

My radio desire started out by hearing stories from an uncle who was in the Air Force at the time. He was in a communications MOS (military occupational skill). It was always great to hear about sending and receiving codes and radio operations. Just thought it was the best, ever to be able to do. Many of the family were and had been in the military. So, I guess you know which way my mind was headed.

After High school, I worked at the Kingsport Press. A job! Making money! But not very exciting to say the least. Had to try something else, see what the military was all about?

Went into the Army, just like my Dad. The MOS I chose was 13F Field Artillery Forward Observer. Little did I know, at the time, that a great deal of my young life would involve carrying a radio strapped to my back walking everywhere I go. And when they say "field" they do mean field. And when they say Forward Observer they mean Forward. I spent a lot of time forward or should I say ahead of everybody else. Just had to look back to see friendly faces, I knew what was in front of me. My job was to use the radio and call in artillery strikes. Like hide and seek, you find them, but don't let them find you. I tried not to think about that one.

Later I got the chance to have a (sit down) job. It was flying in the left seat of an OH58D helicopter (co-pilot/observer). That was my new tittle. I will make the long story short. Got to operate more radios at the same time. UHF, VHF, and even digital. Yes, they used it instead of voice transmissions. Needed to get the job done quickly. So, not only did I talk to the artillery units and infantry units, but air units too. My knowledge of communications was growing. Learned a lot, understood how important it was to be able to talk to one another. Enough!

Ok, that was my past life time! Let's come back to Tennessee. Started working in Church Hill, lived in an apartment complex called, The Landings. The old "Silver Lake", for those of you who are old enough to know. The couple next door to me and I got to be good friends. Their name was Williams. His name was Bill and he was a ham radio operator, or had been. By the time I got to know him, he did not operate the radio any more, for he was not in good health. We always talked about being a ham. He would say that I needed to get my license. Sorry to say that I did not do that before he became a silent key. He told his wife to give me his Ranger AR3500 (10 meter) radio. It was modified and had a 100 watts output. It was my first rig.

Now, my shack rigs are a dual band Yaesu ft-7900 using a j-pole and a Yaesu ft-767gx using a g5rv jr. 2 HT's and a Kenwood for the car.

I joined the Kingsport club in 2015.

73

Rick WB4RLJ