

Steve Ford, WB8IMY, upfront@arrrl.org

VE-Day in France

No, we're not talking about World War II and Victory in Europe Day. This is an entirely different "VE" experience!

Paul Schreier, AA1MI/HB9DST
aa1mi@arrrl.net

On Saturday, October 11, 2014, the first-ever ARRL Volunteer Examiner Amateur Radio license test session was held in France. The event took place at the clubhouse of F6KQV, the Radio Club of REF67 (France is divided into 90 districts, and District 67 is on the eastern border, next to Germany). The event was organized by Philippe Givet, F5IYJ/NK2F.

An obvious question is why someone in another country would want to take the US license exam. Besides the challenge, there are two very popular reasons. First, it appeals to people living in a foreign country who are not fluent in the native language such as expats working for a multinational corporation; in this specific case, they can take the US test and request that the French telecom authorities issue an equivalent French ham radio license. Second, like all Europeans, the French love to travel. Having a US license provides many more opportunities for reciprocal licensing so someone can operate a ham station while on vacation or business abroad.

For this test session, Philippe gathered not only a group of VEs residing in France but also invited those

from nearby countries. Pascal Nussbaumer, HB9EXA/AK4RX, and I were among the invitees, and decided to attend.

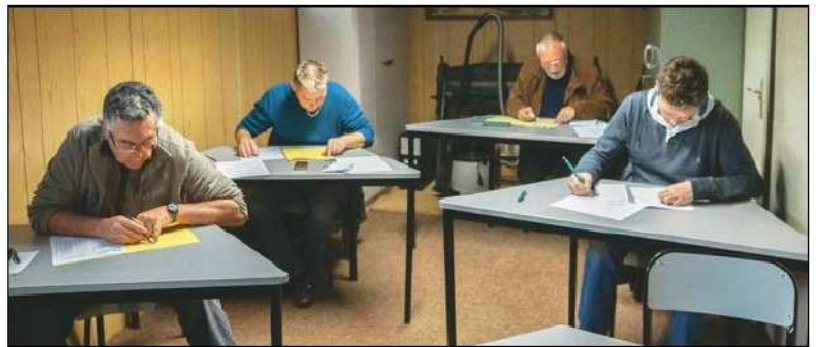
The VEs then assembled on Saturday at 9 AM. Besides Philippe, Pascal, and myself, we also had Arnaud Vive, F6BZG/AC2NK, Jean-Luc Missler, F1ULQ/AC8QS, and Charles Balla, F1TZV/AC8QT. The test session began at 10 o'clock.

We had four candidates in all, all of whom passed at least one element: two Technicians, one General, and one Amateur Extra. We followed up the test session with a celebratory barbeque including the VEs, the successful candidates, and others who supported the effort.

All in all, it was a unique experience and unlike any other VE session I've ever participated in. It illustrated the true international nature of ham radio and how our hobby brings together people of different cultures so we can become better acquainted with each other. Our grateful thanks to everyone at REF67/F6KQV for their generous hospitality, and we look forward to future such events with great anticipation!



The Radio Club du REF67 clubhouse.



The clubhouse had a separate room that served conveniently as a place for the candidates to take the test. The new hams (left to right): Roberto Lovaglio, F5RVF/KG7OMY; Yoann Gaedke, F4FTA/KG7OMZ; Robert Richard, F1OET/KD2HIR, and Frederic Mossman, F1UIH/AD0KW.



The VE team (left to right): Charles, F1TZV/AC8QT; Philippe, F5IYJ/NK2F; Jean-Luc, F1ULQ/AC8QS; Arnaud, F6BZG/AC2NK; Paul HB9DST/AA1MI, and Pascal HB9EXA/AK4RX.