

On Shortwave from Kløfta, Norway

by

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Here is one from the unexplored nooks and crannies of SWBC history that you may not have heard of before. It is the Kløfta Kortølgekringkaster, or Kløfta shortwave broadcaster, located in Kløfta, Norway, about 20 miles northeast of Oslo. Like many other stations, we learn of it today through its QSL, a 1946 version of which is shown on the next page. It operated on 6200 kHz., and it was run by the broadcast division of the radio department of the country's telegraph administration, or "Telegrafstyret, Radiokontoret, Kringkastingseksjonen," as appears on the front of the card. The QSL, which was dated and mailed from Oslo on October 30, 1946—almost exactly 75 years ago—informed the lucky listener not only that his report of August 17 of that year was correct, but that he had heard the station about two weeks before it ceased operation on September 1. Such are the lucky breaks of DXing.

I had never heard of the station before, but my Swedish DX friend of many years experience, John Ekwall, pointed me to a source of information: the website of [Forsvarsbygg](#), the Norwegian agency which builds and operates the country's military facilities. It managed the Kløfta physical facility, referred to as [FTSN Gorge](#), until it was sold in 2014 [use Google Translate, or go [here](#), for English]. Says Forsvarsbygg: "The shortwave transmitter was established by the German army in 1943 and was the Germans' main radio station in southern Norway." This doesn't necessarily mean that Kløfta was used as a broadcasting station at that time. It may have been in military or other non-broadcast service; or it may have been multi-use.

It was the clay grounding conditions that made Kløfta a desirable transmitting site. The area is generally open and hilly, except for some dense pine groves. The station was originally designed to look like a farm house, and there were two other buildings for barracks. The transmitters were water cooled, from a large nearby pool. Some time after the war the buildings were extensively renovated.

The Germans departed circa May 8, 1945 ("VE Day"), ending a five-year occupation. The FTSN Gorge webpage says that Televerket, the Norwegian telecommunications agency at the time, then operated the facility from around October 1945 to some time in 1950. The site appears not to have been used for shortwave broadcasting purposes after September 1, 1946; I have found no sign in the DX press of a Kløfta shortwave broadcasting station after that date (the WRTH began publication in 1947). Starting around 1950 the site was used for military communications and perhaps other utility-type purposes. Its exact usage in later years is not entirely clear, but remote-controlled military shortwave equipment was in use there until at least 2007.



5238/46
 Oslo, 30/10 1946

Dear Sir,

We thank you for your report of
 and are pleased to confirm that you have heard
 our short-wave transmitter (*experimental*)

Kløfta
 KORTBØLGEKRINGKASTER
 on *6200* kc/s (*48.4* m.) Call Letters Power *15* kW

Transmissions ceased 1/9-46.

73's

ADMINISTRATION OF TELEGRAPHS
 RADIO DEPARTMENT
 BROADCAST DIVISION

*Mr. Bo Swärd,
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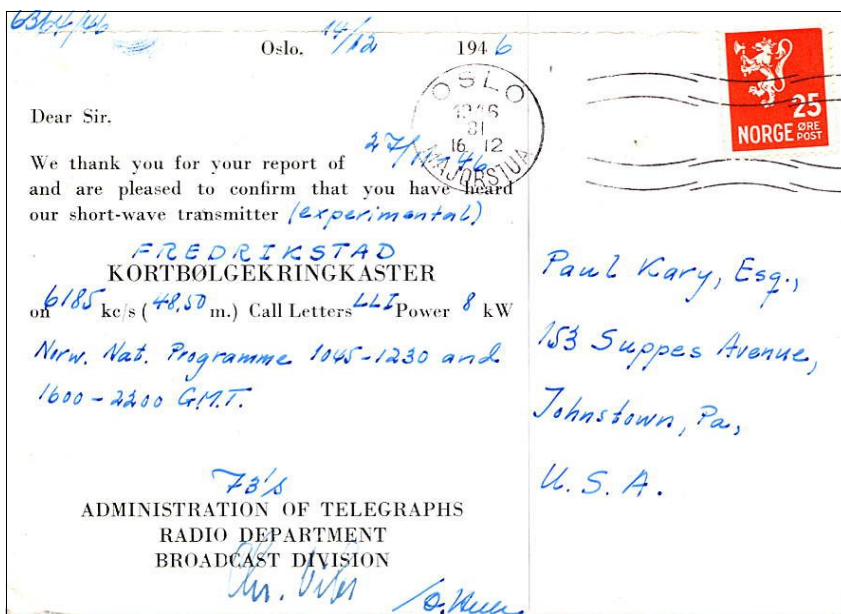
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3
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2
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There is uncertainty about the power of the station when it was used for postwar broadcast purposes. The QSL on pg. 2 shows the power as 15 kw.; another QSL, issued about six weeks before, says 10 kw.; and the FTSN Gorge website says that German transmitters of 20 kw. were at some point moved from Kløfta to Jeløya, home to Norway's old international transmitters. A listing for the Kløfta station in the July 1, 1946 edition of [Broadcasting Stations of the World](#), published by the U.S. Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, gives the power as 10 kw. It is the only list I have found from the years during or after the occupation that includes the Kløfta station, but the war years were lean ones for DX news. The edition for August 1, 1945 (not online) does not contain a Kløfta entry.

With this information in hand I did a little researching of my own, and found some mentions of the Kløfta operation in several 1946 issues of [Radio News](#). This was Ken Boord's "International Short-Wave" column, which was one of the meatiest sources of shortwave station information available at the time. The June issue, which was not untypical, contained 20+ closely-packed columns of information. Tucked away on p. 132 was an item, attributed to unnamed Swedish sources, that Kløfta was operating with 10 kw., relaying the Norwegian National Program northward at 11 a.m.-5 p.m. [EST], and that the station verified. (This information was probably the result of someone receiving a QSL.)



The August issue (p. 130) cited "an article in a Norwegian journal" that explained the purpose of the station. It was "intended for communications purposes. It now operates as a relay beamed to Finmark, the extreme northern portion of Norway, replacing damaged or destroyed land-lines which previously carried the Norwegian Home Service to long-wave broadcasters there." So Kløfta was in the nature of a point-to-point station, mainly transmitting programming to the distant longwave stations via shortwave while also providing direct-to-listener service for individuals who could pick up the 6200 kHz. signal.

In October (p. 128) and November (p. 156), Ken again reported Kløfta QSLs. It should be noted that these QSLs were mailed from Oslo. The QSL was the standard one used by Norway at that time (see above); reports for Fredrickstad were QSLed with the same card, but with "Fredrickstad" inserted instead of "Kløfta." Surely the Kløfta QSLs were filled out at Oslo headquarters, not Kløfta (even by the same persons, it appears).

That is all we have on the shortwave broadcaster in Kløfta, Norway. There is probably more on this interesting station in the Norwegian-language DX press of the day.