


## # 4, August, 2026

In this issue


- From the Shack
- Bunkers on the Air Activity Day
- Tiles on the Air
- NZART Winter Sprints
- ILLW
- MWP
- MCW
- Vernal Equinox Activity Day
- Other Reasons for Spotting


## From the Shack

New Zealand ops are fortunate in that they have such a large number of New Zealand based on-the-activities available to them that they should not want for opportunities to actually get on the air.

NZART has a good collection of operating awards, including an award for new hams. Awards are available for both HF and higher frequencies, and they vary greatly in how much effort is required to earn them. NZART's website has the rules and logging requirements for these awards.

The ontheair.nz website lists many thousands of outdoor features that can be activated. These features include huts, islands, lakes, lighthouses, parks, summits and volcanoes. Many weekdays and almost every weekend some of these features are available for chasing.

Most years NZART has 18 to 20 contests. These vary markedly in format from the traditional Jock White Field Day to the modern Autumn and Winter Sprints.

## Bunkers on the Air Activity Day

On August 1, Br 29 (North Shore Radio Club) hosted an activity day where operators transmitted from or near bunkers. As well as providing another opportunity to get on the air, the day was intended to assess whether there was enough interest in creating an official New Zealand Bunker on the Air program, possibly under the auspices of WWBOTA [1].

Bunkers were activated in Auckland, Cambridge and the RNZAF Base Ohakea near Bulls. The photograph below shows a roadside bunker near the southern entrance of the POTA park Long Bay Regional Park in Auckland. This bunker was activated from the park, giving the activator a two-for-one deal.

Most QSOs during the day were 40m SSB. One activator had 46 QSOs and two had 36. These large numbers of QSOs combined with positive




Facebook comments about the day suggests an official BOTA program in New Zealand would add value. A possible counterargument is that New Zealand ops already have enough outdoor features to activate and the time spent creating the program would be better spent encouraging more activations of the features in existing programs.

[1] WWBOTA – Worldwide Bunkers on the Air

## Tiles on the Air

Tiles on the Air [1] is a new international award program. I will use the abbreviation TiOTA for the program to avoid confusion with Towers on the Air.

A tile for TiOTA is a Maidenhead sub grid square such as NL37lx. An activator can claim a specific tile once per UTC day.

The number of points an activator gets for activating a square depends on three main factors: the number of QSOs the activator made from the tile, the distance they walked, ran, hiked, cycled or paddled, and the weight they carried. There are bonuses for using QRP and for specific modes, and for activating in the winter. The points for distance and weight carried are intended to reward effort.

Chasers get a point for each valid contact.

TiOTA encourages stacking. This is activating a tile while activating a feature from another award program such as SOTA.

TiOTA is definitely another reason to get on the air.

[1] https://tilesontheair.com/

## NZART Winter Sprints

The NZART Winter Sprints [1] will be each Tuesday in August. The dates are August 4, 11, 18 and 25.

Each sprint consists of the following three 30-minute segments: 0800-0829 UTC CW only, 0830-0859 UTC SSB only, 0900-0929 UTC FT4 only. There is a 100W section and a QRP section.

All contacts must be on 80m. The recommended frequency ranges are

CW 3520-3550 kHz
SSB 3620-3670 kHz
FT4 3575kHz

A sample QSO for each of the three modes is given in [1].

Last year I listened to the CW portion for two winter sprints. I found the CW was sent at speeds of approximately 17 to 24 wpm. This is significantly slower than in major international contests. During the second Tuesday, one South Island station used just one watt and the signal I received on my G5RV in Auckland was easy to copy.

[1] https://nzart.org.nz/activities/contests/sprints/

## ILLW

The 2026 International Lighthouse and Lightships Weekend [1] is 00:01 Saturday August 15 UTC to 24:00 Sunday August 16 UTC.

The event organisers encourage clubs and individual operators who plan to participate in the event to register on [1]. As part of the registration, the registrant can specify which bands they plan using and how they will issue QSL cards (if any).

Registering can be viewed as a form of alerting and should avoid two or more individual ops or groups of ops activating the same lighthouse or lightship.

The lighthouses that are acceptable for activation during the ILLW are listed on [1]. The number of New Zealand lighthouses that are acceptable is significantly smaller than the number of features described as lighthouses on ontheair.nz.

Registering should increase the number of QSOs an activator has compared to not registering. The number of QSOs New Zealand activators have can be further increased by alerting and spotting on ontheair.nz, monitoring the alerts and spots of activators in other countries, and frequently using "CQ ILLW" when running a frequency.

## MWP

On July 27, Chris VK3QB and Stan ZL3TK introduced a new CW-only awards program called Morse with Purpose (https://groups.io/g/MWP). The program has 14 badges, see below, and has the four levels bronze, silver, gold and gold with honours. You need to earn two, four, six and eight badges respectively to earn these awards. You have 12 months to earn the awards. Once the 12 months ends, you can earn the awards again.

There is something in the MWP award program for all CW operators, from beginners right through to experts.

The badges are

- Education. Complete a CW course.
- Out and About. Activate 10 or chase 50 valid LLOTA, POTA, SOTA, or WWFF features.
- Contesting (two badges). Earn a CWops Test award or make 100 QSOs in a major CW contest.
- RandomGram (two badges). Earn a specified number of points in RandomGram events.
- DX-Marathon. Submit a DX-Marathon CW entry worth at least 70 points..
- Cold War. Copy five CW numbers stations accurately.
- DXCC. QSOs with 75 DXCC entities or 50 if QRP.
- Straight Key. Accurate sending at at least 15 wpm with a straight key.
- Bug. Similar to the previous badge except 20wpm.
- Ragchew. Have 20 ragchew 15-minute ragchews.
- Telegram. Initiate 10 and answer 10 messages, composed and recorded on telegram forms.
- Enigma. Initiate five and answer five encrypted Enigma CW messages (on-air) or eight if on-line using a standard Wehrmacht, 3-rotor machine, and recorded on formal message forms for auditing.

## MCW



The website Morse Code World (MCW) [1] provides many ways to practice receiving international CW. There is instant character recognition and receiving words and callsigns from many pre-loaded lists or those of the user. The user can practice receiving general overs and up-to-date headlines from major news sources.

For each type of practice, the user can set the CW speed, the recognition time and has some control over the type of feedback. The CW can be sent using perfect computer timing or as a simulated novice, average operator or expert using a straight key, a bug or paddles.

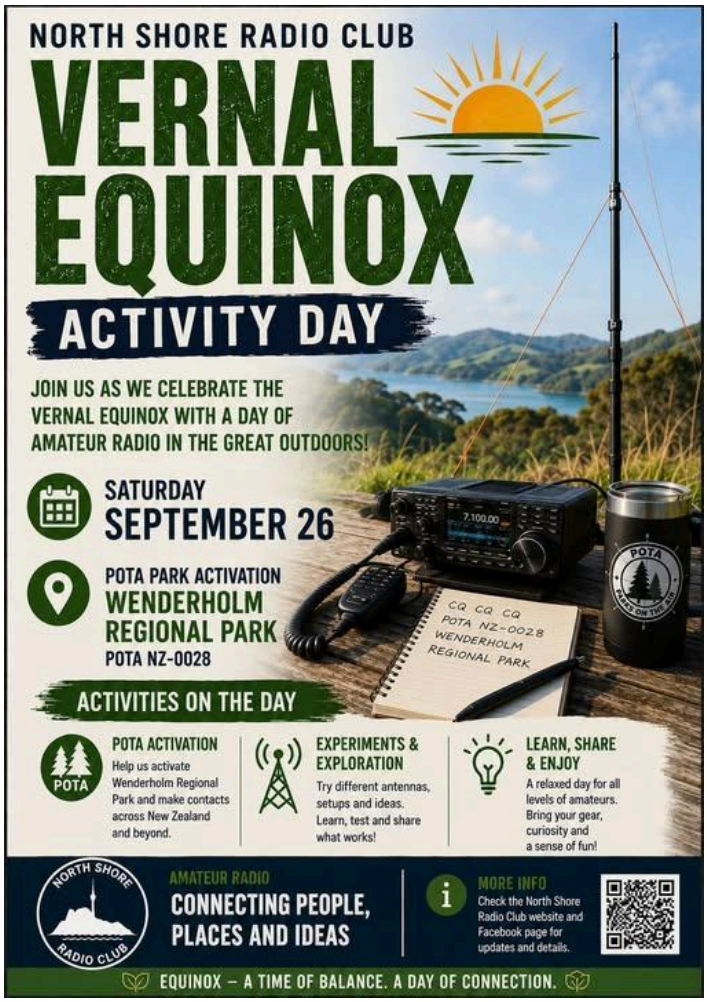
Other MCW features include decoders, an American morse trainer and a shop. In addition, there are articles on CW including Wordsworth timing.

The website is still being developed and I look forward to seeing what the new features will be.

## Vernal Equinox Activity Day

The North Shore Radio Club held a very successful activity day at Shakespear Regional Park on June 20. The club will build on this success by holding an event

entitled Vernal Equinox Activity Day on Saturday, September 26 at the POTA park Wenderholm Regional Park. The event is open to all radio amateurs and will be from approximately 10:45am to 1:30pm.




The activities during the event will include an activation of the POTA park and experiments with amateur radio equipment. One possible experiment is using vertical antennas on the Wenderholm beach to attempt QSOs with VK POTA on 40m in the early afternoon. Other possible experiments are powering a portable station using an EV and seeing how many contacts can be made from sea level on 2m.

## Calendar of Events

Below is a calendar of some local, NZART, POTA and SOTA events until the end of 2026. Further information about the events can be had by googling. If you know of events you believe should be added to the calendar, please let me know. The entry in red is an event that was not in the previous issue of the AOTA newsletter.

Each Tuesday in August. ZL Winter Sprints. CW, SSB & FT4 on 80m. 100W & QRP sections. 0800-0829 UTC CW only, 0830-0859 UTC SSB only, 0900-0929 UTC FT4 only.

Aug 15 & 16 UTC. ILLW.

(TBC) Sep 12 NZST. Andrew White ZL3CC Memorial Day. A SOTA event.

September 26. The North Shore Radio Club's Vernal Equinox Activity Day. 10:45am to 1:30pm approx.

Oc 3 & 4. NZART's VHF and above Microwave Contest. All bands 32 cm and up. All modes. 0400 - 1000 Sat UTC, 1800 Sat UTC - 0000 Sun UTC.

Oct 17 & 18 UTC. POTA Support Your Park.

Dec 5 & 6. NZART's VHF and above Field Day Contest. All bands 6 m and up. All modes. 0400 - 1000 Sat UTC, 1800 Sat UTC - 0000 Sun UTC.

Dec 6. Summer Straight Key Night. 0800-0900 UTC.

Dec 8. H Night Contest. AM on 80m. 0630 - 0900 UTC.

## Other Reasons for Spotting

An obvious reason for an op to use a spotting facility such as that on ontheair.nz when activating is to increase the number of QSOs they make.

Other reasons are

- To support the regular chasers.
- To provide additional information to chasers such as "I have arrived & will be txing in 10 min".
- To reduce the likelihood of another activator using the activator's frequency.
- To enable a chaser to provide the activator or other chasers with additional information such as " 53 into Sydney".

## Author and Contact

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