

2021 Field Day Summary

June 28, 2021

Upshur Area Amateur Radio Club and Upshur ARES® first joint Field Day held June 26 and 27, 2021 was an outstanding success! Preparations were complete and all participants supplied the items for which they took responsibility, so set up was accomplished without any problems.

Coffee and donuts were on hand at 0700 after which folks starting arriving. Set-up scheduled to start at 0800 started only a little early with erecting the Station canopy and outdoor carpet, all supplied by K5GDM, Gary. I wonder how many FD sites had a carpeted floor for their outdoor stations?

The inverter generator, again supplied by K5GDM, (very quite! and very stable) was set up about 50 feet away from the Station and was perfect in all respects. The generator ran non-stop for approximately 26 hours on approximately 6 gallons of fuel. The generator ran four fans, one LED flood light and three transceivers. So, the Station was totally independent of any commercial power sources.

The weather was seasonably hot and little more so humid. With a daytime breeze and the night time loss of sun, it was not bad weather. Rain held off until we completed tear down and headed to the home QTH. The weather was a little warm at dinner time as the breeze died down, but all in all was good to us.

The Station consisted of one HF Station which was a ICOM 7300 and Astron Linear Power Supply supplied by KG5UGY, George. This was the primary station and operated from 1300 Local on Saturday until 1210 Local on Sunday. With rain threatening we pulled the plug a little early and were able to tear down before the rain started, but just barely so. The VHF station was a TS2000, supplied by KG5ZSU, Tommy and was on 2M and 6M. This station was on the air until all VHF stations that could be copied were worked.

AE5ZA, Cliff set up a third station and operated digital mode for several hours under the call of AE5ZA. So, we were not able to include his contacts in our 1A classification, but he was able to demonstrate digital operation to those interested and operate over an extended period while the Phone station was on the air.

The primary HF antenna was a dual band Inverted Vee, resonant on 20 and 40 Meters W5BWC's "camping antenna". It was supported by a 26 foot aluminum telescoping mast and needed no tuner, even though one was on hand. The VHF antennas consisted of several 2 and 6 Meter hoisted into the trees and tuned on site by KG5ZSU. The digital station had a very compact portable vertical with a single counterpoise. All antennas performed well, went up easy and stayed up (not always a given for portable antennas).

KI5OFD, Tony and N5LFH, Greg brought canopies for sleeping, resting and additional shade. We set up lawn furniture under these and which were located close enough to the Station that you could snooze and listen. While we worked a few stations that surely were asleep at the switch, I don't think many of our folks took more than a few minute cat-nap the entire 24 hours. The station was operated throughout the period, well except for 1900 chow time.

KA5AZK was Net Control on 7290 Traffic Net from 1300 to 1400 Local. The planning had not taken that into consideration, so we had a little desens from her operating my 600W station. However, turning ON the attenuator reduced the effects; but doing so also decreased the receive signal levels almost into the noise floor.

Such an outstanding group of members showed up that the entire set-up process was accomplished by 1200 hours, without any problems. Subway sandwiches were provided for lunch and plenty of time was available for everyone to eat and rest before 1300 Local start time.

The stations were set-up, tested and ready to go at 1300 Local. W5BWC was going to start off using the desk mic, but it had not been tested – only the Headset. It had a problem so we did not get "our" frequency established. So, by the time we switched back to the Headset, we had to cruise the band looking for stations to work. We were on 20M where the signals were pretty much in the noise floor, so with any desens or the attunator on we had a hard time. When checking the station operation prior to FD we worked California on 20M without any problem, but by now signals were not as good.

Finally we switched to 40M, but the Traffic Net was on that band and even though signals were stronger than on 20M we still had some trouble. So, we took a break and sent the three Radiograms (for Bonus points) to KA5AZK who then passed them on the 7290 Traffic net. KG5UGY, George sent a message to our NTX Section manager for 100 bonus points; KI5BHT, Debbie, sent a message to our NTX Section Emergency Coordinator for 10 bonus points and KI5OFD, Tony sent a message to our NTX Section Traffic Manager for another 10 bonus points.

At 1900 hours we shut the Station down and had BBQ Brisket dinner. In addition to the brisket we had sausage, beans, potato salads, green beans, coleslaw, onions, tomatoes, pickles, peppers, peach cobbler, ice cream, banana pudding, oat meal cookies, cup cakes, tea, soft drinks, coffee, water and some other things I have forgotten, I'm afraid. All I can say to those who missed dinner, you missed one of the finest free or otherwise meals in Upshur County. The families brought all the trimmings and side dishes. Everyone contributed in some way to make for a very enjoyable and delicious meal. I want to extend a Texas size THANK YOU to everyone who brought food and supplies. In all my years as a Ham, I've never seen a better contribution by the members.

We had our Club photographer, Emily Collier, take our group picture just before we ate. That was the only way we could get everyone in one place! N5TQI, Jim our ARES® Chaplain ask a blessing and we were off to the chow line.

20M was tried a few times during FD, but we never had much success on it. Early in the afternoon and through late evening hours we worked mostly central and eastern US. KI5BHT took the station after dinner and finally got a run going, working something like 45 stations in a row. She was working one station after another. Sorry guys, a YL will beat us hands down every time, just get over it – hi. I think her run went for a couple of hours or more until her body ordered a break.

KG5SVM, William took over for her and had good success as well, still not like Debbie's, but he proved to be an outstanding operator - I guess you expect nothing less from a submariner. Early in the morning hours Debbie headed to her home QTH, I thought to sleep, but no, she cooked us breakfast for 0600!

KT8TOR, Nancy took over again around 0400 and once again she started working station after station! She showed us all up, working Disney World FD Station, Canada, Alaska, Mexico, Japan (JH7MQD) and best of all Mr. Magoo.

All of those working through the late night and early morning hours had a wonderful time laughing between and even during contacts. It may have just been things were funny because of the late (or early) hours, but indeed we did have some hilarious times. Please greet KT8TOR, Nancy as Yang and ask her how it came to bestowed upon her. So as to not be unkind to anyone, I will not introduce you to Mr. McGoo, but ask her about him as well.

Well Nancy was king of the hill. She had worked the most distant station (6300 miles), the most interesting stations, had one of the longest runs and certainly the longest and most difficult contact - we were all in awe. She even once was trying to work a station where there was multiple stations piling on top of him. Nancy, not to be intimidated, transmitted K5UAR and stood by. When the pile-up finally got quite the station came back "the YL only, others standby". He didn't get Nancy's station call, but he knew he was working her next. She worked him with ease, then the pile up jumped back on the guy, I have no idea how long it took the other OMs to work him, but K5UAR was on top.

But - then along comes K5GDM, Gary. He was doing good, not as good as Nancy, but he was working a lot of stations. As the gray-line approached Australia/US he had VK3IO call him; Gary not sure of his call was trying to understand when the station replied "DX! down under – Australia". Oops, there goes the distance record as we plotted it as 9000 miles! I'll leave that at that, but the Mannings took all distance records!

KG5SVM, William operated several time slots during FD and made a lot of contacts. KE6VJH, Ray; KI5OFD, Tony and N5LFH, Greg also made contacts and ensured the station stayed on the air. As did KG5UGY, George, but he sit back and watched the folks having a good time using his rig, that worked flawless the entire time. KA5AZK, Jo Ann was pretty tired from her FD preparations and 5 hours on 7290 Traffic Net so she took a nap, but still managed to make several contacts around 0800. I goofed up at 1300 trying to use the desk mic, so I tucked my tail and let the good operators take over. KE5VJH operated the station several times and contributed most after 0900 Sunday morning where a fresh voice did wonders.

Early in the afternoon on Saturday, I know KD5OZA and maybe another, but I can't remember who, made some contacts. AE5ZA made almost 30 digital contacts using his call, which we can't count, but I know several enjoyed seeing him operate. KG5ZSU, Tommy worked all the VHF stations plus several HF stations.

About 1210 Local on Sunday morning our SKYWARN coordinator K5GDM, Gary notified us small cells are popping up around the area. Contacts had dropped off anyway, so we pulled the plug at 1215 and started the tear down. I have attended FD many times over my 53 years as a Ham, but never have I seen better participation in both set-up and tear down as we had! Established clubs would be envious!

I am amazed at how quickly our members became confident and capable operators. Some had never worked HF others little or a long time ago. One purpose of FD is to evaluate Hams ability to deploy, set up an emergency or portable station, generator or power source, antenna and make contact with distant stations.

I had expected a lot out our group, as we have so many capable folks, but I have to admit they far exceeded my expectations! We proved, when required, UAARC and Upshur ARES® is now capable and ready to establish radio communications whenever needed. It is amazing to me, still after all these years, how a simple, inexpensive Inverted Vee antenna at 26 feet above ground and a 100W transmitter can literately communicate all over the world.

We had five visitors. Four were recently licensed and one was an OT (old timer). All of them complemented us on our Station and more importantly the welcome they received. One mentioned a visit to another FD site operated by a larger club but gave us higher marks. We really did good for our first FD, our first club outing, our first deployed ARES® Exercise - for which all attending ARES® members will receive credit, even if they did not operate - and our first joint venture.

The official totals are not complete yet, but I added up some statistics that follow.

UAARC FD 2021

Total Attendance:	27
Total Eating Dinner:	20
Total Ops,Set-up and tear-down:	12
Total ARES Ops:	11
Total ARES Credit:	12
Visitors:	5
Msg Bonus Points:	120
Log Entries:	240
Longest DX:	9000 miles
Hardest Contact:	Mr. McGoo
Hours of Operation:	23 hours 10 minutes

Operators Signing the Log:

W5BWC
KG5UGY
KE5VJH
KD5OZA
KG5ZSU
KI5OFD
KG5SVM
N5LFH
KI5BHT
K5GDM
KT8TOR
KA5AZK