

Augstbordhorn, HB/VS-184

Paul HB9DST, August 3, 2015

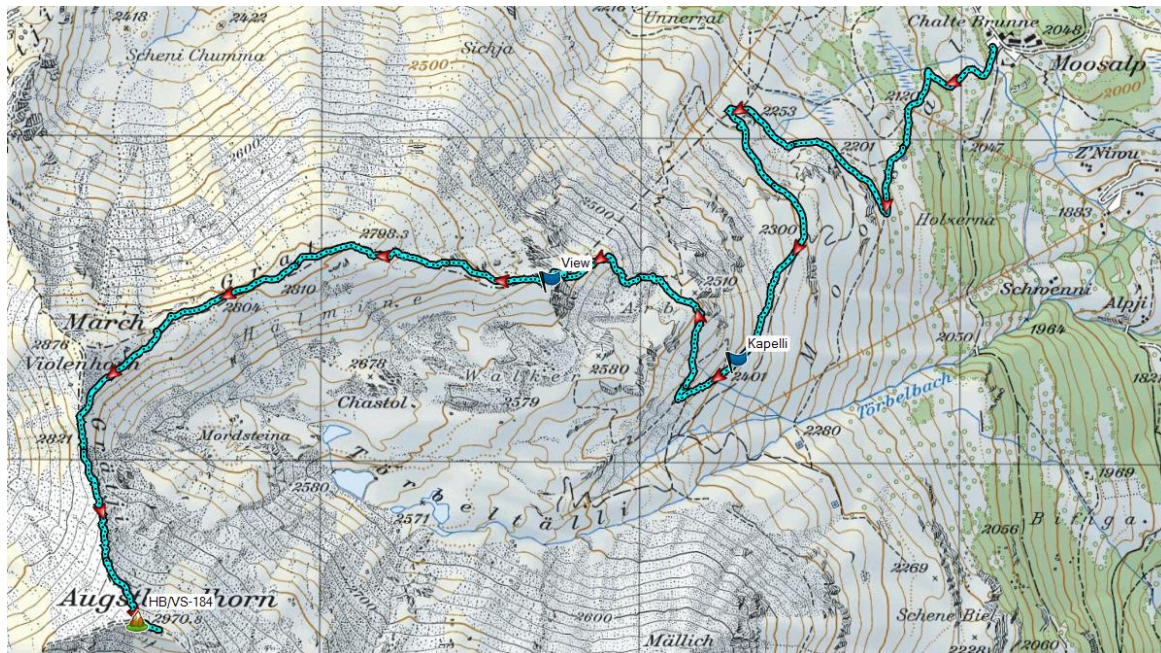
Summary: If you're in the Rhone Valley in the neighborhood of Visp and Brig, this is a popular hike among the vacationers and you'll have plenty of company on the summit. The hike is long, takes some endurance, but there is nothing technically difficult beyond any normal mountain hike -- and it's well worth the effort with some spectacular views of the Oberwallis (Upper Valais) region. What also made this day special was that it was the very first SOTA activation for Beat HB9HQX!!

For the past year and more, I've been talking with Beat HB9HQX about doing a joint activation of Augstbordhorn. He showed me some other summits near Brig last year that I activated but he didn't get on the air. This year, though, he did bring equipment and gave it a try. I hope I have a SOTA convert!

This being a long hike where you really want to get an early start, he and his XYL Christine invited me to stay with them the night before as a special favor. We waited for a day with a promising weather forecast, which was on Monday August 3, 2015.

The hike itself is 6.6 km with an overall up/down ascent of 999 meters. We went at a leisurely pace, took plenty of breaks, did not rush things and ultimately took a bit less than 4 hours to get to the summit. I will describe the route with the following sequence of photos, making references to the waypoints on the map below.

To start, we got up quite early and were in the car at 6 a.m., and we were on the trail shortly near 7 a.m.





Even at 7 a.m. we were not the first hikers in the parking lot. The sun had not yet come over the horizon and there was a distinct chill in the air until it did.



From the parking lot, the first stretch of the route follows a dirt road. You cannot yet see the summit, which is hidden behind this ridge in the morning sunlight -- a ridge you must climb over.



Some of the beautiful flowers we saw on this stretch.



Near Point 2253 you leave the dirt road and follow a dirt path that runs parallel to a slope and gradually climbs up it. The signpost indicates that you can take the route to the left or the right to get to the summit; we looked at the map and chose the one to the left.



We took our first rest stop at Kapelli, the little chapel, which you can see here.



A bit beyond Kapelli there is a switchback on the path up the slope.



At Point 2510 you get to the top of the section just described and get a closer look at climb leading to the ridge ("Grat" on the map). Here on the far left you get a first glimpse of your destination, and it seems quite a distance away. The top of the ridge in the center brings you to the waypoint marked "View".



Getting to the ridge involves crossing the first of numerous rocky areas that are tough on the feet and slow down your progress somewhat.



Continuing to get to the top of the ridge where you start across the Grat.



When you get to the waypoint marked "View", you get your first good look at your destination (the peak on the left) as well as the ridge you will follow, in this picture going from right to left. There's still quite a lot of distance to cover!



Some of the grat/ridge trail is easy to follow...



...and other parts are not quite so easy.



The ascent to the summit from the ridge is reasonably steep and takes careful footing. If you look carefully, you can see the yellow signpost at the top of the picture, and it is almost at the very top of the summit.



The final ascent from the signpost to the summit cross.



Beat HB9HQX at his operating position. These are just a few of the very many people we saw on the summit and on the trail. True, it's still vacation time, but it was on a weekday. The activation zone is relatively large with adequate antenna supports (lots of rocks), but finding a place where you will not disturb others is not easy.

In terms of operating, we had only one mast with us and used it to support both end-fed antennas. No surprise, it created such interference that we could have only one station on the air at a time. That didn't matter -- we had all the time in the world, and the sun was burning off the fog more and more every minute.



A panorama of the ridge you just walked up (going right to left) to get to the summit -- and the route we again followed to get back down.



To celebrate our accomplishments, Beat and Christine invited me to join them in the Restaurant Moosalp for a piece of Cremeschnitt (cream pie), for which this restaurant has an excellent reputation. Thank you for a wonderful day, Beat and Christine!