

3C7Y - Equatorial Guinea 2007 *

Anselmo Bernabe Coll, EA5BYP

(Edited by Dr. Lutz D. Schmadel, DK8UH)

After a year of conversations with different Ministries of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea to be able to carry out a ham radio expedition to this attractive African country, we were finally granted the call sign 3C7Y in August 2007. The plan was to activate 3C with an expedition of various operators to take place in Malabo. In this way, the island of Bioko (IOTA AF-010) would be activated and, after five years without any ham radio activity in this country, many OM could obtain a New One in the DXCC and a new island in the IOTA.



Together with the Ham Radio Section of S. Vicente we began to prepare our project, Vicente EA5YN, Luis EA5BRE and Elmo EA5BYP. While visiting my good friend Fred KH7Y in Hawaii during the middle of April, 2007, I mentioned the need for a CW operator to go to Africa. He didn't think twice about it and decided to join the group. Now our group was complete, four operators for a good expedition. Each operator has its own ham radio license in Equatorial Guinea, Luis 3C7L, Vic 3C7V, Fred 3C7Y and Elmo 3C7A.

The date for the expedition was set for the middle of October, a time of year where the winter rains have disappeared and yet the place to install the Shack was not defined. This would be a surprise since the Ministry itself had assigned us a place to carry out the expedition. I remembered that place during my 1998 expedition, but could not imagine its present condition. We would see it only when we arrived there. However, they assured us that we would have at our disposal a 40m tower to install our antennas.

On October 1st Fred KH7Y arrived at Alicante and on the 5th we found ourselves at the Alicante Airport en

route to Madrid – Malabo. We decided to carry on the plane our backpacks containing a pair of Transceivers, thread dipoles, coax, PC, etc. In this way we would save some money in shipping costs and at the same time we would assure ourselves of having a station on the air in case of possible complications.

We arrived at Malabo at 21,45 GMT the same day, Friday, October 5. Humidity was very high and, in the middle of a torrential downpour, representatives of the Communications Ministry were waiting for us with all the documentation necessary for our stay in Equatorial Guinea. After a long time waiting for our luggage we were surprised to find out that our boxes with the amplifiers, filters, tools, etc. were not going to arrive. This was a great disappointment since the next flight from Spain would not arrive until Monday, so that we would be three days without the most important part of our equipment.

On Saturday morning we went to the place where they had prepared for us to mount the antennas and to set our Shack. Here we were again surprised since the place, a very humid warehouse with part of it almost in ruins, was hard to get to. We had to set up our antennas under a constant rain that didn't let up until the expedition ended and this made out work outdoors very difficult.



Vic, EA5YN, Luis, EA5BRE, Fred, KH7Y, Elmo, EA5BYP

After examining the place, Luis and Elmo began to set up the Yagi at 10, 15 and 20m. The idea was to have a station constantly active until we got the rest of our equipment. At 07:42 GMT on October 6, Fred made the first call in 20m CW, with the first station in our log being F2GC and at 17:59 GMT Luis started his

calls on 20m SSB, with YB0NFL being the first station to answer him. The pile-ups were enormous, the whole group participated in the great demand there was for this entity of the DXCC.



Fred, KH7Y operating CW

We had an active station until noon on Monday when the Ministry of Communications told us that our heavy equipment was at Customs at the airport. Vicente and Elmo, our experts on navigating the bureaucracy, were in charge of getting the equipment. It took about three hours to complete all the police and customs formalities and finally, in the afternoon, all the material was at the Shack. Now all our team members had a happier face and we set up three complete stations. From Tuesday on we had two and sometimes three stations in operation. We finished setting up the rest of the antennas, a rigid dipole for 40m, two elements for 17 and 12m, another yagi for 10, 15 and 20m, the 40m tower was used to hold the thread for the lower bands.

Propagation was difficult, even with Europe. We had constant QRN and in some bands we barely had some openings, such as in 12m or 10m, where sometimes our signals disappeared completely due to electrical outages that sometimes lasted for three hours. We were still able to take advantage of all the time we could to be on the radio. We missed propagation with Asia on the lower bands, but, in this trip, openings with the USA west coast were really good in the higher bands as well as in the lower bands. We managed to realize a total of 13.500 QSOs in CW, SSB and RTTY. The expedition manager was EA5BYP.

Our resting Shack was 5km away from there and that didn't facilitate our work. We were keenly aware that our trip to the resting Shack during certain times at night was not a safe one.

While the expedition lasted, a technician designated by the Ministry of Communications was present on a

to daily basis to observe and report our transmissions the Ministry.

On the 14th of October, the last day of our expedition, we were surprised by a strong storm that brought down and destroyed some of our antennas. In the afternoon we concluded our expedition. At 19:05 GMT, Fred realized his last contact on CW with JA8JO.

On the morning of the 15th we picked up and packed everything into our boxes and by the afternoon we were at the Malabo Airport en route to Spain. Behind us were days of happiness and days of sadness since we were not able to respond the 59 (9) to all who called us.



We want to thank all the groups, Associations and individuals who helped and supported this expedition. NCDXF, Colvin Grant ARRL, INDEXA, GDXF, EUDXF, Lynx Dx Group, Clipperton Dx, Magnolia Dx Ass, CDXC, Ocean Fone, URE, EA5AR-RCA, Nippon Dx Asso, Proyecto4, Unión de Radioaficionados de S.Vicente, JR2KDN, W5BXX.

We also want to thank the Authorities of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea and all of you for your constant calls.

*) Electronic Supplement to GDXF Journal #22