Preface

AMATEUR RADIO HAS BEEN A PART OF MY LIFE FROM an early age. It was a passion of my father, Olavi Lehti, who, starting in his teen years, committed six decades of his life to the hobby. Our summer house had a hut dedicated to the activity, with tall antennas at the top of a rocky hill marking the landscape. He also worked in our study at home, with the distinct scent of melting solder often hanging in the air. The room was cluttered with all manner of electronics and radio gear: components in plastic bags, antennas, transceivers, tuners—you name it. It felt like a real-life MacGyver's lair, only with even more gadgetry.

Under his call sign, OH2BBR, my father was one of the founding members of team OH2AM, a collective of like-minded Finnish youths in the 1960s who shared a passion for amateur radio. The OH2AM team became a big part of introducing and advancing international competitive amateur radio in Finland, securing multiple championships in the CQ Worldwide DX Contest, the world's largest amateur radio competition.

< In 1965, OH2BBR served in the army, stationed in the Signal Regiment. The QSL card deck on top of the counter features the call sign OH3AH, which was the station identifier for the Riihimäki Garrison Radio Club, the regiment's club for conscripts performing their military service.

QSL cards were commonplace in our home, but their true depth of meaning became evident to me only after my father's passing. While sorting out cardboard boxes of his extensive but disorganised QSL card collection—for a donation to a local technical museum—an unexpected inspiration hit me. My initial plan of *'just organising the cards a little'* turned into lengthy dinner table monologues about radio operators' captivating adventures around the world.

Diving deeper into the world of amateur radio, it quickly became compelling to compile my discoveries into a book. While many might perceive amateur radio as just some complex technical jargon, in reality it is full of adventure and history, and sure, also has a little bit of a geeky underbelly. To the best of my ability, I have tried to capture these facets of the amateur radio hobby to share with anyone who might also be curious.

This book showcases some of the QSL cards in the unique collection I inherited, for you to explore and appreciate. The cards aren't just personal memorabilia but offer perspectives into history, geography and political events, with a backdrop of some very daring adventurers' undertakings. Most importantly, the cards are testaments to some lifelong friendships.

I hope these cards will captivate you as they have me.

QSL Cards

THIS BOOK PROVIDES A GLIMPSE INTO THE WORLD OF amateur radio through a selection of QSL cards from the latter half of the 20th century. But what is the purpose of a QSL card?

To begin with, the abbreviation 'QSL' is another Q-code; this particular one asks for confirmation of transmission: 'Please acknowledge receipt', by replying with a confirmation of having received the radio transmission sent by the other party.

A QSL card, then, is a written, physical confirmation that two-way radio communication between two amateur radio operators has taken place. There is no strict standard, but it is roughly postcard-sized and contains the call signs of the sender and the recipient, the date and time of contact, frequency used, signal strength, mode of contact, and some further technical details of transmission. These details serve to verify contacts for both a personal sense of achievement for the operators, as well as wider community recognition—sometimes even amounting to competition awards.

In the 1960s, a time period from which many cards in this book originate, radio amateurs would manually record their QSOs, and then exchange QSL cards by post. Today, electronic QSL services are also commonly used in addition to physical cards.

A QSL card is a written, physical confirmation that two-way radio communication between two radio operators has taken place.

1 CALL SIGN:
unique identity of a radio operator or station. With the issuance of an amateur radio license comes a unique call sign, serving as the operator's on-the-air identity. A call sign consists of a prefix and a suffix, where the prefix identifies the country as assigned by the ITU (International Telecommunication Union), and the suffix uniquely identifies the operator. Luxembourg call signs, for instance, start with the prefix LX, followed by a digit (0-9) and one to four letters.

FROM LUCKY LUXEMBOURG

L X 1 E S

ZONE 14

to radio OH2BBR

	Date	GMT	RPT	Mode	QRG		QSL	
	4 24.9. 1972	00.00	**5** 79	**6** CW SSB AM FM	**7** 3.5 7 14	21 28 144	**8** PSE	TNX

Stn : / Home made / I C Line
ANT : / inv. V / Ground plane

OP : Emile SCHOETTER, 81, rue de Tétange, KAYL

2 CALL SIGN
of the Operator in Contact, to whom the QSL card is addressed. 'OH' is the prefix for Finland, '2' denotes a particular region within the southern part of the country, and 'BBR' serves as the operator's distinct identifier.

3 LOCATION:
Operators may specify their CQ Zone for detailed location information. Established by CQ magazine, a publication for amateur radio enthusiasts, CQ Zones organize territories for contest purposes and are numbered from 1 to 40. Luxembourg is in CQ Zone 14. ITU Zones, on the other hand, divide the world into regions for radio frequency coordination and allocation, numbered from 1 to 90.

4 DATE AND TIME OF CONTACT:
a QSL card should include the date and time of the contact, including the applicable time zone.

5 SIGNAL REPORT:
the RST standard (Readability, Signal strength, and Tone) rates the quality of a contact. Readability evaluates clarity (in the range of 1-5); signal strength (1-9) notes transmission power; and tone (1-9) is for technical signal quality. For example, RST '579' means perfectly readable (5), moderately strong (7), and perfect tone (9).

6 MODE OF COMMUNICATION:
two-way communication abbreviations CW and SSB note how information was encoded in the transmission. CW (common in the cards of this book) means sending Morse code, while SSB stands for analogue voice over radio. Digital modes like PSK31, Packet Radio, RTTY, FT8 and MFSK also exist.

7 RADIO FREQUENCY:
records the approximate radio frequency band used in either kHz, MHz, or a wavelength in metres. On this QSL card, 'QRG' is from the Q-code system and stands for: 'What is my exact frequency?' And the answer is 3.5 MHz.

8 QSL:
'TNX' (thanks), and the underlined 'PSE' (please) indicate that the radio operator is requesting a return QSL card.

11 'OP'
stands for 'operator'.

9 THE PHILLIPS CODE,
created by telegraph operator Walter P. Phillips in the late 19th century, is a system of abbreviations where numbers represent common words or phrases, making it easier and quicker to send and receive commercial telegrams. For example, '73' means 'best regards' and '88' stands for 'love and kisses'.

10 A QSL CARD
typically provides details about the equipment and setup used during a radio contact. 'STN' denotes the station equipment, while 'ANT' indicates the type of antenna used.

Europe

1. 1A Sovereign Military Order of Malta
2. 4U1ITU ITU HQ
3. C3 Andorra
4. CT Portugal
5. DL Germany (West Germany)
6. DM German Democratic Republic (East Germany)
7. EA6-EH6 Balearic (Spain)
8. EI Ireland
9. F France
10. GI, GN Northern Ireland
11. GM, GS Scotland
12. HA, HG Hungary
13. HV Vatican
14. I Italy
15. JW Svalbard (Norway)
16. OH0 Åland (Finland)
17. OJ0 Märket Reef (Finland/Sweden)
18. OY Faroe Island (Denmark)
19. R1FJ Franz Jozef Land (Russia)
20. SV-SZ, J4 Greece
21. SV/A Mount Athos (Greece)
22. SV9, J49 Crete
23. TF Iceland
24. YT, YU Serbia
25. ZA Albania
26. ZB2 Gibraltar (United Kingdom)

TO RADIO OH2BBR   **MT. ATHOS — HOLY MOUNTAIN**

July, 1975			GMT	BAND — MHz		RST	MODE	
21 ☐	24 ☐	26 ☐	1810	7 ☐	21 ☐	599	2 x CW	☒
23 ☒	25 ☐	27 ☐		14 ☒	28 ☐		2 x SSB	☐

EQUIPMENT:
XMTR   KENWOOD T599S
RCVR   KENWOOD R599S
ANTENNA HY-GAIN TH3MK3
GENERATOR HONDA E300

ARIS GERMANIS, SV1GA
(operator, authorized by Greek PTT
and the Holy Council of Mt. Athos)

MARTIN LAINE, OH2BH
(QSL-manager)

Mt. Athos, the holy Mountain has been a source of inspiration for generations, both as an arena for ascetic endeavours as well as a beauty spot. And it can truly be said that everything about this mountain, the sea, its peaks and valleys, its rocks and ridges, its vegetation, its towers and churches offer a multitude of the finest landscapes in the world.

This monastic state, unique in the world, covers almost the whole area of the eastern peninsula of Chalkidiki in the Northern Creece. This promontory stretching for about 25 miles into the sea, its width ranging between 5 and 15 miles.

This DX-pedition run into much trouble all the way just to mention that our only transceiver got burnt. Only with the extra power prayed for to God this operation was happily completed. We would like to share our happiness with Greek PTT, the 1st Secretary of Holy Council, the Governor of Mt Athos, the Metropolitan John of Helsinki, the chief at the customs in Dafni and Mr Robert Thompson, K6SSJ for making this operation succesful.

SV/A Mount Athos (Greece)
Mount Athos is the only European entity on the 'most wanted' DXCC entities list featured in this book, holding the #30 spot as of May 2024.

# SV/A Mount Athos: The Mystical Monastic Community

A BIG PART OF THE APPEAL OF AMATEUR RADIO ARE all the stories you can stumble upon that jump, without skipping a beat, from pioneering robocraft in Italy, to an isolated skerry in the Baltic Sea, over to scorching radio receivers in a monastic community—Mount Athos is yet another DXCC entity with an intriguing story.

Mount Athos is a mountainous peninsula in north-eastern Greece, stretching out for about 50 kilometres into the Aegean Sea, with its width varying between 7 and 12 kilometres, and its highest point reaching about 2,000m. The area is a UNESCO World Heritage site and functions as an autonomous monastic state, hosting 20 Eastern Orthodox monasteries inhabited exclusively by monks.

Operating a radio from Mount Athos requires not only a license adhering to Greek telecommunication regulations, but also consent of the monastic community. Obtaining approval is challenging due to the monks' reclusive lifestyle. As a result, radio contact with Mount Athos is relatively rare, adding to its appeal as an entity to communicate with.

As hinted earlier, visiting Mount Athos is strictly reserved for men only, and those possessing a special permit granted by the Holy Council at that. There is a persistent rumour that this exclusivity would extend beyond human visitors as well, prohibiting even female domestic animals like cows and hens, but this is, it must be noted, just legend.
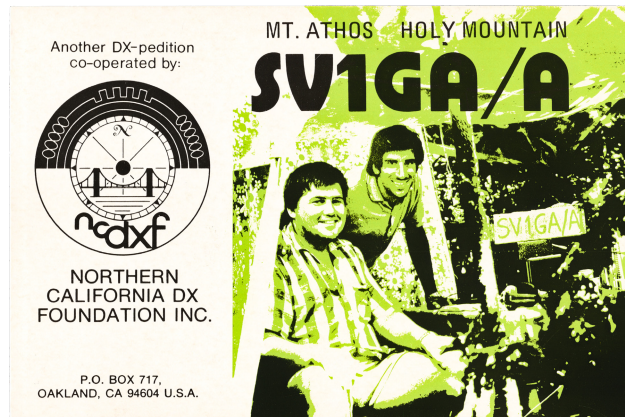
LU3EX

ALFREDO E. LIEBERWIRTH
Casilla Correo Central 4553
BUENOS AIRES
ARGENTINA

To
Amateur
Radio
Station

OH2BBR

Tnx _Olavi_

for the _28_ Mcs _cw_

qso; ur sigs _579_

at _1750_ GMT _21.969_

Pse QSL, 73 s _Alfredo_

RADIO CLUB
ARGENTINO
23 SET. 1969
Q.S.L.

114

Ing. ALCIDES T. DRELLER comunicando desde:

⊘ en SSB .... ◯ en ....

LU 8 FT | **LU 6 FAZ**
NECOCHEA 1279 | AYACUCHO 2168
CAÑADA DE GOMEZ —' (Santa Fe) | ROSARIO — (Santa Fe)

Estación OH2BBR . Fecha 12-4-69

Hora L. U. 41³²ª 117⁴² h. Frecuencia 28590 Kc/s.

QSA 5 R 6 M Bueno

Condiciones Bueno s

Transmisor Yaesu FLdx 400 + FLdx 2000

Receptor Yaesu FRdx 400 S. de h.

Mosley TA-33 Trap Master

"N° 215 para Concurso"
Complacido por
este encuentro, re-
itérole que puede con-
tar en Argentina
con un nuevo amigo,
que queda a sus
gratas órdenes

Muy cordiales saludos

[firma]

Señor

Operador Olavi
A. Postal 10.306
Helsinki
FINLANDIA

Upon my arrival in the DPR Korea in December 1998, I did not realize that I would be activating the most sought after DXCC country one day.

It has been a long march to make my life-time dream come true and to make the DPR Korea a part of this great world DX community of ours. I am grateful to the dedicated supporters of KK5DO, OH2BH, W3UR and W5IZ for assisting me at various times in my adventure.

It was their support and knowledge that guided me so that the accredited P5/4L4FN cards would make their way to you today. But most of all, I would like to present my greatest gratitude to my wife Marine and my daughter Ann who have lived through Dad's "strange hobby" back home in Georgia, as well to all my friends in DPR Korea who have made our desires possible. With this wonderful experience, I am now extending my stay here until June 2003, securing that P5 will be logged for all those who Deserve.

I would like to thank the following for their kind help: EA7JX, K5GNA, K5OE, PA8AA, WZ8P, Personal Database Applications, Inc., Bencher, Inc., NCDXF, INDEXA and all hams worldwide.

BENCHER, INC

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA DX FOUNDATION, INC.

International DX Association
INDEXA
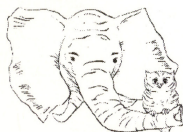
QSO Verified by KK5DO

Confirming QSO with **OH2BBR**

Date	UTC	Band	Mode	RST
12 Apr 02	12:38	15M	SSB	59
	VOID	VOID	VOID	VOID
	VOID	VOID	VOID	VOID
	VOID	VOID	VOID	VOID

73...Ed

QSL KK5DO Verified

10-X# 72722
Grid PM38

Printed by WZ8P

73 de Ed!

P5 North Korea

P5 North Korea: The Most Sought–After Entity

OVER THE YEARS, CONNECTING WITH ANYONE IN North Korea has been very difficult to achieve by amateur radio operators—difficult, but not impossible. After the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (also known as DPRK, or more often North Korea) was accepted into the United Nations in 1991, it took until July 1995 for ARRL to announce the addition of an entity for DPRK to the DXCC List.

QSL cards from North Korea are hard to come by due to strict government restrictions, limited amateur radio activity, and the country's isolation from the rest of the world. Only a select few operations over the years have qualified for DXCC credit, with several planned activities either ultimately not happening or not meeting the required criteria.

The P5/4L4FN operation in early 2000 was not a typical DXpedition. Operator Ed Giorgadze, from the Republic of Georgia, was there on duty for the United Nations World Food Program and operated the radio during his spare time. The April 2002 ARRL Newsletter confirmed that Mr. Giorgadze's operation in Pyongyang had been verified, with the necessary approvals from local telecommunications officials. Wayne Mills, N7NG—the ARRL Membership Services Manager—confirmed that while Giorgadze began his operations based on a verbal agreement with North Korean authorities, the ARRL, after reviewing the written documentation provided, has declared that the P5/4L4FN operation adhered to the DXCC guidelines and is worthy of credit.

P5 North Korea

Confirmation du Q S O Ph- CW
du 7-6 1963 à 16 h 55 GMT
avec la station OH2BBR 14 Mc/s.
reçue à la NOUVELLE-AMSTERDAM
R 5 S 7 M. 9 OM Louis
73s et Merci pour votre Q. S. L.
Q S L Bureau FB8 — B.P. 587
        Tananarive, le 13-11-63
VIC, FB8BC, log. manager de FB8ZZ

Station : OH2BBR
Opr : Olavi Lehti

Imprimerie Société Malgache d'Edition Tananarive 1500 -

MOST
WANTED
ENTITY
#40

UNION FRANÇAISE

FB8ZZ

NOUVELLE AMSTERDAM
Latitude 37°50' Sud
Longitude 77°   Est