



W3UR

HOW'S DX?

5A7A: Elite Team Spirit in Libya — 2006

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A Wonderful Memory

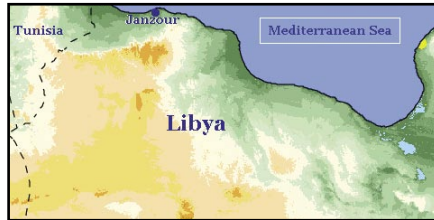
After 23 months of planning, our exotic trip to Libya, November 15-29, 2006, has come and gone. Our international team and new Libyan friends and culture are vividly ingrained in our minds. Without question, the memories will be with us the rest of our lives.

Our team was led by Andreas Lüer, DJ7IK, and assisted by our Arabic area coordinator, Mustapha Landoulsi, DL1BDF, who both did a nice job getting our team in and out of Libya safely. Volkmar Junge, DF2SS, and support team did an excellent job with logistics and acquiring the much needed supplies for the trip. Key equipment donations by ICOM (seven IC-746PRO HF transceivers) and ACOM (seven ACOM-1000 HF amplifiers) along with numerous other commercial and financial contributors made this trip possible. The loaned equipment performed in an effective manner without fault.

Departing Frankfurt

On Wednesday, November 15, 2006, our team of Amateur Radio operators from 11 countries boarded the 9 AM flight to Tripoli, Libya on Libyan Airlines from Frankfurt, Germany. Two of our team members, Krassy, K1LZ, and myself, did not appear on the Libyan issued visa approval list for boarding the aircraft. After much discussion and phone calls with contacts in Libya, we proceeded to Libya with the hope, worst case, of being held in Libya until such a visa could be issued. Quite frankly, we were not sure what would happen. If we stayed behind, the next flight was not until Saturday.

Tripoli, Libya is located on the northern central coast of Africa between Tunisia and Algeria to the west, Egypt to the east, and Niger and Chad to the south. This time of year, we expected the temperatures to be approximately 70°F during the day and 50°F during the night. We were blessed with warm and clear weather except for one day toward the end of the trip.



Janzour is located in NW Libya right on the Mediterranean Sea.



Ali (center seated with headphones, one of the 5A7A club members, makes one of the first QSOs. Watching and just as excited are (front, from left) DL1BDF and DJ7IK; (back) DL5CW, DJ7EO, K3LP and 5A1HA.

Arrival in Libya

We arrived in Libya at 2:10 PM and were greeted by our Libyan sponsors, Milad M. Matoug and Heythem Hashem, 5A1HA, and two young ladies dressed in Libyan attire from the airport's tourist council. Their smiles and warm greetings put our group at ease.

Our team paid the 80 Euro (100 Dinar) required as a visa fee as the equipment completed the customs requirements in about an hour and a half. By 3:45 PM we exited the airport front door, placing our equipment on a flat bed truck. Then, team members boarded a tourist style bus headed for our hotel in Janzour, located about 30 km west of Tripoli on the Mediterranean Sea.

Opening Meeting

That evening, Milad M. Matoug, Professor

and President of the Libyan Assaker Amateur Radio Club, led the opening meeting. All our team members were required to attend the meeting where Libyan greetings and the rules for the operation were communicated.

Milad made it clear that the Libyan government and his organization wanted us to know that we were safe and welcome to travel Libya without constraint. The Libyan people were happy to see us as displayed by their openness to share, kind words and actions. During the meeting, a few rules regarding when ac power could be first applied to the radios and when the first QSO would be made were communicated.

Operation Full Steam Ahead

Starting at 7 o'clock the next morning, Franz, DK1II, and I, co-managed the Operations Planning by setting up camp with many team members to make adjustments and finalize the 5A7A Operations Plan. Though we had an idea of what was possible with the planned campsite, some decisions were impossible to finalize until we could physically see the site for antenna installation, examine available power and ensure we would have access to the identified areas.

A few early delays or plan changes were caused by no access or keys for remote operating site rooms, east and west, and the internet connection that went from high speed DSL to dial-up, arrived on the fifth day.

The 20 hour delay after arrival before we could put the first signal on the air was enough to make you chew your fingernails off. The delay was in order to accommodate the hotels engineer who wanted to witness the ac power connects, and we needed to plan for the first QSO presentation with the local support group.

We made team adjustments in lunch and dinner food selections, and integrated local authority sponsored day tours, dinner events and post dinner movies and plays that became mandatory by our host.

The 40, 80 and 160 meter stations were physically moved four times in three days before we achieved the configuration we wanted — continuous improvement. We were asked by local authorities to relocate



From the left, team members JH1NBN, DL5CW, DJ7EO and DL9USA install one of the Spiderbeam antennas on the roof.

BERNIE MCCLENNY, W3UR



Krassy Petkov, K1LZ, is greeted by two of the lovely Tourist Council personnel.

the 80 meter antenna from the first west beach location. The second east location was moved as a result of no keys being issued for the building. The third central location had the great beach and building top we wanted for the 40 and 80 meter four-square antennas, but lacked room for the 160 meter antenna plus the operation station was a utility room. The fourth minor adjustment, placing the 40 and 80 meter stations within the main campus building and combining the 160 meter and 2/6 meter stations together west of the main campus, proved to be perfection. Everyone went with the flow — no stress.

Getting on the Air

Just before noon on the second day, Andy, DJ7IK, and Mustapha, DL1BDF, gave the authorization to make the first CQ on the 20 meter band. The Spiderbeam installation guys were present as we all gave greetings from Libya to DK6ZZ at 1037Z on November 16. Andy, DJ7IK; Mustapha, DL1BDF, and Ali, 5A1A op, joined us to officially announce to DK6ZZ, DJ6OV and the DX community that the 5A7A DXpedition was ready to begin. The pileup was loud and wild! This put a smile on all our faces — finally we were on the air.



The 5A7A team managed over 112,000 contacts in just 14 days of activity. Team members included (no special order): DJ7IK, DL1BDF, DF2SS, K3LP, K1LZ, DJ7EO, DL5CW, PA0R, DK1BT, HB9DTE, DJ8NK, DJ9CB, DF6QV, DK1II, DL9USA, IT9ESZ, DJ2VO, DL3KDV, DL8YHR, DK7PE, VE6OH, ON5GA, DK8FD, DK7YY, N2OW, JH1NBN, DL1EJA, DK2DO, and last but not least, 5A1HA.

Wireless Network, Web Site and Logs

Mitch, VE6OH, effectively handled the wireless network installation for laptop PCs, and Rein, PA0R, ensured that laptop PCs were configured and daily logs were collected and uploaded to our online Web site log search function. Andy, DJ7IK, prepared and maintained our team Web page keeping the DX community informed of our team's efforts each day. Andi, DL9USA, accepted the responsibility for handling the QSL Manager duties for our team.

Antenna Installation

We were grateful to have a team of resourceful and hardworking Spiderbeam antenna installation guys. They were led by Andi and Markus, DJ7EO, and included Andy, DL5CW; Oliver, D11EJA, and Günter, DJ9CB. Mitch was in charge of the rotator operation effort. Our success is much due to their hard work and in getting the four multi-band Spiderbeam antennas installed in a prompt and effective manner. I'm glad to say we had no antenna damage or injuries to any of our crew.

The key player for the 160 meter operation and vertical installation was led by Rudi, DK7PE, and supported by Volkmar, DF2SS, while Krassy and Franz, DF6QV, led the 40 and 80 meter four-square antenna installation effort, with help from me and Diana. All three of these antennas were extremely effective. I remember working the USA West Coast on 80 meter SSB at 9 AM Libyan time and the signal was still S9 or better. The 2/6 meter and 70 cm operation and antenna installation was lead by Frank, DL8YHR, and supported by Andi. It's impossible to document all the efforts of each team member, but I assure you that each team member made

valuable contributions and worked without hesitation to achieve our team objectives.

Camp Locations and Equipment

Campsite 1 had four separate operating stations each equipped with an IC-746 PRO HF radio and ACOM-1000 amp. The stations were used for 80 meters, 40 meters, and two stations for 10-40 meters. The two 10-40 meter stations had a G5RV dipole for 40 meters and two 5-band Spiderbeams, while the 40 and 80 meter stations had the four-square antennas.

Campsite West was divided into two separate beachfront condos. The first condo had the digital station and a separate 10-40 meter station. There was a 5-band Spiderbeam and 3-band Spiderbeam for 20, 30 and 40, and one Butternut multi-band vertical dedicated to these stations. Both stations included an IC-746 PRO HF radio and ACOM-1000 amplifier.

The second condo included the 160 meter station with the Titan quarter-wave vertical and two phased pennant antennas (150 feet apart) with a RX amplifier for reception. In addition, the 2/6 meter and 70 cm station had a dual band 70 cm (27 elements) and 2 meter (12 elements) beam, and a separate 6 meter (6 elements) beam.

Completion of the DXpedition

The final QSO was logged with US7LM on November 29, 2006, 0642 UTC, on 20 meters using SSB. Our complete team was sad to see the trip come to a closure after 14 days as any great trip end comes to fast. I'm grateful to be part of the 5A7A Team and an Amateur Radio operator with friends all over the world. See the 5A7A Web site (5a7a.gmxhome.de/) for more information. QST