



EA20AJ at the 20th World Scout Jamboree

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From 28 December to 7 January 2003, the amateur radio station E20AJ was the "voice on the airwaves" of the 20th World Scout Jamboree in Thailand.



Operated by 31 staff members, 14 of them from outside Thailand, the station managed to make over 2000 contacts with other amateur radio stations, both Scout stations and others, in more than a hundred different countries.

E20AJ was part of the Jamboree's City of Science, an area that offered all sorts of technical workshops. The amateur radio team ran several of these:

- VHF radio operating where contacts could be made to radio stations in the surrounding area;

- The main HF station which offered long-distance communications around the globe;

- A 21st century foxhunt, using VHF equipment to locate the mobile fox on the campsite and win the foxhunt badge. The fox played the tune "it's a small world after all", so we saw several Scouts dancing while they were trying to find the hidden fox transmitter?..

- Build your own radio transmitter at the kitbuilding workshop. A low-power transmitter that could be received on the broadcast FM band, sending phone or morse code.

- SSTV, APRS and packet radio were amongst the new digital modes to play with. Send your own picture over short-wave radio or type a message into the packet system.

Each day some 150 Scouts took the radio workshops, organized as a ticket-activity. This means they could get program tickets at their sub camps for various activities, one being the amateur radio workshops.

Later in the evening and during free time, the radio station attracted many others. During one of the many radio contacts we were called by Roberto WA9E, from the USA. He asked us to please locate his daughter Laurne KB9DTE on the campsite for him. Could we please ask her to email a message home, as he hadn't heard from here yet? How do you find one person amongst another 20.000? Well, you contact the contingent and try your luck. We had her speak directly to her father over the radio two days later..?



An absolute highlight was the scheduled contact with the International Space Station, NA1SS. A matriculate preparation had been done by Masashi, JI1CUJ and Chawalit, E21KEW with the support of many technicians. An automated antenna tracking system kept the double array of VHF beams pointed straight at the Spacecraft during its pass over Thailand. The selected Scouts received instructions beforehand and were trained in handling a microphone. Each of them could ask one question to the Space Station. Audio and video from the contact were webcasted live on the internet and of course, recorded too. Then on the afternoon of 28 December all gathered at E20AJ at the scheduled time. A massive turn up of the press, representatives of the World Scout Committee, of the Thai government and many Scout visitors. At the scheduled time we called?? but were not heard in space. Much to our disappointment. As it appeared later in an email from NASA, the astronauts had conflicting schedules and needed to look at things of higher priority. However, we had a second sched on 31 Dec, just 3 days later. Again we set up everything as before and again had a lot of press attention. But this time everyone was a lot more nervous. Would it work out after all? Together we did the final count down to the exact time that the spacecraft would be above the horizon. At precisely that moment the loudspeaker sounded out: "E20AJ this is NA1SS, how copy?" A loud applause filled the tent. It worked! For the next 10 minutes Scouts from various countries posed questions to Don Pettit, KD5MDT, the scientific officer on board the ISS. "How do you sleep in space", "what do you miss most?", "how does our planet look like from up there?" and "what is your message to the Scouts?". Don answered them all. After the contact all Scouts received the special NA1SS QSL card that had been prepared for them. A memory of the contact they had with the "voice from Space".



One evening we organized a party for all the radio amateurs on the campsite. Scouts, leaders, staff and many other visitors turned up for the big eyeball QSO. This was great fun. All sorts of DX operators were now within very short reach?. And of course we had to celebrate the birthday of Shelly, K2BS. He was part of the radio staff of many World Scout Jamborees and always succeeds in contacting stations in many different corners of the world.

Special thanks go to the Radio Amateur Society of Thailand (RAST) and the local amateur radio club of Sattahip. They both provided most of the technical equipment, antennas and transceivers, as well as manpower to mount and dismantle the station on the Jamboree site. The latter was not an easy job given temperatures of over 35 C almost constantly and a high humidity to go with that.



The E20AJ staff consisted of: Thida Denpruektham, HS1ASC (Station manager) Paskorn Kampao E20XQY Chawalit Rusmeenil E21KEW Pakorn Somchaichareon HS0XBP Kanok Nakchum E20EHQ Piyalak Sonchouy, E20XVH Sirichoke Jamsawang, HS6SCZ Thawat Lertritsumpan, E20ARH Boontiang Daenglah, HS2ZSS Rattansak Niosuwan HS2OV Apichet Kanthongthae HS2YNN Nuttasit Chalernwong HS2WWY Ekwit Toburin HS5PJD Pkorn Kettad E21DNM Noppadol Eiampijit, E27KI Wiroj Kittayawattanajit, HS1RMS Kemrin Tiengpraser, E20JDX Jim Parnell ZL2APE Stephen Watson VK4SGW Sheldon Weil K2BS Magdi Osman Ahmed ST2BSS Jochen Sulovsky DK8ZM Mich Friederich LX1KQ Erwin van der Haar PA3EFR Masashi Osada JI1CUJ Frank Heritage M0AEU John Crowder G0GDU Hannu Antero Ratto OH7GIG Luis A Salton Peretti PY3IQ Yves Margot HB9AOF Richard Middelkoop PA3BAR.



