

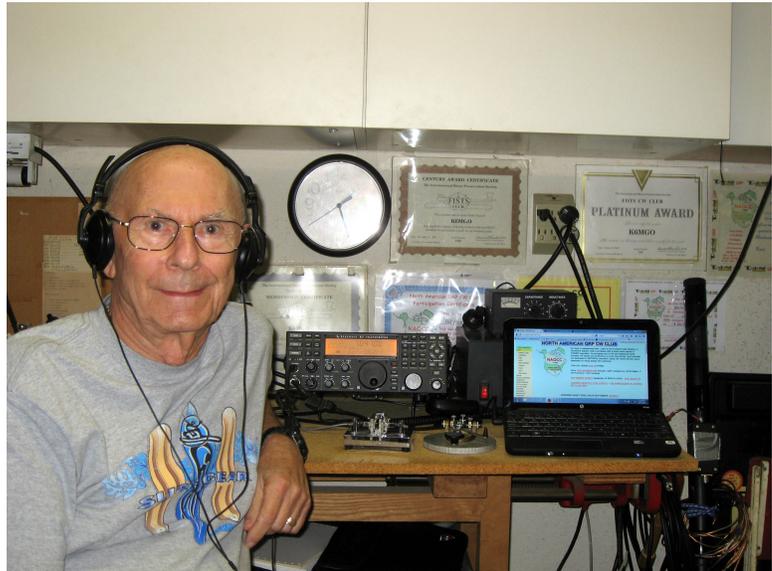
# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Each month one of our members is randomly selected and asked to share their ham radio biography with all of us. Questions or comments should go to Paul, KD2MX.

DISCLAIMER: Any views expressed in this section are those of the submitting member and may or may not be those of the NAQCC or its officers.

## BILL ROSS, K6MGO, #0259



I have always been interested in radio and electronics, from my high school days in Electric Shop and being on the Sound Crew, and throughout my Air Force service as an instructor at the Airborne Radio Mechanic School at Scott AFB. Then I had a short stint as a Radio Mechanic on the flight line for Western Air Lines followed by my jobs in aerospace after going to school on the G.I. Bill. But it wasn't until my second job in aerospace, at Hughes Aircraft Company where I worked in a group that must have been 50% Hams, that I met and knew any Hams. They quickly convinced me that I should become a Ham, and my boss and another fellow, administered the Technician test to me, and I became K6MGO in 1957 or 1958.

For several years I was content to work 6-meter AM both from home where I had a 70-foot high ground-plane antenna and mobile with a Black Widow rig. I built several homebrew rigs using 5763 and 2E26 type tubes and AM Broadcast radio converters, first with tubes and then nuvistors and later transistors. Then the guys at work "urged" me to upgrade to General, and the boss provided me with the Ryder Sight and Sound Code Course on the old 78 RPM records. Had to go to downtown Los Angeles and take the FCC exam. My first HF rig was a Heathkit DX-100, but it caused so much TVI that my neighbors were ready to lynch me so I upgraded to the Heathkit Apache. That was a sweet rig. I used that rig with a Hammarlund HQ-110 receiver for several years on AM, never liking CW and never having made a CW contact after passing the 13 wpm to get my license.

Fast forward through my career at Hughs, working on Fire Control Systems, and the Surveyor

Spacecraft, to the Flight Simulators for the F-14 and F-18 Aircraft for the Navy and finally retirement, where I felt bad about never having used CW. So, with lots of time on my hands, I decided to relearn my CW and after a short “refresher” was back up to about 15 wpm. I made my first CW contact on the air, about 40-plus years after getting my General license. I was terrified when I sent that first CW CQ, but afterwards I was so elated that I was hooked. I started operating CW almost exclusively from then on. In a short time, I upgraded to Advanced and then to a 20-wpm Extra. I joined FISTS, #9253, and achieved first my Century Award, and later my Platinum Award.

I met a fellow at a convention who was building miniature CW-QRP rigs and I was fascinated by them. I had always been drawn to miniature rigs and the amazing things they could do, So I started building some of the kits that were available, and found out about NAQCC, which I joined and became #259.

I never was too interested in the “wham-bam, thank you mam” type of QSO, preferring to rag chew instead, but a couple of years ago, I dipped a toe into the NAQCC Sprints and found them easy going and enjoyable, not hectic like most other contests, and so now I try to make every Sprint. It is still the only contest that I participate in.

I have built many rigs, from my first Heathkit AR3 Receiver, to single band QRP rigs to my current PFR3A rig and have had a K1, a K2 and now a K3/100 and FT-857D. I also like to build antennas, from dipoles and doublets to verticals using fishing poles and Jackite poles to mag loops.

I haven't been able to get too excited about the digital modes, too much like email as far as I'm concerned. So I am content to use “finger music” as long as my fingers will still work for me. Recently I joined SKCC, #11373, and have been enjoying getting back to “basics” with several straight keys.

One of the most memorable QRP QSO's that I have had was several years ago. I was tuning the upper QRP part of the 40m CW band, and heard a CQ. It was sent rather hesitantly and slow, so I figured it to be someone just starting out, and thought I would help them out. So I answered the CQ and was amazed to find out that the person sending the CQ was not a newbie but a ham who had been in a bad accident and suffered severe brain damage, and could neither walk, talk nor see. His only communications with others was his Morse Code. He carried on a very interesting QSO, remembering in his head what you had told him even days later, when I worked him again. Over about a years time, I must have worked him 3-4 times, but haven't heard him for a while. I will never forget those QSOs nor what this ham's knowledge of Morse Code has done for him.

I would like to thank my XYL for putting up with me and my hobby for over 57 years, and I would also like to thank the Officers and Members of NAQCC for their tireless devotion and efforts so that I might have some fun and enjoy so much this wonderful hobby of ours.

CU on the air and in the Sprints.

73/72

