NCDXF newsletter

ncdxf.org

Winter 2025-26

Youth DXpedition to Saba, PJ6Y

Gregg Marco, W6IZT

Saba, PJ6Y, was a youth-focused DXpedition in October 2025, organized by the Pacific Island DX Group in partnership with Youth on the Air (YOTA), and supported by foundations, clubs, and individuals worldwide.

Over 14 action-packed days, the team completed 56,635 QSOs across 160 through 6 meters, operating CW, SSB, and FTx. The on-island crew included nine first-time DXpeditioners alongside four experienced operators, while 26 operators from around the globe joined as off-island operators.

Our goal was ambitious: to create a fully immersive experience that gave young operators the excitement of a DXpedition while equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to plan and lead one of their own. Impressively, these young hams built all five stations from the ground up!

The adventure also included participation in the CQWW SSB contest, and a new POTA activation while blending learning, camaraderie, and competition into one unforgettable experience.

The on-island team (from left): Gregg, W6IZT; Connor, KD9LSV; Aaron, KC1SJR; Vincent, PC2Y; Marlee, KC1YBR; George, YO9LIG; Emilia, YO8YL; Ewan, N7EWN; Suzan, PD3SZN; Robin, W7YED; Jeff, NM1Y; Glenn, WØGJ; Matúš, OM8ATE; Dominik, DL1DJH, and Shelley, XYL of NM1Y.

About Saba

Saba is a small, lush island in the northeastern Caribbean Sea. Rising steeply from the ocean, it features rugged cliffs and dense rainforests instead of broad sandy beaches. Home to just 2,150 people and covering 13 square kilometers (5 square miles), it is one of the region's smallest territories.

Mount Scenery, a dormant volcano standing at 877 meters (2,877 feet), offers not only spectacular hikes but also excellent take-off angles for HF radio. The surrounding waters are part of Saba National Marine Park, a hotspot for diving and snorkeling.

Following the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles on 10 October 2010, Saba became a special municipality of the Netherlands and was established as its own DXCC entity. The first operation under the new DXCC entity inspired one member of our team, Jeff Jolie, who went on to earn his ham license (NM1Y) and later hosted several successful contest operations from his QTH.

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In This Issue

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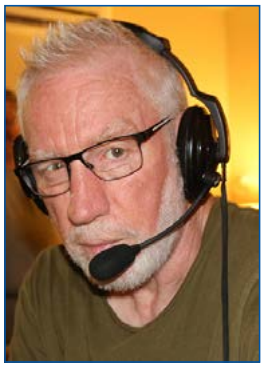
From the President's desk



We are all eagerly waiting for the return to Bouvet by 3YØK. By the time you read this, the team may already be on their boat, headed to that challenging QTH.

It is basically a new team, with the leader, Ken, LA7GIA, from the prior attempt. Ken has learned a lot from the previous trip. This one has a solid plan: the team, the boat, the sponsorships, the fund-raising. For this trip, Ken has chosen a helicopter for transport to the island. He's done work to make sure the helicopter pilots are part of the team — that was one of the issues with a prior trip. We believe the team looks solid with a strong group of known and experienced DXpeditioners.

We all know Bouvet is wanted by many DXers. It's also appealing to other communities. To cover the enormous cost of this trip, Ken has wisely joined with other sponsors, giving him a depth of support.

NCDXF has been a major financial supporter of 3YØK. Ken and the team have worked to gain financial completeness. However, NCDXF would like to see more EU clubs provide meaningful support. Visit their website *3y0k.com/#!/up*.

We are enjoying what is a huge surprise for all in the DX community — a fully remote operation from Desecheo Island, KP5/NP3VI. The primary leader is Otis, NP4G. They are covering all bands and modes, with many very experienced remote operators. Their all-remote plan drew the attention and approval of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. It's a solar and battery operation – the team is learning the issues and capabilities of those resources. We look forward to reading and hearing their story!

We thank and congratulate this crew for activating this long-missed entity, and for their unique approach. We also thank George, AA7JV, and Don, N1DG, for pioneering this approach to activating an environmentally sensitive entity.

Many, many more DXpeditions are planned for 2026!

This edition features three stories that demonstrate NCDXF's commitment to support younger DXpeditioners: PJ6Y, Saba; PJ2T, Curacao, and FW5K, Wallis. The excitement shown by many of these first-time DXpeditioners is inspiring for the future of our hobby. Rounding out this edition are stories about YOTA Summer Camp and successful trips by experienced DXpedition teams to FP5KE, St. Pierre, and V6D, Chuuk.

And, you can read the Director Profile for our newest board member, Dave Anderson, K4SV.

We sincerely appreciate your financial support and thank all of you for that support. 3YØK is by far the largest grant NCDXF has ever made. We need your donations to continue funding DXpeditions into the future that are increasingly expensive to execute.

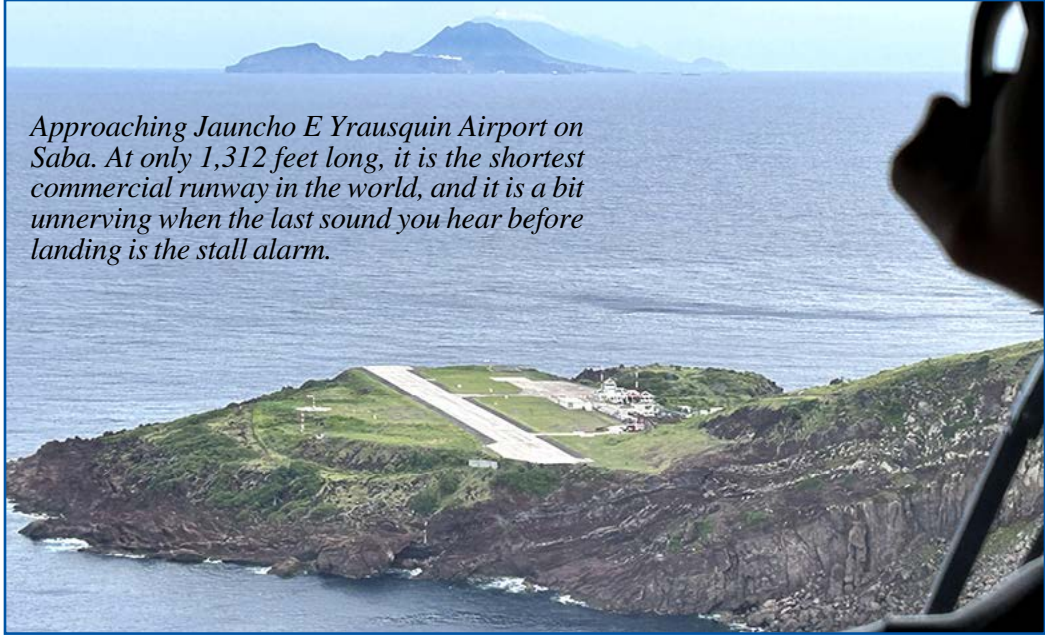
73,

Kevin J. Rowett

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.

Why Saba?

After our successful 2024 DXpedition to Rotuma, 3D2Y, we sought a location that could support a larger team, be safe, accessible, economical, and provide opportunities for learning and adventure. Saba checked every box. Having operated there before, I was confident we could deliver an extraordinary experience, combining challenging operations with the chance to forge lasting friendships. We also needed official approval from the Dutch Authority for Digital Infrastructure (RDI) to operate two NexGenRiB stations, which was granted without issue.



Approaching Jauncho E Yrausquin Airport on Saba. At only 1,312 feet long, it is the shortest commercial runway in the world, and it is a bit unnerving when the last sound you hear before landing is the stall alarm.

Planning the adventure

Planning kicked off in early 2025. We decided to support 12-14 on-island operators, with three local stations and two remotely operated NexGenRiB stations — based on Elecraft K4Ds, designed and built in early 2025 thanks to a grant from NCDXF.

To prepare our young DXpeditioners, we conducted four one-hour online DXpedition workshops led by experts Gene Spinelli, K5GS; Gerben Menting, PG5M; Glenn Johnson, WØGJ, and Ralph Fedor, KØIR. These sessions shared a wealth of knowledge — from planning and operations to logistics and team management — and were recorded for future use. Team members applied these lessons directly during the Saba operation, turning theory into hands-on experience.

Funding priorities focused on covering all expenses for our young operators, which was made possible through the generosity of the global DX community. Remaining operators covered their own travel and about 60% of on-island costs. Equipment traveled either as checked baggage or via a freight forwarder from Miami. Since return shipping is unavailable from Saba, some gear stayed at Jeff's QTH for future DXpeditions.

The team was selected strategically: three members of the 3D2Y off-island team joined us in Saba; the rest were recommended by colleagues and DX clubs.

Travels

European team members met in Amsterdam, navigating tight connections before flying to Sint Maarten where they joined up with the North American team members for the short, 15-minute flight to Saba, which has the distinction of having the shortest commercial runway in the world, making takeoffs and landings thrilling, to say the least.

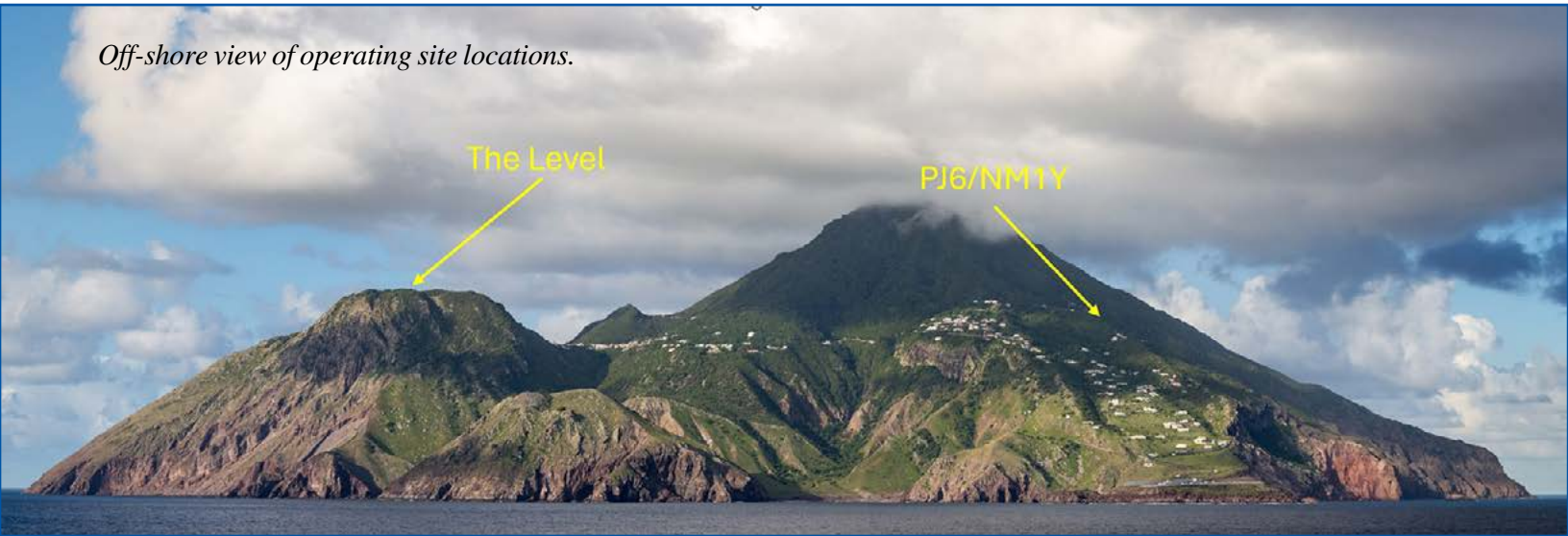
We arrived late in the afternoon and had our equipment transported to Jeff's QTH while the team was shuttled to El Momo Cottages, with a cozy collection of cabins. Dinner and initial planning wrapped up the day, setting the stage for station setup the following morning.

Two teams, two locations

We planned operations from two locations: Jeff, NM1Y's QTH at ~1,200 feet on the north side of the island operating one remote and two local stations, and "The Level" at ~1,600 feet, about a mile east of Jeff's QTH operating one local and one remote station.

The morning after our arrival, we split into two groups to assemble the stations. The NexGenRiB stations were prioritized, allowing the remote team to start logging QSOs while the local team completed the local stations.

Local stations at Jeff's included three Elecraft K3s with KPA500 amplifiers, using an inverted L for 160/80M, a sloper for 60/40M, a triband Yagi + HexBeam for 20-10M, and a Yagi for 6M. Logging computers were connected via a private Tailscale VPN, allowing operators to monitor all stations in real time. By midafternoon, all stations



Off-shore view of operating site locations.

Vincent, PC2Y, Suzan, PD3SZN, and Dominik, DL1DJH, finishing assembly of the HexBeam, while Gregg, W6IZT, watches.

were on the air. The internet connection from Jeff's house was fiber-based, while the connection at The Level used DSL and was good enough to support the two RiBs.

The NexGenRiBs featured non-resonant vertical antennas with base-mounted tuners, minimizing footprint, simplifying band changes, and reducing inter-station interference. Custom software and a tailored user interface made these stations robust and remarkably easy to operate. The NexGenRiBs required minimal on-site support, with troubleshooting handled entirely via VPN, allowing the local team to focus on making Qs.

Getting into our groove

Transporting the team between El Momo and the operating sites proved to be a bit tricky, so after the first day, the team decided to place both NexGenRiBs at The Level and all three local stations at Jeff's. Vincent, PC2Y, then developed a rotating schedule, giving each operator time to enjoy Saba's sights and activities. Schedules were shared via WhatsApp, keeping everyone connected and informed.

It did not take long for the team to settle into an efficient operating routine. Several of our younger operators already had substantial contesting experience and performed exceptionally well. The less experienced operators quickly learned by observing seasoned teammates and were soon operating confidently.

Split operation was new to nearly all of the younger ops, but it proved to be only a minor challenge. As the days passed, our QSO totals climbed rapidly. After a week on the island, we were fully prepared for the CQWW SSB contest.

Murphy's Law

For the most part, Murphy was kept at bay. Aside from a few minor issues, the only significant problem was an intermittent connection on the triband Yagi. The cause was traced to a corroded connection in one of the traps. This antenna had last been used in 2016 and had remained in storage on Saba ever since. The decision was made to inspect and clean all connections thoroughly. The repairs were successful, and no further issues were encountered.

CQWW SSB Contest

Local operators ceased operation approximately six hours before the contest began, while the remote operators continued to rack up QSOs. Our first priority in contest preparation was to check for interstation interference — we wanted no downtime during the contest due to technical issues. Every radio, band, and antenna combination was evaluated. Fortunately, we identified only one minor instance of interference, which had no impact during the contest.

In the last hours before the contest, we finalized our operating strategy and developed a clear plan. We maintained the same three teams, changing to a 4/6/4-hour rotation. We were off to the races. We monitored the online scoreboard closely and quickly knew that we were putting forth a strong effort.

As of the date of this report, final scores have not yet been published. Based on raw scores, we are currently standing at #16 worldwide and #6 in North America, with a claimed score of 13,171,466. We are incredibly pleased with the results.

If you are looking for some outstanding young contest operators, feel free to reach out.

Operating positions at N1MY's QTH.

Team members hiking to survey a location for the POTA activation. Robin, W7TED; Ewan, N7EWN; Aaron, KC1SJR; Suzan, PD3SZN; Matty, OM8ATE; Dominik, DL1DJH, and Vincent, PC2Y.

POTA activation

Shortly before our departure to Saba, it was determined that there were two Parks on the Air (POTA) entities on Saba: Mt. Scenery and the Saba National Marine Park. Both would have been first-time activations.

Mt. Scenery was feasible; the Marine Park was not. POTA rules require operation below the high-tide line. While this might have been possible at Wells Bay, it would have been extremely difficult at best. As a result, we chose to focus on Mt. Scenery.

The park was not accessible by car, so Ewan, N7EWN; Matus, OM8ATE, and Robin, W7YED, trekked into the park, set up a station, and successfully made a number of contacts.

Podcasts

We participated in three podcasts with DX Engineering, Q5 Worldwide Ham Radio, and the Southeastern DX Club. Thanks to today's technology, we were able to share our experiences with supporters in near real time. Podcasts and social media will play an even larger role in future projects.

Wrapping up

On Monday following the contest, we began disassembling the local stations and antennas, while the remote ops continued to add QSOs to the log. The last QSO was made by the remote ops on Tuesday at approximately 1300Z. For the return trip, we were limited to 10 checked bags, each with a maximum weight of 50 pounds.

Vincent, PC2Y; Dominik, DL1DJH, and Connor, KD9LSV, assembling one of the V8 RiB antennas.

We successfully packed all radios, electronics, filters, and antennas within our allowance. As planned, we left behind coax, desks, chairs, lighting, and fans — essentially everything that could be easily replaced.

This adventure was a resounding success. All the team members had the experience of a lifetime, and we are all very proud of our results.

Acknowledgements

By all accounts this was a highly successful DXpedition. Feedback like "you were loud and everywhere" was common. We had no injuries or sickness. All team members made it home safely, likely exhausted from the adventure.

Thanks to Neil, WB9VPG, and YOTA for your continued support.

We had a large group of volunteer supporters who helped make the project possible, including Ash, 3V8BB; John, AA4AN; Attila, HA2NA; Ralph, KØIR; Nathan, K4NHW; Gene, K5GS; Warren, KD4Z; Steve, KI4KWR; Charles, MØOXO; Gerben, PG5M; Kees, WØAAE; Glenn, WØGJ; Jim, W4UCK, and Mark, WC3W.

This trip would not have been possible without support from our corporate sponsors, foundations, clubs, and individual donors. With your continued participation we hope to continue and expand this project into the future. On behalf of the entire team, we offer a big "Thank You!"

For additional information about PJ6Y, including a list of sponsors and donors, visit *pj6y2025.com*, and stay tuned to see where we go next.

NexGenRiB2

The off-island team consisted of Marhazk, 9M8HAZ; Champ, E21EIC; Bun, E25KAE; Pedro, EA1FCH; Marcel, HA3MAR; Dori, HA5YD; Boti, HA8TA; Caleb, KC3VPB; Warren, KD4Z; Steve, KI4KWR; Angus, KJ7KOJ; Ethan, KK7UXY; Izumi, KO6DYI; Benji, KQ4KIS; Max, N4ML; Vlad, NA6JD; Martin, OK1WCF; Adi, SQ2RAD; Pawel, SQ5ANT; Tax, SV8SYK; Aiden, VE7VCK; John, W4ER; Matiss, YL3RZ; Richard, YO3GND; Cojo, YO3LMP, and Stephan, YO9RYI.

YOTA Summer Camp 2025 (Region 2)

Katie Campbell, KE8LQR

YOTA campers after a successful SOTA operation.

THE MOST EXCITING PART OF the summer for many young hams — the Youth On The Air (YOTA) summer camp for Region 2 — returned for its fifth year in June 2025. Held just outside of Denver, Colorado, and hosting nearly 35 campers from the ages of 15 to 25, the camp was immensely successful. Campers had the opportunity to learn about countless different aspects of Amateur Radio, from CW to contesting, satellites and digital modes. Due to the uniquely mountainous location, we also had the opportunity to host both POTA and SOTA sessions.

The week started out strong at the opening ceremony where the purpose, beginnings and history of YOTA was discussed, and then moved on to a basic overview of what the week would look like. That was followed by a shack orientation session to familiarize attendees with the equipment and logging setups they would be using during the week.

Day 1

Monday morning started with sessions on how to program HTs, as well as radio contesting. In the contesting session, campers were first introduced to the basics of the sport, followed by lessons on how to get involved, what the most popular contests were, the easiest contests for beginners, and contests with the most youth participation. Also presented were the main modes of operation and favorite aspects of contesting for young hams involved with that segment of the hobby.

Following the morning sessions, we prepared for a high-altitude balloon launch. Because many of the campers had never taken part in a balloon launch, an informational session was held to learn about the equipment, process, and what information can be collected, as well as why we do balloon launches.

Later, we moved into our beginner kit build, which was a small CW key and oscillator. The echoes of the successfully assembled kits rang proudly throughout the building for the rest of the week. In the beginner build session, the majority of the campers learned the basics of how to solder and assemble a kit, many of whom had no prior experience building things.

After these sessions, we had our formal "sharing session" where campers had the opportunity to share resources such as clubs, groups, websites, and anything else that they've found helpful or supportive as a young ham.

After the sharing session, we had our intercultural evening, which proved to be the highlight of the week for the campers and staff alike. With campers from Argentina, France, Austria, Italy, Canada, and the US, we were able to have successful and enjoyable cultural exchanges.

We finished off the first full day of camp with plenty of time to operate the special event station and many campers took the opportunity to put our YOTA key to good use by making some CW QSOs!

Day 2

The next morning started with a session about satellites, designed to help young hams who haven't had prior experience with satellites to get started in that aspect of the hobby and to equip them with the knowledge they would need to be successful, including the

YOTA campers launching a high-altitude balloon.

technical and logistical aspects to the "how?" of making contact on a satellite. After a presentation and a few demonstration passes for the satellites session, we moved into our Pico balloon launch and intermediate kit build sessions, followed by preparations for the SOTA and POTA sessions later in the week.

Tuesday ended with a social outing and dinner, giving campers time to get to know each other outside of the Amateur Radio context and bond over other shared interests.

Day 3

Wednesday was a big day — the highly anticipated visit to Station WWV in Fort Collins! Between the in-depth tours of the facility and the portable special event station set up on the grounds, there was no shortage of radio to be enjoyed.

The tours were very educational, from the explanations of the different pieces of equipment used to modulate the signal and keep time accurate, to the decades-long history of the facility. We made plenty of contacts in SSB, CW, and even a few digital modes from the portable station on site while enjoying a beautiful view of the mountains and broadcast antennas.

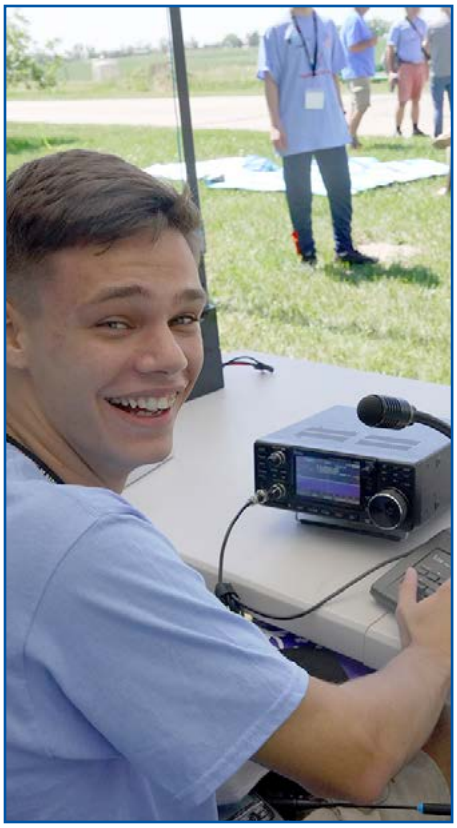
After a long but exciting day at the WWV site, we returned to the hotel for a bit of remote operating with the special event call sign.

Day 4

Thursday began with an ARISS contact, which allowed campers to ask an astronaut questions over radio directly while aboard the International Space Station. The ARISS contact is always a highlight, and campers had a few especially interesting questions, and we learned a lot from the astronaut who answered them.

After the ARISS contact, we hit the road for our POTA and SOTA operations. After a short hike up a mountain, the SOTA stations were ready to set up and get started with our operation. We had very quickly made more than enough contacts for the operation to be official, but we didn't stop there. After a few hours of pretty solid pileups in CW and SSB, it was sadly time to pack up and head back down the mountain.

Aiden, VE7VCK, working on the kit build.



Franco, LU3EFH, operating from the portable station at the WWV site.

After our very successful POTA and SOTA sessions, we headed back to the hotel and hosted a VE session so campers could upgrade their licenses if they wanted, and then it was time for the annual pizza party and one final night all together at the hotel.

Wrapping up

Friday started by returning the HTs kindly provided by Icom before jumping into our closing ceremony. We had a very brief recap of the week and then some information presented regarding various opportunities for young hams, including upcoming youth DXpeditions and December YOTA month, before concluding what had been an incredibly enjoyable and educational week.

We were all sad for the camp to come to an end and to say our goodbyes, but excited about the new friendships that we had formed with each other, which we hope will last a lifetime.

DXObsessed with Wallis & Futuna, FW5K

Hannah Rosenfeld, W7HER

I AM EXTREMELY GRATEFUL TO the Northern California DX Foundation (NCDXF) for sponsoring me as a team member on the October 2025 FW5K Wallis & Futuna DXpedition with the DX Obsessed Group. While I have always enjoyed contesting and DXing, this DXpedition exceeded anything I had previously experienced, both technically and personally.

Preparations

A DXpedition is kind of like an extended Field Day, but if you forget something, you either have to do without because you can't run home to get it, or you learn to improvise.

While we had shipped some items to the island ahead of time, this was largely a "suitcase DXpedition," where we filled our bags with everything: radios, amplifiers, power supplies, antennas, computers, paddles, cables, headsets, foot pedals, clothing, CLIF bars, mac & cheese, and ramen.

You over-pack, then pare everything down to bare essentials to get under the weight limit, then realize you should bring something you don't even have so you have to run out and buy it. Now you have to take something else out because it's over the limit again, and then shift stuff when you realize that another suitcase is over the limit because the amp weighs over 30 pounds.

Although we'd been planning this DXpedition for over a year, we were excited and nervous to see it actually begin. Naturally, I had many questions spinning in my head.

What would the rental property be like?

Just how hot and humid is it really?

What would the food be like?

Did I forget anything important?

What if a flight gets delayed and we lose time on-island, or can't get home on time?

Getting underway

Our 6-member team consisted of Marc, NC7M; Scott, N7JI (my dad); Dave, KA6BIM; Alex, K6VHF; Osiel, NG7E, and myself. We departed for Wallis & Futuna on 16 October 2025 and operated as FW5K from 18-31 October. We couldn't truly comprehend how small the island really was until we were seeing it from the air.

Hannah Rosenfeld, W7HER, excited to be part of the Wallis & Futuna DXpedition.

After 38 hours of travel and nearly 24 hours on planes, we finally arrived on Wallis, and it was a great relief that every piece of luggage arrived with us as well. Fortunately my dad speaks French; it's the official language.

The airport didn't have WiFi, so we couldn't inform our families that we arrived safely, and our mobile phones were incompatible with the cell service on the island, so we had to wait even longer to get in touch with our families. Being completely cut off from cellular networks was an entirely new and unique experience for me.

It was pouring buckets (pretty typical for the tropics) when we arrived. Manu, our Airbnb host, met us at the airport and as we loaded seven people and 20 bags into two small cars, we got soaked. Packed in like wet, travel-weary sardines, we made the bumpy, 20-minute drive across to the southwest corner of the island, arriving at Lausikula Chambres d'Hôtes, our home for the next two weeks.

Setting up

The plan was to get some rest before doing any station setup, but it was still light outside and we couldn't resist the urge to begin. We set up two stations

The antennas spread out across the grassy area of the property to limit inter-station interference.

in the great room (with a transceiver, a 500-watt amplifier, an antenna tuner, headsets with foot pedals, and a computer equipped with N1MM to log our contacts) and in the back room of the house (with a transceiver, a computer and a shared 1.3kW amplifier).

To succeed with this large of an operation, we brought and utilized six separate antennas, including three BuddiHEX hexbeams with Mastwerks rotatable masts, 17M and 30M vertical antennas, a 40/60/80/160 Meter inverted-V antenna, and a 6M Yagi. We spread out the antennas across the grassy area of the property to limit inter-station interference, using about 1,200 feet of coaxial cable.

On the air

Stephane at the telecommunications licensing bureau was great to work with. He allowed us to start operating (on the weekend) before we had even paid our licensing fees, which we took care of when the office opened on Monday.

My first on-air shift was super exciting! We spotted ourselves on DX Summit and I started calling "CQ FW5K, listening 5 up." Within a minute, a huge pileup had formed.

The stations coming through constantly changed with the position of the sun, and we rotated our antennas as the pileups lasted for hours and hours. I turned to my dad and said, "There's too many, everyone is calling over everybody else. I can't pick anyone out." I then learned how to spread out a pileup, working "5-15 up."

Contesting

In addition to activating No. 63 on the Club Log Most Wanted List for Europe, we activated Wallis & Futuna during the CQ Worldwide Phone Contest. We hoped to eclipse the 5,500 QSO tally made by the DX Obsessed Group operating as YJØTT in 2023 during their DXpedition to Vanuatu, but we made only 2,500 QSOs, which was frustrating and disappointing.

We operated with three teams of two operators each, for 3-hour periods. With this schedule, we were on the air for the entire 48-hour duration of the contest, with two stations active at all times. For long stretches, we weren't being heard at all, sometimes making only three or four contacts per shift. At 0400, when you've called CQ for a solid hour and only made one contact, it's easy to nearly (or actually) fall asleep at the radio.

Conditions were great for our friends in the northern hemisphere as a whole, so much so that there was apparently little reason to aim south, as less than 10% of hams live in the southern hemisphere and nobody in North America, Europe, or Asia were pointing their antennas toward our location. At times, when we got spotted, I would maintain rates of 100-120 contacts per hour, but then that would fade and I would be left calling "CQ" over and over again — with no results. Search-and-pounce sometimes worked, but I didn't have a

Getting our local licenses at the telecommunications office (from left): Marc, NC7M; Alex, K6VHF; Hannah, W7HER, and Scott, N7JI,

frequency to hold. Over the duration of the contest, I made about 600 QSOs and got some practice digging out very weak signals in difficult conditions.

Lessons

One important takeaway was that it's essential to take care of my health. Taking precautions against malaria, typhoid, hepatitis, and gastric distress — and making sure I got enough sleep. I was there to make QSOs, and if I'm sick, I can't do that very well. I also discovered that my dad and I are mosquito chow, so it's good that we took anti-malarials.

We did most of our own cooking, which kept costs down and limited the likelihood of contracting food-borne illnesses.

I had heard the horror stories from Vanuatu where five of the six team members were sick in one way or another. I can imagine that getting sick while on a sparsely populated, remote tropical island paradise is not fun.

This time, only one team member was privileged to experience the island's medical system, which considering it's part of France, was actually very good, and completely free.

Making contacts

While in Wallis, I made contacts with several NCDXF members, as well as many hams from my clubs back home in Oregon who were very excited to make contact with me. It was really cool to talk with people on the air who I have known since I was a little kid sitting on my dad's lap at radio club meetings from more than 5,000 miles away, and hearing, "Hi Hannah!" on the air.

By the end of our DXpedition, we'd completed nearly 38,000 QSOs, with approximately 12,800 unique call signs logged. I personally made about 4,000 QSOs and spent most evenings managing European pileups on SSB. I even made a few friends on the air, people who knew it was me whom they'd previously spoken with (as the only YL on the DXpedition) and then emailed me with encouragement and a desire to find out when and on which band to work us next.

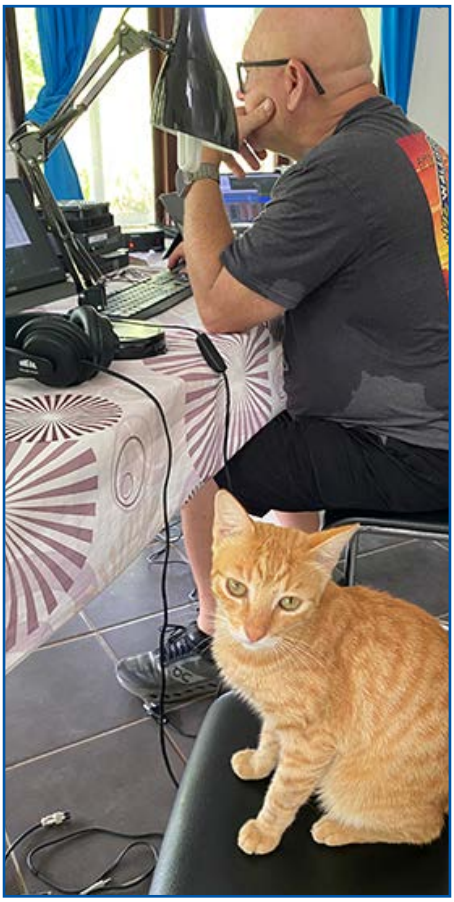
Goals & appreciation

Going into the trip, our goal was to focus on Europe. We succeeded, with approximately a third of our contacts coming from Europe. It was very gratifying being able to hand out "all time new ones" to so many operators internationally, and to hear them say, "Thank you, thank you for the new one. You're doing a great job, see you on the other bands!"

Our group worked 157 DXCC entities and have sent out over 1,000 QSL cards to date.

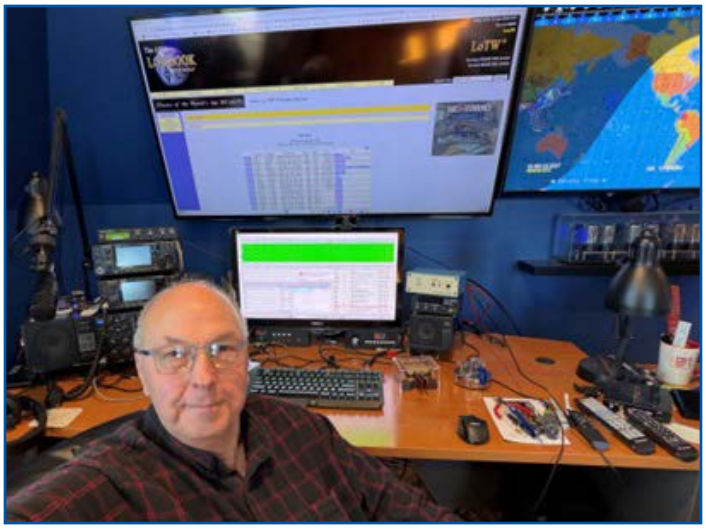
I had a blast learning about the drastically different operating conditions in the South Pacific and had fabulous on-air experiences. We had numerous opportunities to go to the beach, experience tropical flora and fauna, meet the locals, enjoy local cuisine, do some shopping, eat a lot of baguettes, and experience a completely different culture and way of life.

I am sincerely thankful to NCDXF for their very generous grant and the opportunity to be part of such an amazing operation! Thank you, too, to Expert Electronics for use of Sun SDR2 DX radios and remote control units; to 4O3A for use of a triplexer; to Buddipole & Mastwerks for use of BuddiHEX antennas and masts; to WS7L for use of his personal Elecraft KPA500, as well as Willamette Valley DX Club and dozens of individual sponsors for their financial support.



This cat was always around, catching lizards and getting his head stuck in bags of chips, but he couldn't tie a guy rope or manage a single QSO during the contest!

NCDXF Director Profile



Name & Call Sign: Dave Anderson, K4SV

Past calls: WA6BWW, KW4DA

Current QTH location: Tryon, NC

What were your previous QTH's? Huntington Beach, CA

What is (was) your professional career? I am an embedded software and hardware engineer and worked in my own business for 32 years. We manufactured two-way trunking radio infrastructure.

What college degree(s) did you earn and where did you earn them? BS in Computer Science from West Coast University

Married? Kids? Grandkids? Married 46 years, two kids — daughter is a veterinarian and son is an application engineer.

NCDXF leadership positions? New board member

Other leadership positions? None

Current DXCC status? Top of Honor Roll as of March 2016 – 346 Mixed, 343 CW, 344 SSB, 341 Digital, 2,999 DXCC Challenge (more in paper QSLs)

Describe your shack and antenna system: In North Carolina, I live on a hill with 40 acres. There, my equipment includes: IC7851, K4, KPA-1500, homebrew amps, several towers, SteppIR DB-42, quarter-wave 160M vertical, 80M 4-square, and bi-directional low band receive antennas. My Wyoming QTH is 80 acres, there my equipment includes: K4, KPA-1500, OB-9-5 on tower, verticals for other bands, and bi-directional low band receive antennas. Both sites are remotable using K4 and K4/0.

DXpedition experience? 21 DXpeditions including 3YØX, ZL7C, 5X7C, A5ØA, CEØZ, CE9/K4SV, PJ7E, HBØ/K4SV, DL/K4SV, K1B, F/K4SV, TJ9PF, ZS/K4SV, 7P8DA, 3DAØSV, T2DA, 3D2CW, ZL4DA, LU/K4SV, 4U1ITU, M/K4SV…

What would you tell someone who is thinking about contributing to NCDXF? It's important to support the effort to activate rare DX locations as it helps you increase your DXCC totals AND it's a blast working through the pileups. The cost for DXpeditioners is immense and your NCDXF donations help them get you all time new ones. In addition, always send $5, $10, or more with your QSL requests.

As an avid DXer what sorts of trends do you see? Laziness. As amateurs age they want to do less. Digital, FT8 in particular, makes old and new amateurs lazy. The technology allows for weaker signals to work equivalent DX with less effort. New Hams are just trying to get DXCC the easiest way. This is rooted in the lack of Elmers and being in the "Amazon generation" wanting instant gratification. They gravitate to what's easy.

Any tips for DXers? Work tirelessly to get into the log when the new DXCC appears. If no instant log update, work an insurance QSO. Build as big an antenna as you can. Learn how to DX by visiting other DXer's QTHs. Use the DX spotting networks to locate and track needed DX.

Any advice for NCDXF? Generate videos, possibly YouTube, to show how to DX. This knowledge is lacking for someone trying to get into DXing and Amateur Radio in general. The Elmers are gone and effective, self-taught DXing ops are rare. Be the conduit between DXing and average Amateur Radio operators.

What might someone be surprised to know about you? I started my business in my kitchen and sold it 32 years later to Motorola and retired at 57. I spend my time traveling domestically. I love hamfests. My motto: "You can rest when you are dead." Since retirement, I am SO busy now and cannot do everything I want to do.

K4SV antenna farm in North Carolina.

PJ2T Youth Event Video

Geoff Howard, WØCG/PJ2DX

A PREDOMINANTLY YOUTH-staffed team operated in October 2025 at PJ2T, Curaçao, in the CQWW SSB 2025 contest. That team consisted of seven youth who qualified for the contest youth overlay, two middle-aged contesters (38 and 44), and two long-experienced operators (aged 69 and 73).

The youth were very substantially subsidized by a grant from NCDXF, together with funds from 34 other donors. The on-air operation was a great success with the team making a claimed 13,894 QSOs for a claimed score of 33.1M. Most importantly, the contest world heard the young voices on the air on all bands all weekend, experiencing their very high proficiency and enthusiasm. The contesting community hopefully quickly came to the collective realization that our sport is alive and well and has a continuing future.

A 70 minute video was produced to provide a permanent historic documentary record of the event, and as a report to the donors. That video is available on YouTube (*youtube.com/watch?v=ShbVLHYefos*).

The video very early presents on-the-air snippets of youth operators grabbing viewers' attention with very high QSO rates in the midst of heavy pileups and atmospheric noise from nearby Hurricane Melissa. Following that attention-getter, the team members are introduced, all wearing their NCDXF t-shirts.

The largest cost component of the operation was air travel. Team members came from six countries and three continents, converging on the Caribbean island of Curaçao. The video details the distances and routes of travel for each team member, supplemented by numerous travel video clips and travel commentary from the team members. The magnitude of this globe spanning travel underscores the epic nature of the entire weeklong event. Without the financial support of the donors, it would not have been possible to bring these young contesters to PJ2T.

Coverage of the video then turns to numerous work projects the team accomplished during the days before the contest, including extensive tower climbing plus the maintenance and repair of antennas, particularly Beverages, in difficult and unwelcoming terrain. The heat index exceeded 110°F, but the youth worked tirelessly to complete station preparations for the contest weekend.

PJ2T Youth team (from left): Grace Papay, K8LG; James Erickson, W7EY; Megan Lorenz, EI5LA; Leon Hellmich, DL3ON; Max Freedman, N4ML; Pim Polderman, PC8M; Levi Stevens, KG5XR; Rob Kaufman, VE4GV; Violetta Latham, KN2P; Connor Black, W4IPC, and Pete Gladysz K8PGJ.

In addition to his outdoor work, youth operator KG5XR also worked on equipment repairs, rebuilding the entire HV supply of an AL-1200 amplifier and dealing with a bad regulator board in a defunct 50 amp DC supply. Some of these projects had been deferred for over a year, but the youth team completed them all in 2½ days.

The video continues with coverage of the weekend competition — the first 15 minutes presented without interruption, with one window showing the log for the entire multi-multi station, and another simultaneously featuring one selected station and operator at a time. The focus station in this first quarter hour was 15 Meters with youth operator W4IPC running hot and fast in what would become a 332 QSO run.

As the video unfolds, youth operators are featured with live video and radio audio, interspersed with brief statements from each addressing how they came to ham radio, their current education, and their career aspirations. The positive influence of amateur radio and contesting in inspiring their edu-

cational and aspirational activities is overwhelmingly clear. There are multiple electrical engineering and related technical careers in the works.

The video is constructed in a way that practically puts viewers in the chairs at PJ2T, with headphones on. The hope is that this video will get very broad dissemination among a great many radio clubs, in high school and middle school classrooms around the world, and also broadly among new licensees. Viewers will get a chance to see what the fun looks and sounds like, and be motivated to get licensed, take up contesting, and choose technical careers. In the process, our October 2025 youth operators will become "stars" that young new hams will want to meet and emulate. If even a part of this becomes reality, the funds from all the generous donors will have been impactful and well leveraged.

As the 48 hours of the contest roll by, viewers receive periodic score updates, hear comments from some of the operators as they come off shift, and enjoy the tropical beauty that is right outside. The production winds up with a full listing of all known donors. Hopefully, this will not be the last such large-scale contest operation involving talented young licensees.

50 Years Ago A Blast From the Past

West Coast DX Bulletin published every week by the Marin County DX Group January 6, 1976

One of the local QRPers came by last week, a mite furious. "It's that VR8B," he said. "For three days I have been calling and they have yet to come back to me. But that will be the last time this happens. You can bet on that!"

We could hear a bell tinkling somewheres in the back of our consciousness and we moved in close to the QRPer. "You have a plan. Maybe?" we said and the QRPer nodded.

He moved in close and his voice was low, his manner guarded. "We will let you in at the start," he said, "and here's the plan. We have sent off to Newington to register the Marin County QRP DX Net and we will meet anytime there's some good DX on. Anytime! And our frequency will be 14205kc … plus or minus a handful of course. That's where you will find us."

We thought this over for a bit for something was not ringing that bell rightly. "Why 14205kc?" we asked. "That's DX territory. What's a traffic net doing there?"

The QRPer snorted. "Who worried about traffic? This is a DX Net and we will be officially registered with the ARRL to meet on that frequency and that makes it our frequency. And heaven help anyone who interferes with an official ARRL Registered Net. A controlled Net and our own frequency … how can we miss?"

Son of a Gun!! What could we say to something like that when we did not have the answer ourselves?

But while we figure out the answer to this enigma, the weekly clues to the Riddle of the Ages will come your way. Maybe we will figure out what's wrong with this idea … someday …

NCDXF Announces Special $50,000 Award to Spur Top 20 DXpeditions

To help promote DXpedition activity to the world's most in-demand destinations, the Northern California DX Foundation (NCDXF) has introduced a special **$50,000 award** aimed at encouraging operations to a **Top 20 DXCC entity**.

This award is designed to support DXpeditions that successfully activate entities appearing on the **Club Log DXCC Most Wanted List** at the time the operation begins – helping deliver much-needed on-air opportunities to the DX community.

Key Terms and Conditions

To qualify, an operation must meet all the following requirements:

- **Permission and licensing:** The DXpedition team must obtain official permission and an operating license from a **Top 20 DXCC entity** (per the Club Log DXCC Most Wanted List on the start date of the DXpedition).
  At this time, Bouvet, Peter 1, and St. Peter and Paul Rocks are excluded. Only one award will be granted per entity.
- **Full legal compliance:** Securing permission and licensing must **not violate any law or regulation**.
  ***No bribes or payoffs** may be used to obtain either permission or a license from authorities.*
- **DXCC credit approval:** The **ARRL DXCC Desk** must approve the operation for **DXCC credit**.
- **NCDXF funding qualification:** The DXpedition must have **qualified for NCDXF funding**.
  Important: this $50,000 award is separate from — and in addition to — any other NCDXF funding support.
- **QSO threshold:** The DXpedition must log **more than 50,000 QSOs**.

How to Apply

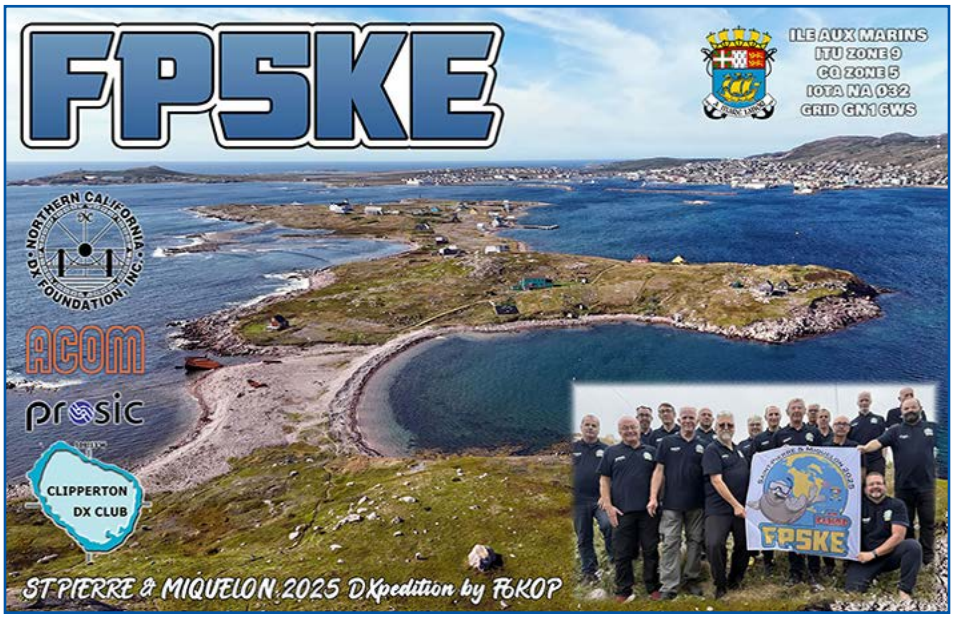
Within **90 days of completing** a qualifying DXpedition, teams must submit an award application to NCDXF, including all required documentation. Applicants should use the official *$50,000 Award application* to apply. The NCDXF Board will consider the application for compliance and impact before an award will be made. The NCDXF board has the final say on this award.

This initiative represents a significant incentive for well-planned, high-impact DXpeditions — and a promising step toward bringing rare entities back to the bands for operators worldwide.

FP5KE — Saint-Pierre and Miquelon

Patrick Bittiger, F2DX

For the past 25 years, the Provins Radio Club, F6KOP, has organized a yearly DXpedition to a highly wanted destination. In December 2024, less than a month after returning from 9L5A (Sierra Leone), Patrick, F2DX (FP5DX from 1988-1991) got back in touch with his old friend Jean-Christophe, FP5AC, to plan a 16-operator DXpedition to Saint-Pierre et Miquelon.



Planning stages

From the very first discussions, the choice naturally fell on Île aux Marins, located close to Saint-Pierre but offering a good take off in every direction and far enough away from the city's radio noise. However, we needed to be fully self-sufficient in accommodation, power supply and logistics, which required even more meticulous preparation. The only rental house large enough to host such a team and offering enough space for all our antennas was Maison Marie-Ange. An initial contact was made in late 2024 with the local "Association de gestion du patrimoine."

Our team was quickly formed with 16 operators from F6KOP, all experienced DXpeditioners except for Vincent, F4BKV, for whom this was the first one with our group: Patrick, F2DX (CW and leader); Jean-Luc, F1ULQ (SSB and co-leader); Frank, F4AJQ (DIGI); Damien, F4AZF (SSB); Vincent, F4BKV (SSB and SAT); Jimi, F4DLM (DIGI); Guillaume, F4FET (SSB and EME); Diego, F4HAU (SSB); Xavier, F5NTZ (CW); John, F5VHQ (SSB); David, F8AAN (CW); Philippe, F8EFU (CW); Misho, F8GGV (CW); Andy, DL3GA (CW); Olivier, HB9GWJ (SSB and SAT), and Eric, ON7RN (CW). Jean-Christophe, FP5AC, was in charge of the enormous logistics workload.

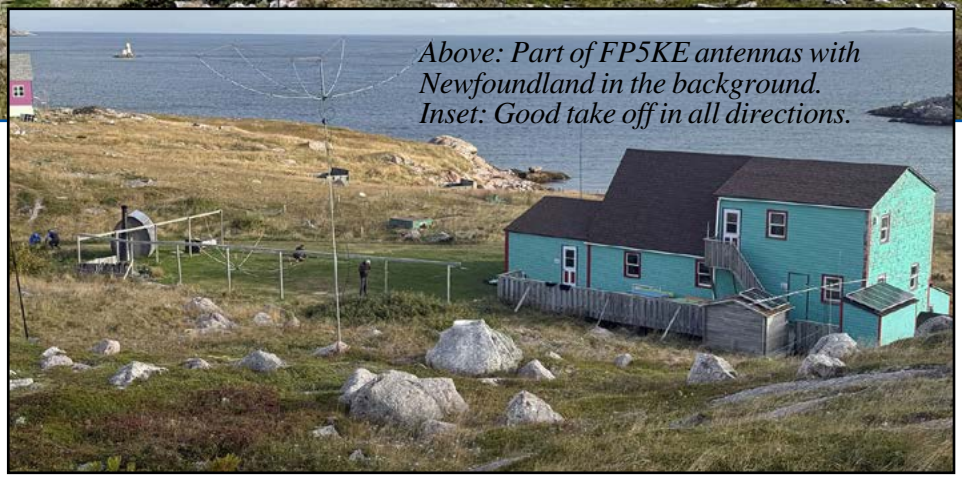
Over 10 months, my exchanges with FP5AC multiplied, as there were many issues to resolve — accommodations, supplies, power generation, and transport. "Every problem has a solution," is Jean-Christophe's motto, and we owe him the success of this DXpedition thanks to his dedication and his extensive network of contacts.

The FP5KE team.

Also, thanks to our solid reputation, many sponsors and individual donors offered their support, even though FP ranks only 104th on the Club Log Most Wanted List. We are very grateful to all of them, especially since costs were particularly high — for instance, we had to charter an Air Saint-Pierre plane to return to Newfoundland ($8,700), as the scheduled boat trip was cancelled at the last minute. This was the only way to not shorten the DXpedition.

In the final months, our equipment was prepared, tested, and packed at F6KOP under the supervision of F5PBM while finances were meticulously managed by F5GVA and F5GSJ. This crucial work was carried out not only by the operators but also by several club members who were not part of the DXpedition team, but were essential to its success.

Thanks to a 30-page document that I constantly updated, each participant had access to all the detailed information, both logistical and financial, and



Above: Part of FP5KE antennas with Newfoundland in the background. Inset: Good take off in all directions.

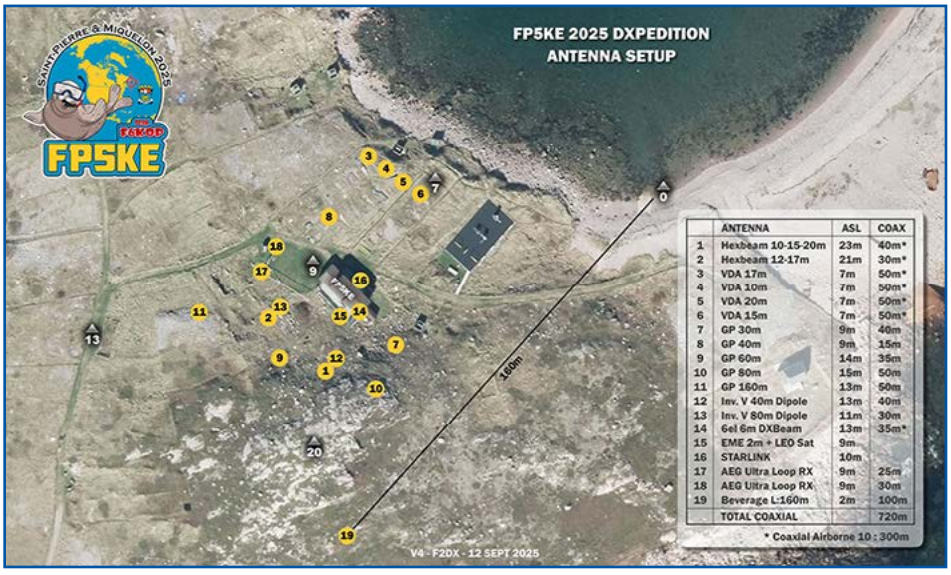
also committed by signing a charter. Another important task was compiling an ATA (temporary export declaration) where everything was listed and numbered, from the transceivers to the smallest cable or tool. Since Saint-Pierre and Miquelon have a special Customs status, this official document simplified our trip with nearly one ton of equipment spread among about 40 suitcases (including five oversized bags for masts and antennas).

Travel arrangements

On the morning of 14 September 2025, we all met at Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris where F5PBM and F4JCT joined us to deliver the one-ton shipment of gear. Everything had been carefully planned, and everyone normally knows which bag they're responsible for, but F1ULQ and F8EFU systematically checked that the distribution was correct (and continued to do so at every stage). Then, our 40 equipment bags had to be cleared by Customs, as well as the 16 personal bags of the operators, and everything went smoothly (thanks to the French Customs officers).

After a 6-hour flight, we arrived in St. John's, Newfoundland, and after going through Immigration, we headed to the Air Saint-Pierre (one of our sponsors) desk. Although airline personnel helped us with the check-in, once we landed at Saint-Pierre Airport, we learned that Murphy had unexpectedly joined our trip! It seems that 11 bags, including all the antennas and amplifiers, were left behind due to the aircraft being overweight!

From the airport, it was a short ride on a chartered bus to the dock to board the *P'tit Gravier* ferry, which was also privately chartered, as the regular schedule didn't fit our needs. Ten minutes later, we reached Île-aux-Marins and all the equipment was carried to our house one kilometer away, using a trailer and a small tractor — many thanks to Axel for his invaluable help.



	ANTENNA	ASL	COAX
1	Hexbeam 10-15-20m	23m	40m*
2	Hexbeam 12-17m	21m	30m*
3	VDA 17m	7m	50m*
4	VDA 10m	7m	50m*
5	VDA 20m	7m	50m*
6	VDA 15m	7m	50m*
7	GP 30m	9m	40m
8	GP 40m	9m	15m
9	GP 60m	14m	35m
10	GP 80m	15m	50m
11	GP 160m	13m	50m
12	Inv. V 40m Dipole	13m	40m
13	Inv. V 80m Dipole	11m	30m
14	6el 6m DXBeam	13m	35m*
15	EME 2m + LEO Sat	9m	
16	STARLINK	10m	
17	AEG Ultra Loop RX	9m	25m
18	AEG Ultra Loop RX	9m	30m
19	Beverage L:160m	2m	100m
	TOTAL COAXIAL		720m

* Coaxial Airborne 10 : 300m

Settling in & setting up

FP5AC did the shopping in advance so we had everything we needed for the first two days. We had planned to set up all our antennas the following day, but had to wait until the afternoon for the remainder of our luggage, which required another visit to the Customs Office and an additional boat charter ($300).

Dominique and Franz had prepared stakes and electrical wire in Saint-Pierre several weeks earlier, so that afternoon we worked until sunset to install coax cables and several antennas while F1ULQ supervised the setup and configuration of the stations. We decided to start operating once all 20 antennas were in place, as we needed a well-rested team, so at sunrise on 16 September, after a good night's sleep, the full team was back in the field under the supervision of F8EFU with whom I had previously defined the position of each antenna and the layout of our 1,000 meters of coaxial cable.

The restored church and old fishermen's houses on Île aux Marins.

Operations

In the end, we lost one night and an entire morning of operation since our first QSO was logged on 16 September at 17:44 UTC (13:44 local time). We then had to double our efforts to reach our goal of 100,000 contacts. From that moment, each operator simply had to follow the operating schedule carefully prepared by F8EFU (and his YL, Martine) and give their very best.

Unfortunately, the house's diesel generator, supposedly rated at 15kVA, only delivered about one-third of that! FP5AC immediately took the challenge and, thanks to the well-known solidarity of the Saint-Pierre community, managed to find two backup generators the next day. We operated this way for a few days until an electrician from Saint-Pierre came to make the proper connections on the main three-phase generator (thanks Stéphane and Jean-Patrick). However, to protect it and avoid any bad surprises, we decided to run our eight stations at reduced power during the entire stay.

As soon as their HF shifts were over, F4BKV and HB9GWJ, our two satellite specialists, went on the hunt for QO-100, even climbing a large rock to get the best possible angle. However, after many attempts from various spots around the island, it became clear that with an elevation of -3.2°, we would never be able to reach QO-100. Still, there was some consolation: 118 QSOs were successfully made via low-orbit satellites.

F4FET, our EME specialist who built and brought an ultra-light 12-element 144 MHz antenna of only 3.4 kg, set up in a small shed near the house and began his "bagpipe" sessions while still doing his HF shifts which remained the priority. During our stay, 56 QSOs were made via the Moon, quite a good result for F6KOP's first attempt at EME during a DXpedition.

For the low bands, we set up quarter-wave verticals on 30, 40, 60, 80 and 160M, and two inverted-V dipoles for 40M and 80M. On the high bands, we deployed two hexbeams which, thanks to a triplexer on one and a duplexer on the other, allowed us to operate all five high bands simultaneously. These were supplemented by four monoband VDAs.

This setup gave us two antennas on each HF band, enabling true in-band operation (two stations working simultaneously on the same band in different modes). This was made possible by adequate antenna spacing, opposite polarization, and bandpass filters. For low band reception we added three highly effective antennas: two vertical-array loops and a 160-meter Beverage, using a kit supplied by SO9I Engineering.

Contrary to the propagation forecasts prepared by F4HAU and VOACAP, we

FP5KE with eight stations in operation.



Left: A good meal is important for the group's morale. Center: Manning the generator. Right: F4FET operating the EME station — 56 QSOs were thus made via the Moon.

were pleasantly surprised by excellent openings on 10 and 12M allowing us to log 14,000 QSOs on each of those two bands.

Other duties

In charge of communication, photos and video, I tried to fly the drone as often as possible, but it was almost always close to stalling as the wind always blows on Île-aux-Marins. It remained like that for the duration of our stay, except for half a day when the best aerial footage was finally captured.

Each day, one operator was assigned to kitchen duty and household tasks. When supplies were needed, that person had to ferry overt to Saint-Pierre, where FP5AC took care of transportation. Additionally, we made an arrangement with the *Association de gestion du patrimoine* (which manages the house and the island's only restaurant, usually closed at that time of year) for their chef to prepare our lunches — many thanks to Christophe for his kindness and the variety of his dishes.

Local flavor

We regularly received visitors, including the local press and television, as they closely followed our DXpedition. Several great articles, reports, and even live broadcasts were produced. Whenever we went to Saint-Pierre, it was impossible to go unnoticed — it seemed that everyone had heard about the radio amateurs on Île-aux-Marins. The local gendarmerie command, representatives from the Prefecture, a school group, and several residents of Saint-Pierre also came to visit us, curious to learn more about amateur radio.

Outside operating hours, the team members took the opportunity to explore Île-aux-Marins, which I hardly recognized after 35 years — most of the wooden houses have since been beautifully restored. The island is amazingly well maintained. The colorful houses are mainly occupied during the summer and on weekends. About 10 *pieds rouges* (red feet) live there for most of the year, and we quickly formed strong bonds of friendship and mutual help with them. In the evenings, Maison Marie-Ange turns into a warm and lively meeting place, where we shared a good, locally brewed Miqu'ale beer. Radio traffic never truly stopped with at least six operators always on the air.

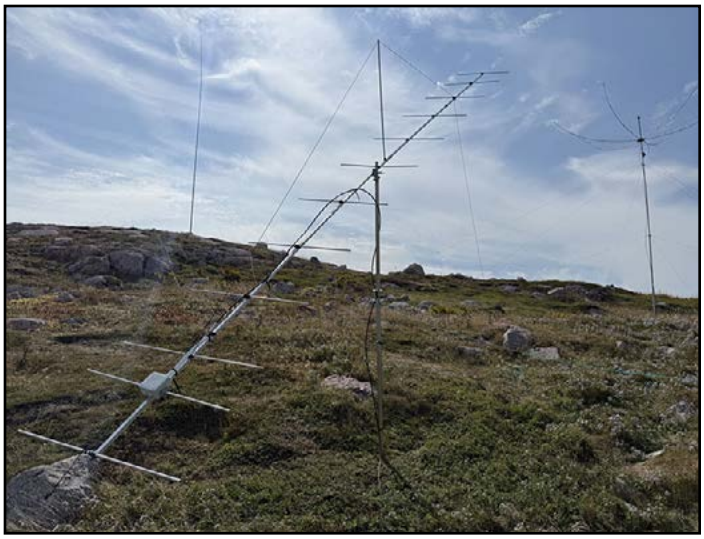
For comfort, the house was well equipped with plenty of room for our eight HF stations, all set up at a good distance from the shared living area. We brought our own sleeping bags, and the operators slept upstairs in three dormitory-style rooms. Water management, however, required strict discipline as rainfall had been scarce and the storage tanks were far from full. It was mutually agreed that everyone would take only a very quick shower every other day at most (in the only bathroom with hot water).

An early departure

With a storm approaching, we had to leave Île-aux-Marins on 26 September, a bit sooner than planned and spent the night in Saint-Pierre. The following morning we boarded our "private plane" to Newfoundland, where we spent the day before needing to board our return flight to Paris.

St. John's was a true pilgrimage for radio amateurs, as we were determined to visit Signal Hill, the legendary site

A school group came to visit us, curious to learn more about amateur radio.



Left: 160M top loaded vertical antenna. Right: 12-element 144 MHz homemade Yagi for EME.

where Guglielmo Marconi received the very first transatlantic radio transmission. Welcomed by Chris, VO1CH, and Frank, VO1HP, we even had the privilege of taking turns operating VO1AA, the official Signal Hill station located inside the Cabot Tower.

Wrapping it all up

In 9½ days on the air, FP5KE logged a total of 131,604 QSOs across 164 countries, averaging 13,850 QSOs per day (577 per hour). Our goal of prioritizing human-operated modes was met with 60% of them in the log. Our only disappointment was the complete lack of propagation on 6 Meters despite having a well-positioned 6-element antenna. By comparison, during 9L5A last year in Sierra Leone, we logged 4,000 QSOs on 50 MHz.

We are pleased to report that we experienced no equipment failures. The DXpedition was fully equipped with ACOM amplifiers which proved to be reliable and robust from start to finish and we thank both ACOM and PROSIC for their support.

Beyond the extensive preparation, the equipment deployed, the experienced operators and the operating strategy, one crucial factor is the harmony within the group, especially when fatigue arrives. In this regard, once again this year it was a complete success, and not by chance.

You can watch the DXpedition film here: *youtu.be/t3DOw2gdB1Y* and you can find more information about the DXpedition by visiting our website, *fp5ke.wordpress.com*

The team at Signal Hill in Newfoundland.

Show your support for NCDXF

NCDXF offers several ways for you to show your love for DXing! Impress your friends with a gold-toned lapel pin at a DX convention. Show up at your next hamfest sporting a NCDXF ball cap, don a NCDXF T-shirt or keep warm wearing the new NCDXF 50th Anniversary hooded sweatshirt or knit beanie to set up your Yagi on Field Day. We've also added wicking long-sleeved tech shirts to keep you looking *and* feeling cool on your tropical DXpedition. And when you return from that rare DX entity, you can send out your QSLs affixed with an NCDXF label. To place your order, fill out and mail in the form below or visit ***www.ncdxf.org*** to place your order online through our secure website. *Please note, due to drastic increases in mailing costs, shipping (included) is only available to US addresses.*

Click HERE to order securely through our website.

Navy blue long-sleeve hooded sweatshirt with full-length front zipper and pockets (sizes: S, M, L, XL, 2X & 3X)

White, long-sleeve tech shirt (sizes: M, L, XL, 2X & 3X)

Navy blue short-sleeve t-shirt, (sizes: M, L, XL, 2X, 3X)

Gold-toned lapel pin

Navy blue ball cap (one size, fits most)

Navy blue knit beanie (one size)

Roll of 500 labels

Send me the following supplies (shipping included):

ITEM	UNIT COST	QUANTITY	TOTAL
Join NCDXF with your Contribution / Renewal (circle one)			$
50th Anniversary Sweatshirt (circle size S / M / L / XL / 2X / 3X)	$70		$
Short sleeve T-shirt (circle size M / L / XL / 2X / 3X)	$25		$
Long sleeve tech shirt (circle size M / L / XL / 2X / 3X)	$30		$
Ball cap	$17		$
Knit beanie	$30		$
Lapel pin	$15		$
Roll of 500 labels	$15		$
TOTAL ENCLOSED			$

Name & callsign _____

Mailing address _____

Email _____

Check enclosed or Charge to Visa / MC / AmEx (circle one)

Card number _____ Expiry _____ Signature _____

Mail your completed order form to NCDXF, PO Box 2012, Cupertino, CA 95015-2012

(12-24)

V6D DXpedition to Chuuk

Werner Hasemann, DJ9KH

ALTHOUGH WE HAVE ACTIVATED quite a few regions in the Pacific in the past, we found Chuuk in the Federal States of Micronesia (FSM) to be worth activating. It ranked 49th on the DL Most Wanted DXCC List and is particularly popular for SSB. We knew that there had been a DXpedition to Chuuk in 2023 (V6EU) with moderate success, so we were hoping that it would still be of interest to the DX community, even as the sunspot maximum subsided. We were very optimistic that we could make many QSOs, especially with Europe, on the higher bands.

Our last DXpeditions to Tuvalu (T2C) and Nauru (C21MM) were very elaborate and expensive, so we were hoping for a more relaxing DXpedition this time. The license with the desired call sign V6D was quickly obtained via an online application.

Our experienced 9-member team consisted of Rolf, DL7VEE (team leader); Ron, DG2RON; Olaf, DJ7TO; Werner, DJ9KH; Joe, DK5WL; Frank, DL1KWK; Norbert, DL2RNS; Georg, DL4SVA, and Olaf, DL7JOM.

Scouting locations

The available locations were QTHs on the Chuuk islands of Kosrae (IOTA OC-059) and Weno (IOTA OC-011). Our top priority in preparing for the DXpedition was to find a location close to the ocean with a minimum risk of manmade noise. The location needed to offer an unobstructed view of the sea to the north and be as far away as possible from power lines and sources of electronic interference (e.g., LED lighting).

With that in mind and based on experiences from previous DXpeditions, we found Rachel's Beach Resort on Weno Island, the capital of Chuuk, to meet these criteria. All antennas could be erected in the immediate vicinity of the sea, without any obstructions toward the major radio transmission areas of Europe, Japan, and the USA.

Weno is located approximately 3,300 km southeast of Japan and about 1,000 km southeast of Guam. The island is home to around 14,000 of the 105,000 FSM inhabitants and has an airport with regular flights to Guam.

The V6D Team (from left): Rolf, DL7VEE; Olaf, DL7JOM; Frank, DL1KWK; Norbert, DL2RNS; Ron, DG2RON; Joe, DK5WL; Georg, DL4SVA; Olaf, DJ7TO; Werner, DJ9KH

Left: Rachel's Beach Resort, our base of operations for V6D.
Below: Our antennas, installed without obstructions toward EU, JA and US.

It lies within the lagoon of the Chuuk Atoll (called Truk until 1990).

We flew from Berlin, Germany, via Helsinki and Tokyo, to Guam, and from Guam to Chuuk aboard the United Airlines Island Hopper. Shortly before we departed Berlin on 20 September, a cyber attack that affected several European airports' passenger and baggage handling systems required our baggage to be labeled manually. As a consequence, one of our bags with the LZ beam antenna and a suitcase with a transceiver arrived at Chuuk's airport in Weno a week after our arrival.

As usual, we transported all radios, mast material (60 meters of fiberglass poles) and antennas in our checked and carry-on baggage — within the economy baggage allowance. Rolf, DL7VEE, developed a detailed distribution plan for this, limiting the "personal allowance" to 7 kg — no problem in the tropical climate. Since we were already allowed two pieces of luggage each for the Berlin-Helsinki-Tokyo leg of the journey, we were able to book two additional pieces of baggage at a reasonable price for the flights between Tokyo and Chuuk.

160M antenna with a loading coil.

As agreed, the Rachel's Beach Resort staff picked us up at the airport. Arriving at the resort, we found spacious three-person apartments with great views of the Pacific Ocean, built and equipped in a very modern style, far away from that what you would expect on a remote island. We knew there wouldn't be restaurants or shops nearby, so we retained a rental car to use for daily shopping, dining, and tours (which were adventurous). The resort is designed for self-catering, so even shopping in the few local stores proved to be quite an adventure on the poor roads.

Construction and operation

We booked one apartment to use as our radio shack. It had enough space for four to five stations and sufficient "acoustical safety distance" between SSB and CW operators. After about 10 DXpeditions together, installing the stations and the antennas is a well-trained procedure, so upon arrival we immediately began setting up the equipment.

With temperatures exceeding 30°C and high humidity, we were sweating profusely, but thanks to the air conditioning, at least the shack remained pleasantly cool.

The two-man inside crew began their job installing the five transceiv-

Bandpass filters and triplexer.

Preparing the 80M-160M vertical antenna.

ers, laptop computers, filter banks, and configuring the Starlink connection. The Starlink internet system had been installed on Weno Island a few weeks prior to our arrival and allowed us to stream our activity in real time via Club Log. We found it to be very stable as well as the electricity system.

Since our LZ beam for the higher bands was still somewhere between Helsinki and Chuuk, the outside team initially installed antennas for 30M (loop), 40M (triple leg), 15M and 6M (rhombus loops) using 12M and 14M Spiderbeam fiberglass masts.

Radio operations began punctually on the afternoon of 22 September. Our first QSOs were on 40M (JL1UXH) and 30M (JAØEME). Radio traffic on the higher bands was pleasingly good from the start.

The following day, the 80/160M vertical antenna was erected. Since the airlines could not give us exact information regarding our missing luggage, we continued to improvise with sloping monoband dipoles for 12 and 20M (five meters high) and converted the 15M loop to 17M.

One lesson from our DXpedition experiences is our avoidance of using compromised multiband wire antennas. Instead, we use separate antennas for each band, optimally aligned for DX and precisely tuned to resonance. With this approach, we achieved 50,000 QSOs after just one week — and then our missing luggage arrived.

Work continued around the clock in a three-operator shift system: 4.5 hours of operation, 9 hours of rest. Despite heavy rainfall, there were no power outages; however, the Starlink system was occasionally affected. From the second week onward, five stations were available simultaneously: one Elecraft K3 and four Elecraft K4s, whose spectrometers we found very helpful for identifying stations calling from outside the current reception range.

New equipment consisted of the JUMA amplifiers with integrated switching power supplies. With a weight of less than 6 kg you may call them lightweight powerhouses. They performed well, even with the prevailing mains voltage sometimes dropping below 120V.

Results

Unfortunately, propagation conditions worsened with the arrival of the beam antenna. The 6M band was constantly monitored, allowing us to utilize almost every opening and achieve a new DXpedition record of 3,689 QSOs — including 851 on CW and 590 on SSB. The favorable distance to Japan certainly contributed to this success.

For 160 and 80M, we used only a single vertical antenna this time, alternating between 80M and, with a loading coil, 160M. Thanks to the generally low noise levels, we made 159 QSOs with Europe on 160M and over 1,200 QSOs with Europe on 80M. Use of the 60M band is not allowed in Micronesia for radio amateurs.

The elevated radial for 160M was only about 10 meters away from the transceivers in the shack. Transmission on 160M created strong RF interference that affected the touch panel displays of the Elecraft K4s, causing their settings to change uncontrollably. We tried to solve this problem by repositioning the stations within the shack and using various types of chokes — a time-consuming task that brought the problem somewhat under control, but it was not a perfect solution.

The LZ beam antenna in place.

Frank, DL1KW and Olaf, DJ7TO operating.

In the CQ WW RTTY Contest on the last weekend of September, we competed with one station in the Multi Single Unassisted category and made 1,678 QSOs on the 40M, 20M, 15M and 10M bands.

Demand for RTTY QSOs remained high even outside of the contest. We recorded a total of 5,963 QSOs on RTTY across the bands from 80M to 6M!

Looking at the distribution of our approximately 92,000 QSOs by continent, we found 43% were with Europe. On the seven bands between 40M and 10M, we made over 10,000 QSOs with Europe on each of those bands. For comparison, during the 2019 sunspot minimum in Canton (T31EU), the European share was only 17%.

There is an ongoing discussion in the DX community regarding the ratio of FT8 QSOs on DXpeditions. We were anxious to hold the FT8 total below 50% and the statistics show with only 47% FT8 QSOs, we achieved what we believe to be an acceptable rate.

Island impressions

Our preferred shack located right next to the antenna field at the resort was unavailable because it was reserved for VIPs. In fact, the Vice President of the State of Chuuk and the Australian Ambassador to Micronesia, who was also interested in our radio activity, resided there at times. During their stays, armed security guards watched over the resort, and the VIP convoy was escorted daily at a snail's pace along the poor gravel roads.

The general infrastructure on Weno was significantly worse than expected. Rachel's Beach Resort is considered the best accommodation on the island by far, but most residents live in simple corrugated iron shacks surrounded by old, rusty vehicles. The selection of food in the shops is very limited. Remarkably, almost all journeys are made by car and at a snail's pace — motor scooters or bicycles were rarely seen.

Conclusion

The V6D DXpedition, with over 92,000 QSOs (nearly 32,000 on CW and almost 12,000 on SSB), was a complete success and an exciting adventure for the entire team. We achieved this high number of QSOs despite the delayed arrival of the LZ beam.

Every QSO is confirmed with a QSL card upon request. It shows Rachel's Beach Resort with our antennas, as well as the logos of our sponsors, to whom we extend our sincere thanks.

Exhausted, but happy about completing another well-executed DXpedition, we boarded the plane to Guam where we overnighted before our return flight to Germany.

For further information, visit *V6D.mydx.de.*

We couldn't escape the paparazzi and they finally caught up with us in Tokyo, where Ron, DG2RON, graciously agreed to an interview.

V6D shack operations.

Cycle 25 Fund & Cycle 25 Society

To 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.

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

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

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* 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.

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*.

Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)

Are 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 Distribution (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.