

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.

MERLIN WILLIAMS, KD0V, #2002



I love operating portable. This photo was taken by my XYL while we were on vacation at Gun Flint Pines Resort in Northern Minnesota about a half-mile south of the Canadian Border. The radio is a NorCal 40A and a Buddie Stick antenna is in the back ground.

I was first introduced to morse code as a boy scout in the 1950s. It has been a real challenge in my life ever since. I learned the morse code the wrong way, by memorizing it as a boy scout and starting out at 2 wpm when I started learning it to get the novice license. I still suffer from it. My father-in-law, W7OZJ, Paul, helped me get started in ham radio, shortly after I got married. In 1965 I was first licensed as WN7FAE. I was unable to get my code speed to anywhere near 13 wpm while in college and lost my license at the end of one year. After graduating from college, I started working on mastering the CW again. I did so by sending CW and recording what I was sending and then using the tape for practice until I had it memorized. Then I would start over again. After about a year I was up to around 15 wpm. I passed the General test and became WA7JUK, and a month later passed the Advanced test.

We moved to Minnesota in 1974 and my call was changed to WB0MPN. After several years of operating as WB0PMN, I decided to really challenge myself and get my code speed up to 20+ wpm and get the Extra Class. I spent a half an hour every evening after work pushing myself with on-the-air CW contacts. I passed the Extra examination and became, KD0V.

A couple of years after passing the Extra examination I went into business for myself. That was the end of CW until 2005. I was using some old Collins gear, a KWM2 and a 75S-3B. I got involved with FISTS and started playing around with QRP. I purchased an Elecraft K2 Kit. I earned the FISTS QRP Award #107, and the Two-Way QRP Award #18 and somehow along the way got involved with NAQCC. Also I got involved with SKCC and earned their QRP Awards, #6 for the One-Way and #2 for the Two-Way.

The K2 really changed ham radio for me. It was my first solid state radio, and I found it so amazing. The receiver performed better than the Collins 75S-3B. Because of the K2, I decided to sell my Collins gear and use the money for solid-state gear. I got enough money from the sale of the Collins gear to purchase a Tentec Jupiter. My ham radio activity exploded. The recession helped, my business collapsed. I have since replaced the Jupiter with an Elecraft K3.

I used a straight key so much that I got carpal tunnel in my left wrist. I cannot use a straight key any more so I learned to use a bug. I can use a bug with both my right and left hands. It is sure nice during the Sprints to be able to write with the left hand and send with the right hand.

Last June, 2015, I had my right hip replaced. The bad hip slowed down my portable QRP activity for several years. I am doing much better now and I am looking forward to portable operating in the future. This fall I will attempt the October NAQCC Sprint as KD0V/7 from Idaho, using the NorCal 40A and Buddie Stick, I hope it works.



Finally, here I am operating the FYBO Event in February of 2012 in my back yard. It was cold that day. The flexible solar panel helped keep the batteries up.

