

Commanding Officer
USCG Loran A Station
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20 April 1971

From: Commanding Officer, USCG Loran A Station, Batan, R.P.
To: Commander, Fourteenth Coast Guard District
Via: Commander, Philippines Section

Subj: Excessive unauthorized bad time on rates 2H3, 2H4 during period 01 April 1971 to 20 April 1971

The excessive unauthorized bad time on rates 2H3 and 2H4 was due mainly to poor watchstanding on one or two days of the month. On 2H4 this was mostly the fault of the slave station. However, on rate 2H3 it is felt that watchstanders of both stations must share the blame.

On rate 2H4 the slave went out of tolerance at 1034Z on 12 Apr. It took the watchstander 20.9 mins to remedy the situation and assume normal operations. When questioned, the watchstander stated that he was having trouble with excessive atmospherics and kept locking onto the skywave. Likewise, on 15 Apr the slave was out of tolerance for 7.6 min at 1048Z and for 11.9 mins at 1428Z. A different watchstander was on watch, but he reported similar difficulties.

These were the only two periods of excessively long bad time on this rate. Had these been reduced or eliminated the bad time would have been reduced to a tolerable percentage.

On 2H3 the slave watchstander reportedly had the master off air for a total of 75.5 minutes from 1902Z to 2020Z on 10 April. The slave was blinking for a total of 69.7 minutes.

Upon hearing of this excessively long bad time, the senior ET at the slave station radioed the senior ET at the master station in an attempt to find out the problem and to co-ordinate its reporting. The master station reported no excessively long off-air time on that date. Also, after conferring with his watchstander, the master reported that he had not noticed the slave blinking during this period of time. An excessive off sync condition had not registered at their station.

It is confirmed that the master had been going off air intermittently for a few minutes at a time throughout the day on that date. That evening a similar situation probably occurred about 1902Z. The master was off air for a few minutes at this time. When the master came back on air this was not reported to the slave station. Radio comms between both stations were good throughout this period, according to the watchstander at the slave station.

The slave watchstander evidently did not notice the master back on air. Severe atmospherics are present on this rate during nighttime hours and the watchstander probably did not distinguish between them and the master signal. The duty ET had been called, but this was before the master came back on air. He called the master on the radio to insure that they actually were off air.

This was confirmed, and he went back to sleep after instructing the watchstander to keep a close watch on the slow scope for the master signal. Voice communications being good, he also assumed the master would notify the slave when back on air.

The master station did not blink the slave during the entire time. If it had done so this would have helped the slave watchstander distinguish between the master signal and the atmospheric. Also, the senior ET stated that the alarms had not registered at the master station.

At 2020Z the slave watchstander noticed the master signal on the scope and drifted it back into tolerance. Normal operation was resumed. The watchstander at the slave station stated that he had spent the entire time watching the scope for the master signal, but had not noticed it prior to this time.

On 15 April the slave went out of tolerance at approximately 1530Z. This situation lasted for 39.6 mins. The station had been out of tolerance for approximately 30 mins when the duty ET called for the senior ET. The senior ET noticed that signals appeared normal, but the master kept blinking. After checking the coding delays on the timer he asked the master to stop blinking so he could check the signals better. The master stopped, and the signals appeared to be in tolerance on the operate and both standby timers at the slave station.

The master informed the slave that he was approximately 10 MS out of tolerance. The slave stated that time delays had been thoroughly checked and everything appeared in tolerance at the slave station, but they would shift 10 MS upon instruction from the master if that appeared to be a definite problem. The master station (senior ET present there also) said they would shift time there. Slave acknowledged, and drifted itself back into tolerance after the shift. Master reported operations normal.

The slave station has been unable to determine the actual cause of this last situation. All equipment was operating properly, and the watchstander was definitely not locked onto a skywave. Signals looked normal and in tolerance when monitored on operate and both standby timers.

In an attempt to prevent excessive errors due to watchstanding at the slave station all watchstanders have been given additional instructions. Also, they have been informed to call the duty ET if an out-of-tolerance condition exists for over three minutes. Previous time for this had been five minutes. The duty ET has been instructed to call the senior ET if he cannot immediately recognize the problem and take steps to remedy it. Also, if the master station is off air the duty ET has been instructed to remain in the Loran room until normal operations are resumed.


J.T. TAYLOR, BMC, USCG, CO

4 May 1971

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on CO CGLORSTA BATAN ltr of 20 April 1971

From: Commander, Coast Guard Section, Philippines
To: Commander, Fourteenth Coast Guard District (o)

Subj: Excessive unauthorized bad time on rates 2H3, 2H4 during period
1 April 1971 to 20 April 1971

1. Forwarded.

2. The continuing problem of poor watchstanding is recognized. COMPHILSEC and Philippine Coast Guard representatives are currently visiting all stations in an attempt to reduce bad time due to these errors.

S. J. STEPHANY