

# Loose Gravel

Newsletter of ROADS

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AB7X + KD7VLP -- Editors

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The *W7ORE Field Day* was a success: people showed up! Many thanks go to these main players of RF on those two days: 'Doc' Bowers, KX5W; Bob Peschka, K7QXG; Bob Boswell, W7LOU; Jim Campbell, N7WWH; Chris Portal, AD7GT; all of whom were operators. Mike Nason, KA7HBB, came by for a short time. Of those who helped with setup, donated equipment or helped with logging, there were: K7QXG (instrumental in pre-field day logistics and scheduling), K7IJK (she did a *marvelous* job of providing food and refreshments for us!), W7LOU, KD7VLP, KG7G, KX5W, KW7DSP, KE7NJM, and Shadow. Bill Hahn, the Dallas Fire Chief, came by to inspect our site and was impressed with what we had and how we were set up. Chuck, AC7RF, came by with some of his 4-H lads, and I shall soon have their photos posted to my web album. Thanks again, everyone! If I have missed anyone, it is not intentional. As I type, the temperature in the radio room is 87° F and will probably stay that level for the next few hours. I am too warm and it feels just too much like California to suit me!

As soon as I get the proper information, I will post a tally of contacts per band per mode for Field Day. 'Soon' is the keyword here.

Installation of new officers will be tomorrow evening, at our regular 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month meeting. Incoming are: President, David Moellenberndt, KD7VLP; Vice President, Mike Nason, KA7HBB; K7IJK, Irene Koubek, Secretary/Treasurer; N7TMB, Scott Nielson, 2-year Director, and myself, AB7X, Director at Large. If there is to be a 'program', I have not been informed what it might be. That is the duty of the Vice President. The agenda for the meeting contains such things as: dues for the new fiscal year (due on 1 July); audit report; assessment of Field Day activities; passing of the Gavel and general jocularity.

QRK for this edition is somewhat different...

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## **QRK de KD7VLP**

Well...here we are again. Another month and more Loose Gravel to dig up. However, this month is a bit thin. I was not able to come up with anything that is remotely related to radio or communications. I have no excuse this time...although, lately my wife has been working me outside much too hard.

You all know that I have some interest in History. One area of history that I find especially fascinating is the Roman era. I am always amazed how they were able to do what they did in such an organized manner. I came across this item a while ago and it helped spread some light on how they operated their army. You might note how the names of some of the specialties have come down to modern days and the English language.

### *Roman Army Specialists*

*One of the most fascinating aspects of the army organisation was that of the technical and craft specialists. There was no separate specialist corps; legionaries were responsible for all building work and engineering operations and the soldiers were trained at ditch- and drain-digging.*

*This was an excellent idea in practice, since the legions could be kept fit and active in the close season with new works projects and the continual maintenance. All this activity of considerable variety required the services of many technicians and specialists such as the agrimensores (surveyors), plumbarii (workers in lead), sagitarii (arrow makers), etc.*

*These men were not given special rank, but an important privilege - immunity from heavy fatigues. The significance of this is that it placed such a man outside the arbitrary control of the centurion, who could order men at will to do unpleasant tasks and expected to receive bribes for exemption. This was one of the unfortunate abuses exploited by centurions and one of the reforms instituted by Hadrian, who regularised the system by drawing up a full list of such men and increased their pay to one-and-a-half times that of the ordinary miles [soldier].*

*A list of specialists and craftsmen has been preserved in a sixth century Digest. It is virtually the only surviving fragment of the *de rei militari*, a late second-century work by Tarruntenus Paternus who was also a source for Vegetius. The list, which is far from complete, seems to be arranged roughly in categories of work and includes: mensores (surveyors), optio valetudinariarii (the *optio* in charge of the hospital orderlies), medici (medical orderlies), capsarii (wound dressers), artifices qui fossam faciunt (surveyors who planned and directed ditch-digging), veterinarii (veterinaries), architectus (a master-builder), gubernatoriae (ship pilots), naupegi (shipwrights), ballistrarii (men making and/or operating ballistae), specularii (glass-fitters), fabri (craftsmen in the fabricae (workshops), sagitarii (arrow-makers), aerarii (bronze-smiths), buccularum structores (craftsmen making cheek-pieces for helmets), carpentarii (carpenters), scandularii (roofers), gladiatores (sword-makers), aquilices (hydraulic engineers), tubarii (trumpet makers), cornuarii (makers of cornua, i.e. musical instruments), acuarii (bow-makers), plumbarii (lead smiths) ferrarii (blacksmiths), lapidarii (stonemasons), qui silvam infindunt (woodsmen), qui carbonum cadent actorrent (charcoal burners), in eodem numero haberi solent lani (butchers), venatores (hunters, i.e. for food), victimarii (men in charge of the sacrificial animals), optio fabricae (the *optio* in charge of a work-shop), qui aegris praesto sunt (sick bay attendants), librarii quoque qui ducere possint (book-keepers and those in training for this work), horreorum librarii (clerks of the granary accounts), librarii depositorum (clerks of the deposit accounts), librarii caduceus (clerks of the accounts of the deceased), adiutores **corniculariorum (assistants to the chief clerk), stratores (grooms), polliones (millers), custodies armorum (armourers), praeco (herald), bucinator (trumpeter).***

*Among these specialist were the priest (auspices), but their duties were not like those of our service chaplains, to help soldiers with personal problems, but to officiate at the sacrifices and other ceremonies. There is a vivid scene on Trajan's Column (Pl. IIa)*

*which shows the long procession with the animals, in appropriate order, winding its way around the fort to the altar, where the veiled priest stands with the horn players, ready to sound the fanfare which scared away the evil spirits, and the victimarii in the rear with their traditional axes for killing sacrificial animals. There were also the doctors (medici ordinarii) and medical orderlies (medici)*

*Extract from \_The Roman Imperial Army\_ by Graham Webster, Third Edition, London 1984 ISBN 0 7136 2697 6*

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Very interesting, indeed. I haven't seen anything like that since my days at Oregon State University in my History of Western Civilization class.

Meanwhile, back at the desk, which is getting no cooler as I work. It is 2220 hrs. and the temperature is 85.5° F. Noticeably uncomfortable, and I am reminded by the notices I've been receiving for the last few days to pay close attention to my water intake and to stay out of direct sunlight, in 'air conditioning' if possible. This sort of day reminds me of how fortunate I felt when I was living in Newport. Air conditioning direct from the Pacific Ocean. We supposedly have another day of extremely hot weather, and so behave accordingly. If we have a neighbor who is elderly or infirm, we should see if they are okay and if they have requirements which we could possibly fill. It's the right thing to do.

With that, I will take leave of my desk and seek a cooler comfort zone. I will be at the meeting on this Thursday evening and hope to see *all* of you there.

Coyote ~AB7X