



# NCDXF newsletter

ncdxf.org

Winter 2024-25

## St. Paul Island, CY9C DXing on the Rock

~ Patrick Dolan, N2IEN

**A** SUDDEN SQUALL SHOOK THE small tent like a baby rattle, lashing it with sheets of horizontal rain. Water found its way onto a UPS powering the 6-Meter and VHF/UHF gear in use by Lee Imber, WW2DX. It started to sizzle like a strip of bacon. Lee said, "I quickly dove under the table, ripped it out and threw it outside while it was smoking and popping and burning. That'll get your heart rate racing!"

Just another day of DXing on the "Rock."

From 24 August through 5 September 2024, 11 members of the CY9C team huddled on St. Paul Island, a windswept, 3-mile-long archipelago 15 miles north of Nova



Scotia's Cape Breton and 44 miles southwest of Newfoundland's Cape

Ray. The camp was technically located on the northeast end, on a separate piece of barren rock only several hundred yards wide and separated from the main island by  
*continued on page 3*



The team next to the lighthouse on St. Paul Island.

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## From the President's desk

**D**XPEDITION ACTIVITY HAS CONTINUED TO increase. As a direct result, if you are new to DXing you can add to your DXCC count. If you're a DXer who has been at the activity for a while, you can fill in more band slots and raise your DXCC Challenge total. If you're high up for the DXCC Challenge, then you look for unique ways to get new ones — EME is one mode that has helped.



Within NCDXF, we see grant applications from almost everyone going somewhere. Our mission is this: to provide necessary support for well-organized DXpeditions to desirable DXCC entities. That means we are always looking for a team to activate a Top 10 Most Wanted entity. These entities are either hard to reach like Bouvet, 3YØ/B, or places where politics don't support getting a license to operate like, as in the case of North Korea, P5. In the meantime, we have supported several non-Top 10 DXpeditions this year to entities that we knew would generate DXer interest.

Two stories in this issue stand out because the teams encountered extreme political issues. They had the permits and did all of the work needed to get their equipment in, yet they were denied any operation (Somalia, 6O3T), or had their operation interrupted for several days (Burkina Faso, XT2MD). Please read their stories. DXpeditions can be a dangerous activity. At the next DX gathering, talk to some DXpeditioners, thank them for their efforts, and show them the respect they deserve.

This year, we have all experienced the fantastic propagation provided by Cycle 25. All indications are that we are in the midst of its peak. The downside slope will hopefully continue to provide excellent propagation on the bands for several more years.

The tech world is busy with artificial intelligence (AI). What effect will it have on our hobby? FT8 has brought a major change to our hobby. Will AI bring other changes?

One of the recent non-AI changes has been the Radio-in-a-Box (RiB), initially funded by the NCDXF. This DXpedition technology continues to evolve as George, AA7JV, makes more RiB refinements. It has already provided access to a place where traditional DXpeditions are no longer allowed: Jarvis Island (N5J). Hopefully, more will follow.

The SuperFox mode for WSJT-X has been improved once again. Thanks to the efforts of Rich, KE1B, and Ned, AA7A, NCDXF is supporting Joe Taylor's team by fostering testing of new versions and issuing SuperFox verification keys.

We have also had good success this year providing financial support for 10 youth operators to travel on DXpeditions and have gotten the word out that this funding remains available.

In addition to the 6O3T and XT2MD stories, this issue includes articles about funded DXpeditions to Glorioso Island (FT4GL), St. Paul Island (CY9C) and Liberia (A8OK). We have also included a summary of, and link to, an outstanding article written by NCDXF Board member, George, AA7JV, entitled "Better Low Band Reception for DXpeditions."

As always, we appreciate your continued financial support for the NCDXF grants.

73,

*Kevin J. Rowett*

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a narrow channel. It's home to an abandoned lighthouse and a scattering of wrecked buildings.

Prior to the trip, CY9 was ranked #50 on Club Log's Most Wanted List. But the team undoubtedly made a dent in that number, racking up approximately 115,000 QSOs on all HF bands plus 6 Meters, EME and LEO satellites. The overall tally far surpassed the combined last two CY9C DXpeditions in 2019 and 2016.

"Beyond happy," exulted team leader Murray Adams, WA4DAN. "We exceeded expectations."

## Operations

The team used six radios loaned by FlexRadio with Maestro control units, associated amps and tuners to cover the HF bands. Antennas included assorted Yagis on 10 to 20 Meters, verticals for 30 and 40 Meters, and two dipoles secured to the lighthouse tower for 80 and 160 Meters. Use of a triplexer on the Cushcraft A3 trib-ander allowed three full power stations to operate on one antenna. DX



*Breton Air Bell 206 L4 Helicopter used for slinging loads.*

Engineering donated a valuable cache of coax, connectors and filters.

St. Paul's northeastern island is crowned by 100-foot-plus cliffs that deliver a thrilling view of the bright blue waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. "And we have a high elevation here, we're about 108 feet above the water, so we have wonderful take-

off angles really in all directions," said Murray. So, the takeoff angle to Europe, Japan, Australia, New Zealand ... you couldn't ask for a better spot."

Nor could you ask for better timing for a DXpedition, the peak of the sunspot cycle. Propagation was a little off for the middle part of our stay, worsened by a couple of solar flares, but conditions heated up for the second half of the trip, resulting in explosive, continuous pileups — 10 and 12 Meters were frantic well into the evening. "One for the history books," said Adrian Ciuperca KO8SCA, a veteran of 34 DXpeditions.

"We got an opening so strong on all the bands that SSB was possible, even from unusual places on 10 and 12 meters. And we actually ended up the DXpedition doing SSB pileups on 80 Meters," said Adrian. "From my point of view, it's something I've never encountered."

Even with the "quiet times" during the middle of the DXpedition, "we made 8,000 QSOs a day, which is really good," said Craig Thompson, K9CT.

CY9C operators ran up the QSO count on all HF bands using CW, SSB, RTTY and FT8. FT8 operations relied heavily on the brand new "SuperFox" mode, which accommodates nine streams without dividing up the power. "It's amazing, you can



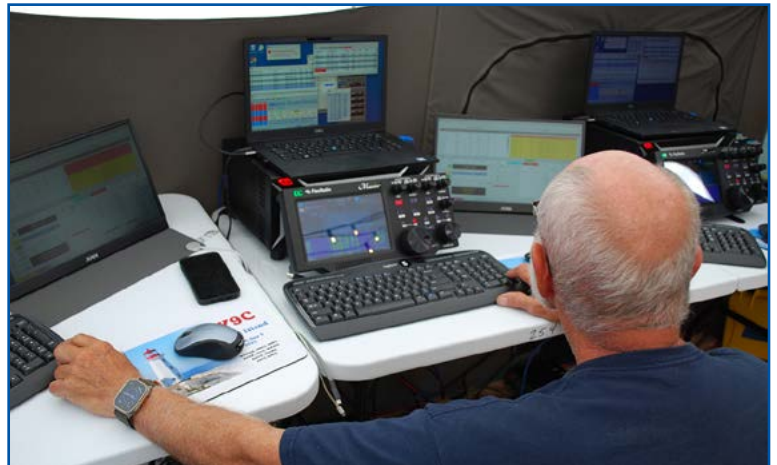
*Top photo: KO8SCA, N2IEN & W4DKS operating. Bottom photo: KO8SCA, WØGJ & K9CT operating.*



*Cushcraft A3 tribander in front of the abandoned lighthouse.*

do incredible throughput with it,” said CY9C team co-leader Glenn Johnson, WØGJ. “At one time when it was really working well, I did some rough figuring; I was working 1,600 stations per hour at peak rate.” The downside of SuperFox is that it can be difficult to decode in marginal conditions, so the team switched back to “regular” Fox and Hound after a solar storm disrupted propagation.

Meanwhile, Lee, WW2DX, had the VHF/UHF crowd well covered. Immediately after connecting the 6-Meter Yagi and powering up, he worked about 25 European stations, which he says was “not at all expected this late in the season.” He added more EU Qs by jumping on RS44 passes. But the biggest thrill happened when he aimed his array at a much bigger



*WØGJ operating three FT8 SuperFox stations.*

satellite: the moon. “432 was never activated from CY9, so I wanted to activate 432 and give it out as an all-time new one. So, there’s probably 15 or 20 first-time contacts between CY9 and those 15 countries, the first in history. That was the highlight for me.”

### Challenges

St. Paul’s northeastern island is a challenging place for a DXpedition. It’s subject to quirky and sometimes violent North Atlantic weather, and its steep coastline is rimmed with jagged rock. Over the centuries, countless seafarers lost their lives in shipwrecks, earning it the name

## Band/Mode Breakdown

Band/Mode	CW	FT8	SSB	RTTY	FT4	MFSK	FM	MSK 144	Total	Total %
160	817	1471	0	0	0	0	0	0	2288	2.0%
80	1655	2805	984	0	0	0	0	0	5444	4.7%
60	494	2172	0	0	0	0	0	0	2666	2.3%
40	4140	5656	1850	0	0	0	0	0	11646	10.1%
30	5210	8344	0	0	0	0	0	0	13554	11.8%
20	5640	9257	3155	1488	0	0	0	0	19500	17.0%
17	5700	10392	1991	257	0	0	0	0	18340	16.0%
15	6735	4773	5299	1	0	0	0	0	16808	14.6%
12	2617	6992	3104	0	108	0	0	0	12821	11.2%
10	3846	5584	1582	0	0	0	0	0	11012	9.6%
6	0	245	0	0	0	81	0	0	326	0.3%
2	1	65	320	0	0	48	1	9	444	0.4%
70	0	2	1	0	0	26	0	0	29	0.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>36855</b>	<b>57758</b>	<b>18286</b>	<b>1706</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>114878</b>	

“Graveyard of the Gulf.” It’s a risky place to access by boat. The CY9C team hired veteran local mariner Greg Lawrence and his crew to land a heavy stash of water bottles. Local charter operator Breton Air carried

## Continent Breakdown

	Total QSOs	%
Africa	640	0.6
Antarctica	1	0.0
Asia	7504	6.5
Europe	61585	53.6
N. America	41332	36.0
Oceania	1436	1.3
S. America	2380	2.1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>114878</b>	<b>100%</b>

passengers and hauled in equipment and tents using a cargo net. The team also used an Airbus H120 5-seat chopper (owned and piloted by the author), which was based on the island and used for supply runs and to ferry a few lucky ops to a coveted shower at the well-run Markland Hotel in Dingwall. The hotel staff more or less adopted the scraggly CY9C crowd and even cooked up a phenomenal chicken dinner, which was airlifted in.

It took about a year to secure permission from the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans to operate on the island, but it was a straightforward process thanks to some friendly help from DFO's Colleen MacDonald.

And despite the downpours, the thrashing winds and the chilly temps, there were days of mild, beautiful weather, clear enough to see the coast of Newfoundland dozens of miles away. One night, a blazing aurora lit up the night sky.

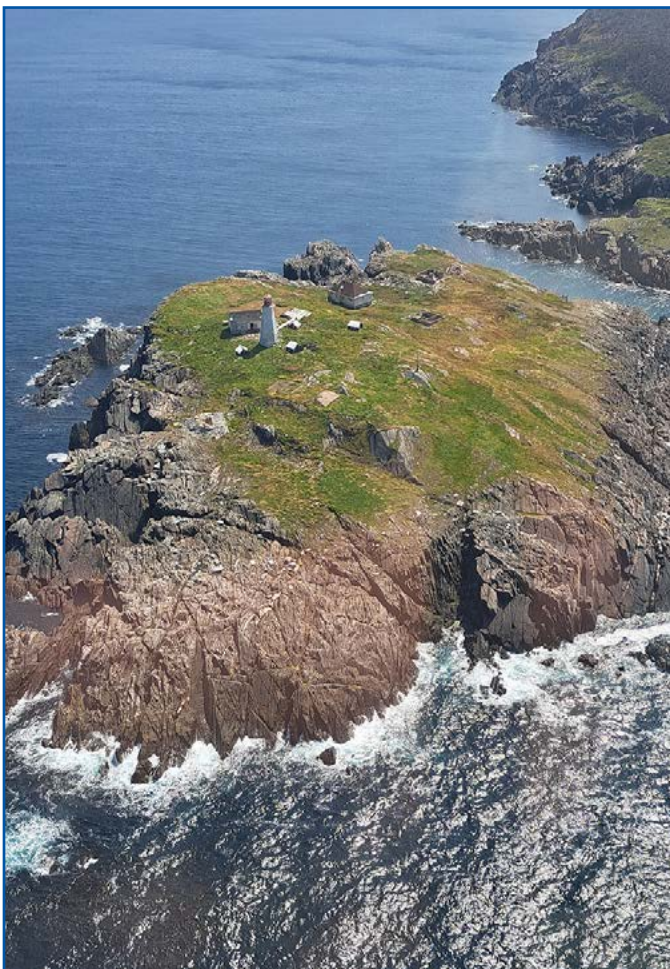
Passing showers yielded brilliant horizon-to-horizon rainbows, which seemed to plunge like molten metal into the sea. We saw a pod of whales cruise by, seals were a presence on the rocky shore, and the sound of coyotes could be heard from the main part of the island across a channel of crystal blue-green water.

### The best memories

Mix some natural beauty, an exotic location, and a little adventure into ham radio, and you get some good brag-



*"St. Paul Power & Light" generators.*




*Left and below: Aerial views of St. Paul's northeastern island and the old North Point lighthouse.*



ging rights along with the memories.

Together with the Asian pileups, it was "probably the time in the mess tent with the rest of the team. Just sitting around chatting, and telling stories, and eating some questionable food," said Dan Sullivan, W4DKS.

"10-Meter sideband and getting a lot of guys in the log," said Craig K9CT, who recalls "the excitement in their voices when we worked them. That was priceless." 



*On the Indian Ocean beach.*

## Glorioso Island, FT4GL **A One-Man DXpedition**

*Marek, F4VVJ/FH4VVK*

**L**A GRANDE GLORIEUSE, OR Glorioso Island, is ranked No. 7 on the DXCC Most Wanted List, and the main aim of this FT4GL DXpedition was to give out as many All Time New Ones (ATNOs) as possible

### **Hit the ground running**

As soon as I arrived on the morning of 24 May 2024, I installed the first Hexbeam aimed towards Europe and North America, and the DX Commander vertical to start traffic the same day. The second Hexbeam, oriented towards Oceania and Asia, and the 6-Meter antenna were installed on the following two days. This second Hexbeam was rotated many times in the direction of the Caribbean and South America to give as many sta-

tions as possible a chance for a new one.

The team asked me to go the extra mile and install the inverted-L for 80 and 160 Meters to please the DX community, so that was added on the eighth day of activity. Initially, radio activity was to take place only from 10 to 40 Meters, as we had many restrictions when it came to installing and deploying antennas.

Traffic started on the HF bands using FT8 and SSB, but I soon encountered problems on one of the computers used for FT8, and it wasn't easy to fix them remotely. The secure links between the team and myself were not of the desired quality (messaging only, no WhatsApp calls possible).

### **Limitations**

Although it was decided that I would do as much radio as possible from the start, after 10 days I decided to slow down because humans have their limits. Even so, day after day, activity was sustained with messages from all over the world congratulating me on the activity from such a sought-after entity.

Signals were very good from 10 to 40 Meters, but on the "Magic Band" — 6 Meters — we had to wait for an opening. I constantly monitored the band on the third radio, but there weren't many openings.



*Assembling the DX Commander antenna.*

The pilot stations received numerous e-mails a day, some bordering on harassment, as DXers could not understand why they were hearing Mauritius and not Glorioso. Bear in mind, the two islands are about 1,500 km (932 miles) apart and the propagation conditions are totally different. Nevertheless, perseverance paid off in the end, not without difficulty, as I was able to make over 300 QSOs on 6 Meters.

Although we already knew it, 160 Meters was a completely different challenge. We tried and tried, but none of the radios or SDRs could decode the signals on 160, making that band a

high percentage of QSOs because it's blocked by Europe. However, if we compare similar locations, like the Maldives, we see the same thing. This suggests that the path to South America isn't the best; the rest of the globe, however, had nothing to complain about, with a final result of some 61,000 QSOs in the log.

## Band/Mode Breakdown

Band/Mode	FT8	SSB	RTTY	FT4	Total	Total %
80	354	0	0	0	354	0.6%
40	2402	64	1	134	2601	4.3%
30	2665	0	0	433	3098	5.1%
20	9505	1665	0	367	11537	18.9%
17	5207	356	0	648	6211	10.1%
15	10740	1497	1	1345	13583	22.2%
12	9361	377	0	65	9803	16.0%
10	11196	1241	47	1200	13684	22.4%
6	326	0	0	0	326	0.5%
Totals	51756	5200	49	4192	61197	



## Gratitude

Thank you all for following this adventure, and a big Thank You to the sponsors who supported this DXpedition and did everything they could to ensure that this activity could take place. Thank you to all the support staff for their commitment, time and efforts in making this DXpedition a success. Thank you to our friends in Poland: Bartek, SQ1K, and Andrzej, SP6STG, and last, but not least, thank you to all the DXers who respected the DXpedition ham spirit. 🇵🇱

## Continent Breakdown

	Total QSOs	%
Africa	410	0.7
Antarctica	4	0.0
Asia	12991	21.2
Europe	33567	54.9
N. America	12008	19.6
Oceania	1317	2.2
S. America	900	1.5
Totals	61197	100%

frustrating failure for the whole team.

Traffic on 80 Meters, a little easier in theory, also gave us a hard time, with only 350 QSOs completed.

In the middle of the DXpedition, I wanted to try a bit of RTTY, but there too, we had computer problems, which prevented us from making many QSOs in this mode.

In an attempt to keep everyone happy, at the end of the activity I decided to do some FT4 for fans of this mode.

A word on the SSB part, and it's worth mentioning because the behavior of some operators was counterproductive and disrespectful, which strongly impacted my night traffic and especially the limited North American openings during this period.

Looking at the statistics, we could see that South America didn't have a



Operating position.



*The Mediterraneo DX Club (MDXC).*

## Burkina Faso, XT2MD An Up and Down DXpedition

~ Emil Bergmann, DL8JJ

**A** JOURNEY OF A THOUSAND miles begins with the first step. And that first step was departure day, 29 October 2024, when I reunited with my “radio family” — the Mediterraneo DX Club (MDXC) — for another exciting journey together.

Once again it would be Africa, namely Burkina Faso. I love Africa! Years ago, my friend Frosty, K5LBU, said, “Emil, I will show you Africa, then there are two possibilities: either you will love Africa and enjoy traveling there again and again, or you will never want to go to Africa again.”

Africa is something very special. And it is not just about the countries as radio targets, as the “most wanted,” but also about the country and its people. By country, I mean the continent and the people who have lived there for thousands of years. Controversial, exciting, risky, wealth and poverty, diseases, a razor-thin line between life and death, dreams, past and future — all of this is so different from the rest of the world that you could almost speak of another planet in the truest sense of the word.

### Preparations

I used the time before the start of

the trip to prepare my EME system for 2 Meters. Once again, I wanted to operate EME and activate this foreign country via moon QSOs, in addition to shortwave operations. The whole topic and the moon project were completely in my hands. I was solely responsible for preparation and organization, and on site I would carry out EME operations alone. It is both exciting and exhausting. Bearing the responsibility for this and ultimately making successful connections makes this EME project very valuable to me, and I am always accompanied by the wish that, at the end of the day, I have made as many radio operators as possible around the world who are enthusiastic about EME operations happy.

This time I had to pack the entire EME system into two bags, each weighing 23kg (50.7 pounds), a challenge that forced me to pay attention to every detail of the equipment. Again, I found a few tricks to save a few grams. A 30-element cross Yagi from Antennas & Amplifiers, which I developed in collaboration in 2023, weighs 10kg, has 15 elements per level, has horizontal and vertical with a gain of 15dB, 10.5-meter boom length and fits, disassembled,

into a 150cm transport bag. In addition, there was a tripod with a 5-meter mast, 25 meters of high-quality Hyperflex 10, two LNA preamplifiers from SSB-Electronic, tools, guying material and importantly, a spare pair of underpants and a T-shirt, which served more as padding.

All the electronics, namely the 2 Meter amplifier, an RFP *Phoenix* 1000A, the FT-857D, a DCW-15 sequencer, band-pass filters, an external 32-bit sound card, a power notebook with the MSHV software, the 13.8 V PSU and additional “bits and pieces” were with me in my hand luggage. It is always important that the electronics always stay with me and come into the cabin with me. How often have electronic devices broken? Or the luggage didn’t arrive? Or? So, there’s no way around it, all of this had to come with me!

I purchased a new and lighter bag and a new cabin bag and packed everything nicely.

But with Ethiopian Airlines you are only allowed to take 7kg (15.5 pounds) of hand luggage. Hmmm! Now what do I do?

When I prepared and weighed my hand luggage, I was almost shocked. The handbag weighed a whopping





*The flat roof of a service building was a suitable spot to install the EME antenna.*

17kg, not including the laptop bag, which also weighed around 7kg. I simply ignored these instructions and decided everything would be fine!

### En route

On 29 October, I left Dreieich, Germany, traveling to Milan, Italy, where I would meet my friends from the Italian MDXC club. The team assembled and assigned all the DXpedition equipment. Each person was given two bags, and each person was only allowed to take a small bag with personal items (clothes, etc.) on the trip. Then, as is tradition, everyone sat together, including the helpers, to eat pasta, drink wine and receive an official welcome from Antonio who also handed out DXpedition T-shirts and caps.

Team members consisted of Ant Cannataro, I8KHC (team leader); Dario Grossi, IZ4UEZ (logistics and organization); Marco Zanchi, IZ2GNQ (technical manager); Vlad Zencak, OK2WX (CW); Daniel Caduff, HB9TOC (CW); Francisco Pajuelo, IU3PMA (SSB); Sorin Parlog, YO8PS (SSB & DIGI); Dario Rinzivillo, IT9ZZO (SSB); James Gallo, KB2FMH, (SSB); Eric Vanraenbroeck, ON7RN (CW); Richard White, GI4DOH (CW); Francesco Gentile, I2MKS (SSB); Peter Schmeiduch, DL6LZM (SSB),

and myself, Emil Bergmann, DL8JJ (CW & EME).

### Welcome to Africa

From Milan we flew to Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, where we were met by a representative of the Burkina Faso Amateur Radio organization. “Welcome to Africa!” in the truest sense of the word! Step-by-step we fought our way with all our equipment to exit the airport where we boarded an awaiting bus for the short drive — past military and police posts with heavy weapons — to Customs.

There, everything had to be meticulously checked, again. Serial numbers, number of antennas, pockets — everything — and after about 1½ hours, we survived that too.

We reached our lodge, Le Grand Calao, around 1800 hours. It was a paradise. High walls with barbed wire separated the lodge from life in Burkina Faso. Inside was a swimming pool, beautiful small air-conditioned huts, a bar, a souvenir shop and green trees. Outside the walls were dust and garbage everywhere, chaotic traffic and a stench.

### Getting started

After moving into our rooms, we enjoyed a good meal and began to set up the antennas and the rack. Once the first antenna was installed, the first station was already running on FT8, so we were able to log the first connections.

I, on the other hand, walked around the site with Dario in search of a suitable place for the EME system — with success! We discovered the flat roof of a service building where the cleaning staff and a small workshop were housed, reached via stairs and over a small wall.

A table was provided for me in the laundry room where I set up the EME station. At around 0200 hours I was finished and went to bed, looking forward to the next day.

After two days, everything was set up and we were gradually able to concentrate on radio operations. We employed a three-hour shift schedule, and also gave team members a few days off.

For the first few days, very bad conditions were forecast on the EME front. Nevertheless, after my HF CW shifts, I continued to operate EME and tried to make QSOs. Every QSO using the moon gives us great pleasure. Thanks to SSB Electronic, I had a very high-quality antenna preamp (LNA), type MHP S. This ensured that even the weakest signals from the moon would be amplified well enough under the current conditions to complete a QSO. And when you consider that the signal travels around 750,000km and reaches the earth again with a signal strength of -250dB, making a QSO this way is simply fascinating. Every few minutes I had to climb onto the roof, realign the antenna to the moon, climb down to the radio station PC



*A table in the laundry room was provided where I operated the EME station.*



*After some strong winds, I found the EME antenna lying on the roof, entangled in barbed wire.*

and hope for signals to appear on the MSHV software screen in JT65B mode.

On the third day, the wind suddenly picked up. I looked at the roof! The antenna was gone! “Oh man,” I thought, “the antenna fell over!”

Quickly I ran upstairs. My fears were confirmed — the antenna was lying on the roof, entangled in barbed wire from the wall. Immediately I put it back up, aligned it, and then tied it down. Luckily, only a few elements and part of the boom were bent, but nothing serious. After about an hour, everything was back in place and ready for use. I secured the mast with ropes in four places to ensure it wouldn't topple over again.

## Radio operations

I had my shifts running CW on the HF radios, which I enjoyed a lot. The pileups were enormous and the conditions were brilliant. We received strong signals from all over the world. I was able to do my first HF shift the evening after our arrival starting at 0900Z on 10 Meters. After calling CQ twice, the signals came like an avalanche, and I was able to work nonstop on 10M for three hours.

The 5-person CW team exchanged

experiences after our shifts and over dinner, where we learned from each other and had the opportunity to try things out. New to the team and on his first DXpedition, Richard, GI4DOH, learned quickly and became a more confident operator with each shift, due to the supportive nature of the CW team.

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in digital modes. FT8 has become an important part of every DXpedition, and most QSOs are made via this mode. Nevertheless, I am proud to have sent only CW during my HF shifts on this

DXpedition. Overall, our CW team made the second largest number of QSOs. At this point, I would like to thank the AGCW Club very much for their support and hereby promote it. Learn CW, experience this skill and you will not regret it. It does not matter what CW speed you are using on the air; the feeling is always just as good.

After four days of operation, everything seemed to be a joy. There were no problems with the technology, the antennas and both stations (a separate one for digital operation) were fully set up, everything was perfect. We had four spider beams, a hex beam, and vertical antennas for 160, 80 and 40 Meters; multiband vertical antennas, receiving antennas for the low bands, my EME system, and a QO-100 antenna satellite system that Richard brought and set up. All we had to do was transmit and have fun.

As always on such DXpeditions, there were some jammers who were mean and kept sending strong signals on the RX frequencies where we were listening in split mode. We invest so much money, time, energy, love, heart and soul to activate rare countries around the world, with little time for sleep, taking on the inconveniences and risks of such a trip — to be marred by something like this. It's such a shame!

## Local flavor

At the lodge we met Aboubacar, who has a small souvenir shop in



*Both stations (a separate one for digital operation) fully set up and operating as expected.*

the lodge and another in town. He was always present and helpful, and after several days of operations, a few of us went with Aboubacar to Ouagadougou. He arranged a car and we drove through the city, admiring interesting sights. We visited a large market in the city, the Monument of National Heroes, a large Catholic church, a mosque and the National Museum featuring the history of Burkina Faso.

Despite war, millions of people live there and cope with everyday life as best they can. Their joy, despite their difficult circumstances, shows they make the best of everything. In the evenings, streets are crowded with cars, motorcycles, mopeds, bicycles and people on foot. The bars are accordingly full, music plays everywhere, and the community enjoys their time together — until the next morning when everyone returns to their vehicles, driving through the city, going to work again. I am so grateful to Aboubacar for allowing us to experience the world of Burkina Faso so closely.

As mentioned, everything was going well. On Tuesday, 5 November, we received a visit from the president of Burkina Faso's amateur radio organization, many representatives of the "Ministere des Postes" and some students from the university in Ouagadougou who were interested in Amateur Radio and were planning to set up a university club station — all together, about 40 people. Antonio and Dario were prepared with a great presentation about Amateur Radio.

### **Unfortunate twist**

That day, and the following ones, will remain in our memories. For an unknown reason, police showed up and interrupted the presentation. We were ushered to the guest reception area where all our passports were checked by two plain-clothed officers. Passports were collected, visas were checked, and photos were taken with smartphones. It appeared that everything went well and no problems arose, but then we were asked



*Aboubacar, our unofficial tour guide, at his a souvenir shop in the lodge.*

to return to our rooms and be ready for further checks.

"What's going on?" we all wondered.

Eric, ON7RN, and I shared a room, so we went in and waited. The police came and began looking everywhere for "something" — checking the bathroom and toilet, behind artwork on the wall, and through pockets in the cloakroom — then they took pictures and left.

The radio rooms were also checked and some were documented with pictures.

When they were finished, they said everything was "Okay" and offered a polite goodbye.

We returned to our radios.

Then the real horror started.

That evening two police officers returned and interrupted radio operations. All our technology was confiscated for further inspection, which meant it had to be disconnected, packed and loaded into a van within minutes. Then they asked us to dismantle everything else (antennas and cables) on Wednesday morning, pack it up and bring it to the police station.

There was radio silence — the radio room was empty! Headphones and connection cables, power cables,

etc., had been taken. I had to dismantle and pack up my EME system — working until about 0400. I tried to rest, but sleep was out of the question, so I got up and continued breaking down the EME system.

As a precautionary measure (in case things got out of control), and because we were an international group, we had notified our embassies in Burkina Faso about these developments. Peter and I, the only Germans in the group, learned that Germany's embassy was in Ouagadougou. Mr. Schulze at the German embassy was very helpful and we stayed in constant contact with him via WhatsApp or phone.

Around 1000 hours Wednesday, a bus came to transport us and our remaining equipment to the police station in Ouagadougou. We had no idea what was waiting for us, but knew of groups that had been held in the police station for days without any reason.

Because this was an extraordinary situation to be in, we officially posted to social media that we were experiencing a power problem and were working on it. We didn't want any comments or statements about the true situation to cause us any harm. We also reviewed the pictures

we took during our trip the previous day for anything that may have been compromising.

After about an hour's wait, Antonio and Dario were called into a meeting, and in less than five minutes both of them came out with beaming faces and announced that the officers had apologized several times for the inconvenience and that we would get our equipment back.

What a relief!

We returned to Le Grand Calao Lodge — without our equipment. It had been taken somewhere and stored, and we hoped that everything would be returned soon. When we asked the police for an update, we were told that some of the technology was with local police experts who wanted to check something, so it might take a while.

Finally, on Thursday evening we were allowed to retrieve our equipment. Although the location was only 12km away, the roads were so busy that it took hours. And to make matters worse, 3km from the lodge we suffered two flat tires!

With our equipment back, we immediately set up the stations and antennas and resumed operations. I set up the EME system with a headlamp, and on Friday I was able to make QSOs. Everything went perfectly for



*Emil, DL8JJ, at the Monument of National Heroes.*


our last few days in Burkina Faso, and I even found a few hours to take another ride through the city with Aboubacar and experience people and life up close.

### **Wrapping up**

No one knew what exactly happened or why. In simple terms, “TIA” (This is Africa). We felt like we were in the wrong movie for many hours,

but we all stuck together as a team. It was a great experience that meant a lot to me, and certainly to everyone else. Extreme and unexpected moments in life show a person's true character.

Thank you to AGCW, SSB Electronic, Michael, DJ6MC; Martin, DL1DBR; Frank, DL8YHR; Bernd, DF2ZC; Carsten, DM1CG; Dithmar, DF7KF, and everyone who supported me along the way!

Memories remain, yet I anticipate the question of “Where do we go next?” I'm anxiously looking forward to the answer! 



*The large market in Ouagadougou.*

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# Somaliland, 603T An Unsuccessful DXpedition

~ Fabrizio Vallefuoco, IV3JPP

**T**HIS ADVENTURE WAS BORN OUT of a desire to return to DXpeditioning after a break — due to a thousand reasons, but mainly work and family — of many years. After a careful analysis of myriad factors, including DXCC location, difficulty in acquiring permits, and safety of operators, we evaluated Somalia as a possible country for our next DXpedition. Through this analysis, the area considered to be the “safest” turned out to be Somaliland, a “democracy” that had seemed quite stable when compared to the diverse Somali context.

It should also be considered how the state or region of Somaliland, although not internationally recognized by the vast majority of UN countries, is, in fact, independent. It has its own institutions, its own regulatory bodies, its own regular army, police force, and everything we usually find in a “normal” state.

## Uphill battle

Having verified this, in November 2023, I begin to liaise with possible contacts to help me receive an amateur radio license, since from the



*The team in Somaliland.*

first inquiries, the local Ministry of Technology and Telecommunications, had not been very responsive. Often emails and phone calls went unanswered for weeks — to my considerable frustration, but not much surprise, given past African experiences.

I will not hide the fact that I struggled with absurd requests as the local ministry, as often happens, thought we wanted a broadcast license. To facilitate better understanding, I prepared dozens of PowerPoint slides for them, and sent out documentations.

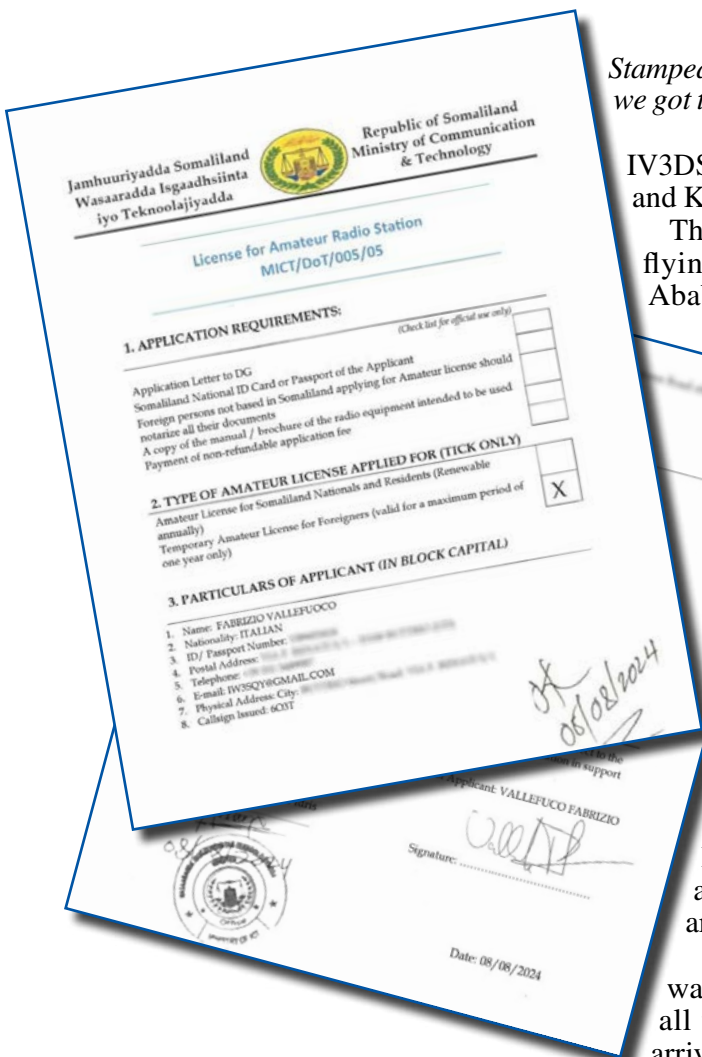
*All our suitcases in tow, awaiting Customs clearance.*

I even involved local academics to best explain who amateur radio operators are and what we do. It’s seems a very simple thing for those in the field; somewhat less so for those unfamiliar with it.

My interaction with the various ministries was long and torturous, culminating nine months later in a Skype call with the Honorable Minister and the Director General, who is its operational arm, to try to finalize the whole process, and to have an answer without too much ambiguity: YES or NO!

Finally, after 10 months, and with thanks to the intervention of a “technical director” from the Ministry of Technology, we were able to get the license stamped and signed by the Minister. Then we got the green light from the Ministries of the Interior, of Customs and of Immigration, all of whom had, in the meantime, been informed by the Ministry of Technology and our on-site contact.





*Stamped and signed documents, we got the green light.*

IV3DSH; Frank Papa, IZ8GCE, and Kris Misa, YL3JA.

The trip was rather smooth, flying from Rome to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, continuing to Hargeisa, Somaliland. We were very tired after 24 hours of travel, including transfers and stopovers.

### Looks were deceiving

We were asked for our passports for the identification and visa procedures, which were completed in about 40 minutes, but not before having a coffee with the authorities present on our arrival.

As DXpedition leader, I was the contact person for all the steps related to our arrival, so I left the team with their coffees and went with our on-site contact to the Customs offices where, after a negotiation in classic Arab style, we got the equipment cleared with surprising speed. Evidently our contact had everything well organized for us.

After closing the Customs paperwork, a young officer from the Homeland Security unit showed up at the office wanting to open the suitcases and inspect the contents. Since we

had all the authorizations, we helped in the inspection by explaining what kind of materials we had, and how it will be used in a legal way as already approved by the various ministries.

After about an hour of inspection and the impression that they did not understand us very well, we were dismissed saying that they would have to call an IT specialist with specific knowledge to authorize the material to enter the country. We pointed out that the material had already been authorized by the Ministry of Technology, complete with an endorsed list!

### Stalemate

Days then passed — Friday arrived (a non-working day in Muslim countries), Saturday and then Sunday, which we learned was a national holiday. More days passed and we did not have news of our luggage. We had actually planned for a few days of waiting, so we were fully on schedule.

Seeing that time was passing without answers, we began to activate our contacts in the various institutions in order to get information about what was blocking our equipment, and attempt to resolve the issue.

Each passing day we met new generals with stars on their shoulders, all who seemed to be friends with everyone; each time being assured that the situation would be unblocked the following day. As time passed, our spirits and hopes grew weaker and weaker.

We had learned there was an election within a few months, and that seemed to be another reason why

### All systems go

As soon as we got this wonderful news, we purchased airline tickets (which had nearly tripled in price), and paid for our location located in the hills at an elevation of 1,320 meters and adjacent to the town of Hargeisa. In addition, we took out various insurances, which are very difficult to find and very expensive, as Somalia is coded as a risk country and often uninsurable.

We prepared five stations using Yaesu FTdx-10 radios and new Expert 1.5k-FA Taurus amplifiers fresh out of the factory. Our antennas consisted of two Spiderbeams, a HexBeam and several verticals for all bands.

Our journey began on Tuesday, 10 Sep 24 from northern Italy with 18 pieces of luggage in tow, some very heavy and some non-standard size.

Our team members consisted of myself, Fabri Vallefucoco, IV3JPP; Maurizio Mattiello, IV3ZXQ; Mauro Azzalini, IV3AZV; Paolo Del Do',



*The team gathered with their escorts in the dining room.*

our dossier was under a magnifying glass — a dossier that initially was considered a mere technical issue but later, as it was explained, became a national security issue and now intelligence services were involved.

From what I could understand, information was gathered incorrectly and decisions were made based on that incorrect information, which obviously would have been impossible to change, both as a matter of timing and for other, much more practical reasons.

Based on that information, we contacted our embassy in Mogadishu to seek advice on the matter. They were very quick and proactive in assessing what had happened, and gave us some very useful advice and valuable support.

### Changing goals

After getting a complete overview of the situation, the team was consulted and by mutual agreement, we decided that our goal was to return home with all our equipment — worth a considerable amount (nearly E40,000). We would have been very sorry if we had to leave it behind.

I contacted the airline to arrange a return flight, and found one departing for Milan three days later. The flight booked, we began a series of phone calls with the various people who had blocked our equipment, with the goal of reaching an agreement to get us back in possession of the equipment that had been stuck in an airport warehouse for what was now, nearly two weeks.

We contacted the Director General of the Ministry of Interior, and arranged a meeting that afternoon and reached agreement to release our equipment in exchange for our departure and the reassurance that nothing would remain on Somaliland soil. We also negotiated permission to go the following day to pack and recheck our luggage, which had been opened and inspected numerous times.

In the climate of total disappointment, we saw a small ray of light and a hope that we could come out of this adventure with fewer broken bones.

The next day, three of us went to

the Customs warehouse. After 12 days our suitcases became buried by new arrivals, but were eventually located. Some broken, and some half-opened, we went through them one by one and tried to repack everything as best we could. Materials that were valued less than the cost of their additional baggage charges were discarded; however discussion arose as to why we wanted to throw it away. That ended when the material, along with a suitcase, was kindly “donated” to the boss on duty.

With packing finished and the OK from the “police” confirmed, we reported to Customs that we finally got the OK and would be leaving the following day.

### One more hurdle

It just could not end easily! We learned that in the institutional whirlwind we unexpectedly created, state officials had blocked us and our equipment, and now that blocked Customs approval (which had given us the OK on our arrival). We were told that the only the Minister could personally give the release of our equipment!

Our contact, knowing well how the “system” worked, told us to immediately go to the Ministry of

Finance (on which Customs depends) and speak directly with the Minister himself — otherwise we would never see our radios again!

We drove about an hour from the airport to the center of Hargeisa, through busy, dusty, pothole-filled roads, and reached the Ministry, where, thanks to connections, we managed to get in — only to learn that the Minister was busy in a video-conference with the President.

What now? As always, we waited. And waited. And waited.

With the Minister’s videoconference over and our situation explained, we were invited into his office to confer and explain our problem — again. He was aware of the situation, as our case was “going around” at the institutional level, but he did not know what to do. After explaining who to call and what to ask, the order was given to release our luggage — along with an apology. We shook hands and left.

After all that transpired, I still was not 100% confident until I saw our bags go with our team on the Ethiopian flight the next day. Then, we all breathed a sigh of relief.

### Epilogue

Our stay in Somaliland was not



*Meeting with officials.*



all serene, as there were moments of tension, euphoria, fear and despondency, where we reasoned many times what could have been done to avoid this. The answer was always the same: “Nothing!”

In hindsight, it is easier to look back with greater clarity and recognize that organizing an expedition to Somalia involved some significant risks, which we had evaluated and considered at the time of planning. We had gone through all the required formal and informal processes; we had received written documentation where we attested that we could operate from Somaliland legally and according to the rules. However, sometimes the intervention of one person, out of scruples or fear, can create a concatenation of events and bad information, leading to the sinking of a long-planned DXpedition.

In addition, we have had confirmation of how the Somaliland government is still immature, as the documents signed by the various ministries, and personally signed by a minister, were considered waste-paper by other state officials, who, for reasons unknown to us, had the authority to do so.

In regards to personal security, we didn’t encounter any problems. Our location was definitely protected (two guards per shift), and some of us were able to visit the city in total autonomy, with only a guard and a cab. We always had the freedom to leave the hotel — with an escort — to go shopping or for coffee. We never saw military checkpoints pinching dollars, typical of African capitals.

Considering the institutions we had to deal with, I will not deny that we had the impression of being “kept in check.” Discouragement sometimes took over and it caused a great strain on our emotional resilience, and was certainly stressful for our team members.

Everyone learned something from this experience — some were positive lessons, while others were overwhelmed and considered this trip a negative experience.

## Gratitude

We thank you for your interest and support. Thank you for your messages, for your patience and for waiting on the air, hoping to hear from us. It is important for us to know that the DX community is there for us, especially at times like this.

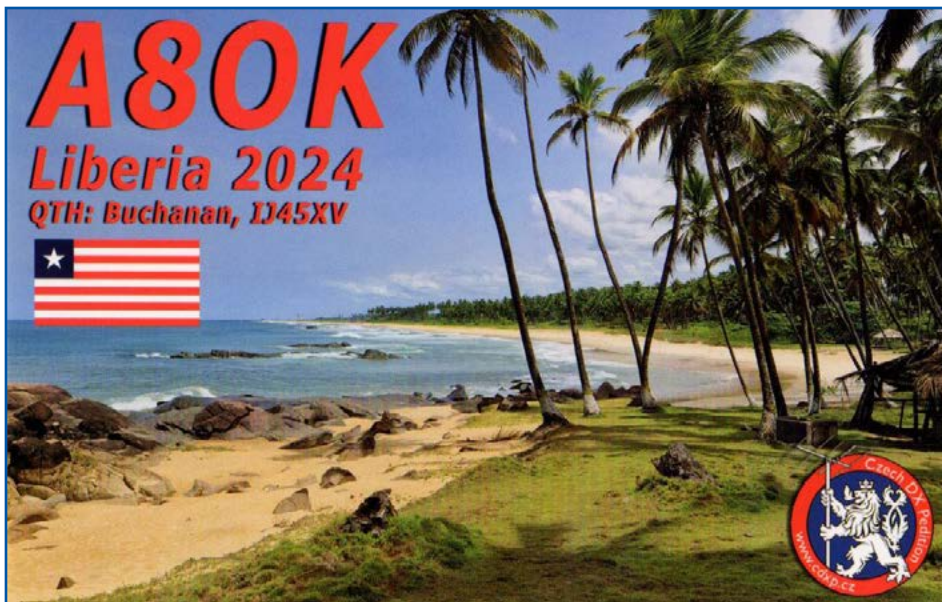
We also thank all the foundations and individual donors who helped and supported us in our attempt to conduct this DXpedition. Thank you, too, to the foundations who gave us the opportunity to bring Kristers, YL3JA, a young

man with excellent operational skills, at zero expense for him, so that he could gain experience in a DXpedition. We regret that he was not able to hear the furious pileups that were sure to take place on the radio, but I am convinced that he learned a lot from this experience and we will see him independently organizing a project of his own. We are sure of it!

Finally, we would like our experience to help raise awareness about what it means to organize a DXpedition in such “complex” areas. 🌐



*At the Hargeisa War Memorial.*



## Liberia, A80K Overcoming challenges

~ Karel Odehnal, OK2ZI

**L**OCATED ON THE WEST COAST OF equatorial Africa about 5° above the equator, Liberia is about the size of Bulgaria with a nearly 600km-long coastline. English is the official language and we hoped that would make communication with locals easy; we were very much mistaken, and found them very difficult to understand.

While we were planning this operation, Liberia ranked 142nd on Club Log's Most Wanted List, but had moved up to 137th before our departure.

### Preparation and arrival

We initially aimed to broadcast from Wulki Farms in Careysburg, a recommendation by Italian colleagues who were there five years earlier, but budget constraints led us to the Trabencou Resort in Buchanan, approximately 65 miles southeast of the Carysburg location. Situated on the banks of the Saint John River near the Atlantic coast, Trabencou provided sufficient space for antennas and offered other facilities including a conference hall and a swimming pool.

Richmond Harding, EL2BG, president of the Radio Club of Liberia, played a key role in securing permissions and the A80K call sign. We were very grateful for his help, so when Steve

Kölcese, HAØDU, contacted us to say that he had donated a 33kg power amplifier to Richmond but had no way of transporting it to him, we were happy to make the arrangements.

The team faced numerous logistical hurdles, including expensive airfare. To save costs, we opted to fly from Brussels to Monrovia, Liberia, via Casablanca aboard Royal Air Maroc.

This maneuver required Ruda, OK2ZA, and Palo, OK1CRM, accompanied by a friend Slava, to drive from Prague to Brussels with our 500kg of luggage, while the rest of the team — Petr, OK1BOA; Petr, OK1FCJ; Pavel, OK1GK; Luděk, OK2ZC; Karel, OK2ZI, and David, OK6DJ — flew to Brussels from Prague.

The team landed in Monrovia early on 5 April, where we encountered delays at Customs and Immigration. After repeated explanations about the purpose of our DXpedition and providing documentation, the team was allowed entry.

The drive to Trabencou Resort took about two hours, and we travelled on well-paved roads — even better than those at home. It was still dark when we arrived at 0600 hours, and we had already decided to convert the conference room into our operations base. Our first impressions were positive — plenty of room, electrical outlets, a large air-conditioner and adjoining bathroom — although our initial voltage readings of 180V did raise concerns. We knew they had additional generators so we were hopeful that it would be better.

### Setting up

The team began unpacking and assembling equipment. With Edwin, a local assistant, providing invaluable



The A80K team (from left): Pavel OK1GK, Petr OK1BOA, Petr OK1FCJ, Rudolf OK2ZA, Karel OK2ZI, David OK6DJ, Pavold OK1CRM, Luděk OK2ZC.



Left: A8OK room with radios and accessories.

help, the team constructed multiple antennas, including a pair of 5-band Spiderbeams for 10M to 20M; Yagis for 17M, 15M, 12M, 10M, and 6M; vertical antennas for 160M, 80M, 60M, 40M, and 30M bands, and Beverage RX antennas for improved reception on lower bands.

Despite harsh conditions, the team logged their first contact — OK2PAY on 15M — and completed 3,500 QSOs by the end of the first operational day. Climate conditions were grueling, as temperatures soared to 35°C. That, combined with high humidity, made outdoor activities extremely taxing.

A new feature introduced on this DXpedition was satellite operations via RS-44 and IO-117, set up by Luděk, OK2ZC, using an IC-9700 transceiver and a cross dual-band VHF Yagi – 10el.

on 70cm and 4el. on 2M. Thanks to the lightweight design, no additional mast was needed.

### Overcoming obstacles

Power outages and fluctuating voltage created significant challenges. Even with multiple generators to stabilize operations, outages persisted. To mitigate interference, antenna configurations were optimized, and additional systems were constructed, including a 160M vertical with a capacitive hat, and a 40M two-element vertical phased array.

Despite operational challenges, the team expanded their capabilities by constructing a quarter-wave vertical for 80M on a nearby hill. Transporting the 18-meter-high radiator, installing it, stretching the radials, and tuning

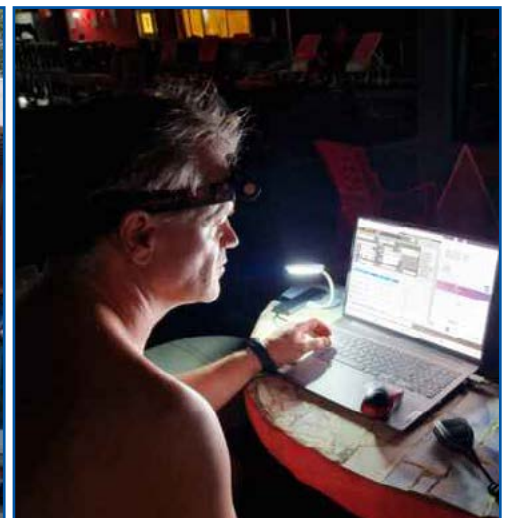
it was exhausting. Adding to that, we encountered hordes of large and furious biting ants crawling all over the hill; our legs were bitten up to our knees. And we got sunburnt. We cooled off in the swimming pool as soon as we got back to the base, and we were rewarded for our efforts with perfect parameters from the antenna.

Setting up Beverage RX antennas provided a new set of challenges. One Beverage was stretched to JA and EU; the other to NA. It took three people 2½ hours to pull the two 120-meter-long wires through the jungle — for which we compensated the land-owner \$100 for the two-week use of the property. In addition to being bitten by ants, we were scratched up by thorns and sharp grasses. Fortunately, our fears of mosquitoes were not realized.

### Midpoint adjustments

By the DXpedition's midpoint, the team had logged 80,000 QSOs — as we closed in on our 100,000 goal. Although we had been operating fairly well, we were having difficulties with inter-station interference. It became obvious that the position of antennas and workplaces was not optimal, so we checked coaxial cables and switched workplaces around, with little improvement. We had moved the 12M Yagi away from the building, and nearer to the 60M vertical and used one coaxial cable for both antennas — 12M during the day and 60M at night.

We weren't happy about the propagation conditions either. In the evening,



Luděk OK2ZC working poolside (left) and in the evening (right) on RS-44 and IO-117.

they were appalling! The only band open was on 6M to southern Europe, where we made a large number of CW QSOs. We switched to FT8 on the HF bands to at least make some contacts.

One afternoon we had a visit from Richmond, EL2BG, who brought a malfunctioning Alpha amplifier with him in the hopes that we could fix it. We tried, but failed. Still, he spent the night at our QTH and before he departed the next day, he joined us for a group photo.

## Final operations

With our operations nearing an end, the team began to gradually dismantle antennas while maintaining reduced operations. The 40M/15M vertical and one of the Spiderbeams were among the first to be packed. Operations continued, focusing on high-demand bands like 80M and 160M.

We concluded with group photos, including local staff, and expressed gratitude to Edwin and Richmond for their invaluable support.

By 19 April 2024, we had logged 122,337 contacts, ranking #17 on the Mega DXpeditions list. In addition, we successfully provided a new one to many through satellite operations via RS-44 and IO-117.

## Challenges

Extreme weather conditions, including high temperatures and multiple storms, posed significant operational challenges. Heavy storms damaged antennas, including the 30M vertical, which had to be rebuilt. RTTY opera-



*How many operators does it take to repair the PA Juma? Karel OK2ZI (right) with Petr OK1FCJ, Luděk OK2ZC and David OK6DJ assisting.*

tions were introduced after numerous requests from DXers worldwide. While FT4 generated larger pileups, RTTY provided a needed mode for traditionalists. Weather conditions remained unpredictable — unexpected rainstorms and strong winds forced temporary halts in transmission, but the team adapted by reinforcing antenna masts and adjusting schedules to maximize uptime during favorable conditions. Poor propagation on higher bands required adaptive strategies, including increased reliance on digital modes.

Persistent power outages and the high cost of generator fuel added logistical strain. When we paid the property owner for our accommodations, he demanded an extra \$100 per day for excessive electricity consumption and fuel for the generators. We felt that was unwarranted, and the electri-

cal supply was not nearly as stable as promised. We eventually compromised on \$50 per day.

## Conclusion

This is the end of another African story. We believe we gave many stations a needed zone and some a new country. We were able to strengthen ties with the local community through equipment donations and collaboration.

We thank all our individual sponsors for their support. Among the associations, we thank Northern California DX Foundation, Clipperton DX Club, Mediterraneo DX Club, Danish DX Group, SDXG, GM DX Group, OH DX Foundation, Northern Ohio DX Association and Mastrant. 🌐



*Above: The SpiderBeam was used for five bands: 20/17/15/12/10.*

*Left: The cottage on the right served as our radio room and two vertical 30M antennas were in front.*

## SUMMARY

# Better Low Band Reception for DXpeditions

~ George Wallner, AA7JV

**T**HIS ARTICLE FOCUSES ON NOISE REDUCTION AND effective receive antenna systems for improving 160 Meter CW performance during DXpeditions. Most DXpeditions enthusiastically announce 160M CW operation; too often they don't deliver. They spend valuable days battling noise, but eventually fall back to FT8, or just work 80 Meters, and that doesn't satisfy the demand for 160M CW.

## Key Article Highlights

### Importance of Low Band RX systems

Effective 160M CW operation requires noise reduction and a good RX antenna. Without these, only "big guns" can be worked, and QSO rates drop quickly.

#### Noise challenges

- **LOCAL NOISE** – from generators, power supplies, computers, etc.
- **THUNDERSTORM NOISE** – significant in tropical zones, especially in monsoon areas.
- **INTER-STATION NOISE** – from nearby TX antennas, harmonics, and wideband emissions.

#### Noise mitigation techniques

- **GROUNDING** – use water-grounded stakes or multiple radials for RF grounding.
- **FILTERS AND CHOKES** – add AC line filters and RF chokes to block noise currents on cables.
- **STATION LAYOUT** – separate TX, RX, generators, and cables to minimize coupling.

### RX antenna systems

Good RX antennas improve signal-to-noise ratio (SNR) by focusing on desired signals. Key options include:

- **FLAG** – rectangular, loaded-loop with ~7.3dB directivity factor (DF).
- **DELTA LOOP** – single-support antenna with ~7.5dB DF and low complexity.
- **DHDL** – modified delta loop with excellent 9.3dB DF but very low gain (~31dBi).
- **BEVERAGE** – excellent performance (~11 dB DF) but inconsistent results near water.


#### RX System components

- **PRE-AMPLIFIERS** – essential for low-gain antennas like the DHDL. Place them at the antenna to preserve SNR.
- **COAX FEEDLINE** – use quad-shielded RG-6 to avoid noise pickup.
- **POWERING RX SYSTEMS** – inject well-filtered DC power through the coax (bias-T method).

#### Generator and power supply noise

- **SHIELD** ignition systems and use filters on generator outputs.
- **BURY** AC cables in wet sand for noise reduction.

### Conclusion

The full article provides a detailed, experience-based guide for DXpeditioners aiming to excel on 160M CW. Preparation is key for noise-free 160M CW operation on DXpeditions. Effective noise mitigation, thorough station planning, and using directional RX antennas ensure success. Operators should optimize for high SNR and be ready to capitalize on rare, magical low-band conditions where high CW run rates are possible. 

Visit the [NCDXF website](#) to download the full [article](#).

## 50 Years Ago A Blast From the Past

**West Coast DX Bulletin  
published every week by the Marin County DX Group  
September 10, 1974**

*One of the local QRPers dropped by last week and talked of his visit to a down-state club. "It wasn't like our meetings," he explained. "They talked of a lot of strange things and there was this fellow there with a guitar and all evening he just sat there and strummed and sang. Strummed and sang. And the only song he sang had the words: "Where has all the DX gone? Where has all the DX gone? Oh, when will we ever learn?" The QRPer looked at us with a sideways look. "Do you think that maybe I did not get into a DX meeting?" he asked and we could not think of a reply. "What did you say to them?" we asked and the QRPer shrugged. "I told them that when they sang up some DX to let me know." And then we knew for sure that that was not a DX meeting. For all true-blue DXers always whistle for DX and never ever sing. \$10.50 brings you a full year of true-blue DX .... \$12.00 roars it in by airmail. Actually whistles it in....*

# Cycle 25 Fund & Cycle 25 Society




**T**O HELP SUPPLEMENT NCDXF's mission to provide necessary financial support for well-organized DXpeditions to rare and

financially demanding DXCC entities, NCDXF established the Cycle 25 Fund

in 2016. The goal of the Cycle 25 Fund is to double NCDXF's endowment through significant estate gifts from current DXers, which will allow NCDXF to continue its mission throughout sunspot Cycle 25 and beyond.

NCDXF Vice President, Craig Thompson, K9CT, who oversees the Cycle 25 Fund, has established a Cycle 25 Society for those who participate. Thompson said, "The Cycle 25 Society is for honoring those special individuals who commit to estate giving before the next sunspot maximum. When you let us know your plans, we will honor you on our website and send you a special Cycle 25 Society pin as a memento of your thoughtfulness."

Craig invites DXers interested in the Cycle 25 Society to visit the NCDXF website [ncdxf.org/pages/estate.html](http://ncdxf.org/pages/estate.html) for more information.

You can also contact Craig to discuss Cycle 25 Fund funding options, including specific bequests, designation of IRA beneficiaries and purchase of an annuity or life insurance. 

*Since the announcement of the Fund, the following individuals have made estate-planning commitments:*

Ned Stearns, AA7A	Udo Heinze, NIØG
John Grimm, KØYQ	Glenn Johnson, WØGJ
Ross Forbes, K6GFJ (sk)	Ed Muns, WØYK
Al Burnham, K6RIM	Rich Haendel, W3ACO
Alan Rovner, K7AR	Dan White, W5DNT
Craig Thompson, K9CT	Charles, Spetnagel, W6KK
Rich Seifert, KE1B	Rusty Epps, W6OAT
Bob Schmieder, KK6EK	Bruce Butler, W6OSP (sk)
Hardy Landskov, N7RT (sk)	Randy Stegemeyer, W7HR
Tom Berson, ND2T	

The mission of NCDXF is to provide necessary support for well-organized DXpeditions to desirable DXCC entities and to support advances in DXpeditioning skills, technology and infrastructure.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

NCDXF relies heavily upon the generosity of its contributors to fund various projects. We ask you to consider making an annual contribution of US\$50 or its equivalent in foreign currency. However, we do not wish to exclude anyone from the FOUNDATION for financial reasons. If \$50 is not within your budget, then please give what other amount you can. Naturally, we welcome contributions in excess of \$50! NCDXF is an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and all contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law for U.S. taxpayers. Send your contribution to: NCDXF, P.O. Box 2012, Cupertino, CA 95015-2012, USA. You may also contribute and order supplies online via our secure server, visit [ncdxf.org/donate](http://ncdxf.org/donate).

## Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)

**A**RE YOU 70½ YEARS OLD OR older? If you donate to charities, then you can save on your taxes.

The IRS issued a press release in November 2022 stating that you can use a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from your IRA to save on taxes.

All of us at this age can or must take a distribution each year from our IRA or 401(k) plans. Take a look at the distribution form from your plan trustee and you will see that there is a way to have your plan trustee send the distribution to selected charities or 501(c)(3) entities. If you meet the age where a Required Minimum Dis-

tribution (RMD) must be taken each year, this election qualifies as your RMD and, because you are sending the money directly to the charity, no taxes are withheld! Check with your tax advisor about which method is best for you.

NCDXF is a qualified 501(c)(3) organization and you can send money directly to NCDXF without any taxes being withheld. Please let NCDXF know that you are sending this from your plan trustee so that we can give appropriate documentation to you recognizing your donation.

The *IRS website* has more information about qualified charitable distributions. 