

MISSION: MICRONESIA

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"For ten long hours, she beat, bow and stern against the rocks."



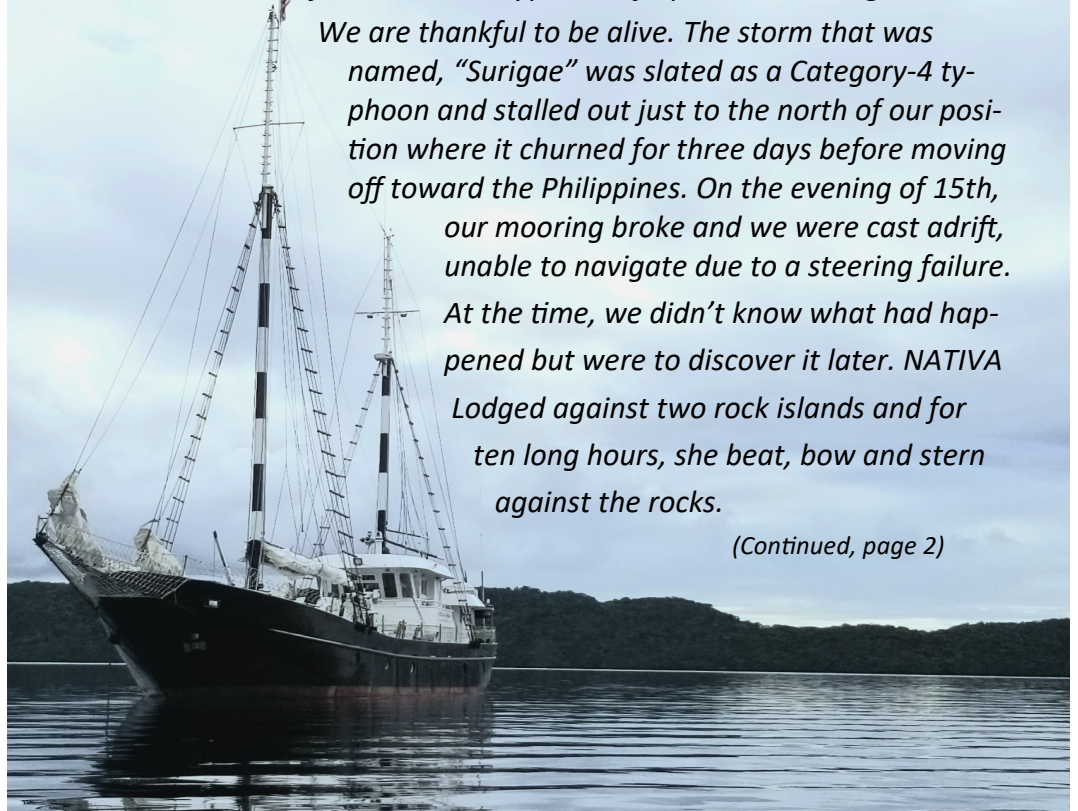
A lad of Pulo Anna Island clutches his new flip-flops. What a joy!

Ship's Log: April Typhoon in Port Koror, Palau —Glen Knight

It could be seen on our journey back from the southwest islands during the early morning hours of April 9 as we neared the Malakal Passage on the east side of the Port of Koror. Watching the sunrise that morning from about fifteen miles out on approach to our home port, I could see the dark, brooding clouds that signaled a low pressure cell about 115 miles away. This time of year, we didn't imagine it would develop into a typhoon that within days would sweep past the main islands of Palau with a ferocity seldom seen. It had been thirteen years since such a storm struck these islands so directly. We arrived safely and gladly back at our mooring on the early morning of the 9th, following a week of successful and beautiful sailing to Sonsorol and Pulo Anna Islands. This was the first voyage we were able to make since July, last year due to covid restrictions. Approximately 27 tons of construction materials were delivered to the islands along with humanitarian supplies and Bibles. Our plans of returning within two weeks were gladly embraced that we might continue helping the islanders and spend more time among them, encouraging them in the Word of the Lord. The typhoon of April 13-17 changed that.

We are thankful to be alive. The storm that was named, "Surigae" was slated as a Category-4 typhoon and stalled out just to the north of our position where it churned for three days before moving off toward the Philippines. On the evening of 15th, our mooring broke and we were cast adrift, unable to navigate due to a steering failure. At the time, we didn't know what had happened but were to discover it later. NATIVA Lodged against two rock islands and for ten long hours, she beat, bow and stern against the rocks.

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April Typhoon in Port Koror, Palau continued from p.1



The large jib sail took the force of the bow against the rocks. It is obviously ruined with a section chewed out in its center. I will have to order a replacement.

"...we had nothing to do but to pray and hold onto each other."



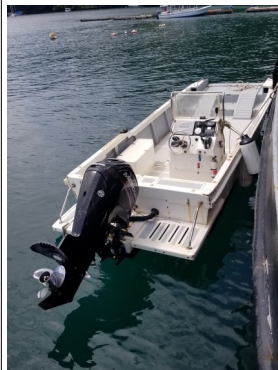
We took this heavy rock a prize as our bowsprit knocked it loose from the island and it landed on our forecastle. This is part of what ruined the jib sail. It weighs around 500 lbs.

The bow sustained considerable damage during the ten hours NATIVA laid against the rock island. The beautiful bowsprit broke off and the plating in the front of the bow and along the starboard side is severely bent. It will require cutting out the damaged steel and replacing it with new as well as rebuilding the bowsprit with a new length of 5" diameter steel pipe. I have located the materials already.



The starboard stern quarter and the portside corner both also sustained severe damage. The bulwark is bent inward by about 14" from the deck up and the deck is warped at the very back. Also the shear strake bumper is demolished through about a 14' length. But this is what took the blows which for over ten hours can be best described as a car wreck every 30 seconds. It's difficult to imagine the trauma we endured while riding out this typhoon. God, in His grace gave us the stamina to wait it out as we had nothing to do but to pray and hold onto each other. We lost one of our solar panels and the wind turbine generator as well as our satellite telephone antenna.

The EAGLE ATVC was crushed between the ship and the rock islands and later, between the ship and the seawall where we eventually landed. The little landing craft then ended up, suspended in a drainage channel where she lodged after the storm surge subsided. The photo to the right shows us removing the EAGLE from its snare by use of a mobile crane. We set it back in the water and with the tide high, motored back to the ship.



Damages to the EAGLE ATVC include the wrecked canopy and railings as well as the crushed top corners of the bow and stern. We have removed the hardware from the boat and will make preparations to repair the fiberglass damage. There isn't a scratch on the underside of the boat and the outboard motor is fine, except for the cowling which can also be repaired and painted. The photo to the left shows the EAGLE stripped bare of its stainless steel bits and canopy. She is still serviceable even in this condition. The boat is well built to have survived such a storm. With proper attention, she will soon be as good as new.

"Surveying the damages to our ship, and having lived through the nightmare of a typhoon onboard, we are convinced that although she is damaged, her strength and toughness have been proven and perhaps in real ways, so have the same been in our family and crew." —Memoirs of a Missionary, gk

Successful mission to Pulo Anna Island



It was our joy to assist the Sonsorol State government in delivering construction supplies to Pulo Anna. The photo to the left shows some of the women and the children of the island who came to meet us. We gave them some supplies to aid their living on the island and shared copies of the Bible among them. They listened respectfully as we shared The Word of The Lord among them. We will return soon!

The beach is where we landed around 7,626 pounds of cement. Another 3,900 pounds needs to be delivered at the soonest possible time. The cement and the reinforcement bar, also delivered, are necessary to building a strong shelter that can withstand a typhoon. While helping the people there to prepare for such a storm, we had no idea we'd face it too.



Other construction materials delivered included lumber and the steel structural members for the building. This is a little over half the total building system to be delivered. The type of construction is modular steel and concrete. The roof structure as well as the flooring and foundation are all of concrete. Concrete board will be used for the walls and ceilings. Once completed, the facility will serve as a shelter as well as the dispensary for the island. Periodically, there are nurses that visit the island from the town of Koror. Their supplies are usually limited and visits are sporadic at best. This island is truly a remote island that takes us thirty-five hours to reach, one way.

There is no anchorage at Pulo Anna Island and currents are very strong. Small boats are used, one of which we towed behind NATIVA from Sonsorol to Pulo Anna, for offloading supplies. You can see in the photo to the right, the process of lowering the materials and personal dunnage into the small boats for the run up to shore. Nativa drifted a half-mile off the reef to do this.



The school teacher, Samantha graciously received us and encouraged our return. We will be bringing school supplies on the next trip and hopefully, something nice for her to use in the school.

"This island is truly a remote island that takes us thirty-five hours to reach..."



A big load of lumber is handed down to the small boat for delivery to shore. One can see the island in the background. At this point we were almost on the reef...too close for comfort!

"There was a time when NATIVA didn't exist. She was merely a fantastic dream in the mind of an 'imagineer.' Now that she is damaged from a storm that was not of our making, what becomes of her? I will answer that in simple terms: We make repairs to what we built and we sail again...soon." —gk

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Pulo Anna Island in the sunrise and a day of work we would eagerly embrace after 35 hours of sailing from our home port, would prove to be one of the best efforts we have made in Western Micronesia. (04-07-2021)

...Reaching people on the edge!



"The Approach to Sonsorol Island"

Sailing close by Sonsorol Island on April 6, 2021, the Tall Ship NATIVA makes way into the sunset toward Pulo Anna Island. Sonsorol can be seen in the distance.

Closing thought: Keeping Perspective

Glen Knight

Honestly, there are times when it would be easy enough to just quit. After all, at our ages, most people retire. But the more we consider it, the less likely we feel the time is right and frankly, the time may never be right to stop working. We see too many opportunities yet, to reach people with the gospel. In many ways, perhaps we've just hit our stride. The child to the right is one among a group of children and adults who had not known the simple words of John 3:16. And there are many more on islands like theirs who are the same. How can we possibly lay off now? We cannot.



Keeping perspective in doing what we do means that we always look around while looking ahead. New places and new faces, tender hearts and warm smiles await the arrival of the Missionary Ship. And with each one, our hearts are stirred within us to carry on. Setbacks? Yes, they come. But they always have. They always will. That's okay.

"They sat, orderly and quietly, waiting for the things we had brought and eager to hear what we had to say. This opportunity to share with islanders had been a long time coming. And we were ready!" —Memoirs of a Missionary, gk