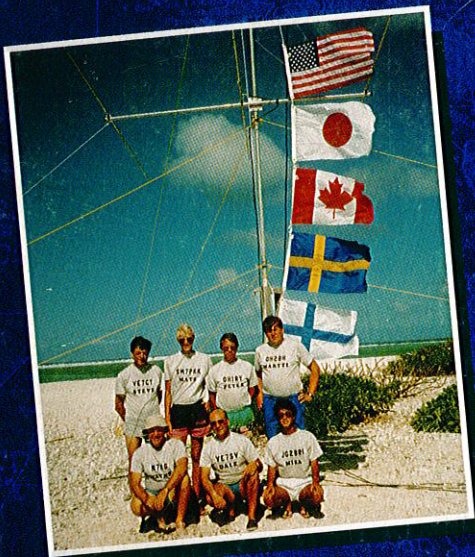


WHERE do we go NEXT?



**Martti J.
Laine**
OH2BH



WHERE DO WE GO NEXT?

Martti J. Laine
OH2BH/AH3D

KTE Publications, Long Beach, California

PUBLISHING:

Publisher: Wayne Gingerich, W6EUF

ART DEPARTMENT:

DTP design: Erkki Heikkinen, OH2BBF

Cartoonists: Kari Syrjänen, OH5YW

Jyrki Kivimäki, OH1KC

Cover artwork: ICOM America, Inc.

PRODUCTION:

Coordination: Howard Brainen, WZ6Z

Communication: Wayne Mills, N7NG

Prepress: Custom Process, Berkeley, CA

Printing: Economy Printing, Inc., Long Beach, CA

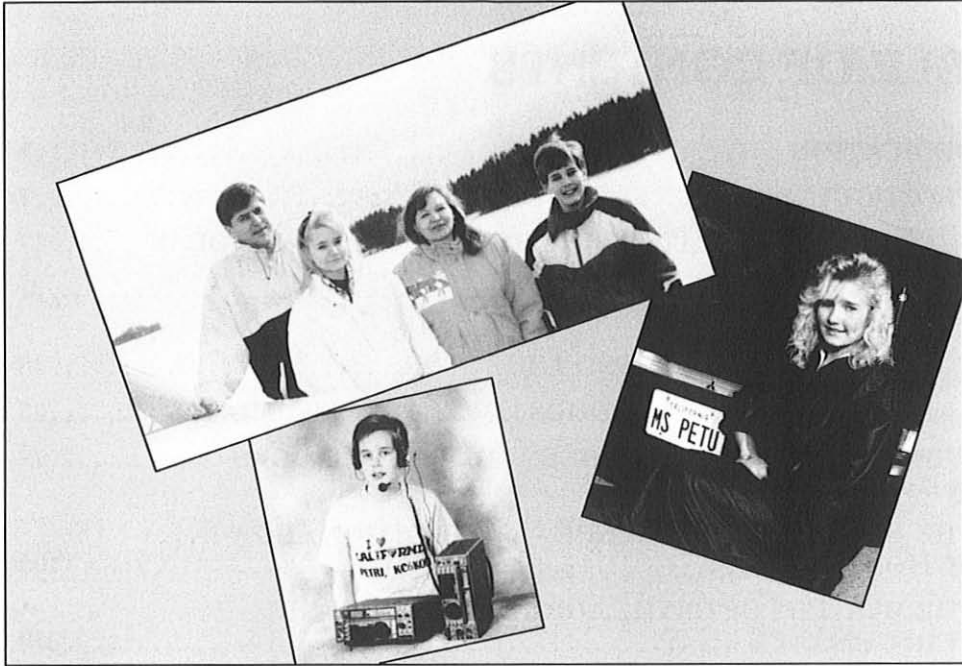
Copyright © 1991 Martti Laine, OH2BH

ISBN 952-90-2810-5

Published in 1991 by KTE Publications,
2301 Canehill Ave, Long Beach, CA 90815

All rights reserved. No part of the contents
of this book may be reproduced without the
written permission of the publisher.

Printed and bound in USA.



Dear Leena, I wish to thank you from the bottom of my heart for having given your support and understanding every single day and being with me to support the OH2BH adventure. Do you still remember when you sent me that cable to Annobon Island to let me know that you were expecting our first child? Now that girl is graduating from the Fresno San Joaquin Memorial High School.

It's like we have completed a full circle. Leena, do you still remember when we both cried when our newly born son was "knocked about" at birth? Now that boy is everyone's favorite here and he's working the Stateside gang on the bands at a much younger age than his Dad did. It is to you - Leena, Petrita and Petri - that I want to dedicate this book. Without you the OH2BH spirit would not have been born.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	DEDICATION	5
2.	PROLOGUE	7
3.	SEARCH FOR DX STATUS - IN YEARS GONE BY AND TODAY	17
4.	A CAVALCADE OF DX CHARACTERS	31
	<i>by Hugh Cassidy, WA6AUD</i>	
5.	TODAY'S DX AUDIENCE AND THE ACTORS	43
6.	ANNOBON - MY FIRST SERIOUS LOVE... DX-WISE, THAT IS	55
7.	THE STORMS OF MARKET REEF - DX ON THE ROCKS	79
	<i>by David E. Heil, K8MN/9L1US</i>	
8.	THE ACTUAL PERFORMANCE - A DXPEDITION SHOW IN ACTION	103
9.	THE MYSTERY OF REVILLAGIGEDO - A VOLCANIC PERFORMANCE	119
10.	DXING AMID A DESERT WAR... FOREIGN LEGION-STYLE	137
11.	PROFILE OF A COMPLETE DXPEDITIONER	159
12.	EAST MEETS WEST - GORBY-SHOW ON M-V ISLAND	177
	<i>co-authored with Charles H. Margelli, K7JA and Boris Stepanov, UW3AX</i>	
13.	NAVIGATING IN PURSUIT OF DX FROM BLUE HAWAII	195
	<i>by Peter H. Grillo, AH3C</i>	
14.	THE CASE FOR TECHNICAL DXCELLENCE	215
15.	ON A SLOW BOAT TO CONWAY REEF	229
	<i>by J.R. Stephen Wright, VE7CT</i>	
16.	THE WIND-MILLS OF PENGUIN ISLAND	253
	<i>by Wayne A. Mills, N7NG</i>	
17.	THE AUTHOR'S PROFILE	275
	<i>by Michael R. Koss, W9SU</i>	
18.	APPENDIX I: ALL YOU NEED IS... TAILENDING	279
	<i>by Wayne A. Mills, N7NG</i>	
19.	APPENDIX II: LAWS THAT GOVERN DXING	286
	<i>by James A. Maxwell, W6CF</i>	

DEDICATION

It's another misty morning in California. The family has left the house to do some shopping, leaving this contemplative Old Timer immersed in his nostalgic memories and recollections of those other years and planning future ventures. The sun just cannot penetrate that thick veil of fog so typical of San Joaquin Valley.

It is strange that California should have so many different faces. Long ago, in years gone by, the West Coast conjured up images of eternal Summer, bright sunshine and big white-crested Pacific surf. As I lay meditating there, sprinklers were switching on to water the lawn already turning yellow at this time of Fall, and a massive UPS delivery van approached the house. Maybe a package was being delivered from faraway Finland, from those northern parts in the Old World. One day we would be returning there. That's where our roots are anyway and that's where this story once began.

When was it that I really for the first time got in touch with this part of the world, far away from home? Well, it was almost three decades ago that the mailman brought me my operating license and OH2BH got on the air. Perhaps that license was the initial impulse – some kind of a key – that opened the door for travels worldwide. Of course it was fascinating to make contact with exotic countries across the oceans.

In those early years, I was intrigued by the curious flutter that was so typical of signals coming in from the West Coast. They said it was because the signal crossed the North Pole. Strangely enough, every morning one had to get up early in the dawn to work a multitude of Stateside stations. Maybe it was in those years that a decision was made to see this part of the world and to experience life here. Now it is all happening to me and my whole family.

But a lot had to happen before the dream could come true. Why did it have to take that long? But then again, that was probably best for us. Now having run around the track more than once, I have been able to get more out of the adventure. It has been great to be able to offer one's kids a whole year of fresh experiences and an opportunity to study abroad and expose themselves to a different culture.

The past thirty years have been full of activity and adventure. Certainly I would do all of those things again if I could relive that period. I wonder if I could otherwise have experienced all these memorable events and met all the countless interesting people? With my mind's eye, I can see all the innumerable corners of the world that I have been able to visit. And, I still remember those dreams of decades ago when I wanted to challenge the contesting superstars whom I greatly admired.

It seems as though all these dreams have now come true with the year spent here in the United States coming to an end. I would like to cry out to the whole world that OH2BH is here now! To affirm that he is enjoying life here in these western parts, dipping a toe into a swimming pool.

It was a long road to the fulfillment of all these dreams. All these years, all these events were needed to create the essence of OH2BH. Could I now laugh at it all, in celebration of the past thirty years? And, start recalling and thanking through this book all the dozens and hundreds of true friends here and in my home country – everywhere in the world – who have shared with me many of these adventures.

I stand up and shout at the mountains so that the whole of San Joaquin Valley will hear it. And I thank God for protecting me on all my travels across the world, for allowing DX Believers to have a great time on the radio waves during the past decades and for showing that you can live your life with radio in harmony with other important things.

However, I wish to dedicate this book to my family for sharing with me many moments of joy and sadness during all these wonderful years. Life cannot always be sheer happiness, and each story must reflect those everyday concerns as well.

PROLOGUE

If you are a Believer, you will be Deserving. Every now and then each Believer devotes himself to meditation, reflecting over one's accomplishments in life, studying the prospect of raising a family or assessing the success of bringing up one's offspring. And, at some stage you begin to wonder if in the turmoil of this changing and sometimes restless world you have given your children all the opportunities for a good life or whether you have taken full advantage of what life has to offer.

In the final analysis, a DXer is no more complex or singular a character than an ordinary human being; DXers are just different. Lots of times serious thinking is quite healthy for DXers and ordinary mortals alike. There are moments when you need to analyze the past, the present and the future since the world has come so much closer to all of us, and everyone is in possession of far more basic knowledge to evaluate whether one's own way of life is the best possible one. Whether you were born into this universe right on those latitudes where life is guaranteed to bring you the greatest possible satisfaction.

The more one contemplates all the commonplace, everyday situations, the more one wonders whether a DXer, after all, stands out as a thinker or philosopher of greater stature than somebody who may not yet be considered a Believer. Does the big wide world really stand that much closer to a DXer, is it more of a tangible, challenging opportunity to him, the DXer whose thoughts transcend all boundaries with apparent ease, whose ideas are carried over the airwaves

at the speed of light to each corner of the world? The DXer who often talks to people caught in the action right at the heart of world events that we watch on television, hear on the radio or read in the newspapers, events occurring in countries embroiled in wars or afflicted with other calamities or developments that reflect life's rich tapestry of success and happiness.

What is DX in the first place? We hear about Big Gun DXers who are considered true-blue Old Timers but in what way are they different from ordinary people? Are they indeed that different, and is it true that only a DXer understands another DXer and that only a DXer understands DX? Can one somehow tell a DXer from the man in the street or even from an ordinary amateur?

And the questions go on and on. Is there a way to become a DXer if the urge is there? How does one know that one is ready, ready to join the DXers who are the top echelon? Does one become a Believer totally unaware? Is DX just like any other hobby or pastime? Or, should it be seen more like a way of life, a state of mind, worth striving for and to be proud of?

Well, in the small wee hours of the morning, a DXer may find his mind wandering at random like that, when 20 meters is suddenly fading out – just a couple of hours before a needed country was scheduled to fire up from that rare spot halfway around the world. Deep meditation is particularly typical whenever a sudden surge in solar activity just blacked out all communications worldwide and the lonely DXer in his DX Salon up the hill is nervously looking for a needed one or is fretting about that soaring Boulder K index.

These are some of the Eternal Enigmas of DX that wanderers in the DX wastelands have to unravel

although the answers may not be easy to find. But it helps if you believe; be a Believer and you will understand. Also, it helps if you bear some basic laws of physics in mind, those that govern the movement and activity of Old Sol or dictate that the noise level is lower in some parts of the world than in others. At times, realizing the impact of these phenomena on DXers, their lives, their state of mind or outward behavior may not be all that easy.

All DXers share some typical distinguishing characteristics. Perhaps these will give you some clues as to who the real Believers are, who believe that learning the Mystique of DX will help you understand everything.

Perhaps some of these external circumstances will give an answer to a DXer who ponders about the meaning of life in the DX wastelands. Maybe it is true that a DXer can indeed be distinguished by virtue of certain characteristic superficial qualities that the DXer himself feels most comfortable with. For one thing, it has been said that right-thinking DXers are fond of wearing pants with the seat cut knee-high. The lower the seat, the higher the DXCC total, as we remember Professor Cass telling us in those other years.

It is also possible that a DXer deliberately seeks to acquire and embrace those characteristics although he may not always himself understand when the moment has come for him to be considered a true-blue DXer possessing a state of mind that we tend to associate with DXing. That historic point in time is generally regarded as the DX Moment.

As I sat wondering about these Mysteries of the Ages, I tried to make it perfectly clear to myself what these distinguishing features of a DX Believer really

were and whether they might be listed for everyone to read in a DX publication, even in the Handbook's "Operating a Station" section.

Having toiled the first ten years in the DX vineyards, I had found some answers to these tricky questions. Licensed at the good age of 15 years, I commanded the strength and the energy to explore the Laws of DX. Many things were not all that simple and, for answers, one had to experience a variety of happy as well as sad moments on the bands.

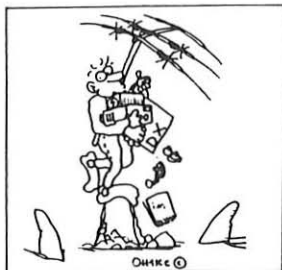
There were numerous things that did not become clear until my first tribander was mounted on the rooftop although at one stage, I lost considerable ground having burned the traps on my beam while tuning up a linear amplifier, the first of its kind on my operating desk. Other complexities and facts of life dawned on me after I had ventured to attend a local Club meeting to hear the stories of venerable, elderly DX types with high country totals. Somehow the feeling was that in order to gain understanding, one had to work more DX, and beginning to understand and working DX would take many valuable weeks and months. Sometimes years seemed to be flying by without anything of significance accomplished.

Of course, climbing the DXCC ladder steadily produced higher country totals, with less time set aside for more trivial pursuits, and DXing began to leave a definite mark on this operator. I put on some extra weight sitting there in the loneliness of the shack, only making it to a Club meeting every now and then. One inevitable consequence of advancing corpulence was a need to get more loosely tailored clothing and to wear pants with the seat cut lower and lower as the DXCC count climbed higher and higher.

Also, there was no question that the KLM tribander had to be hoisted progressively higher, and now that the traps posed no problems, more power had to be fed into the antenna. A kind of rebirth was experienced when an opportunity arose for me to move QTH and set up shop on top of a hill in the neighborhood with a good shot in all directions. This gave me a chance to get rid of traps altogether, go for monobanders and string out a set of full-size slopers for the low bands.

Years went by and my whole outward appearance and character changed significantly. Sometimes all those years seemed to have been wasted with no answers found to many of the puzzling questions still on my mind; I kept searching for the truth, scanning the books to try to understand when I would be considered a true-blue DXer. Would one become a Believer overnight, all of a sudden? Would a DX state of mind, a newly acquired awareness of the complex state of the amateur art, markedly affect my otherwise more or less stabilized lifestyle?

In those early years, the DX scene was dominated by big names such as Danny Weil and Gus Browning, with Don Miller representing a high-performance type of DXpeditioner extraordinaire bringing a fresh air of unrivaled efficiency as far as operating-related events were concerned. Sir Gus unexpectedly showed up from Bouvet signing LH4C while Dr Miller found his way to Heard Island to put VK2ADY/VK0 on the air. The Heard Island effort proved a real setback since only one of our local DX types got through while your author and many other brothers had their beams pointing in the wrong direction; I missed out on the VK0 since the signal that particular morning insisted on coming in from due north.



- No wonder Don Miller had some difficulties with ARRL...

Don Miller, W9WNV, and Gus Browning, W4BPD, were responsible for DXotica in those other years. Mickey, YV5AIP, another QRP type, in the middle is ready.
—Photo YV5AIP



The only DX guide published in those years was Don Miller's DX Handbook. I bought as many as three copies of that book. The contemporary DX scene featured many other idols of mine who were watched closely for any clues that might explain some of the Eternal Enigmas of DX. But there appeared to exist no comprehensive literary product telling you what kind of a character a true-blue DXer was and how you could become one. The local bookstore or the CQ Bookshop did not seem to carry such literature anyway.

DJ2PJ appeared to have produced a Conversation Guide enabling you to make contacts in a multitude of languages, but no answers to the Eternal Questions of DXing were forthcoming in that book, either. In a little while, I had read and memorized the DJ2PJ product from cover to cover to acquire basic capabilities in a wide assortment of languages.

ZL1ADI was planning an activity from China and Albania, and DL7FT absolutely needed \$2,000 and tiny transceivers for something and got them from W6KNH. All sorts of strange things were happening. As for clothing, XXL was now a size large enough to accommodate this tall DXer who was beginning to walk tall, too. But answers to the real questions still

seemed to be missing. Where were the keystones of true DX knowledge, when would one know the answers and stop asking the questions? How could one gain understanding of the Eternal Enigmas that only came to the Anointed Ones and enter the Age of DX Enlightenment?

With fifteen years into my amateur career, I still kept looking for answers to the questions. Then the time came for my first trip from the northern parts across the big water to attend a major DX convention west of the Rockies. The honorable aim was to find out if the world looked somehow different there and if some answers might readily present themselves to this inquisitive Seeker of the Truth. With a few minor-scale overseas expeditions already under my belt, I had been able to observe the world from various points of view. But now was the time to take a firsthand look at the Stateside scene where DX was plentiful and where many of the notable DX actions capturing my attention in the preceding years had originated.

And, really and truly, as I was watching many of the towering DXers of those early years and listening to their tales of spectacular DXploits down the road, stories of all the new country counters added to their DXCC totals, a number of answers began to take shape. Here were a host of Deserving DXers, attuned to the finer things of life, great personalities who were clearly the top echelon, who only accepted the best, who drank the finest wines and ordered their meals from the choicest gourmet menus amid animated discussion about how the latest DXpedition was contacted and how much aluminum was needed to snare that one.

Strangely enough, everyone from the newer DX types to the really Ancient Gurus somehow looked alike and they seemed to be interested in the same

things and be united by that shared interest in the Eternal Enigmas of DXing. They even dressed alike with the seat of their pants cut so much lower than others seemed to prefer. The impression was that these Big Gun DXers, those Believers and true Internationalists of Amateur Radio, stood taller than the rest of the multitude, as if they held the globe in their hands and distances meant nothing to them when it came to talking to other people or doing things together.

Here was a group of fine individuals who seemed to appreciate poetry, literature, modern jazz and every once in a while New Ones on every band. As they showed pictures of their home stations, it was obvious that the houses almost invariably stood perched on hilltops and that gardening was not an activity of particular concern to top-notch DXers. Oftentimes, the garden looked like turned upside down with loads of concrete poured into the ground to support guy wires that held a tall tower in place.

Often at the DX conventions I ran into Believers who enjoyed each others' company and who always greeted me with the same words and never bothered

At the DX convention, QRP types are listening when the Old Timers are speaking. Always! Don Wallace, W6AM, standing taller than the regular ones, was featured extensively over many centuries.



to ask about possible additions to my family or about my new son's weight at birth... they all acknowledged my presence with the same query: "Where are you going next?"

When the world's one and only DX Professor – Dr Cass, WA6AUD – was introduced to me, the Truth was finally revealed, the DX Dictum that DXers are smarter, richer, cleverer, handsomer, more daring, stronger and taller than the others – that accomplishment alone does not bring understanding... one will gain understanding when one is ready. Cass presented me with a copy of his blue-covered book that had all the answers to the questions tormenting me over the years, that explained the Laws of DX governing this world of ours, that profiled many of the familiar personalities populating the DX vineyards.

Well, I returned home from a highly valued trip to that far-off DX convention, with an even bigger Alpha linear and Cass' blue-covered book in the baggage. The book was deposited in a place of honor on the shelf next to the family Bible. All the answers were there; there was no reason to ask questions any more. Everything seemed to fall neatly into place: all DXers will eventually learn how things are – DXers will always admire and accept cleverness and will always revere age... when you know the answer, you need not ask the question... Deserving DXers will see and hear and understand things that others have difficulty in comprehending... DXers are dreamers, dreaming of bigger antennas, higher towers. That's the way it has always been. Always.

Having run around the track more than once over the past thirty years and having the marks to show it, having traveled to all continents to make New Ones available for the Deserving and to experience a higher level of DX awareness, having worked every possible

rock and reef, having expended every bit of energy during 48-hour contests finally to pass out at the operating desk when the race was over, having seen the Light to become a true Believer and having realized that the ranks of DX authors were rather thin and noticing that the range of their output was fairly limited, I felt it was my duty to share my experience with you, the reader. To share my moments of DX ecstasy and agony with my friends.

And so, my first book was born. “Where Do We Go Next?” attempts to bring the Laws of DX within reach of everyone, to give you a chance to experience them in authentic circumstances, as if sensing them on the spot and partaking in the adventures themselves. This book not only tries to take you on board for some of the adventures and expeditions you know so well and you made contact with but it also endeavors to tell you about the events and the challenges experienced by the DX community and the DX audience, things that we call the salt of the earth. By identifying yourself with these shows – DX performances – and by getting to know the cast of characters you, the reader, will hopefully gain detailed insight into the world of DX and the laws that govern it.

“Where Do We Go Next?” is a product coming straight from the heart of a Believing DX Brother; it is a product for you whether you are already a Believer or whether you are just starting to tread a path that will eventually lead you to an understanding of the Eternal Enigmas and the Mysteries of the Ages. One day you may find yourself at a DX convention in the company of other Anointed Ones, those upper echelon Knowers, and you will hear others greet you with that familiar phrase: “Where do you go next?” But that’s the way it has always been and will always be.

SEARCH FOR DX STATUS – IN YEARS GONE BY AND TODAY

The Prologue may have sounded a bit euphoric but that's the way DX is. There is no denying that DX brings together a time-honored congregation of DX Believers who do things together, things that others fail to understand and which may even prove difficult to explain to the majority of people who hold an amateur radio license.

But is there a good way of explaining the birth of this singular group of dedicated Believers? What is it that bonds together that fraternity of Deserving DXers? Does DXing have a future, does it have to face the inevitability of change over time? Is DX one of the Eternal Enigmas engraved on tablets of stone, totally unaffected by the changing world or the advance of modern technology? Should we simply embrace the Mystique of DX and accept the fact that DXers are enduring characters who pledge allegiance to DX from womb to tomb?

In the ancient past, DX meant something distant or unknown. DX stood for "Distance X" and was always associated with many exotic things. Somewhere far away... only reached by boat after a months-long voyage... lay that island contacted by an eager DXer... where the exotic radio waves landed and from where

a faint reply came back buried in noisy interference. The mysterious station spoke just to me. A radio contact was made from my house with somebody stranded in a distant jungle. I had the privilege to be able to exchange ideas with somebody out there across the seas in a world of different religions and beliefs. It was into that kind of a world that DX, as we know it, was born.

It was like a family secret that could not be talked about with ordinary amateurs, not to mention ordinary mortals. Even within the family, a kind of lack of DX understanding between man and wife could exist. The husband was busy scampering between his antenna tower and radio laboratory, paying little apparent attention to the normal values of family life. The routine day-to-day cycle seemed somehow twisted; a bottle of French wine remained unopened at the dinner table and the sexy wife wearing her silky nightgown fumbled for the hand of her life's companion only to find a puffy feather pillow... nothing else.

Confidence in life was not restored until the mailman came to the house respectfully delivering a letter from halfway around the world, the only exotic letter seen in that postal district for ages. That rare letter... might it contain a QSL from a new country or one confirming just a new band?

DX is probably as old as man's urge to collect things. It is apparently as old as man's competitive desire. And, it is certainly as old as man's curiosity and ambition to learn new things. Or, maybe it's just a vain need to be interested in the affairs of others and to be dissatisfied with one's own small surroundings.

Could that sacred room, the ham shack, be somehow characterized as the holiest of the holy? Radio

signals are, after all, propagated from the shack to all corners of the world. It's a place where a technological revolution is made and where letters dutifully delivered by the mailman from those distant lands are meticulously filed.

Already in those early years, the ham shack frequently seemed the best paneled room of the house and its walls were adorned with impressive framed certificates with an assortment of seals and stickers. A picture of the newlyweds on the mantelpiece only stood in a frame bought from the local K-mart while a lot more money was spent on fancy frames holding the DXCC certificate and other operating awards lining the walls of the shack.

Family pictures lay about forlorn in shoe boxes while DXCC cards were neatly deposited in the plastic pockets of the best photo album. So, DX and various aspects of DXing represented the dominant features of life, and DXers were the Believers and the true Internationalists of Amateur Radio.

Traditionally, the threshold of joining the brotherhood of true-blue DXers appeared highest in the area of technical know-how and in the ability to live in harmony with the technical side of DX. Those DXers with the highest country totals were often important thinkers in the fields of electricity and electromagnetic wave propagation, and their radio rooms looked more like the instrument panels of a DC-3 airliner than a piece of real estate devoted to a hobby.

In those early days, DXers seemed to take a particular delight in huge transformers humming in tune with one's speech, with mercury vapor rectifiers emitting a blue light in an otherwise dimly lit room. The blue glimmer of the rectifiers revealed stains on the wallpaper near the base molding as a reminder of

Bob Denniston, W0DX, led DX-peditioning to our modern times. Meet Bob at Malpelo to the right from that Oil Barrel DX type in the middle. The baby face DX type on his left is Carlos, TI2CF.



those 5 kV oil condensers that once shot away like today's Patriot missiles. In those years, microphones were mounted on long, graceful swan neck-like supports. Landing on Clipperton Island was a lot more difficult than today because the boat was heavily laden with quite a collection of gear. ICOM was not yet born but Baker & Williams made antenna tuners handling the legal limit even on AM.

Computers were just in their early stages of development when Bob Denniston, W0DX, went on a DXpedition to Clipperton to log a whopping 1,108



DXotica is not a new term. Bob Denniston with others had their share of it when landing on Malpelo in those other years.

contacts, working down the pileups all by himself and taking care of the QSL chores as well. The world had already entered the modern age then... in 1954... and the history of DX and its practitioners spanned more than thirty years.

Now, several decades later, Bob Denniston is still burning the midnight oil, tuning the bands to experience the never-ending excitement of a monstrous pileup. Or, maybe he is cursing his bad luck when all the potential reefs in the Caribbean were not accorded DXCC status in those other years. By the same token, Denniston may be looking with a bit of disdain upon many of the new countries that Don Miller added to the DXCC List and whose underwater existence was found out only years later. But, by that time, all the DXers jealously guarding their treasures were no longer willing to give up any of their DXCC credits; up in arms they converged on the Hartford HQ forcing the then DXCC Administrator, W1CW, to take refuge in an underground air-raid shelter...

In those ancient days, DX was thriving and a foundation stone was laid for the DXCC program which has since then evolved to stand tall as a basic pillar of amateur radio and all the international activities based on it. The DXCC program sets forth universal "legislative" guidelines and establishes worldwide criteria to control the hunt & gather urge of DXers and their armchair travels. It has been said by those who know that the clear logic and always shining clarity of the DXCC criteria is sometimes hard for the uninitiated to understand but there are things which one must believe though one may not yet understand...

The ultimate manifestation of your standing in the world of DX is a DXCC Honor Roll pin that you wear once a year when attending the DX convention. It's

<h1 style="font-size: 4em; margin: 0;">XZ2TZ</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">BURMA</p> <p style="margin: 0;">1965 ASIA-PACIFIC DXPEDITION</p> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: 0.8em;">SPONSORED BY THE WORLD RADIO PROPAGATION STUDY ASSOCIATION</p>		1965 Asia-Pacific DXpedition		Burma	
		OPERATORS DON MILLER - W9WNV CHUCK SWAIN - K7LMU			
Equipment: Gear: Collins S-Line (2S3, 75S3B) Antennas: Hy-Gain 14AVQ, 203BA, Dipoles		<i>"Cek"</i>			
Electro-Voice microphones					
Call	Date	GMT	MCS	Mode	R(5)T
DH2BH	9-23-65	1444	14	2xSB	J8
QSL Via W4ECI					

No one has topped this one during the many years of modern DXing.

like a badge of honor from the Korean war, its value undiminished by a shabby dark suit that you last wore at the previous convention a year ago, one that seems progressively too small for your considerable physical dimensions.

DX has long honorable traditions, and it is handed down from one generation to another almost unnoticed. DXers revere old age and tradition, and everything old is regarded as sacred. Think of Don Miller's XZ2TZ cards – they are still accepted for DXCC credit. Special care is taken when building something new on the old, so much so that if a questionable rock or reef once ended up on the DXCC Countries List it will stay there forever even though it might no longer meet present-day criteria.

There are many Eternal Enigmas of DX that are only understood by true-blue Believers and studied by newer DXCC types as something of a Pythagoras theorem. One is not supposed to argue about these things before gaining an understanding of the Mysteries of the Ages and achieving status as a Deserving DXer. One must first grow in stature both physically and in terms of antenna hardware and DXCC stickers.

Just this past summer, on my DX travels, I ended up in the Caribbean and visited many of the small island nations that had been objects of my intense interest only some two decades earlier. At that time, this area sported a full hand of VP2-countries, and only a few of the Deserving had managed to contact all the islands included in the DXCC List.

The legendary Danny Weil had injected new life into DXpeditioning with the help of those islands. We will remember that VP2VB stood closest to Danny's heart and it was that callsign that he was most intimately associated with in those years.

Many years later, I was myself en route to visit that island. Would the exotic charm of Caribbean DX life be still found there? All the excitement that had kept me wide awake at the operating desk night after night?

Before arriving in VP2V-land, however, I ran into another Believer and this one was on the U.S. Virgin Islands. Perched in his hilltop QTH near the clouds was John Ackley, KP2A, one of the good Old Timers. His house was located high enough in the skies that you could wave a friendly hello to passing aircraft from the window of the shack where the air was so thin that a pair of oxygen bottles were positioned near the operating desk.

John is a real Old Timer with remarkable experience from the production end of DX as well as from being in the audience for many of the world's DX happenings. Walking up the hill to his DX Salon, I was absolutely certain that an answer would be forthcoming to this last tricky question of mine: was DX still flourishing, had anything changed over the past decades or were we just approaching an era of change?

In order to start such an abstract discussion, we first inspected a number of antenna towers overturned by Hurricane Hugo and observed large blocks of concrete strewn all over the place to remind us of their original role of holding guy wires firmly in place. Once inside the radio room, computer files were checked for missing countries on each particular band. All things told, I was quite convinced that I had come to the right place on top of that hill.

Sitting in a swivel chair at the house of KP2A, you can with just one swing spot numerous DXCC countries scattered in the blue sea. This reinforced my conviction that, together with John, we would find a common answer to our worries concerning the history of DX and its future prospects.

Is DX an Eternal Enigma that will live from generation to generation without change, and are all those VP2 islands nearby full of the exotica that DX countries are made of? Could the ecstasy of working a VP2 be relived if we could go back in time some twenty years? And, would I still get a kick out of working that insignificant-looking island twenty years hence? Or, could the state of DX Nirvana be always experienced at the right DX Moment, as Professor Cass teaches us in his book.

Is the DX you work today the DX that is? Is it true that you can regret the DX you did not work yesterday; you can only work the DX you hear today? Perfectly clear and understandable and wonderful, right? Cass comes up with a remarkably lucid statement of principle to define the relationship between the past, present and future of DX. His explanation of the DX equation can be simply summed up as "DX IS!" DX is a complex state of the amateur art, and we must know that the Great Days of DX are coming to inform us that DX is... and will always be.

An Old Timer up the hill,
John Ackley, KP2A.
- The DXers Magazine



The sun was setting exactly in the same direction it had done decades ago, and the path to Europe was opening up precisely at the minute we had been accustomed to in those early years. Reflecting over these laws of nature, we waited for completion of a 180-second warm-up for the 88-series finals quite convinced that we would be able to pinpoint the line between the Ancient Days of DX and the Modern Era... when DX was reborn, as it were, without losing any of its past grandeur.

The Great Days of DX can be recalled easily by looking at one's own DXCC totals or by digging up a fellow DXer's family album to leaf through its pages of shiny QSL cards arranged in alphabetical order in plastic pockets.

The only real loss suffered by DX and DXers in the early years was when deleted countries no longer determined your ultimate Honor Roll standing. That was when a distinct concession was made to newer DX

types as Indo-China and Zanzibar lost their value somehow. Well, fortunately Burma and Albania were retained on the DXCC List to separate true-blue DX Believers from those who were just on their way...

Sitting there in the KP2A house up in the clouds, sampling vintage wines and savoring juicy beefsteaks, the two of us gray-headed Old Timers, who had witnessed the Pacific sunset and operated from the same corner room at Sintra Hotel in Macao, were wondering about the past, present and future of DX. Was it possible that DX might somehow lose value, be devalued, in the turmoil of a changing world? Or, was DX already reborn without anyone really having observed its rebirth?

In more recent years, amateurs dedicated to digital communications were worrying about their DXCC prospects while six-meter enthusiasts operating with scientific accuracy already confirmed their first 100 countries to make the DXCC. Devoted to moonbounce experiments, W5UN toiled night and day to work his 100 countries. The more we scanned the pages of our database for different bands and modes, not forgetting WARC bands, the more we realized that DX was alive and kicking.

But something had changed from the old days, and the causes of change were crystallizing into some kind of an understanding of the Eternal Enigmas and the Mysteries of the Ages. A television set with a huge screen sitting in the corner of KP2A's radio room was switched on right in the middle of a National Geographic documentary about Papua New Guinea. Flashed across the wide-angle screen were natives wearing nose rings and dancing for the enjoyment of a visiting television crew. What the heck! That island was supposed to be populated by cannibals. At least I



– Oh, it's W5UN...and I expected romantic cruising in the moonlight...

remember cannibals lived there when I worked my first VK9...

Son of a Gun! The truth was then revealed to the two DX Believers who had a long track record behind them and who had both worked nearly every country on the DXCC List. Not to mention the DX countries that they had put on the air. The past and the present, and the change seen over the years were somehow tangibly in evidence. The era of change had come with the jet airplane and television. Flying by jet had made it possible for you to travel for the purpose of DX or ordinary tourism with remarkable ease from one country or continent to another, leaving aside the exotic sea voyages of yesteryear.

Television, again, brought to every house and hut all those countries in the world that one did not have time to travel to or that had previously been the DXotic objects of one's radio contacts. The jet airplane and television had changed the whole pattern of human behavior and upset the very face of earlier DXotica. But had the jet airplane and television somehow helped to thin out those DX pileups, and had the pileups lost their constituent elements, the participants? Had all the enticing appeal disappeared with the advent of modern jet travel and mass media?

Had the DX countries themselves changed somehow or could we still find those happy aborigines singing and dancing on the beach, eating mango fruit and making love? As for the thickness of the pileups, the two DX Thinkers had a clear understanding of the state of affairs but what would a present-day DXCC country look like, say, VP2V, that was once a strangely beautiful object of worldwide attention when Danny Weil showed up from the island signing VP2VB?

A small jet airplane provided the easiest means of transportation from the U.S. Virgin Islands to the British Virgin Islands, VP2V-land, in our search of DX truth. Should one prefer a high-speed ferry, it would take just a 45-minute ride to reach another DXCC country.

But what on earth... there are only five-star Hiltons here, a whole cluster of seaside hotels with magnificent beaches. People from all corners of the world live here in their stately air-conditioned homes. They eat only the finest foods and taste the best French wines. There are no natives dancing or singing on the beach, eating mango fruit or making love. No, all of them sit glued to their TV sets watching an all-star baseball game from Wrigley Field, Chicago on the ESPN channel. The white man had installed his satellite dish on VP2V to pipe high-definition CATV programming into each dwelling and seaside bar.

There was no DXotica here, and no one remembered that watchmaker of years ago who signed VP2VB and served this top-ranking DXCC country to the Deserving in every radio shack throughout the world when DX was still young.

At the far end of Tortola, British Virgin Islands, we finally stumbled over a TH6DXX badly damaged by Hurricane Hugo and bumped into our long lost friend, an old-time DXer of Clipperton fame, Bob Denniston, W0DX, now signing VP2VI to make B.V.I. available for the Deserving. Standing there in front of us was this DX Believer who had a clear perception of how DX had evolved over the last half-century. He was the right man to explain it all to us. Bob confirmed that the jet airplane and television were revolutionizing what used to be the essence of DXotica, that longing for mysterious faraway places, that blissful ignorance of the march of world events. DX had come closer to

every spectrum user over the decades and people were somehow more knowledgeable about DX.

But when Bob called a fiery CQ on an empty band, the final answer came. All the alert, right-thinking DX Believers instantly showed up for a 10 kHz wide multilayered pileup anxious to put a VP2V into their logs. Bob reaffirmed that this had always been the case over the past decades and would no doubt always be. The pileups had only grown thicker and heavier, and working them down to the last layer had turned into an increasingly laborious exercise with advancing years.

At the end of our session, Bob, that venerable DX Guru whom we remembered from our earlier Malpelo contacts, not forgetting his Desecheo outing, rushed to his car to drive to a meeting of the local Rotary Club at the other end of the island. There he would sit down at a dinner table with other notable dignitaries of the local community to enjoy delicious food and taste rare vintage wines, typical for an upper echelon DXer.

Having unpacked our ICOM transceiver, and after a tiny sloper was strung between a nearby palm tree and our hotel, an endless pileup responded to our first CQ. And the third station came back with that familiar query: "Where do you go next?" We knew it right away that nothing had dimmed the Eternal Splendor of DX over the years. DX was there as tangible proof of its exotic existence to those who still missed a VP2V confirmation. And, the thundering multitudes only seemed to grow larger and larger in numbers as the evening wore on. Meanwhile, we did our best handing out reports in rapid-fire fashion.

At dawn when 20 meters already faded out, the band was finally exhausted. What lay before our eyes was the blue Caribbean; gentle waves caressed the

shores of Tortola, British Virgin Islands, just like in those other years when Danny Weil, VP2VB, enjoyed life's abundance, and a bit of DX, in these parts.

But now it was time to dismantle the settings designed for this performance and conclude that the DX show was over. Thousands of avid DXers throughout the world would switch off the rig and retire to the living room for a chat with the XYL or rush to the office to begin another day of hard work, or whatever, only to return to the band the following night to hunt for that missing country. But that's the way it has always been and will always be.

It was Danny Weil, VP2VB, who served VP2V-land to the Deserving when DX was still young.



And I did my best handing out reports in rapid-fire fashion... says Petri Laine, KC6KOU, some 40 years later

A CAVALCADE OF DX CHARACTERS

During those early years of DXing, many of the wandering DX types, this author included, needed to reinforce their belief and gain in DX understanding in order to have all the strength required for returning to the bands in search of those distant lands, away from the centers of social life. DXers looked for idols and examples worthy of their admiration. They sought fountains of inspiration to find a new meaning for their activities as members of a particular DX community.

There is no doubt that certain periods and many extraordinary DX personalities associated with them have shaped the whole character of amateur radio. One may even wonder if these towering figures are just the ones who help to pass this hobby from one generation to the next. These people are needed to drive us on during the lonely nights spent on the bands chasing those elusive DX country counters.

For me and thousands of other Deserving DXers in those early years, the West Coast DX Bulletin and the man behind it, Hugh Cassidy, WA6AUD, provided a weekly dose of great reading and needed DX information. But Cassidy – or Professor Cass, as we call him – had a mission going far beyond the realm of such mundane concerns. He created an entire world of imaginary DX characters to suit every age, every situation, every need.

Many of us Suffering DXers soon identified ourselves with the figures created by Cass' masterful pen and found joy in the way various relevant issues of the day

were discussed by these characters on the pages of the WCDXB. They all seemed so deceptively real that often-times you tended to forget that these were but products of Cass' hugely rich imagination.

The characters and the topics raised by them helped to nourish our self-confidence and pride, giving us a well-deserved feeling of contentment in being DX types ourselves... part of the holy community. During dialogues between the Old Timer and the Local QRPer plus many other immortal players, we were artfully guided through to a deeper understanding of what really makes a DXer tick.

A master in his own time, Cass even made us laugh at ourselves as he walked us deeper into the world of self-irony. So, at the end of the day, it was no surprise that we found in Cass a highly respected and influential DX figure, and started calling him our DX Professor. He is still the only one around.

You will find traces of Cassidy's style and many of his characters surfacing here and there in this book to bring joy to your remote hilltop shack in those lonely days and nights of DXing. Some of the issues discussed here may be a bit hard to understand or follow. But don't worry - be happy. As Professor Cass said, although you may keep asking the questions while you may not yet understand the answers, the day will come when you no longer need dash up the hill to ask all those questions. That's the time when you will have reached the Ultimate Goal of DX... when you finally understand everything. DX literature included.

I am extremely proud being able to reach Professor Cass up the hill to share his characters with us today, many years after they first appeared on the pages of the labor of his love, the WCDXB. Cass will show us the Light and unravel the Mysteries of the Ages and much

more. Stay tuned with Cass and DX literature and you will be a Believer. Now and forever. Amen.

Cass, the stage is all yours. We are listening.

A Source of Inspiration Revisited

by Hugh Cassidy, WA6AUD

Long ago, and in what now seems to have been a far distant place, we lived in a different DX world. It was a land of great DXing and intrepid DXers, some perhaps even remembered in this last decade of the 20th century. Some have been forgotten as so many Deserving DXers are. Sometimes we wish that more could be remembered of those DXers and those other days. Perhaps from this book you will realize why remembrance of some great DXers should be had by all DXers.

Among the remembered DXers from that now distant world were some who were a bit less than real. These include the Old Timer, the Local QRPer, Red-Eyed Louie, plus the Palos Verdes Sundancers. There also was a DXer never identified with anything but his first name was Albert. There was the Hero of



The truth was finally revealed when
DX Professor Cass was introduced...
-Worldradio

Mafeking and there was the ubiquitous Slim, even today being heard from rare and needed DX spots.

In addition to both major and minor noted DXers, there were the Eternal Enigmas of DXing as well as the DX Mysteries of the Ages. There was often a warning of the hazards lurking to trap DXers and especially that reef called the 300 Sticker where many a once promising DX foundered, caught by a wave of futility. And there were DXers, Deserving DXers, and always spelled with a capital "D". There were these and other Believers in that DX world that many knew back then in those Great Days of DXing, when DX was a Movable Feast – DX was what you wanted but did not have.

Even these days some still come asking about that Age of DX Enlightenment, not realizing that it has been long gone. But many who knew the Old Timer, the Local QRPer, Red-Eyed Louie or the Palos Verdes crowd think that these are still out there somewheres, that possibly one day they will return. At conventions some still ask about them and how they are these days. Some still think that they were among those DXers who back then brought DX to the needy.

All of these came to the DX scene and dwelled in the consciousness of all true-blue DXers possibly because we learned to know how they thought and what their hopes were. Most of these characters had a specific place in the DX vineyards, appeared there week after week, month after month, and from where they reported on their special expertise or possible aberrations in the DX world. Some eventually became far better known than others. Many newer DX types obviously were almost sure that many of the characters capering up the hill were real persons, hidden under the anonymity of a colorful label.

The Old Timer was, and still is, the most prominent of all the characters. He had been around forever, often reminding the Locals that he was operating at the time Marconi was making his first trans-Atlantic tests. He had seen everything, worked everything and, having overcome his initial terseness, was willing to spend time with newcomers explaining things, discussing matters of importance and to generally enlighten and educate those in need.

The Old Timer was really old. Hand in hand he had grown up with amateur radio. When the Old Timer spoke, it was good DX expertise gleaned through the long years. He was the personification of all old DXers, wise with the wisdom of the years, filled with the memories of the Good Days of DXing, carefully logical in his thinking and willing to consider diverse viewpoints.

He always tried to be fair, giving both sides of an argument equal weight. And he would sometimes restate his belief that DXers are smart enough to come to their own decisions, all they ever would need would be the facts. In the minds of many Believers, the Old Timer was the elder Everyman of DXing. He had been around so long that he should have wearied of DXing. But he never did. He never was anything but certain that anyone who called "CQ DX" on the air would ever be considered a true-blue DXer. He definitely never could accept such a transgressor.

Of all the characters of DX, this one was really considered by many to be a real, a living DXer. Many would ask just who the Old Timer was, convinced that he did indeed live up the hill.

The Old Timer was an imaginary figure.

The Local QRPer was the other end of the board. The Local was the embodiment of the young, the new

or the late-comers to DXing. The QRPer had the energy, the interest and always abundant motivation. He wanted to know everything about DXing, he came up the hill with endless questions, a desire to know and an unflagging determination to improve both himself and his DXCC totals.

Often the Locals would have a session with the Old Timer seeking wisdom, asking puzzling questions but frequently showing an unexpected grasp of the complexities of DXing. Generally they were pictured as those DXers around the 150 mark on the DXCC list. Enough on-band experience to perform creditably but needing a lot of answers and advice. They knew, but they did not know. Some had yet to learn the hidden meanings of "DX IS!" Local QRPer were considered the formidable ones.

When a Local QRPer came asking questions, it usually was a three-way discussion, the Old Timer, the Local QRPer and we tearing into the subject, looking for insight and understanding. Sometimes we found it.

In later years when a monthly column was written for one of the amateur magazines, we were told not to use the term "Local QRPer" because some of the QRP types felt that the term was denigrating. As the Local QRPer at times could even make the Old Timer pause for breath, it was thinking with which we differed.

We remembered more than once how the Old Timer and we had been caught sitting on the bench under the big oak tree and had to acknowledge, at least to ourselves, that a Local QRPer could be sharper than a serpent's tooth. We never completely recovered from the time when the Local QRPer came up the hill to grandly announce that he was prepared to explain the

Eternal Enigmas of DXing as well as to raise the veil of the Mysteries of the Ages.

When the Old Timer and myself, curious to know what he knew that we did not, gave cautious assurances that we were ready to learn, the Local QRPer drew himself up to his full height and proclaimed: "DX IS!" Just that and nothing more. When we pressed for enlightenment, we were given the brush-off. "...if you have to ask the question, you probably will not understand the answer".

Even today we are still finding DXers who are trying to puzzle out the meaning of "DX IS!"

Actually, the Local QRPer and the Old Timer, along with ourself, formed a three-sided debating society which could discuss and give opinions on most anything, any idea or any point. Lecturing was avoided, discussion was encouraged. The end result was that our society was able to steer a neutral course with diverse viewpoints expressed on most any DX controversy. Some at times found this exasperating, declaring that we were four-square on all sides of a question. It was easy to concur, that was the intent.

Red-Eyed Louie handled the needed activity reports. His red eyes came from long nights of scanning the receiver dials looking for DX to report. Red Eye was also the in-house poet, coming first on the scene with his alleged quotation from an obscure opera by a little known Italian composer:

*Oh, lonely night, last forever,
You have made me learn to live and love,
And work DX...*

Red Eye absolutely refused to post any activity that would be more than two weeks old. He also was

insistent on listing times and especially dates on his DX reports. Among his other bits of published poetry was that forlorn one heard at the bottom of Cycle 20:

*I must go down to the shack again,
To the shack and a lonely band...*

Should that have a familiar ring, remember that DXers have had to suffer in lonely shacks through many cycles. You possibly knew the verse before you knew DX.

The Palos Verdes Sundancers also showed about this time, the DX world then being shattered by dire predictions that another Maunder Minimum was upon us. That it was possible that sunspots would not be seen again in the lifetime of any living DXer. A dearth that might last seventy or more years. This gloom actually got a lot of space in the amateur magazines. In those days there was a near consensus that the end was near for DXing, that soon it would be but a fading memory.

Being always ready to do good work for a good cause, the Palos Verdes Sundancers, that brave DX dance troupe, announced that through their interpretative dance routines, classical ballet naturally, they would bring the sunspots and unlimited joy back to the Deserving. With the help of their glissades, grand jete and arabesques, DX would rise again.

And in that era of black gloom, the Palos Verdes Sundancers were about the only ones working the positive side of the street. The work of the doomsayers was evidenced in every quarter. Some DXers were so convinced that they took down their beams and sold their gear, giving up DXing altogether. In later years the Dancers would stoutly claim that they alone had saved DX. Repeatedly noting the time when it was

predicted, and the prediction was believed by many, that DXing was about to pass from the world of living men. Possibly forever. No one but the Palos Verdes Sundancers had ever dared dispute the dire predictions.

You had to take them seriously, they never ever let you forget how they had saved DXing, driving away the return of the Maunder Minimum and that seventy-year period when nary a sunspot was seen. This claim was not always universally accepted, some pointing to the Palos Verdes Big Bass Bongo which, when struck, would cause leaves and small branches to fall from trees half a mile around. The counter-assertion was that the Big Bass Bongo, back in the barrancas would, when heartily struck, drive away anything, including QRM. If you heard the Big Bass Bongo, you heard nothing else.

There were other characters populating the DX scene as well. Albert, the soul of introspection, was always figuring things on the back of an envelope, sometimes joining the discussions to sagely note: "All things are relative, some more so". Albert was Extra class, one then always had to listen respectfully to those Anointed Ones. When confronted by a vexing problem, he would often say: "When you're on the Honor Roll, you will understand".

The Hero of Mafeking should be a familiar name to most DXers. He would constantly urge DXers to take no chances, overlook no option and to always "Be Prepared!" This admonition was sure to be heard any time a new one was expected or a big contest was near. We had been in the Boy Scouts at the same time that the Hero of Mafeking had been. We often remember Old Bob, his bandy legs sticking out of his faded shorts, telling of the adventurous days on the Northeast Frontier.

There was Slim, the purveyor of bogus contacts, a good operator but hard to get mail to. Slim was a real person. He showed years back signing 8X8A from Cray Island. "Just far enough south of Iceland to count for DXCC", he would counsel, "and newly emerged from the sea because of volcanic activity along the Great Atlantic Rift". If anyone displayed a skeptical tone, Slim would direct them to a recent issue of the National Geographic which had an article on Surtsey Island which had, indeed, risen recently from beneath the sea. Many would quote this article to support their trust in Slim. Until their QSL was returned, that is. Many worked Slim, many still do. Many DXers back then wanted to believe anything that promised them a new country, many still do. Probably they always will. Slim will always be around to help them.

Before Cray Island, the general appellation for bogus operations was either "pirates" or "phonies". The feeling was that serious DXers were ready for something better than these two examples of name calling. From that point on the term "Slim" was used to tag a bogus or suspect operation.

Over the years, Slim showed from most any needed spot including a couple of operations from Albania. There is a persistent but yet to be confirmed rumor that when the Norwegians on the operations from Bouvet and Peter I Island landed, they encountered signs saying: "Slim Was Here". Should any of you get solid confirmation of this, or even some not so solid confirmations, it would be appreciated if they were to be passed on.

There were the Eternal Enigmas of DXing, these matched by the Mysteries of the Ages. These were known to all DXers, understood by few. These were hard to explain, something that was known but not recognized. Eventually the realization came that

these were but the Mystique of DXing, that common DX bond that binds all DXers even though some may not realize it... yet. Many DXers know it but find it difficult to explain. Once one tried, saying: "No DXer ever comes as a stranger". That is right but there is much more than that. An understanding usually comes, sometimes late, sometimes never. But never doubt it. The DX Mystique exists. Believe that!

Perhaps by this point you are starting to get the idea. These persons were personifications to give a feeling of verisimilitude to DX reports. Possibly DXers tend to believe more readily when they get the word from someone they know. If you doubt that, why do you watch the evening newscast when you can get more and usually fuller information from reading a newspaper.

Yet it was evidenced that in the mind's eye of most DXers they saw these people and for them they existed. All in all, it was a good time to be a DXer though sometimes it was suspected that possibly humor was given equal billing with DXing.

DXers are always a happy lot. At the next meeting, look at the Ancients, flinty-eyed all with the corners of their mouths turned downward. Slip up to them and quietly whisper: "Remember that story about the Local QRPer?" Quick as a wink the corners will turn upward and a smile will come with an equally quick question: "Which one?"

It was always thought that a true-blue DXer will understand these things. Any Local QRPer definitely should.

It can easily be acknowledged that the West Coast DX Bulletin, which lived from 1968 to 1979 and where we eventually drifted to a policy of using these charac-

ters and characterizations in the reporting to entice readers to read the whole bulletin, could be a joyful effort at times. However, eventually things got to the point where there was more joy than the staff, "the Marin County DX Group", could handle. In later years when he could be found, all the editor would say was: "Always sail before sunset". The inference was that any DXer would understand.

The main characters found in the ancient scrolls of the bulletin frequently sought to call attention to that band of DXers who merited not only recognition but remembrance. Sometimes their efforts are taken for granted, their often hazardous trips are not remembered longer than the time it takes to get their QSL for a new one. One such as these was the trip OH2BH made with his associates in a light plane to Annobon off the West African coast. This was for a DXCC new one.

Read about it here and you are reading DX history. More should be known about it, more credit and more appreciation should be extended to those who have pursued DX far beyond the utmost rim of the world. Pursued it for DXers and DXing. OH2BH certainly is one who has seen those rims and passed them. He is and has been a major figure in DXing and in DX history. One to be remembered and recalled far down the path of the years. DXers can learn and benefit from his DX accomplishments.

It has been said that eventually one will realize that all that will be left will be the memories of the good days long gone. There are still good days, yet some still take joy from recalling other great days of DXing. And the great DXers whose exploits are still remembered. You are at this time into some DX memories worth remembering.

Heath Cass. J

TODAY'S DX AUDIENCE AND THE ACTORS

DX is very much alive and it keeps conquering the world of amateur radio just as it did decades ago. All the Great Days of DX, the very Mystique of DX, not to mention the Mysteries of the Ages, pass from generation to generation. Only the associated technologies and instruments change.

DX contacts still have that same exotic quality about them although today's QSOs are guided by circumstances typical of our modern age and the laws of contemporary life. Today's DXers are aware of their strength and their responsibilities, and they rally behind their beloved hobby on a larger scale than before as amateur radio finds a new position in our changing society.

DX personalities crop up more and more frequently whenever administrative vacancies in amateur radio organizations are filled. In the case of the ARRL, a major requirement for Division Directors is that each office holder should have at least 300 countries confirmed. Vice Directors will get away with 200 current countries. The same goes for the staff of League Headquarters, the Holy Shrine of DX, in Connecticut, not forgetting the officials who run the IARU and its Regions. The day may not be far away when Don Search receives an honorary doctorate from Stanford University and the DXAC is placed under the United Nations Security Council.

Seriously speaking, while attending a major DX convention in Japan, I was seated next to Mr Shozo

OT Shozo, JA1AN, from that distant DX empire on the left while another Old Timer and supporter of many DXpeditions, Kan, JA1BK, looks happy on the right.



Hara, JA1AN, President of the Japan Amateur Radio League, and it was a great pleasure to hear about DX-related developments in that distant Empire. It gave me a gratifying feeling to learn that DXing and how to work DX were included in that country's basic amateur training program.

Little wonder then that the Japanese are universally acclaimed for their commendable pileup behavior. "Standing by" is just as firmly impressed on their minds as how to make a proper "CQ DX" call. Overall, the kind of aggressive antics often experienced on the DX frequency are not associated with the Japanese code of conduct.

The Tokyo DX Convention weekend coincided with a dozen other important amateur radio events but JA1AN made it a point to be present at this particular function to open the proceedings and to listen to a variety of talks given by DXers. On hand were all the top Japanese DX brothers wearing their Sunday best, enjoying each others' company, sipping the finest wines, priding themselves on their latest success in cracking a pileup and comparing notes on needed countries.

Why had JA1AN chosen this particular get-together and this particular weekend? "This group of

people typifies the strength of amateur radio in Japan; that being the case, it is obvious that I should attend their meeting. These guys possess magic power. That's something I value highly and it is a firm foundation to build on."

JA1AN's message was quite clear. Here we had a representative of a million Japanese amateurs talking about things that a DXer could relate to with ease. The JARL President was undoubtedly a Believer and, during the next talk given by JF1IST, he devoted himself to typical dreamy Japanese meditation. The topic was of course Okino-Tori-Shima and how to get it back on the DXCC Countries List where the platform was once placed to honor a JARL anniversary.

What is the source from which the present DX fraternity derives its strength, then? There is no point in expecting these DX brothers to astound the world with dazzling technical breakthroughs since they still pledge allegiance to Dr Yagi. They will order any needed stuff from a variety of outlets by calling an 800-number for the best quotes, and the only known figures refer to the number of beam elements and the local sales tax.

On the other hand, today's DX citizens often maintain a presence in the top echelons of society where modern technological breakthroughs are in the making. DXers have infiltrated the seats of power in many corners of the world. It came as no surprise to DXers when an American astronaut, Owen Garriott, W5LFL, in orbit aboard the Columbia space shuttle, made contact with JY1, H.M. King Hussein, and the distance was long enough to qualify that QSO as a DX contact.

DX had escaped the earth's gravitational pull but still thirsted for a DX contact back to earth. Indeed, it

would be highly desirable to have celestial bodies in orbit somewhere beyond earth's gravitational field to qualify for new country status. Surely a DXpeditioner venturing on a space odyssey would be in great demand. The DXAC should have no great difficulty making its "intervening country" measurements, this time not across open water but in the vacuum of space.

Today's DXers keep their fingers on the pulse of world events and are well informed to discuss, say, the liberalization of life in Albania and the new opportunities that may come in its wake. The mailman faithfully delivers two weekly DX bulletins to every household, and armchair trips offered on television courtesy of the National Geographic achieve high audience ratings particularly among Honor Roll DXers.

Others stuck on the lower rungs of the DXCC ladder, equally glued to their TV sets, are wondering how this or that conflict in the world will end and how it may affect the DXCC List. Everyone can pronounce with remarkable fluency the name of the capital of Burkina Faso – Ougadougou – and eavesdrop on those frequencies where reliable inside DX information is to be found to confirm the reports circulated in the DX press: what the next DX performance will be and who are going to star in that show.

There is no question that today's coveted DX station, be it a missionary devoted to his ministry in a Godforsaken country or a team of DXpeditioners setting up camp there, is staging a performance that present-day DXers reserve time and hone their skills for to get full return, i.e. a DX contact, for their investment in time and equipment.

Sitting in the front row to enjoy the performance are Big Gun Old Timers while the Local QRPer and

other newer DXCC types are seated in the back row. The box is reserved for the DX Foundations' board members and representatives of the DXpedition's sponsors. Left totally outside the theater are amateurs not yet ready to fully understand the Mystique of DX but eager to believe that the top of the line is the only place for a DXer to be...

The show can begin, and it generally does within a time framework announced in the DX bulletins, assuming that the DXpedition team landed successfully and the generators went smoothly into action. All the knowledgeable individuals of the DX world in their festive attire are sitting there waiting for the curtain to rise, for the performance to begin. They know the cast of characters and, eager to add another New One to their DXCC albums, they are all ready for the opening fanfare.

In contrast to the olden times, today's DXers are fully briefed on every key parameter of the target country, these being served by DX bulletins or Packet-Clusters. The most impatient DXers insist on logging their first duplicates while the DXpedition is still signing Maritime Mobile.

The logic of modern-day DX comes into sharp focus as the curtain goes up and the familiar DX actors start doing their pirouettes, like the Palos Verdes Sundancers performing their double heel-clicking with Bass Bongos and that six-eighth tarantella. Contacts are handed out in rapid-fire fashion to the Deserving in the vast audience.

Those sitting in the front row can obviously hear better what's going on out there on stage but QRP types at the back of the assembled audience begin to savor the sweet taste of success as well. If not during the first day's performance, then the following day

when the most impatient brothers have already made their contacts. Occasionally there is a big round of applause or even a standing ovation. The action is breathtaking and the performers live up to expectations. Bouquets of roses are lavished on the actors and at least an extra buck is included with the QSL as a thank-you for a successful performance.

Such is DXing today. It is a happy, international pursuit, with ideas exchanged on the bands and new international acquaintances made. On vacation, a DXer often travels by jet airplane to distant lands to meet with fellow DX Believers, having first made sure that no major DX performance was scheduled to take place at the same time. Missing a New One would be totally intolerable.

The DX audience is demanding and intelligent although DXers in their criticism cannot always take into account the difficult situations that may arise behind the scenes. If a DX performance is announced in DX bulletins, the expectations of the audience are shaped accordingly. When a performance is printed in the DX press, responsibility for success is turned over to the actors who placed themselves in a position of responsibility.

There are instances in which the DX actors failed in their performance and the audience left the show disappointed, throwing tomatoes at the stage in protest. Today's DX tomatoes of course come in the form of deliberate interference and cries of anguish or frustration on the DX frequency, or even more outspoken statements whenever two unsuccessful DX brothers gritting their teeth see each other at the next Club meeting.

In those other years, Professor Cass masterfully elucidated the Laws of DX. He said DXers can be

merciless and infinite in their anger when missing out on a needed one. But in a word of consolation, Cass also reminded us of one of the Inevitable Truths that all DX comes around again though it may not come for some years. Besides, if you work everything and have nothing to look forward to, would you be totally happy?

No one can deny the simple fact that, by most standards, it was a successful DXpedition if you made one solid contact and possibly a couple of insurance QSOs whereas the show was a total disaster if you didn't make it or if scoring a contact proved exceedingly difficult. But then again, that's the way it has always been and is likely to always be.

The dawn of the computer age was initially seen as a distinct threat to DX but now that the dust has settled, DXers have harnessed the computer to serve their own aims, to assist in a multitude of ways in ensuring a DX contact and in taking care of the resultant scoring and paperwork. Any good DX computer worthy of its name will print out QSL labels and produce lots of statistics on successful contacts.

DXers connected to PacketCluster networks, again, pass on information about past, present and future DX events, thus finding an acceptable utility function for their VHF/UHF gear. Such data networks usually face their peak loads whenever a major DXpedition is on, when real-time band information is most valuable and when DX Believers and those who may soon be ready to be considered as such, but now on the verge of a nervous breakdown and struggling with their several VFO knobs, are walked with the aid of a computer to the correct calling frequency.

PacketCluster has unquestionably consolidated its position as a tool of clinical socializing of sorts for DXers. Those boasting higher country totals are con-

nected to the network with several radios while those not yet considered true-blue Believers still shy away from typing their callsigns. Instead, without revealing their presence, they just throw furtive glances at the screen full of up-to-date DX information.

Man was ingenious enough to line up the computer to help in the development of DX and DX operating. The rear panels of modern transceivers feature a computer interface for remote control of your radio to search and pounce in pursuit of that missing DX.

DX actors are the stars of the DX scene. They perform in the limelight of international attention; envied and admired, they are the celebrities of the DX world, just like Greta Garbo or Clark Gable who in their own day dominated Hollywood. During a show everyone in the DX audience is prepared to identify himself with a successful performance and get carried away with that DX illusion. DX Believers with 200-plus country totals will be leaping to their feet jumping and jiggling to shake hands with their heroes.

A small hard-core group of the Deserving are prepared at least in their secret thoughts to give up a withering marriage in favor of traveling to a rare spot with the next DXpedition. There to see and experience the Mystique of DX and to re-enact the trials and tribulations of a successful DX effort, just like the big stars, and to capture the admiration of the whole audience. To experience just once the bliss of being an admired and envied DX entertainer. To become the star of the next DX convention and one of its featured speakers. To be surrounded by the DX masses eagerly asking that familiar question: "Where do you go next?"

That is the way DXers greet their eternal heroes in the hopes of seeing the performers return soon to the stage with a new show from a distant, rare country.

The everyday routines of the DXpedition stars and the events taking place behind the scenes are far different from the beliefs and impressions held by the DX multitude. As far as the circumstances at the DX site are concerned, the reality is often rugged and rough and does not meet even the most basic requirements for modern life. But of course, everything is relative, sometimes even more so. If you end up in the most inhospitable corner of the world for your show, you have to face the most marginal circumstances for human existence and accept great personal risks.

Ironically enough, Top Ten listings of Most Wanted countries rarely include spots where the DXpedition team could put on a show in a Holiday Inn-type environment. Far from it. All the difficult countries end up on those lists because of the virtual impossibility of obtaining an operating license or because of the almost impenetrable location of a country that few will ever try to have a go at.

Permission for an operation from what are now rare countries traditionally taking a dim view of amateur radio is, even at best, obtained with marginal security arrangements, so much so that the radio operators are left with enacting their show in conditions of great apprehension and uncertainty. The fact is that parallel administrative bureaucracies coexist in several rare DX countries, which means that an authorization received from civilian authorities is not necessarily known to local military authorities.

Radio transmissions, even innocuous DX pileups, always have an ominous ring in the ears of authorities unfamiliar with the meaning of amateur radio. A DXpedition to a target country faced with the vicissitudes of geography is fraught with danger. At the DX conventions, you can often hear the most astounding

tales of dare-devil landing attempts or how ultimate success hovered at a razor's edge.

Or, how critical time elements failed. Indeed, danger looms near if your actions are guided by haste or by some unrealistic promises. Disaster lurks around the corner if the person placed in charge is only vaguely known and if logistical arrangements are left to incapable individuals. Even if the DXpedition team sports a huge amount of DX know-how, it is a great disaster if sufficient management skills are not to be found inside the life jackets of the first landing party.

Generally, even in the most impossible circumstances, the DX performance comes alive and is rarely cancelled. The show may get off to an uneasy start but will usually improve as the action continues. The targets set by the DXpedition team and the expectations of the DX audience may not be fully met but herein runs that thin line between a fine performance and a poor one. But that is one of the facts of life in the world of the arts, and that includes the artistry of DX.

There are good actors and bad actors. Experience plays a major role in success. Some performers never learn how to capture their audience while others can handle it quite naturally. The audience is demanding, as always, and will notice every mistake. Any deviation from the expected manuscript will be booed at.

There you have an utterly exhausted superstar of the DX world pondering over the Eternal Enigmas and the Mysteries of the Ages, dreaming of a hot meal or even a cold shower. It would certainly be interesting to contrast the QSO total of each DXpedition with the collective loss of weight suffered by the team members during their ordeal. In relation to time, the latter figure is always remarkably high, dangerous to health. Indeed, DX history knows of only few expedi-

tions on which the actors put on weight. An actor arriving at a DX convention straight from the authentic circumstances of a major expedition and appropriately attired is a memorable sight long remembered by the DX multitude.

You can hear the most incredible stories about the financial rewards earned by DX stars but as far as the Laws of DX Economics are concerned, the simple fact is that DX performers are the lowest paid stars in the whole universe. Each performance leaves them in the red directly or indirectly, but then again, one must always pay a substantial price for a unique experience. The world would be blessed with far more numerous DX performers if they could make a living of it.

The DX artists are highly original personalities, particularly when on stage. Few live a harmonious family life as most of the actors have a deep yearning for adventure. But all of them may share some common traits. They wish to be treated as the idolized heroes of the DX world greeted reverently by the DX community on the band or at the next DX convention.

But of course, there are also DX performances organized in the hopes of earning a little pocket money. However, the identity of the performers and their motives are revealed to well-informed DXers quite soon. The last will and testament of many a DX superstar passing away in recent years has left the family and lawyers with very little to talk about. The DX stars are unquestionably overworked and underpaid, if their sacrifices are subjected to closer scrutiny. Big checks from sponsors are yet to materialize. DXing is a labor of love which of course is in tune with the basic character of amateur radio and its definitions.

Finding this happy bunch across the Golden Gate Bridge took some doing. These are the longtime Yasme QSL management folks, Carolyn, WA6AKK, and Mac, W6BSY.

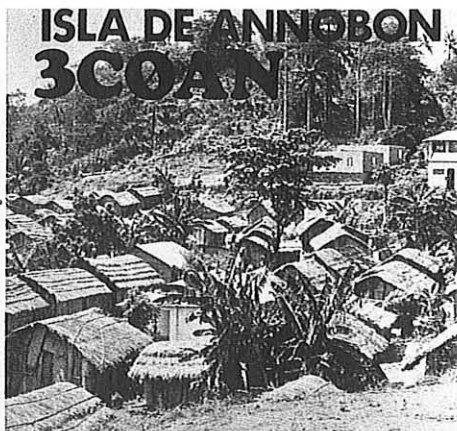
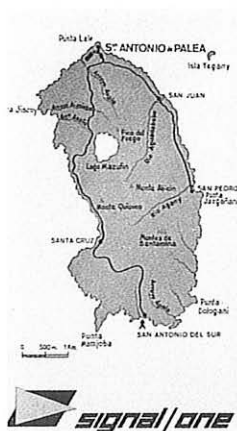
- Photo K6ORP



The final courtesy of a QSO is the QSL card, they say. The QSL also serves as a memento to remind you of the DX performance. Even a simple card can convey an important message to the recipient about the show. A few lines of text about details of the performance and its results is the least that the DX stars owe to their dear audience. Many DX actors put a heavy emphasis on the QSL card to project a more or less authentic image of that remote DX location for the enjoyment of their beloved home audience.

Almost without exception, a DX performer returning to home base will not start thinking about another DX show. Instead, he may be quite determined to call it quits... for years, maybe forever. The experience of that last expedition was almost too overwhelming, and recovering from it takes time. But such is life that in a little while the urge to brave the seas and face the storms returns and the DX actor is seen nervously spinning the globe trying to figure out this question: "Where do I go next?"

Meanwhile, the DX audience is impatiently waiting for the next performance, for the adored hero to re-enter the limelight and the exotic world of DX-peditions. But as Professor Cass said in those ancient times, DXing is an everlasting joy... there is nothing else like it in amateur radio.



ANNOBON – MY FIRST SERIOUS LOVE... DX-WISE, THAT IS

This book would not be complete without a story about Annobon Island. It was my first true love, in the DXpedition sense of the term. And, who wouldn't remember his first love? It always comes back to mind, with all the events that made it such a memorable experience.

The basic elements of an all-out DXpedition were present. And, of course, the Ultimate Goal for an ambitious, serious DXpedition, the addition of a new counter to the DXCC List, was achieved with this one. What we did with this particular DX effort was to make

room, in a highly concrete sense, for Annobon to be placed on that List, the holiest of all lists.

Although the then President of Equatorial Guinea, His Excellency Don Francisco Macias Nguema, was our great idol at the time, having allowed this new DXCC counter to be born, later developments testified to the fact that we had been dealing with one of Africa's most brutal rulers and that we had run some of the greatest personal risks experienced so far during our dozens of expeditions to various parts of the world.

But as the annals of DX will tell every understanding reader, enterprising DXers should not go by the traditional patterns of foreign policy behavior. It has been stated many times that DXers are different, they look different and their philosophy is different. That's why they are Believers.

Perhaps this sincere and open approach coupled with determined and bold action made a favorable impression on that ruthless African leader to the extent that he decided to ensure the fulfillment of every DXer's dream, to allow 3C0AN to get on the air and spare the lives of two youthful DX brothers.

Another thing demonstrated by the Annobon experience was that DXers offer what is closer to true international friendship than any other activity. DX brings together the regulars who always look for more DX as well as the QRP types who are still worrying about whether they made it and when the QSL might be coming. In the background, there is also a select group of true Deserving DXers with a strength and a potential to offer interesting, lifelong friendships.

My colleague for the Annobon adventure was Ville Hiilesmaa, OH2MM, another young DXer of those other years, a friend among many other chums of my

youth. But as we joined forces for front-line DX-peditioning and together experienced its triumphs and tragedies, a true lifelong friendship was forged between us. Dozens of years later with the prospect of other DXploits in sight, friendships of this kind would prove invaluable and create a basis for more adventures and shared experiences that the wonderful and sometimes relative world of DX would offer.

The 3C0AN adventure came along when young love was in full bloom between two starry-eyed kids, this author and his girl. But their love had to experience that DXers are different, that one can be proud of being considered a right-thinking DXer or of being associated with that august fraternity of true Internationalists of Amateur Radio.

As I look back at those early days, the most memorable are of course the long hours spent after the Annobon expedition at the Helsinki University Central Hospital with a severe case of malaria which was just about to separate a loving couple, right at a point in time when DX was bright and plentiful and life was vibrant. But again, Leena had to experience that one must believe that DXers are different, that only one DXer understands another DXer and only a DXer understands DX...

Welcome to Annobon – 3C0AN

The island of Annobon in the South Atlantic has fired the imagination of radio amateurs for years. Because of the location of the island, it amply meets the strict DXCC criteria for separate country status.

Repeated efforts made by Don Miller, Gus Browning and many others in the past to undertake a first-ever DXpedition to Annobon had proved abortive.

Annobon and Fernando Poo, together with Rio Muni on the mainland, were all Spanish colonies up until 1968. With General Franco's kind consent, the colonies gained independence in October 1968 and presently constitute Equatorial Guinea. This development was duly noted by alert DXers closely following world events.

Planning for an Annobon operation got under way despite the fact that so far, all endeavors aimed at organizing a DXpedition to that part of the world had been turned down by Spanish authorities. They would not even allow Spanish nationals to operate from the colonies. But as educated DX types would not take "no" for an answer, a definite plan was now ironed out for a major operation from that newly independent country ready to join the distinguished DXCC Countries List.

Who would have the guts to face eye to eye the mysterious local African rulers? But on the other hand, they might turn out a friendlier lot than the old colonial masters. Never shrinking from an opportunity to serve the worldwide amateur community, the Finnish DX aficionados decided to live up to the challenge. We labored and sweated through it all, and met with ultimate success! The DXCC Countries List now shines with that African pearl, Annobon Island. Was it easy? No way!!

Early Preparations

Plans for activating Annobon were discussed initially with Armas, OH2NB, the Grand Old Man of



Armas Valste, OH2NB, a father figure of those early years for the other two featured Annobon types. Ville Hillesmaa, OH2MM, a world-class contester of more recent years and the author Martti Laine, OH2BH, looking forward to their next one.

Finnish DXing, who got in touch with some of his always useful Spanish contacts. Visa applications were mailed early the following year, explaining the purpose of the projected trip: to organize an amateur radio operation from Equatorial Guinea, the first since that country's independence.

At the time, Equatorial Guinea had established only one diplomatic mission overseas, an Embassy in Madrid to which we addressed our correspondence. A reply did come back from Madrid, asking us to state the reasons for our proposed trip.

Well, that sounded like having to give reasons for reasons... on and on. Later it dawned on us that the Embassy officials probably had skipped their homework for English classes. And so, all the documents were resubmitted, this time translated into Spanish.

The next response finally reaching us from Madrid fell little short of the hilarious; a formal letter apparently produced with the help of a shaky, old typewriter with some characters totally missing.

Anyway, it promised that our visas would be on hand well before the tentative departure date which was four months away.

A few weeks prior to the planned date of departure, we switched into high gear in order to do everything possible for our dream to come true. The Embassy in Madrid was flooded with follow-up inquiries and letters of recommendation, and our representative in Spain called at the Embassy daily. At times it looked like the planned DXpedition was the first real problem to confront the newly independent country of Equatorial Guinea. "Mañana – mañana"... and the scheduled date passed with no word from Spain.

But we certainly would not give up. Subsequently, OH2NB and OH2BH flew to Madrid for an on-site analysis of the problems involved. Visas had been promised but why weren't they issued?

Often we sat for hours in a waiting room of the Embassy of Equatorial Guinea without seeing any progress at all. It was only with the help of Finnish Embassy officials that the Guineans started moving. The Finnish Ambassador threw his full weight behind our case and the problems were finally solved. Everything was supposed to be in order.

A timid Guinean Embassy official made out two tourist visas, numbers 6 and 7, but would assume no responsibility for a radio operation. In any event, the visas were issued by that official fully aware of the purpose of our trip. Accordingly, we decided to give it a try.

Arriving in Spain with all the radio equipment, OH2MM obtained his visa as well, got all the needed vaccinations, and we were ready to buy tickets for a flight to Equatorial Guinea. It was time to bid farewell

to OH2NB at a Finnish Embassy cocktail party, and Armas returned to Helsinki having completed all the arrangements no one had managed before him.

Good-Bye Europe

While in Spain, we ran into all sorts of complications which were solved with the excellent assistance of EA4LH and EA4JL. These guys were really imbued with a genuine ham spirit.

June 20, our long-awaited day of departure, finally dawned with bright sunshine and blue skies. It was time to board an Iberian DC-8, an old workhorse, for a six-hour flight to Fernando Poo (3C). The twin-engine plane took off after a long delay and flew over North Africa to touch down at Santa Isabel's short runway. Our feelings were somewhat mixed since we had absolutely no idea of what lay in store for us. We had come face to face with a lot of puzzling situations over the past years but this was something entirely new and different.

The DC-8 taxied down the tarmac and at long last we disembarked to set foot on the soil of independent Equatorial Guinea, the first hams to do. The air was sticky, and high humidity levels made sure that, unaccustomed to that kind of climate, we were soon soaking wet through perspiration. It was the rainy season in the area but we saw no sign of any refreshing showers.

Having filled out various entry papers, we finally faced a line of stern-looking customs officials. Watching the officials go about their business, I would have been ready to fly back home but it was too late. A dozen customs officials searched through our baggage and nothing escaped their inquisitive, intruding eyes. Our

travel documents seemed to be of particular interest to them.

The terrible truth was all of our papers were confiscated. Damn it! We needed the papers... they were an absolute must for a successful operation. "The President will have a look at your papers and they will be returned to you tomorrow morning", said one official in fluent English. What? The President? Must be a pretty strict fellow that President. But we got off to a reasonable start, anyway.

Santa Isabel and Seven Days of Hard Work

Our hotel was located in the beautiful and idyllic town of Santa Isabel. The only hotel on the island, the Spanish-style Bahia was quite cozy and comfortable. A waterfront restaurant in the shade of beautiful palm trees was one of the amenities offered by the Bahia. Having checked into the hotel, we found our way to a top-floor room and hit the sack completely exhausted.

But what about our radio equipment? Well, we didn't dare even think about that after the grueling customs inspection. The gear was left at the airport awaiting better days to come.

We waited the following morning but there was no sign of our papers. Something had to be done and it was decided to explore the situation a bit. The next flight to Europe was due in a week's time while the whole world was expecting us to get on the air. Would we be leaving on that flight, or would we ever get out of here in the first place? Pardon me, but my thoughts keep going to back those dramatic days.

It was by sheer accident that we came across the American Embassy in town. "Let's go in – the

Americans have always been our friends”, we congratulated each other. Mr Alfred Erdos, the Charge d’Affaires, kindly agreed to see us in his office. The situation was explained to him and we emphasized our honest intentions.

But before we could finish our story, the diplomat almost went berserk. “What!!!?? Did I get it right? Radio contacts from here? You must be crazy! Now, get the next flight and leave this place as quickly as you can... if you can. The police check all telegrams here, all letters must be left unsealed at the Post Office, all whites are constantly shadowed by the police”.

Mr Erdos pulled down the blinds in his office. Trembling and sweating profusely, he escorted us to the backdoor of his office and more or less pushed us out into the street. “Good-bye, Mr Erdos”, we managed to shout before he slammed the door. Well, this diplomat apparently wanted to get rid of us and would have nothing to do with these DX types.

In the course of our discussion, however, we had learned the names of two Swedes and we sought them up immediately. The two guys were working for the ITU to train local personnel. Next morning the two of us joined forces with the Swedes and headed for the Ministry for Home Affairs. Mr Pale-Pale, a senior Ministry official, received us and listened patiently.

Our brief encounter spanned only a fleeting moment, and it took even less for this disgruntled civil servant to make his decision. A firm “no” came from Mr Pale-Pale with such natural flair that it instantly stopped us in our tracks. The DXpedition was over. We decided to concentrate on getting out of the country.

But not quite. This was just the beginning, after all. While strolling down the beautiful palm-lined

streets of Santa Isabel, an Army Land Rover pulled up beside us and three officers jumped out of the vehicle. They beckoned us into the Land Rover. Would this mark a violent and sad end to our story? The events of last year's New Year celebrations in Santa Isabel instantly flashed across our minds. According to the Swedes, three white men had been sacrificed to the gods at a big stadium. It seemed to us that the Africans had now rounded up another two for their next feast.

However, much to our relief, the officers only wanted to speak to us through an interpreter and then drove us to our hotel. While handing us the missing papers, the interpreter conveyed to us warm greetings from the President and his good wishes for a pleasant vacation. The officers shook hands with us and departed with a smile.

Now, what would be our next move since the President appeared to have forgotten all about the radio business? Thereupon a couple of letters were hastily drafted and we took them to the President's Palace where a body search followed before an officer showed us into a waiting room.

As local African custom dictated, two hours of tedious waiting ensued before the Chief of Protocol finally received us. Our letters with their enclosures



The famous Presidential Palace where plans for Annobon Island were nailed down.

were politely handed over to him and we then returned to the hotel, waiting for the President's reply. On the way back, we checked out the Iberian airfreight warehouse and casually looked around to see if our equipment remained unopened. Four days had passed since our arrival, and each day had proved more exciting than the preceding one.

On Wednesday, things finally started to move. An invitation was received from the President's Palace requesting us to report there immediately. After a few hours of waiting, to which we had grown accustomed by now, the Chief of Protocol formally announced that the President had issued an amateur radio permit. The document could be collected the following morning. Wow! Back to the hotel, but this time in an exuberant mood.

After a restless night's sleep, because the start of the DXpedition now seemed only hours away, we woke up and rushed to the Palace to pick up the permit which promised us full cooperation. In addition, we were asked to report to the local Telecom Office and the Ministry for Home Affairs. At the Ministry, our earlier acquaintance, Mr Pale-Pale, apologized for his unkind words and grinned from ear to ear. We shook hands and thought to ourselves that another valuable day had transpired.

Early Friday morning found us at the Telecom Office where a meeting was arranged with Mr Mateus, head of the agency's main department. It wasn't until sundown that we managed to explain to Mr Mateus everything about our equipment and our radio frequencies. This was the first time that the bewildered Telecom official had heard about the ITU allocating a 3C callsign prefix to the newly independent republic of Equatorial Guinea. However, our callsigns were issued expeditiously – under the President's orders –

and other radio amateurs were politely invited to follow suit.

The customs office was closed on Friday as the staff had a day off. A meeting was scheduled with Mr Mateus for the following morning when we would finally lay our hands on our valuable equipment. As we departed, our Telecom friend deplored the absence of any local amateurs with whom we could make contact on the air; surely our 200 watts could not be heard on the mainland.

They hadn't had much success with their own 5 kW broadcasting station over longer distances. Oh well, let's leave Mr Mateus alone. He was not yet ready to appreciate that there are things one must believe though one may not yet understand... one must be a Believer.

3CIEG and 7,500 Contacts

All the equipment was handed over to us in the morning without any problems whatsoever and the stuff was taken to our hotel room for installation. Operating commenced without any further delay and Hotel Bahia turned into Radio Bahia, as the hotel proprietor put it nicely. The equipment had endured the long arduous trip and functioned superbly. Dipoles mounted atop a 33-foot shining mast were radiating S9 signals all over the world.

Equatorial Guinea being an extremely rare country, the pileups were staggering. But despite the bedlam, the ultimate purpose of our trip was kept firmly in mind: Annobon was our goal, as a 1.5 kW generator sitting in a corner of our hotel room kept reminding us.

Daily visits were made to the harbor for inquiries about a ship that might ferry us to Annobon some 450 miles off the coast. The results seemed discouraging as there were only a few fishing vessels and these were in constant use. At some stage we met a Spanish shipowner who promised to help if we waited for two months. Now he was too busy with the fishing season at its peak. Undaunted, we met the guy almost every night and bombarded him with our questions and requests. A curious friendship developed between us and finally we managed to change our friend's mind.

So, boat transportation was arranged. Three days to Annobon, two days there and three on the way back. A 20-ton vessel would have a crew of six. That was the deal, and we could already picture ourselves on the shores of Annobon Island.

The following day saw us at the Ministry for Maritime Affairs to take care of some additional paperwork. Departure seemed certain and, in the harbor, plans were made for installation of an antenna for Maritime Mobile operating. In the meantime, Radio Bahia was busy tackling the huge pileups and would continue to do so for another three days until our departure.

But then Murphy struck. We faced one of the numerous setbacks that would haunt this trip. Our Spanish friend, the shipowner, told he had received a



Boat discussions in any harbor are interesting and educational. Unfortunately, in this case, the rulers of this DX land did not allow our vessel to go. Not at any price.

threat to his life should he go on a trip to Annobon and quit fishing. His country needed fish and the fishing industry was its major foreign exchange earner. Our friend was scared because many of his countrymen had been exiled following similar conflicts. He expressed regret but remained unshaken in his determination not to go.

If there were no radio-related problems around at the moment, others would turn up. One morning while talking to W2HCW on 40 meters, the door of our hotel room was suddenly opened. Somebody had a key to our room... how was that possible? Well, look who was standing there, our beautiful and always friendly hotel receptionist, in the nude beckoning this suffering DXer to another room... Gee whiz, I guess I forgot to sign off with W2HCW and started a frenetic QRZ on the frequency. But as they say, DXers are strong in resisting temptation, unswerving in principle, steadfast in their loyalty.

An announcement was made on the band that there would be no trip to Annobon since all hope was lost. Everyone sympathized with us and the feeling was that the whole world shared our grief. But not everyone just grieved or bemoaned our ill-fated mission. Something unique in the history of DX began to happen. The worldwide DX community demonstrated its unity and infinite resources by seeing to it that we would find access to transportation facilities taking us across the sea to the remote island of Annobon just south of the Equator.

Eva, PY2PE, out of Brazil got into action, studying various possibilities for reaching Annobon from Douala in Cameroon (TJ) or Libreville in Gabon (TR8). Several options seemed to be available and Eva had lined up the Ambassadors and Consuls of these countries to support our cause. The owner of a 300-foot

fishing vessel was contacted at Puerto Rico and he agreed, only the price proved prohibitive. Ville and I doubted whether the guy got the decimal point in the right place!

Finally we struck gold: Robert, TY1ABE, of Dahomey had taken care of everything. A Dahomey Army twin-engine Cessna would pick us up from Santa Isabel and fly us to Annobon. Price? Greenbacks just worth half a year's paycheck for the plane and crew, all to be placed at our disposal for one week. But wait a minute... there was no airfield on Annobon. What was needed was a seaplane with floats to land on the water in the vicinity of Annobon Island. Fair enough?

Farewell Santa Isabel - Mission Annobon

So, we'd gamble once more. The following Monday we were waiting at the airport for the Cessna to land. Inquiries were made about any airstrip on Annobon but everybody insisted that none existed there; they had all seen it for themselves.



But where are the floats ordered for landing? No kidding now since the price is paid and we have the best pilots on duty from the Air Force of Dahomey.

The plane touched down on schedule following a long flight from Dahomey to Santa Isabel. Two cheerful African pilots hopped out of the cockpit to greet us. They were told that everything was OK and we ready for takeoff to fly to the mysterious island of Annobon. Hams from the far side of the globe had arranged for the Cessna to airlift us to Annobon, hardly even knowing where that island was located. So, who were we to argue although the plane was equipped with no floats!

The two pilots were all eager to give it a try; they were professional army pilots, anyway. While the airmen were clearing red tape, we loaded our gear and supplies aboard the small 4-seat plane. Then all of a sudden the guys rushed back to tell us that the game was over, there would no flight to the enticing island. No flight permit would be issued because there was no runway. The Santa Isabel airport director would not take responsibility for a flight to a destination with no runway.

We were also told that no landing would be allowed on Sao Thome (S9) halfway between Santa Isabel and Annobon because diplomatic relations between the two countries were completely broken off. If we landed on Sao Thome, we'd have no business going back to Equatorial Guinea. A direct flight to Annobon was out of the question as well since we wouldn't have enough fuel for a flight back to Santa Isabel, should landing on Annobon prove impossible.

So, once again, we resolved the problem in keeping with local custom. All of us – pilots, airport officials and DXpeditioners – got on the Land Rover for a hurried ride to the President's Palace. We could always count on the President. He would fix the problem. And, Son of a Gun, he did it again!

The plan was to fly to Libreville, the capital of Gabon, for refueling and for a subsequent “reconnaissance” flight to Annobon some 280 miles away. They didn’t know anything about a possible Annobon airstrip at the President’s Palace, either, so there was no choice but to accept this proposition.

This was our ninth visit to the Presidential Palace in Santa Isabel. Just before dusk our Cessna took off for a flight through the clouds in extremely bad weather to Libreville, a remarkably European-style city but appallingly expensive. The prices were at least four times as high as back home.

After a good night’s sleep it was Thursday morning and we were into the fourth week of our adventure. Fresh and expectant, the two of us were ready for an extraordinary flight to Annobon, a new DXCC country, forlorn in the vast expanse of the roaring South Atlantic.

Welcome to Annobon – a Paradise Island

The mainland of Africa slowly disappeared from view as we headed out across the high seas to our little island. With a compass as our only means of navigation, we flew above the clouds to maintain our minimum altitude. After two hours of flying, the Cessna dived through the clouds close to sea level to allow us to make visual observations. We flew on and on but there was still no sign of Annobon.

At long last Lieutenant Tognisso exclaimed enthusiastically: “It may be behind those clouds just in front of us!” He was right. There was the island right in the middle of the ocean immersed in thick fog. Reducing altitude, we approached the northern tip of the island, flew over a village and its funny-looking

Farewell to Libreville, Gabon and now approaching the Atlantic Ocean. Lieutenant Tognisso was ready for a major adventure and risk taking to that far-off island with no recorded landing strip. Put your life jackets on – if something happens, we might still be safe...



huts but couldn't spot any airstrip. "Right there, below us, there's the field covered with bushes and shrubs", Tognisso shouted. "Let's go down", he said before diving for a perfect landing.

I was praying, fingers crossed and scared to death. The plane came down into an almost impenetrable patch of shrubbery several feet tall. I couldn't look out of the window... the wheels finally touched down. The Cessna 337 had dashed through the bushes before coming to a halt with tufts of grass stuck to the wheels. Luckily enough, there were no rocks or ditches along the way.

Lieutenant Tognisso and Captain Ayossa screamed ecstatically: "We did it, the Army of Dahomey did it!" There was a great deal of celebration, gesticulation and self-congratulation on the part of the two pilots whereas the two passengers were still huddled in the cabin stiff with fright.

The "airfield" was soon crowded with people. It seemed as if all the 1,400 inhabitants of Annobon had gathered there to welcome us to their paradise island. But they wouldn't approach more than within 100 yards of the plane, forming a thick human wall there.

A man dressed in uniform stepped forth and slowly started walking toward us. Introducing himself as the

Commandant of Annobon, the official welcomed us to his island and announced that we were the first white men to visit these parts in four years, the very first such visitors since the country's independence. The commanding officer also said the President had sent him a radio message advising him of our arrival.

The Commandant expressed regret that the airstrip hadn't been cleared of shrubbery, but added that he would see to it work would start the following day. Meanwhile, the natives gathered around us gradually mustered enough courage to come closer to the plane. The children had never seen such pale-skinned men and the airplane looked quite extraordinary, too. Finally a mile-long line of people started edging their way toward the village.

And in the crowd were two white men, guests sanctioned by the President and therefore not allowed to carry even their own bags. A quick last look at the Cessna taking off for a flight back to Libreville and we were ready to settle in, knowing that the plane would come back in four days to pick us up.

Full speed ahead through the bushes, the plane barely managed to get airborne at the far end of the "runway". But it did and, making a flyby overhead, waved its wings for a good-bye. Watching the cumbersome takeoff, we concluded that four persons plus equipment wouldn't make it from Annobon. Takeoff friction and loss of acceleration due to vegetation would make any attempt a sheer impossibility.

But all future worries were brushed aside since the start of our DXpedition was now only hours away. We walked some two miles to the village where we were shown our quarters. A goodly stone building was reserved for these two unlikely visitors at the other

side of the village. The house was built especially for official guests – only there hadn't been any for years.

A nice living room, a kitchen with gas and a refrigerator, a bedroom for both of us and, on top of all this luxury, a bathroom with running water. Whoever told us stories about the savage natives, we couldn't agree with them. The locals here were thoughtful and hospitable. They knew the meaning of "luxury" although they lived in grass huts themselves.

The house had electricity, too! We were supplied with 220 volts, 50 Hz three hours a day. And there was enough oil for the generator to run for a few weeks more, after which the island would be left in total darkness. It was a touching sight to watch the illuminated Annobon village silhouetted against the dark blue Atlantic in the evening at sundown.

Up with the antennas and let's get the generator humming away! 3C0AN was on the air after years of waiting. Bill, W3RX, was the first contact with our dipole just 5 feet off the ground. The pileup was simply out of sight. Everyone wanted to work a brand-new DXCC country. G5AFA was the first European to get through and VE3ACD the first Canadian.

Then the proceedings were brought to a temporary halt as the antenna was hoisted a bit higher. Somebody had sustained RF burns having touched the strange-looking antenna. Then back to the never-ending pileups.

One of the Deserving Locals in the pileup was OH2QV who passed a message from my young XYL. Leena had come to the airport in Helsinki to wish us Godspeed as we left for our adventure. Now, the word from OH2QV was "positive - positive - message from Leena". Well, what that cryptic phrase told this tired

DXpeditioner in the South Atlantic was that my lovely lady was pregnant with our first baby. That was great news and made my day. Obviously it was hard to keep one's thoughts from returning to the northern parts where DX was not yet as plentiful as here in the south.

During the first few days, the natives gathered around our house to stare at what we were up to but soon they got accustomed to our awkward daily routines and accepted us as members of the island community.

Victor, the island's radio operator, spent a lot of time with us, practicing with the electronic keyer and even chatting with the Spanish crowd on SSB. Annobon's 84-year old priest came to see us and asked us to forward a letter to his colleague in Santa Isabel. All told, we got dozens of letters to take back to the mainland.

It occurred to us that our sunglasses and wristwatches might contribute toward a further broadening of mutual understanding between the islanders and us. With this in mind, then, the Commandant was presented with OH2MM's watch, the one that Ville had received as a gift from his parents on his 21st birthday. It was all for amateur radio.



I still regret we did not persuade Victor, Annobon's radio operator, to become one of the Deserving and join the ranks of the DX community. He was able to handle the traffic using this ugly gear.

ANNOBON ISLAND



Many DX types of recent years have inquired about the airstrip used by our hair-raising initial landing on Annobon.



A fishing fleet, Annobon-style. The Lord has given those distant people everything they need to survive and enjoy their paradise island known as 3C0-land to the Deserving.



This is Main Street, Annobon Island. When Spanish people had left some three years prior to our operation, no more building materials had been supplied by more recent rulers.

These white beaches and the friendly people are remembered forever by those who have seen them and experienced DXotica.



An official lunch with the Commandant did not turn out an easy experience, any more than the rest of this DXpedition. Heaped on my plate were creatures looking like raw snails, probably one of the specialties of the island. Without our host noticing anything, I was able to stuff these goodies into my pocket while complimenting the commanding officer on a delicious meal. I had no other choice since swallowing those squirmy, slimy little beasts was just impossible.

The operating continued nonstop except for brief spells when the generator was filled up every couple of hours. Band conditions were just great twenty-four hours a day and there was hardly any time to stop for chow; canned food was available. Both of us were busy handing out reports to make everyone happy around the world.

Friday dawned and the Cessna was expected to return that day. It did and landed beautifully on Annobon's airfield: 500 women – men didn't work on the island – had spent four days clearing the field. In return, the pilots brought batteries and tobacco for the islanders. Visiting the village that night we discovered that the 150 or so batteries were put to good use, music was playing in every hut.

At daybreak on Saturday we were sad to bid goodbye to Annobon, our true friends, their wonderful village, its rugged mountains, white sandy beaches and magnificent climate. We left the people of Annobon to their paradise island. They waved us goodbye, this pale-faced duo of intrepid DXpeditioners who would always treasure their memories of those days spent on the DXotic island.



– Martti and Ville! Are you still on the island?

After reaching Libreville we continued that same evening to Santa Isabel where a few hours were spent together with the pilots. We had become good friends

Our highly fortunate DXpedition ended up at Aurora Hospital in Helsinki with a most unfortunate case of malaria – with three different malaria infections. But we were coming through... DXers are a heavy, tough bunch... DXers are a happy lot.

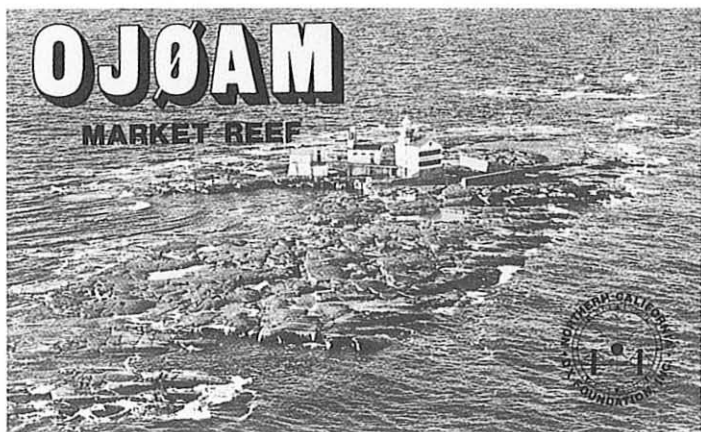


and all of us were equally happy about our success. The following morning it was time to bid farewell to the fearless aviators. It was particularly sad to say good-bye to the friendly people of Equatorial Guinea and their President who had supported the birth of a new DXCC country counter.

Now it was party time. After each party, the regulars would have some rest, especially if they were in for a trans-equatorial flight the following morning. But that was not the case with us DX Believers who raised an antenna during the small wee hours to run a pileup signing 3C1EG again. Not surprisingly, there were many takers who asked when we might be returning to Annobon and “where are you going next?”

And so, it was time to head back to the Old World, Madrid, Paris, Amsterdam and finally Helsinki. We had experienced a great DXpedition with all its amusing incidents and hearty welcomes. Something like 15,000 DXers the world over shared the adventure with us and each one was rewarded with a QSL card.

So the story ends. On a final note, I might add that back home, we spent four long weeks in hospital having contracted malaria. We were also saddened by news of the brutal murder of the American diplomat whom we had met in Santa Isabel.



THE STORMS OF MARKET REEF – DX ON THE ROCKS

As it says in the Scripture, DX is distant and mysterious. But it has also been said that everything is relative, and when it comes to making new DXCC countries, this is even more so. When you add to that the old notion of the other man's grass always being greener, you have a case for a major effort. And, indeed, another DXCC country was in the making.

Returning with a gang of DX Brothers from one of our early DXploits on Aland Islands (OH0), we laid our hands, just by accident, on a Swedish magazine article entitled "The Barren Rock of Market Reef and its Lighthouse Keepers". These were guys who spent their time

operating that important Baltic Sea light to assist international shipping.

All pictures taken of the reef really looked like ones from a rare DX spot with difficult access and rolling surf. The lighthouse keepers had some trouble understanding where they, so close to the Aland island group but not falling within the jurisdiction of OH0 tax authorities, ought to be paying their local taxes. Market Reef did not belong to Aland Islands or its many small island communities. But wait a minute! As DX Professor Cass said many light-years ago, and Cass is still with us to prove it, the DXCC List is unquestionably one of the true Mysteries of the Ages.

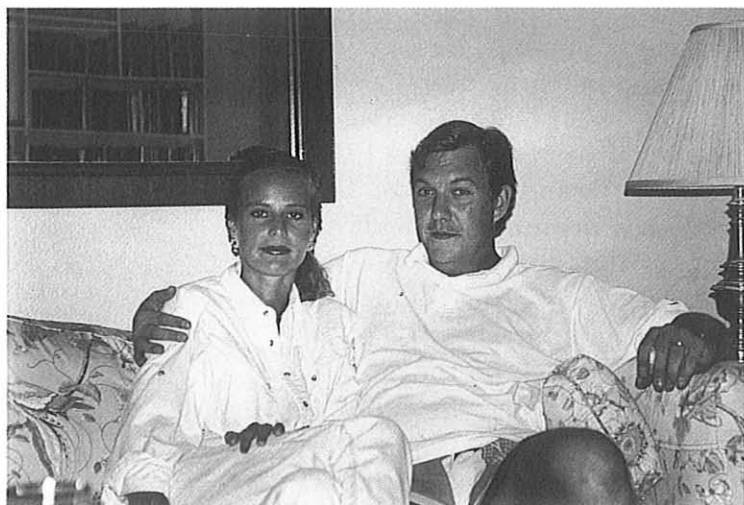
By this time, everybody was leaping to his feet. We were beginning to understand that it was not really matters of jurisdiction that were important but rather that we kept the DXCC interesting. The heck with taxes! Just bring on the DX... and more.

If you are still wondering about these things, you may not have seen the Light yet. It may have happened in other far-off DX lands beyond the horizon that when you finished DXing today and went to bed in one country, you woke up the following morning in another one. Just like in the Pacific where you were supposed to be operating from one country but, as things eventually turned out, you were on from two counters – all at the same time. So, indeed, we are involved with the Mysteries of the Ages here. Just believe and you will have as much fun as believing in Santa Claus.

Along with this barren rock, Finland became a holy country of DX. There were many Deserving DXers coming our way en route to Market Reef while others swung their beams in that direction every so often. It was no surprise, then, that Finland was chosen as the

first posting for one of the Deserving by the name of David Heil, K8MN, who not only ended up among the local Believers but set out for a DX assault on Market Reef despite his busy diplomatic duties. When awesome waves were rolling over that DXCC rock, Dave fully realized that he was right on course and became a Believer.

Dave is gone now in search of other DX lands and adventures but there is a steady flow of wandering DX types going to that desolate reef year after year. They want to feel the magic of DX and share in the excitement of DXpeditioning. But let Dave tell you the story. We were pleased to have him here in these northern parts. To make sure he would return, we had our DX wizard Leila accompany the fearless American diplomat, Leila ultimately becoming his most charming Finnish wife. But that is another story. Now it's time to depart for Market Reef, my next country down the line.



One of the local Believers, Dave, K8MN, and his DX wizard, Leila.

- Photo OH7XM

An Ordeal in OJ0-Land

by *Dave Heil, K8MN/9L1US*

I suppose the idea started during those twenty-meter schedules between Don, K8MFO and Martti, OH2BH. Don had been intrigued with the idea of a trip to Market Reef with an emphasis on the lower three bands, especially 160 meters. Wayne, W6EUF, had taken part in one of the previous OJ0AM operations and was anxious to make another trip. After considerable organizational work on the part of OH2BH, the trip began to take shape.

Market Reef is a tiny dot of rock at 60 degrees, 18 minutes, 10 seconds north and 19 degrees, 8 minutes, 3 seconds east on most maps and charts and is nonexistent on others. The reef is roughly 2-1/2 hours west of the westernmost island of Aland by small boat. It sits astride the Finnish-Swedish border and is of importance for its computerized remotely controlled weather station and because its lighthouse warns freighters plying the nearby shipping lanes of the dangerous rocks which abound in the area.

The lighthouse was erected in 1885 by the Russians, Finland then being a Grand Duchy of the Czarist Empire. Early records are quite difficult to come by and are written in the Russian language. Wooden barracks were constructed on the reef for the workmen who were to build the light. They began to lay its foundation from rock quarried on the site. A tremendous storm swept away the barracks and the portion of the foundation which had been completed. Three men were lost to the angry sea.

After this disaster, plans were revised and stone for the new foundation was quarried and cut to proper size in the Helsinki area and ferried to Market ready to be set into place. The work crews slept aboard a ship anchored nearby and ferried to and from the construction site daily. Work was completed in a year.

During ensuing years two additional buildings were added and connected to the lighthouse by an elevated catwalk some 15 feet in the air. Access to the catwalk is via a series of iron rungs set in the wall of the furthest building or by a steel ladder at the lighthouse end. The middle building is the power generation site for the complex and houses three aged and unreliable diesel generators.

DXCC-wise, Market Reef made it to the Countries List in the latter part of 1969 following Martti's initiative which was heavily supported by Armas Valste, OH2NB, then President of the Finnish Amateur Radio League (SRAL). The criteria were fully met based on the "separation" clause. Market Reef was, and is, administered by the Finnish government, not by the local authorities of Aland Islands which constitute an autonomous province of the Republic of Finland. The



Sigge Mansnerus, OH0NI, played a major role in early DX adventures to Market Reef. But the icy seas, surrounding his beloved island, took their toll. Sigge and his son were found in the freezing sea dead a few minutes after their sailing boat had capsized.

ARRL decision was pretty straightforward and was met with great jubilation on the part of Deserving DXers notably in Finland with a New One rising from the sea right off the coast.

Putting the Pieces Together

The Finnish Coast Guard, through efforts by Lars Nikko, OH0RJ, was kind enough to airlift a new diesel generator in by helicopter and permit us to use it for our operation. Market Reef Power Unlimited (OH0RJ) was like working from commercial mains.

In addition to the Coast Guard landing permit and permission for entry to the lighthouse, licenses were obtained from the Finnish Telecom Office for the other two Americans who would make the trip and for our friends from Ceuta, Juan, EA9IE, and his wife, Pilar, EA9AM. My own permission for operation from Market arrived just three days before our departure date. The visitors began to filter into Finland on various dates toward the end of June. Wayne, W6EUF, headed for the OH0W operating site on Brando Island in the Aland group for some operating time, and Don managed to get in ten or twelve hours from that location as well just before we left for the reef.

The organizing committee for our upcoming adventure scheduled a meeting to coincide with the SRAL summer camp, i.e. a combination of Field Day and hamfest, held in the city of Pori on Finland's west coast. Many DX and contest-related activities were included on the agenda for the Pori session and it was amazing to see the number of Deserving DX types tall with towers and high with power that this small country on the Arctic circle was able to commit to the world arena of serious DXing and contesting.

Don conducted a CW pileup copying contest and he, Wayne and I were honored to take part in a DX Forum with Baldur, DJ6SI and Juan, EA9IE. It was a truly international event and all true-blue DXers were in great spirits.

The evening festivities were organized highly professionally while maintaining a relaxed mood. Sometime in the small wee hours of the morning, SRAL President Axel, OH5NW, consumed his entire wine glass, including stem. I would like to see the folks at Newington top that!

Some of the Finnish DXCC types introduced me to their canned frog legs and heavy shots of schnapps and showed me the local version of crepes suzette prepared over an open fire. People laughed, sang, drank, and danced their way through the short Finnish summer night. What a beginning for our DX adventure to that barren rock, Market Reef!

I returned to Helsinki on Sunday to load my car for the next morning's trip. We were finally on our way on the morning of July 7. Martti and his family had spent the night at their country home, and we met Martti on the highway and convoyed the rest of the way to Turku. Once there, we wound our way through this beautiful city to the Viking Line ferry terminal for the trip to Aland's capital, Maarianhamina. Don and Vilho Flink, OH2BAZ (OH0BA), would meet us there.

Enjoying the Beauty of the Finnish Archipelago

The two cars were loaded onto the big Viking Line ferry, and we went topside to one of the ship's cafeterias where we ran into Baldur, DJ6SI, destined for a short holiday in Aland Islands. We found a table large enough to accommodate the group and

proceeded to talk away a good portion of the trip over glasses of cold Finnish beer. The always-hungry Martti suggested we move to the ship's dining room for some lunch. Baldur introduced us to an excellent German white wine to accompany our meal.

After lunch the group assembled on the deck for a look around. We caught sight of another Viking Line ship heading for Stockholm and, like ours, plying slowly through the waters of the archipelago. We stood aft on the uppermost deck looking over the hordes of sunbathers taking advantage of the pleasant July weather on the ship's fantail. We took turns snapping photos and took great delight in the sight of each small tree-covered island we passed. It seemed a posh way to go on a DXpedition.

Arriving in the quaint little city of Maarianhamina, we checked into our hotel and enjoyed a late afternoon nap. Don and Vilho would arrive late that night via the government ferry. The rest of us grabbed a bite of dinner at a small grill and drove to the OH0AA shack to attend a regularly scheduled meeting of the Aland Radio Club. The club members cut short their normal meeting and took us for coffee at a local snack bar. OH0NC and XYL OH0YL entertained us in their home afterward.

Maarianhamina's center for night life is the Hotel Arkipelag. Some of us decided to sample its hospitality more deeply while the rest of the gang chose to spend some time chatting over a glass of beer in the lounge. Feeling a bit more adventurous, I chose the disco. I crawled back to the hotel after about 3:00 a.m. Martti must have known how late I was out, as I got a wakeup call from the hotel operator at six, a full hour before anyone else arose. I'm still planning my opportunity for revenge.

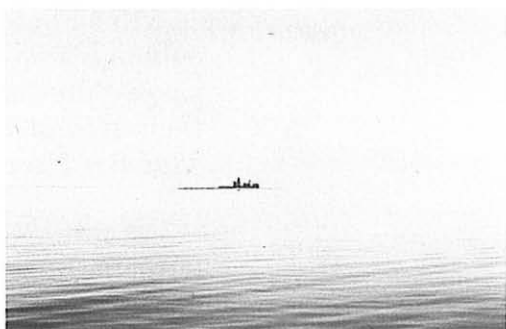
Vilho Flink, as far as I can tell, lacks confidence in only one area – his ability to speak English. Martti asked Vilho how he and Don had gotten along during their stay at OH0, and Flink replied that his arms were tired from speaking so much English.

After breakfast we drove to the home of Kee, OH0NA, to get the provisions loaded and to take the 2-element 40-meter beam off the tower. As things turned out, we would never use it on the reef. Some time later we drove to Eckero, our jumping-off point for the trip. It took some doing, but after a lot of hard work we got the boat loaded and chugged out of the boathouse at about noon local time with nine passengers, a tower, two Yagis, several transceivers and amplifiers, and all of the food and drinks we would need for our week's stay.

Kee's son Mikael took the wheel while Kee sat perched precariously on the roof of the tiny cabin. Seas were a bit rough and the little boat yawed widely. Kee, his hair flying in the breeze, hung on with one hand, smoking cigarettes, swigging Coca-Cola, and charting our course through rocks often barely beneath the surface.

Nearly midway on our 2-hour and 20-minute trip, the lighthouse and adjoining buildings of Market came into view as white specks on the horizon. As we cleared the nearby islands, the seas became more turbulent and, while queasiness was not the rule, there were a couple of faces which were of a different hue than at departure. We had expected that due to the seas we might not be able to land on Market, and that Kee might have to swim to the reef and bring out a longboat to ferry the cargo ashore.

Our Spanish friends Juan and Pilar who had come along just to be able to see Market, were invaluable in



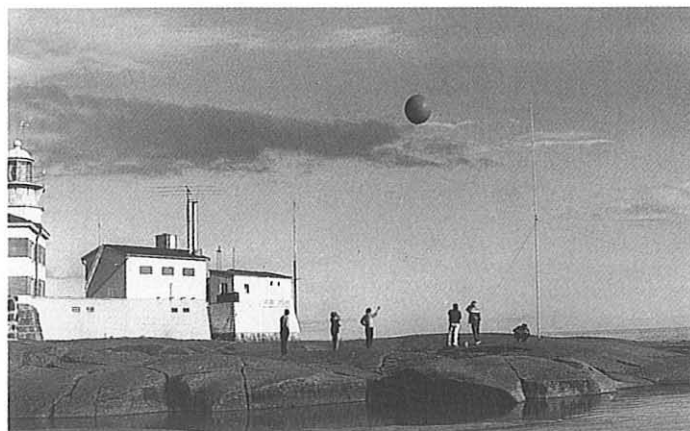
DX counters can at times be hard to locate. But when they rise from the horizon, they bring a playground for the Deserving. Are there many rocks still to be discovered? This is Market Reef.

helping to offload the equipment. They spent the next several hours exploring every inch of the island. Juan was very excited about writing an article for publication in one of the Spanish amateur radio magazines. He and Pilar accompanied the boat to Aland in the late afternoon. The rest of us were now quite isolated on Market.

On the Rocks Now...

The laborious process of stowing equipment and provisions and of setting up our sleeping quarters in the musty-smelling lighthouse began. The lighthouse basement held three concrete water tanks which were filled by the runoff of rain water from the roof. Kee warned us not to take water from the far tank as it contained contaminated "Chernobyl water". We goggled at this unit until we found that he wasn't joking.

We set about getting the CW station set up. Our plan called for getting one station fully operational while the rest of the team worked to put up the tower and assembled the equipment for the second station. We went on the air at 1435 UTC July 8 with K8MFO



Large weather balloons were hauled up and a quarter-wave vertical was made. But our signal was not strong enough to clean up our transmitting frequency.

at the key. Our first QSO was JA1BLC, closely followed by our first U.S. contact, W8QWI.

Through the ingenuity of Kee, a block and tackle fixed to the top of the lighthouse was used to bring up the 50-foot aluminum tower and 203BA. If this reads as if it was an easy task, don't be misled. We had a lot of trouble mounting the beam. The wooden ladder used to support the tower in a horizontal position began to splinter and fall apart and the gusty winds made it necessary to have someone at the ends of several lines to stay the tower as the others hoisted it into a vertical position.

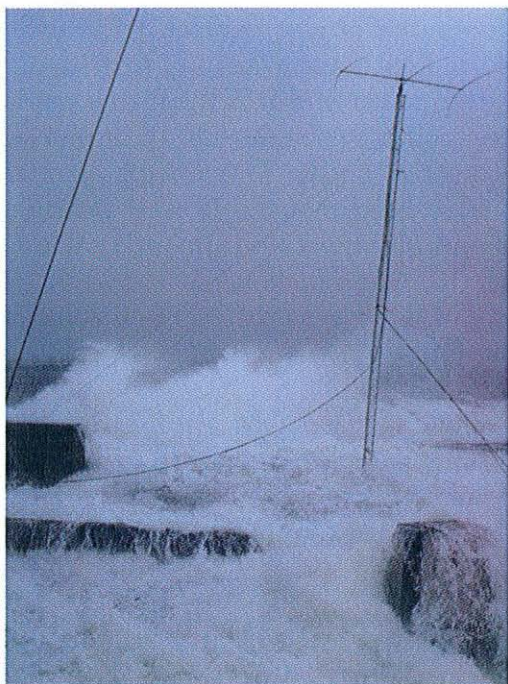
Fortunately we had plenty of daylight for the task, as our operation began only two weeks after the summer solstice. Our "night" was a few hours of twilight. It was this which would make our operation on 160, 80 and 40 a real challenge.

The CW station used a TH3 tribander mounted atop a reinforced concrete structure which jugged fifteen or twenty feet above the roof of the generator building. A quarter-wave vertical was erected on the rocks using a beer bottle as a base insulator. Don gamely drank the beer in furtherance of our effort. An

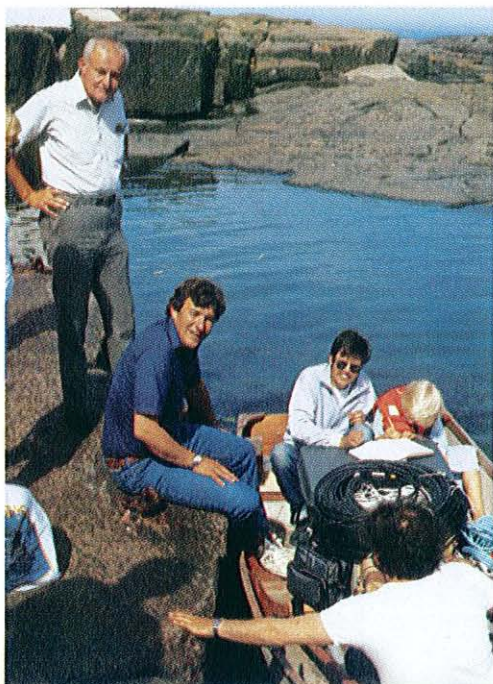
MARKET REEF



Anyone who has spent some time inside the Market light and has seen the endless sea will become a Believer. DX-wise, at least.



The mighty power of nature. Is it strong enough to stand the waves? Is there anyone in the white house?



Kee, OH0NA, is ready to pull out the small boat and ferry much of the gear from the vessel waiting some distance away from the rocks.



The cast, from left: OH2BAZ, K8MFO, OH0RJ, OH0NA, OH2BH, W6EUF and K8MN.

80-meter inverted-vee was hoisted to the top of another mast near the CW position.

Since Don, Vilho and I are 160-meter fans, a huge helium tank and several large balloons were hauled along on the trip. Vilho and Don inflated one of the balloons and attached 100 meters of polypropylene cord, spiral-wrapped with very fine wire. Another light cord was attached as a tether and the balloon was sent aloft. The big blue balloon looked great as it floated above the little island. We would soon find out if it worked.

After both stations were up and running, we settled into the tedium of operating. I'm sure that anyone who has been on an expedition of this type will tell you that not every moment is thrilling. One gets a kick out of working some exotic country, exchanging reports with a buddy back home, or seeing a very high QSO rate during a peak opening, but a lot of DXpeditioning is being tired, cold, uncomfortable, or bored when not operating.

Oh sure, we had quite a few of life's amenities and were even able to operate two kilowatt stations on the

same band simultaneously. The stuff that stories like this are made of is people – not rates, equipment, or antennas. Those of you who worked us know how high the rates were, and you know we had equipment and antennas that worked.

Cast of Characters

K8MFO is an iron man, plain and simple. Don's a CW man who can sit at a rig for hours and hours. He loves operating 160 and 80 digging through the static crashes for weak ones. We teased that he is the only member of the team to sleep in his boots for a week so as not to miss an opening. While we were friends back in Ohio I often had the disappointment to hear weak DX signals on top band come back "K8M?", call them again and hear them give a report to "K8MFO" instead of "K8MN". About the only times we would see each other were over a drink at one of the Dayton Hamvention DX hospitality suites. This time we would have a chance to share the top band operation from the same shack.

One thing we didn't lack on Market Reef was food. It wasn't fancy, but it was filling and warm. OH0NA was, in addition to being the former lighthouse keeper on Market, the expert on the history of the place, a first-class sailor, and our chef. Kee kept us on a regular feeding and coffee break schedule for the duration of the DXpedition. He knew nothing of amateur radio until OH2BH and friends first invaded his reef in 1970. He became interested in ham radio and taught himself the code and theory. After he got his license, he got on the air and taught himself English. OJOMA hit the airwaves with NCDXF-donated gear.

OH0RJ was a breath of fresh air. His sense of humor and abilities as a conversationalist kept us



Following some early outings to Market, DXCC was presented to the lighthouse crew. But even more important, Karl-Erik, OJØMA, featured on the left, was born for reliable service for the Deserving.

entertained throughout our stay. Although he is originally from Vaasa in OH6-land, he has lived on Åland for many years, working for the Finnish Broadcasting Company there. In addition to keeping Market Reef Power Unlimited at 220 volts, 50 Hz, he aided Kee in keeping our stomachs full. Lars was content to keep in touch with his friends on Åland and the mainland on 80 meters during most of the week, but we finally coaxed him into a 20-meter SSB stint the last day of the operation.

If you could choose one man to take on a DX-pedition, you would have to search high and low to find anyone more suitable than OH2BAZ. Vilho is a former rally driver who now owns several taxis in Helsinki. He is an expert antenna man and dedicated operator. Vilho is a natural left-hander who has taught himself to send with the left hand while simultaneously logging with the right. His dedication to the cause included changing the position of the 40-meter sloper several times each day to favor band openings. As the weather would bring down our top-band balloon, Flink would come up with a new idea for keeping us on 160. He had Market fairly well covered with copper radial wires for various verticals for several bands.



DXpeditioner and DX publisher out of Long Beach, Wayne, W6EUF, ready for the country club on OJ0...

W6EUF of Long Beach, California was the only American member of the group who had been on Market Reef before. Wayne favors SSB and put in some long hours manning the SSB station during 20-meter U.S. openings. Despite limited fresh water and opportunities for bathing and shaving, Wayne always managed to look as if he was ready for an afternoon of golf at the country club. While most of us spent our free time sleeping, Wayne would heat water for shaving or tend to some hand-washing of his wardrobe. Wayne lost composure only when his cigar supply became exhausted at the end of our stay.

The glue that held the Market team together was Martti Laine. I don't think there exists a DXer who doesn't know who OH2BH is. Equally at ease on SSB or CW, Martti is a master DXer and contester. He has unlimited love for our hobby and a deep sense of its history. Martti's greatest attribute is his sense of humor. His "Micro-DB Theory" and his ideas about pileups as "theater" are masterpieces, yet it's not necessary to dig too deeply beneath the comedic to find the truth.

Operational Observations

When the last antenna came down and the final piece of gear had been loaded onto the boat, the 150 hours of operating had netted us 18,257 QSOs, a new record for a Market Reef operation. If you needed Market and didn't work us, you either were not on the air that week or spent your time working 80 meters at noon local time.

Some of the East Coast U.S. top band operators got a bonus. Don and I managed to work over thirty of them – the first ever U.S.A./Market Reef 160-meter QSOs. The first five Statesiders contacted were K1ZM, K2EK, W3BGN, AA1K and K1IU. We would have worked many more had some not spoiled things for the many. We copied many more calls than we worked and even tried to have the Stateside operators clear our transmitting frequency and call us 1 or 2 kHz higher. Our request apparently was not heard because of the U.S. gang still calling.

Interestingly, we would receive almost twice as many QSLs as we had QSOs on 160. Creativity is not dead. We were tickled to work VK6HD, some Canadians, several South Americans, and a South African on top band along with hordes of Europeans.

Operating technique by American operators seems to be improving for the most part. One disturbing practice by a few of the new operators is that of giving your call and a signal report even though you have not been acknowledged by the DX station. It's risky and not very wise. Having a station ask for QSL information every two or three minutes is quite annoying. During operation from Market we gave QSL information about every ten minutes. Still there were those who persisted in asking for QSL information repeatedly every few seconds.

One other pet peeve we developed is the operator who jumps into the pileup, gets and gives a signal report, and proceeds to ask for our call. Gad, if you don't listen long enough to find out who you are calling, what kind of operator are you?

Part of our operation took place over the IARU contest weekend. We had a lot of fun passing out the contest QSOs, though we were not in a rare zone. We made no real effort to go for score, but figured that there would be those happy to pick up a couple of points in the test and maybe pick up a new DXCC counter in the process.

On July 10 the winds picked up a bit and the sea was showing a pronounced chop. Kee predicted a storm and told us it might be a big one. He mentioned that if it came to pass we might have to remain on the island for longer than planned. The prospect did not exactly thrill Wayne and myself. Wayne had a plane to catch and I had to be back in Helsinki for work at the Embassy on the 17th.

DXcitement - Rock'n Roll

The morning of the 11th brought high seas and stiff winds. An aluminum ladder which we had used to gain access to the roof of the generator building clattered to the lower level. Vilho lowered the balloon supporting the 160-meter vertical and tied it off. We watched a number of diving ducks head toward open water to ride out the storm, and the few seals which had been sunning themselves on the rocks some distance offshore for several days were nowhere to be seen.

By 4:30 p.m. local time the waves were washing over most of the island and our rocky piece of DXCC real estate became smaller and smaller. A large

freighter passing by was tossed about by the Baltic's churning gray-green waters. Kee, Don and I began moving everything not fastened down into the lower level of one of the buildings.

The wind howled through the CW station and occasional gusts shook the entire building. Gusts of cold, damp air made it necessary for Don and myself to wear sweatshirts. The heat from the equipment did little to warm us. A Finnish Coast Guard Super Puma helicopter made low passes to check our situation. Those of us not operating dashed outside to have a look at the chopper.

Kee shouted above the wind that the really high waves would begin after the wind died down somewhat. He mentioned that he had once been stranded on the island for five weeks and that his father had been stuck there for six weeks during a similar storm. I left the shelter of the lighthouse and began moving about the surface of the island snapping photos of the storm. Lars shouted and waved me back to the light and cautioned me of the danger of being swept away by the surging water.

Anytime we moved out of shelter of the buildings to cross the narrow catwalk, the wind buffeting was tremendous and we were thankful for the sturdy railings. The elements of the 203 were molded into a seemingly permanent arc by the pressure of the wind. The smaller TH3 rode the storm much better, and the tiny Yagi did little more than shudder during the gusts. A problem developed with the rotor control and Vilho clambered up the tower to check the situation.

That evening after our dinner in the shabby but warm kitchen of the lighthouse, the bands were in poor condition and we gathered for some coffee and cigarettes around the table. We discussed our strategy

for the remainder of the expedition and pondered whether or not we would make it off the reef on schedule. We had communications with the mainland through the courtesy of Nokia Co. which had provided us with a reliable portable radio-telephone with direct-dial capabilities. Martti suggested that in the event we were not able to land the boat, we consider arranging for a helicopter to return Wayne and myself to Helsinki.

I produced a bottle of Finlandia vodka and Martti poured some into schnapps glasses and began his comedy routine.

“As they say in Finland,” he began, “I don’t think we came here to talk”, and he downed his first glass. Kee turned on the TV (television on an expedition?) and tuned to the “Twilight Zone”, appropriately enough, with Finnish and Swedish subtitles. The lighthearted mood continued as we downed the rest of the bottle and began to consume a bottle of cognac which Don had brought along.

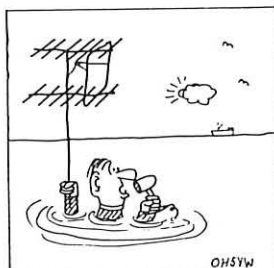
Martti promoted the idea that if the storm continued, we could all become band specialists, Vilho becoming friends with all the 40-meter Japanese crowd, Don and I getting to know the North American set on top band, and he learning about the family lives of the Ukrainians rolling in on 20 meters short skip. He even claimed to have worked all the UB5s from WAA to WZZ. After he had us in stitches he continued.

“You know that Don chose all the operating frequencies in advance, and all I can hear on 7,090 kHz is sort of symphony from Radio Peking”. The last of the cognac disappeared, and we began downing Johnny Walker and Pepsi. Martti launched into a tale of how he and a friend had been out in the woods with an old man, a veteran of the war. They’d had a bottle

of vodka along, and as they shared it, they had gotten the old gentleman talking about the battles he had been in.

Before long the fellow was running through the woods chasing an invisible enemy and shouting "RAUTAA RAJALLE" - Finnish for "More iron into the border". Somehow it sounded good in Finnish with the heavily rolled "Rs", even to American ears. It caught on and became our motto for the expedition. Later in the evening Kee, Martti, Don and I climbed the narrow winding stairs to the light and received a spectacular view of the waves pounding Market Reef. The wind gusts were so fearsome and it felt at times as if the heavy plate glass would come crashing in on us. Sometime during the night, the balloon supporting the top-band vertical dashed itself to pieces on the rocks.

July 12, despite the worsening storm, our operation continued. Rates were still high and the bands were in good shape. The seas were now running between twenty to thirty feet and the winds in the 90-to-100 kilometers per hour range. The waves crashed over the seawall and flowed to the base of the lighthouse. Water flowed over the entire island. Martti reported that as he sat in the "white house" a huge wave had surged over it. Market Reef now boasted its first flush toilet.



- All OK here on Market Reef...except for that high tide...

The sea was now pounding the base of the tower. Vilho calmly pronounced that the tower would soon come down. He was right. About thirty minutes later while Martti, Vilho, and I watched from the catwalk, the first of the large guys gave way, and before any of us could raise a camera to catch the action, the tower swung toward the rocks in a graceful arc. The 203 was smashed and for some minutes the tower lay there.

Eventually the tower was washed from the reef and headed toward Sweden.



Wayne had been working 4Z4EU on SSB at the time and wondered what happened to the band. I rushed to the CW shack to notify Don. He simply nodded and kept operating. A barefoot Kee lashed a rope to his waist and took another line in an effort to get to the tower, but the winds drove him back to the shelter of the lighthouse. Eventually the tower was washed from the reef into the shallow harbor and large chunks of what had been the 203BA headed toward Sweden. Don remarked that Vilho would probably salvage the tower and try using it as a replacement for our top-band vertical.

DX Life is Marginal and Severe!

The next day Martti and I decided that we couldn't stand to smell ourselves any longer. We grabbed soap and towels and braved the remnants of the storm to have a quick bath in one of the shallow pools of icy water on the rocks. The cold winds mercifully numbed us as we squatted and splashed ourselves like two oversized baby birds. It was not the most unpleasant thing I have ever done, but it ranks near the top. We agreed that it had been worth the discomfort.

That night we had another of our kitchen sessions. Most of us had run out of cigarettes, and Lars kindly



Two oversized baby birds splashing in icy water. A major DX problem. You cannot stand your smell any longer.

resupplied us from his stock. After we finished the last of the scotch whiskey, someone remembered the big bottle of Finlandia we had presented to the now-sleeping Lars as a gift. Martti told us that he would handle the situation and headed for the darkened bedroom. We heard Lars mutter something in Finnish and Martti returned with the flask. I asked him what Lars had said.

“He asked if we would leave him his shirt”, replied Laine. Don agreed to replace the gift.

The weather began to improve over the weekend, though as Kee had predicted, the waves were high even on Monday. Things did not look good for a Tuesday departure. The QSOs continued to pile up, and Flink experimented with a number of top-band antennas. Don, Wayne, and I were ready to leave and were getting worried about the prospect of being forced to remain on the island despite assurances that a boat was standing by in Aland Islands ready to pick us up should the weather improve.

Tuesday morning, as if prearranged, the seas were almost glassy-smooth and the sun was shining brightly. The boat arrived and the three of us waved our good-byes to Martti, Vilho, Kee, and Lars, who would

remain on the island until the following morning. We made our way back to Aland almost without incident. A steering cable broke and we drifted helplessly for about an hour until repairs were effected. By late afternoon the boathouse at Eckero came into view.

We hurriedly loaded the car and drove to Maarianhamina, where Don and I parted company with Wayne, who elected to spend the night in a hotel. We helped Wayne get settled in and enjoyed the use of his shower before we ventured to the Arkipelag Hotel's disco to kill some time before driving to meet the government ferry for the mainland.

Upon our return, Jorma, OH2KI, and Ville, OH2MM plus the entire OJO-gang with wives and girl friends converged on Saslik, a quaint Russian restaurant in Helsinki. After several toasts we enjoyed a fine dinner while being entertained by a Russian troubadour. As I was enjoying the sound of a tender ballad, I was nudged in the ribs by Laine.

"Heil, I don't think this is a love song," he said. "I think this is about the next five year plan. Up with the production. Down with the drinking."

Don and his father Kusti, K8HHZ, were presented with what have to be some of the world's largest vodka glasses. Wayne received a liquid-filled plastic pillow to be placed in a refrigerator and used as an aid for a hangover. Martti then showed the slides which he had developed the previous day. The women giggled as the shots of our bathing episode flashed on the screen. We enjoyed coffee laced with cognac as we relived the details of our operation. It was good to be back with all those fond memories from that desolate DXCC counter.

THE ACTUAL PERFORMANCE – A DXPEDITION SHOW IN ACTION

When you finally reach a DX location after thousands of miles and huge expenditure and see the fulfillment of your dreams, a rare DX spot, the next phase down the road involves an actual performance, a show staged for the benefit of all those countless, hungry DX hunters, your respected audience.

Somewhat ironically, members of a DXpedition team will experience their greatest moment of success upon arrival in the target country. This is before a single contact is made, following what is frequently a strenuous and troublesome journey and after months of red tape cut with the local authorities to obtain needed permissions. Additionally, the team will have spent weeks collecting and lining up all the necessary equipment – the props, to use the old language of theater – and getting them to the DX site, the stage.

But all the points for performance and artistic impression and the degree of success will be determined thereafter, on the basis of the operating itself. That's one of the hard facts of DX life. But then again, that is true of life in general.

It may be interesting to study some of the laws governing the operating performance of these DXpeditions. Such an examination will demonstrate why one DXpedition is considered better than another, why the

line between success and failure is so thin. Why a given new country tastes a lot better than some other country counters. The real laws associated with the operating aspects of a DXpedition may decide whether you can snag that rare one on the very first day or whether you will have to stay on your extra vacation for an entire week. The most interesting point probably is that success or failure remains subject to fairly accurately definable laws although often these may not be adequately understood or appreciated by either the actors or their audience.

Preoccupied with disqualification criteria for DXpeditions in the aftermath of some unfortunate forays, the ARRL has not come up with any action. DX bulletins are filled with commentaries trying to explore the relationship between cause and effect, attempting to identify a culprit at either end of the DX circuit, or both, and find ways of solving the problem through a set of regulations or norms.

But the truth is often stranger than fiction. This should be understood in planning, carrying out or working a DXpedition since only that will ensure complete interaction, an enjoyable performance leaving both parties in a happy mood and proud of being a DXer, that omniscient and even slightly selfish, true Internationalist of Amateur Radio, as described by Professor Cass.

Where is the Beef Anyway?

One of the first things you must believe is that the DXpedition frequency is sacred and must be revered. This is something that only a true-blue, full-blooded

DXer will understand. Unfortunately, many transceivers include a feature allowing you to transmit on the DX frequency by mistake and, why not, on purpose when tempers are lost. A DX station will use the announced frequencies without exception, and therefore great care must be taken in choosing those frequencies.

The DXpedition station may depart from the official frequencies only when extremely pressing reasons so require – for instance, continued interference running for hours on end on a published frequency. But no momentary QRM must cause a shift in frequency since such interference, though often quite strong, does not block communications to all corners of the world. The announced frequencies should be considered as being engraved on tablets of stone!

In simple terms, all operating must take place on the announced frequencies to make sure that the DX station can always be found effectively and with ease, and to facilitate convenient and meaningful tracking of the station. The very presence of the DXpedition signal maintains confidence in the whole exercise and permits you to make significant observations about radio propagation.

Even contacts with the folks back home on the published frequencies are justifiable since, as necessary traffic, these add a human element to the event and convey the operators' personal impressions of a distant DX country. The thundering multitudes of the always impatient DX audience must learn to respect such contacts but, on the other hand, these shall not become an end itself for any DXpedition.

In the choice of frequencies, sub-band allocations in various regions of the world should be taken into account. For instance, with an eye to the United

States, it is a good idea to make your home in close proximity to the edge of a sub-band in such a way as to accentuate its limits; the DX station will face a quantitatively smaller load of general traffic while loading the upper or lower segment of a given sub-band.

Publication of forthcoming operating frequencies in the always alert DX press implies a serious pledge to the DX audience whose members usually span the whole world. You must stick to those frequencies and appear there as often as possible during the performance. DXers invariably have strong opinions on everything, and one of the points they like to make forcefully sounds like "...is the CW station on .023 kHz as they said he would?"

How Wide is the Split?

The DX pileup must be a pleasant experience to both sides, on the analogy that it takes two to tango. It should not come as a painful, boring encounter beyond the control of everyone. This sounds all too easy to work out in practice, doesn't it? Well, think of it in terms of a big, busy event in the marketplace where one vendor is trying to serve thousands of thronging customers as effectively and agreeably as possible. If the situation gets out of hand, if people start flying off the handle and the flow of adrenaline only causes stress, imminent failure looms near.

Faced with such a threatening prospect, you must take a highly serious and systematic approach to the matter, bearing in mind that the success of the whole performance stands or falls with this moment. How to serve a huge crowd in the market in such a way as to convince everyone that his turn will come soon and that public order is maintained? That calls for a good

deal of ingenuity and adaptability in a changing situation.

How wide is the split and where should I establish my pileup? Perhaps a useful rule of thumb is that the split should be no wider than 20 kHz. You have to manage the situation by running your pileup on different days of the operation in different sub-bands, splitting the pileup geographically and taking propagation into account.

But if the window is not wide enough and working down the pileup gets painful, you should opt for the particularly challenging pattern of working by call areas or start the game of working by countries or by numbers. You should narrow the window as the operation continues and, if all goes well, you can even do business on a given spot frequency during the closing days of the DXpedition.

But it is important to understand and accept the way in which to operate in the said window. It is not condemnable to use a wider window whenever the bands are not subject to heavy loading and when propagation exists only between two regions and the pileup does not cause worldwide interference to other traffic on a given band. The thing to remember is that DXers are the gentlemen of the amateur spectrum, always considerate and courteous... sometimes even more so.



– Sir, the man on the desert island said he wouldn't leave until the pileups were worked down...

The Split Window – a Window to the World

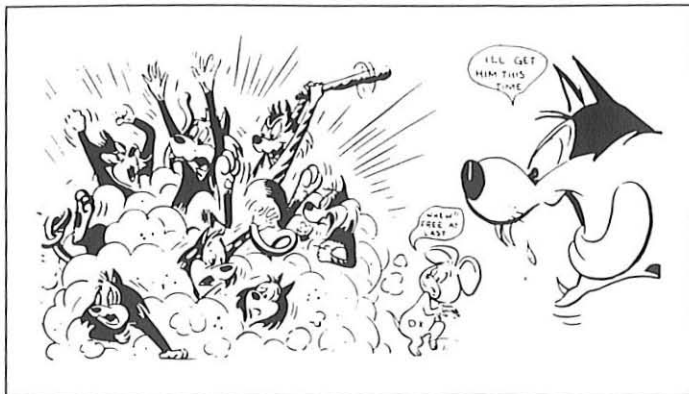
It is always important to specify the upper and lower ends of the window! Absolutely. Perhaps not all that often – but regularly and precisely. It is one of your best investments in time. “Tuning 175 to 190” is the most widely used format. This needs to be done on

CW as well, no matter how incredible it may sound: "Up 5 to 15".

The crucial thing to understand is that the behavior of the pileup in the window will carefully follow the movements of your VFO tuning knob. The truth is simple and when you hear it, there is an end to all speculation: the intellectuals of the DX pileup, your audience, will watch you meticulously and learn your pattern quickly. Frequently there is cause for caution since the pileup can be pretty fierce and brutal and will take advantage of every opportunity. The possibility for disorder is close at hand.

When you understand that most of the callers, Big Gun DXers in particular, position themselves near the lower end of the tuning window, the first opportunity will arise. At the edges of what sounds like a mad pack of callers, you can find big, fat stations to knock off, and it is there you should tune your VFO. It often happens that the upper end of the tuning window is rather sparsely populated while the bulk of the crowd runs riot near the lower edge. You can easily split up the multitude by announcing "tuning 190 to 175" whereupon the popular lower end and the relatively thinner high end will change places.

While the pileup keeps calling you, it also makes sense to give special orders since not everyone necessarily calls you at all times; these are the ones who attentively await any new stratagems you may hit upon. It must be learned that these are often the old DXers and they are usually the wise DXers. Roughly 30 percent of the pileup is always listening. The percentage might be even higher if DXpeditioners took to the habit of speaking to the pileup more often by stating their preferences explicitly or dropping small hints. The pileup window is interactive, a two-way street. In a sense, you could call it an operator's mirror.



It is absolutely substandard to listen to a frequency or a frequency range other than the one you have specified. To do so is to mislead and deceive the callers. Regrettably, even some experienced DXpeditioners have adopted such a highly questionable operating practice as their “trademark”. The majority of callers in the DX audience will object to that. One can always learn by listening.

If traffic in the window does not always run smoothly or according to your instructions, it is a good idea to bring the pileup to a halt and give fresh instructions, sometimes quite firmly, or to rely on your creativity to quickly devise a new plan for smooth action.

What is required of the pileup operator is creative ability at all times. There exists no comprehensive formula engraved on a tablet of stone covering the overall duration of a DXpedition, nor is there reason to try to invent one.

Tuning for W4s only

When the concept of an open audience fails you and each movement of your VFO knob is instantly followed

by hundreds of stations or by a multilayered pileup, often made up of callers from different parts of the world enjoying dissimilar levels of propagation, when the pileup is getting out of hand, or when working the pileup becomes unpleasant, it is time to look for other alternatives.

Cutting the pileup into segments in any number of ways is quite a challenge but highly recommended, assuming that the rationale for such segmentation is based on firm operator knowledge and this is realized and approved by the multitude, your demanding audience.

As we noted before, dividing a pileup is a highly demanding exercise, requiring a conversationalist style of operating. When the DX station insists on working W4s only, it is a tremendous challenge to persuade a Suffering Seven in the Pacific Northwest to view the situation sympathetically. But such a case is not totally a lost cause; what is required of the performer is credibility and ingenuity.

Everything is possible. The W7 may take the evening off today since his turn will surely come tomorrow when band conditions are likely to favor his area. If the pileup can be persuaded to trust the DXpedition operator's skills and good judgment, working by call areas in a highly sophisticated and efficient manner is quite possible.

Working a segmented pileup is to be recommended, and when successful, it gives the listening audience a comfortable feeling of taking part in an organized activity. For the benefit of us all, let us list a few indisputable advantages inherent in the widely used practice of working by regions:

-
- When we work down a pileup from a given country or call area, we can pull through, right from the start, some of the local QRPs using small antennas. That's only fair and reasonable and, as we know, the Small Pistols have lower DXCC totals and consequently a much greater need to contact our particular station. Big Gun DXers will get through even when the going is tougher and the band conditions weaker.
 - We can focus our operating on areas of peak propagation and work all stations, including the QRP types, when they have got the best shot at us.
 - We can concentrate on working stations from areas of high population density faster, always remembering every once in a while to turn our attention to small regional minorities or marginal propagation paths.
 - When working stations by country or call area, some operating characteristics typical for each area can be used, and the efficiency of our operating performance can be maximized. Working weak stations from across a long distance is indeed different from contacting strong local stations. Many variations in operating culture in different areas can be taken into account.

The art of working by regions can be practiced on CW as well. Wayne, N7NG, frequently uses that procedure to full advantage. Handling an area-based pileup is highly demanding and instructive for both the DXpedition operator and the calling audience. It will give you a characteristic feeling of contentment, something that is the salt of DX, since the ultimate measure of pileup success at both ends is still the number of calls you have to make to get through. The method discussed here helps minimize the long,

boring hours of calling a DX continuously. But then again, DX is for the strong and loud, those tall with towers, tireless in tuning and the first in every pileup.

I have to share with you an instructive real-life story that I experienced in Fresno during the 3Y5X Bouvet operation. On the fourth day of a summer vacation taken at the turn of the year, "Six X-ray Japan" was still full of energy repeating his number and last two letters. After four long, uneasy days and a lot of "Six X-ray Japans", there was a phone call made to his house where a suffering, weary XYL indicated that Perry was indeed around but unable to take the call. At the same time, she asked the caller, one of the local Knowers: "What's that 'Six X-ray Japan' that my husband is yakking into the mike for the fourth day now?" And that was a true story.



This is Six X-Ray Juliet...

Indeed, calling hour after hour falls nothing short of a waste of energy; even your neighbor's stereo playback system may get tired in the process, not to mention the neighbor himself. It is an unnecessary exercise to which working by areas may offer an attractive alternative. The local Fresno DXer I mentioned did manage to contact 3Y5X on the last day of the operation, completely exhausted by the effort and no longer capable of enjoying his moment of triumph.

Conversely, at a DX convention, I once met one of the Deserving QRP types who, trampled under foot by his bigger brethren, did not manage a QSO at all but was still able to relish the systematic operating style of that DXpedition which, in his view, was aimed at achieving optimum results.

USA Call Area Statistics –

1991 (source: Callbook)

USA Grand Total: 494,260

W1	6%
W2	9%
W3	6%
W4	19%
W5	10%
W6	15%
W7	10%
W8	9%
W9	8%
W0	8%

Japan Call Area Statistics –

1991 (source: JA1BK)

Japan Grand Total: 1,027,101

JA1	33%
JA2	11%
JA3	13%
JA4	7%
JA5	3%
JA6	9%
JA7	9%
JA8	8%
JA9	3%
JA0	5%

License Totals for Some European Countries –

1991 (source: ON6WQ)

Germany	59,000
U.K.	55,000
Spain	37,000
Italy	27,500
France	16,700
Netherlands	14,000
Sweden	12,500
Denmark	10,100
Finland	4,700
Belgium	4,500
Portugal	2,500
Ireland	1,600
Greece	900
Luxembourg	350

Think about it. An ultimate goal for DXpeditioning: one never makes a contact but still enjoys the show! It can be a gratifying performance despite a tragic end. Maybe you have no need to call day in and day out like that “Six X-ray Japan” did. But some DXers are known to be untiring in calling, strong in spirit, abundant in patience... and long in years!

For the benefit of working by regions, the enclosed Tables list the number of U.S. and Japanese licensees by call areas and show a similar breakdown for European countries. These figures only suggest a general trend since DX is not equally popular in all countries. Pileups are not directly related to the number of licensees.

DXpedition QSO Mechanics

It may be necessary to point out that the established, familiar QSO pattern, always repeated in the same form, is something that the pileup will appreciate and can follow with a higher QSO rate. It is a no-nonsense approach, one that is easy to come to grips with. An oft-changing pattern and possibly an ambiguous, short-cutting or forgetful QSO format will act like a red cloth to the calling stations, giving rise to unnecessary insurance contacts.

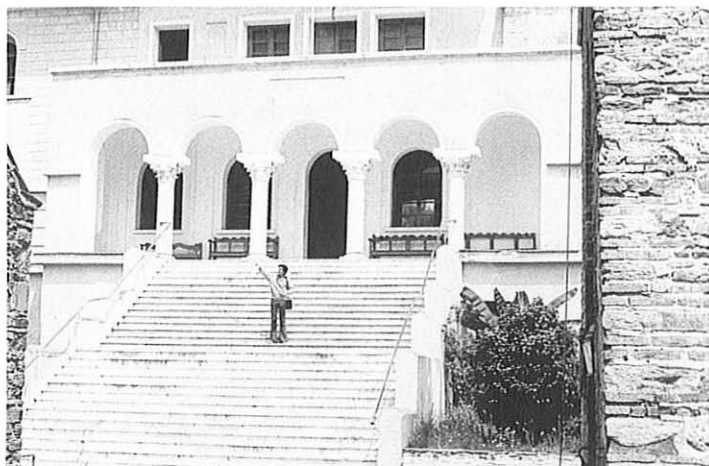
Presenting an equally red cloth to the DXpedition operator, again, is the station who only signs his suffix or gives an otherwise partial call. That problem is a definite spinoff from the growing presence of DX nets or from an increasingly widespread air of apparent haste which is typical of some contest-type operators. For DXpedition-type contacts, artificial or affected haste or efficiency needs to be superseded by adroit and accurate operating whereby no insurance QSOs are called for.

During each contact, both CW and SSB, you must acknowledge the full callsign of the station you work and your timing should synchronize with the calling station. The callsign may of course be transmitted all at once or in complementary parts. The main thing is that the station in the pileup hears it and that he is given an opportunity to ascertain that the call logged by the DXpedition operator was correct. If the operator does not send the call, or if the calling station does not hear it, there is of course reason to make an otherwise so inconvenient insurance QSO.

The transmission of full callsigns by the DXpedition station, often not even shying away from repeats, will ensure a full-bodied performance. For a contact, it takes two to tango, remember? Success or failure is shared by both parties to the QSO. Many times the calling station is blamed for an insurance contact whereas the blame for a wrong log entry or a "not in the log" contact is put on the DXpedition operator. Yet, in all cases, two parties are involved, with both sharing the joy of a good contact or the misery of failure.

It is really important to make sure that the DXpedition should base its operating on clearly defined and universally accepted QSO mechanics. If the operators have any wishes to make for the pileup to follow, they should state their preferences in explicit terms during the DXpedition, not after the operation by lashing out against the behavior of the pileup.

Every DXpeditioner should always carry with him that Magic DX Mirror to look at sometimes. The pileup accurately mirrors the DXpedition operator who runs the show. Often the operator may look like his pileup. At least when the game is about to be lost. But never mind your words of wisdom, some will no doubt say. Just line up the DX so we won't miss any.



This is the holy building on Mount Athos. We have managed to convince the monks to issue us an operating permission.

I can still vividly remember an incident on Mount Athos during the SV1GA/A DXpedition that I was sharing with Aris, the operation licensee. No less than two times every hour did SV1GA fire his tirades against the pileup, pulling the big switch and going QRT. But soon he was back on the air again. What else could we poor souls do except face the unruly pileups, having traveled that far from home?

However, it did not take Aris too long to realize that you needed to speak clearly and instructively as well as constructively to the pileup, like to a child. In that way, you could live in peace and harmony with your audience. But then the pileup took command again and Aris had to go QRT. At times, I had an unmistakable urge to run away from the tent and flee to a nearby monastery.

There is something that the pileup can do to meet the DXpeditioner halfway. A tired, hungry operator without the luxury of a shower or a hot bath for a week is easy to offend, particularly if he gets infested with all the ticks on the island and finds them buried into

But are we ready to convince the multitudes when the actual operating takes place? Or, will we just cause sheer bedlam and disorder?



the most private parts of the body, which sometimes happens.

In these quiet and sensitive moments, the DX operator may briefly lose control and the pileup takes over. But that kind of a delicate situation is often sensed by a perceptive theater-goer. Then a good deal of understanding is required, with less room left for beastly aggressive pileup behavior. Such a situation can be saved by a prompter, or by a fresh operator exuding energy. But only few DXpeditions can afford the luxury of tapping fresh resources each time these are needed.

QSLing and Statistics

In many cases, the DXpedition will use the services of a QSL manager, and quite often several operators join forces for a DXpedition, at least in the event of a major operation from a rare country counter. It is highly desirable that QSL managers should record all problem cases and report them back to the members of the DXpedition team. All the problem cards will

have an important story to tell. Each story should be analyzed fully for the benefit of the next DXpedition.

A “not in the log” case or a wrong callsign in the DXpedition log, in turn, can tell a great deal to the sender of such a QSL as well as to the DXpeditioner. Often you can hear many DXers bemoan their high “not in the log” percentages whereas others never get their own cards returned to them. Well, it takes all sorts of DXpeditioners – and DXers.

As far as insurance QSOs are concerned, it makes sense to report them back to the stations who insist on running them. You can do so either by supplying a list of all dupes or by affixing dupe QSO labels not to the QSL cards but enclosing them for the information of those concerned.

Insurance QSOs may become a way of life or a crazy sport as some DXers seem to get a kick out of flexing their muscles in the company of other callers. But in terms of available DXpedition time, this may prove disastrous for the Local QRPer still vying for his first contact with that DX station. In an article dealing with this issue, I once published the callsign of a Suffering W0 who had worked me seven times on ten-meter SSB from a DX spot. He was probably running a real insurance company.

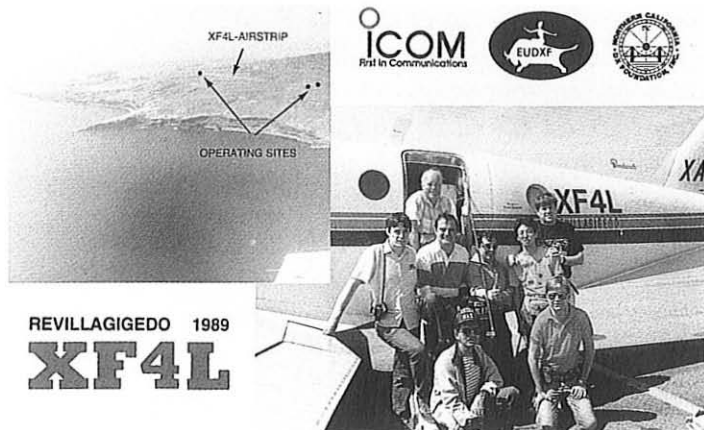
The DXpeditioner can always talk unilaterally to his pileup but how on earth can the pileup speak to the DXpeditioner? Well, although extensive on-the-air conversation with these highflying DXpeditioners is not to be recommended in the heat of a major operation, you can always engage in fruitful correspondence with them using their Callbook address.

It is true that sending a long letter with your QSL is hardly worth the effort, but another letter mailed to

the operator's home address will always cheer him up. That is, if you wish to share your moment of great ecstasy or profound disappointment with him. DXpeditioners get far too little feedback from the audience following a performance, no matter how great or fine. That same question, "Where do you go next?", rings much too often in the DXpeditioner's ears, while real issues and honest comments seem few and far between.

If you are badly disappointed with the services of a QSL manager and if your solid QSO is not found in the logbook, why don't you drop a line to the operator himself. He will be glad to hear about the matter, and in many cases he retains copies of the original logs just for the purpose of sorting out these problem cases.

To be able to identify the operators handing out contacts at any given time of course confronts you with the new challenge of getting to know the operators of that particular DXpedition. But wouldn't that be a rather reasonable proposition? We are here concerned with a performance of great significance to you. It is important to understand who the actors are cast for tonight's production. Be it a tragedy or a comedy! If you're eager enough to work hard enough, you will get there to enjoy the performance.



THE MYSTERY OF REVILLAGIGEDO – A VOLCANIC PERFORMANCE

One may dismiss Revillagigedo as peanuts. DX-wise, that is! But historically, there was no rarer a place than XF4 for the Deserving in Europe.

Let me share this DXotica with you and show that things are relative in DX, sometimes even more so. Discerning DXers in one area of the world can work Revillagigedo most every year and almost on every band, while to others XF4 remains one of the Eternal Enigmas that even the local 300-plus DXCC types talk about late into the night. Does that Mexican island group somehow stand outside the scope of most propagation paths? Is it curiously situated within a Bermuda triangle of sorts? Or, can we find a logical solution to this Mystery of the Ages?

On a trip exploring Mexico City, I got an opportunity to thumb through the logbooks of all previous XF4 DXpeditions. Over the past decades, most expeditions had been organized by the Mexico DX Club and all operators were Club members, hailing from Mexico City itself and other parts of the country, including Tijuana of Tijuana Brass fame. Logs for the latest XF4MDX operation showed only a handful of European contacts scattered over pages and pages of Stateside contacts. Little wonder then that XF4 ranked ninth on all Most Wanted lists for the northern parts of the Old World.

This would be quite a challenge and with every prospect of success, we thought. Our DXpedition team would be hailing from far-off Europe, including some of America's and Japan's brilliant DX virtuosos, and would be hosted by Luis, XE1L, a true friend and gentleman from years ago. This one looked like a DX commando force coming to rescue the Suffering Europeans. To defy the laws of physics and to make our own propagation if the Miniprop or the Palos Verdes Sundancers were unable to guarantee a rising sunspot count.

It could be a lot of fun. Or, it might turn out a real DX pancake. There was a lot of DX Mystique involved... meaning that esoteric skill and knowledge necessary to DXing.

But as this DXpedition proved, the accomplishment of ordinary operating objectives can also see an expedition achieve the Ultimate Goal of DXing. A rare country counter is sent plummeting down the Most Wanted lists not only until the next effort from that spot but to stay there forever thanks to the seeds of DX planted in the country ensuring permanent activity.

Who could have believed that the top-ranking military officer of an exotic island would get carried away with a DX performance to the extent that he was himself working DX before the visiting expedition left his island? One only wonders why it took Fernando, XF4F, so many years of life's mundane routines, even years of distinguished service as Commandant of Revil-lagigedo, to realize that as for his state of mind, he was ready for an instant DX parade on his paradise island! On that island, DX would never run dry. DX would be reborn for the Deserving at every daybreak to offer fresh challenges, and new country counters every so often.

But back to the Ultimate Goal for DXing. An overriding objective is of course to help establish amateur radio on a permanent basis in a needed country, to provide so many opportunities for DX in that country that it will never be considered rare again. On the other hand, a true-blue DX artist's personal highlight is to work every pileup deep down to the very bottom layer, so much so that there's no one left there calling or asking questions.

I'm not ashamed of admitting that tears fill my eyes whenever I hear Fernando, XF4F, on the air from his island. It is so nice to be able to drop by and ask if things are fine in that far-off country, once so exciting for the Deserving, including the 15,000 Suffering Europeans who made contact with our XF4L effort. Here's the story as it was told at the time.

Flying High to XF4L

“What is that glaring beam of light? What is this place anyway? This is not home turf. Where's Mom? Where are the kids?” Well, one of the Ultimate

Realities of DX is that every once in a while even the most knowledgeable and seasoned DXpeditioners, those who are considered the Anointed Gurus of the world of DX, find themselves asking questions. When a true-blue DXer, long in years of active traveling to rare DX spots around the world, persevering in his quest to satisfy public demand for New Ones, starts asking questions, something unusual must have happened that should alert everyone toiling in the DX vineyards.

Well, in the present case, it turned out that this traveler had ended up in a George Washington Hospital emergency room in Washington, D.C. It was spring, the nation's capital was buzzing with life, and the world was waiting – waiting patiently to hear the year's premiere DXpedition blasting the bands with full-bore signals from the Revilagigedo islands off the coast of Mexico, XF4, high on the Most Wanted Lists in many corners of the world.

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER		11-10- LA NE, NUOTTA ESP00 H 000- W 000-
EMERGENCY UNIT MEDICAL RECORD II		
PATIENT NAME	DATE REGISTERED	
LAINE, MARTTI J	04-08-89	

In Europe, where Revilla was a particularly coveted piece of property, Big Gun DXers and QRPer alike were honing their skills, tuning their amplifiers, checking their antennas to be ready for the Big Bang! There was even word of an anxious, ancient QRP type in the north of Europe signing up for a weeklong sick leave, telling the boss that the trembling fingers of his right hand needed an urgent dose of radioactivity – or was it radiotherapy?

“Oh, my. What am I doing here?” was the first thought that crossed my mind, lying there as I was surrounded by hospital nurses and doctors talking in subdued tones. It gradually dawned on me that having suddenly collapsed on a Washington, D.C. walkway, I

was now waiting to be put into casting. With a broken ankle, I had passed out while lying on the sidewalk. "Two more people and then it's my turn", I figured. "Hopefully they'll put a cast on one leg only. Don't tell me it's going to be a full-length job from top to toe".

I was told that the X-rays would be processed shortly, and one of the nurses helped me adjust a pair of crutches to fit. "Oh, no. The show is over before it has gotten started", I thought. Two years of planning and hard work to activate XF4 seemed to be doing down the drain.

But I was carrying a lot of equipment and the rest of the group was already down in Mexico City waiting for me. "Maybe it's time to call up the substitutes and let them continue", a voice of doubt deep inside kept telling me. "Let me try the emergency room telephone and call my buddies N6AA, K6NA and others", I thought.

Meanwhile, the X-rays proved that mine was an extremely bad case of a sprained ankle, but maybe I could manage with a tight bandage and a cane. According to the doctor, I would be allowed to go on my island vacation, provided the leg was not subjected to strain. She told me to lift it up most of the time. "No action. Just keep the leg up", the doctor advised. "Maybe up 5!", I mumbled to myself. The fact of the matter is that even in the midst of great adversity, a DXer always sees things in a proper perspective, never losing sight of the Noble Objectives of DX.

Mexico City

The proposed roster of participants for this operation was international in character. It included people such as XE1L and XE1XA, who represented Mexico;

N7NG and W6RGG, two cowboy types from across the border; JH4RHF, who passed a Japanese language test; OH1NW (also signing XE1OH), OH2BU and OH2BH, who were there to wave the banner of Suffering Europeans – layers upon layers of needy DXers who had never had a real chance to work XF4. Our specific goal was simply to wipe out Revillagigedo from all Most Wanted Lists, to work the pileups down to the last caller firing up his maximum Novice power into a curtain rod – with the coax hanging loose.

Lauri, XE1OH, being a senior diplomatic official at the Finnish Embassy in Mexico City, had acted as our coordinator to make sure all the necessary permissions were on hand. He had signed up a charter airplane and had consolidated and tested some 6,400 pounds of equipment and supplies all bought in Mexico for this outing. Some of the really heavy items, including 260 gallons of gasoline and three 3,500-watt Honda generators, were shipped to XF4 by supply boat well in advance because of limited cargo allowance on our chartered twin-engine King-Air plane.

Preassembling the beams and checking the material lists as well as planning the strategy were the only things that needed to be completed before our departure. The spirits were high, the mood was optimistic, the conditions were right, the sun was shining, the DXCC types were waiting... one of the Mysteries of the Ages was about to be unraveled. It was exactly two years earlier that the plan for this adventure had been established.

Off We Go

When all the eight eager team members, the captain, and his co-pilot were aboard, with the gear and miscellaneous supplies piled up in the passenger com-

partment, there was no room for kidding around. We were sitting absolutely tight in this wonderful flying machine which resembled a can of herring with wings. We took off for a 4-hour flight to Revillagigedo with a refueling stop scheduled in the city of Manzanillo on the coast.

DXers always appreciate good food and drink. They spend their rare idle moments reading poetry and literature, while also relishing classical music and a bit of modern jazz. Our plane was fully equipped, and it was all a smooth ride with drinks served and the upper-echelon DXpeditioners engaging in spirited conversation. For this exercise, though, we had left our scratchy old 78 RPM jazz records and favorite poetry books to collect dust at home. The only pieces of literature we carried included a few ICOM manuals and the Bible of every serious, believing DXer – that blue-covered book featuring a collection of Hugh Cassidy's priceless literary masterpieces.

The DX gods were smiling on us, as we flew high above the clouds toward our destination, sipping our drinks. "Is this the way to go on a DXpedition? Where's



The cast for the XF4L DXpedition. Front, from left: Max, XE1XA and Lauri, OH1NW. Back, from left: Jari, OH2BU, Wayne, N7NG, Luis, XE1L, Bob, W6RGG, Martti, OH2BH and Jun, JH4RHF.



It is not often that you approach a DX land with a professional crew in charge. Captain James Orsatti and our chartered airplane right at the operating location.

Where's the adventure when you're flying high to Revillagigedo? But an adventure was looming at a hardly visible airstrip.



the adventure?”, some of us were probably wondering. But the Mystique of DX was there with us. Looming somewhere over the horizon was the mysterious island group of Revillagigedo dreamed of by countless DX Brothers in their DX Salons, but worked only by a few of the Deserving.

There was an airstrip on the island built on the slopes of a volcano some years back in time for the Mexican President's visit to his island. A solid 3,000 feet of paved runway was clearly visible as we approached the northern end of the island. Despite the undeniable expertise of our pilot, he landed on a heavy tail wind, using up every bit of braking power on the wheels and every inch of the short runway.

Well, he made it, though, leaving us standing at the far end of the airstrip in scorching heat to rest and stretch our legs. There was not too much time to marvel at our new surroundings, however. The plan was to get all the stations operational before dusk. Much to our relief, we found a truck and a jeep waiting for us at the runway. This was a sure sign that we were indeed expected.

Getting Operational

One of the targets set for this operation was to give every needy DXer, regardless of the size of his amplifier tubes or the number of beam elements on his 100-foot rotatable tower, a good shot at XF4. The other aim was, of course, to obliterate Revillagigedo from all Most Wanted Lists – particularly the European list, where it ranked among the top 9 - 20 most needed countries. It was not surprising that hordes of Europeans still waited to work XF4 for a new one, since all but one of the past expeditions had occupied an operating site in an army garrison at the south end of the island, with the result that the peak of the mountain effectively blocked the path to Europe.

Our idea was to challenge that basic setup and not go down to the garrison. Instead it was decided to put up two completely independent and functional camps providing clean CW and SSB operating on the same band simultaneously. Setting up the camps more than a mile apart and placing the beams accordingly added another element of inter-station attenuation and made it possible for us to fire up two signals on the same band during critical band openings.



The SSB and low-band sites were set in a lunar landscape with dust penetrating everywhere.

As planned, both sites were on before dusk – CW at the southern end of the runway, with SSB and most of the low bands handled from the northernmost tip of the island with a clear shot at the Northern Hemisphere. It was therefore no surprise that Europeans reported hearing us all the time with S9+ signals from 40 through 10 meters.

With the aim of providing full-board service, we established another two sites to run two SSB signals on 20 meters, catering to U.S. and European audiences. In addition, to make RTTY available, it was decided to occupy a radar station and the garrison commander's guest room. Given these circumstances, XF4L indeed galvanized the entire spectrum into action for that week, and the Hondas were busy generating power without a single interruption.

In the end, when the final tally was taken, we recorded a total of 47,943 QSOs in the logbooks, including 15,000-plus Europeans, another 525 on Oscar, and 167 on 50 MHz. Looking at the pile of logs which kept growing taller and taller as the days wore on, we were reminded of some words of wisdom uttered by DX Professor Cass in those other years: "The DX you work is the DX that is. DX is! Enjoy the Great Days of DXing while you can".

Having set up the radio tents high up on the volcano, the operators found themselves perched quite a long way from the military base and civilized accommodations. However, every operator had a day off for his shower and nourishment. With no on-site shower and with volcanic dust penetrating our tents and nostrils, the operating conditions seemed little short of hazardous. However, we managed.

Where this DXpedition failed miserably was in the supply of food, since much to our surprise, two wooden



DXpedition cuisine is known to be quite monotonous while fancier meals are found upon a successful return home.



How can you fail if your takeoff looks like that and if your fleet of generators can supply you with an ample amount of power?

containers stocking our daily chow only treated us to Corn Flakes, crackers, and Coca-Cola. Thus, the cuisine was pretty monotonous, with these three items served day in and day out. But it is a truism of DXing that DXers, although attuned to the finer things, understand that in certain circumstances they must settle for less. That's the way it has always been. Always!

My day off came first, since my leg and swollen ankle displayed all the colors of a rainbow even though I went out of my way to keep it lifted up alongside the keyer at the operating table. So, once again this Old Timer ended up in an emergency room, but now in XF4 and at the hands of two doctors. Their prescription was for me to stay in the Commandant's house with no trotting around in the volcano.

Gaining another Victory

It was kind of lonely in the military commander's quarters, but fortunately I had one spare ICOM transceiver and a tiny tape dipole which allowed me to monitor all the action at the other end of the island.

Also, this gave me an opportunity to cause total chaos on RTTY when I showed up there unexpectedly.

Commandant Fernando offered true friendship when things were down for me. But even more important, he expressed a genuine interest in the mission of this DXpedition. Although not yet a true Believer, he began to understand one of the Eternal Enigmas of DX – that DXers are the true Internationalists of Amateur Radio, offering what is closer to true friendship than any other activity.

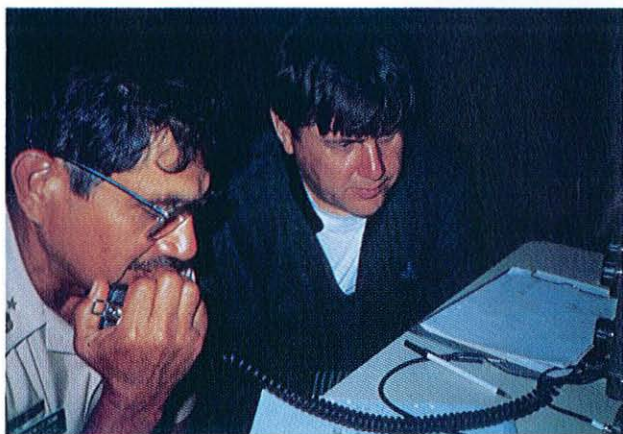
As I watched this commanding officer and noticed his curiosity, a great idea was born. Why couldn't we make him the first ever resident ham operator on XF? Well, it was decided to get down to business, and a licensing class with a single student was opened. It was all rather easy, since Fernando knew the phonetics, and given his outgoing commandant-style on-the-air behavior, he was an ideal choice for 20-meter SSB to keep the folks in order. Fernando was taught the basics of operating from his rare country and he was ready for action.

Soon the Commandant's jeep was heading up the volcano to one of the operating sites for a live training session which subsequently developed into a daily routine for the balance of our stay on the island. The pileups were stunned as we introduced this newly minted DX type into the DX scene. When we hauled Fernando up the volcano to the DX tent, we impressed on him one of the Unshakable Truths: there are two kinds of amateurs, those who are DXers and those who wish they were.

As everyone is aware by now, Fernando was licensed shortly after this DXpedition, and XF4F has been rendering reliable service on the bands ever since. The Northern California DX Foundation picked

REVILLAGIGEDO

The CW operating tent at one end of the airstrip. Going to the other end to see the SSB bunch, by plane, is not everyday DXpeditioning.



Soon the Commandant's jeep was heading up the volcano to one of the operating sites for a live training session. The pileups were stunned as we introduced this newly minted DX type into the DX scene.

The XF4-land had only one intersection and your chances of getting lost were only 50 percent. Here is W6RGG negotiating the right way.





CORREO REGISTRADO

SECRETARIA DE COMUNICACIONES
Y TRANSPORTES

DIRECCION GENERAL
DE NORMATIVIDAD Y CONTROL
DE COMUNICACIONES

Apdo. Postal 55-258
09820. México, D.F.

27 junio de 1989

DIRECCION GENERAL DE NORMATIVIDAD
Y CONTROL DE COMUNICACIONES
DIRECCION DE CONTROL DE OPERACION
DE SISTEMAS RADIOELECTRICOS
DEPARTAMENTO DE DICTAMENES
Y COMPROBACION TECNICA
OFNA. DE RADIOAFICIONADOS 1292
113-406/111- 06/07229

ASUNTO: EXPEDICION de Certifi-
cado de Aptitud para operar estacio-
nes radioeléctricas del Servicio de
Aficionado y su Permiso de Instale-
ción.

No. DE EXPEDIENTE: 06/0722

CONTRALMIRANTE C.G. DEMN
FERNANDO QUIJANO GARRIDO.
SEC. NAVAL MILITAR DE ISLA SOCORRO
ARCHIPELAGO DE REVILLAGIGEDO
MANZANILLO, COL.

En virtud de haber cumplido con los requisitos que el efecto establece el Reglame-
to para Instalar y Operar Estaciones Radioeléctricas de Aficionado vigente, esta
Dirección General tiene a bien otorgarle un Certificado de Aptitud para la opera-
ción de estaciones radioeléctricas del Servicio de Aficionados, mismo que se anexa
con las especificaciones siguientes:

Certificado No. 06/07229 Clase: II

Distintivo: ~~XXE~~ XF4F

Anterior, el titular del Certificado de Aptitud se encuentra facultado por
pendencia para Instalar y Operar Estaciones Radioeléctricas dentro de las
de frecuencias atribuidas en nuestro país al Servicio de Aficionados, con-
las siguientes características:

Nombre de Estación: SEC. NAVAL MILITAR DE ISLA SOCORRO REVILLAGIGEDO
MANZANILLO, COL.

Placas: -----

En B.2 Anexo "A" del Reglamento vigente,
de Vencimiento: 27-06-94 Vigencia: 5 AÑOS

Están obligados a permitir en todo tiempo
al de inspección y vigilancia acreditados -
transportes, debiendo exhibir la documenta-
ción que se les solicite relacionada -
estación brindando a dicho personal las faci-
lidades de su cometido.

Se causará interferencias a otros servicios
eliminarlos de inmediato.

Con las disposiciones vigentes en la materia
el Permiso podrá revocarse cuando proceda
por otras causas, cuando dejen de subsistir

DXpedition Pays Off

The recent XF4L DXpedition to Socorro Island left a
transceiver with the island's base commander: Fernando
Quijano. Fernando obtained his own amateur radio license,
and has been active as XF4F. The DXpeditioners' efforts to
get Fernando on the ham bands paid off handsomely last
week. A visiting skin diver suffered a punctured lung, an
emergency beyond the capacity of the base's dispensary.
Another individual was also in need of evacuation. However,
the military radio link to the mainland was wiped out by the
geomagnetic storm in progress.

Fortunately, Fernando had the ham rig and the
expertise to use it, and was soon on 14225 kHz talking to
Emilio Berny XE3EB, who relayed the emergency to the
Mexican Navy. The Navy immediately flew a plane to
Socorro, and evacuated the patients to La Paz.

Special thanks to the XF4L team for getting Fernando
on the air, and supplying him with the rig. This will pay
dividends not only for Mexican hams, but also to any
DXpeditioners who work to show the value of their sport.



FGA.CNA.11g.

ING. JOSE MARINO AGUAYO ROMERO
ENCARGADO DE LA DIRECCION

DGNCC 97-F14-86

up the tab for an ICOM 735 and a Cushcraft HF6V vertical mounted on top of the Commandant's residence on the morning of our departure. If you have been around the track a couple of times, you will know that the NCDXF was organized back in 1972 by K6KQN and a few other DX Brothers dedicated to the belief that the only thing better than DX is more DX, and the rarer the better. Always!

Touring the Island

The Revillagigedo archipelago is located some 450 miles off the coast of Mexico, and it consists of three small islands plus two adjacent rocks. The island of Socorro, where our QTH was located, is 24 miles long and 9 miles wide, and its smoky volcanic peak rises over 3,700 feet. The island is manned by a small military garrison, extending Mexican fishing rights way out to the Pacific Ocean.

The population numbers around 150, and the community is quite self-sufficient, including schools, sports fields, an army canteen, a two-bed emergency room (!), and many other facilities. Apart from military personnel, many entire families reside on XF4. The outlying island group is served by a supply boat at least once a month. A harbor is situated next to the garrison.

The rugged shoreline is dotted with the remains of a wrecked ship, and the overall character of Socorro Island is barren and lifeless. Only thorny cacti and thistly shrubbery add color to an otherwise brown landscape of volcanic sand. The island's mountain peak is the only tourist attraction, and obviously the XF4L group members headed by N7NG under the guidance of XF4F consumed what was left of the juice



There is no better a place for DX types to be than the top. Our trip was no exception; the XF4L gang made it to the highest peak on the island.



DXpeditioners rarely spend any time exploring nature but we were at least able to observe our barren environment with thorny cacti and thisty shrubbery as the only evidence of vegetation.

climbing right up to the very top to see the best location on the island.

There is one road going from the village, passing the airstrip and continuing to the radar station and on to the northern tip of the island. And there is only one intersection; there you can go either to the airport or to the harbor. Traffic jams seem pretty unlikely because the island depends on just two trucks and two jeeps for its transportation needs. I'm sorry – only one jeep, since these vehicles will cooperate only if you remember to fill up the radiator, which runs dry on every trip. We did not, and thus reduced XF4 transportation capacity by 25 per cent. Poor OH2BU, who had to walk quite a distance to report the jeep damage.

Sad to Say Good-Bye

A farewell party thrown by the Commandant left everyone immersed in a bit of nostalgia, but all the fun was well-earned. Such parties are indeed one of the Rituals of DXing, as only the Deserving are found in



Whenever DX outings are wrapped up with a moving guitar solo by the military authorities of a DX land, it should be stated that both the DX performance and relations with the resident population are well managed.



Luis, XE1L, is showing here how to handle the logging end of the game when a weary DXpeditioner wants to enjoy himself while an endless lineup of people still keep calling. This is called DX enjoyment, Mexican-style.

attendance. These are the occasions on which you hear DXers talk of those happy memories of other days.

Each of us had taken a shower, and, wearing clean clothes, we were ready for a multi-course dinner prepared by Fernando's staff. Ice-cold soft drinks surely tasted a lot better than the lukewarm Coke used up on the volcano during the week. Dr Leon Chincoya entertained the group by singing beautiful songs to guitar accompaniment. The dinner was capped off with an XF4L pie especially designed for this DXpedition.

It was sad to leave this island, the dream of many Locals chasing new DXCC country counters, and to say good-bye to all the wonderful people whom we had met, in particular the Commandant of Revillagigedo, Rear-Admiral Fernando Quijano Garrido, now better known as XF4F, who had looked after us and ensured the total success of this DXpedition.

The Commandant of Revillagigedo, Fernando Quijano Garrido, now known as XF4F among his fellow DXers. The equipment for this newly born DX type was provided by the Northern California DX Foundation.



Thanks are Due

We wish to give credit to the Mexican authorities who issued all the necessary permissions allowing us to undertake this multinational operation from Revillagigedo. We also want to recognize the efforts of XE1NJ and his DX Brothers who faced up to the challenge, proving that this DXpedition was well worth the commitment and that it met the DXCC accreditation criteria.

Thank you Luis, XE1L and the entire XF4L team for a great week and a lot of excitement.

And, finally a word of thanks to my family, who realized only afterward what poor Dad had gone through with what must by now be the best-known sprained ankle in the world. But then again, DXers are not like other amateurs. The first thing you must believe is that DXers are different. They think differently, operate differently, and even look different. Be a Believer and you will begin to understand. Meanwhile, just hang in there and never stop working DX.



DXING AMID A DESERT WAR... FOREIGN LEGION-STYLE

*P*ast decades have offered ample proof that serious DX types often refuse to take at face value what is reported in the world media. In order to achieve their goals, they frequently have to depart from the official foreign policy line of the home country. Meanwhile, they have a DX foreign policy firmly in place, a lot more humanitarian in nature and guaranteed to open the door to more places than the regular variety of policy.

The fact of the matter is that members of the DX fraternity have more in common than the regular types who shape world politics. It has often been proven that when people speak straight from the heart and deal

with issues close to the soul, dramatic breakthroughs can loom just around the corner. The Diplomatic types, again, may let you wait a while longer.

It needs to be said, though, that we had to complete a crash course in the basics of diplomacy, study the history of an existing desert war and get to know the Polisario Front and Western Sahara before this newly minted DXCC country was ready to be served to the Deserving.

What made this mission even more difficult was ample evidence suggesting that we might well fall victim to target practice should we ever dare enter that desert republic. But as we know so well, DXers are different, especially when there is the prospect of a New One.

This time around, it all had to be performed in a refugee camp situation among the suffering people of a country partly under foreign occupation. But life had also its brighter moments there and our mission was well justified.

Let it be said for the first time in public that diplomatic efforts were involved in the first phase of this project. A complete presentation of this case was made to King Hussein, JY1, during His Majesty's visit to Finland prior to the initial SORASD operation. We requested the King's support to ensure the success and safety of this DX mission which was to be slightly different from the regular ones.

As people at the production end of the DX scene know, His Majesty is not just another ordinary DXer. However, he enjoys a bit of good DX whenever his busy schedule permits. The Kingdom of Morocco, a party to the conflict over Western Sahara, is also well represented in the ranks of amateur radio through DX types right at the Commanding Desk. DX diplomacy is

quite straightforward and target-oriented whenever there is a New One in the making.

To present the case of Western Sahara to the ARRL DX Advisory Committee, that sixteen-man Holy Commission which always has the last word, posed another challenge for us Suffering DXpeditioners. How would members of the DXAC look upon this war-torn country and what would be the outcome of their vote? As in politics in general, we had to hit the road and submit our case to that highly distinguished Committee for evaluation and a final vote. Trips had to be made to more than sixteen destinations to secure full understanding before the DXAC vote was taken.

It is a known fact that this DX body comprises sage and savvy Believers while the questioning types, the skeptics, are confined to the lower rungs of the DXCC ladder in the Newington hierarchy. So, the issue was put to a vote and it was 16 in favor and no one opposing. This marked an important step both for the DX community and the Saharawis who were seeking international understanding and recognition for their country at war.

Maybe it's time to pack again and say good-bye to the family. And pray to God that Dad will get safely back home when the show is over. Now let's turn the spotlights on a new DXCC country embroiled in a desert war. Ladies and gentlemen - Western Sahara.



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

IT IS THE POLITICAL OFFICER'S OPINION THAT THERE ARE BETTER WAYS TO SPEND YOUR HOLIDAY TIME THAN POSSIBLY GETTING SHOT AT. THE MOROCCANS HAVE BUILT EARTHER WALLS AROUND THEIR TERRITORY AND IF YOU ARE CAUGHT IN IT, YOU ARE FAIR GAME FOR TARGET PRACTICE.

I HOPE THIS HELPS YOU MAKE YOUR DECISION!

The Shifting Sands of Sahara – SORASD

A massive Iberia Airlines jet was taxiing to the passenger terminal at Algiers International on a hot October day when this story began. Being met by RASD (Republica Arabe Saharai Democratica) authorities at the airport gave us a comfortable start and allowed us to skip tedious inspection by customs officials.

We were given something of a red-carpet treatment usually reserved for foreign dignitaries arriving on a state visit. This was all very good in view of the heavy cartons of gear, beams, and associated equipment that we were carrying, stuff that normally would give rise to lengthy discussions with customs officials. The RASD had instructed us to take an absolute minimum of gear with us for this introductory operation. There was no way of including an amplifier or a back-up transceiver in the baggage. The beam was handled separately as a risky item that might be seized at customs.

The next two days were spent obtaining all the necessary permits authorizing us to fly to Tindouf at the southern end of Algeria (7X) to reach a point for crossing into Western Sahara. With Tindouf one of the major military outposts in the area, it was necessary to file a good deal of red tape to be able to go through the base.

In Algiers, the RASD authorities wanted us to give a detailed presentation on our intentions, since they had never heard anything about amateur radio. With the RASD Embassy in Algiers acting as a representative office for dealing with the outside world, there were no international telecommunications links available from Western Sahara itself, no postal services, no currency. All that sounded very outlandish.

Destination Tindouf

To ensure their total safety in a war situation, visitors were normally accompanied by RASD authorities immediately upon their arrival in Algiers. Our visit was no exception, and we had them close on our heels all the time. Cars with RASD license plates provided us with all-around service in Algiers.

Visitors were coming in substantial numbers but usually only for very short periods of time. Many of them represented the world press and other media. Given our scheduled seven-day visit, there were indications of some problems because accommodations and other facilities in the desert appeared highly limited. Why should we be "broadcasting" that long, they wondered. Evidently our mission was not fully understood.

Arriving in Tindouf was like entering a military front line far out in the desert. It was a vast, forbid-

ding, desolate area with no greenery. They surely had a lot of military hardware deployed there. We saw almost no civilians in that small town but felt like VIPs, because the ever-suspicious eyes of military personnel were following our every movement. It wasn't designed to make us feel good when any abrupt motion or attempt to walk at a slightly hurried pace immediately sent the soldiers quite instinctively feeling for the trigger of their automatic rifles.

We were being shadowed every inch of the way traveling on an ageing RASD military vehicle from the airport to the border area. Needless to say, the presence of RASD personnel made us feel like doing the right things. They even smiled occasionally in contrast to our troubled faces showing signs of fear and worry. How about taking some pictures now that we were in Tindouf? Well, we thought we'd take them at a later date – if we ever came back here.

Entering Western Sahara – a New DXCC Counter

Everything looked very different when we started searching for the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic

So, where is the borderline of this DXCC counter? No traffic signs are needed but the road looks wide enough and straight ahead. No tourist attractions to capture your attention.



in the middle of a desert ravaged by war. We passed one of several military checkpoints that served as a borderline – or, maybe not. There were no roads, no traffic rules in this country, but jeeps were zigzagging all over the place in a kind of structured way. There were road markings in the desert to get you from one place to another – painted stones studded along the way to put you back on the right track should you ever get lost.

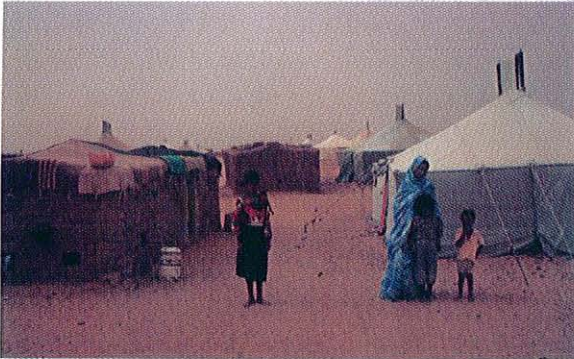
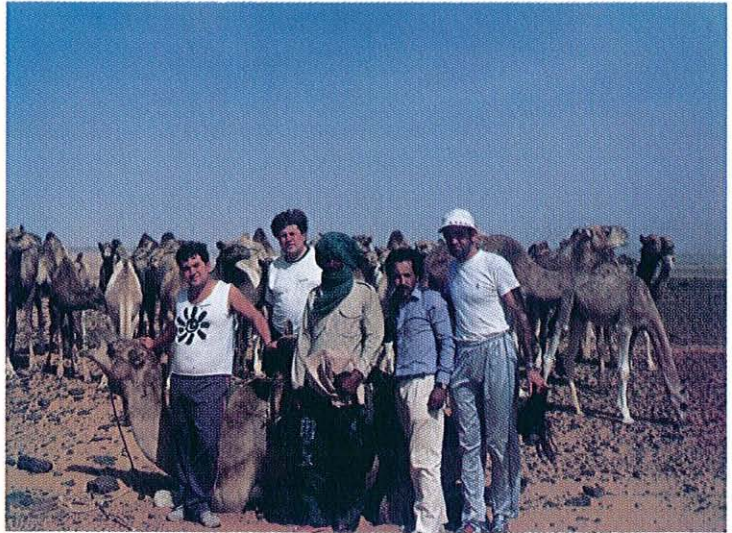
Having reached a massive building complex, probably a military headquarters in the middle of nowhere with the RASD flag flying overhead, we understood that this was it. We were in a region far away from our daily worries, entering a totally different world and a newly born country.

Would this be our location for the next seven days? It seemed to us like a good idea not to keep asking questions, but to take a positive view of whatever lay in store for us regardless of its size or format. This compound would surely be our home, because we unloaded our stuff in a guest room and introduced ourselves to a group of RASD officers there. Among them was an interesting guy, well-built but rather short of stature – Mr Naama Zeine-Eddine, Director of the RASD Department of Telecommunications. Henceforth, he would be our partner now that hopefully we soon would be setting up our station. Naama proudly informed us that his broadcasting station was operating on 1,355 kHz.

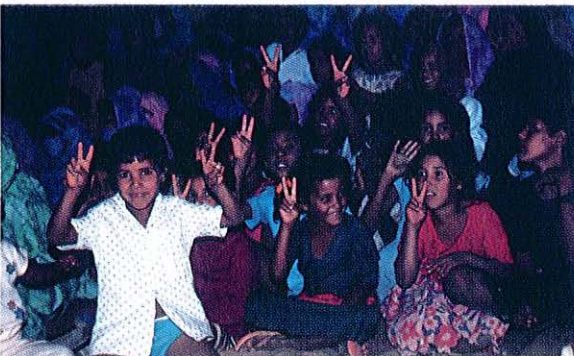
How about putting up the 18AVT and giving a live demonstration? Well, all the entry papers were fixed, and we helped ourselves to a few cups of Arabic tea at a highly ceremonial function. All this was electrifying the atmosphere and finally leading the way for some broadcasting of our own from the RASD. The first

WESTERN SAHARA

Going out to the middle of a desert in a war situation requires devotion and commitment. Often it is no fun but hard work and a lot of risk taking.



Our own tidy residential tent on the right. Sario, a Saharawi lady, out in front with her children. She cooked our food in a simple kitchen nearby, a house doubling as an air-raid shelter.



Saharan people are living for tomorrow filled with hope. Their flag, coat of arms, national anthem and will power give strength to this nation.

potential problem was lurking just around the corner, though.

They wanted to see our “broadcasting” in action, whereas we were probably more inclined toward running a little “pileup”, as we called it. Their expectation and idea was that we would be broadcasting to the whole big wide world, telling everyone about their sad and unjust situation. In other words, no pileup. A relatively difficult mix, as Albert would say.

We made our first contacts with Spain for the benefit of our hosts’ language capabilities which were Arabic, Spanish, and French. Naama, the director, was well prepared and very talented. Keen to try out his skills on the radio, he grabbed the mike and started “broadcasting” with our equipment right away. What a mess!

Fortunately, he soon realized the impossible number of people screaming on the frequency, people who for some reason wished to contact Western Sahara but little cared about broadcasting. Although Naama was not yet ready to understand this, much less believe it, we were muttering to ourselves something about this being one of the Ultimate Realities of DXing.

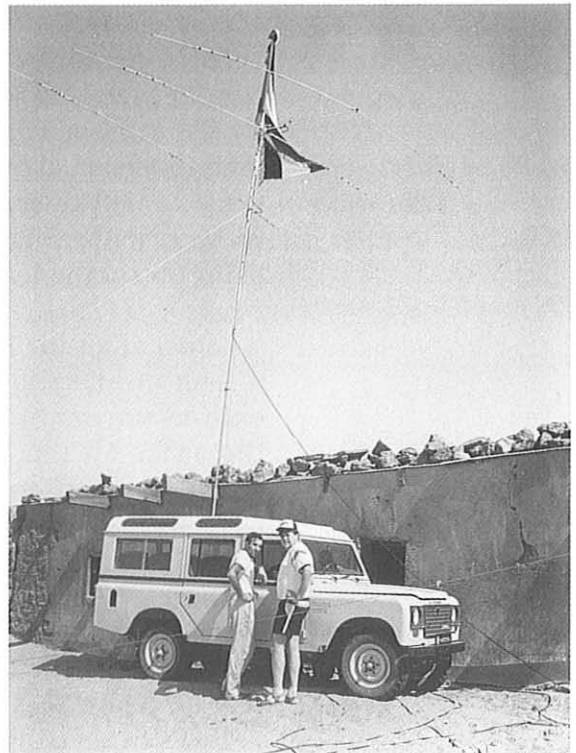
Soon after our initial appearance on the air, after a long arduous journey and a lot of nerve-racking excitement, our hosts called it a day and told us to hit the sack. All the group members would sleep in a single facility. But before falling asleep, we inspected the military hardware positioned at the camp, which was all loaded and tuned up for the following day’s battles.

It was not the first time during this exercise that tears ran down my cheeks as I rested my head on the pillow – utterly tired and hungry, cursing my destiny

of having ever been born into this wonderful world of amateur radio. We had probably amassed as many as 30 – yes, thirty – contacts to our credit. What a disaster!

S0RASD QRV After All – Right on Schedule

Lying on my military mattress, sweating and smelling awful, I couldn't get any sleep. Under a clear, starlit sky with not a single cloud in sight, an otherwise perfect stillness was only marred by the steady hum of a generator running somewhere in the vicinity. The generator was on, then, and the gear just waited to be fired up in this same room a few feet away. What could I lose or gain? A lot or just nothing.



Operating from a lonely Saharan outpost – somewhere near a desert front line, to use military terminology. The jeep is placed next to the operating desk to provide a power source for the S0RASD operation.

Approaching Naama who was sleeping just across the room and who had not flashed a single smile yet, I asked whether I could sit down at the radio for a while and see if it was still working. Everyone was sound asleep. That's what I thought anyway. Dim dial lights were switched on, volume turned down next to nothing, and a Viking Nye keyer placed on the table. SORASD was in business on 7 MHz CW.

A few hours later, without realizing it, I had made the first 1,200 QSOs in one solid shot during the first night. I tell you, it was far from fun. Rather, it was a compelling duty that had to be done, because of all you wonderful people to whom we had given a firm commitment. A glance at the log indicated that the first U.S. contacts were WA2UXC, W1ZE, K4DLI, N1AIM and KR1R, and the first stations west of the Rockies sported familiar calls such as N6RJ, K6NA, N6ND, W6RT, and W6YA. How about good old Canada? Well, the first one north of the border was VE3HGN.

Sleeping on a hard, uninviting concrete floor without a mattress was the Telecommunications Director – or was he really asleep? With one eyeball shining brightly in the pitch-dark Saharan night, Naama was ready to register every unexpected movement by the enemy. The next day he explained to me the full meaning of what he called “desert sleep”. It was just a matter of being always alert and vigilant with only part of your brain relaxing.

In the darkness of that night, the other half of Naama's brain identified me as a partner, not an enemy. The ice was broken, to use a figure of speech familiar from more northerly latitudes. A curious bond of friendship was forged between us that would last throughout the remainder of our stay in the RASD. In spite of that, at first he was very angry about that long transmitting stint and ordered our power cut im-

mediately. This brought our proceedings to a calamitous halt – no more operating, although the Japanese started booming in right along that narrow long path window.

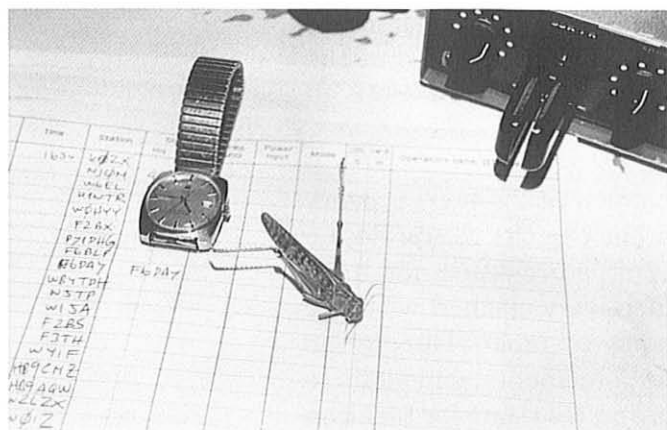
Naama simply was not quite sure of what I had been transmitting that night. He told me that from then on everything would have to be done in plain language using the loudspeaker only. He surely had been goofing off on the job for the first 1,200 guys.

Moving to the Camp – Among the People

Having come all the way to visit this northwestern African nation, we were called upon to be on the move, not to get stuck in any particular location. Safety was an important consideration here, because our station and the beam could be expected to be tracked by radar from the occupied side of the territory. The whole nation was on the move, so why not this DXpedition!

There was no choice but to dismantle our setup, load everything aboard a jeep, and head out deeper into the desert. Our destination was Bir Lehlou, an administrative center and a major military outpost. It was an exciting five-hour trip across a virtually empty desert. The surface was not exactly smooth, giving us a rough ride and the jeep a real-life vibration test. We survived it and so did our sturdy four-wheel drive vehicle.

Would there be any life, any vegetation in the desert? Sure there was wildlife, or should I say wild life, out there in the form of an indigenous Saharawi Air Force made up of millions and millions of 3-inch locusts which were a real scourge for this part of Africa. We surely had thousands of them killed on the jeep windshield. Driving on, we saw more jeeps and



The desert locusts have inflicted tremendous damage over many years on African vegetation and crops. They were everywhere in their thousands – of all colors and about three inches long.

some military camps but absolutely no green vegetation, only black-colored mineral-bearing rocks which made us feel like walking on the moon, a country still out of our reach.

Finally we arrived at our designated camp, which consisted of hundreds of tents and some massive school buildings and administrative facilities. Entering the camp just before dusk, we paid courtesy calls on the village administrators with whom tea was had in the local ceremonial fashion. Then it was time to get settled in a tent placed at our disposal at the heart of the village. We slept like logs that night, totally exhausted. We were sleeping between snow-white sheets with the stars our only illumination. There was no generator in the vicinity, and we didn't care about you tuning for us there that night. The sheer excitement had simply killed us down to the last man.

Getting Used to a New Lifestyle and Limited Operating Hours

It was on the morning of the third day when we finally got set up in the administrative building. Our multilingual antenna-raising party was most success-

ful. The daily routines were not exactly supportive of our efforts to mount a full-scale DXpedition, but the limited hours available for operating were after all better than nothing.

The generator was shut down at 2200 UTC every night when we were taken back to the camp. So, no more 7 MHz... having our simple breakfast and driving to the operating site effectively clashed with the very narrow long-path window to Japan. During the daylight hours there were appointments, and visits to Saharawi sites, leaving less and less time for tackling the huge, never-ending pileups.

Because there was only one station available, the off-duty operators were able to spend more time getting Naama fully trained in all aspects of amateur radio. The Director was all smiles now and most excited about amateur operating, having forgotten the broadcasting business. To this Old Timer it was a sheer joy to see our new recruit handing out a string of 59 reports at a highly professional rate.

The operating room at SORASD was simple and austere – not much comfort. A Polisario Front poster and a map of Western Sahara reminded us of our critical location during this DX outing. Instructor Arseli, EA2JG and trainee Naama, S01A.



Naama lost no time in absorbing all the basic information. He read all the books we had brought him and filled the pages with his own notes. In view of the difficult desert conditions and the fact that the DX-pedition types were getting progressively weaker, Naama gradually took full command of everything and produced a tremendous amount of energy organizing everything and keeping us busy.

We must have created many excited and confused situations when Naama was in charge of operating at the peak propagation hours. But we were making progress and had already established something that would stay and not disappear as a one-shot deal after this first operation. In a matter of a few days we had managed to get our message through, and Naama was convinced that there were more than a handful Deserving DXers tuning for us.

What a wonder child we had found! We had come all the way to Sahara to zero in on a trainee who was doing the job only four days after he had heard anything about amateur radio.

Naama's team had completed the low-band antennas and hoisted them high up in the air - and learned that those bands were never open during the daylight hours. I was getting very close to another target - that of working my way through to another night run on 7 MHz to do some business with the Stateside gang. It was worthwhile waiting there, you guys, as I did show up.

How is Life in the Republic?

All members of the male population were out on the front along a 1,500-mile earthen wall protected by mine fields, a wall built by the Moroccans to keep

We saw another victory by finding "a swimming pool" as part of their irrigation system.



RASD troops out of the occupied area. This being the case, women were responsible for running the camps – doing all the work, looking after health care, and providing education for the children. All the villages were well organized, concentrating on the short-term needs of survival.

Everywhere I could see evidence of a heart-rending hope for and belief in a better tomorrow which would enable the Saharawis to return to their homeland now under foreign occupation. This situation had been going on for twelve years, and, honestly speaking, it might still go on for much longer – maybe too long.

The world community was supporting the RASD, which could not survive a day without international assistance. Since water was available and pumped from deep wells, the drought had not hit this part of Sahara in the same way it had afflicted other countries in Africa. The Saharawis had managed to make the desert bloom, and they were self-sufficient in most vegetables and other crops.

They were also keeping goats and sheep, and camels provided a means of long-distance transportation. Life was extremely hard at the camps, but with

God's blessings and a spirit of hope, they felt that they could only win, knowing that their efforts were well supported.

They relied heavily on increasing their population to protect the country and make it survive. A strong emphasis put on education came as one of the big surprises to us, and it was really touching to see groups of children from different schools come to our station and sing for us every day. With their hair well combed and neat school uniforms, they had a look in their eyes which bespoke a powerful conviction and dedication to their cause. Their songs echoed the Saharawi yearning for a return to home.

Temperatures at times could drop to the freezing point at night, and occasional snowfall interspersed with constant sandstorms strained human endurance to its limits. We met a group of German doctors who were there to train Saharawi personnel to run a system of basic health care. We saw their primitive hospital facilities and could only guess how effective and successful those facilities were in dealing with more serious surgical operations, not to mention the likely infant mortality rate.

No organized sanitary facilities were available, nor any reasonable premises for people to get washed. The sanitary zone, as it were, was only a line drawn in the sand far away from the camp. No toilets; it was just a matter of sitting down. It was all that simple. During our seven-day stay we had the pleasure of swimming in a pool which formed part of an irrigation system used to water their vegetable farm. It was quite an experience to splash in a Saharan swimming pool. It surely took some pumping to fill it up! The pump was powered by a 2 kW Honda generator running on gasoline, wherever that came from.

The country and its spirit of survival were based on a strong sense of national identity, allegiance to the RASD flag, and confidence in a better future which would see the Saharawis return to the occupied half of their country. Even though some of the camps were located only some 15 miles from the front line, the men rarely came back to spend time with their families because their presence was constantly needed at the front to defend what was left of their country.

What a sad situation! A human disaster for some 200,000 people. Their only sources of modern enjoyment were volleyball and Naama's broadcasting station, which was transmitting ethnic African music and hope of a better tomorrow to all the tents that still had some voltage left in the batteries to power portable radios.

The DXpedition Moves Toward Success

Running barefoot was a real uphill battle, and for the first time it was the pileup that controlled me and not vice-versa. I simply did not have enough juice to keep things under control. Every once in a while I went down to the CW band when the pileups became too messy with the SSB crowd. Naama could hardly believe the amount of interest shown in his country. We were proud to be able to report to the President of the RASD the tremendous amount of publicity created by our expedition. The President was informed daily of our progress.

Thanks to their confidence in us and their belief in the value of amateur radio, we came close to gaining another victory. Having seen my Spanish partners EA2JG and EA2ANC go to bed at 2200 UTC, Naama and I drove back to the station to run heavy cables from the jeep battery to the transceiver. Hooray! We

were now in business on 7 MHz CW. The pileup was spread all over the band, and I was working it down as fast as I possibly could.

The question on my mind was just how long I could use the jeep battery without running it dry. Without you folks ever realizing it, I often turned the output way down to 10 watts to save power, but that made no difference to the people calling there. I wanted to make sure the jeep would still start in the morning. You see, there were no spare batteries within a 10-mile radius, and the camels could not tow the jeep fast enough.

Thank God, turning the ignition key in the morning we managed to start the jeep for some sightseeing. I wasn't too interested in seeing the tourist sights just because they were something extra special. But I was keen to get the battery recharged for the following night.

The second night was surely getting out of control, since I started hallucinating, fearing the enemy and death. I simply passed out and left you calling on the frequency. All the excitement and the overall situation coupled with the star-bright Sahara night, the



A typical Saharawi meal at our housing tent. We certainly had a bad conscience eating supplies provided by many relief organizations to the Saharawis to ensure their survival.

presence of armed guards, and the nearness of war had thoroughly overwhelmed this Old Timer. Yet early in the morning some of the Deserving were logged even on 80 and 160 meters for a brief showing.

The Final Count

All things considered, I think it was a success. A total of 11,846 QSOs were made in some 80 hours of active operating. By now Naama was fully trained to run the station and manage his morning long-path session with the always well-behaved Japanese crowd.

We were successful in demonstrating amateur radio to the RASD authorities with the aim of enlisting their full support for continued amateur activity on the DX bands. We had a unique opportunity to share a human experience with the Saharawi people. We will never forget Sario, a Saharawi lady, who was so friendly playing host to us, baking fresh bread for us every morning in her rudimentary campsite kitchen.

Then, how about finding Naama one bright morning operating the station and telling us that he had now licensed himself as S01A! How could he choose such a super-sounding call? Well, his method was quite simple: S0 was the prefix for Western Sahara, he was the number one amateur operator, and the suffix A stood for the city of Aaiun, where his mother and father were still hopefully alive and waiting for his return. How moving!

My partners and colleagues, Arseli, EA2JG, and Agustin, EA2ANC, never ran into an argument in our difficult circumstances. They fully understood this strange Finn who was never satisfied not being able to work the pileups down to the very bottom layer.

They were super nice guys whose support contributed a great deal to the overall success of this first operating and training program with Naama.

Agustin, do you still believe the moving objects in the cloudless sky were missiles rather than satellites? If you still wake up in the middle of the night to your own cries of anguish, just believe me...

The Happy End

It was Sunday afternoon, October 25, when the gear was finally switched off and the first SORASD operation went down in history. We were treated to a ceremonial Saharawi fiesta – a farewell party – with thousands of the local population attending. Many huge generators were producing kilowatts of electric and audio power to make our last evening at the camp absolutely memorable. What a situation! A party in the middle of a desert war. It must have left the troops on the front wondering what was going on that crystal-clear Sahara night.

Lights off, as usual, and with only the stars shining in the sky, we retired to our tent. No more operating. Early departure was scheduled for 7:00 a.m. the following morning.

Breaking the stillness of the night was the sound of a jeep approaching our camp at 2:00 a.m. We were advised to leave immediately rather than await the break of dawn. We did just that, sensing that a thunderstorm was building up on the horizon. Bolts of lightning were blazing across the skies and all around us, some of them striking the ground near us.

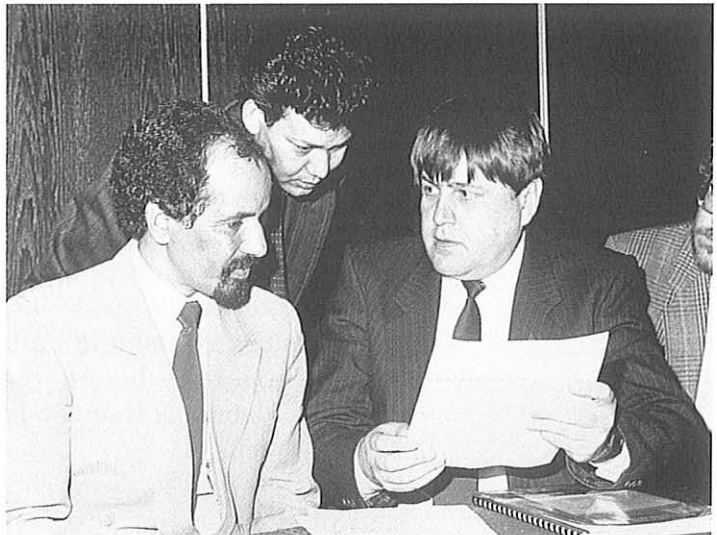
Not a word was exchanged. Everybody concentrated on driving the jeep as fast as possible. We

got lost twice driving in the dark, but luckily found the painted road markings to give us the necessary directions. We left the Saharawi people without saying good-bye, but we sincerely hope for a better future and a brighter tomorrow for them.

It all sounds like a real adventure and a terrible nightmare, but it was not. It was more like making another New One for the Deserving and establishing amateur radio on a permanent basis in Western Sahara as a human link between the Saharawi people and the rest of the world.

When I wake up in the middle of the night and cry over everything that I experienced there, it's a new DXCC country and the great Saharawi nation that come to my mind. I also think of my godchild Naama, DXer by the grace of God.

In the aftermath of a recent visit to Finland by RASD President Mohamed Abdelaziz, a Finnish delegation was invited to Western Sahara to further consolidate amateur radio there and to establish first ever VHF network. The visiting team was issued the special license SØ1DX to honor that occasion.



PROFILE OF A COMPLETE DXPEDITIONER

Sometimes it would be, you will agree, quite interesting to join a DXpedition and feel the wonderful charm of that radio performance. International travel has come more and more within reach of ordinary people. Special rates are offered by travel agents for trips to all corners of the world, and every day the world sees the birth of hundreds of fledgling amateur operators only too soon yearning for a bit of exotic DX and whittling down their needed lists.

DX is a renewable, infinite natural resource, reborn time and again. The actors and the audience are always there. The current DXCC Countries List seems virtually intact, just accommodating a general course of events out in the world.

But where should I be heading, then? Would it be better to look into the possibility of going all alone, or would that get too boring in the end, and should I instead invite a fellow ham just across the street to come along? Or, how about approaching the local Super DXer of our Club who won the last Sweepstakes... from the San Joaquin Valley section? Maybe I'll sign up for a planned DXpedition to Albania that I know of. But would I make the team? Oh, what the heck, suppose I'll just bring to a happy conclusion my family life already disrupted by all these DX activities and report for State Department duty in the darkest corner of Africa.

No matter which decision we arrive at, now is the time to do some serious soul searching and make an evaluation of one's abilities and qualifications – the needed personal characteristics, not to mention one's potential for cooperation with others – before starting to pack. Perhaps it will be interesting for all of us to find out whether the right men are working on that DX-pedition which we are going to log next, and to reflect on why that promised, missing country did not show up last year, or why it only surfaced for a day or two, and which we failed to snag.

DX life and the artistry of DX are subject to specific laws. The artists need to meet certain qualifications and accept associated exceptions... and exceptions to exceptions. Or, to put it in another way, one has to appreciate that all things are equal... and some more so, as Professor Cass pointed out in those other years.

Who is Going and Where?

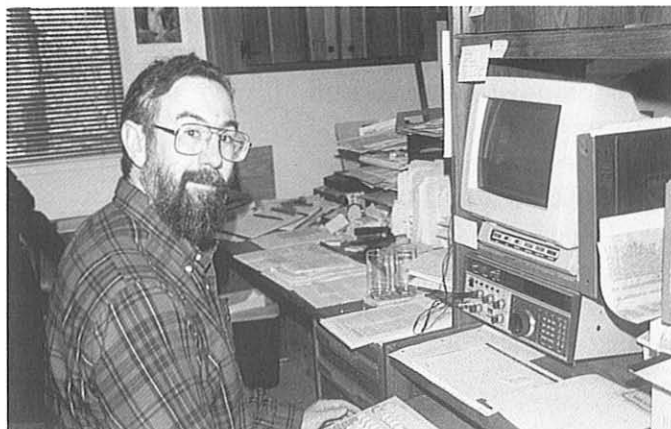
The last few decades have offered ample evidence that the DXCC cycle spans an average of 15 - 20 years. During that period, all countries on the current DXCC List will appear on the bands at least once and be workable. Unfortunately, history also tells us that, at any given time, two or three wars are being fought followed by peace negotiations aimed at uniting or dividing some of the DXCC countries so dear to us. What was is that Professor Cass said in this context? Take from no man his dream... especially if it is a new country.

In certain parts of the world, a military coup is just as routine an affair as a trip to the local zoo in another

corner of the globe. It is in this jungle of world politics that DXers have to plan for their expeditions and find ways of snaring needed DX counters. The ever-changing world situation helps to inject a renewed sense of vitality and fresh potential into the DXCC program. As a consequence, this requires that DXers, true Internationalists of Amateur Radio that they are, pay close attention to the world news pages of the local press that they devour daily, and stay glued to their TV sets for the evening's main newscast to get an idea of what is likely to happen in Albania next week.

For the best analysis of the state of DXCC-related world politics, it is advisable to study various surveys conducted on a worldwide and region-by-region basis by major DX Clubs and Bulletins. The reasons why certain countries, perhaps the first twenty-five, top the Most Wanted lists are diverse, ranging from an explicit ban on amateur radio to a highly difficult geographical location, e.g. a piece of real estate tucked away somewhere in between floating icebergs.

It is important to appreciate that the first two dozen countries are not ranking high on the world's Most Wanted lists for no reason at all. Activating any



Chod Harris, VP2ML, is compiling the most accurate wanted surveys at The DX Bulletin. His data is available to all the Deserving.



Not all DXpeditions succeed. This ZA5Z operation never hit the airwaves from Tirana. But that is another story this gang would love to share with you in the wee small hours of any DX convention. From left: OH2BH, SM5SB, OH2SB, OH2QV and OH2MM.



Downtown Tirana has kept the Deserving waiting for the longest period of time of them all. But the day will come for the Believers...

one of those counters will always turn out a spectacular event on the international DX scene. While bringing these truly rare country counters on the air often requires access to tremendous resources, and necessitates a lot of coordinated teamwork between many individuals, a small key group may be able to successfully handle the contacts with various authorities needed for obtaining all the needed permissions.

It is always worthwhile trying to activate rare DXCC countries enabling the crowd to enjoy the Good Days of DXing, but one should invariably make a realistic assessment of one's personal resources and move in such a way as not to inflict damage on the cause of the Amateur Radio Service or its future prospects in the target country. DXers stand tall and act as excellent Ambassadors of Good Will for amateur radio; it is their responsibility to operate with the best interests of their hobby in mind under all circumstances, thus safeguarding the future of amateur radio. DX is... and that's the whole thing.

Swimming or Skiing - No Problem!

It is true that landing on a rare DX island, reef or rock, you may have to cover the final stretch by swimming. This is what the DX legends tell us, anyway. But perhaps an even more important consideration to bear in mind is that you ought to be in great physical shape when taking part in a major DXpedition. You do not have to be able to match the muscle power of Tarzan or look like Rambo but a lot of stamina is absolutely necessary.

Members of the DX audience often fail to realize that these expeditions almost without exception require a great exertion of physical and mental energy. If physical fitness fails, mental performance is impaired as well. This has direct repercussions for cooperation with other members of the team and, in particular, it affects one's ultimate behavior in the final arena, i.e. on the bands in front of a demanding audience.

An ordinary DXer sitting in the audience for a huge pileup often looks like representing the very antithesis of a keep-fit philosophy. And yet, it is on these reserves that DXpeditions frequently have to depend for additional operators. It is highly recommended that before going on a DXpedition, you consider completing a major fitness program and bring your weight down close to Weight Watchers target figures. In the event of imminent illness or continued medication, a serious word with your physician is advisable.

Indeed, it may come as a surprise to those working DX to discover that DXpeditions are afflicted with many pitfalls, unexpected difficulties, great physical strain and, when everything finally starts running, long sleepless nights, virtually nonexistent possibilities for rest, not to mention the absence of a cool

shower or hot meals. DXpedition cuisine is in most cases pretty straightforward – based on the Law of Survival.

All the hardships and discomforts are invariably connected with the position of that particular DXCC country on the latest Most Wanted lists. But of course, there are some exceptions, and a Top Ten country can sometimes be activated from the suite of a local five-star Hilton Hotel.

Language Capabilities and Different Cultures

While planning for a DXpedition and, in particular, upon arrival in the target country, the eager DXpeditioner is always faced with unmistakable language and cultural barriers. Even in the context of one and the same language, words and phrases may carry a broad spectrum of different meanings. Like in layman terms, anything real may be said to exist. However, in the sense with which we are concerned, DX is said to have existence. Everything can be said to be unique and inexplicable in terms of metaphysical or scientific factors. To put it simply, all can be codified in the simple phrase: DX is.

It is more than reasonable that at least one member of the DXpedition team should understand the language spoken in the DX country, by the ship's crew or the plane's captain. You or members of your DXpedition group ought to identify such capabilities that will enable you to manage the situation in the best possible manner in terms of language, culture and local familiarity. A successful multinational DXpedition, one that in all respects pays attention to the local population, other amateurs or interested parties possibly seeking entry to the same target country, one

flying the flag of the host country topmost, represents the international world of DX at its very best.

Speaking of different cultures, I always remember an incident on the island of Fernando Poo in Equatorial Guinea when we were en route to Annobon Island to activate 3C0 for the first time ever. It was decided to call a taxi for a couple of hours' ride around the island but neither of us suffering DXpeditioners was aware of the local custom which called for agreeing the fare in advance.

What lay in store for us was a rather unpleasant surprise. The fare was enormous, well in excess of the cabman's annual income. Local custom dictated that the fare could be freely fixed by the driver if his customers forgot to strike a deal at the outset. Strangely enough, the man would not settle even for one-third of the claimed fare we offered him. To quote Ville, OH2MM: "Son of a bitch. I'm not going to give him anything".

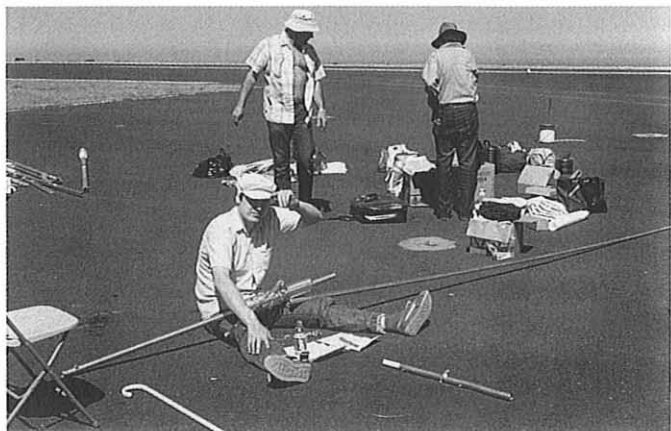
Problem solved. Or, was it? When the stubborn cabdriver was spending his fourth day and night in the vicinity of our hotel, I decided to ask our highly professional guide – a beautiful lady, by the way – what we ought to do. With a charming smile, she replied: "Maybe you ought to pay the man if you want to get out of this country alive!". Aaaargh... where's my wallet? Time to pay up, in this culture!

In the same vein, I recall with particular sympathy the Embassy of the United States and its Charge d'Affaires, Mr Alfred Erdos, located on that same island. The American diplomat went out of his way to give us advice but he, too, had persistent doubts as to our chances of ever lea-

ving the island alive with our radios. Following our return home with a bad case of malaria, we ended up in hospital where one morning we found the latest issue of Newsweek magazine. There was a story about an American diplomat found chopped into several pieces in his library. We had the pleasure of having made the acquaintance of the late Mr Alfred Erdos and we were profoundly shocked by his untimely, tragic death.

President Don Francisco Magias Nguema, whom we had the dubious honor of meeting while in Equatorial Guinea and who presented us with a highly ornamented license, was overthrown a few years later as Head of State of his newly independent country (ex-EA0), and serious chaos ensued. The President showed considerable understanding for our hobby but otherwise represented a way of life far removed from anything known to us; for instance, he enjoyed drinking warm human blood, they said, and his sense of justice was out of this world. Wonder if rulers or regimes of a kind exemplified by Magias Nguema still exist in the present age?

Seriously speaking, a traveler going on his adventures with radio equipment in the baggage but without all the needed licenses and permits is quite a time bomb. Strangely enough, DX history does not know of very many actual disasters. Perhaps the breed of traveling DXers usually make it a point of checking with the home town library to find out about the prevailing circumstances and cultural characteristics of the target country, and then embark on the DX-pedition trail carrying all the various licensing documents, landing permits and customs papers.



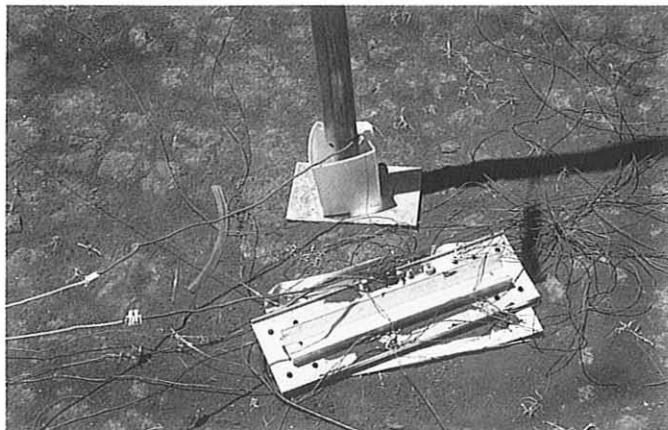
Assembling a Butternut vertical without an instruction manual in a scorching heat at the XF4 airstrip makes a good chemical test of DXpeditioner knowledge and will power. OH2BU had no problem qualifying, with N7NG and W6RGG searching for more tools.

My good friend Ville, OH2MM – a successful contester – always preassembles everything under virtually authentic circumstances at home, identifying each cable and connector, and then moves the whole setup almost intact into a set of suitcases standing beside. Special care needs to be taken to ensure that every nut and bolt is included. The upcoming DX or contest expediton is highly vulnerable equipment-wise.

A technical expert with practical experience and knowledge is often called for when these DX performances are planned, more so than may be generally understood. The DXpedition team simply has to possess all-around technical know-how and capabilities for solving specific technical problems. Those problems may be of a highly practical nature, not involving sophisticated field repairs on an ICOM transceiver since that type of expertise resides in Bellevue, Washington. But it may make a lot of sense to bring along an extra ICOM as a spare, particularly because your on-flight hand baggage easily allows for two of them.

A guy who can climb a 2-inch diameter tubular mast with comfortable agility, tune a Butternut verti-

Getting out the best possible 160/80-meter signal needs a lot of commitment and devotion. Even something more temporary might work for a week. Connecting everything metallic together might provide a necessary ground effect to boost the signal to distant lands.



cal in rain or sunshine, dig up a potential 80-meter signal in every situation or who can plan the technical layout in such a way as to enable the DXpedition to tackle the pileups using several stations simultaneously, even on the same band, boasts qualities that may make him a popular candidate when the lineup of operators for the next expedition is contemplated.

The successful DX performance resembles a matrix or a value analysis in which all the components are of significance and everything is interrelated. In this matrix, the technical proficiency of the makers and members of a DXpedition is of great value alongside the actual operating aspects of the whole exercise.

Team Management – a Final Measure of Success

Far too often, a theater performance opens without a director. But the fact of the matter is that a director or, why not, several of them, must be found at a very early stage. This may sound like overdoing it, but that is not the case. Sometimes it may be sufficient to know that a solution can be found to each and every problem situation. This means that everyone is aware of where

Practice and Experience

One way of getting the hang of DXpeditioning is to head out for your own little trip without making too much fuss about it. For starters, you might like to select a target country from way down the Most Wanted lists to make sure that the whole world will not assault you on your first expedition. By the same token, many major DX or contest ventures will need and want young operators with the right type of growth potential, initially as extra hands or apprentices. Handling those chores successfully will help you climb the ladder gradually, ultimately qualifying you for the coveted main role of a DXpedition star.

Contesting from any fairly rare island, e.g. many Caribbean spots served by major airlines, will net you an important experience, somewhat comparable to the events that you will be struggling with on a real hard-core DXpedition. Significant logistical challenges are always involved, and then there is the task of building up a station to maximum efficiency and the opportunity for live pileup practice. If your stomach or nerves get upset in the Caribbean, home is not that far away compared with a similar predicament out at the seven seas of the world.

In connection with planning for major DXpeditions, a lot of operators volunteering their services will usually turn up. All with a burning desire to take part, just once in the course of their ham career, in a DX performance of this kind. Many such volunteers claim impressive DXCC totals, a big home station or financial independence, but these attributes are not typical qualifiers for success. But few individuals present a resume of claimed experience from this type of activity, or report for duty as apprentices on an upcoming DX trip.

For all of these reasons, it often seems that the same guys keep teaming up for successive expeditions. Well, that is frequently the case. But there always seems to exist room for fresh blood, assuming that you possess the necessary know-how and command solid experience in getting along with other people socially. It is highly uncommon for a major DXpedition to include persons not in possession of special capabilities of this kind, in addition to the requisite basic operating skills.

Technical Excellence and Limited Facilities

Although members of the DXpedition team draw up lists covering hundreds of items while trying to prepare for every on-site eventuality, arrival at the scene of the upcoming action always provides surprises. The ambient conditions conducive to realization of the best possible alternatives are always limited when it comes to the final product – the signal to be transmitted from the site. One has to accept compromise and display great ingenuity. In spite of everything, some items are either forgotten or lost along the way, and the nearest Radio Shack store is 15,000 miles away.

The importance of careful advance planning can never be overemphasized, be it a question of what equipment or supplies to take along or of checking out planned systems in the safety of your home. It is no use testing your brand-new radio for the first time in rigorous field conditions somewhere in the jungle, or heading out to a remote island with a length of antenna wire and a tuner. Everything must stand ready for action and be well tested at the home station. You should not put too much faith even in an unopened factory carton.



– Generator? I thought you'd take care of it...

help can be found and who is entrusted with formal responsibility for various decisions.

The internal and external success of a DXpedition much too often stumbles over this important point. The team may feature brilliant individual performers while comprehensive coordination is totally lacking. At a moment of distress, decisions may be made that are regretted later.

A multinational antenna raising party probably represents the classic case of success or failure. I still recall with a chuckle a beam project deep in Africa. At a critical moment, the team leader began screaming wildly in his own language, prompting everyone to pull instinctively on the ropes with the result that the doggone beam came crashing down, disappearing into a rain forest.

What did we learn from that abortive attempt? Well, the leader was capable of directing the performance... in his own culture and in his own language. He was a real Hercules of the antenna world. What we forgot to do was to give instructions to our friendly indigenous helpers. Some of us were conversant in the local language. But that poor beam... it was a heart-rending sight!

A definite plan must be laid out for all operating. Somebody, one or more individuals, must come up with an action plan. Which band to concentrate on first to work down the pileups quickly at least on one band? The bands may open in several directions, and the audience always represents a wide assortment with regard to nationality, creed and color.

Training or practicing as such is not allowed on a DXpedition. The best available resources are allocated

to those bands and modes where they net the cleanest and highest QSO rates and bring maximum satisfaction to the distinguished audience. Perhaps a few practice runs for the less experienced participants should be permitted during the closing days or in the quiet hours.

As far as the daily operating routines are concerned, experience has shown that the best method is to operate in shifts of 4-to-6 hours, assuming there is enough manpower available. Also, it makes a lot of sense to have a simple operator roster drawn up by those responsible for the operating.

Early on the DXpedition, it is important to invest the best resources in the most critical band openings and to make maximum use of all the top-notch operators. There is every reason to sort these things out whether the team is blessed with just one or several entertainers from the world of DX. These are the ones who subscribe to the view that operating ability and DX techniques are directly proportional to the height of your tower and the power of your amplifier...

From the very beginning, the best operators on hand must be thrown into the battle. This is one of the Basic Truths of DX, as Professor Cass would put it. As time wears on, the pileups get progressively thinner, leaving one with an occasional chance to cruise one's way through at a more leisurely pace toward the end of the show. DX history tells us that few expeditions will ever run into the problem of having too many operators on board, at least during the closing days.

Someone has got to be there responsible for making sure that the DX tents will not be blown away by high winds, that the generators keep humming gently, with the fuel tanks filled up and oil changed regularly.

There must be somebody on hand who will plan a rudimentary menu for the always hungry operators, and who will see to it that social contacts are maintained with other interested parties, be they the ship's crew or the hotel's staff, not to mention the local authorities. Who is the liaison officer taking care of this important diplomatic activity associated with the equally worthwhile endeavor of projecting a favorable DX image in the local neighborhood? Surely, all of these things take some doing to accomplish.

Well, this reminds me of a true story from Western Sahara where a few memorable days and nights were spent in a refugee tent. At night, no operating was allowed for security reasons; you just had to hit the sack for the pitch-dark Saharan nights although you did not feel like sleeping at all under those circumstances.

One early morning, a senior official of the Ministry of Information of Western Sahara – one of our amateur trainees, by the way – went about the business of fixing the day's agenda. Our quarters were situated far away from the DX tent that could only be reached by jeep. The time was 0800 Zulu and this looked like the third day we would have to forgo working Japan via long path although all the Deserving there had seated themselves in the audience ready for us the lift the curtain.

Well, in broken Spanish, I decided to voice our deep concern, as if to defy our daily protocol. In response, our licensing class trainee, with just one day's lesson under his belt, rushed out of the tent, hit the jeep and left us wide-eyed behind wondering what was going on. A bit later on, it dawned on us that Naama, today known by knowledgeable DXers as S01A, sensed that duty

called and, as a future avid amateur, went about the business of working Japan long path.

Thanks again, Kan, JA1BK, for lining up all the courteous Japanese DX hunters and maintaining strict control over the situation, always so typical of the Japanese. In those days, SORASD pileup management more often than not lay in the hands of the pileup. So critical was the situation when a DX signal hit the airwaves in the midst of a desert war.

How to describe, then, the profile of a complete DXer or DXpeditioner? That one is difficult to answer. It must be one of the Eternal Enigmas or Mysteries of the Ages. But as Professor Cass used to impress on our minds in those other years, if you have to ask the question, you probably won't understand the answer... the road to truth and understanding is always a rocky one.

What appears absolutely certain, though, is that success is predicated upon the possession of an abundance of information and knowledge, both as regards the DXpedition as a whole and its actors. When everything falls beautifully into place, most of these things tend to be taken for granted but in the event of failure, the search for its causes will run forever. That has always been the case, and may always be. In DX. Nevertheless, just keep in there and never stop working DX.

The Case of Bouvet Island, 3Y5X

The rarest country of them all in the world came on the air in 1990, sparking off more comment and controversy than any previous DX performance. It probably turned out the most expensive production in

the history of amateur radio and was supported by a large number of individual DXers. Sitting in the demanding audience were all the Deserving, true-blue DXers fully paid up who were there to understand everything. Expectations were running high. Everyone was dressed up and ready for the show.

After it was all over and the dust had settled a bit, the pros and cons were debated for months and months, with the echoes of the dispute reverberating throughout the world. Both the cast and the audience were searched for culprits. Inspired by the Bouvet operation and owing to an unprecedented scale of deliberate interference harmful to the public image of amateur radio witnessed during the operation, the ARRL was in the process of developing disqualification criteria for DX productions.

The final report is yet to be published, but the true Believers who have a good and valid explanation for most everything, are profoundly aware of the reasons for and the ramifications of the hullabaloo.

To some extent, the performance was a failure but a huge number of DX types made contacts. Some of the local QRPer's had to toil an entire week and the most critical ones started hurling eggs and sundry other items on to the stage in protest against what they felt was an inferior performance. Of course, all this ran counter to the ham spirit and the regulations governing amateur radio. Meanwhile, some issues attracted only little attention and were discussed by small groups of enlightened operators only.

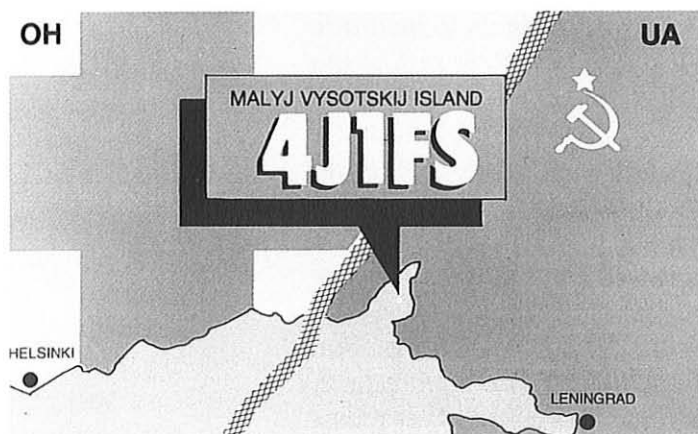


The family quit...then a neighbor stormed the house...and now the keyer is screwed up...

Bouvet Island had to be activated since it was the rarest of them all. This production had to happen so as to set an example to the wider DX audience and to give a lesson to the performers as well. The Bouvet operation went down in history as a splendid interna-

tional effort both in terms of logistics and end results, with the Norwegians deserving full credit for its success.

The 3Y5X operators, in the main, lived up to the challenge. Only the art of operation management was sporadically fouled up during the performance. Besides, the show included one or maybe two actors who should have never joined the cast. Not as actual performers or operators, anyway. They tended to obscure an otherwise excellent contribution made by the rest of the team.



EAST MEETS WEST – GORBY-SHOW ON M-V

Every Dad is wise in his own time. My father was no different in this regard, and he was busy giving advice to his growing son. Because I was born in the immediate postwar years, many of his words of advice were tinged with memories of life in the trenches when the Republic called Finland defended its independence. No doubt, those war memories lived on in the mind of everyone who had experienced the horrors of war. That was true of many OH types, including my Dad who had to suffer spending his best years in defense of this DXCC counter.

Although our Telecom authorities did not object to our communicating with the chirpy UA types, my Dad was

never quite happy allowing such contacts to be made from his house. For him, it was absolutely out of the question even to consider visiting that mysterious country in the east voluntarily. He also felt that in the fullness of time, we might again be called upon to do our duty in defending our country.

So, indeed, our relations with the Soviets were more or less casual, just making sure that the individual USSR country counters were worked on different bands. That part of the world looked so distant and mysterious, even frightening, to all of us. Every guy there was called either Igor or Alex and they all had the same address in Moscow.

But the world had to change and DX life with it. When M-V Island was leased to Finland in 1962 and the island fully met DXCC criteria, many of the Deserving turned their eyes to the east. But the time was not ripe yet. A potential country counter was left dormant there and people had a tendency to forget that Malyj Vysotskij only waited for better days to come.

When I packed my suitcase to go to Moscow for a meeting with the Red Army and presented a plan to set up shop in heavily armed Soviet coastal waters, I knew that Dad would not have been at all happy with what his son was about to do. But now we had matured to meet with these drifting UA types and see if they were real human beings or just shifting oscillators.

The world was indeed changing and another DX country was in the making. But this time around, our mission was a much more serious one than often in the past. An extended weekend was spent in Moscow with serious talking and a lot of festivities. Not a single night did this Old Timer hit the hay before sunrise. But

then again, we were making a better world and it was all worth the effort.

Still, a lot had to happen before this first-ever East-West DXpedition would board a boat for a trip to M-V Island with our newly formed group of friends – and with an American operator to boot! This gang was to make amateur radio history not only by getting this lonely counter on the air but by fostering a spirit of friendship between people and nations. The aim was to make this wonderful world of ours an even better place to live in. The M-V Island DXpedition was on its way.

It was not by accident that these activities resulted in another major event, this time in Seattle, Washington, where U.S. DX types and their associates were able to feel the M-V spirit that had put East and West together – DX-wise, that is. The M-V reunion at the Goodwill Games demonstrated the potential existing for international unity through DX. Even Dad would allow that to happen and be proud of his son being part of it. So, this is the story of M-V Island.

A New Lease on Life

co-authored with Chip Margelli, K7JA and Boris Stepanov, UW3AX

Every right-thinking spectrum user knows that DXers are the true Internationalists of Amateur Radio, that they are the top echelon and only accept the very best. But have you ever really thought of what might be the Ultimate Goal for yourself? Is it to work the rarest, choicest DX in the world from your cozy

radio room, or is it maybe to attend the next DX convention to meet those heroes who get many of the notable DX actions going for the Deserving to savor? Or, perhaps your dream is to get your own feet wet and go on a DXpedition or establish amateur radio on a permanent footing in that rare DXCC country counter.

Possibly it is all of these things, but then again, for supreme satisfaction to be derived from a once-in-a-lifetime experience, you should fire up from a most-sought-after country in the world, that far-out desolate island, and take with you a couple of the traditional co-combatants, Americans and Soviets, for a week on that uninhabited island. The gang can sit around the same fireworks and talk about this wonderful world of ours. You could coax them into pulling each other's leg, let them have a crack at working the pileups for seven days on end without sleep, share in the daily routines of outdoor life out in the woods, and just help each other establish true lifelong friendships. That is DXism expressed in the language of DXese. It is simply the best. Let it be the Ultimate Goal for DXing.

Where is M-V Island?

A while back the average DXer, not to mention the man in the street, had never heard of M-V Island. Even some geographers were at a loss to pinpoint it. But today, thanks to amateur radio and DXCC, thousands of DXers the world over know about the island. Malyj Vysotskij, M-V for short, is located at the southern end of the Saimaa Canal, a waterway that links the Finnish Lake District with the Gulf of Finland.

Prompted by economic and military considerations, interest in opening such a canal was first ex-

pressed in the Dark Ages. But a formal decision to go ahead with the project was not made until 1843. Following a lengthy construction period, the Saimaa Canal was officially opened in 1856. Traffic along the waterway expanded rapidly until it was brought to a halt in World War II, in 1940, when Finland lost the southern section of the canal to the Soviet Union. Then in 1962 the Soviet Union agreed to lease back to Finland the section that the Red Army had captured plus the island of Malyj Vysotskij.

M-V Island stands alone at 20 degrees, 34 minutes east and 60 degrees, 38 minutes north, only a short distance from the last lock on the canal. Originally, the island was supposed to serve as a staging and storage facility for ships loading and unloading their cargo, but the plan never materialized. With Soviet borders heavily guarded due to the USSR's strong military presence in the area, M-V Island was left uninhabited inside Soviet territorial waters.

Even though M-V Island was accorded DXCC status as early as November 17, 1970, it was only fairly recently that a first operation was carried out from the island. Many unsuccessful attempts to activate the island had been made in the past. When the ARRL made its initial ruling many years ago, the folks at Newington were certainly unable to anticipate that it would take almost two decades for this newly-minted country to come to life. Probably the DXCC Desk also did not realize that this particular island would bring East and West together for their first joint DXpedition.

Putting Together the 4JIFS Group

Those who have been through it all at the DX end of a pileup will confirm that a key element for DX-

Thanks to the efforts of Enn, UR2AR (now ES1AR), contacts were initially made with appropriate authorities and negotiations were held with various Soviet officials in Moscow in preparation for the M-V project.



pedition success is having the best people on board, not only for operating, but for making sure that a variety of tasks always waiting to be tackled can be handled successfully. It is a major undertaking, just like moving an entire circus show into the middle of a desert.

An M-V type of event was certain to present another ultimate challenge. Looking back at the international diplomatic scene, you will recall that in the early years of East-West talks in Geneva, the shape of the negotiating table was the only thing on which they were able to agree, and even that took several weeks to accomplish. We were not prepared to get into that sort of haggling over M-V Island with the folks from Box 88.

Following our negotiations in Moscow to secure all the needed permits and to make sure that Soviet waters could be crossed without our being harassed, we realized that the Soviet contingent would be led by their most qualified people. This meant that the Western representatives, both U.S. and Finnish, had to be of the same high calibre to meet the challenge.



It was these two brothers who made M-V a most unique happening in the history of the DXCC program. On a first ever East-West DXpedition, K7JA and UW3AX making friends on that remote island.

It was agreed that the Soviet crew would be headed by Boris Stepanov, UW3AX, of the USSR Radio Sport Federation (RSF). Boris was widely known as the RSF foreign affairs spokesman.

An extensive search for a U.S. operator ensued. The emphasis was placed on the many qualities required of anyone representing the United States of America to ensure the overall success of the event. Charles "Chip" Margelli, K7JA, a well-known amateur and a highly proficient operator was invited.

Often a gateway between East and West, Finland understood the importance of the event and its full potential. Accordingly, the very best resources were identified. Additional operators both in the Soviet Union and Finland were screened, keeping in mind the same high standards. A DXpedition aimed to make amateur radio history was ready for action.

Here are the crew members as described by Chip, K7JA:

- *Alex, UA1ALZ* – A very good CW operator, national champion of the USSR, and a nimble tree climber.
- *Gene, UZ3AU* – A gifted engineer. Gene saved the DXpedition with his generator repairs and good humor.
- *Boris, UW3AX* – The leader of the Soviet contingent, an expert in cutting red tape, and the number one toastmaster on the DXpedition.
- *Enn, UR2AR* – An experienced world traveler with an excellent command of English, always ready for a big pileup.

It was not an amplifier that blew up this house. It was something more serious than that. The Finnish contingent, from left: OH2BU, OH1EH, OH2JA, OH6DD and OH2BH.



- *Larry, UA6HZ* – Almost like a true-blue American; a great operator and supplier of the caviar!
- *Ari, OH1EH* – A member of the international WPX team and a fine, careful CW operator with a great future for DXpeditions.
- *Martti, OH2BH* – The elder statesman from the Finnish crew, who solved all the impossible problems with his shuttle diplomacy.
- *Jari, OH2BU* – The organizer of the DXpedition's food, equipment, and logistics. Incredibly energetic and eloquent on the air.
- *Mika, OH2JA* – From the new generation of OH DXers, with a great operating style that always seemed to open the dead bands.
- *Jukka, OH6DD* – Grinned from ear to ear with news of the aurora the first day (our VHF man). Worked the first M-V Island EME QSO with W5UN using 100 watts.
- *Chip, K7JA* – Extending the hand of friendship from U.S. amateurs on this very important amateur radio historical event.

Entering the Mystery of the East

Rounding up the supplies and equipment needed on an island with no electricity or drinking water required a great deal of effort. Therefore, for our motorized assault on M-V, van loads of gear were stacked up to provide the necessary hardware for a multiple-station affair featuring three HF beams as well as VHF/UHF arrays for EME plus Oscar. The circus wagon was on its way!



For the traveling DX type it may be hard to keep current currency on hand while moving along. But fortunately a traffic sign in that odd language kept reminding us of when the borderline was crossed.

Even though K7JA's entry to the show was backed up by the Soviet Embassy in Helsinki, getting a valid visa and sending several telex messages to USSR border guard officials confronted us with a formidable on-the-spot challenge. When Chip's baggage was checked for the umpteenth time in a row, we detected a faint smile on the faces of some border guard officials. An American here for the first time... this must be DX glasnost.

Every foreigner is required to specify a Soviet destination when crossing the border. Quite reasonable, isn't it? But in our case Chip was not heading for a Soviet destination. He was on his way to an island leased to Finland, an island situated inside Soviet territorial waters. This had to be magic glasnost – not the regular variety.



Is this the Iron Curtain? Or, is that what's left of it? Surely it does not look like a buffer zone, but it makes you think if this is a border between East and West. Or, maybe just between DXCC counters.

It took us several hours to get this situation sorted out, and the bottom line is not clear even today. Nevertheless, Chip was safely trudging along to M-V Island with his Finnish buddies, specially licensed to enter and operate from this DXCC counter.

Reaching the coveted island was just a matter of precise navigation in the canal zone, while extreme care had to be taken not to approach Soviet territory. Yes, some more checking by officials from a nearby

Prewar piers and other landing facilities are all gone, with only some debris left. The island looks like one solid greenhouse apparently with no open space. There may have been Russians living on M-V but not over the past twenty-five years when the island has been on lease to Finland.



naval base and we were ready to set foot on M-V Island.

Those Seven Days Spent Together

When eleven DXpeditioners are busy setting up camp, they seem not to give a darn about world politics or past history. The excitement of putting 4J1FS on the air for the Deserving just seemed to kill those kinds of irrelevant sentiments, and the stage was set for human beings to discover the bonds that unite them – plain and simple.

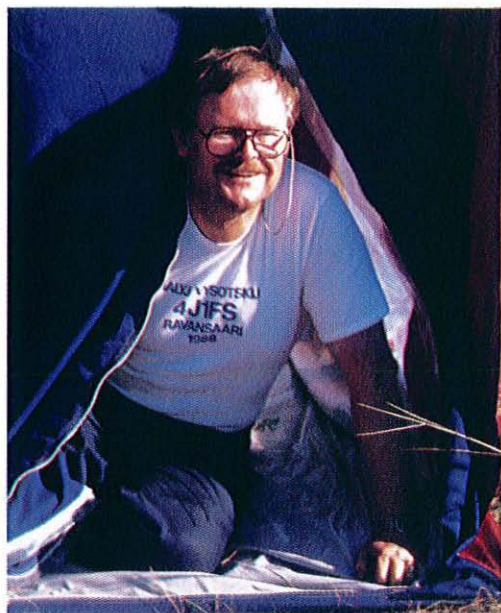
No time was lost in firing up three stations to meet worldwide demand for a New One. 4J1FS hit the airwaves and we were able to allocate an operator for each band opening whether it was coming from East or West, supported by any culture or accent.

A spirit of true friendship was maintained throughout the week, and people even started making fun of each other. If there was someone who had enough operating hours available to himself, it was no doubt K7JA. The Soviets were in fact competing over who would have Chip operate a particular site next. Chip's sleepless week had begun with numerous

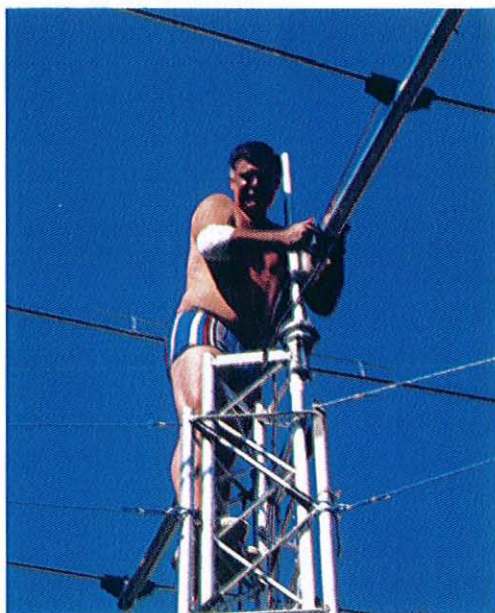
M-V ISLAND



Happy moments are often experienced when DXers gather in DX lands and hoist their beams high enough to reach the suffering ones toiling in the DX vineyards out there on the home front.



John Ahlbom, OH5NZ was a key figure and coordinator of the M-V Island project in dealings with the Finnish authorities.



Gene, UZ3AU, was a well-built Tarzan type from the Soviet Radio Magazine – very clever with his hands and powerful.

Safety and security are key words for DXpeditioners providing fun and excitement for DXers throughout the world. While these goodies were signed up for patrol duty at M-V Island, we knew we could concentrate on making a lot of QSOs and have no worries.



toasts to lifelong friendship and future reunions. The seven hectic days went by pretty past while the operators logged a total of 41,000 contacts.

Everyone learned how to propose a toast – Russian style. Each of us took turns keeping all the sites supplied and going strong, since the stations were scattered all over the one-mile long island. Every now and then we took some time to tour the island to see mysterious structures built during the war years. While scampering around in run-down trenches and bunkers, we all kept saying that “it” should never happen again.

Everyone had his share of Murphy, from generator problems and running away from a king-size elk that seemed to be residing on M-V Island, to being awakened when operating shifts were changed in the middle of the night.

All Good Things Come to an End

When the eleven weary DXpeditioners were ready to board the boat for a trip back home, the saddest part of the show was on hand. It was agreed that the

friendships forged during this DX adventure would last forever. The question was raised as to what would be the next new DXCC country. Everyone shared the conviction that the ARRL DXCC program and many of the efforts relating to M-V Island had created a wonderful framework for this historic event. 4J1FS had established a basis for a major East-West happening with the whole world participating. DX was truly alive!

The farewell speeches were heartfelt; both East and West were in tears and we all vowed to do it again... forever. The Finnish group – with some ancient true-blue Old Timers, those considered the real powerhouses in DXing, attuned to the Mystique of DX and cognizant of the Mysteries of the Ages – watched these warm embraces a bit from the sidelines. But they were all talking to one another to make their services available any time from their Northern Lights homeland on the Arctic Circle. They stood ready to set up a framework for any future joint East-West venture. Only this time around, it produced a new DXCC country counter – M-V Island!

Where Do We Go Next?

There were some firm statements made to further strengthen the relationship between East and West. This very same group of people you now know was to gather for a reunion in Seattle, Washington under the auspices of the Goodwill Games. The theme was “Uniting the World’s Best”, and top Soviet and American operators with another twelve national teams would be competing in a team radiosport contest, an on-the-air event with everyone invited to participate. Under these circumstances the M-V crew would mark the first anniversary of their East-West DXpedition on the

soil of the United States, for the first time ever. The Russians were coming... indeed.

Postscripts

Keeping Tabs on our Eastern Counterparts

by *Chip Margelli, K7JA*

My participation in the 4J1FS M-V Island DX-pedition, besides being a tremendous honor, represented a further step in the important reconciliation between East and West. My hosts were asking permission of the Soviet Government to transport me through a sensitive defense corridor, while carrying sophisticated communications equipment. Surely this was a great opportunity for amateur radio to display its ambassadorial role to the world... and it nearly did not happen!

The invitation for my joining the 4J1FS crew came a month before the scheduled departure date from Finland. I was also pleased to see my company's inter-

Chip Margelli, K7JA running an endless flow of the Deserving who were looking for an M-V contact.



est in shipping a fleet of radio equipment to Helsinki. With those logistics in place, there remained the matter of securing all needed permissions from both Finnish and Soviet authorities.

Uh-oh! One of the needed documents was my current license now residing in my wallet. My worry level went up by 10 dB. My license, "somewhat" ragged at the edges, was fragile and faded. In truth, it bore a closer resemblance to the Dead Sea scrolls than to a current government document.

It is truly a testimonial to the negotiating skills of Boris, UW3AX, that the faded FAX transmission of a poor copy of this tattered license was adequate for him to walk my paperwork through Moscow authorities. Or perhaps Boris' FAX machine uses special "Red Cross" paper that restored my license in Moscow?

Upon arrival on M-V Island, a beautifully-wooded islet in the Bay of Vyborg, I set about doing as much as possible to assist the various station crews in setting up antennas. Naturally, this physical exertion caused a serious bit of dehydration. So when the first dinnertime arrived, I was eager to accept Boris' kind offer of a tall glass of Russian mineral water. For those of you contemplating future DXpeditions with Soviet citizens, please be forewarned about the chemical properties of Russian mineral water.

The second day of the operating, the VHF/UHF antennas were up and running. So it was time to get active on Oscar 13. Since we were not using circularly-polarized antennas, the "spin modulation" effect was causing over 20 dB of QSB with a fade rate of a bit under one fade per second. After a few QSOs I turned the microphone over to Boris, who taught me the secret of defeating spin modulation. With some bubbly "mineral water" we shared the celebration of

the first Oscar QSO from M-V Island. Boris immediately started weaving back and forth in front of the microphone; his appearance was quite like that of a slow-walking pigeon. But he quickly synchronized himself to the spin rate. Solid copy. Problems solved.

Boris' greatest job of teaching came about three days into the operation. After about thirty-six hours of hard work without sleep, I became disoriented and took a wrong turn while walking from our north to our south site. A 20-minute stroll turned into a 90-minute trek through dense bushes. Needless to say, I was quite frustrated.

Boris' eloquent advice was: "Chip, you must remember that I am from a socialist country. I always stay to the left". I never got lost again.

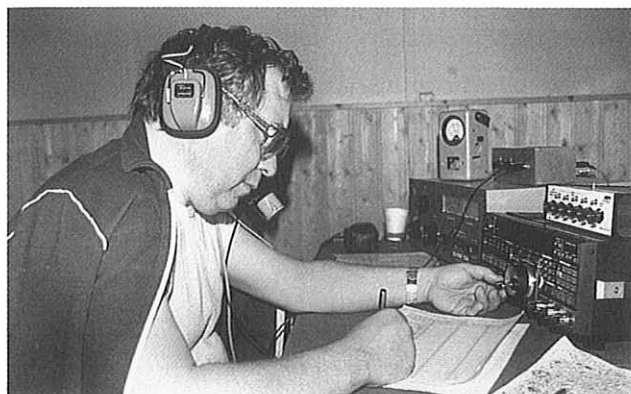
Thanks, Boris.

Keeping Tabs on our Western Counterparts

by Boris Stepanov, UW3AX

Of course, it happened far too late and several weeks past the deadline. Martti, OH2BH, came up with a vague idea of having an American participant join the 4J1FS DXpedition. I wrote down the name and the callsign and promised to do my best in the attempts to get this gentleman accepted on board for a trip to M-V Island.

A few minutes later, after my heartbeat had come down to an acceptable level, I picked up the telephone to start calling the authorities in Moscow. The problem was that we ourselves were quite late getting the



Boris Stepanov, UW3AX handing out contacts from an elusive country counter that many decided to stay at home for.

needed permission. But now an American coming along... Hmmmmm.

After lengthy discussions the officials finally agreed to consider the case subject to receiving the American's paperwork and a copy of his license. I had no FAX facilities at my office, but the Ministry of Telecommunications in Moscow was very kind. They permitted me to use their FAX for fast communication on the needed documents.

A few days later I had a copy of something. It is very difficult to describe this item. Looking quite worn-out, that piece of paper must have been used extensively at least since the beginning of this century. I had never met or heard about Chip Margelli, K7JA, and I knew nothing about him. So I kind of judged that OH2BH must have invited one of the grandfathers of U.S. amateur radio to join our DXpedition.

Lucky me, I thought, having a copy of his license, a real masterpiece of amateur radio history, issued at least seventy, maybe eighty years ago. I decided not to ask for a more distinct copy. The ancient document might be destroyed in the process of being digested by a FAX machine.

The authorities agreed with me that with a bit of imagination, it would be possible to combine various letters with this copy of K7JA's license to produce the full name and complete call sign of this proposed participant. And sure enough, Chip was put on the list of M-V Island operators.

Now I had only one problem: How to bring to M-V Island sufficient quantities of a special brand of mineral water to maintain the health of this outstanding Old, Old Timer (or maybe Super OOT) at a proper level. But when I finally met face to face with this smiling dark-haired fellow aboard the Finnish vessel Veera, I understood that he had used his grandfather's license to fool me!

I am quite sure now that to fool me was the only reason for his taking part in this DXpedition. There are at least two things to confirm this. One, M-V Island was not lonely after Chip had landed there. It was impossible to find a place on the island where Chip would not have been immediately available. Really, I think we had at least a dozen Chips running around the place. Two, if he was not operating Oscar, he was trying to pull somebody's leg and, in practice, it was always mine. I had to play the same game, but being more in the role of a host, I did not try to win that contest.

Nevertheless, at our closing meeting on the island I proposed to select Chip as "The Best American on M-V Island". I had no choice. And I live in the hope of running into him once again on a desert island to pull his leg, while taking a few minutes' break from the pileups.

Thanks, Chip.



CQ
ham radio



ICOM
First in Communications

JARVIS ISLAND
1990

AH3C/KH5J



NAVIGATING IN PURSUIT OF DX FROM BLUE HAWAII

***D**X life projects a full spectrum of the whole universe. You only need to listen to understand that. Whenever a new country is recorded in the log-book for posterity, or when a long-awaited CW counter is added to one's DXCC totals, there is joy and jubilation in the house. Often it feels like a once-in-my-life experience, an event that will be remembered forever. When you log an all-time new one or even a new band point, you are not going to face that kind of situation ever again. It is a one-shot deal. The New One is safe and secure in the log and will so remain till the end of time. You can no longer dream of repeating that same*

experience. A mysterious black hole is filled. Somehow it stops staring at you on your personal Most Wanted list.

By the same token, a DX type at the production end of the circuit may indulge in deep nostalgic meditation, hoping to find a new meaning for his life. This kind of thinking is most typical in the winter when a blanket of thick fog descends on San Joaquin Valley. You get a queer feeling that the DX scene has been empty and quiet far too long. Most of the Old Timers and, in particular, the usually frenetic QRP types are heading up the hill, not hippity-hoppity as QRPers often travel but slow of foot and sad of face.

On a day like that, one may find true-blue DXers returning to their roots in search of a better tomorrow and in pursuit of greater understanding as to why things are the way they seem to be. An ordinary DXer's daily routines are influenced by the Boulder K index while reports such as those mentioning the ouster of Emperor Bokassa of the Central African Republic clearly have an impact on right-thinking DXpedition types waiting to get on stage for the next performance.

In gloomy moments like that, DXers may be found whiling away the hours in the strangest of places with the most fantastic ideas brewing. During such lonely hours, your author was often seen sitting in the Fresno State Library Map Room or in the immediate vicinity of bookshelves poring over volumes of reference books dealing with world history. In the timeless atmosphere of a library you may find renewed strength to believe in the better days that will surely come to the Deserving. Even an elderly librarian may get carried away pondering the Mysteries of the Ages or the laws that govern the world of DX, being at the source of historical DX information.



– That's what he does after every new country...

But a believing DXer, though his brow furrowed and spirit wilted, with the librarian closely on his heels, may be close to finding a real solution to Albania's political unrest which can clearly be traced back to the reign of King Zogu. A scientific treatise found in another corner of the library may describe a distinct dislocation of the continental shelf which in the long run can, if all goes well, result in increased distance between islands... and that again is guaranteed to generate renewed activity on the DX frequencies.

Using three different sources of information and trying out at least two different mathematical formulae, we still faced the unpalatable scientific fact that the distance between Eastern and Western Solomon Islands fell just half a mile short of the required minimum of separation by open water to qualify these for new country status.

We tried to make our measurements absolutely watertight but an appropriate Washington D.C. agency would not allow the official use of its geostationary satellite for an up-to-date, precise measurement of distance. Satellite tracking could produce figures slightly different from those given on the maps made at the time the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor.

But in that Washington D.C. agency there were a lot of wise men who showed an interest in performing these highly demanding calculations on an informal basis so as to please the world of Deserving DXers. But the opening question fielded by this DX type was about the definition of a "baseline". The sage scientists also needed to be briefed on the meaning of an "island nation" plus the essence of our DX Rulebook. There was more than enough reason to find out what the hallowed DXCC Criteria, gathering dust over a number of years, had to say about the matter.

JARVIS ISLAND



Hey do you see that! There are more Deserving DX types landing on our island.



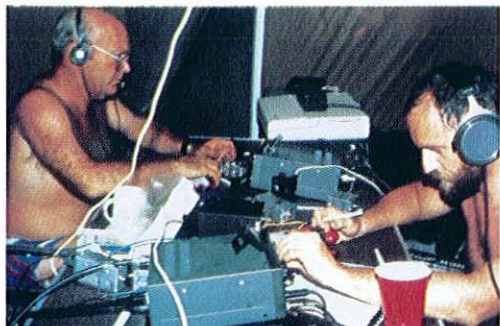
Toni, KN3T, is a serious DXpeditioner always ready for a good run.



Perti, OH2RF, and a steady flow of Europeans...



Jim, WA6AUE, sharp like a toothpick while pulling through stations between static crashes on the low bands...



It looked more like a production facility while these two were handing out QSOs. N7NG and K3NA in full swing.

Talking to the Establishment on the East Coast and the holy DXCC Desk there proved a waste of time and effort. They were just muttering something about Clinton DeSoto, W1CBD, who had lived somewhere in Connecticut back in 1935 and who had gone on record as saying that "each discrete geographical area or political entity is considered to be a country". Even in those prehistoric times, such a definition was soon found a bit impractical because the resulting list of "countries" could easily have run to several hundred. Subsequently, that "country" definition was shot full of holes by the DXers. Son of a Gun!

But then the telephone rang and it was Pete, AH3C, who wanted to go to Jarvis Island with me at any price. "It's a new country", he announced positively, "assuming that you honor the 'island nation' concept and assuming that you follow the baseline definitions set forth by the United Nations". The U.N. Headquarters of course being a separate country itself - 4U1UN. Perfectly clear and straightforward, right?

The trouble is that we ought to be able to walk the questioning DX Advisory types away from the loopholes and the islands off the coast of the state of Washington, and that Indian tribe in the vicinity of Tacoma Airport. If we can do that, we may be successful in proving that there is DX light at the end of the tunnel. But this requires that we understand and appreciate the definitions offered in the Big Apple by the United Nations. Even Clinton DeSoto would be all excited seeing the dawn of a new era following his initial discovery.

But let Pete tell you what we had to go through to make our point clear. And, still, K3NA is only twenty-five percent through with country initiative that may earn him a Ph.D. in DX from Fresno State during the low season.

Preparing the Ground for Jarvis Island – AH3C/KH5J

by *Pete Grillo, AH3C*

As Danny Weil and his YASME spirit demonstrated so well, braving the open sea alone is probably the highest-risk DXpedition. On a larger scale, is there mystique or luck involved in putting together a major group sailing-type DXpedition? DXers are dreamers forever in the action but dilettantes are best left alone in their superficiality. The fact is, such an event requires hard work, commitment, dedication, incredible stamina, total belief that it can be done, a team of devout operators and supporters, strong financial support, and a little bit of help from above! Yet we want to do it because there is enough adventure to make it exciting. The burning desire must come from within.

The reward? A completely fulfilling sense of accomplishment. “Where are you going next?”, they all ask. Totally drained, we only respond with a shrug, a smile, and a trip to our own shacks to chase that elusive one that also went to fulfill the next DXpedition dream.

Identifying with the Dream

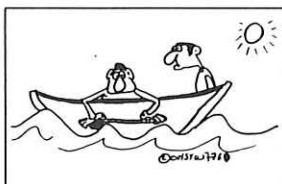
Having been a DXer for most of a generation and off the air for a ten-year lapse I found great fortune, when employment on Johnston Island (KH3) was offered to me. Occasional chats with old friends brought back the ache for doing an even rarer island. However,

something is different with DX. Large quantities of new prefixes abound. Countries are still being added and deleted. The DXCC rules have changed. At least we know that habitation of a piece of land is still not required to be declared a country. The mileages have changed but the concept has not. Government and geography are better defined.

There still seems to be a problem in defining an island nation. Where is the baseline? What is the shape of an island nation? Drawing straight lines over open water between islands of island countries could falsely disqualify a potential new one. The Pacific continues to look enticing.

A host of “problem children” remain on the DXCC list. For example: Midway Island and Kure Island, U.S. possessions smack in the middle of Hawaii. These were grandfathered into the current list as a result of previous operations when “separate administration” was a part of the rules. Why are there two KH5s and not just one, or maybe even three? Kingman Reef is only 50 miles away from Palmyra. Jarvis is over 450 miles away from Palmyra but it is still tied to Palmyra on the current list! Each has its parent as the USA.

The geography has changed also. In 1983, the Republic of Kiribati entered into an agreement with other nations to honor their respective 200-mile economic zones. This created an intervening country between Palmyra and Jarvis and would qualify Jarvis as separate from Palmyra, if the baseline were defined based on the area of influence around Washington Island. Also, we can show that there were amateur radio operations on Jarvis during a period when the DXCC Desk would have quickly added Jarvis, but it was merely overlooked because those amateurs then operating simply did not follow DXCC and did not make a case for it.



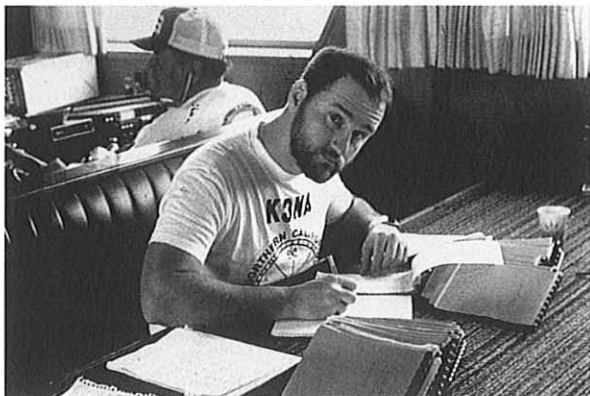
– Well, I'd say it just falls a little short of qualifying for another one...

Why not make a run for it, make a presentation that clears the air, and when the smoke clears... a new DXCC country just may surface.

Gathering the Muscle

Who could be more knowledgeable about this sort of thing that Martti, OH2BH/AH3D, who successfully launched four new DXCC countries. It is late in the year and Martti is in California poring over the maps with Wayne, N7NG, looking for a new one. Together, we research Jim's, W6CF, files for historical DXCC information.

Eric, K3NA, is brought in to review our initiative. Eric is highly considered among the Deserving for his understanding of international agreements, U.N. definitions, and in short, doing things professionally. His Rotuma Island initiative was well received by ARRL and his earlier discussions and support for DXCC country criteria were appreciated by all walking in the DX vineyards. Eric's commitment to join the group with Toni, KN3T, was the final piece to get the Jarvis Island DXpedition under way.



A DXCC scholar of recent Rotuma fame, Eric Scace, K3NA, is drafting the next one.

“Sleep on it”, says Martti. “Then call me or FAX me the information. We Finns always find fresh, clearer thinking after a good rest”.

The team is growing. Our friend Kan, JA1BK, not only offers to be our spokesman for securing Japanese support but also selecting Japanese operator Masahiro “Misa”, JG2BRI, to manage six meters and to represent Japanese ranks for this operation. Now we are six. Still, we need more help. NCDXF offers solid financial and logistics support. ICOM America recognizes the value of this major gathering of forces and offers to help with loaning seven modern ICOM transceivers which are aimed at portable operation like ours.

Our transportation must have just the right combination. Navigation must be impeccable, weather must be hospitable, customs must be understanding, and everyone must be on time. We commit personal funds to get us there and back. The boat charter alone is approaching \$20,000... up front!

While meeting on the air we decide to go for four HF stations. Jim, WA6AUE, is brought in to beef up our CW operation. Pertti, OH2RF, with his knowledge of European operators and propagation adds a refinement to smooth our total team effort.

“Don’t forget the ladder”, says Wayne. “6-foot? 10-foot? wood? aluminum?”, asks Pete. “Make it a standard 6-foot, sturdy, wooden, self-supporting ladder”. “OK. That will be item 127. Do we need amplifiers for this operation?”

Martti immediately announces: “Regardless of power requirements we should be using a minimum of one kilowatt at each radio to keep full command of the pileups... we definitely want to reach our small

audience by building up the balance with our power and having our beams high enough”.

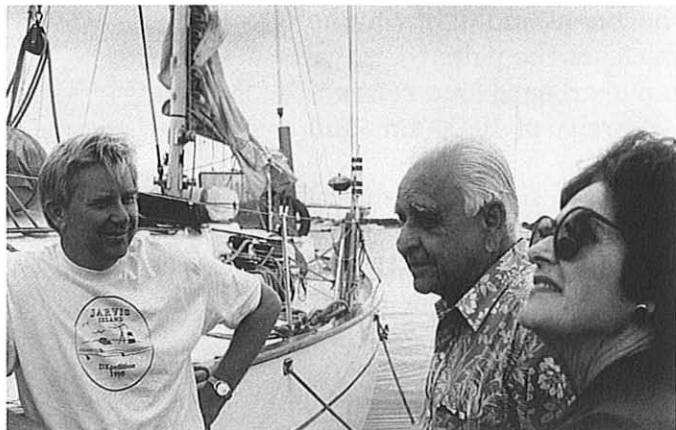
The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service grants permission for our visit. However, we must not disturb any of the wildlife on the island and we will have Mark Rauzon, wildlife biologist, with us. He will survey the population.

Equipment and supplies must be staged in Honolulu, identified, checked out, and loaded on the boat. I commit to an extra week off from work. Our supportive Hawaiian group, KH6VP, AH6IO, KH6JEB, KH6IJ and Mrs Nose, help tie the ribbon. In the meantime, Eric, K3NA, is busy researching the history of Jarvis Island and preparing that first draft DXCC initiative. The FAX machines are smoking from all the action. Three weeks before departure we make the announcement of our intentions to go to Jarvis and to introduce our proposal to ARRL.

Our sailing vessel, the 71-foot ketch *Makanalani*, is properly outfitted with satellite navigation equipment, sextant, radar, depth finder, powerful engine, two rafts, berths for ten, a deck crew of two, galley complete with first mate as chef, and expert captain. The bright red diesel fuel containers stand like soldiers in the sparkling Pacific sun.

Bon Voyage

It is Sunday, April 1, five days before the Visalia International DX Convention as Judy, my XYL, and I wave good-bye from the *Makanalani* to Manny Pires, KH6AY, and his XYL, standing at the dock. Manny was one of the first amateur radio operators on Jarvis Island in 1938.



Sailing out of Honolulu. On the left is Pete, AH3C, comparing notes with Manny Pires, KH6AY, of Jarvis 1938 fame and his XYL.

A 20-meter dipole is strung between the two masts and AH3C/MM maintains daily contact with the rest of the team. After three days of trying to operate below deck, setup of our ICOM gear is moved to the cockpit. The main cabin is no place for a greenhorn landlubber. After six days of rough, choppy sailing, the seas get much bigger as a storm passes directly over the *Makanalani*. Ten-foot seas combined with blinding rain and 40-knot winds make us all aware of our vulnerable position. Ten hours later, the storm subsides and we take inventory. No damage to equipment, but boat bites are numerous.

We inch our way toward Christmas Island late at night of April 8. Phil, T32AN, guides the *Makanalani*



Christmas Island, T32, was a gathering place for the Jarvis crew. It was time to board our valuable vessel *Makanalani*.

by VHF radio to a suitable harbor at midnight. On the next day, as soon as the sun clears the palm trees, we don the scuba gear and jump overboard for a refreshing dive. The custom officials arrive at 10:00 a.m. and we are cleared to land.

The Captain Cook Hotel has hosted many T32 hams. It is set up with a special bungalow with two radio operating positions. We gather up the ICOM gear to check it over. The station and antenna are put together with help from the hotel staff and T32BS is on the air by 7:00 p.m. Conditions are terrible! The Boulder A index is 48 and K index is over 7. A major proton event is in progress. Absolutely no luck over the pole. Only 300 QSOs during the one and only night of operating. Oh well, at least the equipment is functional.

The weekly Boeing 737 from Honolulu is on time. Phil, T32AN, greets us in his well-rigged truck. His support is like manna from Heaven. It is twenty miles from the airport to the dock. We cannot leave without our passports being stamped by customs. All the officials are still at the airport. We “cool our heels” and get acquainted. The waiting in the searing sun is an omen of things to come. Humidity is 95% and it is 95 F outside. Four hours later, the officials return from the airport and we are finally free to go on to Jarvis Island.

Once on board, the detailed plotting of each site comes together. Two teams are created. Site #1 has OH2BH as team captain with OH2RF, AH3C, JG2BRI. Site #2 has N7NG as team captain with WA6AUE, K3NA, and KN3T. Layout is visualized and landing party selected.

Two hours before dawn early in the morning of the third day at sea our skipper, Tony Clarke, points about



The cast for the AH3C/KH5J show, standing from left: K3NA, OH2BH, JG2BRI, OH2RF, N7NG and WA6 AUE. Front from left: AH3C, Mark Rauzon, KN3T and Captain Anthony Clarke.

30 degrees to the left and announces he has sighted land. We stare in disbelief. After all, it is Friday the 13th. We can expect everything to go wrong this day. Moments later, the first blip of radar appears on the screen about six miles away. Who can be sleeping at a time like this?

We all gather in the cockpit as the glow of first light begins to silhouette Jarvis Island. Volunteering for watch, two brown boobies sweep in and plant themselves on top of the masts. A dozen frigate birds hover overhead like sentinels. A school of porpoises dashes across our bow, and a lone manta ray lazily cuts the surface with his dorsal fin. If all goes well, today will be our first day of operation.

Staging, Construction, and Start-Up

We are able to drop anchor just outside the break in the reef. Wayne, N7NG, is first of our group to land. Our 2 meter hand-helds provide the first two-way radio contact with Jarvis Island since 1983 when George's, AD1S, team was there. Each trip to shore we

The landing site across the reef. We arrive safely at our destination. Note the trademark of modern DXpeditioning – a refrigerator.



bring at least one passenger in the first Zodiac and a full load of gear on the second Zodiac.

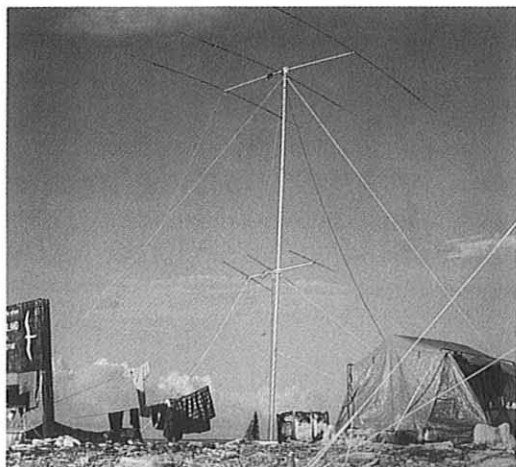
There is no movement of air. The work must be accomplished at the hottest time of day. We are consuming water at an alarming rate. Six trips and four hours of hauling up the 25-foot hill to the SSB site, plus two more hours of dragging over to the CW site wilts the entire team.

The tents are identified and teams go to work. Two non-campers, myself and Martti, wrestle the flimsy floor-less tent in the 15-knot breeze. Jim and Wayne, our experienced campers (as we later found out), are too weak from their struggle with the generators to find the tent erection project humorous. Yet, once the corners of the airy tent are secured, they are ready for a new assignment.

Site #2 is selected approximately 1,000 feet due west of the shoreline SSB site so as to be separated just far enough to permit CW and SSB operating on the same band at any time to optimize propagation conditions. Broadside to the north is required so we can be absolutely assured that we have maximum attenuation of transmitted signals from each site



There were campers and non-campers on this outing. The years spent with Boy Scouts proved valuable at this stage.



when clawing for European contacts. We get the nod from Mark, our U.S. Fish & Wildlife representative, to proceed with the operation.

The start-up blood is boiling. Everyone digs deep inside their soul to find energy to continue. It is late Friday night before we have our first station plugged in as we listen to the 20-meter band on the trap vertical. Our first QSOs are quite historic. We sign our call one time on 14,185 kHz. The band explodes. Somehow, JA1BK surfaces out of the commotion. Manny, KH6AY is next, followed by the first mainland U.S. contact W6KTE, and first European, DJ6OV. Each operator is given a couple of hours of operating time so as to provide rest for the others. Our first CW QSO was W6RGG on 7,023 kHz at 0700 UTC followed by KL7H/6, W6GO, and K5UR.

The island is desert-like. Recent rains give the vegetation a soft green hue. We all feel the presence of the millions of birds. Their sounds change as the day progresses. The searing sun beats down quickly. During daylight, we are the only creatures still moving around. We must put up the beams at the

According to our biologist, Jarvis Island is now much greener than some years ago during his previous visit.



worst time of the day. By evening we have all five stations running.

The campsite comes alive with thousands of visitors. First, we stumble on the persistent hermit crabs. These creatures will eat anything lying about. In the morning, the trash bags resemble a mini-landfill area after the dumpster has emptied his load. Next, we see a gradual buildup of small miller moths. Within two hours of evening, the minor distraction becomes an invasion of thousands of these winged pests.

We have to be careful about inhaling while attempting to make contacts. These moths are everywhere and concentrate around the lights. "POW, ZAP" We have heard that sound before! It is the amplifier. One more moth has met his fate at the hands of the powerful DX machine. We wonder if the station at the other end of our QSO heard the arc-over.

Waiting his turn at the radio, Pertti sees a little white mouse. It braves its way into the tent first peeking its nose and then making a quick run across the floor. Minutes later, reconnoitering for the rest of his clan, it jumps up on the operating table, snaps up a piece of cracker, and skitters back out of sight. All

night long, this search and pounce mission gets more and more daring. We take a certain delight in the antics, but are more protective of the supplies.

The first twenty-four hours results in 6,000 QSOs. Our captain comes ashore with more water and advises us we are consuming entirely too much. Our original estimate of one gallon per person per day is thrown out of the window. He posts the sign: "1/2 gallon per person per day. Use this marking pen to label your jug".

Working the Multitude

The team goal is 50,000 QSOs and individual goals are 1,000 QSOs per day. We want to make 10,000 European contacts within the fifty-thousand. Communication between the two sites is useless. If the other site is not using a given frequency, then it is available. In this way, we focus the primary station of each site on its primary mode, while the secondary station is the swinger. We also find it impossible to make firm operating schedules.

Propagation starts from a low and improves continuously throughout the eight and a half days of operating. We experience a mild solar flare on the third day. This impacts the polar path, but Japanese and Stateside callers abound, keeping a normal rate. Fifteen meters becomes the primary European band with outstanding conditions from 10:00 p.m. local time (0800 UTC) to 7:00 a.m. (1700 UTC). Even ten meters opens up at midnight to Europe.

Pileup management is made easy with our big signal from four stations. The frustration level is reduced tremendously as the worthy DXer has a choice of frequencies to go for his first QSO. This also



When landlubbers are at sea fishing, it is understandable that the wrong kind of fish might be caught.

cuts the pileup in segments allowing for a 10 - 15 kHz spread maximum. The Yanmar diesel generators hum beautifully. No spark plugs leads to no man-made noise. We are able to hear the weakest watery sounding signal while maintaining domination of our frequency, just as Martti and Wayne predicted.

U.S. signals on ten meters are booming from 1800 to 0400 UTC. Japanese stations show up in the log on almost every page. The operating tables are arranged so that we face each other with rigs side by side. When two bands are hot, it is almost like what happens when two sailboats meet at open sea, going in the same direction. Instant contest! At last we are having some real fun.

On the fourth day, we notice the *Makanalani* has gone. The wind has come up to 15 knots and has shifted from northeast to southeast. Huge waves break across the opening in the reef. They are about four miles out, fishing for skipjack tuna. The water is so clear the crew is able to see numerous sharks.

Swimming and scuba diving are ruled out. The boat slowly paces the shoreline. Each afternoon, some of the operators had been taking dips in the water near the landing. However, the crew now unloads a 6-foot reef shark that they caught while patrolling offshore. We are told these sharks are everywhere. It is not advisable to do any swimming.

By the end of the sixth day, the big signal stations have worked us on virtually every available band. However, the pileups continue. There is no end to the numbers of stations out there. We work the South Sudan, Bangladesh, and Spratly operations. It appears that "DXplosion 1990" was a reality. April was the month for DX widows!

Closing Down, Departure, and Tying the Loose Ends

We must weigh anchor no later than noon, Sunday, or we will almost certainly be stuck on T32 another week. Site #2 is first to be dismantled. One station is left operational most of the day with a vertical, while beams are broken down for staging on shore. During the night, site #1 slowly gets torn down.

Dawn of the 22nd, Pertti, OH2RF, is calling CQ on 20-meter SSB. No takers. Have we worked them all? Finally, WB6RFI gives us our last contact as Wayne pulls the plug. We clean up each site and depart Jarvis Island in jubilation. Our celebration fades rapidly as the boat is fully loaded with bodies collapsed about the deck.

We arrive at T32 just in time. We wave to the crew of the *Makanalani* as we depart for Honolulu. After living together for two weeks in a most uncommon fashion, we hold a delicate bond that must suddenly

be broken as we reach Honolulu. The empty feeling is somewhat eased by sharing a few hours together before our various flights spread us around. The glow persists as we each head home to recover from our adventure.

Post Log

For some to say, "Let's do it" can mean "Sounds like a good idea, what do you want me to do?". To hear it from Martti, it was, "How many passengers allowed? How much fuel must we carry? How much water?". There was a constant sense of urgency as target dates were hammered out. Each step was clearly worked out as individual roles were adopted. We tried to leave nothing to chance.

Often, during slack times, Martti and Pertti would banter back and forth in their native tongue, testing each other on what they were hearing from their most familiar European audience, never giving up on the learning aspect of this event. Our dinner gatherings would bring forth all kinds of interesting discoveries on propagation. Through our own experiences and from each other, we learned a bit more on how to plan ahead, execute effectively, and analyze the result. A quote from OK3JW sums up our objective:

"The 10-meter band was absolutely closed, I heard only noise and AH3C/KH5J".

Granted, Jarvis Island is not so rare a DX location as it was before April. There are many who wished we had operated other modes, such as satellite, or spent more time on other band modes. We believe that some time in the next decade, a follow-up trip to Jarvis will be warranted.

THE CASE FOR TECHNICAL DXCELLENCE

The DXpedition operator plays a most important role in ensuring the success of each DX performance. The same goes for his proficiency and creativity and his rapport with the soul of the calling or listening audience. An all-around understanding of the Laws of DX applicable in different parts of the world and sheer technical excellence always form crucial aspects of a successful performance. To put it in another way, DXpedition success is predicated upon a harmonious combination of operating prowess and technical excellence.

Another overriding requirement is of course the operator's understanding of existing propagation conditions and their judicious utilization. In a general sense, it might be said that you can often satisfy the DX hunger of the two easiest continents, sitting there in the front row of the audience as they are, whereas the third major continent has to rely on the standard of your operating know-how.

It is a successful DXpedition only if all three major regions of the world, in amateur radio terms – North America, Europe and Japan – go home after the performance in a happy mood, and if other minor con-

tinents were sufficiently taken into account in the course of the show.

The trademark or motto used internally by a recent DXpedition was “we need to be loud”. That is a useful rule of thumb to remember when preparing the ground for success. More and more DXpeditions should have that wisdom printed on their T-shirts. To paraphrase, we might state that “you are not in command if we cannot hear you”.

The performance is not enjoyable or easy to follow if you have to prick up your ears to hear what is going on. The fact of the matter is that a broad range of people and equipment are sitting in the audience, each according to his own conviction and potential. If an aspiring local QRP type, yet to experience the Great Days of DXing, is waiting for his turn sitting under his sagging folded dipole, it is up to the DXpedition to make up the balance for the QRPer’s missing signal strength. The Little Pistol, green in years but abundant in patience, may often value the contact and the overall performance more than an Ancient DXer with bigger antennas and higher towers.

Professor Cass once remarked confidentially that operating ability and DX techniques are directly proportional to your boom length and the size of your amplifier tubes. The younger generation of DXers may wish to look at it from another angle and state: you need to be loud at all times to maintain order and be enjoyable.

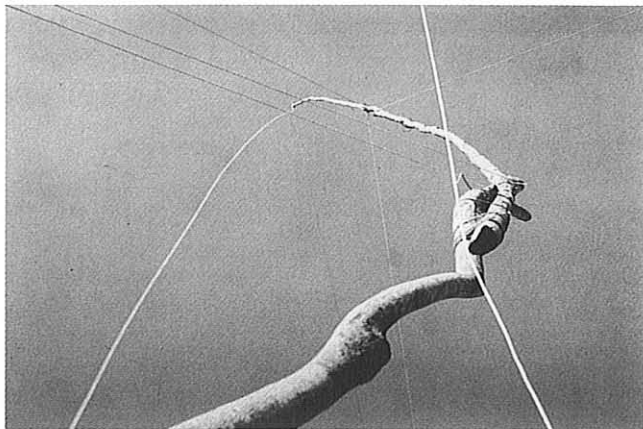
More Weaponry – Greater Technical Efficiency

A case can always be made for one-man shows since the performer faces an enormous challenge and, when successful, he gets a tremendous amount of satisfaction from the performance. But in order to meet the needs of the thundering multitudes in the closing decade of the 20th century, it is to be recommended that a major DXpedition feature several participants.

The size of the crowd chasing every single expedition can be estimated at a minimum of 10,000 different stations. Many of the stations will make several contacts with the DXpedition. For this to be able to happen within a reasonable period of time, multi-operator expeditions are to be preferred. The team may consist of 2-to-6 members, depending on the circumstances, but what is most important, the lineup of participants will determine the technical excellence of the expedition, the level of its overall know-how and the degree of its ultimate success.

With several participants, the costs are more evenly distributed, all-around efficiency is enhanced, logistical considerations prove less unreasonable and the team can draw on many sources of hardware and know-how. Several technical parameters are directly related to manpower. Critical items can be included in the operators' hand baggage. Once the groundwork is laid, the DXpedition station can effectively occupy its announced frequencies on a 24-hour basis to achieve optimum results.

If a mast and a beam are not on hand, the minimum is to get slopers high enough, at least half a wavelength off the ground. Since our small airplane was not able to carry any bigger hardware, we had to settle for much less during our operation as 3COAN.



First Challenge:

Even though the DXpedition team might consist only of two operators, they should appreciate from the very outset which of the three major DX areas is going to be the most critical one as far the performance is concerned. Signals into that critical area are typically weak and band openings short in duration.

How to put two signals, in most cases using different modes but, why not, occasionally the same mode, on the same band to take advantage of those brief openings? Well, by placing two antennas 100 to 1,000 feet apart and by nulling their sides you may achieve up to 100 dB attenuation. And placing the antennas correctly with an eye to different paths to the critical areas may be sufficient to ensure clean simultaneous operating. Crucial parameters for simultaneous same-band operating are clean signals and a correct placement of antennas.

It also stands to reason that the antennas should be able to be mounted at least half a wavelength off the ground on HF bands and that they should stand in reasonably open space. Once the antennas are up, the best arrays or skywires should be utilized for the

critical openings together with available amplifier power. In many cases, the easy continents can be taken care of using smaller antennas and less power.

Second Challenge:

Even though it might not be possible to set up the stations sufficiently far apart, there is every reason to make sure that different bands can be operated from the same operating site simultaneously. In that case, particular attention needs to be given to antenna alternatives and special requirements pertaining to equipment.

Major DXpeditions are frequently equipped with one or more beams and associated masts. Often a single mast would be adequate if greater use were made of monobanders and if less emphasis were placed on multiband antennas, e.g. tribanders. Two monobanders mounted on the same mast can achieve significant mutual attenuation compared with a tribander picking up signals from unwanted bands and causing inter-station interference. A monobander, again, practically presents a short circuit for any other band. Meanwhile, tribander and multiband vertical configurations are liable to cause mutual interference even when you operate different bands.

Often it would be quite simple to use lightweight monobanders, stacked almost shoulder-to-shoulder on the same lightweight mast. The thing to remember is that monobanders may virtually breathe down each others' necks and still significantly attenuate band-to-band coupling. Of course, it would help if the beams were independently rotatable, but often leaving the antenna fixed in a critical direction may prove quite adequate.

This reminds me of how the antennas were positioned on Market Reef during one particular adventure. A monobander and a tribander were erected just 80 feet apart, maximum separation possible on that tiny rock, and the antennas were nulled for maximum attenuation while working down Stateside pileups on 20-meter CW and SSB simultaneously, with no mutual interference. Everything went smoothly and the critical QSO rates were doubled.

For that trip, no miscellaneous radios were accepted. We chose Drake TR-7 transceivers, reputedly the cleanest radios in those other years. Newer DX types may not necessarily be too familiar with the meaning of R.L. Drake Company, a name that reminds us of the early days of the industry when the best ham radio equipment was still manufactured in the United States of America.

Still on the topic of Market Reef, that worthy DXCC counter can show its true unpredictable character without too much early warning. But this is typical of all real DX countries. On that particular outing, 30-foot waves soon washed over the skerry, suddenly wiping out one of our 20-meter signals.

The sea is always unpredictable and its power incredible. It is no use trying to mount any installations in the belief that they just might withstand violent storms drowning your little island under choppy waves. Even playing with high tide is questionable.

Third Challenge:

The need for clean radios has been mentioned several times. But even in the year 1991 A.D. the amateur market is dominated by unclean rather than clean radios. Subsequent production series of the same radio may similarly exhibit significant differences.

The present age is no longer marked by unclean signals or their transmission as such. Today we are rather talking about transmitter synthesizer noise which often covers the entire band used and possibly other bands as well. Even the entire frequency spectrum may be affected, at least in the immediate vicinity of the transmitter.

Some radios are decidedly better than others but owing to the timeless nature of this book, there is no reason to try to list them. In any event, every effort should be made to choose radios which are known to be clean whenever the plan is to use several stations in close proximity to each other on different bands, not to mention simultaneous same-band operating.

But where is that kind of information available? How can one tell one radio from another? It is true that the glossy brochures of equipment manufacturers make no mention of such parameters, and you cannot always take the salesman's pep talk at face value, either. For the best source of information, it is a good idea to get in touch with the nearest multi-multi contest station or any of its operators. The fact is that multi-multi and multi-single stations choose their equipment with those important criteria in mind.

And, under all circumstances, the best alternative is to collect in one place all the radios selected for a given trip and simulate the planned configuration,

bearing in mind that the situation on that distant island is not going to be any better anyway.

In the elimination of mutual interference, even in the case of broad-band synthesizer noise, good bandpass filters may be of significant help in making sure that the transmitted signal, in terms of all its components, is narrow-band and that, on receive, all frequencies outside the desired bandwidth are attenuated.

Several types of the most widely used bandpass filters are noncommercial products, and high-quality filters are not readily available on a commercial basis. As of today, Mike Koss, W9SU, has made some very high-Q professional filters available and several multi-transmitter contest stations and DXpeditions have made successful use of them.

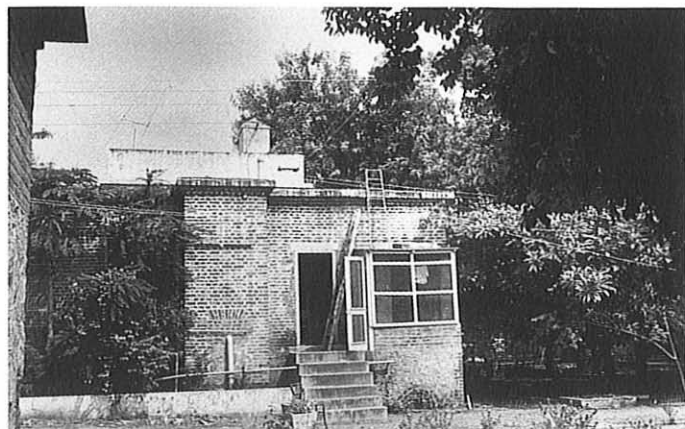
Fourth Challenge:

In many parts of the world subject to different standards of legislation, the use of high output power is illegal. High power requires a big generator and a lot of fuel. Should the linears be left back home? (At this point your author was gasping for breath and needed to be administered oxygen only to look like having received a dose of laughing gas.) Well, we know of a European DXpeditioner who almost received a knighthood for his many adventures but still has got no idea of what a linear amplifier looks like! The truth engraved on tablets of stone is that we need to be loud!



– Are you sure we'll need that much power?

Workable compromise solutions are in order and reasonable amplifier power will put the DXpedition station on top of the situation while making only reasonable demands on generators or other AC/DC sources. Naturally, not every station needs to run high



The center of life in Southern Sudan. A famous entry to Juba Hotel and more DX.

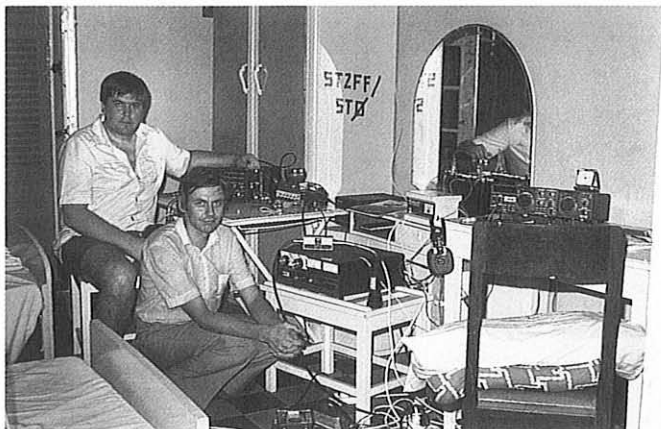
power. Amplifiers should indeed be reserved for the most difficult openings. Linears come in many shapes and sizes, just as the radios themselves, and dependability plus portability should be considered key factors when making a choice.

On my travels across the world, I have often run into situations where battery power was abundantly available but where the mains voltage remained erratic or the use of a generator was limited. In Sudan (ST2) en route to Southern Sudan (ST0), a strange experience once confronted this undaunted traveler.

The power utility in the capital of Sudan, Khartoum, had long ago proved far too small to provide electricity for all districts of the city at the same time. Their solution to the problem looked rather odd: each district was powered in sequence, a few hours at a time. That presented a rather embarrassing situation for a DXpeditioner with no generator of his own.

Fortunately, there were two of us on that trip and our ingenuity was amplified accordingly. What did we do? Well, it was decided to split our

When juice was available, we were on and charging the battery. And when it went off, we were still in business relying on battery power.



station and set up two operating positions in two different power distribution areas of the city, thus making sure that mains voltage was available during the needed hours. Also, there was enough separation between the two stations to enable smooth simultaneous same-band operating and thus a concerted assault on the incessant pileups.

Once down in Southern Sudan, we had run out of both food and gasoline, and the Juba Hotel where we stayed was served only by a shaky 140-to-200 VAC. Fortunately, our radios had a DC option, and we made the acquaintance of a local electrician by the name of John who always saw to it that a jeep was parked at the hotel near our window whenever there was a power outage. In those early years, there were no DC-powered linears but now of course such equipment is available.

I still get tears in my eyes when I recall John, our electrician, and that trip to Southern Sudan. We wanted to reward John for his one-week of hard work rescuing our DXpedition. But the only reward he wanted was to have a few mala-

ria pills he had noticed on our operating table. Many of the local people in ST0 suffered from chronic malaria. But malaria pills provided only momentary relief from the disease.

The same jeep episode was repeated in Western Sahara where the use of a generator was not allowed at night for security reasons. Besides, appropriate care had to be taken so as not to disturb people sleeping in the tents of a nearby refugee village.

Does anyone remember the first night's 40-meter pileup run by S0RASD? Relying on battery power and dim dial lights, I danced away with a steady stream of contacts filling the log pages all through the night. Gee, that was a wide pileup cluttering up the band. In the small wee hours of the morning, I was possibly tuning right up to 7,100 kHz for replies. Half asleep hunched over the operating desk, I may have briefly ignored the sub-bands and pushed the CW multitude into the SSB segment. But then again, this was a brand-new country on the air for the first time ever. Some allowances had to be made...



Brand-new KUBOTA generators were used for the ZS9Z/ZS1 operation. Models 2500 and 3050 indicate how much power was generated for this DXpedition. Hats off for KUBOTA – highly reliable machines!

When you handle high-octane airplane gasoline in the searing heat of the Equator, you are in a danger zone. Diesels would be a lot more practical and safer...unfortunately we had to suck gas from the tanks of the Cessna 337 on the island of Annobon.



Whenever depending on a generator for power, close attention should be paid to the choice of your power plant. Several smaller units make a safer deal than one big machine. In the vulnerable and exposed circumstances of a DXpedition, generators are subject to heavy wear and tear and are prone to go bust. With this in mind, it makes sense to draw only part of the available juice during certain hours and throw a couple of generators into service to support the use of linear amplifiers whenever critical band openings are reported.

Today's gasoline and diesel generators cause no interference but a diesel model may be considered for those trips where the fuel could be pumped, say, from the tanks of the boat you are sailing on. Messing around with gasoline is always a hazardous exercise and great care should be taken for safety reasons alone.

In the case of high-power equipment such as a linear amplifier, there is reason to go for an optional high operating voltage, e.g. 234 VAC, which will allow

the use of thin, lightweight power cables. Many types of generators include the option of supplying two different voltages at the same time, e.g. 117 and 234 VAC.

Small Hints and Kinks

The whole set of equipment and, in particular, all the accessories such as keyers and microphone arrangements need to be checked out and the entire on-site situation simulated beforehand to get an idea of things to come. More often than not, there is no possibility at the DX location for a good earth ground, or finding one is extremely difficult. Accordingly, you must proceed from the very basic assumption that all equipment, your sensitive accessories in particular, need to be able to function perfectly even in the event of the whole station “floating” with no good earth grounding. To deal with any such contingencies and to face other eventualities of a similar nature, it is a good idea to bring along an assortment of ferrite bars and beads.

In difficult circumstances where power distribution or grounding seems in doubt, the use of a computer may be hazardous, at least unless you wish to go to the trouble of making constant backup copies of all important data files. On the other hand, computer professionals may take care of that problem, and of course a small computer comes in handy to keep the RTTY folks happy at one point of the operation. Or, maybe digital communications is just a future vision for modern DXpeditioning.

Many special aspects of digital communications and initial experimentation with such techniques on a DXpedition represent one of the surest ways of substantially impeding a major operation. The best investment is to go for time-proven, reliable arrangements. By the way, did you know that several low-

"We need to be loud", says Dale,
VE7SV.



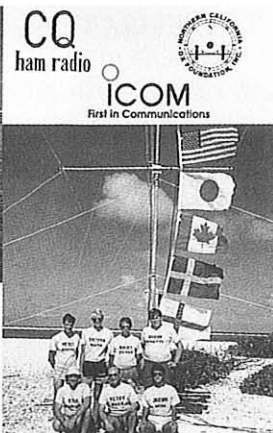
power fluorescent lamps emit a wide spectrum of noise? Such is life in this world of ours.

This book is not designed to serve as a technical handbook for a traveling DXpeditioner or a home-based DXer. But there is every reason to acknowledge the importance of technical know-how under all circumstances when it comes to a successful DX event. Hence the need to briefly touch upon those vital technical elements and areas that DXpeditioners toiling in the DX vineyards have to worry about. DXcellence is part of DXpeditioning.

As Dale, VE7SV, kept repeating night and day on our Conway Reef outing, we need to be loud!! Let's have that statement engraved on a tablet of stone for every serious DXpedition. The local QRP type sitting at the back of the audience holding on to his random-wire will certainly appreciate your booming signal and will accost you at the next DX convention to ask that immortal question: "Where do you go next?"



CONWAY REEF
1990
3D2AM



ON A SLOW BOAT TO CONWAY REEF

It has often been said that members of the honorable DX fraternity have “it” in their genes and that true-blue DXers even fall into the same blood group. It’s in the family, they say.

But you cannot join the brotherhood of DX just by asking to be let in. No, it is only when you are ready to understand the Eternal Questions of DXing that you suddenly find yourself rubbing elbows with other Anointed Ones. There may be a rule of thumb for those to follow who make it a point of deliberately seeking places where particular DXers congregate.

DXers and those of their number who plan DXpeditions may be spotted at restaurants in the immediate

vicinity of a DX convention enjoying each others' company while ordering their meals from the best menus and tasting the best French wines. Around midnight, the Deserving may gather in the bar near the reception area for a glass or two of draft beer. Burgeoning DX types, nervous in temperament, hot in intent but still limited in years, may turn up outside the door of the DX Foundation meeting room to await with their brows furrowed news of the outcome of the meeting.

It is true that this latest DX adventure taking us to one of the recent additions to the DXCC List was born over a pint of beer at a DX convention. Two of the Deserving were watching each other eyeball to eyeball not knowing that in a few weeks' time they would be sailing on a yacht in the blue Pacific.

In the world of DX, everything can happen so fast that you do not even have time to pack your underwear. Like in this case, one of the Deserving wanted the other to sleep on it for the night. But the other responded firmly: "I don't want to sleep - I just want to go". And so, the 3D2AM adventure saw daylight.

The writer, VE7CT, demonstrated a spirit typical of the Deserving and wanted to go at any price. He succeeded right on his first major DXpedition and became one of the real Believers. Nowadays he is sleeping with his expedition underwear ready for the next trip. And indeed, there is a tendency for the next journey to come up for the Deserving. There is a law applicable to all seafaring DXers: if you swim once, you will swim always. But that's the way it has always been. Always!

Why don't we jump on board and join our Canadian author for his most successful DXpedition to that faraway land - with Murphy.

The Murphy Adventure – 3D2AM

by Steve Wright, VE7CT

“I’m not sure...”, was Dale’s, VE7SV, response when I asked him over 2 meters if there was room for an extra straggler for the Conway Reef DXpedition, “...but I will talk it over with Martti, OH2BH and see”. While the question was asked seriously, I did not really expect anything concrete to come out of it since the expedition had been planned for some time. And obviously, I had no impressive record to present from the production end of DX pileups. But being optimistic by nature, as most DXers are, I was committed to my advance special-fare ticket.

Ultimately, I found myself aboard a Qantas flight heading to Honolulu. There I was to meet with Dale who had agreed to share his bunk on the boat with me and guide me through to that small sandy reef in the Pacific, a country added to the DXCC List very recently. But a lot still had to be done in Honolulu since Dale’s employer, Canadian Airlines, was to airlift 3,000 pounds of DXpedition gear just returned a day earlier from a boat sailing back from Jarvis Island. Searching for the last propene cylinder not accepted for shipment by air indicated to me that I was on a serious assignment.

Interestingly enough, I had not met any of these seasoned DXpeditioners participating in this adventure. I was looking forward to our early morning arrival at Nadi Airport on Fiji Islands. Since I had been told that DXers looked different from ordinary amateurs, I had no problem recognizing them at the airport. They certainly looked more like commando

troops ready for an invasion with their huge loads of gear, all eager to reach this or any other sandbar in the middle of the Pacific.

The group was highly international in character and commanded a great deal of expertise in Pacific DXpeditioning. The junior lineup featured Mats, SM7PKK and Misa, JG2BRI while the Suffering Europeans were represented by Pekka, OH1RY and Martti, OH2BH. I was signed up for the CW group and it was my pleasure to meet my teammate and companion Wayne, N7NG, with whom I would share the CW tent.

Dale, VE7SV, another member of the team, was busy making friends with his Canadian Airlines staff at the airport. There was yet another DXpedition member who had signed up for this effort that would swing into action the following week. They told me somebody called Mr Murphy frequently joined these DX adventures and, indeed, he was there at Nadi Airport ready for this trip.

Welcome to Fiji and Conway Reef

Even though this DXpedition had its own representative in the person of SM7PKK on Fiji to work on a steady stream of permissions and a lot of other paperwork needed for temporarily importing this amount of gear into the island and carrying out an operation of this magnitude, the problems were just beginning to pile on us as we entered the Republic of Fiji.

It was not pleasant to hear that a landing permission from the Fijian Home Affairs Office was still pending. Furthermore, the local customs officials would not even consider allowing our lineup of ICOM equipment to be taken in. Much to their surprise, even

our personal baggage looked different from what they were used to when dealing with regular suntan types. The DXpedition got stuck there and our equipment was deposited in a customs locker room. Murphy got us right at the start.

But it was amazing to see just how much problem solving power this gang was able to muster throughout the trip. Accordingly, the equipment was released in a matter of a few hours to a forwarding agent. A major bond was deposited ensuring that the gear would be taken out of Fiji at a later date.

We were free to enter Fiji, tired but happy. A van was rented with two drivers to take this group and its valuable cargo to Suva, the capital of Fiji, some 130 miles away. The local left-hand traffic caused the first driver to fail miserably but then OH1RY, who had spent considerable time in India, took command despite forty hours of flying from Finland to Fiji.

All On Board, Or Maybe Not

We were scheduled to meet our 66-foot American Samoa-based schooner *Galatea* and her crew at the Royal Suva Yacht Club. The boat had been nailed down by OH2BH during his Christmas vacation in Honolulu, and even SM7PKK had spent a good deal of time on board as the boat was refitted for this long voyage to Conway Reef. Everything was expected to be in perfect condition ready for our departure.

But owing to Murphy, the schooner lost her engine en route from Pago Pago to Suva and the last two days the crew had towed the massive *Galatea* with two tiny Zodiacs. Captain Walter Guerin and his exhausted crew of four were busy working on the engine with the



The Murphy-ridden *Galatea* ready to ply the Pacific route for more adventures. Where is she going next?

aim of fixing it in time for our departure over the next couple of days.

Maybe these stressful days were needed after all since we had to make a major effort to secure a landing permission. It was also decided to make this a friendly and truly international effort by inviting a Fijian operator, 3D2AG, to join the group at no cost at all. But at one point, the money invested on bringing us this far and in the boat was just about to go down the drain with that busted engine.

Destination Conway Reef

It was time to board the *Galatea*. With the aid of a small Zodiac, the prow of the ship was pushed around to face the mouth of the harbor. We got ready to raise anchor which, to everyone's consternation, was firmly



Our famous Conway Zodiac and diver Jim, both making a major effort to tow the DXpeditioners to their final destination.

fouled on some underwater obstacle right in the middle of the Royal Suva Yacht Club's moorage area.

There we were maneuvering an engine-less schooner with the crew desperately wanting to go on a DXpedition – engine or no engine. We set sail... and sail... yet another turbo sail, praying to God for wind. Finally we were on our way, leaving Mr Murphy behind hoping that he would enjoy Fiji while we were at sea. Surely we did not want to have him on board.

The next several days and nights were spent at sea heading for that minuscule sandbar recognized by Newington as another country counter. The reef era was back with us and I was wondering whether the Deserving really understood and appreciated what we were going through. Besides, Mr Murphy had rejoined our team despite our protestations.

The winds were favorable and we found ourselves sailing at a goodly speed. Unfortunately, the interface unit between the auto-steering and satellite navigation systems was inoperative and a sticking compass had to be thumped occasionally to make sure it was



indicating properly. The frequent position checks were made with a satellite navigation transponder affectionately called E.T. by our seaworthy captain.

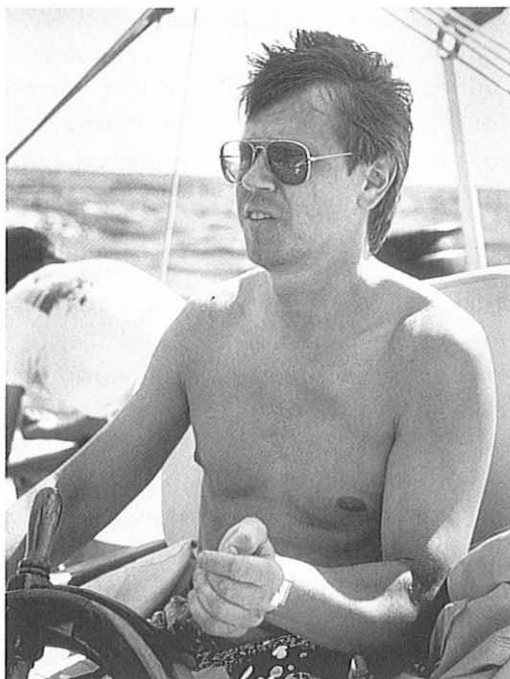
Thanks to extensive efforts notably on the part of our co-captain Edward Cook, the crew succeeded in getting the engine running momentarily and in hooking up a spare alternator in order to charge the batteries sufficiently enough for the communications and navigation electronics to be utilized for brief periods each day, even though the engine continued to overheat and finally fizzled out. Everything had failed while we were floating in the middle of the Pacific.

Landlubbers at Sea

The time aboard the *Galatea* gave us plenty of opportunities to get to know one another under very severe conditions. It became apparent very quickly that we were extremely compatible. The overriding factor seemed to be that we all had a good sense of humor which led to some amusing anecdotes.

For example, Martti showed us what a true humanitarian he was by trying to help Misa quit

Pekka, OH1RY, has maneuvered his Pacific boats to many distant DX locations.



smoking by volunteering to smoke every second cigarette. Misa being the true polite Japanese he was seemed genuinely appreciative of Martti's efforts. He never seemed to run short of cigarettes, though. Perhaps this explained why his so-called six-meter amplifier suitcase was so heavy, probably packed with emergency cigarettes along with amplifier tubes and power transformers.

A favorite pastime between Dale and Martti developed and became ongoing until they parted company in Honolulu but it was so comprehensive that it might continue on their next DX adventure. It was an improvised version of Trivial Pursuit, DX-style, with each trying to stump the other.

For example: Martti – “What was the name of the QSL manager's wife for Don Miller's Farquar expedition?” A look of anticipated triumph would cross

Martti's face as Dale pondered the question. Then, Dale – “Which one, middle, maiden or married?” And Dale usually knew. The questions were well defined but hard to crack by the younger landlubbers languishing pale-faced in their bunks and waiting for the storm to die down.

Meanwhile, the two venerable DX types carried on with their Trivial Pursuit, tossing questions and answers back and forth and looking for more wind. And more DX, as they kept announcing in the boat's quarters.

The DX spirit was definitely alive on this slow boat to Conway and it would stay alive day and night even when we bedded down with everything quiet except for the wind in the rigging and the sound of water sliding past the hull. One would just be dozing off only to be startled awake by Martti's booming voice. “Who was that other American DXpeditioner that joined Don Miller to St. Brandon but got so scary that he made the boat turn back to Mauritius?... Hey, Dale, are you awake?”

A catch phrase for the expedition was adopted by all of us and this one was introduced by Wayne. Another poor European was making his umpteenth insurance QSO and was reminded of it by Wayne. “I don't sure”, came back the reply. That struck a funny note in all of us and from then on any question asked would elicit that same response.

Murphy, however, was not about to quit us. Even Martti would lose his sense of humor one long night when, with waves broaching over the deck, the sun had already dipped far beyond the Pacific horizon. It was at that time Mats and I discovered that we had leaking hatches resulting in some gear getting wet and a wet spot between the two of us in our bunk that

we shared, enough to guarantee a Platonic relationship between anybody. But more fun was on its way.

A Shadow of Doubt Falls Over Martti

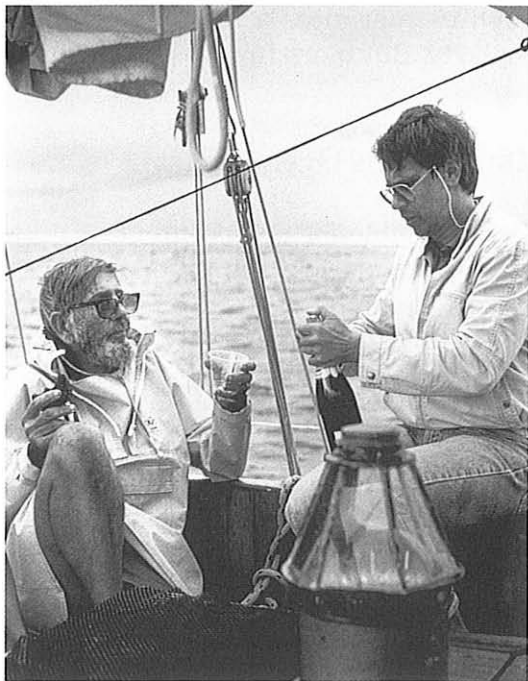
The only toilet available for our group amidships got plugged and “the facilities of the premises” were gone. When confined to small quarters, such a minor, routine technicality would not normally bother the Deserving. A solution was found which meant that we had to share a toilet located in the captain’s quarters and this one was astern for the balance of the voyage.

That toilet was just across the corridor from the low-lying bed of the captain’s wife. Murphy saw an opportunity here and so, Martti was thrown with pants down from the toilet toward the lady’s quarters disrupting her well-earned rest. It all happened because a giant surging wave catapulted Martti from one point to another in complete darkness and with pants down.

Obviously we never queried about Martti’s true intentions but only apologized to our lovely first mate for that nightmarish experience and for the fact that she needed a lot more oxygen the next several days. Martti was hit by Murphy, there was no doubt about it, and this turned out his only major setback during his more than a quarter-century of DXpeditioning.

Land Sighted – a DX Land?

The morning of the fourth day a call from our captain brought us on deck to see our objective lying low on the horizon surrounded by gently rolling waves. It was Conway Reef! Thanks to E.T. and our captain’s seamanship, we were bang on course. The reef and its



When the boat's captain and the DXpedition representatives are ready for champagne, with a DX location in sight, success is just around the corner.

small sandbar were only a few feet above sea level at high tide and could be easily missed if we were 2 or 3 miles off course.

Upon approaching the reef, we faced waves far too high for landing and there were difficulties in locating an opening in any part of the reef surrounding Conway. Contact was made with Vince, K5VT, in Phoenix, Arizona since he had been with the initial group landing on Conway. It was largely thanks to his advice that we were able to zero in on the best point to cross the reef to gain access to the island. This was between two wrecks long since stranded on the reef.

As we got closer to the reef, we were greeted by some of its residents, booby birds and, wonder of wonders, a barn swallow that had obviously been blown off course by a storm during its migration. We were to see this cheerful little bird often during our

stay. Upon anchoring outside the reef, Pekka, OH1RY, surprised us by producing a bottle of champagne to celebrate our arrival. The only trouble was that pointed coral heads and the deep blue Pacific still separated the enterprising DXpeditioners from their ultimate destination.

We all have our individual pleasures. As usual, Wayne, N7NG, wanted to go with the first landing party, and off he went as the only amateur operator with an exploratory party on a Zodiac to chart and mark an opening in the reef. But all of a sudden, Murphy swooped down on the Zodiac. Some 100 yards out of the *Galatea*, the small outboard motor quit, never to run again. Wayne and company had to paddle like hell against a stiff cross-breeze back to our beloved schooner to avoid being blown out to sea. There would have been no engine to catch the runaway Zodiac, anyway!

We Become DX Professionals

After a second try with a new outboard, the opening was found and successfully marked. Another 22-foot Zodiac was inflated and launched overboard, and unloading procedures commenced. It took a minimum of ten trips and long hours but in the end everything had been successfully transferred. Work began to set up the two operating sites as originally planned. At the precise moment, the sun came out to bathe us in its warmth.

Two spots were chosen at each end of Conway allowing for 400 feet of separation between the sites. The one in the landing area was equipped with three stations: HF SSB, low bands and 6 meters. One beam at 30 feet was reserved for 50 MHz, a Cushcraft A-3

When the Old Man of DX with many thoughts and early records meets a QRP type with a lot of enthusiasm and energy, the show is just about to succeed. That is VE7SV and SM7PKK.



at 40 feet for HF and Butternut verticals HF2V and HF6V for the low bands.

The CW site relied on a singular configuration using multiple monobanders and another HF6V. Obviously, both sites were powered by their own generators capable of supplying a total of almost 10 kilowatts needed to run three HF amplifiers and a Tokyo Hy-Power amplifier which was responsible for our highly visible 6-meter presence.

The SSB site was the first to hit the airwaves with all the sideband operators calling CQ in chorus. It was no surprise that NZ7E came back first, followed by WA6AUE. The first Japanese was JE7WGT while the number one from Europe was IIPYS. It was show time from then on with well defined operating schedules and targets.

On CW, the action started just ten minutes later, on the same band with absolutely no interference from the SSB site. NIOC was logged first, followed by JA1KNS while the first European was F2NB, QSO number ten. Interestingly enough, AH3C made it on

both modes within the first ten minutes but he probably knew how these professionals were playing the game anyway.

We expected to be able to work into the United States and Japan with no serious difficulty whereas the Old World would pose a real challenge as the Europeans had more or less missed out on the previous Conway Reef operations, particularly on SSB. But even CW demand for 3D2AM was running high, proving that Conway was the most wanted Pacific country for many Europeans and also for numerous U.S. types east of the Rockies. We came to this conclusion on the basis of extensive DX surveys and bearing in mind the more marginal technical efforts of the previous expeditions.

Consequently, our sub-target was to make no less than 10,000 European contacts. Hence the major effort for us was to work Europe whenever propagation favored that part of the world. This we did, in heavy pileups, achieving our ambitious target. I think I spoke for all of us when I noted the excellent cooperation given us by the North and South American hams and those in Japan. We were not aware of any bad Believers or of the usual policemen tactics employed during many major DXpedition pileups.

One day, it was Misa's, JG2BRI, turn to be afflicted with Murphy. The sole purpose of his trip was to work six meters. Our operations coordinator, OH2BH, now dubbed Papa Bear by the group, had a conversation with Misa who probably did not get the full meaning of what turned out to be a one-way dialogue. Our Japanese friend switched his automatic beacon on and went to sleep, as he thought Martti had suggested.

Dale, VE7SV, was busy knocking off an endless stream of QSOs on 14 MHz SSB when suddenly Misa's

Misa, JG2BRI, is a watchdog for 6-meter openings. And the openings are there for those who believe and have patience.



supporter, JA1BK, broke in to inquire impatiently: "Where is Misa?" Dale, guardedly, asked why, claiming Misa was "busy at the moment". "But the six-meter beacon is 20 over 9 in Tokyo", came the response. Misa was hurriedly awakened to run off 600 Japanese contacts before the band closed up. In all, we experienced three 6-meter openings and made some 2,000 contacts, mainly Japanese but including some of the Deserving back in the United States as well.

That same afternoon, Pekka, OH1RY, our low-band specialist, went to great pains to string out several hundred feet of thin aluminum wire about 3 feet high trying to kill the heavy static that bothered our low-band operations. However, the beverage proved to be a booby trap, literally. The first incoming booby birds at dusk totally demolished our efforts.

Murphy Now Gets at the Weatherman

Next morning a violent squall came through with extremely high winds forcing us to shut down due to rain static. While the CW tent somehow stuck

together, the rain was smashed so hard against the sides of the nylon tent that we could feel a fine spray on our faces. It was obvious that equipment problems were lurking around the corner as every piece of gear was soaking wet.

The poor SSB group found their tent totally washed down and the whole gang had to be evacuated to the sleeping tent. There was nothing to be done except wait for the wind to die down and then take stock of the damage inflicted upon us. It was also noted that the Galatea, anchored off the reef, had taken a heavy beating amid our prayers that the anchor would hold the engine-less schooner in place.

The following day found our watery ICOMs drying up under a scorching sun, and soon all the ICOMs were put back into reliable service. The net result was two amplifiers being shorted out. But after the squall blew past, the amplifiers were fixed with good old ham ingenuity and we were back in business.

So, once again, Murphy was conquered and left empty-handed. In the meantime, we were well on our way toward achieving the targeted 50,000 QSOs. But suddenly, Murphy figured out another trick. Then it happened – solar flare – and what a doozy. In some 10 seconds the noise level rose and wiped out all signals and on all bands for several hours.

While the bands made only partial recovery, another flare followed, and another. Undaunted by such adversity, the daring DXpeditioners had to admit, though, that out there on their little sandbar they were vulnerable no matter how hard they tried. The Old Timers on the trip quickly recalled some words of DX wisdom attributed to Professor Cass: certainly it is true that DXers have experienced

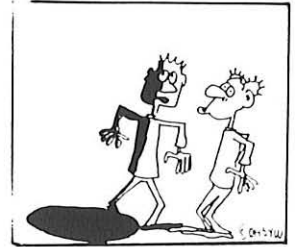
everything, been everywhere, known every problem...
always coming out on top!

Are We on a DXpedition or Just Exploring Nature?

The flares did give us time to explore the island and the reef or to get together to discuss and revise our operation plans. The island had vegetation in the way of large leaved shrubs that grew to a maximum height of about 7 feet and some sprouting coconut trees that had been planted by the Fijians. It was plain, however, that they probably would not survive as they did not look very healthy. There were three species of booby birds, the red footed, brown and blue billed, all of which were in the process of hatching or rearing their chicks. A few frigate birds, some shore birds plus the aforementioned swallow completed the bird population.

Hermit crabs abounded and were quite interesting to watch as they changed their shells while they grew and so came in a variety of shell shapes and sizes. They got to be quite cheeky in advancing into the tents, looking for food of any kind. They appeared just like I had read in many DX-related stories but, much to my surprise, they were not a nuisance.

I found delight in snorkeling in the lagoon during the incoming tide. The colors of the coral, its fish urchins, octopi and small reef sharks made this unspoiled DX atoll a treasured memory. I swam out and proved to the others that man and DXers really did come from something that crawled out of the sea.



- Big sunspots today...



VE7CT
STEVE

SM7PKK
MATS

OH1RY
PETER

OH2BH
MARTTI

N7NG
VA

VE7SY
DALE

JG2BRI
MISA

The Last Day of Operation

In the meantime, operating continued with high QSO rates maintained at both sites although by this time, the operators were literally in agony standing by their chairs. What had become a nuisance, and only after several days did we notice them, were ticks. Some were as big as a little fingernail and others the size of a pin head. Their invasion on us was a last major effort by Murphy to jeopardize this DXpedition. The attack was most insidious for one was not aware of them while one slept until the next day when one found them buried deep in the skin, specializing in areas of perspiration, armpits and the waist, and not even leaving one's most private parts alone.

A pair of tweezers proved invaluable in removing ticks but they surely infested the island. We must have looked like a family of baboons going over each other looking for ticks. Often the pileups needed to be tackled standing up from the chair, and we surely were envious of all those home-based DXers chasing us on every band asking where we would probably be going next – with or without ticks.

On the last day, we raised the flags of our nations using the CW mast as a flagpole. It was an impressive sight and prompted Wayne, the lone American, as he looked at the flags, to wryly state: "Gee, I feel like a minority". In that kind of a situation, you were inclined to get homesick and start missing the family and a hot bath back home.

The place seemed to be off the beaten track of any air or shipping lanes as we neither saw nor heard any ships or aircraft while on Conway. It was a good feeling to see our trusted schooner at anchor outside the reef with or without engine as we awoke for another day; the Galatea was our only ticket home.



Getting back to the *Galatea* out at sea was like reaching our only ticket home. We were off the beaten track.

Murphy Strikes Again

Against all odds and despite repeated assaults by Murphy, we managed some 45,000 QSOs with the *Deserving*. Happy with the outcome of our hard labor, we decided to call it off a day early to make sure that we would get back home instead of having to suffer another major solar flare at this distant outpost off the Pacific Rim.

In spite of a successful completion of our preparations for departure, it was largely because of the low tide and lateness in getting everything loaded on to our boat, the *Galatea*, that we decided to delay departure until the following morning rather than risk negotiating the shallows at night. Everything in loading and battening down the cargo had gone smoothly.

The next day efforts to raise the anchor without using the engine proved futile. With the poor DX-peditioners desperately hand-winchng the anchor chain inch by inch, things were made more difficult by a slipping winch clutch; it all looked like taking three

CONWAY REEF



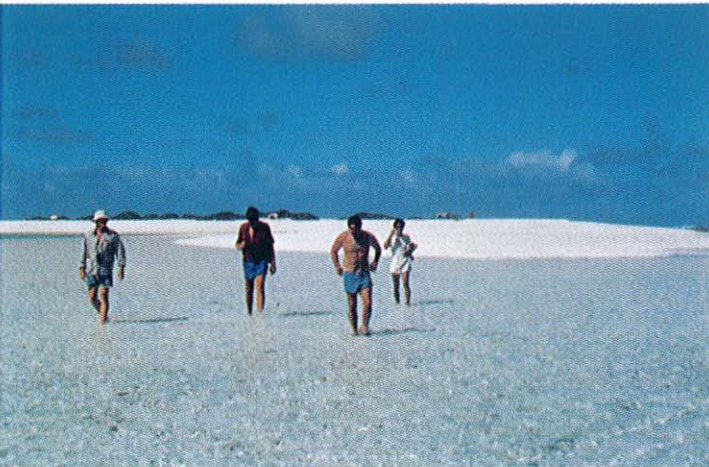
Are you ready for treasure hunting or observing underwater life? Join the Canadians — VE7CT and VE7SV will take you along.



At ebb tide one can walk out to the wreck at the outer reef on Conway. It was apparently a Japanese ship that had met the mighty sea at this DXCC counter. No treasures were found.



Snorkeling among colorful corals is an unforgettable experience. During a major flare the Suffering may dive deep down. At sunset things normally look different.



It is interesting to note that at low tide, DXCC counters may get larger. But fortunately there will be just enough left to qualify when the sea comes in.

steps forward and sliding two steps back. Exhausting work for several hours but a *Galatea* crewman snorkeling among the sharks gave us visual sightings of our progress with the anchor fouled on a coral head. But at last we broke free and set sail.

Where do We Go Next?

We were making maximum hull speed and super time was had by everybody due to great winds although the gang was worn down by fatigue. But the spirits were high even though the heavyweights of this adventure, those who would not get extremely excited about any suggestion of joining Weight Watchers back home, looked a lot slimmer than at the outset.

“Are we going to take this boat along for another adventure at some stage in the near future or is it time to stay with Mom in those northern parts for a while?”, Martti asked Wayne. “I don’t sure”, replied Wayne and with a beady-eyed look on his face our CW virtuoso seemed ready for less DX over the next couple of months.

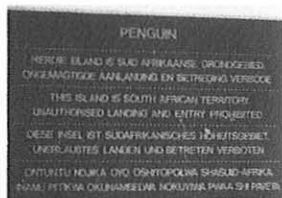
The gear was unloaded on to a truck we had hired for the purpose of moving everything for storage in Suva and subsequently we found ourselves in the middle of a traffic circle at rush hour in the Fijian capital. Here the van stalled and once again the presence of that additional DXpedition member, Mr Murphy, was felt vividly. That guy surely played a role in treating us to some memorable days of DX-peditioning in the Pacific.

But once back home, after five hot baths and having burned my tick-infested underwear, I started to feel kind of strange. It was certainly nice to be back on home turf but there was no denying that a good

part of my soul was sold to DXpeditioning. I had become one of the Believers, just as Cass had predicted in the holy DX book of his. Would you believe that in the middle of the night I had to give Dale a call and ask: "Where do we go next?" But he only replied: "I don't sure!"



PENGUIN ISLAND 1990
ZS9Z/ZS1



THE WIND-MILLS OF PENGUIN ISLAND

Following our return from the remote African Penguin Islands, totally exhausted by a tiring flight, a week of little rest, having burned my by now useless expedition outfit and emerging fresh from five showers taken during the same afternoon, I switched on the radio. The idea was to have a quick listen on the bands to make sure that DX frequencies had endured the enormous load and that all the Deserving were there comparing notes on their latest New One – Penguin Island.

There were three Locals checking things out while the more elderly Old Timers had left the DX bands to take

their families out for a well-deserved gourmet dinner following a brief tour of an art gallery just across town. There was one disappointed DXCC type disheartened by his bad luck in having missed a brief showing on RTTY by just three hours. Another unhappy soul was wondering whether the Penguin types had ever made a really concentrated effort to round up the eighty-meter SSB crowd congregating day in and day out on 3,799 kHz. One unfortunate denizen of DX frequencies had accidentally got screwed up with his multiple VFO facility, prompting an Italian DX type in Genoa to scream "stupido" twice before the other guy realized that maybe he ought to spend some more time reading the ICOM Owner's Manual.

The mood was kind of subdued, bearing in mind that these DX types, younger in years, high in country totals but still limited in experience, had logged a new country on four bands. Even that multiple VFO virtuoso had managed two SSB contacts and one on CW, although the latter contact was still somewhat in doubt, with a question mark in the logbook.

Turning the radio off, the feeling was that I had heard what I wanted to hear. These people who had just added a New One to their totals were already impatiently waiting for a Hungarian group to show up from Albania. This one had been mentioned in the bulletins repeatedly over the past several weeks.

They were not yet true Believers because they were unable to fully appreciate the DX that had just been served to them. Somehow the impression was that the Locals were more inclined to amend the manuscript for the performance to suit their needs without realizing the kind of changes that would be required. Without understanding that a manuscript had existed and that the performance had been successfully completed according to plan.

As I asked my brother in DX, Wayne Mills, N7NG, to recap our Penguin Island adventure, he first refused on the grounds that everything had worked out exactly as planned. There was virtually no delay in landing on the island. No cannibals were around threatening our peaceful expedition; this corner of Africa turned out a thoroughly civilized part of the world. The QSO target was exceeded by 8 percent although the Japanese total fell slightly short of expected levels.

The only major setback was that long-path conditions from the U.S. West Coast to that part of Africa hardly existed at all whereas the path from southeast Africa to the United States was known to be quite reliable.

“So, what was the excitement and adventure that I should report”, Wayne asked. That was a good question, one that I really wanted to hear. Here was a brother who had flown forty hours day and night from the United States, had crossed the Equator and seen the beautiful sand drifts along the battlefields of southwestern Africa finally to end up in Swakopmund in the middle of nowhere. Standing on the paved airstrip smaller than the Banquet Room at Visalia and ready to break the surf in order to land on Penguin Island, my friend did not yet sense any adventure. This was exactly what a seasoned DXpeditioner wanted to hear.

But he added: “Maybe I can write something about an ‘engineering approach’ to these things but are you sure this is what the Deserving, especially the QRP types, will be looking for?”. What can one say? This was my fourth full-scale adventure with N7NG and our third continent to be served jointly to the DX community.

I became more and more convinced that we both came from the ranks of DX Entertainers and that we were not

looking for any specific surprises except the pleasant prospect of low geomagnetic activity.

It has been great fun traveling with Wayne, and we keep saying to each other that maybe once more and then we will call it off. But as we have stated on our QSL cards, if the last show was enjoyable, we may keep performing because the cast of characters is after all rather limited. Surely there are more Entertainers just around the corner. But keep an eye on Wayne and his partners since they belong to an august group of DX Professionals. Give him a big hand at the next DX convention, even though you may have overslept that 80-meter band point.

And now for our DXpedition to Penguin, another brand-new one, where the initial expedition had left us a lot to be achieved.

Engineering a Successful DX – ZS9Z/ZS1

by Wayne Mills, N7NG

DXing and especially DXpeditioning seem to be infectious. But after participating in two full-scale expeditions in the Pacific early in the year, each with their own particular hair-raising adventures, I had made firm commitments to everyone to spend the rest of the year, and especially our Thanksgiving holiday, at home. No expeditions, no CQ Worldwide CW Contest, nothing!



These two islands located in the Bay of Luderitz are the Penguin Islands. They lie only about a mile from the coast of Namibia but they are not Namibian territory. Namibians cannot land on these islands without special permission from the Government of South Africa.

But then, in October, came another opportunity. "What about another trip around the CQ Worldwide, Wayne? If you can take two weeks, I have a grand idea!" ... OH2BH. Well, maybe once more, and then no more for next year! Right! A check with the Mills Management indicated that it would probably be allowed. So affirmative FAX messages to Martti from me and the management, and we were again on the way to more pileups and more QSOs.

The Penguin Islands lie just off the coast of southwestern Africa, with Penguin Island and Seal Island situated in the bay of Luderitz. At the present time, these islands are held by the Republic of South Africa (RSA), and administered as wildlife preserves. Landing without authorization from the RSA is prohibited, in four languages!

A new country application was filed with the DX Advisory Committee in June, 1990 by Bill Shipp, KC1AG and his group based on the separation of the

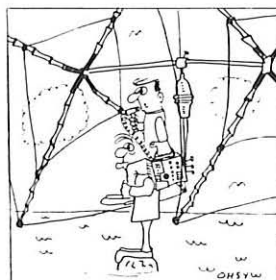
islands from the RSA by Namibia. The first expedition to the islands was conducted by Ian, ZS9A and a group of German operators in July of that year.

The Penguin Islands were sure to be approved as a new country, and reaching them would be relatively easy. A quick trip might be fun and even make a big impact on the need for the Penguins, since only one previous operation had been conducted. A total of about 12,000 QSOs were made from that remote island.

If an operation could be scheduled quickly, we might even be able to squeeze in a CQ WW CW contest effort along the way. In the middle of October, a proposal was made to go to South Africa and team up with Chris Burger, ZS6BCR, to participate in the Worldwide CW contest in Namibia, and then proceed to the Penguins for a weeklong operation.

Operators would eventually include Martti Laine, OH2BH, Pertti Turunen, OH2RF, Chris Burger, ZS6BCR, and Wayne Mills, N7NG. Accompanying the group would be Joshua Engelbrecht, an engineering student and friend of ZS6BCR. Chris had organized several expeditions in the southern part of Africa, but he had never participated at this level. He was eager to try his hand at the huge pileups. Joshua, a potential amateur, would be a camp assistant, cook, and an extra hand in set-up.

Putting together a major expedition in just over one month is a mammoth job. Usually, four to six months would be considered necessary. Equipment and supplies must be purchased and in some cases fabricated. Authorizations for landing, licenses and visas which generally require substantial time to process, must be obtained.



– Whaddaya think? Will they accept Penguin for a new one?

A South African visa, for example, may require up to eight weeks. But with the help of Chris, and cooperation from the authorities, one by one the necessary permissions and authorizations were obtained. The final issuance of our RSA licenses, which was necessary for the Penguin operation, was made only as we boarded our planes en route to the African continent.

In addition to the required authorizations, Chris also managed, in a very short time, to gather the impressive array of heavy hardware and supplies required for the trip. This array included two 40-foot towers, a TH5DX, two generators, fuel and water containers, in addition to the necessary survival items: tents, sleeping bags, food, cooking utensils, and what may become a trademark of our expeditions, a refrigerator.

Having never participated in an expedition to an uninhabited location, Chris was surprised at the amount of material that is required. Other equipment, ICOM transceivers, antennas, coax and other accessories were obtained in the United States and Finland and hand carried all the way through, including three customs clearances, at this time of stepped-up airport security precautions. Many of the large items were shipped ahead to Luderitz, Namibia in a container via railroad. Most of the remaining equipment was transported some 1,000 miles across South Africa and Namibia on a four-wheel drive vehicle and trailer belonging to Hal Lund, ZS6WB, our host in Johannesburg.

In the Air... Again

All of this careful, exhausting preparation began to come together when I met Martti and Pertti in London for the flight to Johannesburg on the 21st of November. The trip to Africa was a new experience for me. What struck me most about the journey was the twenty-four hours actual flying time it required to reach Johannesburg from Jackson Hole. Surely a long trip to a faraway place. Having arrived in South Africa, though, everything seemed back to normal, much like home.

Once on the ground in South Africa, the anxious operators were ready to make some QSOs! But in less than twenty-four hours, after finalizing many of the ticketing issues and preassembling the beams, we were in the air again, heading for Windhoek, the capital of Namibia, for the contest while Chris and Joshua made preparations for driving across the African deserts with the equipment and supplies.

A side-trip was made taking us to Walvis Bay for a meeting with the Colvins. This picture shows the entire ham population of Walvis Bay: (from top left) John, ZS9Z and Ian, ZS9A, Pertti, OH2RF and Wayne, N7NG; (front) Lloyd, W6KG, Iris, W6QL and Martti, OH2BH.





The station of V51DM looks more like an ICOM showroom and indeed, it consists of eight ICOM radios. A neat air-conditioned radiatoroom.

By Monday, less than 100 hours after our initial arrival in Africa, we had made some 7,000 contacts in the Worldwide CW contest, and dropped in on Lloyd and Iris Colvin in Walvis Bay for a short meeting of the YASME Board of Directors. By Tuesday, we had arrived in Luderitz, on the eve of our final assault on the Penguins.

In Windhoek, Namibia, our host Derek Moore, V51DM, and his wife were most accommodating. Derek, the Motorola representative for southern Africa, in addition to setting us up for the weekend's CQ WW CW contest, helped prepare us for the trip to the Penguin Islands. Among the items we obtained from Derek were rolls of RG-213 coax cable. This was in addition to a large amount that we had bought from South Africa and Finland.

Talks with Ian, ZS9A, indicated that we might want to erect an antenna high on the island, far from potential operating sites. We were not sure we would need the extra coax, and the excess baggage costs were significant, but as we later realized, this extra coax was one of the important factors in this successful expedition.

A short trip to Luderitz aboard a Beech 1900 twin turboprop aircraft with our (as always) overweight luggage followed. This trip via Swakopmund took about two hours, leaving us in the middle of a desert wondering not “where do we go next?” but “where are we?” A place where sand drifts must be plowed like snow seemed strangely familiar to the likes of these northern travelers.

Shortly, just as we had finished arranging for a car to town, and loaded all of our gear, a young fellow with a Volkswagen Combi approached us inquiring if we were the DX types intending to go to the Penguin Islands. This was Heiko, the fellow whom Chris had retained to handle pre-arrival chores and to ferry us to the islands. Soon we were checked into a local hotel for the night to await Chris and Joshua, and maybe to get a second good night's sleep since leaving home about a week ago.

As we settled in, we received word that Chris and Joshua would be late because of difficulty with their vehicle. Most every trip has these moments that like a lightning bolt often threaten the whole effort.

Some years ago, we bobbed around for three days aboard our vessel, just offshore from Clipperton Island, wondering whether we would ever be able to negotiate the high surf and set up on the island. Earlier this year, upon arriving in Suva, Fiji, we learned that our boat, the Galatea, had engine problems that could easily have put us into great jeopardy at sea while heading for Conway Reef.

Perhaps these circumstances add to the excitement, but broken engines, bad weather, high surf, boats that do not arrive on time, and uncooperative officials we can always do without.



Landing on Penguin Islands with a small boat can be easy if the sea is cooperating. Eight boat landings had to be completed to get everything to the island.

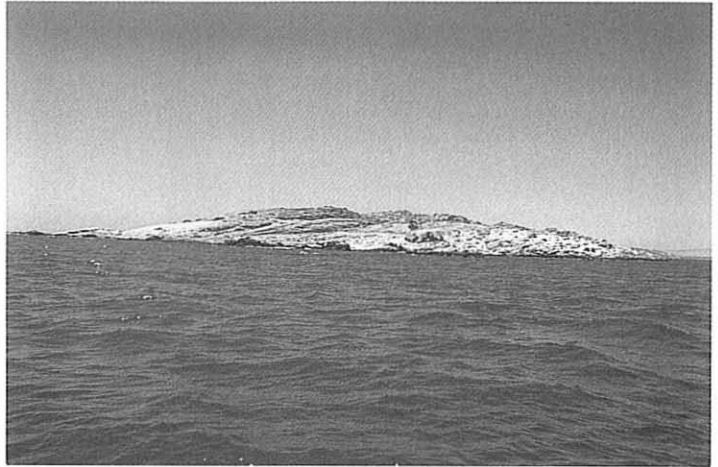
Miraculously, our desert convoy arrived nearly on time, only seven hours late, after a thirty-hour non-stop drive. Miraculously, because they were plagued by a blown head gasket in the middle of the desert which could have delayed them for days, causing a serious reduction in our operating time. An understanding of the problem, and careful attention to it enabled the two to proceed, but only at a much reduced speed.

Shortly after falling asleep, I was awakened and informed the desert duo had arrived. That was wonderful news. With plenty of time to repair the vehicle during the time spent on the island, all was again well! Early on Wednesday morning we loaded our luggage on the Land Rover and proceeded to the harbor, only a few blocks away.

On the Water... Again

Heiko's boat is a small but sturdy craft, with a large outboard engine, capable of traveling to Penguin Island in less than half an hour. It has considerable protected storage space, and it appeared that only four

This is how Penguin Island looks when approached from the sea. These DXCC countries always look very similar – plain rocks and not much in the way of DX luxury.



or five trips to the island would be necessary to move all of our gear. Ear patches to prevent sea sickness would not be necessary for this trip.

At this point, we decided to investigate Seal Island as well as Penguin Island since we had permission to land on both islands. The original operation from this DXCC country was done from Seal Island. Their decision was based on information that the buildings on Seal Island were in better repair than those on Penguin Island. But an inspection of both sites and their surroundings revealed that the buildings on each site were in about the same state of repair, and if we could erect our main antenna on top of the island, Penguin Island would be preferable.

Potential antenna sites on Seal Island, above the operating building, were closer to the buildings, but we felt that our antennas might not be sufficiently spaced. Penguin Island offered more buildings, spread out over a larger area, allowing more separation between the stations and their antennas. If it did not rain, the roofless buildings on Penguin Island were superior to those on Seal Island.



These buildings were left empty dozens of years ago when guano mining was discontinued.

Finally, and perhaps most important, the landing at Seal Island is treacherous. We recalled Ian telling us of being tossed out of the Zodiac during one of the landings on their trip. That type of excitement we did not need, either. Considering the weather we might experience at any time, and the other factors, we decided Penguin Island was the place to be.

Basic Strategy

Organization of the operating phase of an expedition requires recognition of the constraints which will be faced during the trip. One major constraint we faced for the Penguin Island trip was a limitation of five people permitted on the island. This, in turn, limited the number of stations which could be in operation simultaneously. In addition, fewer hands would be available for construction and maintenance.

In the end, two stations were planned, with a variety of antennas to accommodate them. Two lightweight 40-foot Rohn towers with beams, and two multiband verticals were chosen. Since more than a quarter of a mile of coax was brought, we had the

option of placing a tower with one beam at the highest point of the island, which would significantly improve our signal to the United States, South America and long-path Japan, or was it long path because our location was exactly on the opposite side from Japan. Chris brought an HF2V for the low bands, and a Cushcraft AP-8 was purchased to allow operation on the WARC bands.

Normally on a seven-day trip, a minimum of four stations would be desirable in order to satisfy the demand for bands, modes, QRP, mobile, etc. with maybe 50,000 QSOs. With only two stations possible, a slightly different strategy would be necessary. It was decided to use a second beam on ten meters only. This allowed the two stations to operate effectively on ten meters and at the same time, give more DXers a chance for a potential overall new one, before concentrating on the other bands.

Getting Started... Set-Up

The key to a successful operation is, as always, to be as loud as possible; to have a big enough signal to control the pileup, to dominate the frequency and be enjoyable. On Penguin Island, a big signal could only be had by erecting an antenna on the very highest points of the terrain since the high part of the island stood between our operating locations and many eager DXers in the Americas and Japan.

Several arrangements, including establishing a tent-based station high on the island, were abandoned because of high winds. Instead, it was decided to go for a long length of coax with the TH5 mounted high and in the clear, and running the station in a more convenient waterfront location.

PENGUIN ISLANDS



This is how it looks from Penguin Island with a view of Seal Island to the north. Seal Island was home to the first DXpedition to Penguin by the German group.



The cast, standing from left: OH2BH, N7NG, OH2RF, ZS6BCR and our camp assistant Joshua.



Daytime temperatures averaged 20 degrees Celsius with high winds but dropped to the freezing point at night. A true-blue African shows northern people how to jump into the ice-cold Atlantic Ocean.

Some 500 feet of RG8/U was required to reach the top while rotating required a 30-minute effort of climbing.



A concrete base with several anchors indicated that a site on top of the island had been used in the past, perhaps for radio antennas. It offered a view of the horizon in all directions, and it was sure to provide a better signal despite the additional power loss in up to 500 feet of coax.

The major effort for the first day on the island was the erection of the TH5. Carrying the tower sections and antenna parts up the hill was the first order of business. Negotiating the large rocks and avoiding the nesting birds as we worked our way up on the island made the job more laborious. We even moved a generator partially up the hill to power an electric rock drill to make guy anchors.

All the while, many resident birds flew overhead, swooping low, trying to convince us to leave. Final assembly of the tower sections and the TH5 were accomplished only as the afternoon wind made itself felt. This made the antenna installation much more difficult and it was a full-day effort before the TH5 was firmly in place, thanks to the impressive muscle power displayed notably by Chris.

The installation was eventually completed and even as we ran the coax down to one of the shacks, we were in the process of setting up the ICOM transceivers, and starting the generators. The second operation from the Penguin Islands would soon be racking up thousands of QSOs, maybe with the biggest signal ever heard from these parts!

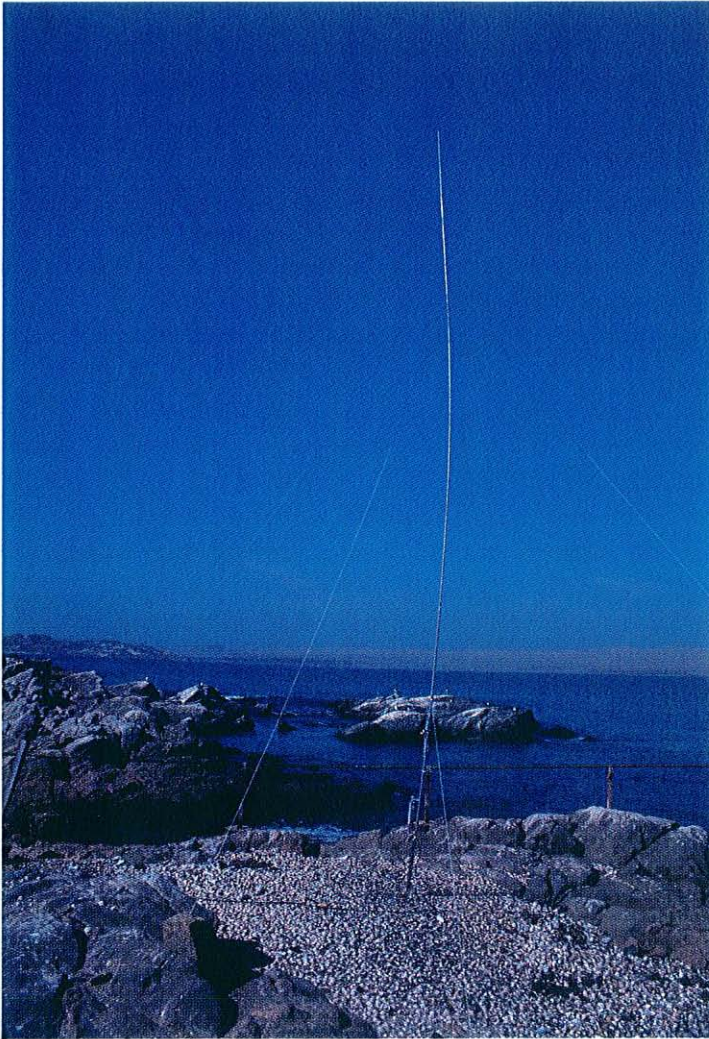
On the Air... Again!

Shortly after getting started and working the SSB crowd, we put another station together, using the Cushcraft AP-8 antenna, located some 400 feet due north. By the time the island was already shrouded in complete darkness, we had two stations filling log pages, and ZS9Z/ZS1 was off and running.

The stage was set, then, for our Penguin Island effort. The fun had already begun! Since our aim was to keep each station on the air continuously, twenty-four hours each day, the four operators would work shifts of approximately four hours, with four hours of



Our CW site was managed by N7NG and ZS6BCR. We were handing out RTTY QSOs for the first time ever from Penguin.



Some low-band operating was done toward the very end of the DXpedition. Our Butternut HF2V is sticking out right from the salt water.

rest. However, rest periods were generally spent building antennas or otherwise completing construction or maintenance of the stations and power plants.

We would be careful to spend lengthy periods on the designated frequencies in order to make ourselves available and easy to find by eager DXers; no reason

to play hard to find. We would even operate in the U.S. General and Advanced class CW sub-bands!

The decision had been made to concentrate much of our early operation on one or two bands in order to give as many different stations as possible an opportunity for at least one QSO with the Penguin Islands. We picked ten meters in addition to twenty since conditions were good, and we had a 28 Mhz mono-bander apart from the TH5DX. Ten-meter operation also included many U.S. Novices.

On Thursday, we erected the second tower and installed the Hy-Gain 103BA at the top. At this point we had two good antennas on ten meters, and we were able to operate both of the ICOMs on this band, SSB and CW simultaneously. Conditions were excellent, and the QSOs came at a furious rate. During the first twenty-four hours, we made more than 6,500 QSOs. It seemed that each day we spent most of our off hours building new antennas for 160 or 80 meters, or a beam for six meters, or setting up the spare station for RTTY operation. And, finally, when all of the construction was completed, it seemed nearly time to disassemble it all and leave the island!

By the beginning of the third day, it appeared that the dupe rate on ten meters was rising out of sight. Still, Martti reasoned that even a 25 percent dupe rate would be far less than moving to another band, working everyone all over again, so we decided to hold out just a while longer and to give an overall new counter to the remaining audience.

Eventually, however, the questions about when we were going to be on 15 meters, not to mention 160, overwhelmed us, and we began it all over again on fifteen meters. Ignoring these questions from time to time was necessary in the interest of keeping up the

rate, and giving a QSO to one more of the Deserving, or maybe Suffering.

Our schedule worked well for the most part, but additional operation on six meters, and on RTTY caused changes in our schedules which, in turn, caused loss of rest. Early in the day Europeans were worked in great numbers, while Japan was worked during various openings scattered throughout the day and night. After several days' operation, it became clear that Japan was the area of the world to concentrate on any time we had an opening.

By late afternoon, the Stateside gang began coming through and continued throughout the night. At times, with the thundering multitudes calling, it was a real challenge to keep the rate up while trying to limit the occupied spectrum to 10 - 20 kHz. When we listened for a specific station, at least half of the pileup would begin to call again. Always!

As usual, we ignored these continuous callers, preferring the station with the perfectly timed tailend call, or moving slightly to work the station finding a clear spot at the edges of the calling pack. When the pileups were worked down, we had no other choice than search for more stations on our own frequency.

By the end of the week, we were definitely looking forward to our departure and some rest. Our last day started with the sunrise 160-meter opening. Only three QSOs were managed by N7NG during that opening, including KY0A in far-off Colorado. That left ZS6BCR the overwhelming champion of 160 meters, after stellar performance the previous day.

After sunrise, we made a few more QSOs on 80 meters, and then the plug was pulled. Heiko arrived with his partner and we began loading equipment for

the return to Luderitz on African soil. We realized that the weather was indeed favoring us. We had experienced moderate wind during our set-up phase, and during the week even strong wind made us nervous about our antenna installation high on the island, but it held without a problem. Again on our day of departure, the weather was favorable and the bay at Luderitz was calm.

No Penguins on Penguin Island?

During our stay on the island, we looked and looked all over for any sign of penguins. Alas! No sign of these birds was ever found. Signs of other birds, of course, were very much in evidence. Most of the buildings had been open to the birds, and at times the smell was sickening.

Thousands of gulls nest on the islands, and many of these were nesting during our visit. We made a great effort to avoid their nests by marking areas to avoid with red cloth, paths to use with green. Many of these nests occupied normal paths between buildings and the beam antenna sites. A trip to the top of the island to turn the TH5 during the night was met with screams of thousands of agitated birds. At times we wondered if that long-path opening was really that important!

On Saturday, we were visited by scientists from the Department of Environment Affairs, who seemed pleased with our efforts. On our day of departure, one of the nests which we had passed many times each day came alive with a young gull. So, the feeling was that we had met our DXpedition goals as well as demonstrated our commitment to the ideals of wildlife conservation.

Going Home... Again!

When all was stored and secure in Luderitz, we made our way to the airport, and began our journey home. Considerably more lightly loaded after leaving much gear in Luderitz for Chris' later trip to Walvis Bay, we had an easy time making connections in Windhoek, and continuing on to Johannesburg to relax and enjoy ZS6WB's wonderful hospitality. Over a cold beer we discussed the week's events and success. Maybe we would even get one good night's sleep before once again wondering "where we might be going next..."

THE AUTHOR'S PROFILE

by Mike Koss, W9SU

I have to admit that when I heard the title of this book “Where Do We Go Next?” it brought out more than a casual chuckle. Any book written by and about Martti Laine, OH2BH should be titled “Where Haven’t We Been Yet?”

For a masterful radio operator like Martti, whose get-up-and-go is up and going most of the time, the Planet Earth must seem somewhat undersized. Perhaps a Jupiter-sized world, bathed in perpetual ionization and featuring several thousand DXCC countries would seem more appropriate. Then again, Martti would probably wear that planet out, too.

He has visited and operated from more than a DXCC’s worth of countries, been responsible for the initiation of new DXCC challenges and braved the dangers of malaria-infested jungles, ongoing wars, torturous seas, and harshly restrictive dictatorial governments – sort of a Finnish Indiana Jones. He has been a world-high scoring contest champ, a world-class station builder, a World Games organizer and supporter, and the only man ever to be elected to both the CQ DX Hall of Fame and the CQ Contest Hall of Fame.

And just when you think that there is nothing left for him to do after all those accomplishments you will

probably find Martti at a nearby airport, his jacket stuffed with airline tickets and passport documents and both arms sagging from the weight of radio gear – on his way out to another creative adventure in some land even high school geography teachers cannot recognize or pronounce.

But then there was a time when the author was just a little boy growing up in Helsinki – a time when riding around on his bicycle and playing with friends were the activities of the day. Change was to come in 1961 when, under the tutorial influence and encouragement of his late brother OH2EW, Martti passed his first tests and the mailman came by with what would turn out to be one of the most important pieces of paper this young boy would ever see – the radio license for callsign OH2BH.

Martti set out on his radio career from almost impossibly humble beginnings – an old pair of 813 vacuum tubes and simple antennas from a locale high in the northern latitudes where the endless summer sun and Northern Lights shine right behind you. Yet here was a challenge that seemed to have no identifiable limits and lots of barriers – perfect for a youngster with endless enthusiasm and a bright mind, like a game of chess with the Planet Earth as a field of play. The technical, logistical, political, and social opportunities were there, and so were the expected hardships, heartbreaks, and competition – both fair and unfair.

Martti made for himself one unique, distinctive advantage. While for most adults life is a self-imposed struggle of job burnout, family strife, constant problem solving and often incalculable boredom, Martti sought to define his life in a different way. Establish goals, recognize limits, involve friends, take chances, be creative, do not count today's success as

the final victory, and keep your attention focused ahead – ahead – ahead.

Few people ever dare themselves to try or express what starts out as a hobby to this kind of level – but one thing is sure. If you do anything with the kind of intensity that Martti has with his adventures over a period of almost three decades, and you still enjoy it with the same kind of giddy excitement and passion after all that time, then you are surely doing the right thing in your life. And you are probably in an exclusive club of self-driven, never-satisfied high achievers like Charles Lindbergh, Sir Edmund Hillary, or Neil Armstrong. It is just that amateur radio does not usually make the front pages. So there is a whole new challenge.

To Martti ham radio is a way of life, a state of mind if you will, with so many angles and facets that a real devotee can immerse himself or herself in it and use it as a platform to launch a happy, healthy, sociable lifestyle. Few DX and radio contest enthusiasts would disagree. He likes to observe that competitive operating makes a perfect personal challenge – a studious matrix of mind and muscle that educates the operator on the winning ways, just as in normal life.

And that will be his most notable contribution. Today Martti the teacher strives to encourage people everywhere to learn, practice, calculate, and execute. He has trained foreign operators in stark Third World lands, contributed technical knowledge and helped finance station construction for others to use, and even offers his own home equipment for young, energetic operators to improve their skills. Martti has been an “Elmer” to so many people he would probably be called “Grandpa Elmer” if he was not so young.

But Martti would probably be the first to note that age has nothing to do with it. Personal conviction, persistence, and good organization are the keys one can use to unlock the doors to nearly every worthwhile opportunity. And you cannot open any doors if you keep your keys in your pocket all the time. Martti is just a fellow with lots of dreams and very few pockets. And it served him well in raising a happy family, traveling the world, sharpening his radio operating expertise to near perfection, and instructing others. It works as well today, and the many ways in which Martti Laine has enriched this delightful pastime will be his enduring legacy for decades to come.

ALL YOU NEED IS... TAILENDING

What's the difference between a break-in and a tailend? What the heck does tailending mean in the first place? In order to depart from the basic call/listen pattern associated with a DX pileup, the real virtuosi of the DX audience have developed several more sophisticated ways of establishing contact with the DX station quickly and reliably. Often this will allow the traditional call/listen format to change and enable the DX station to make rapid-fire contacts with great efficiency without giving the pileup a chance to call as such.

The usual procedure is to break-in during an ongoing QSO in the hope of the DXpeditioner hearing and answering your call. To break-in is as such detrimental if it is practiced without a good plan; in many cases, it may disrupt a current contact and the time needed for completing a QSO is doubled in the process.

Tailending, on the other hand, looks more like an art form. It gives you complete aesthetic satisfaction, as my good friend N7NG would put it. Satisfaction to both sides. What's this all about? How can you turn a break-in into a tailend, and what do you need to consider so as not to turn a tailend into a break-in?

To exaggerate a bit while still sticking to the truth, on several DXpeditions I found N7NG running around the DX vineyard in a terrible fit of emotion, caught in some kind of a pileup ecstasy when everything had fallen into place down to the last detail. Timing, duration, articulation – the whole serenade. After such a perfect tailend, Wayne simply tended to get mentally derailed. Hopefully he remembered to tell the pileup "QRX 5" before starting to wander around the island in that state of DX Nirvana...

What is this finest of the finesses – tailending? When it happened again during the last Penguin Island operation and I caught N7NG in his characteristic mood of euphoria, we made a deal

that he would write a chapter about tailending for my book. Maybe Wayne will produce an all-time Honor Roll listing of the world's best tailends. Anyway, he can vividly recall the best examples from his many DX forays.

May I introduce Wayne Mills, N7NG and the pearl of pearls – tailending!

Tailend – End of Wasted Energy

by Wayne Mills, N7NG

“Nothing in DX circles is more beautiful to hear, nor more satisfying to accomplish, than to raise a new or rare country by virtue of a perfectly timed tailend call”. These words were written by Don Miller, W9WNV in his 1968 DX Handbook. Don was a master in his time... always able to respond to tailend calls while maintaining order. There are many excellent DX and DXpedition operators today capable of equally efficient pileup operation. Often it is a joy to simply listen to these operators. Is tailending really an art form, or is it simply disruptive breaking? Does it add to the enjoyment during an expedition or does it only cause frustration? And just what is tailending, anyway?

Ecstasy?

During many years of chasing DX, I have often found great satisfaction in snagging a rare DX station with a tailend call, and after a few expeditions to far-off locations, I find equal satisfaction in being able to respond to the same tailend calls. Mentally derailing? Probably not, but it is exhilarating to work some of the best operators in the world in only a few seconds time! For the advanced DXer, it is probably fortunate that more of the regular callers do not use tailending effectively since it offers him such an advantage. Working tailenders can improve QSO rates on SSB as well as CW, but more important, it is just fun. Let's see how it is done.

Perfect tailending is this tall and that wide. Wayne Mills, N7NG, is ecstatic while Raj, 3D2ER is still wondering...



What are We Talking About Here?

Tailending can be defined as presenting your callsign to the DX operator, during an existing QSO, in such a way as to circumvent the competition while carefully avoiding any significant hindrance to the current QSO. On the DX end, I often hear many types of calls which are probably thought to be tailend calls. Usually they are not. The key to a smooth tailend call is precise timing under the proper circumstances. We frequently see messages published in DX bulletins and magazine articles firmly commanding "No tailending". Tailending can lead to chaos if not kept under control. Each expeditioner, of course, has his preference for operating procedure, and in the end it must be respected. The operator must always be in command, and maybe this means no tailending. Should he lose control of the situation, the enjoyment will be gone.

Are We Having Fun Yet?

Enjoyment should be a major focus for an expedition; why should we even bother otherwise? If tailending cannot be accomplished by the operator, so be it. But if tailending is accommodated by a DXpeditioner, it can be a very rewarding experience for those who participate.

Proper pileup control is required to maintain order and preserve the enjoyment potential. Since tailending is potentially disruptive, great care must be taken to avoid a bad scene. Above all, we should strive to create an operation which will be

fun. When I return from an expedition, I want to hear that most DXers enjoyed their opportunities to make QSOs with me. Otherwise, I would quickly lose interest in DXpeditioning and spend my travel money on trips to Disney World with my family.

When to Call (Come Now...)

As has been stated by numerous authorities in the field, tailending can be the proverbial two-edged sword, allowing us to enhance the enjoyment of the DX community with rapid-fire QSOs, or hurling us into chaos and vitriol, after which everyone is glad to see it end. Properly executed and controlled, tailending can reward the DXer with pride in mastering an elusive technique. To many DXers this is the "joy of victory".

Within the context of DXing, there are proper circumstances and opportunities for tailending. Certainly, DXpeditions are natural opportunities for tailending. The operators are primarily interested in short, basic QSOs with no extraneous information. If someone carefully sends his name or QTH during a DXpedition QSO, the situation is perfect for a tailend call. The expedition operator will often be extremely impatient in this situation. He may even work another station or two while this information is being sent! I have often done this and then completed the QSO with the long-winded one so that he did not even know it had happened!

Tailending can be done in non-expedition situations as well. In some instances, a tailend call will demand a response even though the DX had no thought of answering such a call. An artful call can leave the operator no choice but to respond! He may be unable to resist! Achieving this level is the ultimate in tailending finesse.

There are circumstances under which even a perfect tailend call is inappropriate. Many DX operators find that responding to any tailend calls only encourages others to follow, leading to uncontrolled chaos. Highly efficient DXpeditioners utilize a kind of controlled chaos, though! Aficionados believe that a situation deteriorates because of a widespread misunderstanding of the technique. Often when a DXpeditioner responds to a tailend call, the masses begin to call, usually continuously. So one had better be prepared to handle such a calamity. Otherwise it is, indeed, best to avoid the thing entirely.

High-rate methods are only appropriate if the DX is interested in the sport. Often the DX is only interested in a chat with a friend. A tailender is a breaker, to be avoided at all cost.

Take Command!

Perhaps tailending is what you make of it. Properly executed, tailending is unquestionably an art. In a pileup, a run of "artists" can add substantially to the operators' enjoyment... on both ends of the QSO. At times, managing a pileup can be like directing an orchestra or choir. Admittedly, in other instances a pileup can be a far less pleasing experience. It should be noted that calling during a QSO at the proper time is perfectly acceptable and calling continuously when the DX stops sending is not. But continuous calling is practiced extensively. An unabashed W9 station recently told me that it was OK for him to call a DX station continuously because the DX was not persisting with the station she had selected even though the DX was prevented from persisting by the continuous caller!

So what does it take to control the masses? Is it possible to accommodate those who would circumvent the usual routine by going directly to the front of the line? It is the responsibility of the expedition operator to control the operation. He really cannot expect much courtesy or operating skill from the pileup as a whole; he must work with what is there and make the best of it. In the case of the continuously calling W9, consistency on the part of the DX might have improved the situation.

In attempting to control a pileup, it is extremely important to create the feeling that everyone will be able to make a contact eventually. With panic replaced by a feeling of confidence, a pileup will usually be better behaved. An effective way to help create this confidence is to keep the QSO rate high. Experience seems to indicate that satisfaction increases as the rate increases. So maybe anything which improves the rate, tailending included, will be acceptable. If too many tailend calls are accepted in succession, however, continuous callers will obliterate the frequency, and a pattern of changing the listening frequency will be necessary.

Go For It

Having decided that the situation, such as a major DX-expedition, is likely to permit a tailend call, how should we

proceed? And how can a fledgling DXer learn to perform and even to enjoy such a potentially disruptive process?

There are very precise rules governing the proper timing and execution of a tailend call. The First Important Principle is that your call will be made while the station currently being worked is still transmitting. If you wait for a pause, you are not likely to succeed. The DX operator will begin to transmit immediately at the end of the previous QSO, because if he does not, others will begin to call... in about thirty milliseconds! If a pause does come, you have lost your advantage; if it doesn't and you wait for the end of the current station's transmission, you will probably be transmitting while the DX is transmitting. The result will be all too familiar.

Your call begun during the last part of the current station's transmission will not upset the DX operator because the Second Important Principle of tailending restricts your call to a time when only redundant or unimportant information is being transmitted. Listen carefully when the DX returns to a complete call, and make a note of the call. Find the station he is working, setting your transmit VFO, and determine if the call you have noted is correct. If it is, the DX is ready for a tailend call. Transmitting while a DX station is still trying to copy a callsign will not generally result in a QSO; in fact, several of the gang may remind you of this fact. But sending your call when the anxious expeditioner is ready for another callsign for his log can be very rewarding.

These techniques may be applied to tailending on SSB as well as on CW. Tailending on SSB, to a great extent, is an exercise in timing, putting your callsign in a time slot that is most advantageous. If you are loud, zeroing the current station and calling at the proper time will work well.

CW tailending adds another dimension to the process. For SSB operation a tailend call must be made very near the frequency to which the DX is listening. For CW operation, your transmit frequency is variable, and you will need to determine your calling frequency based on several factors, including the type of transceiver the DX is using. If the receiver is listening on the upper sideband, calling slightly higher in frequency will result in a received pitch which is slightly higher in frequency. Conversely, for a receiver listening to the lower sideband, the pitch would be lower. Alternatively, listening to how the operator responds to similar calls will suggest how to set your frequency.

Putting It All Together

Having the basic elements in hand, you can set out to see how it all works. Practice often in moderately-sized pileups calling Soviet or Eastern European stations. These operators are good, and frequently accept tailend calls. After determining that the station is, indeed, working stations rapidly, you can wait for an opportunity. If you hear "UD6DKW DE", or even "...de WO....." you have a prime opportunity for slipping in a callsign, timed to end just as the transmission is completed. If you hear "5NN BK" or "5NN TU", you probably won't be able to complete a call, especially if you have a long callsign.

Note that tailending involves sending a complete callsign. The DX operator will usually ignore a partial call since it slows the pace so much. If you have a long callsign, you will find that you are a Disadvantaged DXer. Practice is important, and a newcomer should develop considerable skill before attempting a tailend in a high visibility situation. But once you feel confident using the tailend, by all means use it, and we can discuss the great event over a beer at the next DX convention!

Thanks...

When we go to the next spot, we will be looking for your great tailend call, and if you are one of the relatively few DXers who can finesse your call through the pileup and get in the log early on, you may hear about it from the ecstatic operator. And maybe the rest of the guys in the pileup will even forgive you if he has to "QRX 5" in order to wander around the island and dissipate his euphoria.

LAWS THAT GOVERN DXING – DXCC

There are things and events which only history will show in a proper context. Despite the basically timeless character of this book in its discussion of many of the Mysteries of the Ages and presentation of a wide spectrum of DX-related matters and events, there is reason to link one development to a specific element in terms of history and time.

It all happened some time ago when San Francisco was hit by a devastating earthquake. That same Mother Nature who makes the sun shine and radiate its energy and warmth, produces flares and creates sunspots, decided to shatter my whereabouts, topple many big beams and shake sturdy antenna towers. Water from my swimming pool in Fresno was splashed onto the lawn. It was a powerful quake felt throughout the Bay area.

Well, what did this have to do with DXing? That very same gorgeous day your author was happily driving his convertible down to the most beautiful part of California, following Highway 1 along the Pacific coastline. Having just passed Santa Cruz to reach my destination high in the mountains, I pulled up in front of the house of a local Old Timer. Trying to steer clear of a maze of wire antennas crisscrossing the garden, the visitor was suddenly caught in a scene suggesting the end of the world – there were deafening crashes all around as Mother Nature displayed her awesome might, barely leaving intact an impressive monobander that stood near the Old Timer's library building.

This was a highly dramatic way to enter the home grounds of that local DXer. It seemed as if nature somehow wished to honor the meeting of these two gray-headed DX types. Indeed, from underneath fallen bookshelves, only sustaining a few scratches, there arose with a little effort this distinguished scholar of DX history and DXCC criteria, James A. Maxwell, W6CF.

Instinctively squeezing a test tube in one hand and holding DXCC criteria documents in the other, he began to speak. "Although the DX criteria are written on tablets of stone and all the countries once placed on the List will stay there, a new exceptional change to the rules has finally been discovered and will be tested in honor of the 500th anniversary of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. We are going to change the 225-mile open water requirement to 25 miles to get more action on the bands".

Just to show my budding understanding of what Jim was saying, I thought to interrupt him by asking the only question that came to my mind about the criteria: "Why is Scotland considered a country on the DXCC List?". My host took a quick step back across a fallen bookshelf and launched himself into a voluble discourse to elucidate the Eternal Enigmas associated with the DXCC List. "Because they think of themselves as a country and others do likewise!". And that is written into the DXCC criteria, he continued. Or, rather, this particular point was missing from the criteria at the time and thus Scotland made it to the List. But so did Malpelo.

As I was watching the animated gesticulation of this DX Knower and listening to his dissertation, we ended up in Jim's DX library. It is a well-known fact that he owns the world's one and only library where every single DX event and associated documents having anything to do with the world of DX are filed. Several documents are deposited in up three different filing cabinets as if the librarian had taken precautions to cope with the kind of earthquake we had just witnessed. But he only muttered something about the roots of DX going deep enough not to be shaken here or there by tremors even measuring 9 on the Richter scale.

The whole evening was spent here on the highest peak of Redwood Estate. Well into the wee small hours, we suddenly turned our attention to what would be the world's shortest "statement of purpose" for the entire DXCC program. Where are we headed and why? At daybreak, we found ourselves locked in a heated argument about possible country status for the Vienna International Centre and whether 4U1VIC should be added to the List.

Well, with my fact-finding mission over, I had again experienced something new, having been to the epicenter of an earthquake,

studying the world's only DX library and spending memorable hours with that seasoned DX Augur who had read all the DX documents.

As it was time to say good-bye, I casually inquired whether the laws that govern DXing could somehow be presented in a nutshell. The following is the story as described by Jim Maxwell, W6CF – out of DX Advisory Committee fame. It is good to know the other end of the circuit.

Looking for a Statement of Purpose... and the List of All Lists

by Jim Maxwell, W6CF

Most if not every book on DXing makes a very basic, very fundamental assumption: DXers chase countries. Indeed, it is the never-ending hunt for countries that has made DX what it is today. That should be self-evident: can anyone really imagine sane human beings living in a tent pitched beside guano mounds on the Penguin Islands because they enjoy the view? But many DXers do just that – they visit inhospitable, unsanitary dung heaps and rock piles throughout the world solely for the purpose of giving the Deserving another New One.

Why do they do it? The interesting subject of “why” shall be left for others to ponder – perhaps there is a reputation to be made for the psychologist who unlocks even more of the Eternal Truths of DXing. Be careful when talking with that person in a white coat sitting next to you at your next DX club meeting! But in this chapter we will restrict our attention to some really basic subjects: Just what *is* a DXCC country? How does one go about finding a new DXCC country and getting it added to the DXCC country list? Or, as Martti put it, “How about some poop on the Laws of DXing and DXCC?”

What's a DXCC Country?

In one sense an answer to the question “what's a DXCC country” is ridiculously easy to give: a DXCC country is



When the DX Advisory types are around, the Mystique of DX is right there. Former DX Advisory Committee chairman Robert Thompson, K6SSJ, and current Pacific Division member Jim Maxwell, W6CF, listening to a QRP type.

whatever the ARRL says it is! A DXCC country is any entity appearing on the DXCC countries list for which DXCC credit is given. Of course, although it is awfully hard to challenge the truth of such statements, they really do not tell us much. In order to get a good understanding of what DXCC countries are all about, it is necessary to look at the DXCC rules. Even then, as we will see, there is room for disagreement.

The DXCC country did not spring into life as a fully developed creature. After worldwide DX became a reality in the 1920s, a demand grew for a standard, reasonable method for scoring DX successes. The Worked All Continents award was created, but as long-haul DX became more commonplace, WAC was not enough. Discussions of "scores" turned into discussions of "countries", and these discussions inevitably turned toward a standard, a standard list of countries.

In the early 1930s several attempts were made to define a standard country list, none of which managed to attract much of a following. Then Clinton B. DeSoto, W1CBD, took his turn at bat. Most DXers probably know DeSoto through his authorship of *200 Meters and Down*. But it was DeSoto, in *QST* for October 1935, who set the stage for the DXCC program. He stated a rule, unique in its simplicity:

Each discrete geographical or political entity is considered to be a country.

That's it! For some spot of land to be considered a DXCC country, it must be somehow discrete, distinct, separate from

other DXCC countries. The distinctiveness may be geographical, political, or both.

The approach made sense – good sense. After a year of debate, the ARRL DX countries list was announced in January 1937, followed by the announcement of the DX Century Club in September of the same year. DXCC was on its way!

To be sure, there was a certain ambiguity to the basic rule. How “discrete” must a speck of land or a political entity be to be considered a country? DXers back in those days must have been a more passive lot than they are today, for although minor changes were made to that first 1937 country list as time passed, it was done quietly, handled in a gentlemanly manner – so civilized!

The years have brought change to the criteria. Compare Clinton B. DeSoto’s immortal words with the latest and greatest version, published in the April 1988 issue of *QST*. The original modest, one sentence statement of principle has now grown to 1010 words of countries criteria, plus 412 more words of deletion criteria, altogether filling a full page of microscopic type. But the 1988 criteria boil down to the same meaning and intent of DeSoto’s 1935 definition – only more detail has been added to help answer those eternal questions such as “how much political difference” is required, and “how much distance is required”.

Are Buildings Countries?

Want to have some fun? One of these days, while you are downing a cool one with a group of the Deserving, stand up and announce that you worked 4U1UN on 13 meter CW the previous weekend. Describe how much you enjoyed the contact, and how much you are looking forward to snagging 4U1UN on another WARC band for another new band country, and that you are also combing the bands for 4U1ITU. Then throw in a comment about 4U1VIC, the station at the Vienna International Centre, which does *not* count as a DXCC country although it is credited by a pile of other award programs throughout the world. Then ask why, oh why, does 4U1VIC *not* count as a DXCC country?

Yes, try it, just for fun! The chances are someone will leap to attention, eyes flaming, temples pulsing, breath coming in spasms, shouting “BUILDINGS ARE NOT COUNTRIES, DAMMIT!!!”. I have tried it, more than once. Sometimes the

shout is punctuated by the sound of a fist slamming onto a table, dumping several pitchers of cool brew into the laps of innocent bystanders.

Let's take a look at that statement, and perhaps shed some new light on the meaning of the word "country" in the DXCC program.

It should be obvious from DeSoto's words, quoted above, that a DXCC "country" was never intended to be limited to countries in the sense of nations or peoples united under one government. The DXCC country is a hybrid, something different, something tailored specifically to make it possible for DXers to compare their performance in a consistent, meaningful manner.

Here is one way to tilt your brain in a slightly different direction. Think of the DXCC program as a game in which "points" are given for confirmed contacts with certain geographical or political entities which are called "DXCC countries". The DXer gets one point for working and confirming France, one point for working and confirming Argentina, one point for working and confirming Rotuma Island, one point for working and confirming the United Nations, New York, and so on. It takes 100 points for the DXCC award. Those with very high point totals are known as "Honor Rollers". Those with very low point totals are known as "Unenlightened".

Is it really so outlandish to give one DXCC point for a confirmed contact with the United Nations, New York? The political entity which represents the hopes and aspirations of people and nations throughout the world? A political entity which by any measure is discrete, separate and distinct from the nation which surrounds it?

Where's the beef? Frankly, I don't see it! Go ahead and ask the question one of these days, and when your buddy responds with the predictable "BUILDINGS AREN'T COUNTRIES, DAMMIT!!!" ask him or her "why not?". See if you get anything other than emotion and rhetoric. I'll bet you won't.

The DXCC Countries Criteria

Section II of the DXCC Rules contains criteria against which candidates for DXCC country status must be tested. The criteria consist of three "points". Each of the three describes conditions which a geographical or political entity must satisfy

in order to be added to the DXCC countries list. The entity does not have to satisfy all three to be blessed with country standing – only one is enough. There is also a fourth point which lists ineligible areas – areas or entities which by their very nature cannot be given separate DXCC country status.

Whenever there are rules, there must be some way to change them, interpret them, and enforce them. In the case of the DXCC program two committees have such responsibilities – the ARRL DX Advisory Committee (DXAC) and the ARRL Awards Committee. We will spend some more time later in this chapter discussing the DXAC and the ARRL Awards Committee. For the time being just keep in mind the fact that these groups of people exist.

The points of the criteria are written in the same spirit as W1CBD's one-liner. Point 1 concerns governments – how much political independence is required for DXCC country status. Point 2 treats geographical separation of islands from their controlling government by water, while Point 3 covers the case of geographical separation by foreign land.

We will look at these points briefly, in just enough detail to give you a feeling for their meaning and intent and to point out some of their strengths and weaknesses.

Point 1, Government

Point 1 is the longest of the three – lots of detail to make the decision making process as simple as possible. At least in theory the process is simple! The first sentence is a loong one, reading

*An independent country or nation-state having **sovereignty**, (that is, a body politic or society united together, occupying a definite territory and having a definite population, politically organized and controlled under one exclusive regime, and engaging in foreign relations – including the capacity to carry out obligations of international law and applicable international agreements) constitutes a separate DXCC country by reason of **Government**.*

Not a bad sentence, even though it is as long as a freight train. Most people can recognize a “real” country when it stares them in the face – these are the countries you studied in school

– Sweden and Switzerland, Australia and Albania, Iraq and Indonesia. The first sentence says, in effect, “real” countries count.

Point 1 does not stop with “real” countries, however. It broadens its definition of a Point 1 DXCC country in the second paragraph, which states, in part

*Other entities which are not totally independent may also be considered for separate DXCC status by reason of Government. Included are Territories, Protectorates, Dependencies, Associated States and so on. Such an entity may delegate to another country or international organization a measure of its authority (such as the conduct of its foreign relations in whole or in part, or other functions such as customs, communications of diplomatic protection) **without** surrendering its sovereign status. DXCC country status for such an entity is individually considered, based on all the available facts in the particular case. In making a reasonable determination as to whether a sufficient degree of sovereignty exists for DXCC purposes, the following characteristics (list not necessarily all-inclusive) are taken into consideration:*

There follows a list of characteristics which must be taken into consideration when judging if such entities qualify under Point 1. For example, if a Territory is a member of a specialized agency of the U.N., that counts in its favor, as does handling its own licensing and landing permits, regulation of foreign trade, and so on. Sounds pretty good, doesn't it? However, in practice it is *very* difficult for a Territory, Protectorate, Dependency or Associated State to qualify under Point 1 these days. That ominous parenthetical phrase “list not necessarily all-inclusive” throws a zero into the equation. If the list is not all-inclusive, who is to know what conditions must be satisfied?! That strange phrase allows any individual with the responsibility for determining the DXCC status of a Territory or Protectorate or Dependency to create *new* tests for independence at any time. This has actually happened! In my view this is a major flaw of Point 1, a flaw that has created false hope and hard feelings in the hearts of a number of dedicated, creative DXers.

In summary, Point 1 is straightforward and easy to understand if dealing with “real” countries. Otherwise, beware!

What is Separate Administration?

In an earlier incarnation of the DXCC criteria Point 1 was much simpler than it is today. *QST* for July 1963 gave the following version of Point 1:

Government/Administration: *An area by reason of Government or a distinctively separate administration constitutes a separate entity.*

In those days the concept of a “distinctively separate administration” was quite different than the interpretation which eventually led to new countries such as Kingman Reef and Sable Island. The criteria and discussions were full of the notion that every land area throughout the world belonged to some independent nation. Further, land areas could be broken into two categories: 1) land administered as part of an independent nation, and 2) land *not* administered as part of an independent nation, even though *belonging* to one. Lands falling under category 1 were Point 1 countries because of Government, while lands falling under category 2 were also Point 1 countries, because of their “distinctively separate administration”.

Finally Kingman Reef, administered by the U.S. Navy, and Sable Island, administered by the Department of Transport of Canada, were added to the DXCC list. Many DXers complained that the concept of separate administration was being pushed too far – differing administrative organizations within the very same government were being used to justify new countries. As a result of this concern, the separate administration clause was dropped from the criteria in 1979. Out, damn spot!

Separate administration is no longer part of the criteria. Still, those countries which were added to the list under the very liberal interpretation of separate administration are still DXCC countries. Kingman Reef and Sable Island may no longer satisfy any criteria, but they are still on the list due to popular demand – it seems that Old Timers do not like to see their country totals shrivel, while the newcomers want to have gobs of countries available so that their country totals will climb ever higher, ever faster.

Every once in a while some enterprising DXer will look at a map and discover that Pomegranate Island, belonging to the free and independent nation of Hyacinth, and resting two miles offshore, is under the control of the Hyacinth Department of

Interior, while all neighboring islands are part of the city of Hyacinthville. Voila! A new DXCC country by analogy: Kingman Reef counts, so should Pomegranate. Sorry, fella. It won't fly. Separate administration is OUT!

There is a downside to the removal of separate administration from the criteria. Separate administration originally had a real purpose – as described above, back in the good old days it was really useful as a tool for justifying the existence and structure of many countries on the list, especially Territories, Protectorates, Dependencies, Associated States, and so on. Sound familiar? Yes, some of the “glue” which held the criteria together as a cohesive whole went into the trash along with separate administration, leaving a logical hole in its place. One of the consequences was discussed in the closing comments above under “Point 1”.

Detour: Point 0 Countries

There is no Point 0 in the DXCC countries criteria, but it is useful to introduce the concept of a Point 0 country. Since there is no Point 0 in the criteria, the definition of a Point 0 country is almost obvious – it's a DXCC country which satisfies no criteria. It's a “criterialess” country. A Point 0 country may have satisfied some criteria in the past – most have, in fact. There are a number of Point 0 countries on the list. Just how many is a matter of debate, but there certainly are some. Sable Island and Kingman Reef, two “separate administration” countries are Point 0. So are Scotland and Wales. European Russia and Asiatic Russia are part of the very same nation – the R.F.S.F.R. – and they share thousands of miles of border. One of them must be Point 0.

Many DXers wonder why Point 0 countries stay on the DXCC list. The answer was really given above when we first discussed Kingman Reef and Sable Island: they remain on the DXCC list because the vast majority of DXers want them there! If there were ever a powerful grass-roots movement to pull a certain country off the list, it would eventually disappear. That's what happened to Okino-Tori-Shima a decade ago, but that's a story in itself.

Of course, countries *are* taken off the list from time to time. Occasionally a country will go through political or geographical changes – real world changes as opposed to DXCC rule changes. When political or geographical changes take place, the

countries are sometimes dropped from the active list and become “deleted” countries. There are rules which must be followed when countries are considered for deletion. These rules will be discussed later in this chapter.

Point 2, Separation by Water

Point 2 consists of two parts, Point 2(a) and Point 2(b); the wording follows. While reading them, keep in mind that the purpose of Point 2 is to set rules under which new DXCC countries are created from islands which are reasonably distant from their “parent”. At the same time, it is written to make certain that *too* many won’t be able to qualify. It sounds complicated at first, but we will also cover them in plain language shortly.

Point 2, Separation by Water

*An island or a group of islands which is part of a DXCC country established by reason of **Government**, Point 1, is considered as a separate DXCC country under the following conditions:*

(a) The island or islands are situated off shore, geographically separated by a minimum of 225 miles of open water from a continent, another island or group of islands that make up any part of the “parent” DXCC country.

*For any **additional** island or islands to qualify as an additional separate DXCC country or countries, such must qualify under Point 2(b).*

*(b) This point applies to the “second” island or island grouping geographically separated from the “first” DXCC country created under Point 2(a). For the second island or island grouping to qualify, at least a 500-mile separation of open water from the first is required, as well as meeting the 225-mile requirement of (a) from the “parent”. For any subsequent island(s) to qualify, the 500-mile separation would again have to be met. This precludes, for example, using the 225-mile measurement **for each** of several islands from the parent country to make several DXCC countries.*

To understand how Point 2 works, pick an island, any island. First, if it has any chance to make it as a separate DXCC country, it had better be included within an existing Point 1 country. If it is not, save your time, for it won't count. In the past this rule has been applied most often to Point 1 countries consisting of continental land areas. However, it may also be applied to Point 1 countries consisting entirely of islands, such as the Republic of Fiji. This subtlety was never obvious before the rules were rewritten in 1988. Once it was spelled out – BOOM! – Rotuma Island and Conway Reef came on the air and were accepted as new DXCC countries.

Next, does any other island or islands belonging to the Point 1 country have separate country status? If so, you cannot use Point 2(a) at all – you must move on to Point 2(b).

Let's stay with 2(a) by assuming that no other islands have already been split away from the Point 1 country. Next, take a look around the island, in all directions. Does it have 225 statute miles (miles consisting of 5280 feet) of open, uninterrupted water between its shores and every speck of land belonging to the Point 1 parent? This is crucial! If there is *any land* belonging to the parent closer than 225 miles, which itself does not have 225 miles separation from the parent, the test fails. The test fails even if the land is only a tiny rock peeking out from the water.

If your island passes the test, congratulations! You may have uncovered a new DXCC country. The story is not over because your claim still must be checked out by the DX Advisory Committee and the ARRL Awards Committee, as discussed later.

Now that you understand the explanation just given, Point 2(b) is easy. Once an island has been qualified under Point 2(a), the next one (or several) must be qualified under Point 2(b). In short, Point 2(b) says that the next island or islands must have 225 or more miles separation from the "parent", just as required in 2(a), and must also have 500 miles separation from all other Point 2 countries already split off from the same "parent". The 500-mile requirement is a tough one. It is designed to keep the numbers down, to keep Point 2 countries spread out, like in a pileup. We can break a Point 1 country into one or two or a few Point 2 countries – but not too many.

Point 2 does make sense, all in all, and it leads to an almost mechanical procedure when testing a group of islands. But it does have a problem of its own: if *two or more* islands seem to

have possibilities for new country status, which should be tested first? It makes a difference and can create real confusion. The Republic of Kiribati, presently split into four DXCC countries (Western, Central, Eastern Kiribati and Banaba Island) is a classic example: Starting in the west and splitting to the east does not give the same answer as starting in the east and splitting to the west! Rules of thumb can and have been used to solve the order problem, but none of them have ever been written into the criteria and are therefore unofficial.

The order problem and some other technical problems can be solved by a proposal made by Eric Scace, K3NA, some years ago, which bases Point 2 on the U.N. Law of the Sea. Unfortunately, the suggestion has never gained much support.

Point 3, Separation by Another DXCC Country

Point 3 allows an entity to be considered a separate DXCC country if it is separated from its parent by another, intervening DXCC country. Point 3, as Point 2, is split into two pieces, 3(a) and 3(b). Point 3(a) concerns separation of “contiguous” land masses, while 3(b) treats separation of islands.

Let's look first at 3(a).

3(a) Contiguous land mass: Where a country, such as that covered by Point 1, is totally separated by an intervening DXCC country into two areas which are at least 75 miles apart, two DXCC countries result. This straight line measurement is made at the closest point, and may include inland lakes and seas (that are part of the country) in the measurement. International waters may be included in the separation but do not contribute to the 75-mile minimum.

The country which is being considered for a split under Point 3(a) must itself be a Point 1 country if Point 3 is to be applied. Point 2 countries of any kind need not apply. Next, the country must be separated into two pieces. Second, the separation must be complete – each and every line drawn from any point on the first part to any point on the second part must cross some land – real dirt, that is - of the intervening DXCC country. Third, there must be 75 statute miles of separation at the closest point.

Point 3(b) is similar to 3(a), except its application is restricted to separation of islands. No minimum separation is required. Here's how it reads:

3(b) Islands: Where two islands, of the government under Point 1, are totally separated by an intervening DXCC country (also Point 1), each island counts as a separate DXCC country. No minimum distance is required. The test for total separation means that a straight line cannot be drawn from any point on one island to any point on the other island without passing through another DXCC country. This intervening country may be part of either island, another island, or part of a continent.

There is a **big** problem with Point 3(b) as written, a *really* big problem. A literal application of 3(b) might allow hundreds upon hundreds of islands worldwide to qualify for DXCC country status! Countries such as Long Island, New York, the Isle of Wight in England, plus virtually every island in the Saint Lawrence Seaway. See if you can find the flaw!

Now, the RSGB's IOTA program is great – thousands of DXers throughout the world are having a ball chasing islands! But few would like to see DXCC become a carbon copy of IOTA, least of all those dedicated DXers who were responsible for the 1988 rewrite.

What happened? Reportedly, Point 3 was judged to be too long and complicated as the final draft of the 1988 criteria was being pulled together. Some words were cut to make it shorter, it was rushed off to the printer, and... You know the rest.

The DXAC discovered the flaw after the new criteria were published. Meanwhile, some enterprising DXers in the Seattle, Washington area also read Point 3(b) very carefully. New country status for Guemas Island, located in the Puget Sound, was requested and a DXpedition was announced so that all the Deserving would have a chance to work and confirm the New One.

Guemas Island did not make the countries list, of course, but an awful lot of DXers had a grand time in the pileups, as did the Guemas operators. And isn't that part of what DXing is all about?

As we go to press in early 1991, the DXAC is still working on new wording for both Points 3(a) and 3(b). As long as it is

known for certain that Point 3 will be changing, it makes little sense to discuss it in any more detail here. Perhaps this book will go into a second edition one day; we can then take a longer stroll through the Point 3 garden.

Ineligible Areas

Point 4 of the criteria lists areas which are not eligible for consideration as DXCC countries. It includes unclaimed or unowned areas, Demilitarized Zones, Neutral Zones and Buffer Zones. An iron-clad, all-inclusive statement is also part of Point 4:

The following do not count as a separate DXCC country from the host country: Embassies, consulates and extra-territorial legal entities of any nature, including, but not limited to, monuments, offices of the United Nations agencies or related organizations, other inter-governmental organizations or diplomatic missions.

There has been a long-standing fear among DXers that the DXCC countries list would grow without bound if embassies and consulates were somehow able to achieve country status – a fear that to many seemed pretty remote. Still, the above phrase was judged by the DX Advisory Committee to be necessary, and was added to the criteria in 1986. It was added at the end of a long-running debate over the qualifications of the Vienna International Centre, 4U1VIC, for separate DXCC status, and was written specifically to prevent entities such as 4U1VIC from ever qualifying. It did the trick, although we are still paying the cost. Many Austrian hams, including the president of the OeVSV, their national amateur radio organization, are bewildered (to put it mildly) that a QSO with 4U1VIC gives DXCC credit for working Austria, even though 4U1VIC is not licensed by the Austrian government, is located in a spot over which Austria has utterly no jurisdiction, and is a sister organization to 4U1UN and 4U1ITU, which *do* count for DXCC.

Deletion Criteria

Over the years many DXCC countries have been deleted from the active country list. This has occurred generally when

some major political or geopolitical change has taken place, or when the realities of a political situation are finally recognized.

Deletion criteria first became part of the DXCC rules in 1988, when they were added in Section III. Deletions come in four flavors: Annexation, Unification, Partition, and Independence. DXers should realize that just because some political change has taken place, a deletion is not automatically called for. Some stockbrokers have been known to “churn” their accounts, but the vast majority of DXers do not like to see churning on the DXCC list – deletions just for the sake of deletions. So countries are deleted only after careful study by the DX Advisory Committee and the ARRL Awards Committee.

DXCC countries can also be “un-deleted” or reinstated if a political change which caused a deletion in the first case is reversed. The most recent example is Western Sahara, which was deleted in 1978, then reinstated in 1988.

Accreditation Criteria

The accrediting of operations for DXCC credit is one of the most important and controversial aspects of the DXCC program. Accreditation criteria are given in the DXCC rules, and are recommended reading for anyone planning a DX-pedition to a rare spot.

One question about accreditation is asked repeatedly:

“What the bloody business is it of the ARRL whether or not I am properly licensed?!?! The ARRL has no bloody authority over my operation!!”.

Yep, that’s right. But there is another side to the story.

The ARRL knows only too well that the incentives provided by the DXCC program have caused well-intentioned DXers to cut corners. The ARRL also knows that some of those well-intentioned DXers, as a result of cutting corners, have damaged amateur radio in some parts of the world. Votes in favor of amateur radio at WARC conferences are precious. The ARRL does not want to jeopardize votes or amateur radio’s standing in the international arena by even *appearing* to condone questionable operations. DXCC credits therefore will not be given for an operation which has not been properly authorized. So, although it may well be true that “The ARRL has no bloody authority” over the operation, the ARRL *does* have control over

which cards are accepted for DXCC credits and will exercise that control if it is deemed to be in the best interests of amateur radio.

Tough words, but that's the way it is!

How DXCC Countries Are Born

How are DXCC countries born? Well, their birth has nothing to do with flowers, pollen, or bees. It is much simpler. We will spend some time going through the mechanics of creating a new DXCC country.

Any entity not already on the countries list which satisfies the DXCC criteria, as published in *QST* for April 1988, can become a new country. In order to make a new country happen, however, some person or group of persons must decide that it should happen – that the criteria are in fact satisfied. The groups with the responsibility for making the decision are the DX Advisory Committee and the ARRL Awards Committee, often referred to simply as the Awards Committee.

The DX Advisory Committee (DXAC) consists of sixteen members, one from each of the fifteen ARRL Divisions, plus one from the Canadian Radio Relay League. There are *no* members from outside the U.S. and Canada, a matter of concern to some. The subject of outside members on the DXAC deserves more space than can possibly be included in this chapter, so will be deferred to another time and another forum. All the sixteen members are experienced DXers and all are volunteers; they serve without pay. They communicate with one another by mail, although the telephone circuits are exercised quite a bit, too. Most mail is distributed by ARRL Headquarters. Do you want to mail sixteen letters with one postage stamp? Send a letter to the DXAC in care of ARRL Headquarters, and it will eventually be distributed to all sixteen members.

The ARRL Awards Committee is smaller than the DXAC. It is made up of eight staff members at ARRL Headquarters in Newington, Connecticut. Two alternate committee members may be appointed. An alternate may serve whenever a primary member is not available. These persons, all members of DXCC and active in both DXing and contesting, make the final decisions on all matters related to ARRL contests and awards, including DXCC.

Liaison between the DXAC and ARRL Headquarters is handled by a staff person, while the interface between the DXAC and the Board of Directors is taken care of by a Board member. Another staffer is responsible for keeping correspondence flowing to and from the committee members.

Rules of procedure for the two committees have been developed over the years, in part as the result of Board direction. For example, since March 1976, the DXAC *must* be consulted before any change in the DXCC countries list can be made; that is, the Awards Committee, made up of paid ARRL Headquarters employees, cannot add a new country to the DXCC list, or even delete one, without prior agreement of the DXAC.

The process for handling a new DXCC country application works like this: Any time a request for new country status is received by League Headquarters, the request is forwarded to the DX Advisory Committee. The DXAC then has the responsibility for evaluating the merits of the request and making a recommendation to the Awards Committee. According to the rules of procedure, if the DXAC denies the request (no new country), then the Awards Committee takes no action. If the DXAC recommends approval, then the members of the Awards Committee study the question themselves, and then accept or reject the DXAC recommendation.

Does the Awards Committee ever reject a recommendation from the DXAC? Sure, it does happen, but not very often. Occasionally disagreements occur which are worked out after further discussion and an exchange of views between the two committees. More often than not, the DXAC's recommendations flow smoothly through the Awards Committee, without a ripple. Decisions made by the DXAC and the Awards Committee may be reviewed by the ARRL Executive Vice President, and sometimes even the ARRL Board of Directors gets involved, but vetoes are very rare.

How to Apply for a New DXCC Country

Only a very small number of the thousands upon thousands of DXers in the world ever activate a new DXCC country. Finding new countries is *tough*; all the easy ones have already been discovered and added to the countries list. But there are hard-working, enterprising DXers here and there who never seem to give up hope. They spend their evenings and weekends

looking at maps and charts, bleary-eyed, searching for clues which might lead to something new, something different. Talk about military secrecy, it is nothing compared with the secrecy which surrounds the hunt for new countries. For a new country brings honor among DXers, and with so few New Ones to go around, clues are very carefully guarded. Successful country hunters realize that nothing – NOTHING – should ever be taken for granted. Things are not always as they seem at first glance – the ownership of an island, a distance measurement, a criteria interpretation.

The hunt goes on. Although only a few will ever win, it is a game anyone can play!

Suppose *you*, dear reader, discover an island which you know for *certain* should count as a New One. You have checked the maps, read a few history books, tested it against the criteria, and know beyond even the shadow of a doubt that you have a NEW ONE.

What do you do? First,

Read the latest DXCC criteria again! And again! And again!

Check your facts again! And again! And again!

Important stuff! Incredible amounts of time and energy have been wasted by those who simply had not read the criteria, or who made a mistake making a measurement on a chart! If you have trouble with certain points, then ask questions. Call your local DXAC member. If you have no local member, get the name of one and write a letter outlining your problem. Or talk it over with someone who has been through the drill before: there have been seven new countries announced in the past three years – Aruba, Western Sahara, M-V Island, Rotuma Island, Conway Reef, Banaba Island and Walvis Bay. The DXers who opened up those New Ones know the ropes. They can help.

If, after you have looked at your New One from all angles, you are still convinced you are right, then

Put your thoughts on paper, and build your case.

The DXAC now has a standard form you may request which briefly describes what is expected in new country petitions. In your petition you should describe the entity you have in mind

and tell how and why it satisfies the criteria. Include supporting evidence such as maps, encyclopedia articles, quotes from authorities, including letters from officials with responsibility in or over your New One. Put yourself in the shoes of a DXAC member and try to anticipate questions, problems, and doubts which might arise. Cover them in your writeup. Include everything you can get your hands on, including the kitchen sink! Organize the material in a way such that it flows smoothly and logically from beginning to end, building your case in clear, understandable terms.

Next,

Mail your material to ARRL Headquarters with a note to distribute it to the DX Advisory Committee.

Headquarters will reproduce your petition and distribute copies to each member of the DX Advisory Committee.

Your next step is perhaps the hardest of all, for now you must

Cross your fingers, lean back in a comfortable chair, and wait. Do not hold your breath!

The process takes time. After your petition has been reproduced and distributed to the DXAC, the committee members must read the petition, then read it again. Letters and phone calls start flowing between the members. Questions are asked and answers given. Claims are made, rebutted, and the rebuttals challenged. More information is sometimes required. The process takes months. Just when the committee seems to be settling down to a consensus, another significant question may surface, and the process starts all over again.

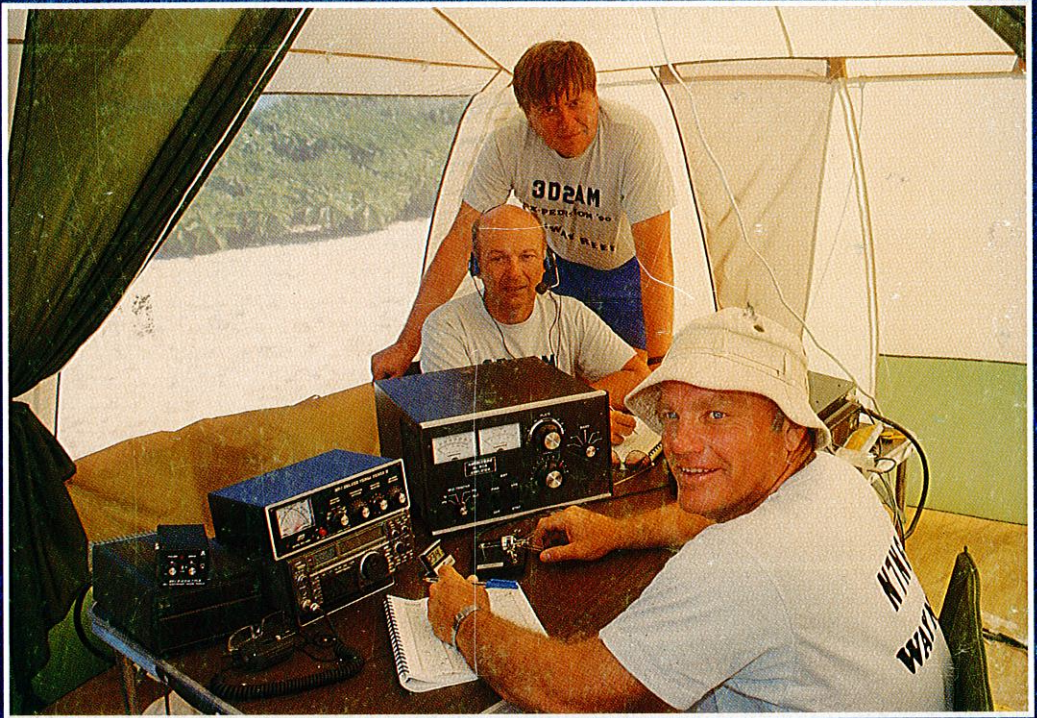
Does the process take too much time? Sure it does! But the DXAC is a careful gang, very careful. They take the DXCC program and their responsibility very seriously. Would you have it any other way? I hope not!

In Conclusion

I hope that you, the readers, have enjoyed this chapter. Perhaps you now have a better appreciation for the Rules of DXing, the Rules of DXCC, and how they work together to help make DXing such a fascinating avocation.

I, for one, believe that the DXCC program is the very essence of worldwide DXing. The DXCC program, like it or not, has become over the years the most respected awards program of all. It has earned that respect in part by its unwavering insistence that the program be run according to the very highest ethical standards. The DXCC program has INTEGRITY. The results are manifold. The incentives provided by DXCC cause DXers worldwide to learn about propagation, to learn how to design and build better antennas, to improve their operating skills, all as part of the hunt for a New One. We have DXers worldwide cooperating with one another in friendship without regard to race, creed, color, nationality, or political persuasion. We have created a true international community, working together toward common goals.

I'm *proud* to be a DXer, aren't you?



KTE Publications
2301 Canehill Avenue
Long Beach, CA 90815