



INDEXA

Helping to Make DX Happen Since 1983

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Peter I 2006 — Getting there is the story!

By Erling J. Wiig, LA6VM



DEPARTURE

During the last days of January 2006, and after three years of preparation and delays, the Peter I expedition 2006 was finally on its way.

The 22 Team members from the Americas and Europe gathered in Punta Arenas at the Straits of Magel-

lan, and on 1 February boarded a Dash 7 turboprop for the 3 ½ hour flight to the Chilean Frei Base on King George Island in the South Shetland Islands. That is where the expedition vessel, MV DAP Mares was at anchor waiting for us.

After a short tour of the base, we boarded the ship, a 1600 ton vessel converted for Antarctic expedition support. The conversion included a helipad, extra passenger facilities and cargo handling gear.

As soon as the team was situated onboard, antennas were erected, transceivers were set, and XR9A/MM was activated for the transit. That evening we sailed out of Maxwell Bay, for the 860 nautical mile voyage to Peter I. Onboard were the Team members, the helicopter pilot and his two

(Continued on page 2)

About this issue . . .

Pile a pandemic on top of a solar minimum and you get . . . very little reportable DX activity!!! Fifteen years ago, the interim editor of this issue produced his FIRST newsletter for INDEXA, reporting on a recently completed DXpedition to Peter One Island in Antarctica. That issue disclosed just a glimpse of the hardships of getting to an uninhabited Antarctic island, getting ashore, constructing the infrastructure to operate, and then restoring the island to pristine condition.

Bouvet Island has set back two recent attempts at activation. Two separate groups have announced plans—one group late this year and one group in January 2023—again to try to put this #2 Most Wanted entity on the air. This issue repeats the report of Spring 2006 to remind all of the difficulties of executing an expedition in the polar regions and to celebrate the tenacity of the human spirit in undertaking difficult objectives.

--John Scott, K8YC, Interim Editor

inside... Meet INDEXA's Board Chairman, Lou Dietrich, N2TU

Peter I 2006 — Getting there is the story! (con'd)

(Continued from page 1)

mechanics, plus the ship's crew of 22 men. The twin-engined helicopter had a 1100 lbs. cargo capacity or 4 passengers, in addition to the pilot. After sailing west in the Bransfield Straits we continued into the open Bellingshausen Sea. The weather was fair, but with gale force winds and 20 ft. waves. As the wind picked up we noticed a handful of Albatrosses on our stern, Antarctica's tireless gliders. A few whales and some icebergs were also seen. We encountered no sea ice—quite favorable for this season.

LAND!

After averaging a speed of 10 to 11 knots we approached Peter I on the evening of February 5th. After having seen the island on the ship's radar for some time, all team members were on the bridge when the grey shadows of the island emerged out of the evening fog. Their cheers were as joyful as any ancient explorer traveling at these latitudes, seeing new land!

We sailed around Cape Eva and anchored in Anderssen Bay, some 3 nm off the north west coast. Our QTH-to-be, Radiosletta (Radio Plains), could be seen in the fog, however no landing attempt was possible due to fog and wind. Radiosletta was named after the first radio amateur expedition to Peter I in 1987—3Y1EE and 3Y2GV.

The next day the weather conditions improved somewhat, but still not enough for flying. In the afternoon we made a recon flight, however the pilot was only willing to circle the northern tip of the island, Cape Eva. The Team members were on the bridge all day long, discussing visibility and cloud ceiling, flying or no flying conditions. We were so close, but unable to land, it was a tense situation! The next day the pilot agreed that we had conditions for flying. The landing operation could begin. At the first flight we had to survey Radiosletta to check for crevasses. Radiosletta is actually 200 to 300 ft. thick ice shelf sliding down from the central mountain massif, and crevasses could be expected. We quickly decided on the campsites, dropped a red bag for visual reference, and landed at what would be our Main camp.

The first cargo, our basic survival gear and some food, was unloaded, and the helicopter lifted off to return to the ship for more. The basic survival equipment included a light tent, sleeping bags and food, in case weather or other circumstances should leave

some Team members on the island before the camp was properly established. Weather stayed fair, and flight after flight brought more Team members, shelter materials, and boxes of equipment, drums of gasoline and water, and propane gas bottles. All together, some 15 tons of goods were to be trans-



ported from the ship to shore—a major landing operation as pictured above. Shortly, the untouched ice shelf was spotted with countless pieces of cargo. Then a lone petrel came sailing over us at low level, and I could see it was looking from side to side, surveying all our gear. What could it be thinking?

ESTABLISH CAMP

We established two campsites, the Main camp and

(Continued on page 3)

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Peter I 2006 — Getting there is the story! (con'd)

(Continued from page 2)

Op B. The Main campsite would have the MEG tent (Meeting, Eating, Greeting), two sleeping tents and the OP A tent, the OP B site only the OP B tent. The tents were standing on floors made of 4x8 ft. plywood sections, comprising 12 x 24 ft. bases for the bigger tents and 12 x12 ft. for the smaller tents. The tents have a steel base frame screwed to the floor sections, aluminium tube arch-frame, and were covered by one or more layers of fabric and insulation. Stakes were driven into the snow for securing the tents to the ground. Provided correct assembly, the tents are very sturdy and will endure the harshest weather conditions. The weather to come would



Shelter preparation was the first order of business.

prove the quality of both construction and installation!

OP A had the CW stations, using mostly vertical antennas; a Force 12 vertical dipole for 20m and $\frac{1}{4}$ wave verticals 30m and 40m, a 2el. SVDA for 17m, the Battle Creek Special for use on 160m, and a DX Engineering vertical for 80m. OP B had the SSB stations using three 2-element SteppIR beams each for 20, 17, 15, 12 and 10 m, a Force 12 Sigma 80 vertical dipole for 80 m, and $\frac{1}{4}$ wave verticals for 40 and 30m.

During the landing operation, the weather condition began to deteriorate, and the pilot called off the flying. We were still missing three team members, some radios and most of the gasoline, but we had the major items needed to complete the camps. As weather picked up, we got OP B ready with two stations, and we were QRV. Peter I was on the air again after 12 years of silence! At the Main

campsite, the MEG and sleeping tents were set up, while the weather was really coming up harsh. Suddenly we had a major storm, with sleet and rain, and wind clocked on the ship with gusts to 100 mph. When the night fell, many of us hunkered down the best we could, cold and wet. During the night, the wind slammed and tore at the tents, and the thought crossed our minds that if we lost the tents we would be very, very vulnerable. But the tent construction, the tie-downs and guying, were designed for this kind of weather, and proved to be of the right sort. We did not get much sleep that night, but as summer nights are short at these latitudes, you are not supposed to sleep much anyway.

The weather kept on the same way during the next day, and we had a hard time doing what had to be done. Walking in the 10-15 cm (4-6 in) deep slushy snow was hard especially while carrying materials, boxes, etc. We raised the OP A tent in the storm, and it took all available hands to get the covers in place. Raising antennas in a storm is also tricky, but with properly placed guy-ropes and working carefully with the wind, even a storm becomes a breeze! In the afternoon we had OP A QRV, and celebrated the important milestone with burgers, hot dogs and a soda. The weather was still so harsh that we could not see the OP B from OP A. Although the path was marked with nightglow marker flags, we required two persons when walking between the two sites. We suffered yet another stormy night, however without incidents of any kind.

After three days on the island, at 2330 local time on February 10th, the weather changed and the remaining equipment and team members were flown in. By the next afternoon the camp was finally

(Continued on page 4)



Clear weather at last!

Peter I 2006 — Getting there is the story! (con'd)

(Continued from page 3)

completed, most stations were up, and normal operating shift plan was implemented.

OPERATING

We were working 3-hour shifts, taking into account our respective preferences of modes, bands and areas to work. Russ, KI4NFF, our photographer and newly licensed ham, would be all over the place making photos and videos, and preparing some of these for uploading to our website:

www.peterone.com. Charles, our traveller and “the World’s Most Travelled Man” proved to be a proficient helicopter cargo dispatcher, and an important liaison with the Spanish speaking crew of the ship.

We were happy to see that the band conditions were pretty good with long openings to all parts of the world. The signals were not very strong at times, but at least stations were coming through, and the number of QSOs was really building up at a rate of over 10,000 per day.

After the camp was fully established our logs were uploaded to our webpage so that everyone could check status of their QSOs. Uploading log data, as well as our almost daily photos and video was accomplished with Iridium satellite phones. The necessary equipment and satellite air-time was generously provided by the Iridium Satellite,



K4UEE lets us know that INDEXA was there.

LLC. The up-link was accomplished using 4 multiplexed phones, to provide the required bandwidth!

EQUIPMENT

Our equipment worked flawlessly. The station set-up included ICOM IC 756 Pro III transceivers with Alpha 99 linear amplifiers. A LAN with a wireless

link interconnected OP A and OP B.

Running several stations at the same time in close proximity was possible by using ICE bandpass filters, physical separation of the two operating sites, and different antenna polarizations. A problem with inter-station interference arising after a few days was traced to moisture in the coax connectors. After cleaning the connectors, the problem was solved.

WEATHER

At Peter I, as expected weather turned out to be a major factor. It delayed achieving full operational status for a few days. Only a few times did we experience calm and clear weather, and they were days apart. We had to start tearing down the camp earlier than planned, because of a bad weather forecast for our projected departure date. The team and most of the equipment was taken off the island two days early. The bad weather showed up on schedule and as a result it took us another 4 days to finally remove the last few loads of equipment off the island. Only then could we finally depart and head for home. When we got back to King George Island we had to wait almost four more days for good flying conditions to get back to Punta Arenas, Chile. Almost 1/3 of the expedition time was spent waiting on weather!

EPILOG

We made a total of 86,891 QSOs, including 114 on 2m EME. We also had one QSO with a station that is absolutely “out of this world”—a 2m QSO with NA1SS on the International Space Station.

It was just fantastic to be at Peter I Øy. The Island displayed all of its specialties, from the horrendous storms, with rain, sleet, snow and thick fog, to sunny, warm and calm weather. The beauty of the mountain wall behind the camp, the troll’s face up the slope and the ragged Cape Ingrid has been imprinted on our minds forever.

We’ll all never forget the overwhelming pileups, the “wall of sound” created by you—the deserving—trying for hours to get through to us. For us it was a thrill of a lifetime! Please be assured, that we tried our very best to copy YOUR callsign, because YOU were very important to us. Also, we tried to keep you informed about our operation, to give you the best chance to be there at the right time. And we hope the website photos, updates and the videos helped you enjoy the same experience we were enjoying.

We really hope that we got YOU in our log!

—73 Erling

Take the Tour

How long has it been since you've taken a look at the INDEXA website? Items are being added there continually. Here is a brief synopsis of what you'll find under some of the "tabs" on the home page.

Join, Renew or Donate Here is where you can easily join INDEXA or renew your membership with a convenient link to PayPal for payment.

INDEXA Overview The overview is a narrated 10 minute slide presentation that informs just what it is that INDEXA does. It is the perfect place to send a friend who wonders what we do. The video is downloadable for a club which might want to have a presentation on the role of INDEXA.

Newsletters Every newsletter that has been produced by INDEXA since its founding is archived here. An index of the content is provided by a scrollable dialog box.

DXpedition Support Heading off to some rare place that's in the top 60 of the "Most Wanted" for a DXpedition? There may be some support available for you if you plan on lighting up the airwaves. Just fill in the blanks and submit it to the Board of Directors. This is how all support requests to INDEXA are originated.

Humanitarian Fund Dating to 2016, this fund was created to fund low cost adjuncts to a DXpedition that can provide meaningful direct physical benefits to the local population at the site of a DXpedition. A video produced by Director Ralph Fedor explains how the fund came to be and cites some of the activities already performed by grants made.

Merchandise Here is where you can find paraphernalia "displaying the colors" of INDEXA. Sweatshirts, hats, mugs, name badges, t-shirts, tote bags, aprons, banners—all are here.

Our Logos Do you need a logo for your QSL card printer? Maybe you want to put a logo on your personal letterhead. A selection of colored and outline only logos can be downloaded from this page.

Our Brochure INDEXA has a trifold brochure, printed on both sides of an 8-1/2 x 11 sheet of paper that describes who we are.

DXpeditioning Basics Wayne Mills, N7NG, authored this original compendium of things you should know if you're planning a DXpedition. It is even useful for those staying at home to put themselves in the mindset of the DXpeditioner. It was revised in 2013. DXpeditioners requesting a grant from INDEXA are encourage to be familiar with the guidelines in this useful booklet.

DXpedition Planning This is yet another video prepared by Director Ralph Fedor for DX University. It provides insight into the need for careful DXpedition planning and sheds light on those factors donors should consider in deciding whether to support a DXpedition.

Takes Two To Tango Veteran DXer Martti Laine, OH2BH, is a master at controlling the pileup while still maintaining an excellent QSO rate. His monograph gives much insight into what DXpeditioners experience in working different international ethnicities. It is mandatory reading for anyone serious about becoming #1 DXCC Honor Roll!

Is it time that you take a look at the INDEXA website? Go to <https://indexa.org>.

Passing the Torch!

If this issue of the newsletter looks a little different from recent issues, it is because the editor's duties for this issue have fallen upon the shoulders of your former editor who produced the newsletter from 2006 to 2019. Val Hotzfeld, NV4L, has edited the newsletter since fall of 2019 but her job and various other volunteer activities causes her to relinquish the reins of editor to keep things manageable. The editor's reins for issues subsequent to this issue will be picked up by Steve Molo, KI4KWR, who also serves as INDEXA's Committee Chairman for Social Media. You will also recognize Steve as the editor of the AWARDS column of CQ Magazine.

Thank you, Val, for producing the INDEXA newsletter during a period when finding publishable material was difficult because a worldwide pandemic halted most DXpeditions. —John Scott, *Interim Editor*

Meet INDEXA's Board Chairman, Lou Dietrich, N2TU



My interest in radio began with my Grandfather's Zenith shortwave radio in the early 1960's. The BBC, VOA and of course, Radio Moscow blasted into my New York tenement. The sounds from far off lands were fascinating and I was bitten by the DX as a SWLer. My main interest in those days was astronomy sparked by the Sputnik launch in 1957. A good friend and I purchased telescopes and spent many nights gazing at the heavens. Unfortunately, my friend was across town and we burned up the telephone lines comparing notes. Back in those days, Ma Bell charged 'message units' (minutes) and I quickly became aware telephone usage had to cease. (Reinforced by my Father!)

My friend and I had to pursue alternate means of communicating our astronomy notes. We explored CB but figured why not go all out, so in 1961 we obtained our Novice tickets. I was WV2RNW and he WV2QMC. From there on, astronomy took a back seat! Ham Radio was our new passion! Since my first contact in 1961, I have always been interested in DXing, seeking out the

rare ones. The chase is thrilling, challenging and rewarding. However, chasing DX from a tiny NYC building lot was far from thrilling or rewarding but definitely was challenging! High School, College, Graduate Studies and of course marriage greatly impacted the DXing effort. Once a bit of 'free time' became available, DXing was once again a pursuit. Luckily, we had moved from the tiny NYC lot to a not so tiny NY suburb and lot. A tower and yagi were out of the question, so a Hy-Gain vertical had to suffice. After another move in 1996, I was able to erect a small tower and compact beam. The REAL DX hunt was now on!

The rest is history! Since that very humble start in the '60s, I have achieved the Top of the Honor Roll-Mixed, I need one more CW DXCC and one more Digital to attain a clean sweep of Top DXCC.

What is the epitome of DXing?....becoming a DXpeditioner! And boy was I lucky! In 2012, I was invited on the Swains Island DXpedition by Craig K9CT and Joe W8GEX. (<http://www.nh8s.org/>). This was my first "real" DXpedition. I had previously operated from 4U1UN (UN Headquarters), HS0A (Thailand), VP9 (Bermuda) and a number of other vacation locations. Swains was a different story. This was a 'real' DXpedition. The amount of logistics, planning, financing and teamwork involved in organizing a full blown DXpedition impressed me and I was 'hooked'. Joe and Craig enlisted a number of world class operators and I was proud and humbled to have been asked to join the team.

(Continued on page 7)



(Continued from page 6)

The NH8S Team, lead by Craig and Joe, were awarded the DXpedition of the Year 2012/2013.

Following Swains, I naively tried to get US Air Force permission to operate from Wake Atoll. Here was one of the top 10 most wanted DXCC and I had zero experience in trying to obtain landing permissions. What was I thinking? Initial requests for access were immediately and emphatically turned down by the US Air Force. Not willing to take 'No' for an answer, another avenue needed to be found.

Having previously watched "Wake Island, Alamo of the Pacific" on the History channel, I immersed myself in the history of Wake Island. I read 'Building for War' by Bonny Gilbert and another excellent book "Unbroken", by Laura Hillenbrand--both of which detail the horrors of captivity. One thing which stood out was the siege of Wake during the early days of WWII. During the siege and subsequent Japanese occupation, there were civilian contractors, working for the US, preparing the atoll for the anticipated war. They were captured and many sent to work in East Asia for the Japanese. Ninety eight contractors, however, remained as prisoners on Wake. These civilian contractors were subsequently terminated by their capturers. Their demise was not known until after the war and thus they became known as "The Forgotten 98". Little is known about those 98, so I thought it was appropriate to use the medium of ham radio to bring their memories alive.

At this point, an 'angel' came forth and used 'backdoor' influence with the US Air Force. I was 'elected' as the Team Leader for the K9W Wake Island Commemorative DXpedition. Not having the skills to organize the DXpedition, I received a lot of excellent support from Joe (AA4NN), Joe (W8GEX), and Craig (K9CT). After many months of planning and waiting for travel permissions, the Forgotten 98 Commemorative DXpedition took place in October 2013.

Below is a picture of the Team and the Forgotten 98 Memorial on Wake. Behind the memorial is the Forgotten 98 Rock which was carved by one of the POWs prior to his demise. It is a beautiful but sad location.



Over 100,000 QSO's were handed out to the 'deserving' who worked Wake Island.

(Continued on page 8)



Here I am on Wake Island, pounding out QSOs.

(Continued from page 7)

One of the highlights of my DXpeditioning 'career' was an invitation from Bob, K4UEE to join the Navassa K1N Team. This was a chance to join another World Class Team and further hone my personal pile-up skills. It was the thrill of a lifetime with a superb team.

Prior to leaving for Navassa, I was working at getting permission to operate from Palmyra Atoll. The initial requests were summarily denied by US Fish and Wildlife. I again, naively, began a process of escalation within the USF&W. Again, multiple rejections. However I was contacted by a high level person in USF&W who offered to broker a solution. Though USF&W has jurisdiction over Palmyra, a portion of the atoll was

owned by The Nature Conservancy. Following in-depth discussions, TNC put the invitation out to the ham world. Our group had to bid on the Palmyra proposal!

While on Jamaica awaiting transportation to Navassa, I was informed The Nature Conservancy had approved our application to operate from Palmyra Atoll, K5P. It couldn't get any better! Off to Navassa! Wow! And with Palmyra permission in hand! Life is good!

If you are a DXer, you know of the successful Navassa K1N operation and its receiving DXpedition of the Year award for 2014/2015. K4UEE, Bob, W0GJ, Glenn and K0IR, Ralph did a remarkable job of organizing and executing the well documented plan of operation. Their game plan was executed like a military drill and proved a well designed protocol yields phenomenal results. These guys may have done this a few times before . . . to say the least!

After Navassa, it was on to Palmyra Atoll, K5P! Having obtained permission from The Nature Conservancy, Craig, K9CT and I put together a fantastic group of nine operators. We were limited to nine operators due to the capacity of our air transport from Hawaii. Additionally, the operation had antenna restrictions. Only verticals could be used to minimize bird collisions with guy wires. Working Europe was difficult at best. Most of Europe was antipodal from Palmyra and many times we had too weak paths making copy extremely difficult.

Palmyra is a beautiful, pristine atoll. Most of us had a chance to snorkel during our off shift hours.

(Continued on page 9)





(Continued from page 8)

We even had time to make friends with the local Booby, Rayne.

Other than the joy of handing out All Time New Ones, DXpeditioning team members become lifelong friends, in every sense of the word. On those rare occasions when we get together, the 'war stories' run rampant, especially if a bit of libation is involved! If you ever get a chance to go, do not pass up the opportunity to join a DXpedition.

For a final....From my very humble DXing roots in Brooklyn New York to my latest operation from the Vatican HV0A, I dearly value the Friendships made along the way. We all share the same "Common Bond", our love of our hobby, and our passionate personal pursuit of the rare one. I am privileged to have been to places in this world I never thought I would visit, and to have operated alongside some of the world's best DXers.

In all the above DXpeditions (and countless others!), INDEXA has recognized the need for 'seed' money at the onset of planning, and has been the first to sponsor. It is your INDEXA contributions which make DX happen.

Best DX!

Lou N2TU, Chairman of the Board, INDEXA

Biography: Born and raised in New York City and a Graduate of Archbishop Molloy High School. Following High School, Lou was an installer at Western Electric and quickly was promoted to management. While working full time, he attended Adelphi University and graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor Degree in Business Administration and subsequently Cum Laude with a Master's Degree in Business Administration - Finance.

During his 36 years of employment with Western Electric, AT&T and Lucent Technologies, Lou held varied positions as Director of Installation, Engineering, International Proposal Development, Financial Control Director and Project Management. In 2000, Lou retired from Lucent Technologies and for the following five years was a Director of Internet Services for Cablevision Systems Corporation. In 2005, he and his wife Hilda retired to Lake Norman, North Carolina.

Lou is married to Hilda and has one child and two grandchildren. He is an avid tennis player, DX chaser, astronomy buff, enjoys boating, retired life and traveling.

Humanitarian Aid Project—a.k.a. "Hams With Hearts"

Early in 2021, Zorro Miyazawa, JH1AJT, completed his series of endowments to INDEXA's Humanitarian Aid Fund. Thanks to Zorro's generosity in establishing the fund and support from other donors, the fund now has a balance of over \$50,000. The fund is designed to be self-sustaining, with grants from the fund in any year not exceeding 80% of each year's income from invested assets.

Several years ago this newsletter announced Zorro's plans. There are surely some new INDEXA members who may not have seen those early announcements. Also, it is important that the general public and the widespread amateur radio community be informed about the fund, its purpose, and its biggest benefactor. INDEXA Director Ralph Fedor has fulfilled that need by creating a short 5 minute video presentation about the fund and its origins. The video has been placed on the INDEXA website and can be found under the tab for the "Humanitarian Fund". There you can see the benefits of some of the grants already made. You are encouraged to view the video and share it with your fellow hams.

The presence of the fund and its humanitarian purpose is already generating donations from INDEXA members who have observed the often simple, yet effective things being done using grants from the Humanitarian Aid Project.

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