



# Northern California DX Foundation

www.ncdxf.org

Spring/Summer 2007

## PENGUINS ON KERMADEC

### The 2006 Microlite Penguins DXpedition to Raoul Island, ZL8R

— Michael A. Mraz, N6MZ

James Brooks, 9V1YC, answered his ringing cell phone. “Hey James, Nigel here. You told me once that you wanted to visit Raoul. Well start packing mate, I just called in a favor from DoC and you have official permission to visit the island.”

Nigel Jolly, owner and operator of R/V *Braveheart* (aka “the DX Boat”),

was calling from the ship’s satellite telephone while anchored at Raoul Island in New Zealand’s Kermadec chain. The government agency responsible for administering Raoul, the Department of Conservation (DoC), chartered *Braveheart* several times a year to re-supply Raoul and transport the small resident team of DoC workers from the mainland to the island and back.

This trip was unusual, however. On 17 March 2006, an active volcano at the center of the island underwent a small geothermal eruption. Mark Kearney, one of the 2005-06 resident DoC team members, had volunteered to monitor the temperature of fumaroles in the caldera of the volcano. Mark was at the caldera recording data when the volcano erupted, releasing a relatively small amount (in geologic terms) of rock, ash and gas. Geothermal (steam) eruptions aren’t as violent as those that involve magma, but it was violent enough that Mark, unfortunately, was killed.

Fearing more casualties, the DoC sent long-range military helicopters to evacuate the rest of the team. When the volcano was quiet again, DoC headquarters asked Jolly if he could transport the team back to Raoul and take two rescuers along to search for



Mark’s body. Before even negotiating a charter fee, Jolly said “Yes” and then ordered *Braveheart*’s skipper, his son Matt, to fuel and provision the boat as soon as possible and put to sea for Raoul.

Matt and Broughton Lattey, another *Braveheart* crewman, volunteered to accompany the rescue team and the four men spent several difficult days



The ZL8R team (top) VK6DXI, 9V1YC; (bottom) HB9ASZ, NØTT, N6MZ, K9ZO, W7EW and EI6FR.  
Photo by Lew Sayre, W7EW

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Wire dipoles ready to go! Photo by Mike Mraz, N6MZ

in the ash and rock debris unsuccessfully attempting to locate Mark's remains. DoC was deeply indebted to Nigel for the crew's efforts and they asked him if there was anything they could do in return. Being the consummate businessman, Jolly called 9V1YC on the spot. DXpedition charters are good business after all!

## Dipoles only!

The most unique feature of the ZL8R DXpedition was our antenna plan. The *Braveheart* crew had visited Raoul many times — they had even emailed us photos of our operating site, where there happened to be a grove of several dozen non-indigenous Norfolk Island pines. Of course the trees are much happier in their exotic location on Raoul than they are on VK9N! In fact, they grow so well that they're now about 40 meters (130 feet) tall and we had permission from DoC to use these beautiful monsters as our antenna supports. Even better, our QTH was near the edge of a bluff

that was almost 100 meters (330 feet) above the sea! That made the antenna choice a no-brainer. Simple wire dipoles for each band would be easy to build and would perform extremely well. Most importantly, they would be fast to install — our 14-day charter allowed us only 8½ days on the island.

After a lovely 3-plus-hour drive from the Auckland airport, James and I checked into a little family-run hotel in Tauranga, a port town on New Zealand's North Island. After lunch we visited *Braveheart* to retrieve the antenna supplies that had been shipped from the USA.

It took just a few hours of easy measuring, cutting and soldering in my hotel room to build all the dipoles. We even built a full-size dipole for top band! We had separate dipoles



The caldera at Green Lake. Photo by Mirek Rozbicki, VK6DXI

## Contributions

The NORTHERN CALIFORNIA DX FOUNDATION relies heavily upon the generosity of its members to fund various projects. We urge each member 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! The 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. Use the envelope supplied with the newsletter to send your contribution. If the envelope is missing, send your contribution to: NORTHERN CALIFORNIA DX FOUNDATION, P.O. Box 1328, Los Altos, CA 94023-1328, USA. You may also contribute and order supplies online via our secure server, visit [www.ncdxf.org](http://www.ncdxf.org).

for 75M and 80M, two 40M dipoles and two 20M dipoles. We assumed that 20M would be our most important band into the most difficult area to work from ZL8, Europe.

The following day, most of the rest of the team arrived. We took advantage of the additional hands to open the two cardboard containers shipped from Seattle that contained our six new Icom IC-7000 transceivers with matching power supplies, six laptops and accessories, etc. Ralph Bellas, K9ZO, and I repacked the rigs, laptops and other important electronics into watertight cases and we gathered various bits and pieces from Nigel's inventory such as flashlights, radial wire, power cords and outlet strips.

Everything destined for Raoul had to be inspected by DoC personnel before departing the mainland. The New Zealand taxpayers have spent an incredible amount of money over the years to remove non-indigenous plants and animals from Raoul, and they weren't about to let a stray weed seed or ship rat sneak onto the island. Fortunately for us, the non-indigenous Norfolk Island pines are a special case; they were planted by the island's first settlers in the 19th century, and are an important part of Raoul's heritage. The mature pines can stay but the DoC team pulls up all the seedlings.

Six hours before our scheduled departure, two ladies from DoC arrived to begin the inspection. They were very thorough and much of our gear was placed into special DoC plastic storage bins and sealed — and not opened again until after we landed and then we were required to inspect them again. We worried about the inspectors being "too thorough," but they were very reasonable and easy-going — typical Kiwis!

After stowing our gear and helping the crew with their duties, the last important item on our checklist was to install one of the 40M dipoles on *Braveheart* so that we could operate maritime mobile and exchange email via the Winlink system. VK6DXI and NØTT drew the installation duty and in a short time we were on the air from the ship.

## Wake up! We're here!

After "only" 60 hours at sea, we ghosted into the anchorage on the north shore of Raoul well before sunrise on the morning of 10 October. Those who weren't already awake certainly didn't sleep through the noise associated with dropping and setting the anchor! A pair of humpback whales swam by to welcome us, and within an hour or two the eastern sky began to glow dimly and we could see the two large peaks of the Meyer Islands, about five kilometers away. We slammed down a quick breakfast and then started preparing all the gear for transport.

All personnel and cargo enjoyed a brief Zodiac ride from the ship to the island. Humans got to hike up the steep cliffs but the cargo had the most fun. Using an aerial tramway called the "flying fox," the DoC crew lifted our goods up the 500-meter-long line to a staging area. The whole operation was safe, smooth and effective, but nobody could tell us why they called the lift a "flying fox."

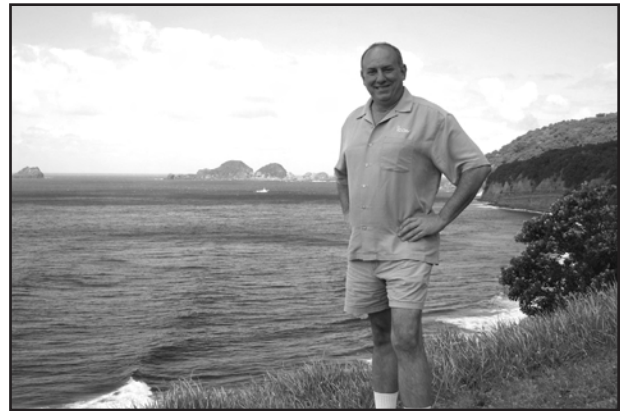
Linda, one of the friendly DoC staff, offered several of us a ride in a cart pulled behind an all-terrain vehicle. Along the way, the path made a turn along the edge of a steep cliff and we got a fantastic view of the volcano's caldera. We were all impressed with this island's incredible natural beauty!

After unloading our personal gear at DoC's village and performing another check for stray seeds and creatures, it was time to report to our operating site, a little clearing on the bluff with a house called the "wool shed" (we never determined the source of that name either). Broughton, our on-site cook, climber, generator repairman and all-round fantastic team member, was already setting up the kitchen and preparing to cook our first supper. James interrupted him to ask if he could start climbing the pines and installing the dipoles. "Broughtie," an avid rock climber, was delighted

to leave the kitchen to another crew-member while he scaled the trees. By sunset, Broughton and crew had 40M, 30M and two 20M dipoles ready to go for our first night on the air.

## Shoveling

We made our first QSO with K6MM on 40M CW at 0842Z (21:42 local time) on 10 October. After the traditional cheers, back slaps, handshakes and maybe a few celebra-



*"Braveheart" at anchor with Mike Mraz, N6MZ, in foreground. Photo by Lew Sayre, W7EW*

tory glasses of wine, we informally divided ourselves into "day shift" and "night shift." Around midnight, the day shift started their 10-minute hike back to the bunkhouse, trying not to trip while gazing at the incredible southern night sky. Arriving at one of the clearings along the trail, we all turned off our headlamps and flashlights and just stood there immersed in that wonderful quiet inky blackness that one sees only at truly isolated places on the planet.

We were already shoveling loads of QSOs into the log. Awakened by their night-shift roomies, the day shift arrived just after dawn. I was already there, doing my daily log collection/merge and backup. Not bad: 2,170 QSOs during the first 12 hours with only three bands active!

The next day was another busy day for Broughton. We wanted to get the 80M antenna up and as many others as he thought he could safely manage. The 17M dipole went up quickly and the QSOs started to flow. Later, the 80M dipole went up as high as possible and we waited impatiently

for our first evening grayline. Unfortunately, that first evening produced no 80M QSOs to Europe. However, as the night wore on and the sunset grayline marched across western Asia and then eastern Europe, finally our first European called in, OH7UE, over an hour before his local sunset!

We got the 160M dipole operating on Friday the 13th, which was certainly a lucky day for top banders. Not long thereafter, I had an incredible opening on 12M SSB, simultaneously working North Americans



The view down the “flying fox” run was stunning. Photo by Mike Mraz, N6MZ

and near-antipodal EA8s/CTs/CT3s/EA7s! Holy cow, working 12M during the sunspot minimum on a 18,500-kilometer (11,500-mile) path! It was time to put up the 10M dipole!

Neil from *Braveheart* and I marched out through the knee-high grass to install the 10M dipole at the edge of the bluff. The little antenna was only about 10 feet off the ground, but I was concerned that it would be too high when the bluff height was added. No worries, we worked over 1,100 QSOs on 10M into North America and the Far East — at the bottom of the sunspot cycle!

Lew Sayre, W7EW (also known as “Doc,” our team physician), brought along his 6M EME station and a highly portable 7-element Yagi on loan from M2 Antenna Systems owner, Mike Stahl, K6MYC. When not shoveling on HF, Doc worked every EME opening he could, adding six 6M EME contacts to our log! Congratulations to SM7BAE (twice), W7GJ, K6MYC, W1JJ and SM7FJE!

## We’re finished already?

As always, it seemed as if we had just arrived and then it was time to start tearing everything down. We all met at a flagpole near the memorial to Mark Kearney to take our team photo, and then the day shift worked the last few hundred QSOs. James let me make our last QSO as we went QRT at 2200Z on 17 October. It was with our good friend John, VE3EJ, one of our FT5XO Penguins who couldn’t come with us to Raoul.

It really was a sad moment when we had to say goodbye to our DoC friends and to this incredibly beautiful island paradise. There was so much that we hadn’t seen; so many more adventures to experience. I could have stayed a whole year.

The wind had been gusting over 30 knots for a few days — it was early spring in the southern hemisphere, the equivalent of April in the northern.

Even at the anchorage on the lee side of the island, the ocean was getting pretty rough and the *Braveheart* was pitching noticeably. The crew wanted to get us off the island before it got any rougher, so we rushed our preparations and skipped breakfast and lunch (NOT the recommended procedure for going to sea!). I had reminded everyone to apply their scopolamine patches that morning, the most important of all departure preparations, in my opinion. It was going to be a rough ride home.

The less said about the return voyage, the better. The wind and waves subsided after a day or so and by 0900 on Saturday, 21 October, we spotted the North Island coastline near Tauranga. By 1100 Matt had expertly guided *Braveheart* to a very “soft landing” in her moorage alongside Nigel’s big ocean-going tugboat. We had everything unloaded in a few hours and began saying our goodbyes.

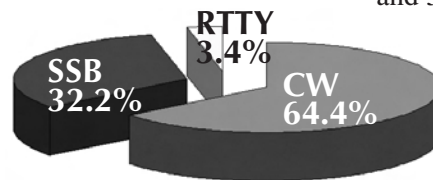
## Stats

Considering the sunspot minimum, our limited amount of time on the island and the small team, we were really happy with our radio results, working about 40,430 QSOs. We concentrated on working the difficult European openings and the statistics showed that we made a good dent in the demand: Europe accounted for 26% of our QSOs.

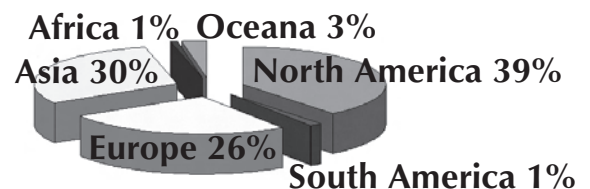
All of the Penguin team members are diehard CW operators, but several of us traded paddles for microphones this time. We were still CW-heavy statistically, but that’s because the mainly-CW bands of 40M and 30M were our big producers at the sunspot minimum.

There weren’t any huge surprises in the band breakdown except that we were thrilled to

### QSOs by Mode



### QSOs by Continent



be able to work so many DXers on 12M and 10M near the bottom of the sunspot cycle. Those near-antipodal QSOs on 12M are unforgettable; the entire trip was unforgettable!

Thanks to NCDXF for helping us make it happen. 🌐

About the author: N6MZ caught the radio bug early and passed his Novice exam at age 11 in 1966. Ham radio led to an electrical engineering degree from Ohio State, where W8JK (sk) tried to teach Mike electromagnetics and antenna theory. N6MZ has been lucky enough to join the DXpedition teams of VKØ1R, ZK1XXP, KH9/N6MZ, 9M600, XRØX, FT5XO, VP5W and ZL8R. Other than DXpeditioning, his passions are sailing and opera. You can reach him at [n6mz@arrl.net](mailto:n6mz@arrl.net).

# VU7RG January '07 DXpedition

After a successful Andaman Island (VU4) Hamfest and DXpedition, the National Institute of Amateur Radio, Hyderabad (NIAR), began organizing for Lakshadweep Islands, the number two most-wanted.

In early 2006, after the Andaman Hamfest, an International Advisory Committee (IAC) was appointed by NIAR to include not only NIAR staff, but amateurs from each ITU region. Frank Rosenkranz, DL4KQ, Kyoko Miyoshi, "Mio," JR3MVF, and Glenn Johnson, WØGJ, met in New Delhi, India, in August 2006. We met with various government agencies and officials who subsequently gave conditional promises in connection with severe restrictions and costly direct consequences. The IAC realized the vital necessity of immediate financial support although the licensing process still was shaky. Financial backup was given by Mio and her Japanese friends and, due to the incredible efforts of NIAR chairman, S. Suri, VU2MY, and Bharathi Prasad, VU2RBI, the Special Permission and reciprocal licenses were finally granted.

A Hamfest was the key for the Special Permission and by late fall 2006 it had been arranged for operations on three islands with three groups of foreign operators. NIAR also successfully applied for the difficult 30M permit, the first ever for VU7, and to activate Minicoy Island, the number one most-wanted IOTA. For Minicoy identification the VU7MY call sign was chosen, as tribute to the efforts of S. Suri, VU2MY, while the other sites signed with VU7RG to honor Rajiv Gandhi (SK), VU2RG, former Prime Minister of India.

After several months of intensive planning for January 2007, rescheduling for December 2006 and then rescheduling again for January 2007, and due to vague travel dates, the site lineup changed up to the last minute. Finally 29 foreign operators arrived

in India and departed to VU7 on different ships.

The Hamfest took place between 15-17 Jan 07 on Kadmat and was inaugurated by the Lakshadweep MP Dr. P. Pookunhi. The Kadmat Team and some 50

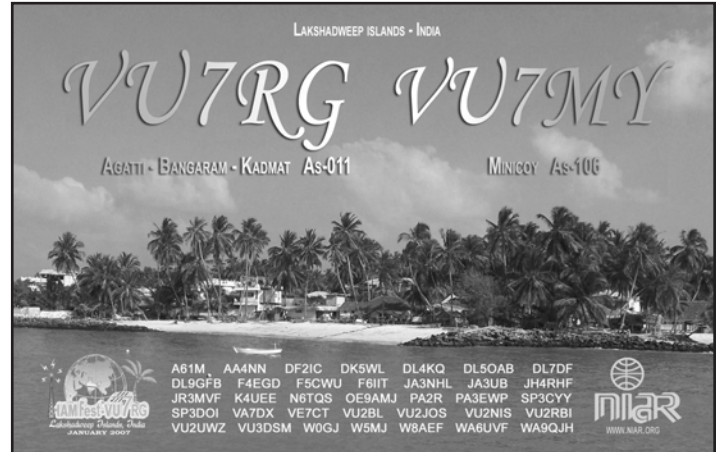
Indian amateurs attended. Even Mio, JR3MVF, and Steve Wright, VE7CT, joined despite a terrible journey on a 20-foot nutshell through 60 miles of high seas.

## Agatti

Our original ferry to Agatti was scheduled to depart on 11 January, but just before departing from home, we learned the ferry had been rescheduled to 12 Jan, arriving on Agatti the afternoon of 13 Jan, giving us exactly one day to set up all of our



*160M — a top-loaded vertical at the water's edge in Agatti. This antenna netted 2,152 Qs with 133 North Americans in the log. Nothing like a salt-water based vertical at the grayline!*



antennas and stations. The way things worked out, we needed those extra days to get our unaccompanied baggage cleared through Customs.

After 24 hours aboard the ferry, we boarded a couple of small boats that delivered us to the most gorgeous of tropical islands with pure white, coral sand and beautiful palm trees. Robinson Crusoe would have been jealous!

While on the ferry, we reviewed our operations manual and made assignments for a quick deployment and erection of our antennas. We did not know exactly what our room situation would be, but, as it turned out, it was ideal.

We stayed at the very nice Agatti Island Beach Resort, located on the southwest end of the seven-mile-long island; there the island was only 200 to 300 yards wide. We had perfect, unobstructed shots to Europe and North America; to Asia and Japan, there were just a few palm trees obstructing the path.

Our rooms were nice and cool, located adjacent to one another, and just feet from a meeting hall, which became our operation headquarters.

We scheduled three-hour operating shifts, with some back-to-back. The resort's restaurant even altered their meal times to match our shift changes.

We thank Icom for lending us their 756 Pro III's for our five stations. MicroHAM provided micro KEYER interfaces that mated our radios to

the computers and also did the CW and RTTY interfacing. We used WriteLog on our laptops. Basically each station was the same, including I.C.E. 419B Bandpass filters. The five stations were dedicated to 160M and 17M; 80M and 12M; 40M and 10M, and 30M and 20M. SteppIR provided two 2-element beams.

Our total number of duped-removed contacts was 40,851 with 5,759 North American (14%) in the log; 78% of our contacts were CW, 5% RTTY and 17% SSB. Who says CW is dying?

Our emphasis was on the hard-to-get North and South America stations and to fill the need for CW contacts from VU7. Many times a day, we would leave high rate European runs to ask for North/South American stations. We would often leave the high run rates to go to slower lower bands as the grayline passed.

### Agatti team

Arno Metzler, OE9AMJ; Neil King, VA7DX; Steve Wright, VE7CT; Joe Pick, DK5WL; Franz Berndt, DL9GFB; Jun Tanaka, JH4RHF; Mohammed Darwish, A61M; Bob Allphin, K4UEE; Madison Jones, W5MJ; Paul Playford, W8AEF, and Glenn Johnson, WØGJ.

### Bangaram

A dozen operators planned to operate from Bangaram Island, but the team was decreased to four. In early November 2006, Mio, JR3MVF, and her husband, Jiro, JA3UB, had stored equipment at NIAR HQ and went on to explore Bangaram.

More freight was shipped but there were problems with Indian Customs causing some items, like coax cables, to be locally ordered and delivered with help from NIAR.

On 12 January the team departed from Cochin and arrived the following day in Bangaram, after stopping at Agatti. Two stations with Yagi and wire antennas were set up.

The operations started on schedule, but due to the interference situation, only one station was manned con-

tinuously. Due to the VU7RG frequency management, Bangaram did not operate on all bands and modes.

Bangaram finished with a total of 4,183 contacts.

### Bangaram team

Ellen Parker (YL), WA6UVF; Tak Yokouchi, JA3NHL; Mio Myoshi (YL), JR3MVF, and Jiro Myoshi, JA3UB.

### Kadmat

Kadmat hosted 14 operators at two resorts two miles apart. All materials were transported by the operators; coax, masts and bamboo poles were ordered for local delivery. The team departed in three groups, with plans to arrive on Kadmat on 9, 13 and 14 January.

Only the first group arrived on time, and laughed when they saw that the 42-foot bamboo poles they ordered turned out to be thin, unsuitable 20-foot sticks!

The two other groups each arrived



*Tropical Bangaram, Lakshadweeps, the only place where drinks were served.*

12 hours behind schedule, giving them only 18 hours, and four hours to setup prior to the operation start. To make matters worse, we had to stop working for official meetings!

Operations, however, started on time and the remaining setups were finished during next few days, despite compulsory Hamfest attendance. A pleasant surprise was YL Nisha Mohan, VU2NIS, who operated some days from our CW site. The low-height Yagis on their 12- to 15-foot bamboo sticks were not efficient for long-haul contacts and to add to the trouble, both Kadmat sites faced S9+ noise levels on low bands once the resort lights were switched on. In an attempt to solve the problem, we moved antennas and used different RX antennas, but nothing worked. Furthermore, we were asked to temporarily dismantle some antennas when a cruise ship disembarked 1,200 passengers. Frustrated, we ceased serious 160M and 80M efforts.

Days 5 and 6 greeted the CW site with the dead loss of two final stages; another one had band problems and interference. Subsequently, we were unable to serve all bands and most stations had to be operated on low power.

We made the best of the situation and worked off the pileups. "Murphy's team" accepted their fate and finished with 47,102 contacts. Despite all our troubles, our NA West coast rate was 27% better.



*The Kadmat CW site where necessity is the mother of invention. Here a ladder had to be used instead of the unsuitable bamboo poles.*

## Kadmat team

Joe Blackwell, AA4NN; Doug Faunt, N6TQS; Adolph Kryger, WA9QJH; Les Fabjanski, SP3DOI; Jan Ambrozy, SP3CYY; Greg Fismer, DF2IC; Frank Rosenkranz, DL4KQ; Bernd Willeke, DL5OAB; Siegfried Presch, DL7DF; Sylvain Lefevre, F4EGD; Florent Moudar, F5CWU; Pat Vermote, F6IIT; Rob Snieder, PA2R; Ron Stuy, PA3EWP, and Nisha Mohan (YL), VU2NIS.

## Minicoy

Minicoy has a separate IOTA number, AS-106, and was Asia's most-wanted IOTA because the last activity there was 46 years ago. No



*Kadmat's mosquito playground. Sylvain, F4EGD, operates from the resort's gym which was used as SSB shack.*

foreigners were permitted there and even Indians need a special permit.

The five-member team arrived the morning of 15 January and set up three stations; one at Twinkle House, close to the jetty; at the Village Panchayat Office on the west coast, and at the Customs Office on the east coast.

All stations used verticals and folded dipoles; two had Yagis. The verticals worked superior. YL Bharathi Prasad, VU2RBI, fell while adjusting the radials, requiring medical treatment. The Twinkle House site turned out to be a RF noisy place while the



*Bharathi, VU2RBI, and Jose, VU2JOS, the Minicoy CW operator, gave a Ham radio presentation to a local school class.*

Panchayat Office site was the most efficient.

Most contacts were made on phone since Jose Jacob, VU2JOS, was the only CW operator. YL Mahathi, VU3DSM, Bharathi's 13-year-old daughter, was the youngest of all. YL Bhanu, VU2BL, already had to leave Minicoy on 19 January. The YL operators manned the stations during the day, while the men took the night shift.

Minicoy only operated on 40M and higher bands, no digital modes, save the few made by Madhu Mohan, VU2UWZ. Twenty was the best band and 40M was open sometimes to NA until 8:45 a.m., Indian time.

Minicoy finished with a total of 17,210 contacts.

## Minicoy VU7MY team

Bhanu (YL), VU2BL; Jose Jacob, VU2JOS; Madhu Mohan, VU2UWZ;


Bharathi Prasad (YL), VU2RBI, and Mahathi (YL), VU3DSM.

## Summary

The total number of contacts made by the four island teams was 110,000.

Generous support from the NCDXF helped make a successful January 2007 operation from four VU7 islands possible and the former number two most-wanted has fallen off the charts.

Many North Americans are now in the logs, including the elusive low bands. Thank you all for making VU7RG such a resounding success.

For more pictures and information, visit [www.vu7.in](http://www.vu7.in). 

*Editor's note: Ellen Parker, WA6UVF; Jose Jacob, VU2JOS; Glenn Johnson, WØGJ, and Frank Rosenkranz, DL4KQ all contributed to this article.*

## 2006 NEW MEMBERS

The following are first time contributors to NCDXF:

ABØYM, AB1DO, AD6LV, AG9A, EA1AX, EI3HA, F5CVI, Hudson Valley Contesters & DXer's Radio Club, I1FQH, IZ3EBA, JA1PYP, KØAV, K2CBI, K3BZ, K4OP, K5FP, K6KLL, K7CO, K7PN, K8VFN, K9ALP, K9TTT, KA8Q, KC2ATK, KI6LO, KI6WK, KM4H, KN6DQ, LA4WIA, LA9DK, LY2IJ, N2EGO, N3GE, N6IPS, N6RB, NL-10018-R36 (SWL), NL7G, NN6W, NO9U, NQ6P, RA6YY, RW3GA, Southeastern DX & Contesting Organization, SP5XVY, VA3YX, VE3AV, WØEWM, WØMAN, W2XRX, W3DQ, W4LSC, W5BJO, W5SL, W6DDB, W6EB, W6NRQ, W6RLL, W6TK, W6YDE, W8MMC, W9XA, WA4NAP, WB4BYQ, WB5OSD, WF7M, WO6T, WS1L and YB7VR.

Welcome to the NCDXF family!

# NCDXF beacons aid 3YØX DXpedition

Peter Jennings, AB6WM

“Did you check the beacons?” Dave Anderson, K4SV, was asking again.

“Whenever someone would claim a band was dead, Dave would ask if we had checked the NCDXF beacons. It became his mantra,” said Al Hernandez, when asked if the 3YØX team had made much use of the beacons while they were down there.

Team members called CQ on 10-, 12- or 15-meters, hoping for an opening. If they weren’t spotted on the cluster, there would be no response at all. But before declaring the band closed, they listened for three full minutes to the beacon frequency, checking for any signals. If a beacon was heard, they announced the frequency and the location they were hearing to the pileup they were working on another band and go back to calling CQ. That would bring the stations out of the woodwork. Once they were on the cluster, the pileup would follow.

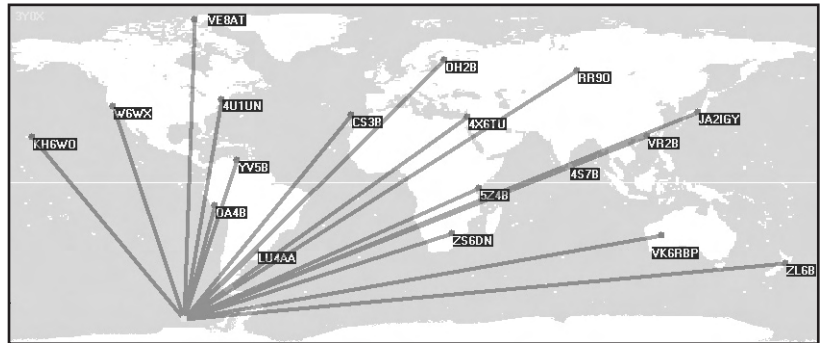
Al continued, “Before we even arrived at Peter I, we listened to the beacons from the ship to get an idea of the propagation patterns from down there. We checked the predictions made by VOACAP against what we were hearing from the beacons as well as the stations we worked maritime mobile. We made almost 10,000 QSOs from the ship!”

Everyone on the team agreed the beacons were invaluable for checking propagation. “We are really grateful to the NCDXF and IARU for funding and managing the beacon chain.”

## Beacons presentation

A PowerPoint slide show presentation has been created showing the history of the beacons, the hardware used and screen shots of some of the useful beacon tracking software.

This can be presented to your local club or hamfest by any speaker who spends a little time reading the accompanying notes and checking out the information on the NCDXF



Beacon website, [www.ncdxf.org/beacons.html](http://www.ncdxf.org/beacons.html).

To request a copy of the 45-minute (23mb) file, visit [www.ncdxf.org/beacon/powerpoint.html](http://www.ncdxf.org/beacon/powerpoint.html).

## NCDXF/IARU International Beacon Project

The transmission cycle repeats every three minutes. Add 10 seconds to the beacon start time for each band. For example, at 2131Z, JA2IGY will transmit on 20 Meters; VK6RBP will be on 17; ZL6B will be on 15, and so on.

Beacon	Time	Beacon	Time
4U1UN	0:00	4S7B	1:30
VE8AT	0:10	ZS6DN	1:40
W6WX	0:20	5Z4B	1:50
KH6WO	0:30	4X6TU	2:00
ZL6B	0:40	OH2B	2:10
VK6RBP	0:50	CS3B	2:20
JA2IGY	1:00	LU4AA	2:30
RR90	1:10	OA4B	2:40
VR2B	1:20	YV5B	2:50

Frequency	Add
14.100	0 sec
18.110	10 sec
21.150	20 sec
24.930	30 sec
28.200	40 sec

## Faros – automatic monitoring of the NCDXF beacons

Alex Shovkoplay, VE3NEA, has created a software program that will automatically monitor the 18 NCDXF beacons on all five bands and present the results in graphical form. The

software will control the rig to switch bands.

The program measures the signal-to-noise ratio, the QSB index and the propagation delay, automatically identifying long path and short path reception.

False reception reports are minimized by intelligent detection of the CW identification of each beacon.

The resulting graphics and reception statistics can be archived for analysis or uploaded to a webpage for sharing.


This is a great tool for keeping tabs on the propagation from your QTH to various parts of the world.

There are already five stations sharing their reception reports and it is hoped that more beacon monitors will come online soon. Active monitoring stations are listed on the NCDXF website at [www.ncdxf.org/beacon/monitors.html](http://www.ncdxf.org/beacon/monitors.html).

The Faros shareware program can be downloaded from [www.dxatlas.com/faros](http://www.dxatlas.com/faros).

## Tools for listeners

There are now more than 30 different programs and a number of hardware projects designed to assist the listener in identifying the beacon or automatically monitoring the signal. Links and reviews of these tools appear on the Beacon website [www.ncdxf.org/beacon/BeaconTools.html](http://www.ncdxf.org/beacon/BeaconTools.html).

The Beacon Project is supported by Kenwood, HRO, Cushcraft, NCDXF and through individual donations. 



# Ham radio anyone?

*Peter Casier, ON6TT*

I was not a happy camper, and that was an understatement. Before we left, I emphasized the need to watch for us on our frequency, but when I called, there was nothing, nada, zilch. The sun had already set behind the mountaintops and even though the sky still had a hint of a dark-blue afterglow, it was already dark. And when I say dark, I mean pitch dark. There was not a single light. The headlights of the trucks in our convoy beamed into a void as they negotiated the twists and turns on this bombed-out road. They lit up nothing but emptiness and bomb craters, and little flags marked “Mines.” I cannot describe it in any other way; there was absolute emptiness.

There is nothing in this part of the world. There is nothing that grows, there are no houses and no one lives here. There is only light-brown dirt and bits and pieces of mangled war toys. A rusted tank half-buried in the sand, or a helicopter’s rotor blade sticking out of a pile of rubble. The rest is just plain dirt. I cannot believe this part of the world has been a battleground for the past 20 years; the last fierce battle was only four days earlier. The Northern Alliance met the Taliban. The score was one to zero; the Taliban lost and evacuated Kabul.

That’s when we moved in with the relief convoy.

## Background

We just flew in a C-130 cargo plane full of food, and I went with a convoy to pick it up from Bagram airport, a few hours drive from Kabul. We couldn’t use the Kabul airport because an unexploded one-ton bomb was sticking out of its runway and there wasn’t anyone available to eliminate the mines. Nobody was allowed to come into Kabul, except 20 expatriate aid workers, of which I was one — and I was the only one on that road that night. I was the only one outside the safe haven of Kabul.

I must have been crazy. At any time, I expected to see the flare of an RPG coming straight at us; rumors were that rogue Taliban roamed the area.

## All alone

I cursed and checked another frequency that was sometimes used, but still nothing. The radio room was not answering. It was Ramadan and at that time of the day, the radio operators in Kabul, 20 kilometers away, had probably gone to pray or were already at the Iftar, breaking their fast.

What to do? I dialed another frequency I was rather familiar with on the HF radio. One push on the auto-tune button and a few seconds later the HF antenna in the front of the car had a perfect SWR. The radio beeped and displayed “14.195.0 – Antenna Tuned.”

“Frequency in use?”  
Not a beep.

I wondered if the radio was receiving or transmitting at all. Maybe that was why the radio room did not copy me. Everything worked well before we left.

“Frequency in use?”  
Then I tried “CQ 20, CQ 20, YA5T/m YA5T/m YA5T/m, CQ 20 and by.”

Then the world exploded on that tiny radio. Shivers ran down my spine!

I could not believe it. There I was, sitting in a car, driving on what was once a road, with probably dozens of Taliban waiting to take a shot at me, in the middle of bloody nowhere. And still, with a small piece of hardware, I had the world talking to me.

## The world talks back

It took me a minute to get Mark Demeuleneere, ON4WW, my friend

in crime, on frequency. He boomed in and I passed him the sat phone number of the control centre in Kabul, just in case and he remained on standby for the next two hours until we safely reached Kabul. By the time we entered the outskirts of the city, I had written down 100 call signs in my log. My handwriting was not the best thanks to the potholes.

Even though I was in the middle of nowhere, I was not alone. Hundreds of people were listening in from all over the world.

Weird stuff, hey, Amateur Radio? How do you explain that to outsiders? How do you explain, not only what Amateur Radio is, but also what it means to you, in your life? It changed the course of my life in many ways



and I started to publish those stories on the Internet (<http://theroadtothehorizon.blogspot.com>).

## A sharp bend in the road

As I wrote these stories, I started to realize — and I know it sounds rather melodramatic, but it’s true — that Amateur Radio changed my life. If not for Amateur Radio I would not have done the FOØCI expedition in



1992 and experienced the adrenaline kick that operating from a remote Pacific island gave me. I would not have done the AH1A expedition to Howland a year later. Then, I would not have met Paul Granger, F6EXV. Paul was a co-operator on AH1A and one of my contest partners at OT3T, operating from the home of John Devoldere, ON4UN.

It was during that contest that Paul received a telephone call offering him a job at the UN in Congo. He explained to me what that work was all about and it raised my interest.

Less than a year and one expedition later (3YØPI), I flew to Angola on my first humanitarian mission for the Red Cross. My job had nothing related to my education (graphical engineer) nor

with my professional experience (IT manager), it was to install radios. I did work that was solely based on my experience as a Ham operator.

In the end, there was no difference between going on an expedition and fiddling around with generators, debugging antennas and raising masts, whether I was on Peter I Island or in the middle of Africa — well, they did not shoot at us on Peter I — but other than that, there was no difference.

Angola was my first mission in the humanitarian world (where I later operated as D2TT and D3T) and was followed by hundreds of missions, to over 100 countries. I also kept track of how many countries I operated from, 85 so far.

Over the past 14 years, there have

been many exciting and memorable moments. Many have a mix of an exotic location, work and Amateur Radio. Some include being the first in SSTV from 9Q, during the midst of the Kisangani refugee crisis, and a few months later to be the first on SSTV from HV. Or the 60,000 QSOs I logged from our home in Kampala as 5X1T, in between power outages, babysitting, bombings and evacuations.

Then there are all the friends I made when on mission and being able to hook up with people I had spoken with hundreds of times, but never met. I had the opportunity to meet them while on mission, and they welcomed me into their homes — be it in YS, EP, YI, 9N, ZS or EY (and dozens more). They often gave me a head start for my work, providing me with much needed connections to the local PTT officials or a trustworthy local telecom repair shop where I could find that long-sought-for cavity filter.

There is not one single memory that stands out. They are all different in their own way, but if there was one time where I felt really lucky I was a Ham, it was that one night, in the midst of nowhere, in Afghanistan, just a few weeks after 9/11!

The Northern California DX Foundation has been involved in my DX activity for many years and I appreciate their help and support as well as the friendships that have evolved. 🌐

*About the author: Peter Casier, ON6TT, works for the United Nations' World Food Programme (WFP). His last duty station was in Dubai where, as the director of WFP's UAE office, he headed FITTEST, the UN's humanitarian support team. FITTEST specializes in the fast deployment of telecoms, IT and logistics infrastructures anywhere in the world, in times of humanitarian crises. He is married to Tine, ON9CTT, and has two lovely daughters, Lana and Hannah. You can read "The Road to the Horizon," stories about a Ham, an expeditioner, an aid worker, a sailor and a nutcase online at <http://theroadtothehorizon.blogspot.com>.*

## HEAVY HITTERS 2006

We sincerely thank these supporters of the **NORTHERN CALIFORNIA DX FOUNDATION** for their generous contributions during the calendar year 2006.

\$10,242 — W6EEN for Educational Fund

\$2,000 to \$3,000 — Northern Illinois DX Association

\$1,000 to \$1999 — K2PLF, W6EUF, K6RIM, SCDXC, W6OTC and K6IPV

\$500 to \$999 — Southeastern DX & Contesting Organization, Northern California DX Club, N4JJ, SP5XVY, K6ANP, N6TQS, NC8B, W6AQ, W6OSP, KØGEO, Anonymous

\$250 to \$499 — AA6IR, JA1EM, K6GFJ, K6TA, K6UM, KI6T, NN6W, NW6P, Twin Cities DX Association, WØGJ, W1PNR, W5IZ, W6BGK, W6JZH and W8QID

# The new NCDXF video

Tim Totten, N4GN

James Brooks, 9V1YC, is well known among the DX community as a world-class DXpeditioner and producer of several fantastic DXpedition videos. Somehow, between major DXpeditions and a hectic professional schedule, James found the time to produce a new video about NCDXF. (As this is being written, James is logging QSOs at a rapid clip on 20 CW from BS7H.)


The video, which runs just under 10 minutes in length, not only tells the history of NCDXF, but it also explains the important work of the Foundation and gives you an insight

into how it operates. This is a perfect opportunity for NCDXF contributors to get an inside glimpse into how their funds are used.

Every DXer is aware of the Foundation's work supporting major DXpeditions, but perhaps you didn't realize that NCDXF operates a scholarship program, or that NCDXF funding is what keeps the International Beacon Project on the air. Or did you know the Foundation now has members from more than 45

different countries? Keep that in mind next time someone tries to tell you NCDXF is a regional organization only for W6 DXers!

If you have a broadband Internet connection, the new video can be viewed in streaming format or downloaded directly from the NCDXF website ([www.ncdxf.org](http://www.ncdxf.org)). It has also been posted to Google Video, where it was viewed more than 6,000 times in just the first few weeks.

A DVD containing the NCDXF video is free to clubs who would like to show it to their members. For a copy, send a request by e-mail to NCDXF Librarian Dick Wilson, K6LRN, at [k6lrn@arrl.net](mailto:k6lrn@arrl.net). 



## Amateur Radio makes news in Somalia

Silvano Borsa, I2YSB/6OØCW

A ceremony was held in Galkayo, Somalia, on 12 April 2007, that, in part, thanked HAM (Helping All Mankind) radio operators for helping facilitate the donation of an ambulance to the Galkayo Region Hospital, Puntland State, Somalia. In addition, the ambulance and its key, was presented to Dr. Ahmed Abdikader, the regional hospital director.

Dr. Abdikader thanked Dr. Mohamed Jama Salad, who, through his friendship with Italian Amateur Radio operators during their 2005 and 2006 DXpeditions in Galkayo, Somalia, was able to get the ambulance donated.

The director also thanked the people of Italy, the amateurs and the NGO called Avis (Italian blood donation organization), who supplied the ambulance.

Dr. Salad, the neurosurgeon in Galkayo, Somalia, thanked the participants at the ceremony, including Sam Voron, VK2BVS/6OØA, Filip Rogister, ON4TA/6OØF, the Mayor of Galkayo, and other local dignitaries and businessmen.

Silvano Borsa, I2YSB/6OØCW,



led a group of five Italian Amateur Radio operators in 2005 and another group of seven Italian Hams in 2006 to Galkayo, Somalia.

Amateur Radio visitors to Somalia can get help with Amateur Radio licensing and assistance at Galkayo airport from SARFEN (Somalia Amateur Radio Friendship and Emergency Network) by e-mail [somaliahamradio@yahoo.com](mailto:somaliahamradio@yahoo.com). For more information about the Italian Amateur Radio and humanitarian assistance to Somalia, visit [www.i2ysb.com](http://www.i2ysb.com). 

### DXPEDITION FUNDING

In 2006 NCDXF made or approved a total of \$62,800 in grants to DXpeditions to the following recipients:

1A4A	VU4AN/ DL4KQ
3B7C	VU4AN/DL7DF
3CØM	VU7LD/VU7RG
4O3T	VU4RAN/KIE/OHA
5A7A	J2ØMM/J2ØRR
OJØLA	S21EA/S21XA
WRTC 2006	XF4DL
XT2C	ZL8R

# Libya 5A7A – 2006

*Juergen Borsdorf, DJ2VO  
and Andy Lueer, DJ7IK*

In November 2006, after receiving a special call sign from the DX Cluster, a large-scale expedition took place. Many frequencies could be served simultaneously, offering radio amateurs from all continents the best possible chance to work a new country. Planned very well and executed on a high level, this activity offers itself formally for the title “DXpedition of the Year.” Here’s how 28 radio amateurs brought a country situated in the north of the black continent on the Amateur Radio bands for 14 days.

After intensive preparation by Andy, DJ7IK, supported by Mustapha Landoulsi, DL1BDF, our group



*Team Libya*

flew to Libya on Wednesday, 15 November 2006. The participants of the 5A7A expedition met in the early morning in Frankfurt/Main to check in. Restricting our personal luggage to 10kg, we could transport the 1.1 tons of radio equipment needed. Once we arrived in Tripoli we had to wait while entry procedures took place. Mustapha, DL1BDF, born in Tunisia and a former Lufthansa pilot, took on the negotiations with the entry authorities in Arabic while Haytem, 5A1HA, who had picked us up directly at the airplane, stood with him. Two hours later, however, it was done. After scanning our luggage and without requiring us to open any of it, our group was allowed to leave the airport and drove the 15 miles to Janzour.

## **An ideal spot**

Janzour, a vacation center, is located directly on the Mediterranean Sea and proved ideal for our purposes. In the centrally situated main building, an unused restaurant on the first floor was reserved for us (“Site 1”). We were also allowed to use two bungalows 200 and 300 meters away, which we labeled “Site 2” and “Site 3.” The distance to the water was approximately 50 meters from all the buildings — an ideal DX QTH!

The next morning began like at every activity of this type: antenna construction. On the main building, two Spiderbeams were erected, and at the beach, two Four-Squares, one for 40 and one for 80 Meters. Also, wire antennas were erected. The roof of Site 2 got another Spiderbeam for 20 -10 Meters and the place in front of the house sported a Butternut and a 20-meter-high vertical for 80 Meters. Some distance away, a 20/30/40M Spiderbeam was positioned. The roof



of Site 3 turned into the home of the Yagis for 6 and 2 Meters for the 14 days. A Titanex vertical for 160 Meters and the Pennant receiving antennas were set up in front of this house directly at the beach.

Because of the great accommodations and the restaurant in the main building, we were able to set up four complete stations with no interference caused by running SSB. These stations were each equipped with IC-746 Pro transceivers and Acom 1000 amplifiers. Each station was operated both on CW and SSB. J. Thomas “Mitch” Mitchell, VE6OH, called it “The-Pileup-Eaters.” Site 2 also got two IC7-46 Pro transceivers



*Site 1 — The center of the DXpedition.*

with Acom 1000 amplifiers. For the CQ-WW-DX-CW Contest, these became the search-and-pounce stations. At Site 3 stations were installed for 160 Meters and 6 and 2 Meters.



The DXer's dream: antennas right at the sea.

Site 1 was the center of the expedition as well as switch and communication headquarters. Here, Manfred Gronak, DK1BT, arranged the W-LAN Access-Point together with Mitch. As the expedition center, all work and band plans were displayed here as well as receiving visitors who were offered tours of our operations. Mustapha, DL1BDF, gave training for the 5A1A members and, most important, beverages and food were always available for the operators.

### Strong signals

With the first QSOs, enormous pileups developed on all bands; predominantly European, located at our front door, they assailed us with power and extremely strong signals. Americans and Japanese

point average, we submitted a good result. Our goal for the DXpedition was 50,000 QSOs, but we more than doubled that with 112,000 contacts in the log.

On 29 November, the stations were dismantled and all materials packed in order to fly back to Germany the next day. Before our departure all participants agreed that we would definitely make another big DXpedition.

Thanks to all our sponsors and the hospitality of the ASSAKER club in Tripoli and the Libyan people. For more information, visit <http://5a7a.gmxhome.de>

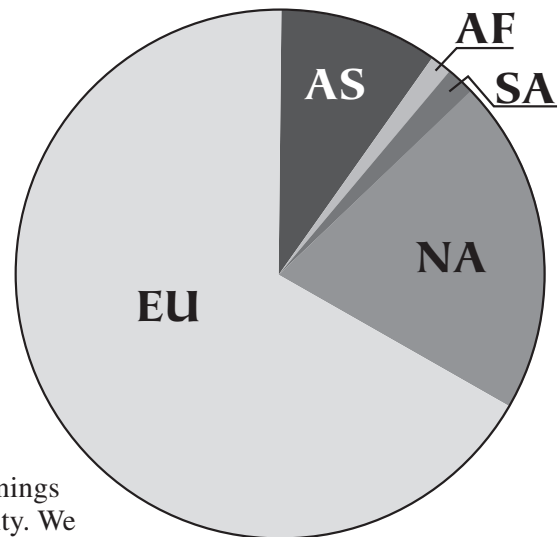


1-Band QSOs	14,722
2-Band QSOs	5,269
3-Band QSOs	3,282
4-Band QSOs	2,368
5-Band QSOs	1,948
6-Band QSOs	1,444
7-Band QSOs	984
8-Band QSOs	638
9-Band QSOs	539
10-Band QSOs	16
11-Band QSOs	2

112,000 QSOs in 312 hours of operation = 359 QSOs/h

called us during the band openings in similar quantity and intensity. We participated in the CQ-WW Contest and with many contacts and a high

### QSO Distribution 5A7A



5A7A Band/Mode breakdown	Band	CW	SSB	RTTY	PSK	SSTV	FM	WSJT	FSK441	
	160M	6,344	928	283	98	0	0	0	0	7,653*
	80M	10,397	7,243	377	4	0	0	0	0	18,021*
	40M	13,018	11,984	1,273	222	0	0	0	0	26,497*
	30M	7,553	0	490	9	0	0	0	0	8,052
	20M	8,351	9,920	1,490	11	71	0	0	0	19,843
	17M	4,231	4,598	802	55	0	0	0	0	9,686
	15M	6,388	8,846	205	0	0	0	0	0	15,439
	12M	1,872	1,616	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,488
	10M	1,893	1,318	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,211
	6M	41	8	0	0	0	1	2	0	52
	2M	2	6	0	0	0	0	63	210	281
70CM	1	6	0	0	0	0	2	0	9	
Mode	60,091	46,473	4,920	399	71	1	67	210	112,232	

\* New records!

### Comparison of DX spots

Call	Year	DX spots
3YØX	2006	9,689
5A7A	2006	8,035
VU7RG	2007	7,930
D68C	2001	7,692
VU7LD	2006	7,089
3B9C	2004	7,073
4O3T	2006	5,323

# Market Reef OJØLA

Trond Johannessen, LA9VDA



*The chopper arrives at Market Reef on its third trip.*

It was quite exciting when we learned there was a possibility for us to go back to Market Reef. It would be the fourth time for two of our members, the second for myself and the first time for Morten Kvernmoen, LA9DFA. This trip never would have become a reality without the help from Lars Nikko, OHØRJ; a few weeks before our trip, he went out to the lighthouse with fuel for the generator and other supplies for us. Lars is also an excellent cook and he always entertains us with his stories.

We all gathered in Moss on a Thursday and purchased the last supplies before we started on our long journey to Grisslehamn. According to weather forecasts, the prognosis wasn't good. As we got closer to Grisslehamn, the weather got worse; it started raining and the wind gained force. The ferry left early the following morning and we knew it wouldn't be possible to reach OJØ that day, due to high wind speeds.

On Saturday the winds had calmed down, but it was still too much for boat travel. We contacted the helicopter transport, but there were a few flights ahead of us so we had a several-hour wait. We decided to use the time to take a trip up to OHØJFP's QTH. For those visiting OHØ, this certainly is worth a visit — eight towers, with aluminum, high up in the air; no wonder he gets out.

That evening the helicopter was finally able to fly us out — our first flight was 1830 local time. After three trips to transport all our stuff,

we were finally on the reef again. Unfortunately, it was getting dark and it took time to bring all the gear inside the lighthouse. The only thing we could do with the antennas was to assemble the 9-element for 2M and the 7-element for 6M. Mounting the antennas would have to wait. Once inside, we assembled all the stations.

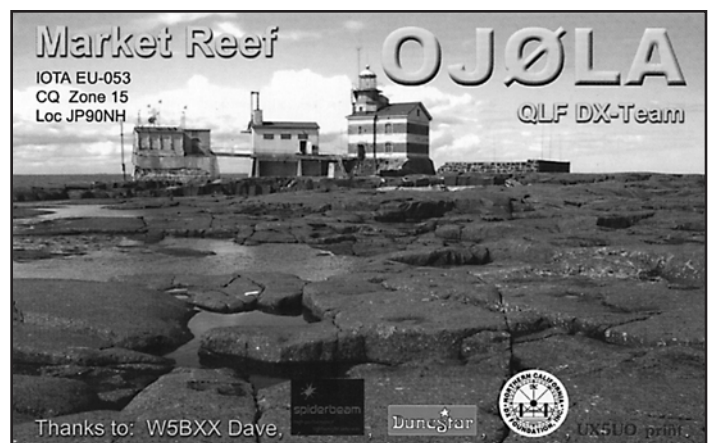
Early Sunday morning, the antenna work started. Three BiggIR vertical antennas were erected; the first was mounted at the top of the lighthouse, the second was mounted on the stone wall and the last one was mounted on the toilet. Thanks to Spiderbeam, we had two 18-meter-long fiberglass poles to use. One of them was used for the 80M quarter-wave vertical. Because of heavy wind, the vertical had to be placed between two buildings. The VHF antennas were put up on a rotor on a pipe on top of the generator house.

## On the air

We hit the air around 14Z. Conditions were quite good and we had instant pileups. At our moonrise, an attempt at EME on 6M was made, but nothing was heard. Later I went to work JT6M and I soon found out what a pileup on this mode sounded

like. Amazing what this mode can do to a “dead” band. 80M was tried, but not much DX to find there. The high noise level made it difficult to pull out the weak ones. 40M, however, provided good openings to Japan and many stations were worked. Since we were all very tired after working with antennas most of the day, nothing was worked during the night.

After a good night's sleep, we were on again and pileups were hitting us hard. Conditions are quite different from here compared to our home QTH. At home, North America comes in quite well and is not difficult to work on most bands; Japan and other eastern countries are more difficult to work. At OJØ, we had trouble working North America on any band, but Japan and surrounding countries were quite easy. In the pileups we had lots of EU and JA, but very few NA. North America was coming through on 40M and 30M in the early morning; 80M was all EU.



At our moonset, we made another attempt at 6M EME; this time it was much more successful. Six QSOs were made and signals were very strong. An excellent takeoff with a good Yagi helped a lot. We worked W7GJ, W1JJ, K6MYC, K1SG, PE1BTX and W1VHF on 6M EME.

Later that day, a 160M dipole was erected at the top of the lighthouse with sloping ends. It was too difficult to get any other antenna up because of the wind and receiving antennas weren't possible. Market Reef is a very small place, which makes it difficult with beverage antennas. A K9AY loop had been tried on earlier

4K stations. Later a few stations from North America were worked and VE1ZZ, VE1ZJ, VE1BVL, W1NG, NN1N, W1JR and K1ZM made it into the log.

As the second day of operation reached its end, we had worked over 3,300 QSOs.

By Tuesday, it was all about operating radio. One EME QSO with K7AD was made on 6M, and some FSK were worked on

2M again. On HF, we still had good pileups. The conditions were quite good most of the time, however we did experience a few quiet periods when the magnetic field was active. At 60°N, we were very influenced by the aurora oval. We tried 160M but only for EU.

At the end of the day, we had worked over 5,500 QSOs.

Conditions were still very good on Wednesday and a lot of HF was worked. That evening we had some good tropo on 2M; the longest QSO was 1,200 kilometers. We tried 160M again and had mostly EU, but a few UA9s made it into the log. A bit later, WØFLS, NO2R, K1NA and KM1E made it into the log. No more DX was worked and the day ended with over 7,000 QSOs.

On Thursday we had an EME scheduled on 2M with EA6VQ. He was worked in only a few minutes and HB9Q quickly followed, becoming the only 2M EME we did from OJØ.

According to the weather forecast, winds were supposed to increase closer to the weekend so a decision was made to go QRT and leave Friday.

That evening, most of the station was QRT but a final attempt on 160M was made and JA4DND and JA4LXY got into the log. Those were the only




*The lighthouse at Market Reef.*

JAs worked on 160M. Many Europeans were worked as well, but no more DX showed up. The last QSO was made shortly after midnight. All stations were QRT and with over 9,100 QSOs in the log, this trip was a success. We even managed to work some DX on 160M and 80M.

Early on Friday we took down the antennas and packed our gear. The water was too high to leave by boat so a helicopter was ordered to transport us back to OHØ.

Market Reef was QRT.

Thanks to our sponsors: W5BXX, NCDXF, UX5UO, Spiderbeam and Dunestar. 



*The gear is packed and we're ready to go.*

trips with very bad results. Finally, all bands were now QRV.

## Good contacts

At our moonrise, we didn't have much success with 6M EME and, unfortunately, our moonset heading was almost straight into the lighthouse, causing QRM and a bad takeoff. We later got reports that we were heard in Japan and in Finland. I went to work JT6M on 6M and some FSK on 2M, which sounded almost like perseids. The big guns obviously had their room heaters on. On HF we were active on CW/SSB/RTTY with pileups. We had several stations QRV at the same time. Thanks to the bandpass filters from Dunestar, we had no problem working several bands at the same time. Since RTTY wasn't worked too much on our previous trips, we decided to do a lot of work this time around. During the evening, we also tried 160M but a high noise level made it difficult; mostly EU was worked together with a few

## PENSION LAW CHANGES

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 offers attractive giving opportunities in 2007.

If you are over 70½ years of age and taking "Required Minimum Distributions" from an IRA then you can make a direct contribution from the IRA to NCDXF for some or all of the RMD.

The Pension Law changes are such that you DO NOT pay taxes on the RMD that is directed toward a 501(c)3. The portion of the RMD that is gifted does not add to your total taxable income so you avoid taxes at a higher level of income and also avoid a reduction in your realized Social Security benefits. These changes are only currently in effect through 2007.

As always you should discuss this with your tax preparer and/or financial advisor.

# DXPEDITION LENDING LIBRARY

The **NORTHERN CALIFORNIA DX FOUNDATION** has a number of VHS/DVD videos and Microsoft® PowerPoint presentations on CD-ROM available for loan to organizations wishing to show them at their meetings. There is no charge to use the programs in the **FOUNDATION'S** library, but clubs borrowing materials are responsible for postage in both directions. Please submit your request at least two weeks prior to your meeting and the program will be sent by First Class mail (CD/DVDs, \$1.50 each; VHS, \$3 each). Priority Mail rates start at \$5, depending on weight and destination.

In your request, please provide the name of the club, your meeting date and an alternate selection in case your first selection is not available. Please return all material promptly so that it will be available for others.

Submit your request in writing to Dick Wilson, K6LRN, via e-mail at [k6lrn@ar1.net](mailto:k6lrn@ar1.net)... or surface mail to PO Box 273, Somerset, CA 95684-0273, USA (*please allow an additional week if your request is sent via surface mail*).

The following is a very abbreviated listing of videos, DVDs and CD-ROMs; for a complete listing of programs available for your club's use, please visit our website, [www.ncdxf.org](http://www.ncdxf.org), and click on "Videos."

**For items 1-109, please visit our website, [www.ncdxf.org](http://www.ncdxf.org)**

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| 110. Ham Radio Olympics (WRTC 2000)          | 115. VP8GEO South Georgia, 2002        | 124. K7C Kure Atoll DXpedition 2005 (DVD)                                  |
| 111. K5K Kingman Reef, 2002                  | 116. WRTC 2002, Finland                | 125. 6OØN Somalia 2006 (PowerPoint)  |
| 112. D68C Comoros Islands                    | 117. 3XY7C Guinea 2002, DL7DF          | 126. AH1A Howland Island Jan/Feb 1993 (DVD)                                |
| 113. I2UIY Niger/5U 2001 & 2002 (PowerPoint) | 118. K4UEE Top Expeditions             | 127. 5A7A Libya 2006 DXpedition by Rudi, DK7PE (VHS, DVD)                  |
| 114. VP8THU South Sandwich, 2002             | 119. 3B9C Rodrigues (VHS/DVD)          | 128. J2ØMM Moucha Island DXpedition (off the coast of Djibouti) (VHS, DVD) |
|  | 120. TN3B/TN3W Congo 2003 (PowerPoint) |  |
|  | 121. Banaba T33C 2004 (VHS/DVD)        |  |
|  | 122. TJ3FR/TJ3SP Cameroon (VHS/DVD)    |  |
|  | 123. FT5XO Kerguelen 2005 (DVD)        |  |

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