

MAIL FROM THE WUN LISTSERVR

SOME THOUGHTS ON NIGHTWATCH NETWORK



From: "Gregory Baker"
Subject: [WUN] Some thoughts on the Nightwatch network
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According to what I have seen from Jeff Haverlah's and other's excellent posts, I have some speculations on the NIGHTWATCH net:

NIGHTWATCH 01 is the primary E-4 carrying members of the National Command Authority. This call switches off as the planes swap duty. Occasionally, NIGHTWATCH 02 is airborne at the same time. In addition, NW is often in contact with WAR-46, which is the command post at Raven Rock, Pennsylvania.

The NW net on HF is the backup for satellite communications between these posts and aircraft. Most of what goes on is circuit testing to make sure HF works. We have noted logs of EAM's from Offutt AFB on 311.0, the base command post (RAYMOND ##) frequency. The other stations in the NW net are tactical callsigns for other airborne units, possibly command aircraft. These are changed daily; they may not even be the same units on alert daily.

I remember seeing a documentary on the training of Minuteman crews. In that documentary, a practice launch served as the graduation exercise of one crew. It started with an EAM/26. The EAM was broken down as follows:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3
4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

and the entire EAM was used to authenticate the launch.

Operational orders are carried by EAM's: I remember hearing MAINSAIL (US Air Mobility Command) issue an EAM aborting the air assault on Haiti in 1994. It was an EAM/26. Of course, many of the messages are dummies.

NIGHTWATCH and the GHFS system carry the same EAM's, with slight variations indicating the key to decrypt an EAM is time-sensitive. Of course, all of this is informed guessing. I would appreciate your comments.

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