

NAVTEX – WHAT IS A GOOD LOGGING?

By **Brian Keyte, G3SIA**

Sooner or later we all receive a Navtex message and are not really sure which station it came from. Very often DX messages have several characters missing or corrupted or it might be a new station testing but not identifying itself.

It is tempting to include an uncertain entry in a log, especially if it would be a 'first time' station. However, no-one wants to find later that any entries made to Rxx, or used in Robert's magazine columns or for CLEs must have been reported incorrectly.

I recently asked several members for guidance on what is needed for a valid Navtex logging. Here is the result:

1. The **Frequency** and **Time** of reception (UTC) must always be given.
2. The **Station Letter**, indicating the time 'slot' when the station normally transmits (e.g. the 'Q' in ZCZC QA23) must be clearly present, if possible without loss or corruption of any of that starting string.
3. Something in the body of the actual message must make it clear which Navtex area the message relates to.

NB: It is very easy to be misled if you do not have a reasonably complete message - here are some examples:

- a. Occasionally two stations share use of the same letter in the same area - the message must then also make it clear which one was being received.
- b. Messages may contain an actual Station Name (e.g. HORTA RADIO, ISTANBUL TURK RADIO, etc.). This may not be proof that you have received that station - e.g. in many of its recent broadcasts, Niton Radio (slots 'E' and 'K') has been referring to CORSEN NAVTEX STATION (slot 'A').
- c. Sometimes parts of messages from two different stations become joined together to make what looks like a good message coming from a third station - very misleading! If you can, it is useful to include a time stamp on every line (e.g. in SeaTTY's set-up menu: "Put Time Stamps in Raw Logs"). You can then see if there are any significant gaps in what would otherwise look like a single continuous message. It is always a good idea for us to keep Navtex messages for a while, though normally the actual messages are not included with logs, of course.

In the end it is for the listener to decide what to claim, as with all our reception reports for all kinds of beacon. However, I hope we are all able to agree on this guidance and will try to use it in making our logs.

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