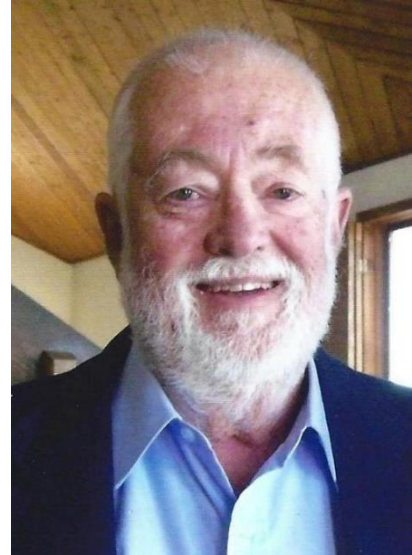


Saving a piece of History

During a holiday trip in August 2019 visiting W6, W7, and W0 with my grandkids and their parents, I planned an eye ball QSO with my long time ham friend Walt Marshall, W7SE and his XYL Dolores. The meeting should happen in Moab, Utah. The day before the get together, I made a phone call to Laramie, Wyoming and got Walt on the phone. The eyeball QSO was canceled because of illness of Walt. My friend Walt, W7SE, died a few weeks later, on Friday, August 30, 2019.



End 2020 I got the yearly Christmas card from Dolores. Enclosed was a letter with a summary of the happenings of 2020, showing this paragraph:

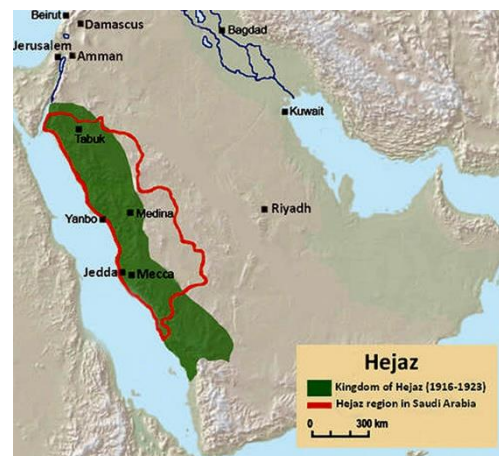
Before we left Saudi, Walt rescued the vast QSL card collection for the HZ1AB amateur radio station that closed down. Walt built a wall of drawers (90) to keep them in. It was Walt's wish that these historic cards go to a museum in Vienna, Austria. [The museum](#) agreed to accept them and K5KG, George Wagner, Walt's long time ham friend, spearheaded this task. W8MYL, Roy Aiken of Laramie, N7WY, Bob Rennard and N7MJ, Jack Mitchell of Cheyenne came to my house several times to plan, box, and ship over 170,000 cards. George raised funds for this project from former HZ1AB operators and interested groups. Thank You to all that contributed.

Of course I knew that W7SE was an operator of HZ1AB when he worked for Aramco. During my visits to Wyoming I saw often objects the Marshalls took home from Saudi Arabia, even a big wooden Arabic door, mounted on the wall of the living room. But I never saw the QSL collection, mentioned in the summary above. But I was wondering how do you send out 170 thousand QSL-cards from Laramie/Wyoming to Vienna/Austria?

Time for some investigation. It became a journey through history.

Hejaz (prefix HZ)

The Hashemite Kingdom of Hejaz was a state in the Hejaz region in the Middle East ruled by the Hashemite dynasty. It achieved national independence after the destruction of the Ottoman Empire by the British Empire, during World War I, when the Sharif of Mecca fought in alliance with the British Imperial forces to drive the Turkish Army from the Arabian Peninsula during the Arab Revolt.



The new kingdom had a brief life and then was conquered in 1925 by the neighboring Sultanate of Nejd under a resurgent House of Saud, creating the Kingdom of Hejaz and Nejd.

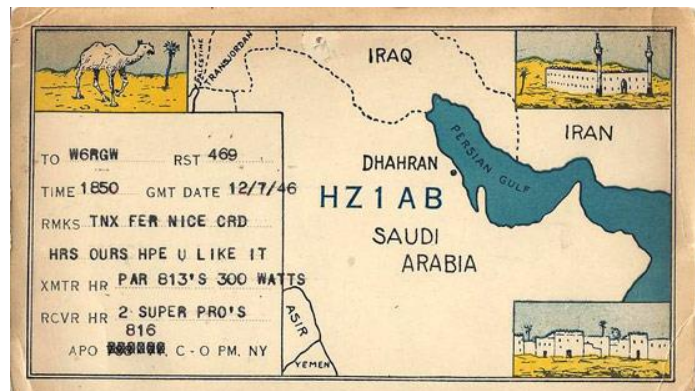
On September 23, 1932, the Kingdom of Hejaz and Nejd joined the Saudi dominions of Al-Hasa and Qatif, as the unified Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This fact was the reason that Hejaz was changed into Saudi Arabia in the Postwar DXCC list. Saudi Arabia (HZ) was listed on the first ARRL Countries list after World War II, in February 1947.

Saudi Arabia and Hejaz were in the Prewar DXCC list mentioned as two different countries. After the war, **Saudi Arabia** (including Hejaz) did get the **prefix HZ**.

HZ1AB 1946-2004

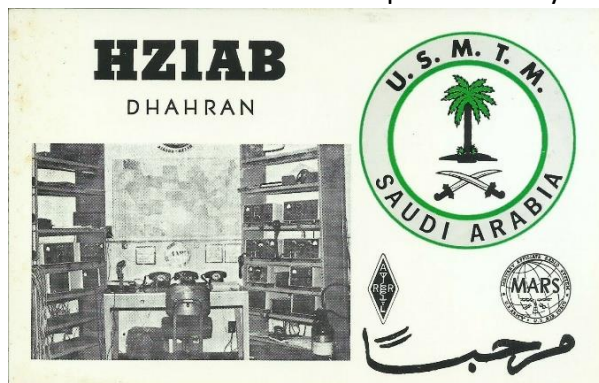
For more than half a century, for many hams HZ1AB was the first station of Saudi Arabia he or she got a QSL from. And often you could work HZ1AB from Zone 21 (WAZ) in the big contests (ARRL DX, WPX and CQWW) on more than one band. According to the HZ1AB website (<https://www.qsl.net/dhahran/>) the station was activated by some 160 operators from 1947 until 2004. The website (once controlled by K7JJ, now a Silent Key) shows a rough chronological list of about 100 operators.

The QSL card of HZ1AB on the right was sent out for a QSO made on December 7, 1946. Also J2AHI, Lloyd Colvin, operating from Japan, did get a QSL card for a 1946 QSO with HZ1AB. By a decree from the King of Saudi Arabia, Abdul Aziz Al Saoud (1932-1953), the U.S. Military Training Mission did get a ham license and got the call HZ1AB.



QST of July 1949 showed a picture of four operators; W8UMQ, (R. Smyth), W7KUC (Donald Kittrell), W0LDK (Carl Zeigler) and W0TND (Geo Callow) with a HZ1AB sign. The rig used in 1949 was a [Hallicrafters BC-610](#), a Harvey Wells 160-10 m transmitter (TS-50??) and a Hallicrafters SX-28 receiver.

Kenneth E, Riley, W5FHM (KE5TS), who obtained his ham license in 1938, is believed to have been the first active HZ1AB operator. Riley worked for the Army Airways Communication



Service and installed very high-powered radio transmitters in dozens of international locations.

“As you can imagine, my very early days using HZ1AB, the summer of 1948 as I remember, were filled with daily excitement,” Riley said in an e-mail to the last club secretary, Thomas Carlsson, SMOXU (HZ1EX). “Many times, just firing up the station and saying ‘hello, HZ1AB,

testing and listening' was all it took to start a series of contacts all over the world, or at least that is the way it sounded, like the whole world was calling me".

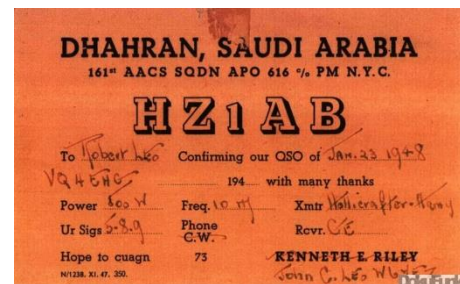


"Keep in mind that in 1947-1948 there was no SSB, and there was no receive and transmit on the same frequency," Riley explained. "I would call on a crystal-controlled frequency on 10-meter phone only using a Hallicrafters BC-610 transmitter at about 400 to 500 watts and received on an AR-88 standard AM receiver."

After each CQ, Riley would advise stations to "start calling from the low end of the band and sign their calls very often while I listened and tuned up frequency for a very short time, writing down the station calling and at some point, break in with my transmission and read off about 10 or 15 stations I heard and then call off, in order, the station and briefly exchange reports and general QSO information."

Riley said it used to "flabbergast" him to have what he considered to be some of the rarest DX stations in the world ask for a QSL card from HZ1AB. He mentioned CR9AG in Macau; AR8AB in Lebanon; and AC4YN in Tibet.

During the Gatti-Hallicrafters DXpedition (1947-1948) (<https://dxcc.info/ghe/index.htm>) Bob Leo (VQ4EHG) made a QSO with HZ1AB and got the QSL (found on Dokufunk.org) showed here. This QSL is special. It confirmed that Ken Riley was an HZ1AB operator, but he did not make the QSO with Bob. The HZ1AB operator was W6YEZ, John Leo, Bob's father.



After this GHE-DXpedition in East Africa, Bob, W6PBV (now W7LR) steamed up to Dhahran, and became an employee of Aramco and was operating HZ1AB from July 1948 until early 1950. HZ1AB was not QRV from 1950 to 1952.

In the Sixty's and seventies of the last century, the HZ1AB club's name was the Dhahran Experimental Radio Association (DERA). This name changed in 1980 to Dhahran Amateur Radio Club (DARC). In 1976 the club got a QSL manager, Leo Fry, K8PYD. Leo still has the 1959-2004 Logs of HZ1AB.



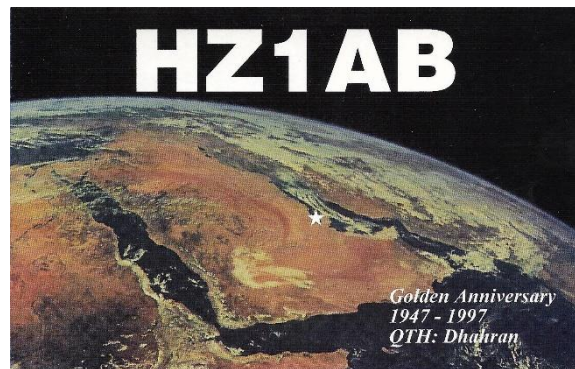
At HZ1AB the used rig changed very often. In 1982 HZ1AB used a KLM-KT-34XA, a Six element 3-band beam and started its operations on top-band. In 1983 a Yaesu FT-902 DM was used. The amplifier was a Harris RF-103 (1 KW).

The call HZ1AB was often heard as **Hot Ziggity One American Boy** when W1TYQ, Vic Crawford (SK) was the operator. He was at HZ1AB from 1961 to 1976.

In 1961, W1TYQ, Vic led an operation from the Saudi Arabian/Kuwaiti Neutral Zone (9K3TL/NZ), with Jack Laub, HB9TL, Roy Fleming, MP4BBD, and Rundy Rundlett, OD5CT (W3ZA/K4ZA).

Vic was also active as HZ3TYQ and 7Z3AC, and was QRV from both Saudi Arabia Neutral Zone Entities (now Deleted Entities) as HZ3TYQ/8Z4 and HZ3TYQ/8Z5.

Many hams, living and working in Saudi Arabia became member of DERA and later of DARC. Among them were a journalist, U.S. Military personnel, members of embassies and employees of Aramco. And often guests (such as Franz Langner, DJ9ZB and Lloyd and Iris Colvin, W6KG and W6QD) did operate HZ1AB during a DX-travel or a DX-contest. In 1997, HZ1AB celebrated its Fifty years of activity on the bands and did confirm QSOs with a special QSL card.



Before 2004 it was almost impossible to get a personal license in Saudi Arabia for expatriates. AL7HG, Dave Kaiser, wrote an article in CQ magazine of July 2009. He was an employee at Arab News, a daily newspaper. That firm made the effort to get him an amateur license, but without any result. Dave tried every year to take a Kenwood TS-430 and later a TS-440 to Saudi Arabia, but the rig stayed always at the customs storehouse until his next trip home.

It was only through the HZ1AB club station that Dave, AL7HG, was able to operate at all. In 1989, when he began working for Saudi Aramco and moved to Dhahran he became a member of the DARC. That time being a member of the club was the only way to legally get on the air from Saudi Arabia.



In 1990, during the invasion of Kuwait and the Gulf War, the Dhahran Amateur Radio Club (DARC) officially closed down. However, about a dozen radio operators, including AL7HG, spent many hours operating HZ1AB as a MARS station and passing traffic from Saudi Arabia

back and forth between troop stationed there and their families in the U.S. Canada, and Britain.

While the Gulf War was going on a MASH (Mobile Army Surgical Hospital) unit resided on HZ1AB's antenna farm and the Beverage was destroyed. It was subsequently rebuilt several years later.

The HZ1AB station was located in a set of barracks on the military base. The location moved around a lot. At one time it was in a Quonset hut and later on, in the early 2000's, it was moved into a trailer away from the barracks area. The security restrictions became harder to deal with, and the number of amateurs working and living in Saudi Arabia lessened as expatriates accepted jobs in safer parts of the world. During 2002 and 2003 the number of active hams operating the station dropped to a handful, and several conscientious members often drove hundreds of miles whenever they had time off during the weekend or vacation to keep the station active.

In 1999, Kenneth Dyer, GW0RHC was the first elected Non-American President of the Dhahran Amateur Radio Club. In 2004 the Saudi government changed the license rules and authorized reciprocal licensing for foreign hams. This changing in Licensing rules made it impossible to keep HZ1AB operating. The last six members of the club made a difficult decision, ending the DARC Club. HZ1AB was permanently dismantled and the license was given up. On May 7, 2004, the Club station HZ1AB became history.

THE HZ1AB QSL COLLECTION

Walt Marshall, W7SE born in Lubbock/Texas was also an employee of Aramco. (an acronym for Arabian American Oil Company). He worked in Saudi Arabia from 1978 until his retirement in 1994.

While working in Saudi Arabia, Walt wanted to be an operator of a big DXpedition. This wish became reality in 1983. Walt flew, together with the rest of his family to Sydney, Australia for Christmas 1982. There the family did split off. His XYL Dolores and the kids then flew to New Zealand for meeting the pen pals of the kids and touring new Zealand.

Walt, who had obtained the call VK0SE, flew to Hobart, Tasmania to join the crew for a five weeks adventure to Heard Island. The trip was made with an old whaling vessel. Walt had been on many ships while he worked for National Marine Fisheries in Seattle and while sailing to Perth, he felt that the ship had several problems. After leaving Perth for the South Indian Ocean, the ship got into a severe storm and went back to Perth for refill the tanks. Bad luck hit the whaler after leaving Perth for the second time when the ship again found a severe storm on its journey. And again, the ship returned back to Perth. This second time was too much for Walt. He had to decide to stay, and join the third attempt, or to go back to Saudi Arabia for



Walt and Dolores visiting Sheik Ahmed Zaidan (SK)

not losing his job at Aramco. Walt did choose the last option, the call VK0SE did never hit the waves.

When Walt returned home after his retirement, he also shipped the QSL-cards, HZ1AB had received in fifty years to Laramie/Wyoming. Walt did build huge chests of drawers to store the 170,000 QSL cards, and sorted the cards in alphabetical order. Almost every country (DXCC Entity) had its own drawer. The cards received from U.S. hams were stored in a separate filing cabinet.



Dhahran Amateur Radio Club of America
Former operators of HZ1AB, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia



Confirming 2-Way QSOs with				
YYYY-MM-DD	Time	Mode	Band	RST

CQ WPX contest by
George Wagner, **K5KG**
QTH Sarasota, Florida
USA

QSL to **W7SE**
PO BOX 651
LARAMIE, WY 82073
USA

Thanks for QSO(s)
73

UNSLD .psx

Walt, W7SE and his longtime friend George Wagner, K5KG kept HZ1AB alive. George was also an operator of HZ1AB (1981-1986). Both did start the **Dhahran Amateur Radio Club of America**. The club got the call AB1HZ which was used by the two friends during contests and other special occasions. Walt was the trustee of the call. Members of the club were the ex-operators of HZ1AB.

Walt had to wait until 1998 when he finally became an operator of a DXpedition. Walt joined, together with his friend George, K5KG, a Swiss DXpedition to St. Brandon in the Indian Ocean. They used the call 3B7RF. Leaving Port Luis on Mauritius Island on May 4, 1998 they arrived on Raphaël Island in the Saint Brandon Archipelago after a 30 hour rough sail, badly seasick. The group made more than 53,000 QSO's. It was a thrill for me when 3B7RF answered my call on 40 Meters with "hello Wino, you are 599, greetings Walt, W7SE". Walt was the propagation man during this DXpedition. The picture, made by George, shows Walt, in the CW tent at St. Brandon.



Walt got his license when he was 15 years old. He had been an active ham for 64 years. Where ever the Marshalls lived in the USA , Walt had a station set up. In Laramie it was in an upstairs room and every day, Dolores could hear him listening or sending code.

In 2014, Walt was one of the WRTC supporting team in New England. The video of this happening is at <https://vimeo.com/119947598>

Walt took the HZ1AB collection because he did not want the cards destroyed. Those QSL cards should be saved in the QSL museum in Austria. After the dismantling of the HZ1AB station in 2004, the remaining QSL cards received by the station after Walt did retire, were scanned and a digital copy of the CD was sent to W7SE, Walt.



During a visit of George Wagner, K5KG to Laramie in 2020, Dolores told George about the wish of her husband, getting the HZ1AB QSL cards to the museum. George contacted the DokuFunk museum in Vienna and got green light from Prof. Wolf Harrant, OE1WHC who was responsible for DokuFunk Research and Documentation. The museum had already the



Colvin QSL-collection, and would be pleased with the HZ1AB cards.

George got help from some local hams, (picture above L to R) W8MYL, Roy Aiken, K5KG, George Wagner, N7MJ, Jack Mitchell and N7WY, Bob Rennard. They needed almost three full days to pack the QSL-cards in boxes. Dolores did count the cards in one of the boxes and came to 1431 cards. About 120 boxes were transported to Laramie, and put together on two pallets of cargo.



Dolores wanted to pay the costs of the transportation of the pallets to Austria, but George, K5KG was able to convince her that they could possibly raise the funds from donations from ex-HZ1AB operators, and other hams. In time, this is what they were able to do thanks to the generosity of DX organizations and DXers world-wide.

A large emailing to DX and Contest clubs asking for funds for sending the HZ1AB QSL collection to DokuFunk in Austria was sent out. They received generous donations from about 60 individuals and two foundations, NCDXF and YASME. The total amount of the

donations did cover the packing and air shipping the 1200+ pound pallets to Vienna on September 9, 2020.

On the web site of DOKUFUNK.ORG you can find a collection of the QSL cards, HZ1AB did send out to hams in more than 300 DXCC Entities. Walt did take home not only QSL cards from HZ1AB, but also a lot of extra documents.

These documents were also shipped to Vienna. See the list on the website of the museum http://www.dokufunk.org/amateur_radio/hz1abkorrekt/

DHAHRAN, SAUDI ARABIA
HZ1AB
DHAHRAN AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

TO RADIO	DATE	UTC	R S T	2-WAY MODE	MHz
PA0ABM	02.XI.96	1529	599	SSB CW RTTY	14
				SSB CW RTTY	21
				SSB CW RTTY	101

QSL MANAGER
K8PYD

A WAMPY QSL

TNX QSL
73,

Of course, you cannot see all the QSL-cards displayed behind a window. At least the cards are put away in the storage area of the museum. According to DokuFunk the QSL cards sent from the Netherlands to HZ1AB, are stored in box number four. I am sure some of my QSL cards are in that box. But I wonder if the QSL cards of CR9AG in Macau; AR8AB in Lebanon; and AC4YN in Tibet, mentioned before are also in one of those boxes sent from Laramie.

When I visit Vienna, I sure will make a visit to the DokuFunk museum. I wonder what the museum did with all those HZ1AB memories? Time will tell.

DX is!!
Wino, PA0ABM

Sources:

The HZ1AB website: <https://www.qsl.net/dhahran/>

The DokuFunk website: http://www.dokufunk.org/amateur_radio/hz1abkorrekt/

The K8CX Ham gallery: <http://hamgallery.com/>

My own website: <http://www.dxcc.info>

Many Wikipedia websites:

Article of **Update from Saudi Arabia** By Dave Kaiser, AL7HG in CQ of July 2009.

And many more.