

**Newsletter of the Australian / New Zealand chapter of the International Morse Preservation Society  
October 2018**

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**FISTS Down Under Sked Page** <http://n8fq.org/sked/index.php?board=fdu>

**Facebook** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1765058520392148/>

**CW Practice Sessions:** Michael's VK2CCW #14198 CW Practice Sessions are available on the [Club website](#)

**Recommended FISTS calling frequencies (MHz):**

1.808	3.528	7.028	10.118	14.058	18.085
21.058	24.908	28.058			

**LETTER CHASE** words for **October** are: **ANODE, BATTERY, CHARGE, OHMS**

(Rules and Info on our webpage). [http://fdu.org.au/letter\\_chase.php](http://fdu.org.au/letter_chase.php) )

**From the Editor: Bill VK1MCW #15215**



My thanks for the favourable comments received following the September edition. You will find this edition is again somewhat larger – I hope I can continue this trend; however, the newsletter needs NEWS, and the only news is derived from you, the members. The best way to generate news is for us all to become more active on the air. I was advised recently that CW is the most used of all modes in SOTA activities overseas – not so much in Australia. So, let's all make an effort to get on the air more often. Try SOTA, get out and activate a park somewhere, or start chasing other FISTS members who are out and about, or who, like many, spend a lot of time sending CQ CQ CQ. I encourage you to join in as many contests as you can – it is NOT about winning, it is about DOING! Let us all make a more determined effort to raise the profile of CW. Am I the only one to notice a lot of The Dark Side (phone) venturing down into the CW sections of the bands? I had someone voicing off on 7.028 the other day! Sacrilege!! They are within their rights of course – the frequency was clear. To that end, this month we are announcing a new GOLDEN initiative to encourage all FISTS members to get on air and exchange FISTS numbers. More on that a bit later!

**de Bill VK1MCW #15215 Editor**



## October Contest



**Key Change Contest Saturday, 6th October 2018**

1000 – 1045UTC (8PM to 8:45PM Sydney Standard Time.)

Rules and more details here:

[http://www.fdu.org.au/pdf/key\\_change\\_contest\\_rules.pdf](http://www.fdu.org.au/pdf/key_change_contest_rules.pdf)

## What's the Message?

What is the message which can be heard when you open the Club website?? <http://fdu.org.au>

**NEW NEW NEW**

**THAT'S GOLD!!**



**Garry VK2GAZ #14151** has come up with a brilliant idea to get all our members more active on the key!!! We are introducing the **FISTS Down Under Gold 25 Award** which can morph into a Gold 50 Award and then a Gold 75 Award. It is a simple in concept, FISTS members who collect 25 QSOs in which they exchange FISTS numbers with each other qualify for the above award. When they reach 50 they qualify for the Gold 50 Award – and so on.

## Rules for FISTS Down Under Inc. GOLD Award

1. The FISTS Down Under Inc. Gold (25, 50, 75) Award is achieved when a FISTS member makes contact and exchanges FISTS number and name with (25, 50, 75) different FISTS members.
2. The FISTS Down Under Inc. club call (VK2FDU) nor any special-event callsign cannot be used for any of the Gold Awards. However, you may use the call sign of the actual station operator, provided that you have not already used that operator's callsign previously.
3. Both parties in the QSO must be FISTS members at the time of the QSO.

4. All callsigns used to achieve any of the Gold Awards can only be used once for that purpose. That is; if the callsign VK3FGE is used for the Gold 25 Award it CANNOT be used again for either the Gold 50 Award or the Gold 75 Award.

5. Contacts may be made on any available band at any time, including WARC Bands.

6. QSOs must be made using any mechanical key eg. straight key, side swiper (cootie), or bug. Contact using computer generated CW will not qualify for any of these awards.

7. If you earn your award using QRP, (5 watts or less), please state so at the time of your application for that award. Your call will be printed on the award as eg. VK3FGE - QRP ".

**8. The starting date for this award is: 1st October 2018. All contacts claimed for this award must be on or after the starting date.**

#### How to Submit your FISTS Down Under Inc. Gold Award Application

The preferred method of submitting your Gold Award application is email.  
vk2fdu.auz@gmail.com

Please **DO NOT** submit your Gold Award application in PDF format, use either Excel, Word or CSV

A sample Gold Award application is available in both Word and Excel format for all entrants, they can be found on the Awards page of the FDU website. ([http://fdu.org.au/gold\\_award.php](http://fdu.org.au/gold_award.php))

Please double check your application, submissions will be thoroughly checked.

**Above all Lets make it FUN and keep it SIMPLE!!**

All questions and submissions about/for this award should be sent to:

Garry VK2GAZ #14151  
vk2fdu.auz@gmail.com

Good Luck!

OoooOOOOOooooo

#### **New Members**

**Please welcome our new members! John Dawes VK5PF / VK5BJE #15230 and David Mayes VK3GDM #15231**


OoooOOOOOooooo

## From our Members

### Ralph Sutton ZL2AOH #1073

The September newsletter article about the VK servicemen using Katakana reminded me of an article that I wrote about 15 years ago, but which is still relevant.

### JAPANESE “MORSE” CODE

Katakana Code				Katakana Characters								
·	ヘ	....	又	....	5	....	6	ア	イ	ウ	エ	オ
-	ム	....	ク	....	4	....	メ	カ	キ	ク	ケ	コ
		....	チ	....		....	モ	サ	シ	ス	セ	ソ
..	ッ	....	ノ	....	3	....	ユ	タ	チ	ツ	テ	ト
--	イ	....	カ	....	ト	....	キ	ナ	ニ	ヌ	ネ	ノ
--	タ	....	ロ	....	ミ	....	サ	ハ	ヒ	フ	ヘ	ホ
--	ヨ	....	ツ	....	°	....	ル	マ	ミ	ム	メ	モ
		....	ヲ	....	2	....	エ	ヤ		ユ		ヨ
...	ラ	....	ハ	....	オ	....	7	ラ	リ	ル	レ	ロ
---	ウ	....	マ	....	キ	....	ヒ	ワ				ヲ
---	ナ	....	ニ	....	ン	....	シ	ン				ヲ
---	ヤ	....	ケ	....	テ	....	ア					ヲ
---	ホ	....	フ	....	エ	....	8					ヲ
---	ワ	....	ネ	....	ー	....	ス					ヲ
---	リ	....	ソ	....	セ	....	9					ヲ
---	レ	....	コ	....	1	....	0					ヲ

The structure of the Japanese language is similar to Maori in that consonant/vowel combinations are used to form words. Japanese has a complex system of writing and there are three “alphabets” in use. The Kanji or Chinese characters are widely used. These are hieroglyphics and they give no guidance to the sounds or words they depict. On the other hand, there are two other phonetic scripts in use, Hiragana and Katakana. Hiragana is widely used but it is the Katakana script that comprises 46 characters, interests us here.

The Imperial Japanese Navy was assisted in its development and training by the Royal Navy. When a need for an equivalent to the Morse code arose, the British assisted the Japanese in creating a code that was based on the Katakana script. This code became the standard for use in Japan, not only for use in naval communications but all military traffic as well as commercial and later amateur transmissions.

During WW2 several allied personnel, including New Zealanders, were trained in the use of the code and Japanese military traffic was closely monitored, especially after the Japanese codes were

broken. A Japanese submarine was forced to beach after a small NZ warship rammed it, and the code books from the submarine were captured.

Often in VK and ZL in the evenings one can hear Japanese amateur CW operators rag chewing away in the Katakana (Kana) code. They will call CQ followed by the combination DO, the DO indicating that they wish to communicate in the Kana code. When they wish to revert from Kana to the international code they will send the code SN.

There are other "ethnic" codes, such as Russian, Hebrew, Arabic, Korean, etc, but none is as widely used as the Katakana code.

That's all, so I'll say:

DO ■ ● ● ■ ■ ■ ■

SA ■ ● ■ ■ ● ■

YO ■ ■

U ● ● ■

NA ● ■ ■ ●

RA ● ● ●

SN ● ● ● ■ ●

To learn more about Katakana visit: <http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2048.html>



This is a Japanese Military Radio key from WW-2. It has the classic straight lever design.

Photo credit W1TP TELEGRAPH & SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENT MUSEUMS: <http://w1tp.com>

**OoooO0000ooooo**

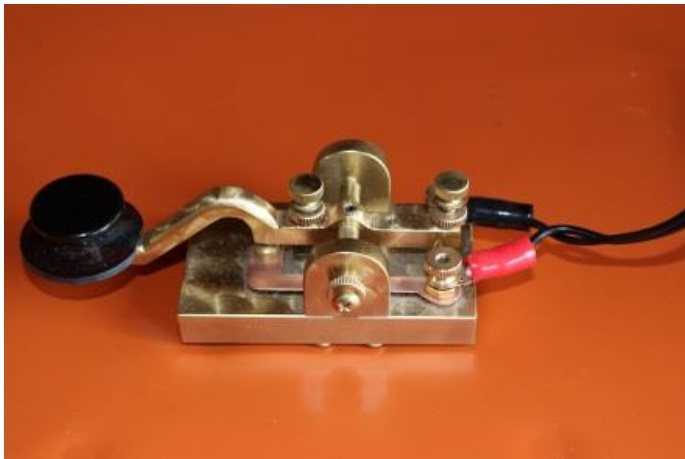
The Following article appeared in the September Edition of Ragchew. It is reproduced here as it appeared in Ragchew with the kind permission of John VK5PF. Thank you John

***Nice Keys and Great thoughts on CW***  
***By John VK5PF #15230***

“Here are my two morse keys. The key immediately below is the Begali Blade. This is now my shack key, replacing my K4VIZ Camel Back. I purchased my key from RF Solutions in VK4. Initially, I needed to consciously have a maximum speed in my head as the key encouraged me to race. It is smooth and very quiet. It is a work of art and beautifully made and is great to use” ...VK5PF SKCC #18570 (not to be confused with FISTS #15230)



*Begali Blade*



*Viz Key Camel Back*

**Why Morse Code using a hand key?**

When I obtained my advanced call in 1977, sending and receiving morse code in plain language, at ten words a minute, was part of the licence requirements. Like many new amateurs I learned the code but did not learn any of the techniques for establishing a contact. And voice over the air was magic! I did have a few contacts from time to time but was never really serious. Morse code became more attractive in the late seventies when novice stations came on the air following examination in sending and receiving plain language morse code at five words per minute. Since learning the code

the old-fashioned way in the 1970s, my understanding of teaching and learning has progressed. It is instructive to look at two publications and examine the content of each. Remember there were no computers in the 1970s, or at least not in the average home. The latest technology for a learner of morse code was a cassette recorder and morse code tapes from the Wireless Institute of Australia (WIA) or listening to morse code practice sessions on the amateur bands or real contacts, or commercial morse code traffic, also on air. I listened to the tapes so many times I could almost remember them by heart, or in learning language 'journalise' them.

My aim was not to learn the code. I already know the code. But I wanted to change my approach to improving my skills and do not want to write anything down (letter by letter) at the time of copying a message. I want to use my head! In other words, I want to be able to write down in my log, at minimum, the other operator's call-sign and signal report and provide my name, signal report and call-sign to her/him. I wanted to up-skill in the same way as one might approach learning music or a new language. To assist me meet this goal I chose a program by IZ2UUF, David, which provides plenty of resources to assist me meet my goals. I use the Koch method of copying in my head letters, numbers and punctuation, at 20 words per minute. The program runs on Android devices and I have a small tablet. The first two letters are K and M. When you know these at least 95% accuracy you add in another letter. In learning theory terms, I am aiming for deep learning rather than surface learning. Surface learning is most commonly understood to be similar to cramming for an exam. When you walk out of the exam room most of the learning goes. I have heard so many amateurs say that or something similar to me when discussing morse code and their trauma at trying to master it! Deep learning changes the person. Deep learning is often over-learning. What you learn becomes second nature to you, for example, riding a bicycle or driving a car. I was always impressed by morse code operators who could converse with a key and speak to someone at the same time. I recommend ten minutes a day for IZ2UUF's program increasing to about half an hour when you are advancing. I set each learning practice run to five minutes, so for half an hour there are six repeats or variations, making up the session. The new letters and punctuation are introduced to the learner based on the apparent difficulty of the letter.

**OoooOOOOOooooo**



### Chris Chapman VK3QB #9085

In early 2002 my former employer (IBM) sent me to SM-land for a seven-week assignment. That short project turned into a four-year international assignment. Working and living in Sweden and northern EU was a fantastic life experience.

I spent some time living in an old waterfront apartment (built circa 1644) in Gamla Stan (The Old Town) just to the south of downtown Stockholm.



On weekends, I would often wander the streets looking in the stores and admiring the architecture. I recall with some fondness picking through an antique store in Gamla Stan and came across an old Morse Key. I scooped it up for about 500 Kroner (About AUD\$100 at the time) and packed it away for some future use.



The key on the black base was found in an antique store in the old town. The better-looking model is currently in use; acquired in recent years from Herman VK2IVX.

On returning to VK in 2006 I dug the old key out from the many boxes of “stuff” that arrived on my doorstep from the international removalists and did a bit of google research. It turns out the old key was an Öller Key made by Lindholm and Wikström sometime between 1890 to 1905.

This style of key was originally designed by Anton Öller in 1857. Two of his machinists, Lindholm and Wikström broke away from Öller on 1878 and started their own business. Another

Öller employee, Lars Magnus Ericsson formed his own company on 1876 repairing telegraph equipment. His company went on to develop telephone equipment and is still a global telecommunications company today.



Chris VK3QB #9085

The design of this key was very popular and was used by various Scandinavian and UK companies and defence forces for over 120 years. Later in the 20th century a popular variant known as the Swedish Pump Key was produced by Lennart Pettersson (ca 1960) and today we have a modern version; the “Blade” by Begali.

More recently I purchased a model in better condition from Herman VK2IXV and this is my current operational straight key. I’ve also got my eye on the Begali Blade – I hear it’s a pleasure to use.

Ref: telegraph-office.com, ericsson.com

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## The QCX 5W CW Transceiver

### Garry VK2GAZ #14151



Last year (2017) I purchased and assembled the QRL Labs QCX 5W CW transceiver.

They are available for 80, 40, 30, 20 and 17 meters, mine is the 40-meter version. These are not your average QRP kit, they are a high performance, single band transceiver with a full 5 watts output. They incorporate a WSPR beacon and built-in alignment/test equipment. It has a rotary encoder synthesised tuning, VFO A/B/Split, Iambic keyer, CW decoder, and more... all this for just US\$49.00 (about AU\$70.00 landed in Australia)

Mine was built slowly over a few days, it is not a difficult kit to assemble, however, there are many components so for me I needed a dedicated area, have all parts labelled and sorted and a large magnifying glass to assist my failing eyes.

The only tricky component was the winding and placing of T1. In hind sight, it may be easier to complete T1 first, this would allow more room when positioning the little blighter.

The resulting kit is a fantastic little radio, I have made many contacts using it and earlier this year (2018) the FISTS QRS Net was run using the QCX with very pleasing signal reports being received.



As you can see the only drawback to the kit was the lack of an enclosure.

Well QRP Labs have addressed this issue and have produced a very professional and sturdy enclosure for this wonderful kit, making it the complete SOTA rig, if only on a single frequency. The enclosure kit is designed to fit a STANDARD built QCX CW transceiver kit with all the original board-mounted controls and connectors.



Nothing is to be removed from a standard QCX. The enclosure kit includes:

Two-part aluminium enclosure, drilled, cut and printed for the QCX

Four rubber feet

2.1mm female power connector

Extenders for the rotary encoder, gain control potentiometer, and buttons

All required screws, bolts and mounting hardware

I found the enclosure very simple to construct and had no difficulty fitting the QCX kit. The enclosure is priced at US\$37.00 (about AU\$55.00 landed in Australia ..... the exchange rate is certainly working against us at the moment!)

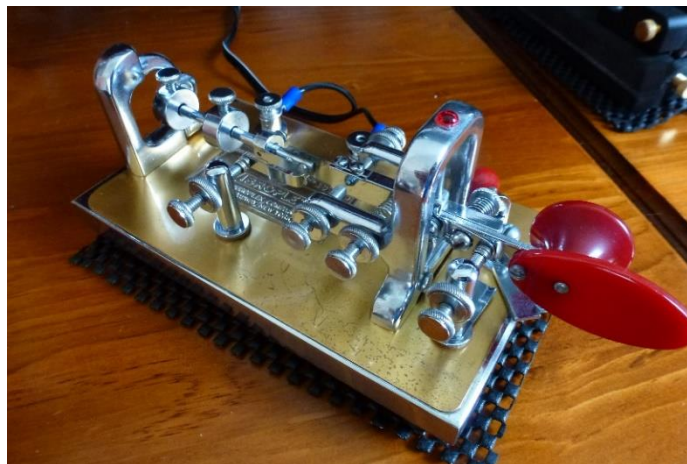


Garry VK2GAZ #14151

## Keys Of The Month

We have received several entries for Key of The Month -Thanks everyone – keep them coming!!!!

**Steve Sal VK7CW #14164**



This is my daily key that I use for 90% of my CW QSOs and all of the FISTS contests. It is a 1953 Vibroplex Presentation semi automatic bug key. This model is fitted with the LaHiff adjustable mainspring. The key is not in perfect condition but it is in very good original used condition. The jewelled trunion bearings provide a very smooth action and it is a joy to use.

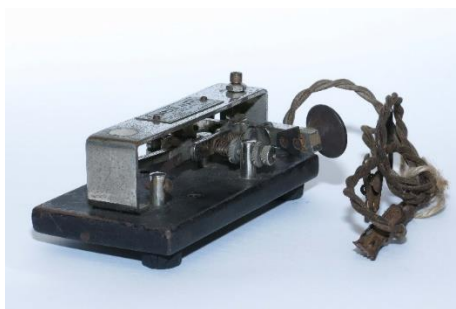


The LaHiff adjustable mainspring is only found on earlier Presentation models and provides another method of adjusting the speed. In its current configuration the speed can be set from around 15 wpm to around 30 wpm, making it perfect as an all-round every day key. The Presentation model by Vibroplex is basically an Original Deluxe key that has a gold-plated base. I have quite a number of Vibroplex bugs that I often use on a rotating basis. They are all great keys to send with however I always come back to the Presentation which is my favourite.

**73 de Steve VK7CW #14164**



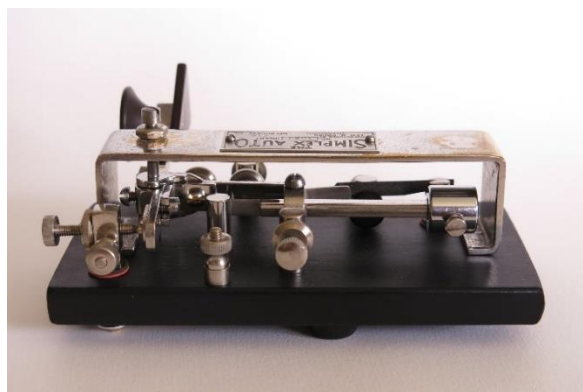
**Kees Van Der Spek #15229**  
**Simplex Auto 1053**



Interesting story. Claimed to have been found around 1967 in scrub near the Majura military training area by a Melbourne teenager looking for firewood when camping in Kowen Forest outside Canberra. Likely originally thrown out as scrap due to damage and missing parts.



Fifty years after having been found it was sold on eBay which is how it came to me. I restored it using original spares and contemporary 'consumables' (washers, insulation, etc.). The replacement finger piece is Brazilian Rosewood for added 'bling'. Literally one saved from the scrapheap and still goes 'like a train'. It is one of only a very few Simplex Auto keys known with a nameplate numbered in the 1000 range. Also see Ron McMullen's Simplex Auto list at <https://australiantelegraph.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/the-simplex-auto.pdf>



**Kees #15229**

## Comparing Keys

**From Michael VK2CCW # 14198**

The last two days I've been comparing different keys. After using the Marconi 365B, the Kent KT-1 key and VK2DLF George's keys, I have come to the conclusion that George's key by standards is of the highest quality. It's very smooth, has a great action and sends effortlessly. If I had to go to sea using a straight key this would be the one that I would take with me.



George's Key all brass except the screws. coils.



Marconi 365B Marine Key notice the spark coils.



Kent KT-1

Has anybody really listened to the different sounds a key makes on air. I was trying these keys this morning and noticed the different characteristics between them. Listening to them through a dummy load into another receiver I could hear the difference between them quite easily.

**73 de Michael VK2CCW #14198**

**From Tony VK3TP #15204**

Here is a photo of a derelict, homemade key that I was given by a colleague with the comment 'My father made this, you might like to fix it up'. It isn't a pretty sight but, surprisingly, there are signs of wear below the knob suggesting that at some time in the past it has actually been used. I have added to my collection of straight keys and have no intention of 'fixing it'.



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**NEW NEW NEW!**

**Display Your Key**

Would like to have your favourite key displayed on the landing page of the FISTS Down Under Inc. website. All you have to do is send Garry VK2GAZ #14151 - [vk2fdu.auz@gmail.com](mailto:vk2fdu.auz@gmail.com) a picture, 600 x 300mm or larger in JPG format and it shall be done.

Go have a look at the keys which are already being displayed. <http://fdu.org.au/home.php>

ooOOOOOooooo

OK, that's it for October!

Now it is your turn! Please send me your favourite key for KoTM, please send in your stories of CW. Right now my inbox is devoid of material – so please contribute. I prefer your original work, however, if you have seen material elsewhere which you believe can be shared here please, if you can, get the originators permission for FDU to use it, then pass it on. I think in the time I have been editing this newsletter I have decided NOT to publish a submission only once. It MUST be related to our hobby. Please send photos in as high definition as possible. New members, please send introduce yourselves via a short story / bio and photo .

Your feedback is welcome – brick bats or bouquets – I have thick skin. Are you getting what you seek in a newsletter? Do you want more? Less? A change? I base the content purely and simply on what I receive from Club members – It is YOUR newsletter – not mine. We are trying to inject more variety to the newsletter. It really comes down to you the members to supply articles on projects, portable ops, new keys, kits builds – the list is endless! As always keys and more keys ( photos ) !!. (Oh and Chris VK3QB #9085, the rumours you have heard about the Begali Blade? They are true!!)

**de Bill**

**VK1MCW #15215**





**FISTS Down Under Inc Gold 25 Award Application****Version: 2018.01**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Call: \_\_\_\_\_ FISTS # \_\_\_\_\_

City &amp; State: \_\_\_\_\_

**CHECK YOUR LOG CAREFULLY FOR DUPLICATE CALLSIGNS AND FISTS NUMBERS.**

QSO	Date DD/MM/YY	Call	FISTS #	Name
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
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