

# No speakada radio mate.

By Jim Potts

A few radio bits in "plain English "

**Frequency**...the radio spot where signals either are or aren't. There are around 3000 of em on HF but you'll only ever have to worry about a few. Frequencies are either in mega hertz or sometimes channel numbers are used instead. Mega hertz has nothing to do with pain. There was a movie made called Frequency.

**Selcall.** Usually comprises of 4 digits. None of em are an index finger. Selcall is used to call a particular station. So if you want to contact a mate and you know his selcall number, you just put his number in, press the selcall button and listen to those weird tones going out. If your mate is available you will hear your radio receive some beeps back in quick succession. Now you can speak to him. No tones received back , no speakada mate.

**Receiving a selcall.** Your radio will start to ring like a telephone. It can be startling if its your first ever selcall. Pick up the mic and speak to whoever is calling you if you haven't passed out or run off the track.

## **Beacons and revertive tones.**

Most transceivers scan some frequencies. At certain times of the day and night, some frequencies are louder than others. Which one to use ? Lets say you want to speak to woop woop base. You dial up his BEACON number, like a selcall , and you can hear REVERTIVE tones from woop woop. Yeaaa, but he's so weak. Try all of woop woops channels (frequencies for the technical) and see where the loudest tones come back. BUT you will have to voice or selcall woop woop because the beacon doesn't tell woop woop that you're calling and want to yak. Be sure you really want to speak to woop woops operator if you selcall. He's probably out driving a roadtrain and gets really mad if you put in his selcall instead of his beacon call and don't REALLY need to contact him.

## **Aerial Not tuned**

Transceiver says "not tuned". Your auto tune is still asleep on the frequency that you have selected. Wake him up by pressing the tune button. He will love you for that and emit a couple of beeps. If he's a sick lil aerial you may get the lower really expensive beeps. That means he's staying asleep on that frequency.

## **Audio mute**

Cuts the noise out when nobody is on

## **Selcall mute**

Turn this on and you will hear absolutely nothing unless somebody selcalls you. Great if you just want to be alone. BUT you cant hear any distress calls or skeds. I hear noth ing . So don't fiddle with this until you know what you're doing. When you can hear your mate ok there's nothing worse than using the wrong phonetics, stick to plain English unless you have to spell something under noisy conditions.

## **Having a chat.**

Imagine you are dazed and bloody and on your own. You crawl to the car/truck, in desperate need of medical attention. Try as you may, you can't call woop woop or the RFDS because of all the conversations going on about nothing important. Not so good eh ? If you must chat, pause between overs.

## **Aerial**

### **An antennae**

Antennae (same as Aerial)

Not necessarily small but often a nuisance like their cousins, especially if mounted in front of the who must be obeyed. This is the bit that does all the outside work.

Antennas come in lots of flavours, but there are two basic kinds of HF antennas mounted on vehicles.

### **The whip**

No boots, spurs or chains are necessary for this aerial. It usually has a few taps where you can't get a drink. Each tap is for a different frequency. If you don't use the right tap for that frequency they don't work too great. You can damage your expensive bits inside the radio if you try and use the wrong tap when you talk.

Whips were invented by city folk who never went out in the rain or dust, and only ever operated a radio in the daytime.

Whips are mounted on spring bases because they like to touch branches and garage roofs. You will always forget this as you drive under your carport.

New whips are around half the price of a second hand auto tune antenna, which have more bits to go wrong than a whip but look much sexier.

### **Auto tunes**

These are expensive aerials that tune by themselves as long as you press the tune button on your radio. They have heaps of bits that can go wrong but usually don't. Because of their cost they are sometimes hidden at the back of the 4wd so Light Fingered Larry doesn't spot em.

When an auto tune aerial is tuned well, your radio emits two pleasant beeps. If it's a sick little puppy you will get two not so pleasant beeps. This may indicate a trip to the bank manager, or that your aerial isn't earthed as well as it should be.

If you mount your auto tune on the bulbar you are sure to see heaps of emus. This is because an emu is one of the few things that can destroy an auto tune aerial in the blink of an eye.

### **Earth**

The thing we stand on when sober. On a 4wd it can also mean the bits that are connected to the negative lead of your battery. This includes the chassis and body. Antennas have to have their bottom bits well connected to earth or they don't work well.

### **Micro phone**

Not the latest hand held telephone.

This is a small plastic grill with a curly cord that plugs into the radio. It sometimes has numbers and stuff on buttons on it, but only on radios that were bought instead of houses. These buttons mean you don't have to fiddle with the radio because you can fiddle with the buttons instead. Clever, huh?

Some REALLY expensive radios have the buttons poking out a bit. You can play with the wrong buttons accidentally and really have some fun.

The plastic grill is where you yell into when your mate can't understand what you're on about. It should really have a sign saying "put your germs here" because it's never washed unless you dunk the car on Cape York. As well as germs you can always tell a REAL microphone from the red dirt in the grill. This can be handy to know when buying a "never been off the tar" 4wd.

Micro phones don't like their cords being stretched too far (neither would you)

They can refuse to work if you do this. A cunning plan is to have a spare in the glove box. Murphy will hate you for this.

### **Sked**

When you tell your mate you'll talk to him at 6pm we call that a sked (short for schedule). Murphy reckons that you'll always forget what time your skeds.

Radio networks have skeds where only one person does most of the talking. They are control freaks so this person is called the control station.

Now the control station (or base...very, after a few drinks) is the grand poo bah of the sked world. They want to know who you are and where you are. You may have to wait in line to tell them.

The good news is that this control or base person will be most helpful if you have an emergency or need some information. So you don't tell them about being a control freak, right?

### **Network skeds.**

Memorize the network sked times and don't selcall or have a convo over the top.

Remember that just because you can't hear Perth doesn't mean that they can't hear

you. And if someone you cant hear is in trouble. sooner or later so will you be. At least listen to network skeds. There may be a message from Aunt Martha's executors and you wouldn't want to miss that, eh ?

If you're not listening you could also miss the weather, track conditions and any warnings.

You might as well never have bought the radio if you don't use it at least once a day.

Listen !!

### **Multi meter**

Usually a hand held gizmo with lots of dials and numbers on it. Ruuuly helpful because it can tell you what those little electron fellas are up to. You have to read the book that comes with it.

### **Short circuit**

This was another film, best known for the saying "nice software Stephanie !"

Not a small dragway.

When the electrons find a really quick way of getting home to earth, they cause a lot of heat, sometimes a loud bang and usually lots of smoke. This can be most distressing to your radio and battery. Taking the radio to be fixed can often lengthen short circuits. A short circuit is never good.

### **Power.**

The stuff that makes the little lights come on. It runs really fast from the battery around your radio and goes home through the earth. As long as the battery has a lot of electrons in it, it will do this for a long time.

Now the radio designers had a cunning plan. (as usual). Your radio will still have some of these electron fellas running around even when the power is off. So we say it draws current even while off. If you don't charge your battery for a long time you will be left with a battery without any electrons. This is called a "flat" battery, which isn't true. Open the bonnet and your battery isn't flat at all, it's still the same shape. Confusing isn't it? A flat battery is easy to spot, as the radio doesn't work. Neither does anything else electrical on your car. Especially the motor.