

## TX9A Tubuai 2025

This story should actually begin some 35 years earlier.

Imagine a 15-year-old Hamlet making his first radio contacts, looking at a world map and noticing all the countries with prefixes. Somewhere far to the right, at the edge of the map, are strange island names: Tonga, Kiribati, Samoa. I imagine myself somewhere in the distant Pacific, with a station and an antenna. A boyhood dream.

In the summer of 2024, everything changes. A meeting in Bilice (Croatia) with 9A3MR (Rolando), who had already been on two expeditions (**TO19A** Reunion, **5W0LM** Samoa), leads the two of us to start thinking about a new trip. The criteria are quite simple: the DXCC must be in the Top 100 Wanted list on clublog.org, relatively accessible, with electricity and internet. The choice fell on the Austral Islands and its island Tubuai.

The expedition consisted of 6 members in total:

- Rolando (**9A3MR**) (Team Leader)
- Mladen (**9A2NA**),
- Kiko (**9A4WY**),
- Livio (**9A7Y**),
- Vlatko (**9A9R**), and
- Zrinko – Zik (**DK8ZZ**, **YT3ZZ**, **VE3ZIK**).

Tubuai (IOTA OC-152) is the administrative center of the Austral Islands, located about 700 km south of the capital of French Polynesia (Papeete). Like many islands in the South Pacific, it is surrounded by a coral reef that protects it and gives the sea a beautiful blue color. Tubuai is known for the mutineers of the ship *Bounty*, who attempted to take over the island but failed. The island is dominated by Mont Taitaa (422m). The climate is milder and wetter than Papeete. The island is green and lush with rich vegetation.



Preparations went smoothly. After obtaining a basic FO license, we received the special callsign TX9A. We found accommodation on the northeast side of Tubuai (Toamanahere Guesthouse), geographically ideal for activity from the Pacific (EU/USA/Japan all open). On Google Maps, everything looked perfect—large yard with more than enough space for antennas. Our hosts assured us that electricity and internet were in excellent condition.



It was agreed that most of the team would drive from Croatia to Erbach (Germany), where the gear would be repacked, then continue by car to Paris-Orly and fly directly to Papeete (technical stop in San Francisco), a 24-hour layover, then take Air Tahiti to Tubuai. TX9A was a low-profile DXpedition; we carried everything ourselves, knowing we'd need excess luggage. In total, we had ten suitcases (French Bee Orly-Papeete-Orly), and we bought premium economy tickets on Air Tahiti to carry 2x 23kg suitcases. The equipment included: beam antennas, GP 40m, GP 160/80m, GP 60/30m, two masts, three HF radios, three ACOM power amplifiers, HP BPF laptop from 403A, coax cables, radial wires, and all the small items needed for an island like Tubuai. Repacking was more than interesting 😊 and the magical 23kg/10-suitcase limit was too tight for some gear, so we decided to leave out the 4-square antenna for 40m and the K9AY loop. There were a few other items left behind—but let's keep that within the team 😊





One crucial pre-expedition item is sponsorship. ACOM Bulgaria recognized our quality and provided us with three amplifiers: 2x ACOM 1200S and 1x 500S. Support also came from 4O3A Signature (High Power Bandpass Filters), and the following foundations: German DX Foundation (GDXF), EU DX Foundation (EUDXF), and Mediterranean DX Club (MDXC), whose donations covered part of the excess luggage costs. DX-World helped by promoting our activity to the DX community.



The flight to Papeete was very pleasant. After a rest and a 24h layover, we landed on Tubuai. Part of the team set up the shack while the others, in the rain, erected the Hexbeam.

A pile-up began; we realized that the QTH had absolutely no noise, we had access to a yard of around 5,000 m<sup>2</sup>, and the internet connection was excellent, allowing us to livestream on Clublog. We were even more thrilled to find that the noise level on 160/80m was exceptionally low. Francine and Michel were good hosts, though they might not have fully understood why we were putting up so many antennas.

We cooked for ourselves, and prices on Tubuai were quite high compared to Europe—not surprising since all goods arrive by supplier ship (every five to six weeks).

We used the following equipment:

2x ICOM 7300, 2x Kenwood TS590S, 2x ACOM 1200S, 1x ACOM 500S, Hexbeam, 3-el. DK7ZB beam (17–10m), 4-el. 50 MHz beam, GP 160/80m, GP 60/30m, GP 40m.



#### **Tubuai highlights:**

- **160m:** Our vertical antenna could operate on only one band, so we dedicated three nights to 160m and logged over 500 QSOs (170 from North America, 270 from Asia, and one from Spain). We operated both FT8 and CW.
- **80m:** Definitely one of the highlights. Although late April and early May aren't ideal for low-band DXing from Tubuai, we logged almost 350 QSOs with EU stations—over 1,650 total.







- **6m:** A surprise for us—openings on 50 MHz all day long. We could've had more QSOs overall if we hadn't spent so much time on 6m, but it paid off: nearly 1,500 QSOs (500+ USA, 800+ Japan), with highlights being contacts with 9K2GR, 9K2GS, 9K2OD, and 9K2NO via long path. We were happy to give many stations a new DXCC on 6m.

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- **Europe:** We made every effort to work EU stations whenever possible and we believe we succeeded—25% of our log is from Europe. We focused on 40m and higher bands during greyline.

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- **Japan:** Incredible pile-ups from Japan. As TX9A, we must commend the discipline of JA HAMS in pile-ups—EU HAMS could learn a lot from them.

The final QSO was with PY2SRL on 17m. We decided to dismantle the antennas on time and pack up because our host Francine invited us to a dinner attended by **Tema Hauata**, the French Polynesian government representative on Tubuai, who listened intently to our presentation about HAM radio.





On our return, at Faaa airport (Papeete), we happened to meet **Didier F6BCW**, with whom we spent a wonderful evening before heading back to Europe.

We want to thank all the donors who supported our DXpedition (GDXF, EUDXF, MDXC). Special thanks to **ACOM Bulgaria** for lending us three amplifiers (2x ACOM 1200S and 1x ACOM 500S), which ran continuously for 12 days without any issues. A huge thank-you also to **403A Signature**—whose HP BPFs helped avoid interstation interference. Thanks to all other donors who contributed to making this DXpedition a success.





Summary:

Length of activity: 11 days, 3 hours

Summary	TX9A
QSOs:	61.444
CW	22.027
SSB	11.803
FT8	27.614

Band	160m	80m	60m	40m	30m	20m	17m	15m	12m	10m	6m
QSOs:	512	1.659	355	6.168	5.589	9.433	8.587	9.764	8.539	9.376	1.462

And, of course, the famous final question:

**Where do we go next?**

On behalf of the TX9A team,

Zrinko (Zik) DK8ZZ

