

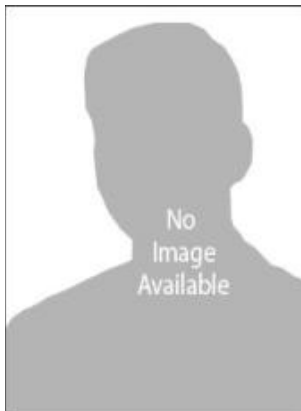
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



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.

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Since taking my first electronics class in high school, and listening to my first international short-wave radio broadcast, I had always wanted to obtain my amateur radio license. I am somewhat of a newer ham, having received my General License in 2012, even though I was in the U.S. Army Signal Corps for over 20 years. I retired from the U.S. Army Signal Corps in 2013, and I can now honestly say that I've learned more about radio communications since receiving my license than I did during my whole time in the Army.

Amateur radio allows me to continue what I enjoyed in the Army, which is working with radio communications and teaching younger (and sometimes older) hams what I have learned. Upon receiving my General license, I decided to focus almost exclusively on digital modes such as PSK-31 and JT-65. I am by nature a reserved and somewhat shy person, and am not one to "rag chew" on the phone bands (only about 10% of my log contacts are phone), so after gaining a solid understating of digital modes, the next mode I wanted to branch into was of course CW.

I am defiantly a "Card Carrying" member of the digital and computer age, and when I started out learning CW, any free time I had would find me using one of the many applications or web sites that teach CW. The more I learned, the more determined I was to become proficient at it.

Although I enjoy new technology, I had a nostalgia for the "Old Timers" and the way they could bang out those dots and dashes with nothing but a straight key. I currently only use a straight key when I operate CW, although I have nothing against others who use other devices to get their messages though. There is just something satisfying to me in "pounding out" my QSO with a straight key.

I fell into QRP quite by accident. I was searching the web for nets that were designed to help CW newcomers, and found an NAQCC CW net. I had no idea at the time that NAQCC was not only "newbee" friendly, but also a QRP net. I had never worked, or considered working, QRP before, but the

NAQCC is such a great club that I thought I would give it a go. Before I started using QRP, if you would have tried to tell me all the contacts that could be made with 5 watts and a piece of wire, I would have said you were crazy. Now I am a believer.

I have since purchased a portable QRP rig. The great thing about being in the Army Signal Corps for so long is that you learn how many different antenna configurations you can create with just some feed line, wire, and 550 parachute cord. I am looking forward to getting out of the shack and operating portable QRP.

I currently use an ICOM IC 7100, which is fully integrated into my computer system, a Straight Key, and Ham Radio Deluxe as my computer interface. All of my antennas are homemade, and since I retired and stayed close to Fort Polk, Louisiana, there is a wealth of surplus military equipment available. So not only are my antennas "homebrew" but most of my antenna supports are home made as well. As one fellow Ham described my set up, it looks like a permanent field day at my house. I am also lucky enough to have a finished shed in my back yard that I use for amateur radio, so I operate out of a true "Ham Shack".

Here are some pictures of my modest, yet functional, radio set up.

