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HB9NBG & HB9FZCs Winter-SOTA-Rallye 2019/2020

by René, HB9NBG and Carine, HB9FZC

*René and Carine, owners of Lutz-Electronics located in Switzerland and one of Elecraft's European distributors, share their 2019 Winter Trekking Adventure in the Swiss Alps with their **KX2**.*

My YL Carine (HB9FZC) and I (HB9NBG) have discovered SOTA on a Trekking-Tour in the Swiss Alps about 5 years ago by accident; we heard another OM calling "CQ SOTA..." and came back to his call asking him what SOTA is – it was immediately clear to us, that SOTA is OUR favorite HAM Radio mode as of now.

On the beginning of our SOTA-activities 2015, we've acquired some first experiences with the FT-817ND from YAESU and an MP-1T antenna. We were not very happy with this equipment; the FT-817ND was too heavy for our big mountain-hikes, which we always hike a lot of hours a day. Moreover, the battery life cycle of the integrated battery in the FT-817ND is too short, the output-power is too low, and because there's no tuner available, you have to use a resonant antenna system – there were too many barriers to break down for us to become a successful SOTA-activator with a solution like this.

In 2016, ELECRAFT launched the KX-2. We saw it the first time at the HAM-Radio in Friedrichshafen 2016 and we knew immediately: Now a new SOTA-era begins for us. In the meantime, Carine and I could activate 302 SOTA-



summits in the Swiss Alps. Our summits are always solely summits in the Swiss Alps, and our activations are always incident to a large mountain-hike. The space on many of “our” summits is very limited, so the KX-2 in combination with the AX-1 and the extension coil AXE1 is the absolutely perfect solution for very successful SOTA-activations for us, and we’re always on-air on the summit at a great pace and without any hassle.

After a very successful business-year 2019 – our big thanks goes incidentally to ELECRAFT for their confidence, and that we have the opportunity to represent ELECRAFT as an Official Distributor in Europe – Carine and I were looking forward to some SOTA activations in the snowy Swiss Alps after the Christmas days. We knew the Alps in the Canton Wallis in the south-western part of Switzerland was very good from our last Summer-activities – back then we could activate all-in-all 33 summits within 23 days in July/August 2019. Ten of these 33 summits were above 3’000m high and four of them were first activations – a real great and successful SOTA-summer for us. After this great time in the summer, we thought that some of these summits could also be a good destination for a winter-activation with our snowshoes – at the time we couldn’t imagine what the following two weeks would bring.

Finally, we started the summit “Haglere”, HB/OW-025 in the Swiss pre-Alps on 26.December. It was our first activation after a long break of 2 months, and so we had to acclimate again. It was very stormy and unbelievably cold on the summit, so we were QRV for only 4 minutes, and both of us could make 5 QSO’s on 40m within the short time of 4 minutes with the KX2 and the AX1/AXE1 – that’s definitely a real highly efficient setup



It was a cold, but a very successful start in our “Winter-SOTA-Rallye 2019/2020”. After another “bad-weather-break” of one day, we started again and could activate 14 more summits until the 12.January:

Date ↓	Summit	Name	Altitude	Points	Activations	Callsign used	QSOs
12 Jan 2020	HB/VS-118	Pointe des Mossettes	2277 m	+3	27	HB9NBG/P	15
11 Jan 2020	HB/VS-102	Pointe de Bellvue	2042 m	+3	30	HB9NBG/P	8
11 Jan 2020	HB/VS-239	Bec du Corbeau	1992 m	+3	23	HB9NBG/P	15
10 Jan 2020	HB/VS-242	La Crevasse	1808 m	+3	17	HB9NBG/P	18
09 Jan 2020	HB/VS-184	Augstbordhorn	2973 m	+3	13	HB9NBG/P	29
08 Jan 2020	HB/VS-216	Illhorn	2717 m	+3	15	HB9NBG/P	19
07 Jan 2020	HB/VS-236	Montagne de Quieu	2195 m	+3	8	HB9NBG/P	17
06 Jan 2020	HB/VS-175	Bella Tola	3025 m	+3	10	HB9NBG/P	14
05 Jan 2020	HB/VS-112	Mont de l'Arpille	2085 m	+3	16	HB9NBG/P	12
02 Jan 2020	HB/VD-028	Corne des Brenlaires	1879 m	+3	34	HB9NBG/P	16
01 Jan 2020	HB/BE-145	Schneitgrat	1960 m	+3	23	HB9NBG/P	15
31 Dec 2019	HB/BE-105	Wispile/ Stand	1939 m	+3	28	HB9NBG/P	16
30 Dec 2019	HB/VD-030	Le Molard	1751 m	+3	35	HB9NBG/P	24
28 Dec 2019	HB/VD-028	Corne des Brenlaires	1879 m	+3	34	HB9NBG/P	13
26 Dec 2019	HB/OW-025	Haglere	1949 m	+3	23	HB9NBG/P	5

The weather conditions were absolutely perfect – the band-conditions, too. So each day was a highlight of its own with

great Mountain and Amateur radio experiences.

A real premiere was the activation of a summit, which is above 3'000m high, in the wintertime with our snowshoes:



The "Bella Tola", HB/VS-175. It was a hard snowshoe hike with an ascent of nearly 1'300m of elevation – the whole hike leads us over a distance of around 14km in front of the magnificent backdrop of the Swiss High-Alps. It was cold again on the summit at 3'025m, and we had a long descent before us. So we had no time to spare and started immediately with the spotting of our activation in SOTAwatch as soon as we arrived on the summit. We didn't want to spend too much time on the summit, so we were activating only on 40m. The Pile-Up was awesome and both

of us could work 14 Stations on 40m within 26 minutes. I think if we would have had more time, we could have worked many, many more. Because of the cold conditions on the summit, we were very glad that we could make the activation with the KX2 and AX1/AXE1 as a simple handheld-solution.

The "Bella Tola", a 3'000m summit, was our very first winter activation while snowshoeing. It was such an absolutely awesome experience for us, so we produced a video of these unique and unforgettable impressions: [You can view it here](#). Please note that the video is produced in native Swiss German, but the pictures speak for themselves.

Among these activations, we activated with the "Augstbordhorn", HB/VS-184 a second summit which is 2'973m nearly 3'000m high – another great experience.



The real highlight from the viewpoint of a Radioamateur was our incredible DX-QSO with ZL1BYZ on 20m in SBB from the "Pointe des Mossettes", HB/VS-118 on about 2'300m during the last activation on this vacation. It's nearly unbelievable, but we worked with only the Telescopic-Antenna AX1 – directly mounted on our KX2. We never worked a ZL-Station on a SOTA-activation before – awesome! In [our video](#) you can see the QSO between ZL1BYZ in the area of Auckland in New Zealand and HB9NBG in the middle of the Swiss Alps. The video starts with an introduction of QRP and SOTA in German language – the QSO itself is in English.

The only thing we can say is: "ELECRAFT brings QRP-Operation and DX together perfectly".



So many thanks to ELECRAFT for the great and unique products, which they are launching again and again – we're proud to have the opportunity to use it ourselves for our great SOTA activities and for DXing in our shack and to be an Official Distributor for your great products – thanks very much.

Our vy 73 de René, HB9NBG + 73/88 de Carine, HB9FZC
<https://www.lutz-electronics.ch/>

News & Updates

Elecraft Proudly Sponsors...

South Orkney 2020 VP8PJ

Feb. 20 - Mar 5, 2020

Elecraft is a proud sponsor of the South Orkney 2020 VP8PJ.

The team will be operating seven K3S transceivers and KPA500 amplifiers.

[Check out their website here](#)



For Latest updates, visit their [Facebook page](#).



South Orkney DX-pedition 2020

12 hrs · 🌐

80m CW..... courtesy WX0V



YOUTUBE.COM

VP8PJ 80m NA CW pile-up February 24 2020

Here is mostly a North American pile-up chasing VP8PJ from the South...



You and 15 others

1 Comment 2 Shares

2020 Trade Show Schedule

Below is a list of trade shows that we'll be attending in 2020. We'll let you know if we add any more shows to our list. If you're attending any of these events, come on by and say hello!

- April 24-26, Int'l DX Conv, Visalia, CA
- May 15-17, Dayton Hamvention, Dayton, OH
- June 5-7 - SeaPac, Seaside, OR
- June 12-13 - Hamcom, Plano, TX
- June 26-28 - Ham Radio, Friedrichshaven, Germany
- July 24-26 - Northeast HamXposition, Marlborough, MA
- Aug 22-23 - Huntsville Hamfest, Huntsville, AL
- September 11-12 - W9DXCC, St. Charles, IL
- September 25-26 - W4DXCC, Pigeon Forge, TN
- October 16-18 - Pacificon, San Ramon, CA

K4 Update

High-Performance Direct Sampling SDR



Our team has been busy performance testing and adding new features to the K4. This month included on air testing during the ARRL DX CW contest. The K4 performed admirably with both excellent adjacent signal rejection and fatigue free audio. With its variable CW filtering down to 50 Hz and excellent dynamic range, it was easy to dig out weaker signals while filtering out the cacophony of adjacent signals.

From Our Demonstration and Test Room

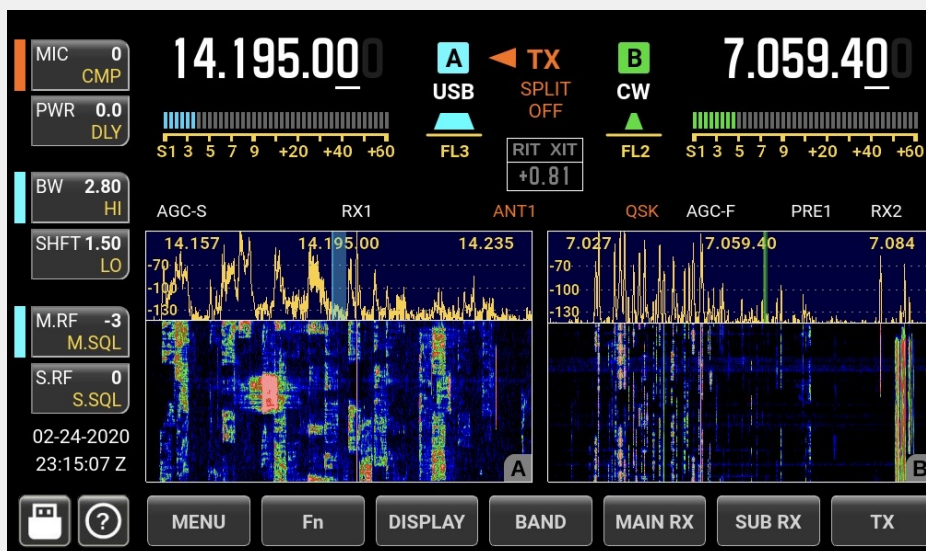
The picture desktop picture shows the K4D on the upper shelf driving an external display in split band VFO Mode along with a K4/0 controlling it with a real time panadapter display over the network. The K4/0 will be available before the end of 2020.

The external monitor can display both single full screen and split screen panadapters independently formatted from those on the LCD, along with a number of other screen formats. Users can adjust the display format for each panadapter independently on the external monitor and on the K4 LCD, including the percentage split between spectrum and waterfall displayed, single or dual panadapter modes, reference level, etc.

Also in this picture is the K-Pod connected to the top K4 over USB. As on the K3s, it can be switched to control VFO A, B and RIT, as well as control the K4 via its 8 user programmable function keys (w/ Tap and Hold functions).



K4 high resolution display



Listen for us on the air - We'll likely be on a K4!

Great Products From Other Manufacturers

Featuring *The Y-BOX* by N6TV



The Y-BOX is a 4-way splitter and breakout box. The Y-BOX makes it easier to connect multiple devices to an Elecraft K3 or K3S transceiver.

[Learn more about The Y-Box!](#)



Check out our list of Great Products From Other Manufacturers [HERE](#).