we were going to have lots of help. That's where the real problem started. How do you get sufficient help without having too much help. The worst thing we could envision was having a thousand hams in here that we couldn't use. That is one of the main things I plan on addressing in the future, managing large numbers of hams in a situation like this. The needs were extreme and not normal ham radio work. Heavy terrain and changes that occurred hourly.

The best thing was that the ones who showed up absolutely showed up with the best attitudes. We were working under a lot of duress. Most of us locals that were trying to coordinate things running on very little sleep. Folks came from all over the country from New York to British Columbia, California, South Texas, Dallas, Houston, you name it. A lot of these people didn't know one another, had never worked together and had never trained together and there was no standard SOP or mitigation plan laying on the desk. We just reacted to what the needs were at that moment and people just took their task and went with it, whatever it was. People were riding with DPS, FBI, NTSB, walking in the woods. As it went from a locating mode of GPS in these things, we went back and forth from locating stuff and GPSing it to picking it up and back to locating it again.

We used from 25 to 71 hams per day in Nacogdoches with the high being 71 on Saturday. That's a lot of hams to be coordinated, assigned to teams, assigned to net control. We had 188 unique hams come through Nacogdoches. Our hams drove over 60,000 miles in their personal vehicles and logged 5,500 manhours.

We got a lot of commendations from the Incident Commander and a lot of agencies on the scene but the one word that was used the most was "professional". Every one conducted themselves in a very professional manner and pitched in and did the best they could.

## **North Texas A.R.E.S. Involvement**

K5MWC, Bill Swan, McKinney, North Texas A.R.E.S., Section Emergency Coordinator

I want to let everyone know that although my direct involvement was very small compared to others, I did listen and try to understand what was going on. I did contact the local Emergency Coordinator in Nacogdoches. I think that this was born out of tragedy, which unhappily is the way we get a lot of the recognition that we get. We certainly demonstrated the value of amateur radio. Once again amateur radio came to the forefront. There were many agencies involved, all of which have their own communication equipment but which cannot as a general rule inter-operate as they must in situations such as this.

There was a lot of interface with agencies and organizations that we perhaps don't normally have a chance to do. So once again the value of this is to spread an awareness of amateur radio to agencies and organizations that perhaps are not familiar with our performance in situations such as we had.

My role primarily was to be a clearing house of information, to direct people to those who were directing people into the area and providing excellent information regarding what to expect when they arrive. And to just generally make certain that we were available if need be. There were a lot of people calling from out of the state asking how they could become involved. As Kevin mentioned, one of the big things to be sure of when you do have a lot of people responding is that you do so in a way that is organized and in a way that allows people to make use of their talents and their time in the most productive way.

It was also my opportunity to coordinate with the South Texas Section of the ARES and to keep them advised of what was going on during the initial part of the operation. I know that they later participated, especially in San Augustine County and also in Nacogdoches County.

The coordination with amateur radio in general is something else I would like to emphasize. This was not an ARES organization only and was not a RACES organization only, but it was amateur radio and that is what we are all about. Providing a service to the general public and also to the served agencies that we are involved in. It was a good learning experience for everyone no matter what your involvement was and those are the things that will be picked up in the net tonight.

I am very, very proud of the amateur radio organization. We always come through. We are a very responsive organization. We learn from these experiences and this was a very important experience. One that has demonstrated the value of amateur radio to many, many people and certainly helped the awareness to agencies that we do not normally get to work with. These things can work to our benefit.

As the Section Emergency Coordinator for North Texas I am very proud of the

work that Jim, AA5QX and Johnny, K5JD did in helping to coordinate things from this end. As many, many people, 188 as I understood was the number accounted for, we can all take pride and we can all learn from these experiences. I know there were things that didn't go the way they were expected but those are the things that we get out of these operations.

Once again, thanks to everyone. I'm very, very happy that we had the chance to respond as we did and it sounds like from what I understand from every source, that overall the operation was certainly a great success.

KK5BE, K.J. Hughes, Nacogdoches - Net control in Nacogdoches, A.R.E.S.  
Emergency Coordinator for Nacogdoches County

Thank you to everybody on the net. On my behalf as well as Jeff Clark, K5NAC, another net controller we want to say thanks to everyone. We're a small club, we have 33 ARES members but thank goodness for the past several years that we have been in training, both simulated and actual. We handle a lot of evacuees from the gulf coast during hurricanes. I know that we'll continue our training. I also want to thank Bill Swan not only for his support in this operation but for times past. Bill has been a great help to us. As Bill said earlier, we were under no one flag but just a lot of good hams. I also want to be sure to thank W5BJ, Bob Jones, K5HW, Bud Walton and N5TIM, John Galvin and the Garland Amateur Radio Club for their help in getting the 146.660 repeater down here so quickly. It really saved the day.

### **Summary of how and why Dallas became involved in recovery efforts**

K5JD, Johnny Davis, Richardson - linked Dallas to Nacogdoches via EchoLink

What happened, as those who are locally involved in RACES recall, we had a discussion after the net about getting people to volunteer to go to East Texas to help. Jim, AA5QX and I started putting together the list of names of those who could go. Jim developed the system to keep up with the volunteers and to publish updates and to send lists to Kevin daily or even more often to let him know who was coming and what days. Monday it cranked up and I was amazed and simply flabbergasted and pleased with the response we were getting from the hams in north Texas. It started off with most of them we were getting were from Dallas and then Fort Worth and then Oklahoma and then as it was published on ARRL web page and then, first thing you knew they were coming in a steady stream. I know that we were spending anywhere from 14 to 16 hours a day, mostly in front of a computer in a nice warm room as we were processing volunteers, sending over their information and giving them instructions !

as to what to take with them and how to prepare to go over to East Texas to work. I don't think a lot of them realized at first the conditions that they were going to be confronted with, brambles, thorns, swamp, going through woods so thick that not even a rabbit could get through.

That's what really started it. After about Monday or Tuesday it got into a

routine. When someone volunteered, we sent back a message asking them questions about their abilities: asking if they had a 12 channel GPS, if they could walk through the woods for 4 hours, whether they could ride horseback, what day could they start, and what day would be their last day in the field. There were several questions like that, that's how we got the volunteers lined up.

The hams that were coming to us get all the credit for the numbers. We were simply putting out the word and it was the response back that was just fantastic. As a matter of fact, last weekend, the first weekend after the shuttle disaster, we got to a point where Kevin sent a message saying, "cut if off". There were about 70 in Nacogdoches, and about 30 or 40 in San Augustine and that's not just from Dallas/Fort Worth, folks, that's from all over the country. I think they had some guys drive in from California and I know they were getting messages out of New York City from hams up there wanting to come down to help. I know that some of them did, I don't know if all of them got down before they shut it off. We tried to contact as many as we could after we learned that it had been shut down.

AA5QX, Jim - First impressions were that there would not be any recovery operation involvement by Dallas area hams other than linking a Dallas repeater to the Nacogdoches repeater audio to permit Dallas hams to hear what was going on there. When the Sunday afternoon Nacogdoches net traffic revealed that many Nacogdoches hams couldn't work through the week due to job obligations, a call was issued for outside volunteers about an hour and a half before the normally scheduled Dallas R.A.C.E.S. net was to begin. An email and text page was sent to all of the R.A.C.E.S. Radio Officers in the Dallas area prior to the net. The information regarding the need for operators was shared during the training net and another non-R.A.C.E.S. net was conducted immediately afterward to permit other hams to ask questions and to volunteer. It was decided that I would serve as a contact point between Dallas area volunteers and East Texas ham management. Unfortunately, I had to make a trip out of town Thursday through Saturday. K5JD, Johnny and KC5MXN, Clay took over handling the emails from volunteers and sending lists to Nacogdoches until I returned.

### **The shifting understanding of how amateurs were going to be involved**

KD5CCH, Kevin Anderson, Nacogdoches

Quite honestly, it is a blur. We had no idea that our involvement was going to be what it was. Our initial thing was to do the initial assessment. We were actually operating net control from our homes and our office. We actually thought we would be working it through the weekend and be swarming with Feds by Monday and that would be the end of it.

Sunday we were contacted to be the drivers and communication for the GPS teams that were going out and we thought, "Oh man". We mobilized in a big way Sunday, called out all the locals that we could get out. Then we realized that instead of there being maybe hundreds of pieces that needed to be located with GPS there were literally thousands and thousands of them. There was absolutely no way that Sunday was even going to come close to handling that.

We still thought that the Feds would come in and completely take over in a day or two. On Monday, we actually scrambled around and figured out that we needed our own command post and that we needed more hams. Many of the local hams took off on Monday and I think there were people showing up on their own. We saw that we were very involved with the GPS teams and that we were going to need help.

Jim and Johnny up there in Dallas, everyone, were absolutely the reason that it was the success that it was. There were a lot of reasons, a lot of people doing a lot of work but without the help down here, it just wouldn't have worked. On Tuesday when all the Feds came rolling in and all the DPS units came rolling in (about 350 DPS units) they realized that they had no communications whatsoever. As they spread out through the woods there wasn't but one way they were going to talk back to the EOC and between units and that was with ham radio operators. DPS even showed up and their car-to-car frequencies had different PL. West Texas DPS couldn't talk to East Texas DPS car-to-car, much less through the repeaters in Lufkin. So it was interesting. We knew then that we had a huge task and that's when the all-calls went out for help.

We wanted enough but not too much. It then came down to us assessing our needs on a daily basis as to how many people we needed. Then as teams were being formed we realized we needed an operator for each team and then they didn't want to send a team in the field period, without an operator. It just went from there.

NE5AH, Alan Hayes, Lufkin

Our experience was a little different from Nacogdoches. There are only 4 listed hams and only 1 active ham in San Augustine County. There was no infrastructure, no working repeater. WD5EFY, Mike and I were talking on our local repeater Saturday and the people in Tyler brought down a mobile repeater and 5 operators to help us on Sunday. All the operators who came down in our area were either acting as net control or going into the bush.

The 146.66 repeater from Garland Amateur Radio Club was set up early on Tuesday and that is what saved the day for us. From that day on we had reliable communications. To echo what Kevin said, as far as communications, even on the last day we operated which was Wednesday, Ham radio was still the only reliable communications. I went out twice on Wednesday with two FEMA teams on dog searches and they weren't able to get back to their EOC

with their equipment but we were.

On mistakes that we made, obviously when we went down there on Saturday, our anticipation was that the Feds would be in there fully in force by Monday and we would be pretty much out of the picture. We pretty well had Saturday and Sunday covered. We got some additional hams in on Monday and in our early planning we pretty well thought that we would exit that operation by Monday night. After operating for a week and a half it was clear that that wasn't the case.

The second thing was that it turned out that the headquarters for the overall operation did wind up being set up here in Lufkin and we never had a presence here so that was a mistake on our part. When we found out that there was going to be the major headquarters here, someone either from Nacogdoches or us, should have set up someone to be the liaison for the total effort. I think that that might have helped us with planning because we were having to wait until we had our briefings in San Augustine at 6:30 or 7:30 at night to find out what the next day's activities were going to be like, so that was a mistake.

In retrospect, we probably should have planned for longevity. While we were like Kevin in the Nacogdoches group, we were sensitive in trying not to overstaff too much because we didn't want people coming down and getting turned off by not having been utilized. We probably would have been better off in the long run to have gone ahead and planned on it being a long-term event and staffing for that. The first few days we thought that by Monday we would be out of there. By Wednesday we were prepared for this to go on for three weeks. Then on this last Wednesday, Nacogdoches had a couple of days notice that they were going to stop but we only found out at 10 o'clock Wednesday that we were going to cease operations here.

AA5QX, Jim -

There were unique situations because of the location, because of the pine forest, because of the terrain, because of the lack of infrastructure ... there were a lot of things working against communications in the East Texas area and that's really where we shine. We have to realize that just because people get paid to go and have fancy gear to go doesn't mean that when they get there they will be able to operate. Amateur radio has a unique capability, the flexibility of people and equipment and frequencies to operate when others can't and that was certainly demonstrated in East Texas.

Another thing to realize is that there is never a way to know how long you are going to be involved at the get-go. Certainly the East Texas hams and everyone who responded showed the flexibility to change with the daily briefings and to change with the daily events. That's a credit to everyone but particularly those who were down there Saturday and Sunday and having to handle all the strange operators and strangers from every agency under the sun, all the "alphabet people" that showed up down there with their own

agendas.

### **Comments from operators who were on site**

#### **Quality of information received before going compared to actual experience**

KD5PXM, Richard - We didn't know what we were going to do but we did know where to go and what frequencies to use and that was very helpful

KD5PXM, Richard - We took our own maps and were able to navigate around without needing to ask for directions and that proved to be very helpful

AD5KE, Doyle - Good information available prior to first shift included fcy to use, where to go

KD5IPJ, Tom - E-mail information received ahead of time really helped with making preparations

KD5IPJ, Tom - Handout with information was available in Nacogdoches Tuesday but not on others

KB5PYS, Brett - Flow of information to volunteers via email was good

WA5OEB, Brad - Took "everything" to be prepared for "anything" based on info received early on

### **Support at site - lodging, meals, information**

KC5HWX, Albert - The Torino church did a wonderful job providing meals for the volunteers.

AA5QX, Jim - There were no other comments during debriefing.

E-mails during and after the event included:

Praise for the support operations such as the Texas Baptist Men's Association, the Salvation Army, and the American Red Cross for providing excellent meals that were hot, tasty, and nutritious.

The dorm sleeping arrangements in the Expo Center in Nacogdoches, although coed and Spartan were appreciated. Dorm lights stayed on all night. "Last folks in" was around midnight, "first folks up" was around 3:30 a.m. Those who got showers early in the day or evening had hot water, later folks didn't.

The warm hospitality of the local businesses and citizens in Nacogdoches, San Augustine, and Lufkin was often mentioned in e-mails and conversations.

### **Operations at site - individuals' preparation vs actual operation**



KD5OUG, Doug - "Took about everything I had and am glad I did"

KD5OUG, Doug - Many of the Red Cross vehicles have fiberglass bodies so setting up an antenna was a challenge, I wound up using a metal door frame to mount my magnetic mount antenna.

KD5PXM, Richard - Was prepared to work in woods, Took own maps (self sufficient)

KA5IVR, Stuart - prepared to work in the field, wound up working as net control but had to have equipment brought in since the existing NCS station left with the operator

K5LTC, Gordon - Information provided by email prior to going down was excellent

K5LTC, Gordon - People who bought or borrowed GPS equipment didn't know how to use it or program it before taking it into the field.

K5NLM, Nancy - I promise to never get in another DPS tropper's car again without my own map, regardless of what my assignment is. (Note: The local supply of 100's of maps were quickly exhausted)

KD5PXM, Richard- land navigation skills were handy to have

WB5QLD, Mike - Availability meetings and nets were located separate from both the operation fcy and location and allowed for much better support to the operators and a smoother running operation net

WB5QLD, Mike - It was tiring, uncomfortable but a very rewarding experience

K5NLM, Nancy - I know that some of you were in the field and experienced things you aren't accustomed to. If you are experiencing any difficulties or want to talk to someone who has "been there" I would be happy to get you the name of someone in your area who understands emergency stresss and its aftermath. These are generally personnel in your local fire, police or EMS services who will be more than willing to visit with you. Send me an email at [k5nlm@arrl.net](mailto:k5nlm@arrl.net) <<mailto:k5nlm@arrl.net>>

### **Lessons learned for response/operation in future events**

KA5TYW, Paul - Relay teams had two ops but third op to deal with people who walked up with questions would be ideal. Many times there were simultaneous calls from operators in the field and from net control. Having 2 operators allowed those to be handled in a timely and efficient manner.

KA5TYW, Paul - Log all radio communications/messages. Many times the ability to refer to logs ensured that information being passed was not a duplicate of a previous message but new information.

KA5TYW, Paul - Daily briefings were extremely useful for operating

frequencies, procedures, assignments. Operators need to follow the instructions given in these briefings.

KD5ING, Tim - Many people were receiving e-mails from people wanting to volunteer. There was no one uniform way to volunteer nor one contact point.

KD5ING, Tim - The ARRL Section Newsletter was used as one way to get out the latest information.

KD5ING, Tim - AB2M, Joe in Florida was developing a website for volunteering but it came too late in the event for use this time. At least one ham is building an internet sign-up utility that can be standing by for use in future large scale events.

NE5AH, Alan - Dual in-band receiving capability (even if it is just 2 separate radios or a transceiver and a scanner) is a real plus to allow operator to stay in touch with field and command operations.

NE5AH, Alan - Having an "improved" antenna for fringe area operations is an asset when normal antenna isn't sufficient (push-up pole, j-pole, etc)

KD5OUG, Doug - Having a way to send information regarding needs and information updates to clubs as well as individuals would have possibly helped recruit resources.

KD5CCH, Kevin - Logging was extremely important. There were a number of incidents when there were multiple sensitive items located about the same time and the logged messages kept it all straight. Having information logged builds confidence in our ability to operate at the level of other professionals.

KD5CCH, Kevin - Most operators came well prepared but some didn't and just couldn't be used. It is imperative that operators find out what is needed and come prepared to work.

KD5CCH, Kevin - We had thousands of maps produced but there were thousands of volunteers and other workers who grabbed them up.

KD5CCH, Kevin - The scheduling of operators was particularly hindered by the dynamic nature of the operations. Having enough operators was a problem but needs changed on an hourly basis and knowing what to expect was a real problem for ham management.

KD5CCH, Kevin - The amount of issues to be handled when dealing with so many different agencies and needs requires software to keep track of and manage resources. New software under development will include scheduling, availability, and assignments for at least a 48 hour period.

KD5CCH, Kevin - A centralized website with needs, maps, operation frequencies, how to sign up is really needed. We used the ARRL North Texas webpage and that will continue to be a good tool but we really need a site

dedicated to keeping information updated for the specific incident.

KK5PB, Bill - The ability use high speed wireless internet technology added an enormous resource to the command operations by providing email, weather, and other information capabilities.

KK5PB, Bill - Handling the scheduling and screening of volunteers can best be performed from a single point outside the hot zone to free those directly involved with operations

KA5IVR, Stuart - APRS was not utilized during this event, however, there were some incidents where APRS communications were made and information exchanged between San Augustine and Dallas without using the Internet. If implemented, it could have provided significant support to command and control of the operators.

KD5IPJ, Tom - Maybe the ARRL could provide some standardization of software, web access, and perhaps designation of someone outside of the affected area to handle the volunteer signup, etc.

KD5QXF, William - The Richardson Morning News carried a good story on all that the hams were doing to help with the East Texas situation.

AA5QX, Jim - There were several news agencies that presented stories regarding amateur radio's contribution to the recovery efforts, however, these were almost exclusively small town editions with a personal interest aspect to their reporting. Many of these stories were written as a direct result of hams contacting the papers and letting them know about the local hams' participation.

### **EchoLink's contribution to event from operator preparation standpoint**

K5JD, Johnny -

EchoLink is a free software package that allows you to connect to other repeaters and computers viat the internet. You must be a licensed amateur radio operator to use it. If you want to try it out you can go to: [www.echolink.org](http://www.echolink.org) and download the software. Once you load the software it will ask you to register and the sysops will have to validate your amateur radio license before you are permitted to access the system. Validation takes about 4 hours to a day. Once you are notified you can use the system. If you have any problems check the FAQ on the site first. Most issues are addressed, particularly if you are behind a firewall.

Echolink provided direct contact between the affected area and the remote support operations. Re-transmitting net audio in remote cities generated awareness of the operation and the nature of the operation's needs. Hearing "local" operators from the remote cities formed a tie to the event and stimulated additional volunteering of operators. Real time re-transmitting net audio gave the event immediacy and relevancy to those who listened and increased awareness of amateur radio's role in disasters. It also encouraged

self-evaluation by listening hams of their own preparedness for such an event.

Additional observations by AA5QX, Jim

AA5QX, Jim - At a time when many critics are claiming that amateur radio is archaic and irrelevant, operators using normal ham equipment as well as Wireless Internet, Echolink, and APRS demonstrated that the technical capabilities of amateur radio hobbyists remain uniquely capable of meeting real world communication needs in the 21st century.

AA5QX, Jim - Dallas County has an organization, the DALLAS County R.A.C.E.S. Council that is made up of all of the R.A.C.E.S. Radio Officers from the various cities' R.A.C.E.S groups. This organization's role is to ensure that all of the groups are working together toward the common goal of effective emergency communications in large scale events.

**Four needs of any large scale response:**

**ON SITE OPERATORS** - need equipment and skills before they arrive, how to operate radio, gps, etc

**ON SITE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT** - Management Hams should interface with all agencies but maintain control of their operators. i.e. Food, housing, who's on duty/off duty in field, who has returned.

**RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT** - communicating with the ham community regarding needs for operators and equipment

**GOOD LINKS** to various communication sites and control centers throughout the area of operation are essential

**Three general issues during any event:**

Standard phonetics - when stations come on frequency and use non-standard phonetics it is difficult to understand the message. When under stress you revert to habits, make good operation habitual

Failure to respond equipped to meet needs - not just throwing radios/hams at problem, but properly prepared for the operations, better to hold back if physical or equipment limitations would hinder your ability to work. If you aren't able to be part of the solution then others must support you and you become a non-productive part of the overhead.

Time to prepare equipment and develop skills is before you go ... now - One operator reported that everything that was needed in East Texas was covered in the three Emergency Communicator courses being offered by the ARRL. The time to put a portable repeater together is now, rather than waiting until the need arises. Having reliable portable repeaters available and put into operation for this event were extremely helpful.

Additional observations by K5JD, Johnny Davis

This was unique in that although it was a large event, power, phones, showers, and radios worked.

Weather didn't limit ability to respond and there were no chemical agents to protect against. Updates of the ever changing situation were very helpful. APRS, if available, could have contributed greatly to the event. EchoLink had 52 stations and repeaters monitoring and participating in this event.

### **Closing Comments by KD5CCH, Kevin Anderson**

We've gone through the critique process and we want to thank everyone again, those who brought down the repeater, those who helped with administration, we just want you to know how important it was to us. Especially those who came down and helped out. You really sacrificed alot, you went out got cut up and bruised up, a lot of you. Everyone appreciates you, not just us, the Incident Commander, other agencies.

I want you to know that we are putting together "CARE" packages for everyone. It's going to take a little while. There are going to be things from NASA the Incident Commander, our local group and perhaps from other federal agencies, expressing their gratitude. We are having some patches made up. We have everyone's contact information. It may but we

We are also thinking of having a special gathering for folks perhaps in Canton which seems to be a pretty central location for those who participated, possibly sometime this Spring. So many came and left and we didn't get an opportunity to visit with you. You rolled in that morning and got your assignments and then wham bam you were out there. When you came in in the evenings you were cold and wet and tired. We would like to visit with you. We also plan on doing a special event station annually in the future as a commemoration of this event.

Thanks again to everyone. Let's hope it doesn't happen again but in this world today I wouldn't be surprised if it did. If you need our help, just holler and Nacogdoches will be there.