SOME COMMON QUESTIONS ASKED BY VISITORS TO THE BB-62

The advent of the internet has created the term "**F**requently **A**sked **Q**uestions (**FAQ**)". Web sites will post a FAQ and its ar an attempt to help potential customers understand a product or service. The radio room restoration group is often approached visitors with questions. This month we post some of **FAQ** about the radio room and communications on board the BB-2 that we been asked.

Question #1. If the teletype machines operated faster than a Radioman could send and receive Morse Code, why was the ship still using the Morse Code during the tour of South East Asia?

Answer. Because teletype is a faster mode of communications it requires a more complex system of equipment and machine. There are times, such as high noise on the radio circuits, when a system like teletype can not get through the noise. Yes, the teletype message could be repeated several times until received correctly but this would take more time than using the less complex Morse Code once.

Question #2. I enjoyed the talk given by the tour guide but was wondering about the real radio room. Where is it located? How close to the look of the real radio room is this mockup?

Answer. The space that these visitors were calling a mockup is the radio room of the 1980's. The equipment in the Message Handling Area is just as it was when the ship was decommissioned in 1991, it is not a mockup. The present Radio Room, on the main deck was part of the crew's berthing prior to the 80s. The inner space, now know as FACCON 1 was a separate compartment used as CPO berthing. FACCON 2, now the Ham Radio shack, was a passageway and a section of the Chaplain's Office. Prior to the 1980s modernization, the BB-62 radio room was located on 3rd deck, just aft of the # 2 barbett, near sick bay.

Question #3 What prevents anybody from picking up a red phone and talking to the President or the Kremlin?

Answer. Hmm! Someone has been watching too many movies. Actually, the red phones on the ship are not telephones but are "radio control handsets". They could not be used to talk to another red phone on the ship, only to similar systems on other ships or bases. The red color warns users about the sensistivity/security of communications taking place on that system.

Question #4: We find the sound powered phone and their growlers to be "neat", but why would anyone need to "growl" themselves?

Answer: This person was paying very close attention to the docent and picked up on a unique situation. The Radio Room could growl themselves because they had to. Since the sound powered phones are a party line, there needed to be a way to prevent someone from listening in simply by picking up a phone. The growlers associated with the radio room are Type N modified so that to use them you had to growl the other station and yourself. The second growl connected the Radio Room phone to the circuit so the conversation could take place. At the end of the conversation the circuit would disconnect the Radio Room phone until needed again.

Question #5: What is this button for?

Answer: I was asked this question once but find the subject quite interesting but never mentioned while moving through the ship. A Sea Cadet was asking about a small, painted over, push button located in the 01 level midship Officer's head. This button is a remnant of the "Stewart's Drop Call System" that appears in various places throughout Officer's Country. The system worked like this. An Officer needing assistance from a Stewart would push the button. A "drop target" near the Stewart Station would rotate to reveal the location of the need for assistance. The Stewart would reset the target then proceed to the location and provide the required assistance. This system even extened to each of the tables in the Wardroom. Need more potatoes? Push a button, no yelling or waving for the Steward.

Question #6: What kind of TV reception does that antenna on the front part of the ship provide?

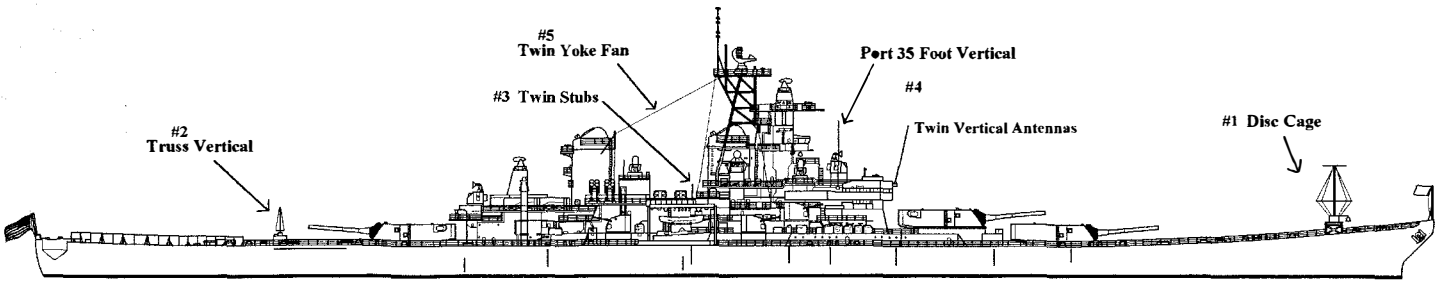
Answer: These visitors were having fun with us but it does bring up a good point. The disc/cage antenna (aka NTDS) on the bow of the ship did not receive any kind of television signal. It was developed to improve the reception of targeting information from other ships and bases but could not receive pictures from missiles about to hit their target. An added note about the disc/cage antenna, the Christmas lights do not interfere with the Ham Radio station use of the antenna, it works great.

Question #7: How many radiomen would be in the room at one time?

Answer: According to some of the 1980s radio crew, there were up to 12 radiomen on watch at a time. The number of shifts varied depending on the circumstances but the radio crew usually worked a 1-1-1-32 rotation when at sea.

1 day watch 1 mid watch 1 evening watch 32 hours off radio watch

USS NEW JERSEY SHIP'S ANTENNAS



During her 60 years of service the Big J has operated with many different styles and locations of radio antennas. This month's column will try to address some of the questions posed to the members of the radio room restoration crew concerning the current antennas. We will also try to clear up a few misconceptions about the antennas that we have heard from people around the ship.

All of the ship's High Frequency (HF) antennas, used for long distance communication, have color-coded bases, either red or blue. Because of the power used when transmitting, the bases of the transmitting antennas are painted red. Red-based antennas should not be touched or used as "leaning posts". The bases of HF antennas used only for receiving signals are colored blue. Although safe to touch, a good general practice is not to touch any antennas unless proper procedure is followed.

RED = Hot = Transmit **BLUE** = Cold = Receive

The ship's Very High Frequency (VHF) and Ultra High Frequency (UHF) antennas do not carry as much power as the HF antennas. VHF is used for line-of-sight communications while UHF is used for line-of-sight and satellite circuits. Since these types of antennas do not use as much power and are not in close proximity to the crew they are not color-coded.

(Antenna #1) On the bow of the Jersey is the disc-cage antenna. Originally developed for use with the Naval Tactical Data System (NTDS) during the 1960's, it was used as transmit only during the 1980's. This is actually two antennas, a Disc and a cage. The larger Cage portion consists of the wires while the smaller Disc section is the set of spokes at the top of the pole.

(Antenna #2) Atop the former movie projector booth, on the fantail, is the Trussed Vertical (Antenna #2). Installed during the 1980 modernization this was a transmit antenna but in 1987 was converted to a receive antenna. This change was due to concerns about High Energy Radiation near Ordinance (HERO). In other words, radio signals could have ignited weapons located onboard the helicopters.

(Antenna #3) On the starboard side of the O3 level, near the forward ABLs (Tomahawk Missiles) is the Twin stubs antenna (Antenna #3). This antenna replaced the transmit antenna lost by the HERO concerns on the fantail.

(Antenna #4) At the O5 level Open Bridge is a good example of the base color coding mentioned above. On the Port side, near the CWIS is a red colored 35 foot vertical transmitting antenna while on the starboard side is another 35 foot vertical, blue base, used by the ship's receivers. On the O5 level notice that the Twin Verticals just forward of the Fire Control Tower are also blue.

(Antenna #5) The least noticed of the BB-62 radio antennas is the Twin Fan antenna strung between the Aft Yardarm and the Aft Stack. These six almost horizontal wires are connected to a box on the top foremast via two red insulators. Any one care to guess if this is a transmit or receive antenna?

Four antennas that raise eyebrows are the "eggbeater", satellite receive antennas (not shown on drawing). This set of four antennas was located around the ship so that at least one of them would always have sight of a Naval satellite used for Fleet Broadcasts. They are located at the following locations: one either side of the bridge; one at O7 level above the ship's bell; and one on the Aft secondary gun director.

All of the Battleship New Jersey radio antennas are functional and used almost daily by the Amateur Radio Station located in Radio Central.