

Spotlight – Walt Nicholes WA7YPL

When I was 9 years old, my Dad got my brothers and me each a 100 mW Radio Shack "walkie-talkie" for Christmas. I was mesmerized by it. Although we had a lot of fun talking to each other on the only channel it had, Channel 7, the real test was talking to the East Lawn Cemetery near Provo Canyon from our home in Edgemont, about 2 miles away. WOW! I was hooked. But in those days a "real" CB transceiver was too expensive, so I just spent a lot of time wishing.

Jump forward 12 years and I was drafted into the US Army, and ended up in the Signal Corps. I was force-fed Morse code, and was taught basic radio operations – military style. Later I trained in radio teletype and then radio repair.

It was in Germany a year later when a ham approached my radio shed and asked if I had a license. I didn't, but under the rules he could administer the test for a "conditional class" license. Because of all of the Army training, passing the exam was a snap, and soon afterward, I became WA7YPL. I have kept that call sign throughout, and sometimes say WA7 Yelling Pretty Loud, which those who know me find unremarkable.



Along came kids, and relocations, and ham radio wasn't a practical pastime for me, but I built a Heathkit HW101 and its power supply, and when I got a few minutes here and there, I spent a little time with it.

Jump forward to about 1998 when I met Jim Manookin N7XGA and he sold me on the idea of a 2-meter handheld transceiver. Again I got one from Radio Shack, and it works to this day. I was involved for years with the MARA net that he headed up.

And finally, in March of 2020 I retired. My wife and I discussed what I would be doing, and she suggested that I get back into ham radio. I had kept my license active, and I thought that was a good idea. She insisted

that I get "good" equipment this time (what wife DOES that?) and I decided on an Icom IC-7300 for HF and an Icom IC-2730A for VHF/UHF. (Pictured in the photo.)

In the Army, we made our own antennas, so I made a VHF/UHF antenna out of cooper pipe stuff, and I strung a 204 -foot end-fed long wire up and over the trees in the back yard. Both appeared to have worked pretty well.

Lately I have fiddled with some with digital modes, but I still prefer talking.

– 73, Walt

