The KC4DXpedition

Wayne Green W2NSD/1

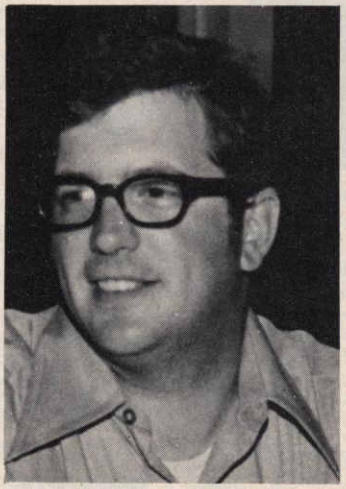
One of the fellows on the DXpedition to Navassa was musing over what it was that made Navassa so interesting a place for a trip. Why not go to Antiqua or some other place? Navassa has the advantage over most of the other spots in the Caribbean – it is seldom hammed – it is awfully hard to get to – no one lives there – the seas are often against you – the weather is hot and the cliffs are awe inspiring. It is a lot different from going ashore on an island with a dock, moving into a nice hotel room with ice water and a restaurant, and setting up a DXpedition.

The intrepid ten, gathered around for a round of beers before going aboard for twelve hours of nausea, sickness and distress.

Ten of us met in Jamaica for the 1972 Navassa Island DXpedition. Eight of the group were from the Atlanta area, one from Philadelphia and Wayne from New Hampshire. Chaz Cone W4GKF made most of the arrangements for the trip, in between his work for IBM. The Philly man was Rick Feld K3FPY, the only dedicated CW man on the trip. Rick runs those 800 watt sound systems used by the top rock groups and swears that his hearing has not been permanently damaged.

Our captain of the Tycoon, Busha, said he had been by Navassa the day before and that the seas were very high at the time and that unless they had subsided we would not possibly be able to land. Great news. All of us managed to get aboard the 41' boat along with about fifty boxes of equipment and supplies and we putted out of Kingston harbor just before midnight. Chaz turned white moments later and assumed his permanent leader position with his head over the rail, a spot which he kept for the next twelve hours. Judging from the convulsions he ran quickly through dinner, lunch, breakfast, and midnight snack the night before before we reached the open sea. He then worked his way back through several days and was about two months back, doing everything possible to dredge up more by the time Navassa hove into view.

Chaz was not by any means alone. The seas were mighty and our little boat went up and down like a roller coaster, smashing suddenly to right or left, nosing into a giant swell, spray shooting into the air. It was a very rough trip and the only winners were the school of fish trailing our boat to pick up the free lunches being left behind.



Chaz Cone W4GKF of Atlanta and IBM who organized the effort and got the license, the Coast Guard permission, etc.

The gear filled all of the bunks in the cabin, leaving only a few chairs and the deck for stretching out. To help more, it was grisly hot in the cabin and this helped aggravate any developing queasiness brought on by the wild ride. To help even more, and probably the most aggravating of all, Neil was there bumbling with a transceiver and making contacts. He'd loaded up one of the fishing outriggers on 75m and the mismatch was so bad that he had to run about 0.5 watts to keep from blowing the final tubes. He did manage to work 6Y5CB up to a couple of miles DX. For some obscure reason he had not thought to bring an antenna tuner.

Rick Feld K3FPY from Philly, a swinging CW op with loads of anecdotes about the rock stars he works with.

Ray Cobb K4PGM of Atlanta, the chef for the party of ten.

Skip Staub K4TMA

Three of us headed for the flying bridge. It was flying around a lot too. We huddled on the seat around the helm and held on for dear life. There was just room to lie down scrunched up, but no way to stay put without grabbing for something every minute or so when the boat would take a particularly steep dive or list. We all spent the night too tired to sit up and too battered to sleep. You might call it aggravated rest. It got us in shape for the strenuous ordeal of moving the ton of gear ashore the next day.

As day broke Busha passed around some saltines for breakfast. Saltines are supposed to be the best thing for a seasick stomach. They were great – soon there were showers of saltine flakes billowing back from the boat looking for all the world like snow as

Steve Smith WA4VWV, another Atlanta pilot and a darned good ham operator.

even that Spartan breakfast was rejected. The heartier stomachs settled for crackers and cheese. Even the best of constitutions were not any too stable after that shaking up.

Busha, asked every one or two minutes by the whiter members of our group, kept answering that we should see Navassa along about 9:20 AM. It is a credit to his helmsmanship and navigation that Navassa appeared dead ahead on the horizon at about 9:17. The Tycoon was making about 10 knots. It could do about double that in calm seas, but any more speed would have pounded the boat too hard.

Navassa got larger, looking like an upside down pie plate floating on the water. The plateau is about 400 feet out of the water. It is ringed by a narrow flat area which is about 75 feet up from the ocean. There are no beaches. The entire island is rocky cliffs and quite impossible to climb. The only spot where the island can be reached is a tiny indentation on the south coast called Lulu Bay where the U.S. Coast Guard has built a landing platform about 35' above the water.

Don Kasten WB4SST, a pilot, of all things. Goes right with his call letters. Don is starting a little ham business on the side to make tone encoders for FM.

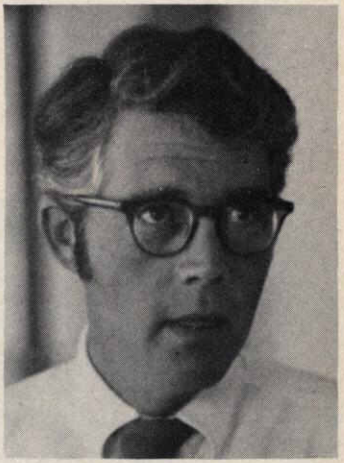
There is a wire ladder hanging down from this platform. Since the cliffs are undercut from ten to thirty feet at sea level, utmost care has to be taken in approaching the ladder. One mistake and a swell can shove your dinghy under the cliff and the inrushing sea will smash it and you, spitting out the whole in a shower of spray that goes out about 30 feet.

As we approached Lulu Bay we noted with dismay that the tie down buoy which used to be there had been removed. The bottom is deep and smooth, making anchoring very difficult. The cliffs go straight down about 80 feet under the water and the bottom falls off rapidly to 300 feet or so. The seas were much too heavy for the big boat to get near the ladder and the cliffs. We would have to use the tiny dinghy to go ashore.

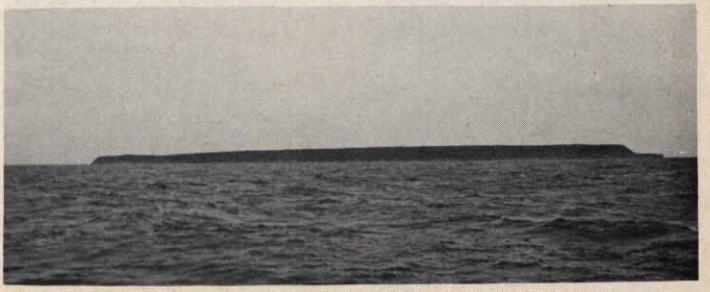
Chaz, anxious beyond all description to get his feet on solid ground, went in with the first dinghy trip. Even the spectre of the ladder, which is not at all easy to climb, didn't slow him down in his rush to get on shore.

As self-appointed official photographer for the trip I managed to get into the second trip to the ladder. After being up all night and shaken through and through for twelve hours, I was groggy but game. Somehow I got into the dinghy, meeting it coming up as the big boat went down a swell, grabbed my camera bag, and off we went to the ladder about 100 yards away.

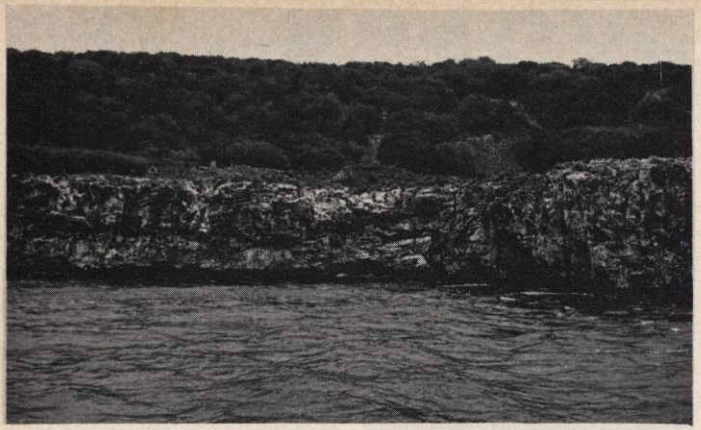
The ladder is a bitch to climb. You have to put one leg around on one side and the other in front or else it will swing out from under you and you then have to chin yourself up the length of it; if you do it right you do get a good workout and some bruises on the legs, but at least you can make it in a minute or so instead of having to rest two or three times on the way up. Just grabbing the ladder takes coordination. If you grab it and hold on while a swell is down the next wave will come up and soak you. If



Bill Donovan WB4WMG of Atlanta.



Navassa comes up over the horizon dead ahead, proof of good navigation by the skipper.



Lulu Bay, the only landing on Navassa, a pork-chop shaped island about three miles long with no beach whatever.

you grab at the peak of a swell and don't hold tight the boat is suddenly six feet below you.

The island wasn't as steady as I wished. I made it to the top of the ladder, my cameras followed me up on a line, and I stood there gathering my wits – or at least half of them. The island was not pitching and rolling as much as the boat and that was nice. Chaz was there, a bit of color beginning to appear around the edges.

Cameras slung over my shoulder, I headed along the cliffs to get into a good spot to take pictures of the landing operation. The cactus had grown a whole lot since my last visit and I soon found myself stopped to pull off big bunches of it. Balls of cactus clung to my pants, my shoes, everything. Luckily I had worn gloves to climb the ladder and they made it easier to pry the damned stuff off. Only a few thorns went through into my fingers – and broke off.

Since I knew that the fellows would thank me in the long run if I spent most of my time taking pictures of them working rather than stopping the pictures to lend a hand pulling all that gear up the cliff, I tried to ignore the growing chorus of requests for me to come and lend a hand. You know, they reacted the same way the last time I came to Navassa! As the suggestions became a little more pointed I did some token work, huffing and puffing a lot, talking a good deal about how old I am, how often things like this lead to serious heart attacks for those unused to heavy work in the hot sun, and musing over the reaction of the 2000 or so life subscribers to *73* and their reaction if sheer laziness on the part of a couple of expedition members should cause me to expire.

I sure did get an awful lot of pictures.

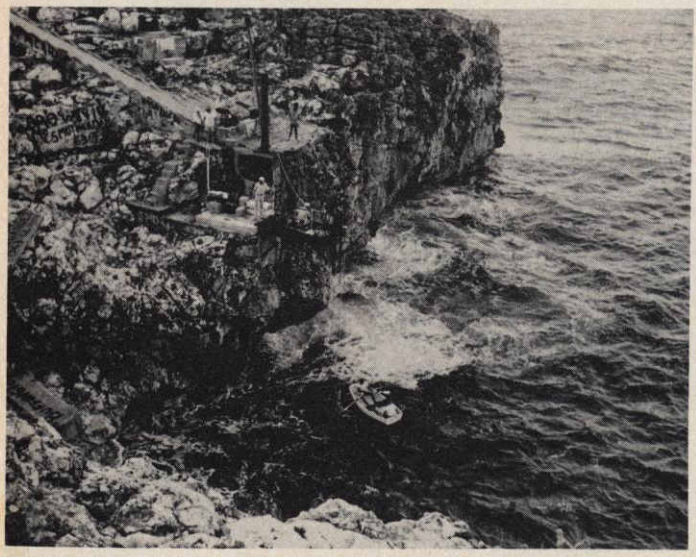
Along about 3 PM most everything was ashore that we would need and Don WB4SST was hard at work trying to decipher the instructions that came with the all band vertical antenna. The hot sun, lack of sleep, and continuous seasickness did help to make most of us a bit crabby. Neil helped with this a whole lot by issuing conflicting orders, and generally rubbing everyone the wrong way with a skilled hand.

Ray Cobb K4PGM, our gourmet cook, got his job off to a flying start by unpacking the grape jelly a little quickly. It dropped and there was Ray in grape shoes. Fortunately he had thought to bring a spare jar of jam, so all was not lost. The strawberry jam did the ten of us fine.

The Tycoon.

Two of the rigs were set up in short order – Heathkit sets. The triband beam was the next order of the day. It was taken out of the box and three fellows set about trying to get it together. Steve Smith WA4VWV tried to make heads and tails out of the instructions. One casting was cracked when the package was opened. The castings which were supposed to hold the reflector and director to the boom were a little small and couldn't be fit to the boom. The cracked casting promptly broke when forced. Some tape saved the day with this. The element was taped to the boom.

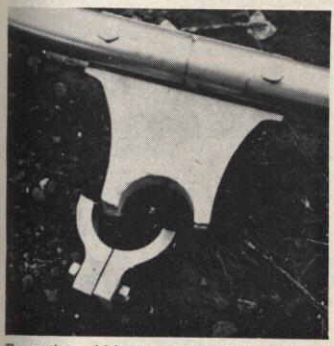
The Tycoon at anchor a couple hundred yards off from the cliffs. The loading boom and winch were rusted solidly into place and not usable, so everything had to be hauled from the dinghy to the platform by hand line.



Hauling the gear and food up the cliff from the dinghy. Note graffiti all over the place such as the K4IA/KC4 on the side of the walk way and the old brick cistern building above the cliff. That gang sure must have brought a lot of paint.

One of the transceivers comes up the handline from the dinghy. Everyone held their breath hoping that nothing would go wrong at this critical stage of the game.

The worst blow of all was when Steve discovered that we had two director elements and no reflector. You can shorten a reflector and make a director out of it, but how to stretch a director? You don't. The result was a beam which we never had to turn at all. Oh, we tried turning it, but never could find out if there was any way to point it that was better than others so we just gave it up.



The casting which was supposed to hold the reflector on the tri-bander boom looked like this when we tried to fit it to the boom.

The next kick in the head was when the tribander had been assembled as best we could with the parts furnished and we put it on the end of the 18' mast. Four of us walked the mast up to about 45° when it folded at the top of the bottom section. So we ended up with a 12'' mast. This could not have helped the beam a lot either.

So we used tape to hold the darned element to the boom. There were two directors and no reflector shipped with the antenna, so the beam didn't work.

Under Neil's direction the 75m antenna was swung a couple of feet below the beam. This had the benefit of wiping out the 75m operator whenever the tribander was being used. The 75m dipole wire was stretched out without being unwound, with the result that it took an hour or so to get the hundred or so kinks out of it. And so it went.

The rig that was to work with the tribander turned out not to work, so the Swan rig, which was brought as a spare, was set up in its place. Despite

Richard, one of the boat crewmen, looks on in wonder as Steve hooks coax to driven element. Others are setting up the guys for the mast — which promptly folded in half.

the antenna, it worked and the DX-pedition was on. The pileups built up immediately. All of us did a lot of operating during the weekend and most of us had a ball. It was reported that Neil had taken on the 20m CW station and had managed to work his way through 26 contacts in two hours. I found that I was running about three to five a minute on phone.

We got started operating late Friday afternoon and I spent a good deal of

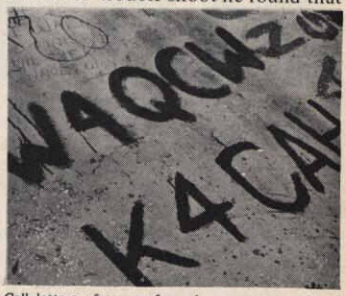
Don trying to decipher the instructions for assembling the vertical.

the night operating and logging for others, mostly on 20m. I finally managed to get onto a cot set up under a big baobob tree about 5AM as it was beginning to get light. I had to coat myself with a half inch of bug repellant to keep off the swarms of mosquitos. About an hour later the first drops of rain hit me in the face. I yawned and headed to the operating area to help cover the rigs. On my last Navassa visit it had rained about ten minutes during the four days we were

Steve and Phil Latta W4GTS at work figuring out the tri-bander assembly instructions. They sure wish they'd made a practice run on this in Atlanta before getting to Navassa.

there. This time it rained a good half hour and it rained hard. So much for that night's sleep.

Neil set up a folding table as a work bench and opened up his 80 pound box of tools to see about fixing the ailing transceiver. Neil went at it fresh, having had a nice night's sleep in a tent, sleeping right on through the deluge. He needed his fresh for as he started to trouble shoot he found that



Call letters of some of previous ops were painted all over the place. It's no wonder the Coast Guard doesn't like to have hams visit Navassa. Our expedition did not paint anything whatever. Note that the KC4AF expedition in 1958 did not paint anything either.

his vtvm had gone west. He spent a good deal of the day fixing his vtvm. Fortunately he had brought along a back up vom which he used to service the vtvm. He managed to completely disassemble the unit while fixing it. We didn't hear what was actually wrong with the rig, so I suspect it was nothing serious. It was working by evening, thus missing only half of the expedition. Unfortunately, once the rig was fixed, Neil was again available to operate and the screams of anguish

About half a day was spent servicing a vtvm.

from furious operators around the world could be heard echoing forth. There was serious talk of breaking the rig again just to get him off the air.

Neil was pretty crabby most of the time. He had been frustrated over and over. He had wanted to bring along a two meter repeater and set it up so we could all keep in touch via two meters when we walked around the island. This had been vetoed when it was found that the gear would cost 58¢ a pound to ship to Jamaica. He was put out when they made him leave his spectrum analyzer and Tektronix

Chaz operating while Rick, Skip and Don look enviously on.

scope at home. He wanted to bring along one spare for everything on the trip, plus a third for backup. And so it went.

None of the fellows had been on a DXpedition before so they were not really prepared for the realities of the pileups. It is bad enough trying to handle the masses of stations that

The two generators were set up on a concrete patch that connects the landing area at Lulu Bay and the old Coast Guard acetylene building about 100 yards away. Station number two was set up right near the landing area beyond the generators.

want to work you when you have a good strong signal – when you are weak it is murder. One lousy lid with fifty watts and no brains in the States can drown you out. And once you cannot be heard there are enough idiots around to hold down your frequency for hours on end, each trying to be the very, very last in a tail-end race.

The Swan without a remote vfo made it difficult to try and work split frequency. And the weak signal made

Rick took care of most of the CW activity.

it miserable to work transceive. And so it went. Most of the time I worked by call areas, starting with the WB's, then the WA's the K's and the W's. This worked pretty well. Late in the game it came to me that I could do a bit better than this if I worked say three WB's, three WA's, three K's, and three W's in each call area, working my way around the areas a lot faster than when I picked up every single WB, no matter how weak or how bumbling. Next trip I'll try that.

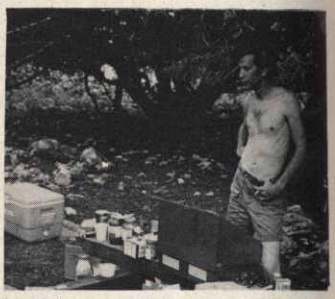
Chaz operating while Bill Donovan logs for him.

I managed to separate the DX stations pretty well by working them according to the number in their call. I had worked out this system in Jordan and it did well. Of course there is no real good answer to the s.o.b. who refuses to go along with this and calls without stop no matter what you say – like EA7IF. There was an HK4 and a PZ1 that drove hundreds of us up the wall too. I sure hope that Chaz does not QSL these stinkers. The next time I run an expedition there will be a place in the log to note that no QSL is to be sent for these inconsiderate

Ray took time out from cooking gourmet meals to paddle some CW.

crumbs. Yes, I know that we had a weak signal and that there are language problems – but is that an excuse for calling for an hour in spite of requests in their own language from neighboring stations to shut up and wait their turn?

One of the systems that worked very well for me and which I also developed while in Jordan was to have a couple other fellows with good signals move up or down the band and make up lists for me. This can flake



The Coleman stove had to work on regular gas instead of white gas due to a gas strike at Kingston. It managed, but had to be coddled. Here is Ray coddling the stove and coaxing it to turn out spaghetti and meat sauce.

out if the band folds, but most of the time it works very well. The big problem for a DXpedition is getting the call letters through the QRM. A list fixes that.

At one time I had too many chaps making lists and I got about a hundred calls behind. This meant that some of the fellows on the list had to wait quite a long time for me to make it to them. I tried to speed everyone up as

Bill Smith has just learned that he is scheduled to log for Neil.

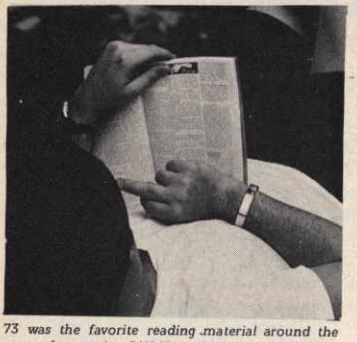
much as I could, but many insisted on spelling out their calls, even though I already obviously had them – others gave their names and locations – etc. I noticed that almost without exception that the German ops would be there, even after an hour of waiting. The Japanese ops hardly ever gave up.

Chaz operating while Steve logs 'em in.

They were right there, no matter how long it took and I worked dozens upon dozens of them, all in the S-2 to S-5 signal range. Without the list I would have only worked a fraction of them.

The band folded to Europe on Sunday morning as I was working my way through a long list – sorry about that.

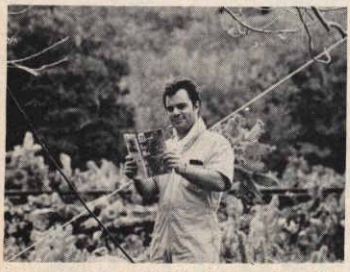
Now and then someone would get mad and put a carrier on the channel to try and spoil things for everyone. I would stop everything when this would happen and explain to the chap



73 was the favorite reading material around the camp. It was the ONLY reading material around the camp.

that all he was doing was making life miserable for the many fellows that we were contacting and that I would simply change bands to move away if he persisted. This worked every time.

During off moments on Saturday I tried to take a nap on the cot, but the flies paid no heed to the bug repellant and were perversely persistent. There was no sleep. Along about one in the morning I sacked out and fell asleep. The Sunday morning rain started in



Ostentatious show of reading 73 to sooth a crabby publisher who has had damned little sleep.

about 3 AM and I was up again, getting my daily bath. By the time we left Navassa on Monday morning I calculated that I had managed about six hours sleep total from the time I got up Thursday morning. Excitement and nervous energy kept me going. I did manage to grab an hour or so of sleep on the boat trip back.

Nothing very rare was worked during the trip. The best I managed was 7Q7AA. Very little from Africa came through. A couple of 5Z4's made it. Not much else. It was a pity that we

Skip threads his way between the cactus up the slope toward the plateau on a trip to the lighthouse about a mile from camp.

did not have a couple of good beams along as we had had in 1958 when I last visited the island. That time we brought two beams, rotators and towers. We worked a JT1 last trip.

A short 75m stint was more than frustrating. I enjoy working DX on 75 and I had been looking forward to knocking off a good bunch of contacts on that band. The 75m station was set up next to the tribander and every time the other rig came on the 75m receiver dropped dead com-

Typical terrain on the island. It did not encourage casual strolling around. Some of those holes went down over thirty feet!

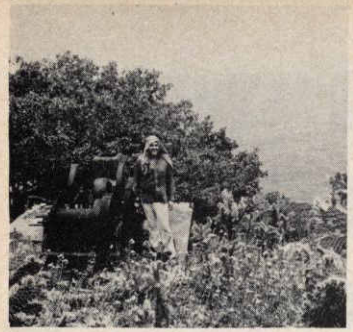
pletely. Okay, I would have to work through the difficulty and make contacts as I could. The 75m dipole was about eight feet off the ground, so I didn't expect a lot out of it. And the rig wasn't running a lot of power. But I didn't expect what happened.

A low end of 75m was fairly clear. I heard W4JM and some others on there talking about KC4DX and wondering when we would come on. Every time they turned it from one to the other I broke in yelling "break!" After a half hour of this I was close to tears. I tried moving up the band and calling CQ. Nothing. Pretty soon I heard my old friend CO2DL talking to the W4JM roundtable – aha, now I'll make it. I tried again to break the group; no luck. Not once did they ever shut up and listen for a weak KC4DX on channel trying to get through to them – not one time! Two of our group pulled me away from the rig, calmed me a bit, and got me to go to bed to cool off. I didn't make any 75m contacts.

Slow Scan DXpedition

Though no one on the expedition seemed overly enthusiastic about my bringing along a little cassette recorder so we could make some slow scan television contacts, one member, Neil, resisted to the last ditch. Even though I had brought along patch cords and different types of connectors so we could connect the tape recorder into

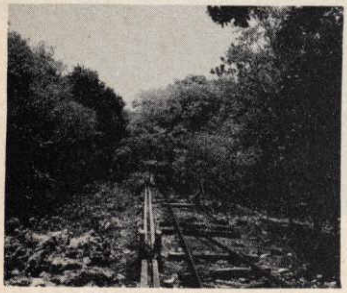
Part of being cook is doing the dishes. Ugh!



Old donkey engine left from the days of mining postash and guano on the island before WWI. Island used to be German owned, but was taken over after the first war by the U.S. Note Arab-style hat made from towel to ward off sun stroke. It's Wayne.

the mike and speaker jacks, they didn't match the ones on Neil's control consoles and there was absolutely no way that we could mate them. I found this interesting in view of his virtual radio store supply of spare tubes and parts which had enabled him to just about rebuild his VTVM the day before.

Well, no matter. Slow scan is simple to use and we don't even have to connect the recorder to the rig to make do. Before leaving home I set up a menu board with a KC4DX QSL on



Old tracks for mining cars.

it and recorded the slow scan signal on a tape cassette. I brought along a second cassette for recording the incoming slow scan signals. Lacking the patch cords I decided just to put the transmitter mike up to the recorder speaker and do an audio patch. Ditto the recorder mike to the receiver speaker. I hadn't tried it before, but I figured it would work well enough. We weren't after perfection, only success.

I fired up one of the rigs – the one using the vertical antenna. I realized that I had a lousy signal for 10 AM Sunday morning, but that was what was available and I figured that enough fellows would want Navassa on slow scan to clear a channel. I figured wrong.

14,230 was busy with some W6TEZ and others trying to get a JA3 on slow scan. When I came on channel I was asked, not too politely, to get the hell off the channel so they could get their JA. My short fuse was lit. With bad grace I moved down a bit and worked W4MS – no strain – my pictures came through just fine. That was a relief. Eddy had no sooner made his contact for his country number 43 on slow scan than W8YEK called in. I was number 46 for Gene. I'm reasonably sure that Gene is leading in slow scan DXing.

The tape recorder system of working slow scan is not novel. Many slow scanners have only a monitor and use a tape recorded camera signal until they build or buy a scanner. Robot makes up tapes for their monitor customers – and any active slow scan-

Tracks go along cut about ten feet deep all the way across the top of the island. This facilitated their dumping guano and stuff into the cars from the surface.

ner with a camera will help out and make tapes for newcomers. Buster W9WED uses a cassette recorder to make mobile SSTV contacts.

A few more slow scan contacts were made and I found myself out of customers. I moved back to the international slow scan channel and tried to break the group still struggling with the JA3, but to no avail. I moved back down the band and started working the thousands of sidebanders who wanted Navassa.

Late that night Glen W6KZL called on sideband and asked for a slow scan

The first glimpse of the lighthouse from the tracks.

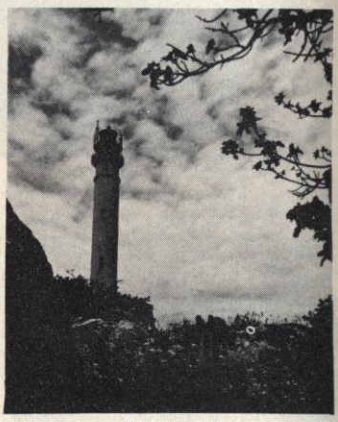
Slow scan television QSL sent from Navassa via a $17 cassette tape recorder and received by W8YEK and photographed from his monitor. The el cheapo battery operated recorder does result in slightly quivery letters.

QSO. I whipped out the recorder and inside of about a minute we had that one buttoned up. In all ten SSTV two way contacts were made from Navassa – a new first, I'm sure.

In June I'll have the recorder with me and try for some slow scan contacts from YK1AA, JY1, OD5 and possibly even SU1IM.

The incoming slow scan signals were recorded and played back when I returned home. They came out just fine! I've since replayed them on the air several times to let fellows see how they came in on Navassa.

When you consider how terribly simple it is to take along a complete



The lighthouse.

slow scan setup on a trip or a DXpedition, it is difficult to see why this should not be part and parcel of all future unusual operations. You need no camera – you need no monitor all you need is a tape recorder. My unit was one which I bought for $17, so you don't even have to have an expensive recorder.

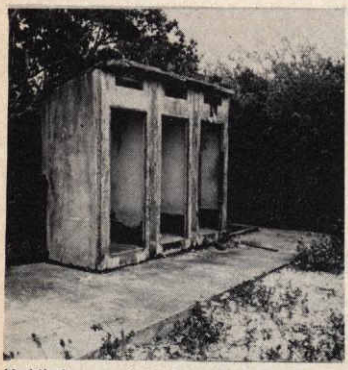
On Sunday afternoon Skip K4TMA, an Air Force man, and I headed up the hill toward the lighthouse. We picked a poor trail for it and soon found ourselves struggling up a 30° slope covered with what

Wayne, Bill, Chaz, Skip and Steve rest at the bottom of the lighthouse.

looked like meteorites and cactus. The whole island is made out of swiss-cheese type rock, like a giant solid sponge. You have to watch every step carefully for there are holes all over the place. Some are only a foot or so deep, others go down thirty or more feet and could hold a horse. One unwary step and you are in deep trouble.

We finally got to the top of the plateau which covers most of the island and were met by Chaz Steve and Bill Donovan WB4WMG who had found an easier way up following an acytelene pipeline which had been built in 1962 to power the lighthouse. The lighthouse is now run on batteries which apparently are brought in by helicopter and the pipe line was no longer used. Pity, for they sure did a lot of work putting it in. I feel sorry for the Coast Guard men that had to work at that project.

The lighthouse was firmly chained so we couldn't get into it. We did explore the old lighthouse keeper's building next to it. The roof had burned off this building in the 30's but the cistern was full right to the ground level with water. In '58 it had had water, but we had to reach down about ten feet to get it. That was the time when we ran out of our own water and had to go to the lighthouse to keep from drying up and blowing away. The water looked a little stagnant so we boiled the first batch. This was a lot of trouble so we tried a glass of it on the least popular member of the group and waited to see if he died. He didn't so we all drank it right out of the cistern from then on without bothering to boil it.



World's deepest privy? With a 400 foot hole under you, it is difficult to bring the necessary concentration for proper use of this fine Navassa facility.

This trip we had plenty of water so we didn't have to haul it back the mile from the cistern. Our boat stayed nearby so we were able to get in a lump of ice every day and have iced drinks – luxury. On the last trip the boat dumped us and then left us alone, going to Haiti for a few days to see about a leak, so we had no further supplies possible.

Though I have no complaint about the food on this trip, some of the selections seemed strange. For instance, we had along a rather good supply of powdered eggs rather than fresh ones. I forgot to ask why. It certainly wouldn't have been much trouole to keep fresh eggs on the boat and send in a dozen with the ice every day – or two dozen, for that matter. The powdered eggs came out excellently, spiced with some of those bacon bits – you know, the synthetic bacon. I would think we could have had fresh meat the same way, but instead we had packaged beef stroganoff. Again, it was fine – no complaint. But the whole works was a curious mixture of camping out away from civilization, all the while keeping civilization (ice) with us.

While at the lighthouse I made a contact via two meter FM (146.94, to be precise) with the base station and from there via 20m I contacted K6CKY/4 in Virginia for, I think, the first two meter relay DXpedition QSO. Always something, eh? We didn't need the repeater for the island is small enough so there was no problem in keeping in touch via the little Drake one watt TR-22 units.

Early Monday morning we turned off the generators and packed up to leave. The number of contacts had definitely fallen off, though I am sure that we could have gone for several more days on the bands working the thousands of European and Asian stations that missed us. Perhaps some day we'll be back again – probably with a much better antenna setup and a linear amplifier to make working out easier. I don't think there was more than one chap on the trip that wasn't thinking seriously in terms of going on another DXpedition as we moved the gear back aboard the boat. It was fabulous.

With serious work in sight, I headed for the safety of the adjacent cliff and started snapping pictures of those who were working. The seas were a good deal calmer than when we arrived so the operation went quickly. Even a calm sea at Navassa is something to contend with, so it wasn't all peaches and cream. The little dinghy bounced up and down about four to six feet as it came alongside the big boat, making the transfer of people and the heavier gear chancy. No accidents.

If anyone else is thinking of going to Navassa they may be encouraged to know that we left a nice triband beam there for them. We recommend that they bring along a reflector for it and a taller mast – and perhaps a couple of castings since the sun and weather may rot out the tape in a short while. There didn't seem to be any good

After three days of much operating and little sleep, Don is a little groggy. He wore the cap to fake us all out. Don is now a jet pilot with the cal WB4SST.

Phil Latta W4GTS of Atlanta, as seen on Navassa.

Phil W4GTS as seen by Atlanteans.

reason for bringing the remains of that antenna back.

The ride back was a good deal easier than the trip to Navassa and many of us were able to stretch out and get some sleep, at least for a couple of hours. No sickness this time. We did burn out one engine and had to limp back at half speed for the last few hours on the other engine. We just about ran out of fuel oil too, with only a spoonfull left when we docked. The engine quit as we maneuvered into place. Luckily we had "borrowed" some fuel from a passing boat at Navassa in exchange for replacing a fuse in their radio, or we might have had to go into port out by the end of Jamaica instead of heading directly to Kingston.

We all had a quick dinner at a local department store, the only restaurant open at 10 PM, and went off to a very deep sleep. Chris 6Y5CB and his attractive wife were there to meet us and guide us around. Most of us flew back to the U.S. the next morning, though a couple stayed on with their wives for a few more days vacation. By Tuesday night I was back at *73* six days away and another memory for a lifetime for me.

The trip to Navassa was so much fun that it put me back to the map of the Caribbean to see where else a small group might go that would be fun, reasonably rare, and not too expensive. I think I've got it. Would any of you readers like to try your hand at a DXpedition this fall? How about one to Baha Nuevo (HKØ) in late October to coincide with the DX contest? I figure that the whole thing can be done for about $500 per person with ten going. We would leave from Kingston on October 25th and set up on the 26th. The big push would be on the 27-28th, and back on the 29th to Kingston – to the U.S. the 30th. One week of great fun.

This time we would have a place to sleep on the boat going over for it would take about 24 hours to sail that distance from Kingston. We would have two transceivers with beams, one with a good linear, and one spare transceiver with more modest antennas. The beams would be complete with rotators and short towers. I think I can plan the trip and arrange for the equipment. It will be hard work at times, so strength and stamina are required. Any takers?

. . .W2NSD/1