

MISSION: MICRONESIA

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"Often on our voyages to the southwest islands of Palau, we have encountered such operations..."



Filipino fishermen gather around NATIVA off an island in the Philippines a few years back. Their tiny boats seem too dangerous for fishing far from land but one is often surprised when seeing them on the open ocean.

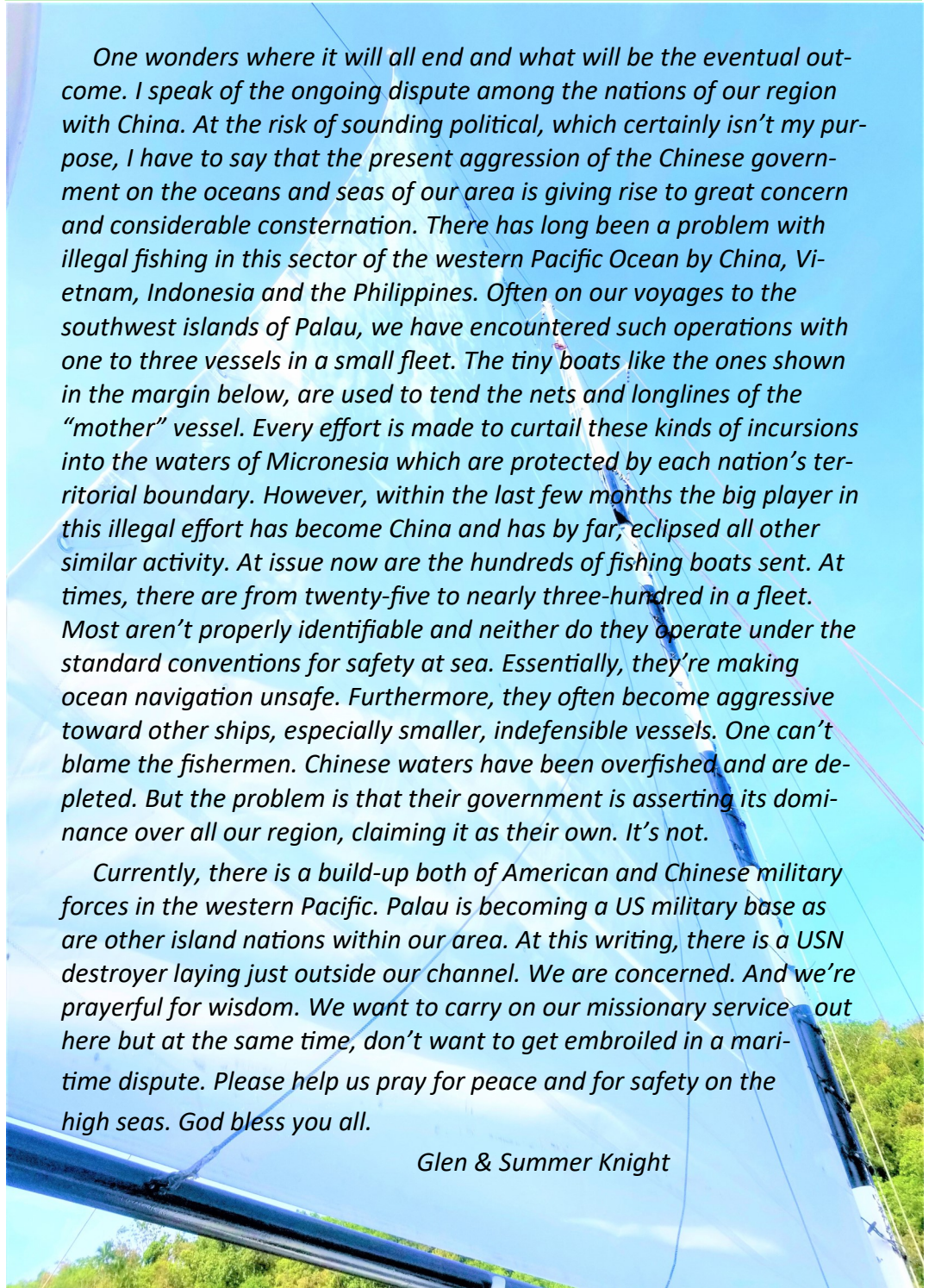
Ship's Log: Oceans of Dispute

—Glen Knight

One wonders where it will all end and what will be the eventual outcome. I speak of the ongoing dispute among the nations of our region with China. At the risk of sounding political, which certainly isn't my purpose, I have to say that the present aggression of the Chinese government on the oceans and seas of our area is giving rise to great concern and considerable consternation. There has long been a problem with illegal fishing in this sector of the western Pacific Ocean by China, Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines. Often on our voyages to the southwest islands of Palau, we have encountered such operations with one to three vessels in a small fleet. The tiny boats like the ones shown in the margin below, are used to tend the nets and longlines of the "mother" vessel. Every effort is made to curtail these kinds of incursions into the waters of Micronesia which are protected by each nation's territorial boundary. However, within the last few months the big player in this illegal effort has become China and has by far, eclipsed all other similar activity. At issue now are the hundreds of fishing boats sent. At times, there are from twenty-five to nearly three-hundred in a fleet. Most aren't properly identifiable and neither do they operate under the standard conventions for safety at sea. Essentially, they're making ocean navigation unsafe. Furthermore, they often become aggressive toward other ships, especially smaller, indefensible vessels. One can't blame the fishermen. Chinese waters have been overfished and are depleted. But the problem is that their government is asserting its dominance over all our region, claiming it as their own. It's not.

Currently, there is a build-up both of American and Chinese military forces in the western Pacific. Palau is becoming a US military base as are other island nations within our area. At this writing, there is a USN destroyer laying just outside our channel. We are concerned. And we're prayerful for wisdom. We want to carry on our missionary service out here but at the same time, don't want to get embroiled in a maritime dispute. Please help us pray for peace and for safety on the high seas. God bless you all.

Glen & Summer Knight

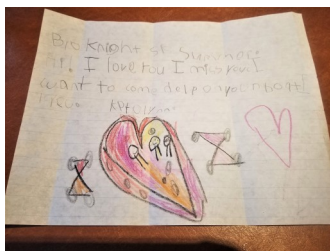


Ongoing work while laid up in Port Koror...



Images like this one always remind us of who we are and why we're doing what we do. A young mother and her child, "sea gypsies" of the western Pacific Ocean, forage for food at a local market with no money to spend but great hope that someone will take pity and share.

"It's important in these waters to let other vessels know that we're an American ship..."



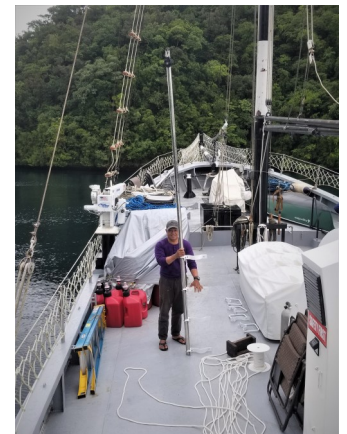
Precious. A note from one of our little missionaries, Katelyn Kelly of South Crossett MBC, Crossett, AR. She is a mighty little warrior for Jesus. It reads, "I love you and I miss you and I want to come help you on your boat." And our hearts are deeply touched...

We are still taking full advantage of being laid up in port, finishing some work I had delayed for a long time. The photo at the right shows our crewman, Jhobert Lastimozo, high aloft on the main mast. He is busy bolting on some new climbing rungs our other crewman, Tony Cierva had fabricated here on the ship. These have long been needed for safe access to the very top of the masts so that we'll be able to service sail rigging, electrical circuits and lights. In September, we built the new shroud ladders and now, we've completed the rungs. This is the main mast that reaches ninety-four feet above the waterline of the ship.



The photo to the left shows the completed project of installing the climbing rungs up the top mast. We did the same with the mizzen mast for access to the lights, the VHS antenna and the radar dome. Climbing on the ship is always a dangerous job but by use of the rungs and a safety harness with double life lines, the hazard is reduced considerably. High atop the main mast, we also fixed a twelve-foot flagpole where we now fly our colors. It is important in these waters to let other vessels know that we're an American ship and there's nothing better than the Stars and Stripes to say it!

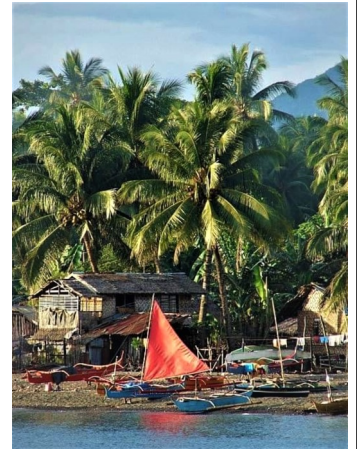
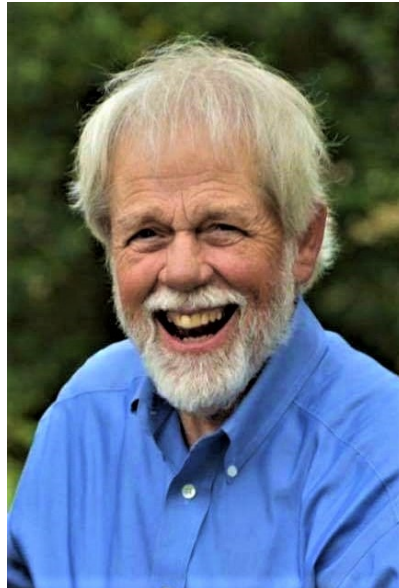
The photo to the right shows Tony holding the new flagpole that we made for mounting on the main mast. The material is a beautiful piece of stainless steel tubing that Justin had purchased some years back in the Philippines but later donated to the ship for whatever purpose it might serve. It is the best of all possible things to have been used for the flag. Its bright finish will never rust and the rope block we put at the top will provide carefree service for years to come. You can also see how beautiful the ship's deck is with new paint and safety netting all around.



"It is an island that perhaps has seen more destruction than any other, so much so that still, the unspent mortar rounds are unearthed from their burial sites and the empty cartridges are found strewn along the beaches as numerous as the fragments of shell and coral, and deaths, numbering more than 11,000 men who fell during September and October of 1944. This is Peleliu. It took decades for the jungle to overgrow the ravages of WWII and the years can't erase the sorrow. Now, it is being fortified once again. War. Senseless."

Sorrows and rejoicing...

Dr. Leland Dodd, our long-time friend and helper of Remote Island Ministries passed from the walks of this life into the arms of Our Lord recently. From as far back nearly as I can remember, "Doc" has helped me in so many ways, mostly related to medical ministry planning, medical equipment and supplies. He was instrumental in securing large donations of supplies for humanitarian purposes from different sources. His professional advice, generosity, gentle spirit and jovial personality will be sorely missed as we carry on here. He leaves his sweet wife, Sherry behind for now as well as a loving family. God bless the memory and legacy of "Doc" Dodd.



Red sails on the boats are typical of a certain village along the shores of the Gulf of Davao, PI.



During September, we lost our friend and co-worker, Luke Atkinson of the UK. Luke is shown here on the left with Justin, facing. He was the explosives expert with whom we worked a year ago to assist in lifting several unexploded ordnance pieces from the seabed here in Palau. Luke died by accident while working in the Solomon Islands.

"From as far back nearly as I can remember, "Doc" has helped me in so many ways..."

We're pleased to have been able to ship a pallet of Bibles and song books in early October from the Port of Koror to our co-worker in Vanuatu, Missionary Walt Emry. With port closures throughout our region of the world, we haven't been able to sail the ship to make such deliveries. So our next best option is to palletize and ship them through the few certified ocean-freight lines that are able to operate for cargo-only purposes. This pallet should arrive in Vanuatu by sometime in late December. We are presently looking at other destinations for similar shipments.



Some of you have asked about Justin and Natsuki. They moved away from Koror last March and have settled in Japan. He recently has taken a job with a large international firm in Chiba. They're doing fine and yes, we miss them! Thanks so much for your prayers for Jus and Nats.

"The radar picked up an object floating off our starboard bow, apparently immobile in the water at a distance of two nautical miles from our position. Close observation while holding Nativa's course indicated it had begun to move and had taken a bearing toward us, moving our same direction but angled so as to intersect our course line. While maintaining our forward speed, what was now obviously another vessel began to close quickly upon us causing great concern. The time was 3:00 AM. Closer now, we could make out that it was a fishing boat, but he wasn't fishing. And a crackling voice over the radio, called, "Hey Joe! Got cigarettes?" I smiled for the moment, but sped up to lay him astern." —Memoirs of a Missionary, Glen Knight

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Beautiful NATIVA lying at her mooring in Koror, Palau, Micronesia, awaiting clearance to sail once again.

...Reaching people on the edge!



“God’s Promise”

Rainbows are a signature of the tropics, reminding us of God’s blessings!

Closing thought: Just a saw...Remembering Clifford

It’s just a saw. But it’s a good one. And what makes it special to me is the one who gave it. Look carefully at the photo and you may be able to read: “To Glen from Clifford.” It was his gift and I have used it over the years more than what can be featured. And it remains one of my most cherished and handy tools. Clifford Jordan of Bastrop, Louisiana went home to be with The Lord a few days ago following a round of illness, complicated by Covid-19. He leaves behind is wife, Lois and a dear family who’ve long been friends to our work. We sorrow with the Jordans, but rejoice with Clifford as he is in the presence of Our Lord. I will always remember my friend with every cut made.



The years have passed quickly, multiplying acquaintances both at home and abroad and compounding experiences with the same so much so that often, reflection upon it all creates a flood of emotion. Word has come just today of the passing of my children’s maternal grandmother, Lovada Magness of Texarkana, Arkansas. But we sorrow, not as those who have no hope, for our hope is in Jesus Christ, in Whom, we have eternal life. God bless the memories of all our dear ones.