

Bouvet Island

The year 2000 was an exciting time in the DX world. We saw activity from six of the top 10 most wanted DXCC Entities (BQ9P, A5, 7O, E3, FR/T, 3Y). The last one being 3Y0C from Bouvet Island, which came as a total surprise just nine days before Christmas 2000. Astronaut Chuck Brady, N4BQW, landed on the island of Bouvet with a group of South African scientists and their Norwegian team leader.

This Norwegian island (54° 26' South 3° 24' East) is located 2574 kilometers (1600 miles) south-southwest of Cape of Good Hope, South Africa, in the South Atlantic Ocean. The island is composed of the remains of an extinct volcano and it measures 6 by 9 kilometers with most of its landmass engulfed in ice. The island was discovered by Jean-Baptiste Lozier Bouvet, a Frenchman, on January 1, 1739. It wasn't until 1823 that the first landing took place by an American expedition. On December 1, 1927 Lars Christensen, a Norwegian, landed an expedition and claimed Bouvet for Norway.

In 1971, a Norwegian royal decree declared the island as a nature reserve. Bouvet's only inhabitants are seals, penguins and other sea birds. Landing on the island can be extremely difficult thanks to steep cliffs and high seas. The only safe area to set up camp is on the west coast of the island.

Bouvet ranked # 8 on the ARRL DXCC Most Wanted list in 1999. Past operations from this rare rock included LH4C (1962), 3Y1VC and 3Y3CC (1977), 3Y1VC and 3Y5DQ (1978-79) and 3Y5X (1990).

This is not the first time that Chuck has operated from such a rare location, as many will remember his operations from Palmyra and Kingman. Chuck is not on a DXpedition to Bouvet, however. He is working on the island as a medical assistant to the scientists. In his spare time, he is on the air as 3Y0C on all bands from 6 to 160 meters, primarily on SSB. Chuck has said that he expects to do some RTTY and may make a few CW contacts. His equipment includes an ICOM IC-756PRO transceiver, an ICOM PW-1 solid-state amplifier and a generator. He has vertical antennas for 40 through 160 meters and will use beams on 10 through 20 meters.

Chuck's most difficult task is keeping the antennas up because the winds at



Here is Chuck, 3Y0C, enjoying one of the few sunny days on Bouvet.



Chuck has a devil of a time keeping this vertical antenna vertical in the 90-MPH winds. Note the clothing he is wearing as well as the operating shack to the right.



This is the 3Y0C operating shack. Chuck logs all QSOs the old fashion way—with pen and paper. He and the scientists sleep outside in tents.

Bouvet can be severe. He also thought the generator would be usable for 12 hours a day, but after recalculating the fuel consumption rate, he was forced to trim that down to 3-4 hours daily. Suggested SSB frequencies are: 1835, 3795, 7095, 14195, 14260, 18145, 21295, 24945, 28495 and 50120 kHz.

As of press time, the pileups have been growing rapidly. Many times the pileups have developed to the point where Chuck seems inundated and either pulls the plug or moves to another frequency. Cluster spots have contributed to the feeding frenzy. Chuck is scheduled to be on the island until mid-March. Deon, ZR1DQ, has set up a very informative Web site about the operation at www.qsl.net/zr1dq/. Send Bouvet QSLs to WA4FFW.

NORTH KOREA

You may recall the much-anticipated multinational North Korean operation, which was announced in mid-October. Well, it was scheduled for late October, then rescheduled for early January 2001. Now I have learned that the operation has been scrapped.

The North Korean Organization for Army support is now refusing the use of any transmitting equipment during the Official Opening of the Educational Center, which was scheduled to take place on January 7, 2001. Obviously, this is a disappointment to the organizers of P5UK and the DX community.

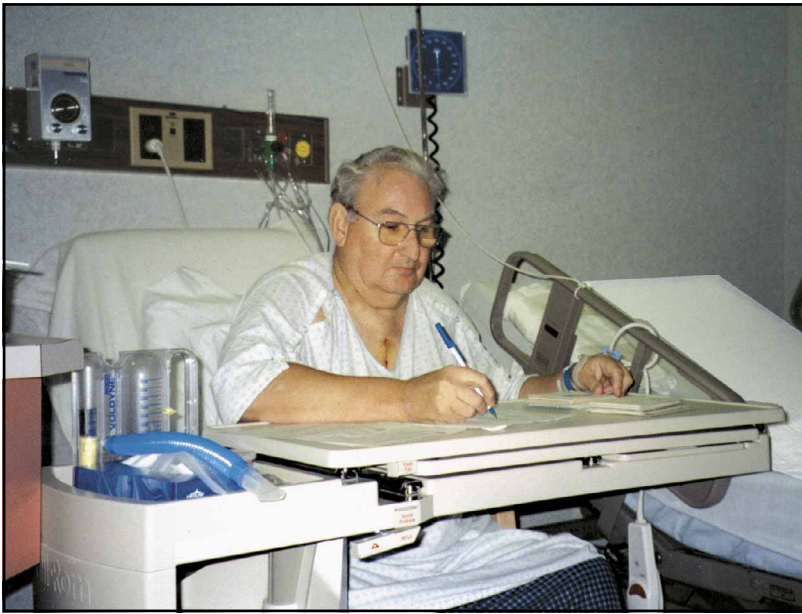
North Korea has only been activated legitimately two times. This is a tough nut to crack, but the surprise Bouvet Island operation reminds us that there is always a way. Be assured that other DXpeditioners are looking for that way. P5 is going to take the right person, in the right place, at the right time. Most old timers will remember how long China was off the air—30 years! North Korea was added to the DXCC list in 1991 and has been active (on a limited basis) twice in the last decade. You gotta believe: DX IS!

NATIONALS FROM BHUTAN

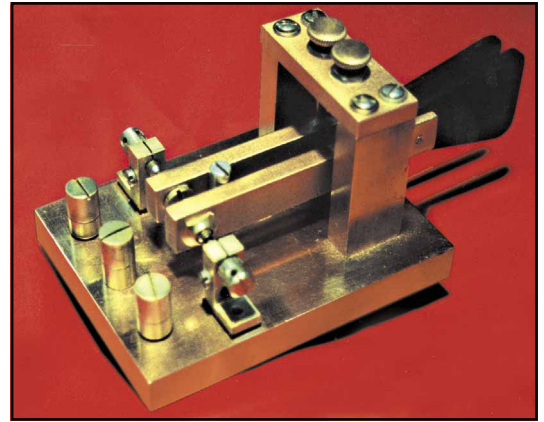
Glenn Johnson, W0GJ/A52GJ, and his family spent the month of January 2001 in Bhutan on a work assignment. In his spare time, he worked closely with a group of nationals training to become Amateur Radio operators from this Himalayan nation. Glenn gives us a report on the soon to be licensed Amateur Radio operators from Bhutan.

"All are very enthusiastic and fast learners. They are having so much fun that the director and chief engineer of the Bhutan Telecommunications Authority are also taking the class. One older gentleman was a good friend of Pradhan, A51PN, when Pradhan was active. He is in the class because he remembers the fun that Pradhan had on the air. He also fondly remembers Gus Browning.

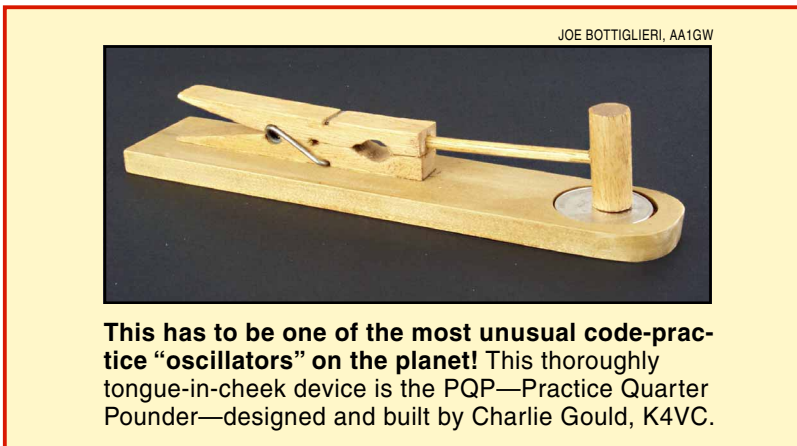
"There are three classes of licenses in Bhutan: Novice, General and Restricted. Restricted and General have the same "advanced" theory test. The Restricted license has privileges only above 50 MHz. The General license requires a 5-WPM code test and receives all amateur privileges. I would estimate that the difficulty of that exam is somewhere



There is dedication...and then there is *real dedication!* Bill Dodge, K1BD, is checking VUCC cards for Fred Allstadt, N1ZUK, while still in the hospital just days after undergoing quintuple heart bypass surgery! Bill is a member of the Great Bay Radio Club and was a New England Division Volunteer of the Year in 1994. We can see why!



This iambic key is a beauty! Fred Kilburn, W2VUF, made the three-pound key from 1/2-inch copper stock using only hand tools. (Even the holes were drilled and tapped by hand.)



This has to be one of the most unusual code-practice “oscillators” on the planet! This thoroughly tongue-in-cheek device is the PQP—Practice Quarter Pounder—designed and built by Charlie Gould, K4VC.



You have to live somewhere...so why not live in Radioville? George Weber, KA0BSA, spotted this appropriate ham destination while driving through northern Indiana.



Greetings from Bouvet Island. These photos of Bouvet Island from Chuck Brady, N4BQW, give you a sense of the cold desolation he and the team of South African scientists encountered early this year. While on the island, Chuck operated as 3Y0C, making this rare DXCC entity available for thousands of amateurs.