Newsletter • MAY • 2020

EUROPEAN DX FOUNDATION E.V.

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EUDXF newsletter JULY 2020

Imprint

EUropean DX Founation e.V. — **President:** Dominik Weiel (DL5EBE), Kirchweg 13, 49356 Diepholz, Germany, e-mail: president@eudxf.eu. **Boardmembers:** Ronald Stuy (PA3EWP), Hans P. Blondeel Timmerman (PB2T), Jan B. C. Harders (DJ8NK), Kenneth Opskar (LA7GIA). **Advisor:** Prof. Dr. Achim Rogmann (DF3EC).

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As always a new year means that the **membership fees** are due. Please transfer your **25 Euro** or more as soon as possible, preferably to **our Bank Account:** Volksbank Kleverland, IBAN: DE65 3246 0422 0205 1830 19 BIC: GENO DE D1KL L.

I trust that members living in the Euro zone will use this account only, because this implies the least costs for our foundation. Those who do not live in the Euro zone may also use PayPal to **cashier@eudxf.eu .**

Dear EUDXF Members,

welcome to the May edition of the EUDXF newsletter! First of all we hope that you and your dearest and nearest are doing fine in these challenging COVID-19 days. A warm welcome goes also to our new members who recently joined EUDXF! We are very happy to have you on board and we hope that you will enjoy your membership.

When we published the January edition, none of us could really imagine that the vulnerable world we are living in would change so dramatically and this within just a few months. Countries closed their borders, economies were locked-down and people had to stay at home to slow down the spread of the virus. COVID-19 hit a totally unprepared world with full force. We are all affected by the taken measures in the one or other way. The shut-down of the international air traffic and tourist travel business had a direct impact on the DX world – many announced DXpeditions had to be either postponed or were even cancelled. The frustration and disappointment is high for both, the DXpeditioners who spent months of preparation and probably facing big financial losses, as well as for the DXers who were looking forward to the DX highlights of the year to log their ATNO, fill missing bandslots or work new modes. Luckily, operations such as TI9A, HU1DL, VP8PJ or TO7DL still hit the airwaves just in time with excellent results. DXpeditions such as T3ØET, VU4R, W8S and several others were postponed. By when to expect a return to normal life with respective travel freedom essential for DXpeditioning, can't be predicted at the moment. This are definitely unsafe times for DXpeditioners which is also reflected in much less funding applications adressed to EUDXF in the first half of the year and generally reduced DX activities on the air.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 situation also the 2020 Ham Radio hamfest in Friedrichshafen was cancelled where EUDXF had planned to be present with a desk as every year. Also the EUDXF visit to the Hamvention in Dayton was cancelled for the same reason. So far, only the Annual General Meeting of the EUDXF planned for August is still on the agenda. We will keep you updated about any changes.

As people really suffer from social distancing and isolation from family members and friends, we as radio amateurs can be lucky to have such a great communicative hobby which especially in difficult times we are experiencing now, allows us to keep in touch with the rest of the world and get unfiltered information out of first hand. This gives us the opportunity to form our own picture about what is going on in the different countries. Ask your QSO partner how they cope with lock-down situation and how they are personally affected by the taken measures. I am sure they will be happy to tell their individual COVID-19 stories. Let's try to reduce the number of contest style QSOs and dedicate more time to each other, especially to those who are locked into their homes for many weeks now. In days like this I still remember my first indian QSL which I received from Kab, VU2BK. It shows a wise phrase from Confucius which applies very well to the present day situation: "I live in a very small house, but my windows look out on a very large world"!

With the very best 73s, good DX from Wolgograd and stay healthy,

Dom R4BE - DL5EBE

Dear EUDXF Members,

According to our statutes, each member is obliged to pay at least an annual fee of € 25,00 €. The contribution is due upon admission and then at the beginning of the calendar year. The Board can allow a different alternative payment method.

During the last board meeting on December 1st 2019, the following decision was made based on the proposal of the treasurer:

If you become a member, the membership fee has to be paid latest after 12 months (e.g. if you join on November 12th 2019, the next fee is due on November 2020 at the latest). One month in advance, members will receive an email with the contribution invoice.

For me as a treasurer, this handling makes it easier for me and certainly for you as a member, too.

Members from EURO / SEPA countries please transfer the fee to our account at Volksbank Kleverland, IBAN: DE65 3246 0422 0205 1830 19 - BIC / Swift: GENO DE D1KL L. However, if you would like to pay via PayPal, please note that you take over any PayPal costs. Within the EU you can use the "Send money to friends and family" function to avoid PayPal costs. Members from non-EURO countries please pay via PayPal to cashier@eudxf.eu.

Special thanks to those members who have already paid their contribution (or even more) for 2020.

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MESSE FRIEDRICHSHAFEN

Radio silence due to coronavirus COVID-19: Ham Radio not taking place as planned

16.04.2020

Due to current developments in regard to the spread of coronavirus COVID-19, Messe Friedrichshafen has been forced to make a very difficult decision: the international amateur radio exhibition Ham Radio will not be taking place in the planned period of June 26 to 28, 2020, but instead from June 25 to 27, 2021. The Federal Government and the Minister-Presidents of the Länder decided yesterday, April 15 that no major events shall take place until August 31, 2020.

"Due to current developments relating to the coronavirus, we have the unfortunate duty of announcing that we cannot hold the 45th edition of Ham Radio as planned," explains Klaus Wellmann, Managing Director of Messe Friedrichshafen. In recent weeks, it was already necessary to make the same decision in regard to other events (Aqua-Fisch, IBO, AERO, Tuning World Bodensee, and Motorworld Classics Bodensee). Project Manager Petra Rathgeber also expressed her sadness about this turn of events: "We very much regret that this event cannot take place as planned. However, the health of all exhibitors and visitors is of utmost importance to us. Unfortunately, our trade fair calendar and the dates of other industry events leave no room for postponing this fair to another date this year." Christian Entsfellner, Chair of the German Amateur Radio Club (DARC), adds: "Our members, domestic and foreign guests, and we ourselves have been hit hard by this decision, which now became necessary to make on short notice. Until we get together again in Friedrichshafen, we as amateur radio operators are looking forward to keeping in contact with one another using amateur radio." However, radio amateurs do not have to do without everything the Ham Radio fair normally has to offer: On the Ham Radio website, exhibitors will be presenting product innovations in the form of a virtual trade fair. DARC will also be offering presentations there.

The exhibitors, visitors, and partners involved are currently being informed about this opportunity.

VP6D Ducie Island 2018 DXpedition

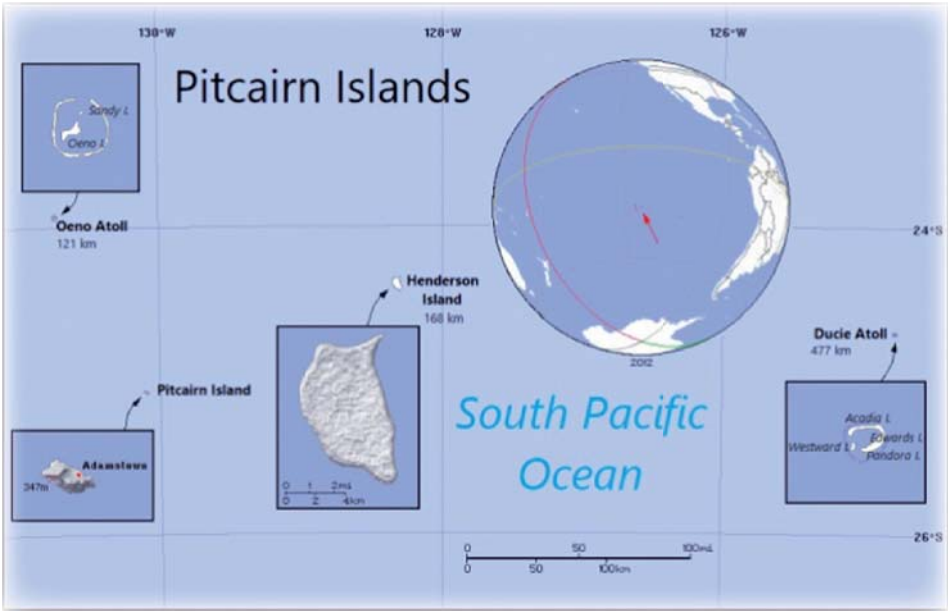
BY DAVE LLOYD, K3EL, AND GENE SPINELLI, K5GS

Introduction to Ducie Island

Ducie Island is an uninhabited atoll in the Pitcairn Island group located in the center of the southern Pacific Ocean approximately equidistant from Chile and New Zealand, both several thousand kilometers away. It lies 535 kilometers (332 miles) east of Pitcairn Island, and over 1,000 km west of Easter Island. The atoll is 2.4 km (1.5 miles) long, measured northeast to southwest, and about 1.6 km (1 mile) wide. We landed on the main island, Acadia, on the north and east side of the atoll. Acadia is crescent-shaped, several hundred meters long and mostly covered in low trees. There are also three small islets, Pandora, Westward and Edwards, on the southern side of the atoll. Due to its inaccessibility and landing permit requirements, Ducie is rarely visited today.

Amongst the Pitcairn group, Henderson Island is most famous for its birds, but Ducie is also a significant breeding ground for a number of species. More than 90 % of the world population of Murphy's petrel nests on Ducie (an estimated 250,000 birds), while pairs of red-tailed tropicbirds and fairy terns make around 1 % of the world population for each species.

Ducie was first discovered in 1606 by Pedro Fernandes de Queirós, who named it Luna Puesta, and rediscovered by Edward Edwards, captain of HMS Pandora, who was sent in 1790 to capture the mutineers of HMS Bounty (although they did not find the mutineers on nearby Pitcairn). Edwards named the island Ducie in honor of Francis Reynolds-Moreton, 3rd Baron Ducie, under whom he had previously served. In 1867 it was claimed by the United States under the Guano Islands Act, but the United Kingdom annexed it on 19 December 1902 as part of the Pitcairn Islands.



Pitcairn Islands Location (stampaday.wordpress.com image)

Ducie became a DXCC entity on November 16, 2001, after the Pitcairn Island Amateur Radio Association (PIARA) was accepted as an International Amateur Radio Union member society. The first DXpedition was led by Kan, JA1BK, in March 2002 using the VP6DI call sign. One year later, Ducie was again on the air with VP6DIA. Ducie was last activated in February 2008 as VP6DX by an international team of 13 operators, who made over 180,000 contacts in 16 days of operation. However, after 10 years of noamateur radio activity, Ducie had been climbing up the most-wanted lists and was ranked as ClubLog's #19 before VP6D's activation.

Planning and Preparation

At the 2017 International DX Convention at Visalia, California, members of the Perseverance DX Group (PDXG) discussed several potential DXpedition opportunities, and we quickly decided upon Ducie as our next target. It was clear that there would be plenty of interest since the island had not been activated for a decade, so anyone licensed or taking up DXing since 2008 would not yet have had a chance to work Ducie. Also, the island is well-positioned for propagation to all major centers of amateur radio activity, so we expected to be able to work even modestly-equipped stations. The potential to make a large number of contacts drove the design of our DXpedition. At the bottom of the solar cycle, only a few bands would be open at any one time, so we set up two camps (one with a CW focus, the other primarily SSB, although we operated digital modes from both locations) distant from each other to allow two stations to operate simultaneously on a band when it was open, with a complete set of antennas at each camp to provide maximum operating flexibility.

Ducie proved to be a popular choice and the operating team was quickly filled. Our international team included:

Dave K3EL, Les W2LK, Gene K5GS as Team Leader and Co Team Leaders, respectively, Heye DJ9RR, Mike WA6O, Vadym UT6UD, Steve W1SRD, Walt N6XG, Laci HAØNAR, Jacky ZL3CW, Chris N6WM, Arnie N6HC, Rob N7QT and Ricardo PY2PT. Many of the team members knew one another from previous PDXG or other DXpeditions or had met at ham radio events. We held several pre-DXpedition teleconferences to help the team gel, dealing with topics such antenna planning, operator scheduling, travel planning, and the thousand-and-one other details that must be decided before the team sets out. The detailed plans were documented in the VP6D Operations Manual which was shared with everyone prior to departure.

Landing on Ducie Island for a DXpedition and overnight stays requires a landing permit (issued by the Police and Immigration Office on Pitcairn Island), a travel visa and a VP6/D radio license. Shortly after the DX convention we applied for the landing permit. The application included our plan for 14 operators, tents, generators, radio stations and various antenna types. We received the permit in July, 2017 and immediately applied for the VP6D call sign and travel visas which were issued soon after.

We selected the expedition ship Braveheart from Tauranga, New Zealand. Braveheart, and her owner Nigel Jolly, K6NRJ, have a long history of providing outstanding support to the DXpedition community. Nigel's son Matt was the skipper for this project, and his younger son Dan was a crewmember.

Travel and Set-Up

During the weekend of October 13th the radio operators met in Papeete, Tahiti. From Papeete we flew to Mangareva, the easternmost major island in French Polynesia where *Braveheart* was waiting, our equipment having previously been loaded aboard in New Zealand. Mangareva is a no-frills stop in French Polynesia with just a few cafes and several small shops set up in residents' homes to sell supplies to locals and to the yachting community. Mangareva's primary source of income is Black Pearl farming.

We departed Mangareva on October 16th for the journey to Ducie. By the use of social media and a Garmin personal locator many of you (and our families) followed our progress across the Pacific. Seas were calm and the winds helpful, so we arrived at Ducie 12 hours earlier than planned and were able to begin transferring people and equipment to Ducie the morning of Friday, October 19th. All radio and campsite equipment was ferried ashore using the *Braveheart's* rigid inflatable boats. The *Braveheart* crew, with assistance from the radio operators, established campsites complete with kitchen, covered eating area, large rectangular frame tents for the radios, and sleeping tents. The sleeping tents each housed three people, with a camp cot for each person.

Much of Ducie is heavily wooded with *Heliotropium foertherianum*, so the tents were put up in-between or underneath the trees which provided excellent shelter from the strong winds so we had no problems with tents being blown down. Meals were prepared on the island by the *Braveheart* crewmembers who stayed ashore with the radio team. They prepared three meals a day, replenishing their food stocks from Braveheart as required. A camp toilet was dug and a camp shower constructed. Each team member was allocated enough fresh water for one shower a day, plus all the drinking water they required. To get clean you could also swim in the lagoon or the sea during daylight hours, but at night sharks prowled the shallow waters.

Path to CW Camp (K3EL Photo)

We established two camps, the SSB/Headquarters/main sleeping and eating area on the eastern side of the island and the CW camp just over a kilometer away on Ducie's north coast. There were only a few possible landing sites because a fringing reef surrounds most of the shore, so these determined the locations of the two camps. The separation of about 1 km was adequate to eliminate radio interference between the camps, although the distance between the sites presented some challenges. The ocean shore on Ducie is made of coral rubble which is tiring to walk on, so this was not a good choice fo commuting between the two camps. The dense brush made walking directly between the camps impossible. The preferred route was to cut across the island from oceanside to lagoon, then walk along the shore of the lagoon before returning back across the island to the CW operating site. Even this route was rough, traversing sharp coral shelves and boulders that were at times submerged by the tide, but it was preferable to the alternatives. Once people got to know the route, it took 15 minutes or so to go from one camp to the other.

We were well-supported by various manufacturers and distributors of radio equipment, who provided the following items: Elecraft loaned eight K3S transceivers, KPA-500 amplifiers and P3 panadapters; DX Engineering coax, connectors, tools, antenna parts and miscellaneous items; SteppIR two-element Yagis; Rig Expert two AA-55 Zoom antenna analyzers, and Arlan Communications their RadioSport headsets. Spiderbeam provided a substantial discount on the fiberglass masts which we used to build many of the antennas. We had several SPE and OM Power amplifiers loaned by team members. Computers for logging were loaned by Bob KK6EK, and by a team member. Many of the Pelican and other shipping cases were provided by Paul N6PSE (Intrepid DX Group), Bob KK6EK and Jim K8JRK.

Much of Acadia Island is around 10 feet above sea level, with a steep drop off to the shore. The take-off is over water in the direction of NA and EU. For JA the take-off was along the shoreline from the SSB camp but there was a clear shot across the water from the CW camp on the northern shore. Because of the layout of the island, Ducie is an ideal location to use vertical antennas, located just at the edge of the drop off to the sea. Our antenna complement included home-made two-element vertical dipole arrays (VDAs) for the high bands at both sites, four-squares on 40 at the CW and SSB

VDAs on shore (K3EL Photo)

camps, a 30 m four-square at the CW camp and a single 30 m vertical for digital operations at the SSB location.

For 80 m we had a quarter-wave vertical and for 160 m an inverted-L vertical. A Beverage helped out for low-bands receive. Also at the SSB camp was a 2 element SteppIR horizontal Yagi. A 6 m EME Yagi antenna loaned by Lance, W7GJ, was located near the water's edge along with the VDAs near the SSB camp. The Headquarters tent contained two BGAN satellite terminals used for uploading logs, DXA feed and receiving pilot reports. A WiFi link connected the CW camp to the Headquarters tent.

Radio Operations

Radio operations started during the night at 04:16 UTC on 20th October with a couple of stations on the air. The next morning, the entire team returned to work completing the antennas and camps before full operation started the next day from both camps. We were delighted to find excellent propagation and strong signals worldwide. Later during the DXpedition the conditions dropped off a little but overall we could have few complaints about propagation. During periods of good propagation all eight stations were in action. As propagation waned during the night some of the SSB operations would shift to FT8, where a single operator could handle two or three FT8 stations simultaneously, then as sunrise approached the bands would become active again. One important element of planning for VP6D was scheduling, and we used an approach that had been successful on Heard Island VKØEK; we scheduled operators for four or five stations, depending on expected band activity, while the remaining stations were open for any other team member to use. The scheduled ops worked with designated team leaders to decide which bands/modes to use, and had priority during their operating shift. Operators coming to any of the remaining free stations could choose to do whatever they wanted, so long as the band/mode was not already occupied by a scheduled operator. This design ensured that all ops had a significant base amount of operating time, while providing an opportunity of extra time on-the-air for those who wanted it.

Each morning we'd look at the N1MM+ graphs and see that we were making ~10,000 QSOs a day. Signals from all over the world were strong. Pilot reports and over the air reports told us we were being heard without much difficulty on most bands, with the exception of 10/12 m which were closed most of the time. Despite the low sunspot number, VP6D logged over 112,000 QSOs with just under 25,000 unique call signs: 53 % NA, 26.6 % EU and 15.8 % AS. Firsts from Ducie Island were 28 6 m EME contacts and 24,400 FT8 contacts. A couple of our team are enthusiastic RTTY operators so we made nearly 6,000 contacts by this mode. Still, it is clear from the numbers that FT8 was our primary digital mode. We had advertised the WSJT-X software version (1.9.1) and the fox/hound operating style we would employ, and for the most part callers followed the instructions on our website. However, a fair number of callers

Band/Mode VP6D

Band	CW	FT8	JT65	RTTY	SSB	Total	Total %
160 m	2,672	353	0	0	1	3,026	2.7 %
80 m	4,931	1,143	0	0	266	6,340	5.7 %
40 m	11,771	5,867	0	329	3,720	21,687	19.4 %
30 m	7,466	3,643	0	1,650	0	12,759	11.4 %
20 m	7,313	5,474	0	1,668	6,526	20,981	18.7 %
17 m	8,643	3,658	0	1,225	4,930	18,456	16.5 %
15 m	8,429	2,224	0	811	5,561	17,025	15.2 %
12 m	4,344	1,805	0	2	1,693	7,844	7.0 %
10 m	3,033	273	0	0	589	3,895	3.5 %
6 m	0	0	28	0	0	28	0.0 %
Total QSO	58,602	24,440	28	5,685	23,286	112,041	100.0 %
Total %	52.30%	21.81%	0.02%	5.07%	20.78%	100.0 %	

Continent/Mode VP6D

CONTINENT	CW	FT8	JT65	RTTY	SSB	Total	Total %
AFRICA	190	93	1	20	215	519	0.5 %
ANTARTICA	1	0	0	0	1	2	0.0 %
ASIA	10,723	4,423	0	1,192	1,395	17,733	15.8 %
EUROPE	17,614	6,703	19	1,445	3,997	29,778	26.6 %
NORTH AMERIKA	28,279	12,112	8	2,819	16,036	59,254	52.9 %
OCEANIA	642	443	0	36	257	1,378	1.2 %
SOUTH AMERICA	1,153	666	0	173	1,385	3,377	3.0 %
Total QSO	58,602	24,440	28	5,685	23,286	112,041	100.0 %
Total %	52.3 %	21.8 %	0.0 %	5.1 %	20.8 %	100.0 %	

didn't get the message straight away and were calling below 1,000 Hz. This seemed to improve as time went on, as more people got the hang of fox/hound operation. It was interesting to see the popularity of FT8 not just amongst the callers, but also amongst the DXpedition operators; perhaps the chance to remove the headphones and relax a bit was an occasional welcome break from the adrenaline rush of working a pileup on the other modes.

6m EME Antenna (K3EL Photo)

The EME operation was an interesting venture for us, since there was almost no EME experience within the team. However, we were given guidance by Lance, W7GJ, and by using his loaned EME antenna and "DXpedition procedure" we were able to make several QSOs on most nights. EME activity was limited to moonrise only because of the location of the antenna, and other competing operating activities.

We used DXA to provide real-time acknowledgement of contacts made, and QSOs were also uploaded to the PDXG online log, which is the basis for our OQRS system. These operations were not as smooth as we had hoped due to challenges of building a robust network across the island (which was achieved after a couple of days experimentation) and some incompatibilities between N1MM+ and WSJT-X which resulted in some contacts not making it to the N1MM+ log while on island, requiring resolution after the DXpedition.

Departure

On about October 30th the skipper informed us of worsening sea conditions with increasing onshore winds and a significant swell building from a storm system that had passed to the South. Since Ducie has no natural harbor you are very dependent on favorable tide and sea conditions to safely leave the island. We began removing non-essential equipment a couple of days before the planned departure. Over the next two days we dismantled all campsites and antennas. The extraction process was exciting for all involved. Team members, assisted by the boat crew, walked two at a time through the surf on a slippery coral base to the edge of the reef where the zodiac could meet us. The skipper brought the zodiac in and people were "helped" one at a time into the zodiac as it came in on a wave, then the skipper quickly leaned on the throttle to get away from the coral, before maneuvering back for the next passenger. It was an exciting exit, but the next morning's activities were even livelier when four team members returned to the island to help the crew recover the remaining equipment that had stayed on the beach overnight. By that time the wind had picked up significantly and the exhilarating experience of landing, loading and returning was one which we will remember for a long time. After everyone and everything was safely aboard we began a 36 hour journey to Pitcairn Island. We were met by the island residents who transferred us from *Braveheart* to a longboat for the 30 minute exciting and wet ride to Bounty Bay. There we were greeted by the Pitcairn Island Police and Immigration officials who processed our arrival and stamped our passports. The team had an opportunity to have a look around the island, and meet some of the residents including several who had amateur radio licenses. It was then time to re-board the longboat for the ride back to *Braveheart*.

We arrived at Mangareva 36 hours later. The *Braveheart* crew invited us to a BBQ on the fantail the night before our departure. The next morning we moved our personal gear to the wharf while the crew prepared Braveheart to receive their next clients, a group of bird watching enthusiasts. We then took a ferry to the airport for the once-a-week four hour flight to Tahiti.

Reflections

Back in Tahiti we had some time to finally relax and look back over the past three weeks. The consensus was that VP6D had been a great DXpedition for the island participants, and we hope it was also a good experience for those of you chasing us in the pileups. We have certainly enjoyed hearing from people who contacted us, be they mega-stations looking for a full house, or a temporary QRP setup on a beach looking for one QSO. A consistent theme from many who wrote to us was they had "fun" working VP6D, and we had fun working you.

Wrap Up

We would like to acknowledge the help and support of many groups and individuals who contributed to Ducie 2018. Major early sponsorship from organizations like the Northern California DX Foundation (NCDXF), the German DX Foundation (GDXF) and the European DX Foundation (EUDXF) was important to kick-start our fundraising, and many other clubs and foundations also joined in supporting us. Please review the list of Corporate and Club / Foundation sponsors at VP6D.com, they deserve your support. Over 1,500 individual donors contributed via the VP6D website, including 74 premier donors (contributing over $200) and another 1,700 have added a contribution to their OQRS confirmation request since the DXpedition. As listed earlier, amateur radio manufacturers generously gave or loaned equipment. The on-island team were supported by many individuals, and in particular we would like to recognize our Chief Pilot Glenn, KE4KY, and his team of pilots, and also Pista, HA5AO who supports the PDXG websites and the OQRS / QSL system. And of course, Tim MØURX who processes / mails your QSL cards and uploads your LoTW confirmations.

VP6D Team at the Lagoon (K3EL Photo)

Among the highlights of the project were giving many DXers an ATNO and/or band fills, putting people on the Honor Roll, logging the first EME and FT8 contacts from Ducie Island, and working with a fantastic team of radio operators. We must also recognize Matt Jolly and his *Braveheart* crew who were as much a part of the project's success as the radio team.

Until the next time, thank you for your interest in VP6D Ducie Island 2018.

Next destination: Tokelau ZK3A

BY DR. HRANE MILOSEVIC, YT1AD

"Only when you start something new, then you know where the beginning is!"

I was thinking for some time how to start this story: when I started planning this DXpedition. After a long time, I understood that the beginning of this DXpedition was not this year, not last year but the year when I celebrated 50 years of my amateur radio hobby, which for me was in October 1969, when I was in the eighth grade of elementary school in my home village of Vitanovac and I visited the radio club Kralgevo, YU1DKL. At that moment after this visit I understood, that my hobby will be amateur radio. And this passion was much more than a hobby for me, as my profession is in a related field of radio communication.

Tokelau, ZK3, is for many radio amateurs around the world a most wanted DXCC country on different bands or mode. Why heading to Tokelau? The reason is, that I am sitting at 03:00 h in the morning to start to write this story when my 18 friends were sleeping on the boat Mataliki, which is the official boat of Tokelau. The boat was cutting and jumping through the ocean waves taking us to our final destination, the country of Tokelau is located at 8 degrees Latitude and 171 degrees Longitude and it is under the suzerainty of New Zealand. This country is in the tropical area and it never experiences cold temperatures and for us who live in the northern hemisphere, the tropical areas are a symbol of warm ocean and vacation paradise. I like tropical areas a lot. In the 90's I used to go skiing in my country and that's when I then decided that for me the tropical warm areas are what I call paradise. Tokelau is a country made up of 3 separate atolls: Atafu, Nukunonu and Fakaofo. In addition, there are also hundreds of other small uninhabited islands.

During a presentation to my Ukrainian friends at KPI Kyiv Polytechnic University about our last 9MØW DXpedition to the Spratly Islands in 2018, I personally met with Alex, UT5UY, after many prior radio contacts. He is Head of Sales at Rig Expert Ukraine Ltd. which is now also one of our main sponsors. We spoke about our wonderful hobby and DXpeditioning. After our conversation he proposed a DXpedition to the island of Tokelau which he visited in 2010, after having boat trouble on the way to Kiribati. The boat had to stop for 2 days on the Tokelau island of Nukunonu for repair before returning to Apia, Samoa. During this short stay in Nukunonu, he and his friends used the call ZK3X to make radio contacts. After thinking about it for a short period of I agreed to his proposal. It was for me a challenge, but at the same time a big responsibility to organize this DXpedition.

We started preparations and I named 2 co-leaders for the DXpedition: Alex, UT5UY, for logistics, because it was not easy to coordinate 19 people, and Roman, URØMC, for the technical side. We quickly formed our team. We had a lot of requests from hams who wanted to join the DXpedition, but we were limited to a maximum of 19 team members. During a science conference in Auckland, New Zealand, where I participated with my colleague Dr. S. Panic, I've made the decision to go to Fiji and Samoa to visit my old friend Atsu, 5W1SA, who stored at his home in Apia one of my containers with ham radio equipment that we had used for prior DXpeditions. Atsu, thank you so much for your support to my DXpeditions over the years!

We arrived in Apia, Samoa, at hotel Millenia. After a short rest we visited the representative office of the Tokelau government in Apia. We were interested to find out how to obtain an amateur radio license for Tokelau. After a few of inquiries, I was a bit disappointed as there was no definite answer from our meetings. But I was able to obtain the telephone number of Teletok director in Fakaofo, who is the person responsible for all amateur licenses in Tokelau. I was in the hotel room number 31. I remember this as if it were today. I attempted to call Mr. Tealofi, but there was no answer. I called again after 30 minutes and Mr. Tealofi, the CEO of Teletok, picked up the phone. I introduced myself and asked how to obtain an amateur radio license. He quietly listened to my story and then asked me where I were. I replied that I was in Apia, hotel Millenia in room 31. He replied that he was in room 27 in the same hotel. How happy I was in that instance, to be at the right place in the right moment! We agreed to meet for dinner in the restaurant in front of the hotel. It was a nice dinner with lobster salad and wine. After dinner, all worked out easy and fast. We quickly found common language and

he invited me to visit Tokelau, his office and the people of Tokelau and obtain the desired amateur radio license. After this successful meeting I quickly reached out to my Ukrainian friends to tell them the good news. The whole team was very happy and the DXpedition planning started on the next day.

At the beginning of May 2019, Dusko, ZL3WW, and I travelled to the island of Fakaofo in Tokelau and stopped by the Teletok office. The Teletok office run by Mr. Tealofi and his deputy Mr. Bosco was well organized and hosted us very nicely. They provided us with all the information regarding transportation, traveling, food, accommodation and other technical details that we needed for our DXpedition. At the end of the meeting we received our amateur radio license with the callsign ZK3A valid from May 10th until December 31st 2019. The cost of the license was NZ$100. During our return trip from Fakaofo to Apia, we made short visits to the other 2 atolls: Nukunonu and Atafu and that gave us a nice overview of this small country but with large territorial waters. On arrival to Apia, Dusko and I checked and prepared our antenna systems which were stored at Atsu's 5W1SA house for our upcoming October 2019 Tokelau DXpedition.

As I already mentioned, 19 persons who love DXpeditions and were very good amateur radio operators began preparations for the ZK3A activity: UT5UY, URØMC, RW7K, USØKW, R7KW, UT8IO, SV2BFN, ZL3WW, VK3FY, VK3GK, K6VHF, WD5COV, KO8SCA, N7QT, VE7NY, PY2NDX, UR9QQ, RX3APM and YT1AD. Most of the logistical details were done by the Ukrainian and Russian operators. On August 13th to 14th we organized a planning meeting in Zaporozhie, Ukraine. Our host was our friend Igor, UT7QF.

After returning from Ukraine I was very satisfied that all the main issues had been resolved and we were ready to start our adventure. As Pacific life is slow going and there are always issues that may come up, so that at the beginning of September 2019, I decided to send an advanced team of 3 members to Tokelau by the cargo boat *Kalopaga*.

2 boat seats for Adrian, KO8SCA, and Dusko, ZL3WW, were confirmed immediately, but Rob, N7QT, was on the waiting list for the departure on September 24th. But unexpectedly on September 23rd, the day before departure of the advanced team, we received good news: the government of Tokelau scheduled a second boat named *Mataliki* for the destination Tokelau together with the boat *Kalopaga*.

This boat travelled directly to Fakaofo and thus, all 3 team members arrived to Fakaofo 2 days earlier than scheduled. During the preparations for the DXpedition, Mr. Tealofi, CEO of Teletok, asked our team to make a radio amateur equipment donation not only for the Island of Fakaofo where we would operate from, but also for the other 2 islands Nukunonu, ZK3NT, and Atafu, ZK3AT. Dave, WD5COV, was very active and successful in his work to obtain sponsorship and donations for ZK3A and so we received donations for equipment for all 3 locations. All 3 locations would have the same radio TS-590, a dipole for 40 and 80 m and a laptop with all necessary amateur radio software. For the location Fakaofo we also got a Cushcraft A3S beam donated by GigaParts. We hope that this equipment will be used by the local people to make contacts from this rare DX entity. The main part of our team arrived in Samoa on September 29th. It was Sunday and all team members were tired after a long trip, but very excited to start the new adventure.

On the next day we presented our passports to get the Tokelau entry permit and left our luggage for inspection, but again we ran into problems.

According to the schedule, Mataliki first had to go to Atafu, then to Nukunonu and last to Fakaofo, which meant that we would loose 2 days of operating. The team was disappointed but thanks to Miss Taitai and my insistence, the minister of transportation of Tokelau changed the schedule and gave order to the boat to go first to Fakaofo and then to the other 2 islands. Again, the team was very happy and satisfied with the outcome. After dinner, organized in Serbian style with fish, fish soup and beer our team went to bed.

The next day, Tuesday, was a very important day. After 06:00 AM wake up time, a 15 minutes breakfast and a 15 minutes walking to the port, we were ready for immigration and customs control.

We received our passports with the entry permit for Tokelau and then we stepped on board the boat *Mataliki*.

At 08:00AM we finally set sail.

During the boat trip, nobody drank whiskey or vodka, just coffee. Everyone was waiting for the sunrise, the estimated arrival time, and the first view a our target island: Fakaofo.

During our trip the sea was relatively calm but some of our team members had sea sickness. Slowly, we started to see the red light of the sun at the horizon, showing up in the East. All team members were now on the upper deck of the boat, taking pictures and preparing to disembark.

After arrival on the island, we immediately received our luggage and divided our team into 2 groups.

10 team members stayed on the main island of Fale and the other 9 team members left on a small boat to Fenua Fala Island where the Teletok office was located about 2 miles away from the main island.



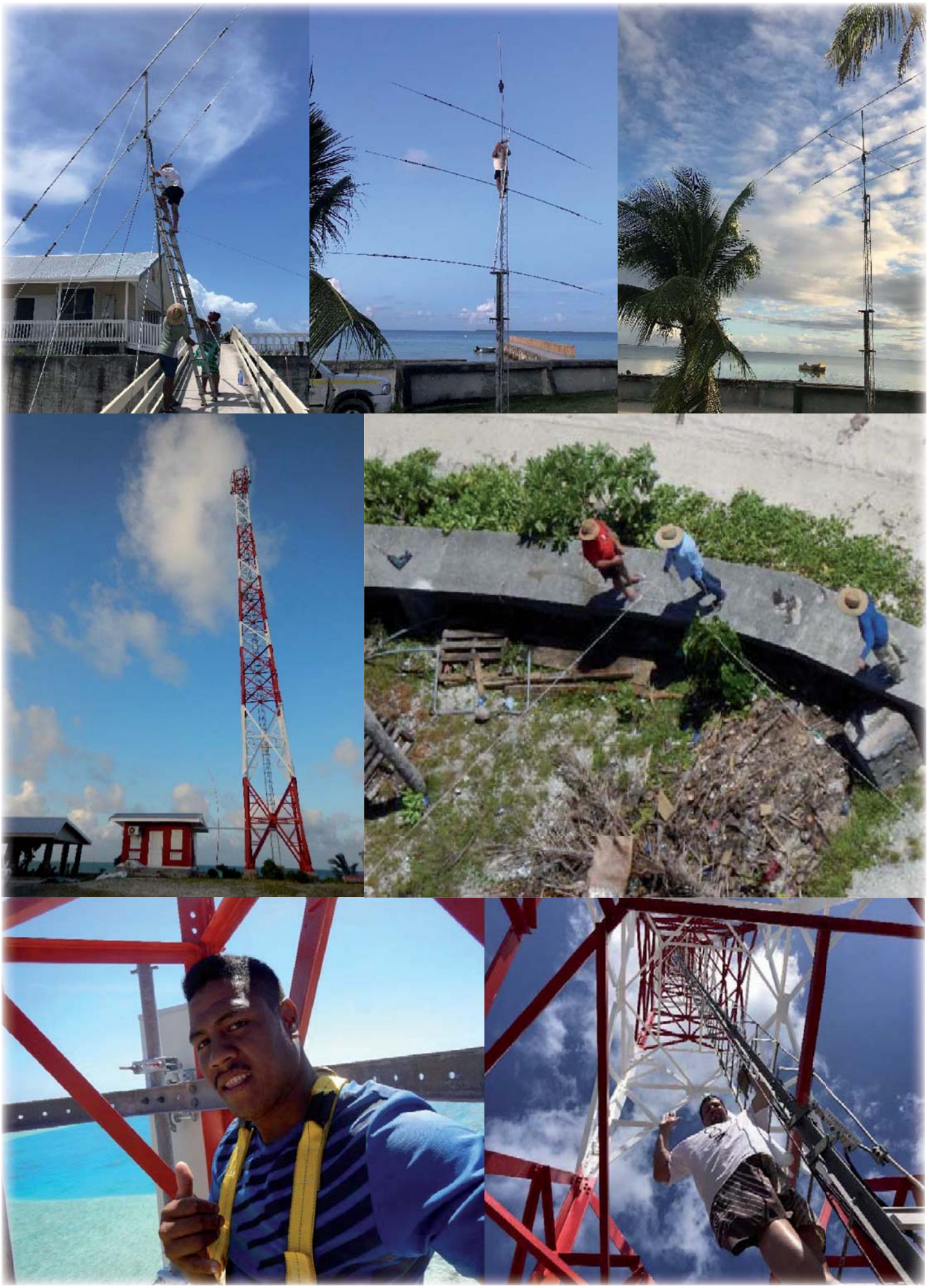


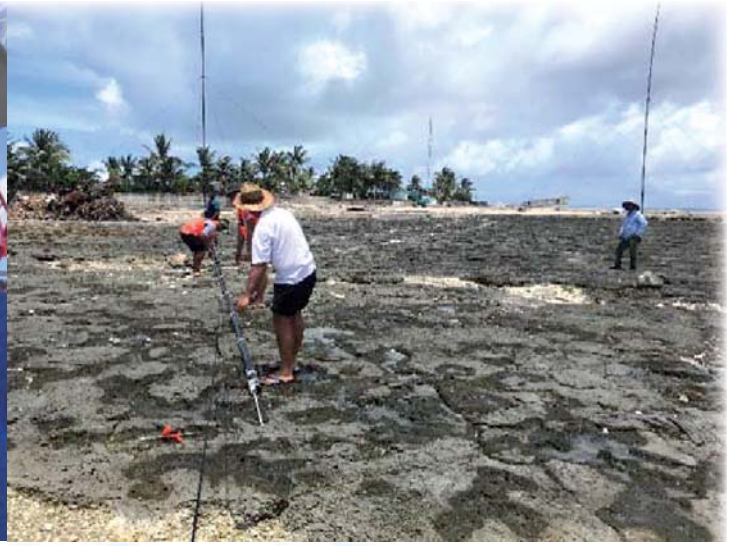






The advance team already installed the largest and the more complex antenna systems.




On arrival, the main team just installed a delta loop for 160 m hanging from a cellphone tower on the island and a 9 element beam for 6 m.

Roman, URØMC, was responsible for our EME contacts and he really was happy like a small child every time he was able to make an EME contact.

The 2 locations had the following antenna systems:

Camp 1 on Fale Island: Mosley beam TA33M for 14/21/28 MHz, Mosley beam TW33XL for 10/18/24 MHz, 4 Square for LBS 3.5 MHz and Comptek 4 square for 7 MHz and a vertical for 10 MHz.

Camp 2 at the Teletok location: Cushcraft beam A3S for 14/21/28 MHz with YAESU GDX 800 rotator, Mosley beam TW33XL for 10/18/24 MHz, dipole for 3.5 MHz, vertical for 7 MHz, dipole for 5 MHz, 9 element beam for 50 MHz, vertical and delta loop for 1.8 MHz and receiving antenna for 1.8 MHz, Beverage antenna (BOG) 120 m long, as there was not enough space available.

Our equipment was:

Radio: 3 x Elecraft K3S, 3 x Kenwood TS-590s, 1 x Icom 7300, SunSDR Pro and

a Rig One transceiver. Amplifiers: 3 x SPE 1.5 kW and 1 x SPE 1.3 kW, 1 x Burst 2 kW and 1 x homebrew 1 kW amplifier.

Sometimes, propagation was on our side and we were able to be on the air with 8 stations simultaneously on different bands and modes.

Having teams spread on 2 different islands, about 2 miles apart, gave us the opportunity to work multiple modes on the same band at the same time. Like on any DXpedition there were some technical problems, but the team was able to overcome them successfully. After an 8 day operation, we achieved more than 50k QSOs, as a gift to the amateur radio community.

We were active from 1.8 MHz to 50 MHz in different modes: CW, SSB, RTTY, FT8, EME and SSTV. Our team also enjoyed swimming, fishing in one of the most beautiful waters in the world and very friendly communication with the locals.









In a few occasions, our menu contained sashimi and lobster.





Every day, we also had fresh coconut milk available to drink.

We planned to be on the island until Friday, October 11th, but in life not everything works according to a set schedule. On Wednesday, October 9th at 10:00 AM we received the unexpected and unfortunate news from Mrs. Taitai: one child from island Nukunonu was ill and the boat Mataliki immediately changed the schedule in order to take this sick child urgently to Apia. We had 2 solutions: pack everything within 3 hours to be on that boat leaving urgently or stay on the island for an additional 10 days. But for our team there was really no choice at all, as we all had flight reservations for the trip home so the decision was taken to leave immediately.

We would arrive to Apia 2 days ahead of the schedule.

We were happy with all commentaries and support from the radio amateurs on all social media. Dusko, ZL3WW, will visit Tokelau again in the beginning of next year to provide additional training as well as help to set up the radio equipment on all 3 islands which the team had donated. We cannot forget to mention here the incredible hospitability from all people of Fakaofo Island. Special thanks to Mr. Pulenoku, the Minister of Transport, Director of Teletok Mr. Taibosco and other workers from Teletok: Ma, Rose, Mike and others.

It rained almost daily but the local team from Fakaofo delivered our food and water in time every day. Their help on installing and uninstalling our antennas, transportation of equipment from the port etc., was invaluable. In the end, a big thanks to my team for their cooperation and dedication to this DXpedition and for operating on all bands and modes. We spent a lot of time and personal money with one target in mind: to give a chance to the radio amateur world to have the pleasure of working this rare DX entity in multiple bands and modes.

Thanks to all amateur radio operators around the world for listening and calling us patiently in the big pile-ups. Finally, we left Fakaofo with 52.600 QSO's. As Team Leader, I must emphasize professional and honest attitude of all Ukrainian and Russian amateurs and recommend these hams for any DX expedition in future.

And finally, this DXpedition was also a personal present, as I was celebrating 50 years of ham radio, a present to my children Milos, Alexandra and Milice and to our families and friends who were waiting patiently for our return home.

73, Hrane YT1AD/ZK3A

Working on my DXFC

BY HANS BLONDEEL TIMMERMAN, PB2T

While the majority of the DX community puts an effort in contacting as many DXCC entities as possible, I try to operate from at least 100 DXCC entities. Even though three of the countries that I operated from have been deleted, I am slowly progressing to the magic number of 100. I am not the only one who keeps track of countries visited and operated from. Have a look at the DXFC website at http://www.dxfc.org. Recently I was able to add FJ and VP2E to my list.

That we have a son living on Curaçao is a good excuse for a winter break in the Caribbean. Our initial plan was to combine this visit with the Orlando Hamcation and a trip to Cuba. As is our habit, the final travel plan and the execution of it looked very different from what we had in mind.

Last year on Curaçao I made only four contacts using my Elecraft KX3 with 15 Watts. This year I decided to bring an ICOM IC-7300 with 100 Watts and half wave endfeds for 30, 17 and 12 m. My plan to operate FT8 didn't work because the USB port on my computer was blown up. Although the issue was known before leaving home I didn't bother to get it repaired or replaced. Here is a chronological overview of our winter activities.

PJ2 Curaçao

On January 29th 2020, we took the KLM flight from Amsterdam to Curaçao. At Hato airport our son Chris and his girlfriend were already waiting for the old folks. Besides family affairs there was some time for amateur radio.

PJ2/PB2T

The porch of my son's house overlooking the Spanish Water was an excellent shack and his garden has trees that served as antenna support.

Un-un

The half wave end feds for 30 m and 17 m, 3 - 5 m above ground performed remarkably well. I checked dxmaps.com for conditions on 12 m several times and decided not to put up an antenna for that band. On Sunday morning we went to visit Brett, PJ2BR, and his wife Nena, PJ2ZZ. Over a late breakfast we discussed other Caribbean islands, including Anguilla.

FJ Saint Barthélemy

Plenty of DXCC entities in a small area

On February 3rd we continued our journey to Saint Barthélemy, St. Barts for short. It was still dark when our son Chris dropped us off at Hato airport. With Winair we flew to Sint Maarten and from there to St Barts, located about 35 kilometers southeast of Sint Maarten. We just missed our connection, but luckily we were put on the next flight that left only 40 minutes later. This flight took less than 15 minutes. We were the only two passengers on the small Twinotter DHC 6-300. Both St. Barts and Saba claim to have the most dangerous runway. All we can tell is that the landing between the mountains was spectacular. My suitcase arrived at the only luggage belt. Margreet's luggage arrived in the departures hall, not a big problem at this small airport. After picking up our rental car we went to a nice quiet Airbnb called "Hidden Paradise". The cottage has a swimming pool and a porch. Doors on St. Barts don't have to be locked. It is slightly cooler here than on Curaçao. Narrow hilly roads make you feel as if you are in a roller coaster. There is no mass tourism on the island that covers 24 square kilometers. There are no traffic lights except for the transportable set used at road works. We were told that St. Barts is an expensive island, but the prices in the supermarket are not that bad with a bottle of pastis for only € 3.99. Propagation to Europe was surprisingly good on 30 m. My halfwave endfed was supported by the porch at about 3 m height and at the far end by a 4 m long telescopic rod. Overlooking the sea at 120 m height helped to make it to both Europe and the USA.

Saint Barthélemy - once a Swedish colony

Ferry from Saint Barthélemy to Saint Martin

FS Saint Martin

On February 6th we started our journey to PJ6, Saba. During our trip to Saint Martin I received an email that our ferry from Sint Maarten to Saba had been cancelled due to high seas. That meant a change of plans. Upon arrival in Marigot, Saint Martin's capital, we explored different options over a delicious seafood lunch. We booked an apartment at the beach of Grand Case on the North side of French Saint Martin. Unfortunately, the take-off to Europe was not very good, although several Europeans made it into the log.

PJ7 Sint Maarten

Relaxed Caribbean atmosphere

On February 7th we moved a few kilometres south to Sint Maarten, the Dutch part of the island. We stayed in an Airbnb close to Dawn Beach. Height above sea level was 75 m. Signals from the US were surprisingly strong even with hills in that direction. I was glad that I brought a dual voltage power supply, since I had completely forgotten that the voltage on Sint Maarten is 110/115 Volt. Adapter plugs were available in the house.

VP2E Anguilla

As compensation for not making it to Saba we made a day trip to VP2E, Anguilla, on February 10th. There is a ferry from Marigot every 45 minutes and the crossing takes about half an hour. Following PJ2BR's advice I had contacted Ira, VP2EIH, to ask if he was available to meet us. Ira was so kind to pick us up at the ferry and to show us his island Anguilla. We even saw what was left of the famous VP2E contest station that had been severely hit by hurricane Irma back in 2017. After a delicious lunch near the beach, DXFC #92 was added by making two "supervised" contacts from the VP2EIH shack, using his IC-7300 and linear amplifier. The antenna was a Cushcraft R8.

PA Netherlands

On Tuesday February 11th there was a last opportunity to work on our sun tan at Orient Beach. Later that day KLM brought us back to Amsterdam, where we arrived the next morning.

Breakdown

By no means can this activity be qualified as DXpedition, not even as a holiday style DXpedition. Nevertheless, I am quite pleased that I was able to make over 1,000 QSO's.

Luggage

Our KLM luggage allowance was generous. Our weight was restricted on the inter-Caribbean flights where Winair limited us to 20 kg each plus 10 kg cabin luggage. The IC-7300, Pelican case, power supply, antenna's and coax were 10 kg in total and in the Caribbean we just needed summer clothes!

Odd requests

During the trip I received two rather unusual requests. The first request came from WD4NGB who wrote that besides being an active DXer, he also collects country flags on his QRZ page. St. Barts was one of the missing five country flags at https://www.qrz.com/db/WD4NGB. With pleasure I clicked his webpage to show a visit from Saint Barthélemy. The second request came from BD4CZX who besides being a crazy DXer, also is a postcard collector. He runs a project that is called Postcards from ALL DXCCs and asked me to send him a card from Saba. Unfortunately I was unable to help this time.

From left to right: VP2EQH, VP2EIH and PB2T

DXCC	MWL	30 CW	17 CW	17 SSB	Total	Total %
PJ2/PB2T	210	117	102	0	219	20.9 %
FJ/PB2T	107	307	225	37	569	54.2 %
FS/PB2T	127	108	0	0	108	10.3 %
PJ7/PB2T	106	101	51	0	152	14.5 %
VP2EIH	177	0	0	2	2	0.2 %
Total %		633	378	39	1,050	100.0 %
Total %		60.3 %	36.0 %	3.7 %	100.0 %	

MWL = Clublog Most wanted ranking for Europe

Future plans

Our son's assignment in Curaçao will end in the summer of 2021. We are already making plans for our next winterbreak with a return flight from either Martinique or Guadeloupe. But remember what was said about our planning.

73, Hans, PB2T, as always supported by Margreet, K2XYL

TO8ØSP – St. Pierre & Miquelon 2019

BY SIGI PRESCH, DL7DF

The french overseas territory of St. Pierre & Miquelon Archipelago was selected as next DXpedition target by Sigi, DL7DF, and his team. In order to celebrate Sigi's 80th birthday at the end of September, not the traditional FP call was requested for, but the special call sign "TO8ØSP". For propagation reasons and the touristic winter break on our QTH "Ile aux Marins" which began on the 15th of October, our DXpedition was scheduled from the 2nd to the 14th of October 2019.

A long journey led the team Sigi, DL7DF, Frank, DL7UFR, Wolf, DL4WK, Manfred, DK1BT, Jan, SP3CYY, and Anne, DL6SAK, from their home QTHs via Frankfurt, Toronto, Halifax and finally by "Air St. Pierre" to the main island St. Pierre. On the next day, after having spent one night on the main island and buying food supplies for one week, we took a privately scheduled ferry to the most of the time uninhabited island "Ile aux Marins", our operating site. A storm with wind force 7 came up. From the harbor we enjoyed the luxury of baggage transportation by tractor, while the team had to walk over mown grass to our QTH "Maison Marie-Ange".
























The house was run by the NGO Sauvegarde du Patrimoine de l'Archipel (SPA) and Frederic was our very helpful contact person. After instructions in handling the aggregate, the management of the limited rainwater supply and the use of the outdoor dry toilet, we began with the antenna setup. The storm got stronger to wind force 8. At carefully selected locations a 30 m delta loop, a 40 m delta loop and a 160 m / 80 m vertical L-antenna were installed and TO8ØSP got QRV late on 3rd of October.

The power aggregate and the house power cables allowed either running our 3 radio stations or house heating. There was no choice - the team had to operate in warm outdoor clothes due to indoor temperatures around 8 – 12° C. Pileups were impressive. The antennas were supplemented by a Spiderbeam, a 17 m delta loop, a 80 m dipole and a beverage antenna. TO8ØSP was QRV mainly in CW and often in SSB. One main focus was on 160 m and 80 m. The logs for these bands grew in variable speeds. On the low bands we were very successful although the rate was very slow during the nights, but 40 m to 17 m showed very stable pileups.

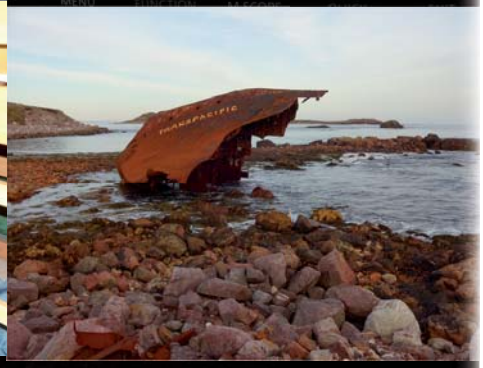
On the higher bands from 15 m to 10 m we experienced more difficulties due to poor propagation. The team watched the conditions very carefully and got QRV on the higher bands whenever possible. Only 15 m succeeded in 862 QSOs, unfortunately there were no possibilities for 12 m and 10 m. Already during the first day, one PA broke and could not be repaired on site, but Jean-Christophe, FP5AC, surprised us with his offer to borrow us an Expert PA for some days. So we could continue with 3 PAs.

Because the kitchen had fridge temperature all the time, the team had no food storage problems. Hot meals were prepared in rotation and the team always had dinner together. Jean-Pierre, FP5CJ, and Jean-Christophe, FP5AC, visited us occasionally and impressed us with French hospitality and big ham spirit. Even FP/KV1J showed up. Usually, during our previous DXpeditions guests came and drank our beer, but here we met French art of life with baguettes, terrines and anisée.

The power aggregate needed refueling every 4 to 5 hours. Running out of fuel meant severe damages, so we were very careful. In particular during the weekends there were only few tourists around the house for sightseeing and collecting cranberries, which meant that we had less interference.

After 4 days, the log contained 20,000 QSOs. Unfortunately, team member Manfred, DK1BT, had to leave earlier due to QRL, so 5 operators remained on the island to run the 3 stations. After 8 days of operation the log reached 30,000 QSOs, mainly in CW and about 12 % in SSB. Time had come to get ready in digimodes, because we knew that there was a high demand. The team started with FT8 as we did in Gambia during our C5DL activity. But we had huge problems with the FT8 F/H mode in WSJT-X, which we could not completely solve. Anyway, we logged 1,783 FT8 QSOs, 114 QSOs in PSK and 257 QSOs on RTTY, with PSK and RTTY working stable as usual.

On Sunday night, 13th of October, a strong storm came up. The Spiderbeam got destroyed, one rod broke off. On Monday night, 14th of October, TO8ØSP went QRT with a total of 34,835 QSOs in the log. As there was no tractor service available at this time, the team transported all baggage by wheelbarrow to the harbor. Using the ferry and then 4 different flights with a lot of excess baggage, the team returned home safely, tired but happy and looking forward to the next DXpedition.





NORDET





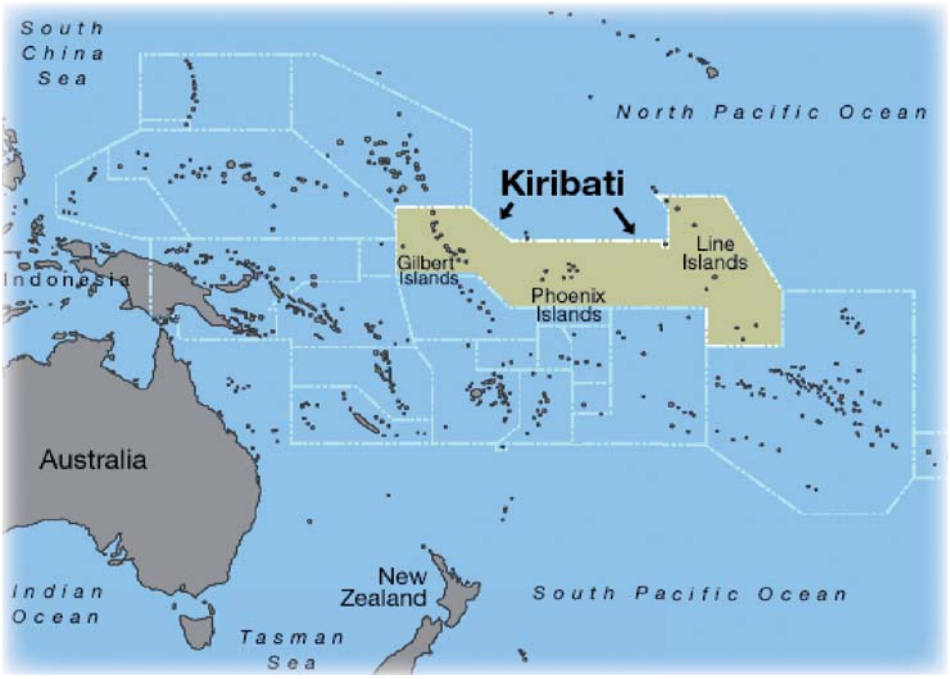
T3ØGC DXpedition to Western Kiribati 2019

BY STANISLAV "STAN" VATEV, LZ1GC

The decision to activate Western Kiribati (T3Ø) on the amateur radio bands was taken by me at the end of January 2019. Initially, I had plans in October and at the beginning of November 2019 to activate two destinations in the Pacific, namely: the Northern Cook Islands as E51GC and Western Kiribati as T3ØGC, but after surveys for these two countries in the Pacific and due to urgent commitments on my job, the Northern Cook option dropped from my plans.

I would like to introduce some information about the Republic of Kiribati, an integral part of which is Western Kiribati (T3Ø). The Republic of Kiribati is located in the central Pacific Ocean, with a population of 110,000, comprising many islands located in the north and south of the Equator.

The main island groups of the Kiribati Republic are the Phoenix Islands, including Kanton Island and several smaller islands. This group of islands is known to the radio amateur community as Central Kiribati (T31). To the east of the Phoenix island group is the Kiritimati Island, also called Christmas Island, which together with several other islands form the so-called Eastern Kiribati (T32), known as the Line Islands. Western Kiribati (T3Ø), also known as the Gilbert Islands, include the islands (atolls) Abaiang, Tarawa and Tabiteuea. The westernmost island of the Kiribati Republic is Banaba Island, T33.



From February until mid of March 2019, I did a lot of research on the internet and made e-mail contacts with Rolf, DL7VEE, and Antoine, 3D2AG, to gather enough first-hand information for Western Kiribati, to be familiar when preparing this DXpedition. Both were already active from Western Kiribati, Rolf as a team member of T3ØD in 2014 and Antoine as T3ØAR in 2016. The information I received from them helped me a lot in the preparation of the T3ØGC DXpedition 2019.

The first thing I did when starting the preparation of this DXpedition was to develop the itinerary and, according to it, to specify the period during which this activity would take place - between 2nd and 27th of October 2019. In February 2019, I quickly requested and obtained my required amateur radio license – T3ØGC. At the end of the same month I had already booked an accommodation at Dreamers Guesthouse, Ambo, Tarawa Atoll, Western Kiribati. In mid of March 2019, I purchased the necessary airline tickets for this DXpedition. The route that I had specified had to be operated by 4 flights and included the following destinations: Sofia (Bulgaria) - Paris, France - Seoul, South Korea - Nandi, Fiji Republic - Bonriki, Western Kiribati. In the Republic of Fiji (3D2), I had planned a 3 day stay due to the lack of an earlier flight for the last part of the trip from Fiji to Kiribati. At that time, after emails and phone contacts with me, Mitko, LZ3NY, and Karel, OK2WM, also joined the T3ØGC DXpedition. Thus, the number of operators for the forthcoming DXpedition was increased to 3 persons. Since I had already purchased tickets for the trip to Kiribati and back, I assisted them in purchasing their tickets.

Whenever I organize DX expeditions, I prefer to do things on my own so I know everything is done correctly. I have to tell you that there was really no particular desire on the part of the other team members to do anything about the organization of the DXpedition. So, in practice,

T3ØGC Team: Mitko, LZ3NY, Karel, OK2WM and "Stan", LZ1GC

the whole organization of the T3ØGC DXpedition was made by me - as immodest as it sounds! Getting a T3ØGC license, booking the accommodation on Tarawa and purchasing airline travel tickets were just a small part of the organization of this DXpedition! As an organizer, I had to anticipate many things that could have happened to us during the trip. An important part of organizing of the DXpedition was to provide sponsors, to support and help us!

Those who have already made ham radio DXpeditions to the Pacific are aware of the high costs of excess luggage, as well as the many other payments during the journey and DXpedition. Activating all of the HF bands and working on the air with several radio equipments is unthinkable without extra luggage, including antenna masts and other antennas and technical equipment. In many cases, excess baggage payments exceed $ 2,000 - 2,500 USD. I had sent requests for financial support to about 30 amateur radio clubs, associations and foundations from all over the world. I am grateful to all who have supported and helped us, depending on their capabilities! I am impressed by the support, which I received from Spiderbeam Ltd, Germany, and ACOM Ltd, Bulgaria, in the form of masts and equipment needed for the antennas and technical equipment of all the DXpeditions organized by me so far. I turn to these corporative sponsors because I know that what they provide to me is reliable and safe gear!

I have already mentioned that as the organizer of the DXpedition I was obliged to anticipate everything, starting with ensuring safe and hassle-free travel, ensuring good working conditions on the air from the chosen destination, as well as successful and safe return of the team after the end of activity. To accomplish all this and to make the DXpedition a success, I made several contacts with my great friend Aves Kang, DS2AGH, who is committed to providing our team with everything needed during our stay in Seoul, South Korea. The success of any DXpedition depends on logistics and good logistics is a guarantee for the success of any DXpedition!

On the way to Tarawa, Western Kiribati, we had a 3 day stay in Fiji due to the lack of an earlier flight from Nadi to Bonriki Airport, Western Kiribati. I contacted Tony, 3D2AG, via e-mail and together we decided to pay him a visit at his home in Suva on the 5th of October. The following two days, I planned for us to stay at the "Down Town" hotel in Nadi before our flight to Tarawa, on October 7th.

An important step in organizing the DXpedition, though from a distance, was to provide a good generator for electricity. I had prior information about power failures and frequent power cuts in Kiribati, and without reliable power supply, the DXpedition would not have been successful. Although at a distance, this issue was resolved relatively quickly. A Honda-3 generator was provided, which was available at our booked accommodation place and which we could use, when needed, during T3ØGC activity.

Information about the upcoming T3ØGC DXpedition was published on the websites of DXNEWS.COM and DX-World.net, as well as on the website of T3ØGC at www.C21GC.COM on March 13th, but its preparation just started. The organization and preparation of this DXpedition, includin testing of antennas and technical equipment, took me about 7 months. If anyone thinks that arranging a good DXpedition takes 1 to 2 months, he is just out of his mind!

The time from April to mid of September went into preparing and testing the technical equipment that would be used during the T3ØGC activity. During this time, hundreds of meters of wire (about 1,000 meters) passed through my hands. In addition to 2 Vertical antennas for 160, 80 and 40 m and the multiband GP antenna from 40 -10 m, I also prepared and tested mono-band vertical antennas for 40/30/20/17 m, which we could also use during our DXpedition. All antennas were equipped with radials, tensioners and tuning boxes. I also prepared backup radials and about 200 m of coaxial cable at different lengths so that we were 100 % secure with respect to antenna equipment.

In mid September, I had a clear vision of how much our luggage was and how it would be distributed between the three of us. While preparing and testing the antennas, I was greatly assisted by Val, LZ1WX, for which I am extremely grateful! At the end of June, I was unpleasantly surprised by Korean Air that our flight from Seoul, South Korea, to Nadi, Fiji Republic, was cancelled. It was not only an unpleasant surprise, but a big problem - an itinerary already prepared, tickets purchased and one part of our trip missing!

I reacted quickly and changed the route from Seoul, South Korea, to Sydney, Australia and from Sydney, Australia to Nadi, Fiji. So our flights increased by one more in both directions! Still, it was a better option than working out a new itinerary and buying tickets again! In this situation during our return trip from Western Kiribati to Sydney, we had a scheduled 10 hour stay before our flight back to Europe. I figured it wouldn't be a good idea to spend that time at the airport in anticipation of our next flight. After the end of the DXpedition and after two flights had already been completed, we would be very tired. About our stay in Australia on the way back, I spoke with my friendly family Olga, LZ1QG and Nick, LZ1QP, who live in Sydney for many years. They offered to meet us at Sydney Airport and have us as their guests in their house for a few hours before we catch the flight to Paris. I would also like to clarify that Olga, LZ1QG, did an excellent job in the early preparation of the DXpedition, namely in communications with Mrs. Beta, the owner of the Dreamers Guesthouse in Ambo, Tarawa, and the contacts with Mr. Cabotera, the Director of the Kiribati Telecommunication Commission. Committed to my permanent job in Bulgaria and working on the preparation of the DXpedition, the time from March until the end of September passed by very quickly.

It was early in the morning at 05:30 h on October the 2nd. Me and Mitko (LZ3NY) were at Sofia Airport, Terminal 2. Since our luggage (about 100 kg) could not be transported in one car, Anna, the chief of LZ1KDP, and Ivan Kotev, LZ1IK, a good friend of us and our supporter, helped us with their car. After the usual procedures during check in and after a 3 hour flight with Bulgaria Air, we arrived at Paris International Airport (CDG). Here, was our "first fight" with the French customs officers who unnecessarily removed and searched all our luggage with the intention of detecting any irregularities, even though we and our luggage had been

through the scanners! For their regret everything was OK with our luggage! At Paris International Airport, we had an appointment with Karel, OK2WM, who had to arrive from Vienna to Paris so that we could continue our journey to Tarawa together. We met Karel as planned and continued our journey with Korean Air at 21:00 h on the same day.

On October 3rd, the Airbus A380-800 aircraft of Korean Air landed successfully at Incheon Airport, Seoul, South Korea, at 15:00 h. Our next flight from Seoul to Sydney was in 3 hours and 30 minutes. I had an appointment with Aves Kang, DS2AGH, who had promised to bring me the ACOM 700 linear amplifier to the airport, which I had left to him in the previous year after the 5WØGC/YJØGC DXpedition. The meeting took place. Aves Kang was waiting for me at the exit of the "arriving passengers" sector. A hearty handshake and a brief conversation followed, since there wasn't much time until the next flight. I want to tell you that I feel this person as my brother. Every year he does so much for me and others who join me on DXpedition. He welcomes us, sends us off, provides us with lodging, and despite of his many business commitments, he devotes so much time to us during our stay in South Korea for it to pass unnoticed and quickly. After the meeting with Aves, our "hand luggage" increased by another 15 kg due to the amplifier.

Our journey from Seoul to Sydney lasted almost 12 hours, but it went unnoticed for us. We had a 6 hour stay in Sydney until the next flight, but this worked out well as we needed to take a walk after the two 12 hour flights. At 13:00 h local time on October 4th, the T3ØGC team was already onboard the Airbus 330-200 in anticipation of our departure to Nadi. After a 4 hour flight, our plane landed at 19:00 h at Nadi International Airport, Fiji. We were stopped here for inspection by Fiji Customs officers for the huge amount of technics we carried, but after explaining to them that we are travelling for a DXpedition to Kiribati and after showing to them our license we were quickly released to continue our journey. We took a taxi in front of the airport. As we had about 150 kg of luggage we had to hire 2 taxis. I have no idea how I looked like after 3 flights, but I remember that when I got into the taxi the driver who was about 30 years old, turned to me and said: "When I saw you, I said - this is Rambo! Yes I was impressed!". Understanding that I was from Bulgaria, he kept driving the car and kept saying "The Bulgarian Rambo" and we bursted out laughing!

We stayed at the Down Town Hotel, located in the central part of Nadi. In the meantime, we made an appointment with Taki, the taxi driver, to bring us to Tony, 3D2AG, in Suva, on the following day. So it happened. On October 5th, we spent some unforgettable hours at Tony's home. Tony, 3D2AG, is a wonderful person and a very good radio amateur. I have known him personally since 2019, but in previous years we have contacted him by phone and e-mail. Writing this article now, I think of the tragedy that struck him, when he lost his elder son in January 2020. I still can't believe this has happened! I remember playing football with his two sons when we visited Tony and I hope that he can overcome this huge loss! I pray for him and for his boy! Before we left Tony's home, we also met with Philip, 3D2TS, who lives close to Tony. It has always been a pleasure for me to meet fellow radio amateurs and interact with them. In such meetings, I do not feel "alone", although in this case I was thousands of kilometres away from Bulgaria!

On October 6th, we had a day of relaxation before our flight on the following day to Bonriki, Tarawa. In anticipation of our last flight to Western Kiribati, we were able to sleep only 3-4 hours, waiting for the morning. We were excited thinking, that soon we would arrive to Kiribati! On October 7th, after a 3 hour flight from Nadi to Bonriki, Kiribati, we arrived to Bonriki Airport, Tarawa Atoll, Western Kiribati (T3Ø), at 10:30 h local time. It turned out that the people from the guest house where we had reservation, had forgotten to wait for us at the airport and to transport us to our accommodation! With the help of an employee from the airport, the owner of the guest house was informed of the problem and after an hour they came and drove us to Dreamers Guest House in Ambo.

After arrival, we quickly started installing the equipment, creating three different operating sites. Karel, OK2WM, quickly installed his Crank IR vertical antenna for 40 – 10 m and started working on 20 m CW using an Elecraft K3 transceiver and an Expert 1.3 K linear amplifier. He started with a good rate and the contacts began to grow fast! Stan, LZ1GC, and Mitko, LZ3NY, started to prepare the 18 m masts for the 160/80/40 m vertical antennas. We had 2 such antennas, but unfortunately, we were unable to install them immediately after our arrival due to the fast approaching evening. At the same time, it struck me that the coastline was very narrow at the time of tide. This was a problem for the installation of our vertical antennas, because the tuning boxes of these antennas would stand in the water at the daily high tides!

Crank IR antenna

160, 80, 40 m antenna

View of Crank IR and 30 m antenna

"Stan", LZ1GC assembling antenna

The narrow shoreline also proved to be a problem for the installation of my favourite antenna - the multi-band GP antenna designed to operate from 40 to 10 m. During the first night of the T3ØGC activity, Karel continued to work on 20 and 40 m, whilst me and Mitko continued the installation of our 160/80/40 m vertical antennas, including the mono band vertical antennas for 30, 20 and 17 m. Early in the morning of October 8th, we started to install the two vertical antennas for 160/80/40 m. That way we had the possibility of working on 160 and 80 m during the following nights, with two operating places. In the early afternoon, in addition to the Crank IR antenna, we had already installed 2 vertical antennas for 160/80/40 m and one vertical for 30 m. The installation and adjustment of these antennas took us a long time because we had to lift the tuning devices of these antennas about 80 cm from the bottom of the masts. This way we solved the problem of rising water levels at the time of tides.

On the same day, we started on the air with 2 more operating places equipped with a Kenwood TS-480 SAT plus linear amplifier ACOM 1200 S and an ICOM 7300, completed with an ACOM 700 S. In the afternoon, T3ØGC was already on the air with 3 operating places on 40/30/20 m in CW. During the night we continued to work on 160, 80 and 40 m with two places. On the 3rd day of the T3ØGC activity, we installed a SAL- 30 receiving antenna for 160 and 80 m of Array Solution and two vertical antennas for 20 and 17 m, which at high tides turned out to be literally in the water but they worked well. During the first week of T3ØGC we were working on CW, SSB and RTTY. Since October 16th we were also active on FT8 mode. Using the good condition windows, we alternated the bands and modes, striving to transmit without any interruptions on the air. My worries about the island's power supply problems were justified. More than 50 % of the activity was done with power supply from the Honda-3 generator, which luckily worked flawlessly.

Another problem during the DXpedition was the daily repair of torn radials after the tides. There were days with high winds during our activity, but thanks to Spiderbeam's resilient and sturdy masts, we had no problems with our vertical antennas! Despite of the problems described above, in the time from October 7th and 23rd T3ØGC was at on the air nonstop. Since the recent years were characterized by a period of minimal solar activity and lack of any good propagation on the higher bands, our focus has been more on 160/80/40/30/20 m bands, without missing even the small windows of better propagation on 17/12/10 m. I want to share very briefly the good attitude of the local people towards us. We had the full support of the locals we contacted during our stay in Tarawa. Whenever we needed anything, we not only got the support of the people at Dreamers Guest House, Ata and Mrs. Beta, but also of their neighbours. We had no problems with the locals, although part of the antennas and radials reached into their yards!

From 03:45 GMT on October 7th to 18:05 GMT on October 23rd, T3ØGC made 20,164 contacts on all HF bands from 160 to 10 m in CW, SSB, RTTY and FT8 modes. I will remember this DXpedition especially because of the many contacts on 160 and 80 m! The contacts on the other bands in my opinion were many enough and also impressive. I provide the readers with Clublog statistics about the T3ØGC activity. On October 23rd, at 06:10 GMT, T3ØGC went QRT and we began to quick-

Antenna tuning boxes

The Honda-3 generator

"Stan", LZ1GC, on the Air

Continent/Mode T3ØGC

CONTINENT	160	80	60	40	30	20	17	15	12	10	Total	Total %
AFRICA	0	2	0	11	7	2	1	0	0	0	23	0.1 %
ANTARTICA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0 %
ASIA	576	698	6	1,147	1,300	2,221	1,495	983	381	36	8,843	43.9 %
EUROPE	582	596	31	880	1,281	1,164	30	30	0	0	4,594	22.8 %
NORTH AMERIKA	700	516	60	724	729	1,286	703	443	14	0	5,175	25.7 %
OCEANIA	42	62	1	160	135	311	177	121	15	2	1,026	5.1 %
SOUTH AMERICA	5	17	1	77	52	77	88	154	5	0	476	2.4 %
Total QSO	1,905	1,891	99	2,999	3,504	5,061	2,494	1,731	415	38	20,137	100.0 %
Total %	9.5 %	9.4 %	0.5 %	14.9 %	17.4 %	25.1 %	12.4 %	8.6 %	2.1 %	0.2 %	100.0 %	

Band/Mode T3ØGC

Band	CW	FT8	SSB	RTTY	Total	Total %
160 m	1,778	127	0	0	1,905	9.5 %
80 m	1,879	0	12	0	1,891	9.4 %
60 m	85	14	0	0	99	0.5 %
40 m	1,842	752	313	92	2,999	14.9 %
30 m	2,736	486	0	282	3,504	17.4 %
20 m	3,251	557	696	557	5,061	25.1 %
17 m	1,141	772	358	223	2,494	12.4 %
15 m	810	656	265	0	1,731	8.6 %
12 m	186	219	10	0	415	2.1 %
10 m	3	35	0	0	38	0.2 %
Total QSO	13,711	3,618	1,654	1,154	20,137	100.0 %
Total %	68.09%	17.97%	8.21%	5.73%	100.0 %	

ly dismantle the antennas and pack our luggage. Our long journey back to Europe began with a flight from Tarawa to Nadi, Fiji. At Nadi Airport, despite of our short stay, we had an appointment again with Tony, 3D2AG. We donated him an 18 m Spiderbeam Fiberglasspole mast as a gift, which he can use for his future DXpeditions to Rotuma and after a short but very cordial conversation we headed to the sector for our next flight to Sydney, Australia.

On October 24th at 22:10 h, after a 4 hours flight operated by Fiji Air, the T3ØGC team arrived to Sydney, Australia. At Sydney airport we were greeted by my friendly family of Bulgarians Olga, LZ1QG, and Nick, LZ1QP, who drove us to their home, about 30 km from the airport. We had nearly 8 hours until the next flight and spent pleasant hours at their home, for which we are very grateful. On October 25th at 17:45 h, after a 12 hour flight on an Airbus 330-300 operated by Korean Airlines, we arrived at Incheon Airport, Seoul, South Korea. Waiting for us there were Aves Kang, DS2AGH, along with two of his business colleagues. In the following few hours, we enjoyed the wonderful Korean food in a small local dining place. In the evening we stayed at a local hotel, the "Punta Star", before our upcoming 12 hour flight on the following day to Paris, France. After so many sleepless nights during the DXpedition, we took advantage of the long flights and spent most of the flight time sleeping. Time passed unnoticed and at 18:30 h on October 26th we landed at Paris International Airport, France, where we had more than 12 hours of stay until our last flights followed: for me and Mitko to Bulgaria, and for Karel to Vienna, Austria and after that to Czech Republic. Finally, in the evening of October 27th, we were all back home. That's how the T3ØGC DXpedition 2019 ended.

We, the T3ØGC operators, are very happy to have done our utmost for the success of this DXpedition, that we delighted many radio amateurs with a new country! We are very grateful for the support we received from many individual sponsors - before and after the DXpedition! We are extremely grateful for the support which we have received in carrying out this DXpedition from all Amateur Radio Foundations, Associations and Clubs, such as:

GDXF, SDXF, FEDXP Foundation, CDXC, EUDXF, LA DX Group, GM DX Group, CDXC, LYNX DX Group, MDXC, Thracian Rose Club, SouthEastern DX Club, SWODXA, WVDXA, OKDXA, Lone Star DX Association, National Capitol DX Association, Long Island DX Association, Twim City DX Association, Greater Milwaukee DX Association, Great Southern DX Association, Northern Ohio DX Association, Willamette Valley DX Club, North East DX Association.

We, are very grateful to our corporate sponsors for their support, namely: Clublog, ACOM Ltd - Bulgaria, LZ Antenna, Spiderbeam Ltd - Germany and GES Electronics.

At the end of this article, we hope that the T3ØGC DXpedition 2019 will leave good and lasting memories among the radio amateur community!

73! Stan, LZ1GC (T3ØGC)

VK9N Norfolk 2019

BY JACEK MARCZEWSKI, SP5EAQ / VK9NE

Just after the Friedrichshafen Hamfest, I started to think about a new DXpedition. During the last ten years I used to activate several South Pacific countries alone or together with some friends. If I exclude from the list countries already visited or horrendously expensive, there were not so many countries left to be chosen with reasonable air access. The choice fell on Norfolk Island. Although it has been activated quite often, it was still remaining interesting on the low bands. I contacted ham radio friends in VK who used to visit the island to help me to choose a location. The Pacific Palms bungalow at the northern shore of Norfolk has already hosted DXpeditions several times. It is located 300 meters from a high Pacific cliff facing NE. I invited Mek, SP7VC, and Martin, SP5ES, to join the DXpedition. Mek is an experienced DXer and keen DXpeditioner and with Martin I spent one month activating Tokelau a few years ago. Both had limited vacation opportunities, therefore we decided for an unusual solution. Although our team consisted of three operators, there would be only two of them staying on the island at the same time. Mek would be active for 10 days, Martin for a week and I would remain on the island for the entire time. This decision caused several logistical problems concerning the transport of equipment, but finally we solved all of them. We then applied for individual callsigns for everybody. Priceless help on several stages of preparations has been provided by Luke, VK3HJ.

The DXpedition started on 15th of October when the first operators SP5EAQ (VK9NE) and SP7VC (VK9NC) left Warsaw airport. We flew through Doha to Sydney, where after spending the night we boarded on a plane to Norfolk. After a 3 hour flight we collected the luggage and realized that the owner of Pacific Palms was not at the airport to pick us up as promised but instead, there was a van rented at our expense for the entire stay. The contract for renting a bungalow, however, included a car in the price. It turned out, that the offer of the agent had not been updated for many years and now the car was not in the offer anymore. This made our situation not comfortable. On Norfolk Island there are no taxis or public transport and without a car our fairly remote location would mean serious problems with food supply and uploading logs. 2G network does not provide any internet access and the internet is available only via WiFi hot spots or via very expensive permanent lines. All our problems were solved after four days when we got an old rusty car and a hot spot was installed by the local Telkom.

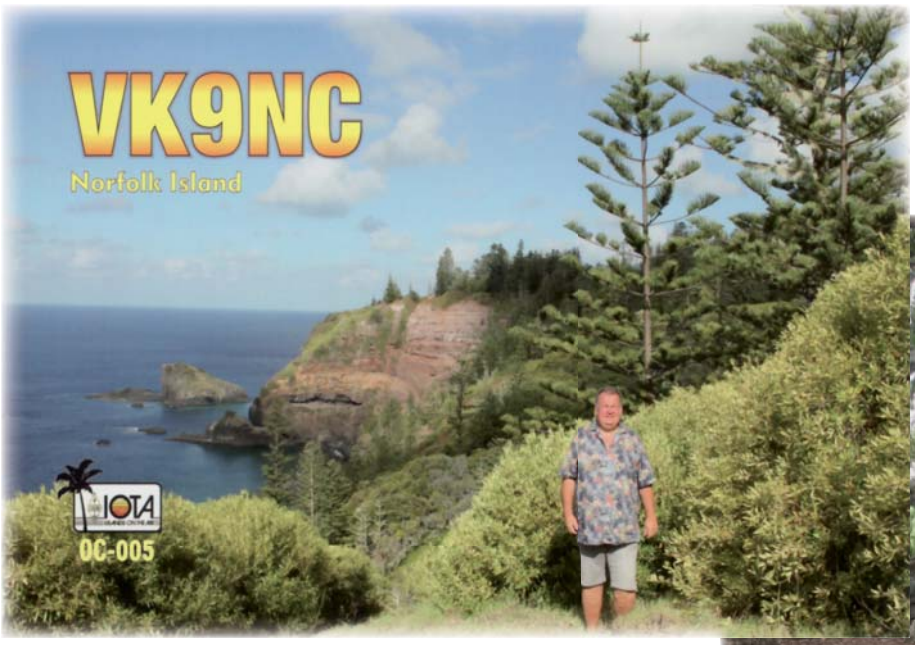
Our antennas were installed just after arrival. The lawn in front of the building was not very large and it was surrounded by an electric fence preventing animals to enter. The limited area for antennas forced us to optimize. We abandoned phased antennas for the lower bands and finally we ended up with a set of six monoband vertical antennas, two deltas for 40 and 30 m and a short 40 m beverage towards Europe. Mek, VK9NC, spent most of the time on FT8 which allowed him to make a lot of contacts also on the



low bands with Europe. The most effective bands were 40 m and 30 m. 20 m, 18 m and 15 m were hardly predictable as well as 80 m. 160 m was very difficult, affected by QRN and 12 m and 10 m had very short openings mostly towards JA. I (VK9NE) was working exclusively on SSB. Both we took part in CQ WWDX SSB Contest. Raw scores showed that Mek got the 2nd place in Oceania on 40 m HP (5th in the World) and Jacek the 2nd place in Oceania on 20 m HP. Both stations were ranked in the non-assisted category.

After ten days of operation Mek was replaced by Martin, VK9NG (SP5ES). Martin was expected to work mostly on CW, but he spent a lot of time also on the digital modes (FT8 including F/H mode and FT4). Finally, the DXpedition made more than thirteen thousand QSOs on all bands, allowing a lot of ATNOs to increase their DXCC scores. The conditions with exception of 40/30 m were rather bad and not predictable, especially during daylight. The lack of internet in the first days of our operation significantly hindered to notice our weak signals in Europe during this period.

The team thanks all friends and sponsors for significant help during the preparations. The help of the website master SP5UAF and on-line log software designer SP7DQR was greatly appreciated. SP7SP kindly offered a power amplifier he had designed.



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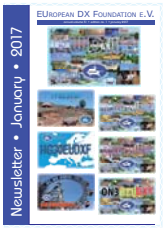

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Data Protection Declaration
(Members)

Section 1

By joining of a member, the association records the name, first name, date of birth (optional), home address and e-mail address of the member. This information is stored in the computer systems of the executive committee. Each club member is assigned a membership number. The personal data are protected by appropriate technical and organizational measures against the knowledge of third parties. Other information about the members and information about non-members are only processed or used by the association if they are useful for the promotion of the purpose of the association and there are no indications that the data subject has a legitimate interest, which precludes the processing or use.

Section 2

The board announces special events of the association life, in particular the execution of events in the club magazine and/or on the club's own internet pages. Personal member data can be published at this juncture. The individual member may at any time object to the publication of such data by the board. In this case, there will be no further publication in relation to this member on the notice board and/or in the club magazine and/or the club's own websites.

Section 3

Only board members and other members who perform a special function in the association, which requires the knowledge of certain member data, receive a list of members with the required membership data.

Section 4

The association informs the amateur radio related media about special events. Such information is also published on the website of the association. The individual member may at any time object to the publication of his personal data or revoke his consent to publication on the Internet. In the case of an objection or revocation, further publications regarding his person are omitted. Personal data of the withdrawing member will be removed from the homepage of the association.

Section 5

Upon resignation, the data of the member named under section 1 will be deleted from the member list. Personal data of the withdrawing member concerning the cash management will be kept for up to ten years from the written confirmation of departure by the Board in accordance with the tax regulations.

EUROPEAN DX FOUNDATION E.V.

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