

# THE KTRK STORY

## various contributors describe it as it happened

☛ Hey Guys....They're on the air!!! This is their first night. It's 8:00 PM EST and they're smokin' in with a doo-wop program. Catch them now before they're gone!! ID's as KTRK and K- TRUCK.

☛ I tuned into 1670 tonight (6 Feb 0615 UTC) and found a strong Rock & Roll station. The call is KTRK from Fort Meade, Maryland. They even gave a 301 area code phone number for requests. I called it and the DJ said they were authorized for testing the next 4 days. Since they have a "K" call sign I am curious as to what this is about. They spelled out their call as "Kilo Tango Romeo Kilo", could it be military? They also said it was a temporary test of the "Tactical AM Broadcasting Service" and would continue for the next 24 hours, "K-Truck". Sounds like military to me.

☛ Well I trust everyone has heard the new experimental AM station KTRK on 1670 kHz. Well they have changed call letters all ready!!!! This evening since about 6 PM EST they have been using the call ARMY!!! I called the stn to ask them why and the private first class that I spoke to says that they had to change calls because the call KTRK is actually registered to a Houston TV station on Channel 13!!! When I asked him if the FCC had actually issued the call KTRK to the experimental stn on 1670 kHz. he said... " Hell NO... we just made it up!!!! 'cause it stood for K-TRUCK... which is what we are b/casting from!!!!" We both had a real good laugh before I asked him some more questions about the stn!!!

He says they will be on til Friday morning with no snags with the equipment. They should be using the call ARMY until the end of the mission... I guess someone is going to catch proper hell for using the KTRK call without it being issued to them legally!!! The furthest reports to date were Hawaii, Sweden, and Moscow!!!! The guy I called said they would still verify any reports they got using the KTRK call sign... but we'll have to wait to see about that??????

So... for those of you who did not log KTRK last night or earlier today... I guess you'll have to settle for ARMY!!! What a hoot eh???? Strange things sure do happen in the DX radio world. Catch them tonite before they change calls again!!! HIHI

☛ I also heard this station here in Minnesota last night (7 Feb 0000-0500 UTC), playing classic rock from the '60s and '70s. Not clear-channel strength, but good solid signal all evening, and much better than WJDM. They announced the Ft. Meade, MD address, request phone # of 301-677-1377, but ID'ed as A-R-M-Y, Army Radio. The DJ, Specialist Jason Dunn, said they were operating under section 305a of the Communications Act of 1934 and they were running 5 kW of power, non-directional. Their signal was obviously getting out, because the requests were coming from New York, Vermont, Ontario, and North Carolina. They signed off at midnight EST (0500 UTC) and broadcast a test tone until 6 AM Eastern (1100 UTC) this morning, when they signed on as KTRK. While listening, I couldn't decide if it was legit or a pirate. Definitely not commercial.

☛ The station is housed in modular units capable of being lifted onto palates and transported anywhere in the world. The test, which runs through this Friday, is being conducted on 1670kHz with a power of 5/1kw. They seem to be using 5kw at night, 1kw during the day. They are using a Harris solid state transmitter. The station will be sent to Bosnia within a month and likely begin transmitting on 1143kHz.

A retractable 140 foot tower is part of the package. The ground system consists of 120 radials "strung out in the snow" per the operator I spoke with. The station is being staffed by civilian volunteers during the test period. Hey, here's your chance to spin a few tunes in the nation's capital :-) They're even taking requests!

☛ Well as I speak (8 Feb 96) KTRK/ARMY/ABS 1670 kHz from Ft. Meade, Md. is now history. While driving home in my car this afternoon I noticed they were ID'ing with yet another Callsign... namely ABS/Alpha Bravo Sierra. Not sure if this is a legitimate call sign or just an acronym for Army B/cast Service or ????. At 1638 EST, the on air DJ said they were winding down the tests from this station. He played a song at 1640-1646 EST then said... "Testing is now completed on

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this government B/cast station. Alpha Bravo Sierra is owned by the United States of America and operated by the United States Army. The DJ then thanked all the people who were associated with the stn. and also thanked the many listeners who had called and written. He gave a phone # of 703-428 0401 for a Major Messersmith?? who was in charge of the whole mission?? The DJ was Don Brown who at 1649 said "this is the final song from Alpha Bravo Sierra". After the last selection at 1652-1654 EST they went off the air with only a carrier remaining when I tuned out at 1654 EST.

Thanks to the United States Army for providing us with this interesting bit of listening!!!!

Footnote: Hams helped a Bosnia-bound US Army mobile AM radio station in Fort Meade, Maryland, test its broadcasting capabilities. Fred Cresce, KC4MOP Butch Ickes, WB3HUZ and Paul Courson, WA3VJB, staffed the new Army Broadcast Service station on 1670 kHz which used the call letters KTRK. The frequency is in the newly expanded standard broadcast band.

Courson, a broadcaster with Dow Jones, said the station began broadcasting around the clock February 5. He said he and the other hams were brought in to help specifically because of their AM activity on the amateur bands. The 5000-W transmitter is working into a 140-foot vertical antenna the hams helped set up and tune. KTRK continued broadcasting from Fort Meade until February 9. Then, the portable station was packed up for transport to Bosnia, where it will be set up to entertain and inform US troops stationed there.

Reception reports go to the Army Broadcast Service, 601 North Fairfax St, Alexandria, VA 22314. Write DX on the outside of the envelope. (from ARRL Newington CT via David Atkins)