

Michael S. Hardester

Approximately 1677 kilometers/1042 miles to the north-east of Sydney, Australia, is the island of Norfolk. Norfolk Island covers an area of 36.3 square kilometers/14 square miles and a population of 1600 in 1976. Administered by the Minister for Administrative Services through a resident Administrator, the Australian Territory has an interesting history.

In 1788, Norfolk Island was established as a convict settlement and remained as such until 1814 when there was a brief period of little occupation of the island until 1825 when convicts were again brought to the island. In 1856, the last convicts were removed and as a result of an offer made by Queen Victoria to the descendants of the mutineers of the British ship "Bounty," 194 descendants chose to be taken from Pitcairn Island to their new home on Norfolk Island. In 1913, Norfolk Island was accepted as a territory under Australia's authority.

With the assistance of Kathy LeCren, Broadcasting Officer of Station VL2NI, the following station information has been made available and my thanks to her. Early in 1952, a daily ten minute broadcast of information on ship and aircraft arrivals and departures and other matters of a local urgent interest was commenced. These transmissions were carried out with the cooperation of the Department of Civil Aviation and the consent of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board: the first broadcasts were made by the then local Officer-in-Charge of the Department of Civil Aviation from his office at the airport. These transmissions continued for approximately five months when the Officer-in-Charge advised the Administration that he would no longer be able to continue with the transmissions. Arrangements were then made for the Administration manual switchboard operator to take over the broadcasts and the necessary equipment was installed in the switchboard room which was located at the airport. In 1960, the manual switchboard was transferred from the airport to the Administration Offices Building at Kingston when the telephone system was being re-organized; the transfer was carried out with the assistance, again, of D.C.A. technicians who also installed a transmitter with an output of from 10 to 12 watts which they made up from second-hand material. The serials and microphone were loaned by D.C.A.

Broadcasts were made each weekday commencing at 10:00AM in relation to shipping and aircraft movements and matters of an urgent and public nature. The Officer-in-Charge of D.C.A. made broadcasts regarding ships and aircraft from his airport office on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. The frequency used for broadcasts was 1500 kHz. The first music to be broadcast was by the Officer-in-Charge during the first three months after the service commenced; he did this while waiting for the required information or until the time fixed for the normal broadcasts and the music was picked up by a microphone from a nearby record player.

In 1962, the Postmaster-General's Department approved of proposals to extend the local broadcasting service and for the frequency to be changed from 1500 kHz. The Norfolk Island Administration made provision for \$500 for the establishment of the extended service.

In 1967, the broadcasting studio was shifted from the Administration Office Block building to the then Library/Museum building. In 1970, the building was completely destroyed by fire along with all of the broadcasting equipment. With the fire, all broadcasts ceased until a studio was installed with voluntary help and equipment donated in a building located on New Cascade Road.

Since the move, the studio has been moved from the transmitter room to larger and larger rooms until at present there is an audition studio as well as the main studio. The present studio includes a Cetec panel with 20 channels, 3 turntables, 2 ferrogaph tape recorders, 2 Nakamichi cassette recorders, 4 Yaesu-Mussen FRG-7 receivers, and 2 microphones.

The staff has increased from approximately six to thirteen with seven young people also doing programmes under a Youth Council project. Most work is voluntary, however from 7:00AM to 1:30PM Monday thru Saturday, staff are paid an hourly rate by the Administration. Broadcast hours have increased from the previous four to approximately 72 hours weekly: 1930 - 1100 GMT on Monday thru Saturday, and 0100 to 1130 GMT on Sunday.

The current call sign is VL2NI operating on 1570 kHz (there is no indication if there will be a frequency change on 23 November in line with the 9 kHz channel separation plan scheduled for that date). The transmitter is a Common-

wealth Electronics feeding 50 watts into a one-eighth wave-length vertical dipole. The programming contains no commercial content whatsoever, local notices of community interest, varied music and entertainment from local sources. News and other programming is courtesy of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, BBC, Deutsche Welle, Radio Nederland et al.

VL2NI continues to be run by the Administrative Officer of the Norfolk Island Administration who has jurisdiction over a Broadcasting Officer who manages the staff, controls programming, cataloguing, ordering, buying, etc; in fact, he/she does everything as well as announcing. Equipment maintenance is carried out by the officer-in-charge of the Ionospheric Station and is paid for by the Administration.

Future plans include the implementation of a FM service within twelve months. There are no plans for an increase in the hours of operation, though an increase in the number of staff is possible. No change in call sign is anticipated, though there "may be a change (slight) in frequency."

Reception reports are mainly from Australia and New Zealand, some from overseas: particularly Italy. QSL cards and pennants are sent as confirmation of reception, and IRCs (International Reply Coupons) are quite acceptable for return postage.

Again my thanks to Mrs. LeCren for the most complete information she provided for this article.

Norfolk Island Broadcasting Service

# VL2NI



1570 Khz 50 watts

Thank you for your reception report dated \_\_\_\_\_

which we are pleased to verify.

BROADCASTING OFFICER

THIS IS THE SOUTHERN COMMAND NETWORK

MICHAEL S. HARDESTER

Located between Colombia and Costa Rica is the Central American nation of Panama. As many know, Panama has been in the news in recent months owing to the Panama Canal treaties. While these treaties were being finalized, I was looking through the current World Radio TV Handbook when I came across mention of two (2) United States Department of Defense radio stations located in the Canal Zone area. In doing research, MSG Robert J. Foster, Jr., USA who is the Director of the Southern Command Network was able to provide information relating to the stations.

In 1963, the Caribbean Command (Caribbean Forces Network-CFN) became the United States Southern Command. Following in February of 1964, the unified command assumed operational command of the network from the Army element and has since been operated under the direction of the Public Affairs Officer of the U.S. Southern Command.

All studio facilities are located at Fort Clayton with differing transmitter sites. On the Pacific side of the Canal Zone, ACA20 operates on 790 kHz with 10 kW of power from Fort Clayton. The FM-Stereo outlet on 91.5 MHz and TV Channel 8 (5 kW) emanate from Quarry Heights. On the Atlantic side, all transmission originate from Fort Davis. [redacted] on 1420 kHz has a power of 1 kW. The FM-Stereo operates on 98.3 MHz and TV Channel 8 has a power of 5 kW. **ACB20**

The staff of the Southern Command Network averages around thirty in size with staff coming from the Army, Air Force and Navy. In addition to the AM, FM and TV outlets on each side of the Canal Zone, a weekly newspaper is also published. Should anyone be fortunate enough to log any of the Southern Command Network's transmission, their address is The Southern Command Network, Radio-TV, P.O. Drawer 919, APO New York, NY. 09827.