

My way to amateur radio

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I first heard the word amateur radio in the fall of 1973. I was already 15 years old then. Of course I knew that there were radios and that these devices could only be operated with a permit. But that you can also acquire a license to operate radio equipment as a normal consumer was new to me.

When my neighbor asked me in autumn 1973 if I would like to take part in an amateur radio course, I immediately said yes. The course took place in the Komödienbau in downtown Weilburg. He was always on Friday from 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. At that time, Komödienbau was a school with several classrooms. And one of these rooms was reserved for the course in the evening.

On the first evening about 20 interested people and 4 trainers were present. Among the instructors, all of whom already had an amateur radio license, were two teachers, a technician (electronics) and an engineer (electronics). One of the two teachers taught radio operation and law and the other three taught technology. By the way, the exam consisted of about 75% questions about technology and 25% about radio operation and law. The Post also had booklets in which all the questions and answers for the exam were printed.

In the coming weeks, the number of participants fell from around 20 to just 10 to 12 participants. The course began with the basics of electrical engineering and also contained a lot of circuit technology. Tube circuits with triode and pentode were also explained in detail. Another area was the transmission and reception technology including power amplifiers for shortwave and VHF (2m band). In terms of reception technology, the superhet receivers were also explained.

This course, with its mainly technical focus, also influenced my career choice. While I was very interested in chemistry for a long time, my interest has now shifted to electronics.

For me, radio operation and legal studies were actually just learning by heart. There were, for example, the Q groups and country experts and other abbreviations from the radio and amateur radio sector. I just learned the legal texts by heart.

There was also an offer from one of the trainers to set up a small shortwave receiver for the 80m band. Some of the participants accepted the offer and so the trainer (it was the technician who worked at Leitz in Wetzlar) got circuit boards, components and of course a circuit diagram. The receiver was a 0-V-2 i.e. no RF amplification,

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amplitude demodulation and a 2-stage low frequency amplifier. For the first time I assembled a circuit board, wound coils and soldered the whole thing together. The receiver was powered by a 9V battery and everything worked straight away.

However, I never built the receiver into a housing. A larger button was only mounted on the axis of the variable capacitor to tune the frequency. A few meters of copper wire served as an antenna. And actually I was able to receive some stations on the 80 m band with it. The course ended in autumn 1984. In the meantime I had also started my professional training at Philips. Incidentally, one of the participants has already registered for the exam and passed it.

My test for the C license, which means broadcasting on frequencies above 144 MHz, was in January 1975. The three of us drove to Frankfurt and only two took part in the test. The third in the group took the exam a few weeks later. All three passed the exam and received their license certificates and callsigns. My callsign was DB7FP, or Delta Bravo 7 Foxtrot Papa for short. At first I didn't have a radio and so I was allowed to make my first attempts at walking with a radio amateur from our club.

The furthest direct connection (i.e. without a relay station) was to Wetzlar.

The callsign of the opposite station was DJ1SG and the name was Gottfried.

When we went to Frankfurt again at the beginning of February 1975 so that the third party could do his test, I bought a small radio type TRIO TR 2200 G with 1W output power and twelve quartz channels from Walter J. Schorr in Frankfurt. The price for this small radio was 625,- DM. For the next few years I radioed with the trio and later with an ICOM IC 260. As an antenna I mainly used a self-built HB9CV. I then built the TRIO into my car, but mobile was rarely active. It wasn't until the end of 1995 that I bought a shortwave transceiver from Kenwood. But here too there was insufficient space for a sensible antenna. In 2019 a shortwave antenna was bought and stretched between two 6m high aluminum masts. I hope that I will be able to use the radio more often in the near future.