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s/v Soggy Paws: Feb 13 - Mar 4, 2019 (Part II of II)

Boat Make: St Francis 44 MK2 Catamaran

Draft 3.5'

Home Port: Melbourne, FL, USA

SSCA Members Since: January 1992

Editors Note: In Part II of Dave and Sherry's great adventures we follow them as they continue to explore Papua New Guinea both above and below the water.

Noipuas River Trip

The next morning, we were picked up in Clem's boat by Johnny, Batman, and Apolis, Clem's boatmen and guides. As gasoline is in scarce supply, we supplied the gasoline for the trip. We also took a few gifts for the village that we were going to visit; things like pencils, paper, crayons, and books for the school.

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Our Crew Setting Out Up the River

We motored across the bay and into the shallow entrance to the river. The entrance was almost totally blocked by a bar of sand and river debris, and there was a pretty big chop where the river current met the incoming waves. But Johnny, our boat driver, skillfully found the channel and had us in the river in no time, with only a little bailing needed afterward.



The River Mouth looking Hazardous



Bailing After Crossing the Bar

Once in the river, we motored upstream enjoying the sights.



Beautiful Old Trees Overhanging the River



A Local Stilt Leaf House at the Water's Edge



Curious Kids on the River Bank Watch Us Go By



Mom and the Kids in the Family Car

We went as far up the river as we could in the heavy fiberglass boat with an outboard. Then we offloaded and hiked over a hill to the village.



Hiking to the Village



Vakalsapal Village and River from the Top of the Hill

Upon arrival at the village we were warmly greeted by several of the villagers, including the chief and given a tour.



The Village Church shaped like a boat.



The Village Church Inside



The Village School



School interior with no seats

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The school motto and daily plan.

Since we had only arranged with Clem to do the trip the afternoon before, the village had not been warned ahead of time about our visit. So they parked us in a cool place with someone who could speak English and answer our questions, while they got organized for our visit.



Waiting on the teacher's porch for our tour. She was Clem's relative.

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We always get asked "Where do you come from?", "How many children do you have?", "How old are they?" So it is fun to whip out the camera and show some pictures of our kids and our boats. They also LOVE to see pictures of themselves and it's a great icebreaker with the kids. When we take one picture then show it to them every kid in the village lines up for a picture.



Sherry showing pictures on the cell phone.

After the tour and a long but enjoyable wait, the villagers took us down to the shallow river next to the village and started building the rafts. The men went into the jungle with big machetes and brought back long bamboo logs, and some heavy vines. They laced the raft together with the vines. As it was only meant to be a short trip downriver in calm water, local materials worked fine.



Our Rafts Being Constructed from Natural Materials

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Bamboo logs being tied together with strong pliable vines.



The Finished Raft Looks Pretty Sturdy

And our rafts are finally complete, and we set out down the river, two to a raft



The queen and her oarsman.

WW2 Japanese Mini-Sub and Torpedo Plane

One of the reasons we were keen to stop at Three Islands was a report of a Japanese sub-tender, and mini-submarine in the anchorage, sunk next to the island. We knew its approximate location from other cruisers' information, and we could see a white buoy marking something near where we thought it was. But being good cruisers, we asked Clem if we could dive "his" wreck, and in return, we got one of his guys to take us to the wreck.

It was a good thing we had a guide. The surface buoy marked the ship, but it was the sub we really wanted to see. Visibility wasn't great and it was not obvious where the submarine was in relation to the ship. Our guide said over there. So we swam out from the ship in the direction we thought it was and didn't find it. Finally we surfaced and asked our guide again. It turned out to be just a bit farther north, away from the sub tender, than we had thought.

The visibility was not good, so we couldn't back up and take a picture of the entire sub. It was about 80' long, in 60 feet of water. It is the same type that was involved in the attack on Pearl Harbor. These are very rare to find other than in museums or on display.



The Bow of the Sub Showing 2 Empty Torpedo Tubes

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The Top of the Sail or Conning Tower with Hatch Open



A Stern View Showing the Two Counter-Rotating Propellers

We didn't have a lot of information about this ship and sub when we were there, but later found out details from Justin Tayan's Pacific Wrecks website. Discovered in 1987, the ship is the Japanese converted merchant vessel to sub tender Sanko Maru. The mini-sub the IJN HA-52. Both were sunk by US B-25 light bombers on Feb 16, 1944. Details here: <https://pacificwrecks.com/subs/HA-52.html>

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Also, here are some pictures of what it's supposed to look like when not covered with 75 years of sea growth.



Counter-Rotating Propellers on Japanese Mini-Sub HA-8 in the Submarine Force Museum in Groton, Connecticut



Full View of Japanese Mini-Sub HA-8 outside the Museum

Finally, our friends Craig and Pam on Berzerker filmed the dive with their Go-Pro, and here's a short video Craig posted on YouTube: [Mini-Sub Dive at Dunung Island](#)

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Having been out in the boonies for over 3 weeks, we were all dying for a meal ashore; one that we didn't have to cook. We talked with Clem's wife Sophie about having her make a meal for our group. She said she could make us a pizza, if we could provide

most of the ingredients. We managed to dig up some olives, tomato sauce, and parmesan cheese from the depleted stores on our 4 boats. Sophie did a passable job of making the pizzas, and we enjoyed our meal on our last night ashore before heading off to Kavieng the next day.



The Berzerkers enjoying Pizza at Clem's surf resort

There are a few more Japanese shipwrecks around Three Islands, but none were as significant as the mini-sub, and we were keen to get going. We needed stores in Kavieng, and we had planned to get all the way to Vanuatu before the SE Trades set in in June. So this required us to keep moving.

But not so fast. We had one more stop to make in New Hanover. On the eastern end, next to the small island of Anelaua, is a Japanese airplane in about 25 ft of water. We had a waypoint for the plane, but no information about an anchorage there. So we set out as a group on a day sail, hoping to find anchorable depths near the plane. The plan was to anchor overnight, do a quick dive on the plane in the morning, and get all the way to Kavieng in the afternoon.

We had a fairly pleasant sail east along the north coast of New Hanover. As before the commercial PNG charting is not very good, but we had accurate satellite charts on OpenCPN, and so navigation was pretty easy. It took us awhile to survey the anchoring area and find reasonable depths and swinging room to fit all 4 boats. We again left the shallowest spot for our friends on Berzerker who had no anchor windlass.

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After anchoring, a pile of teenagers gathered on shore waving at us, so we went over in the dinghy to say hello and ask about the plane. It turns out that there's a big high school just inland from our anchoring spot. The kids were friendly and enjoyed practicing their English on us. They of course had seen it and described the location. The plane was just around the corner of the island from our anchor spot. Dave and I went to find it and make sure we knew where it was, so we could make a quick dive in the morning.

B-5N Kate Anchorage	02 35.00 S / 150 29.360 E	48 ft sand
B-5N Kate Airplane	02 35.22 S / 150 29.101 E	About 25' of water.

Come morning, all 4 boats launched dinghies to go see the wreck. Four of us went diving and the rest snorkeled.



The Japanese Nakajima B5-N-2 "Kate" torpedo bomber found off Anelaua Island, New Hanover, PNG



Engine and cockpit of B-5N2 Kate discovered in 1960s.

Additional details here: <https://pacificwrecks.com/aircraft/b5n/kavieng.html>

By 10 am, we were all back aboard and hauling anchor to sail to Kavieng.

Kavieng Rudder Repair

One of the most urgent things we needed to do once we reached Kavieng, PNG on Feb 19, was to figure out how to repair our port rudder, which had a soft-ball sized dent mashed into the leading edge from our encounter with a floating log earlier in the trip.



The 30'x10" Log We Hit Enroute to the Ninigos in January

Dave is great with mechanical things, but considers himself a little weak when it comes to fiber glassing. So we enlisted Jon Hacking from Ocelot to help him do the repairs. Fortunately, between the 4 boats, we managed to scrounge up the necessary repair materials.

The first step was to get the rudder off the boat and out of the water. This we opted to do by dropping the rudder (carefully) while in the water. We consulted with the St. Francis Owners Group for advice. One person said the rudder would float, another said it would sink. So we got Soggy Paws into shallow water in case we dropped it and it did not float. We also tied a line around the rudder, so someone on board could hold onto it if it was too heavy for the ship's diver. As the official 'ship's diver' I got in the water. Dave as the 'ship's chief engineer' loosened the rudder arm clamping bolts and disconnected the tie bar from the arm to the other rudder.

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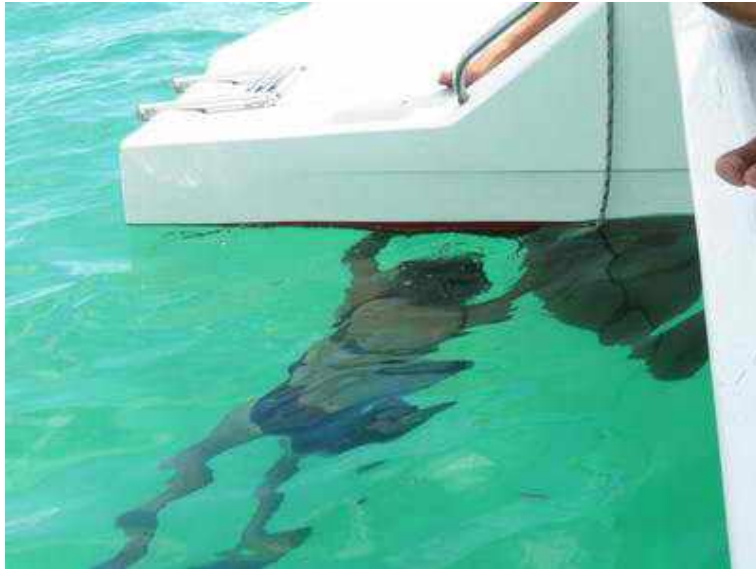


Disconnecting the Rudder Arm Prior to Dropping the Rudder



The Aluminum Rudder Arm and Post

Fortunately the shaft wasn't bent (which might have jammed the rudder stock in the tube). Now we know why the leading edges of the rudders are soft, so they absorb the shock of hitting something. A little wiggling back and forth on my part, and the rudder dropped a couple of inches. I took another breath, pulled harder, and the rudder came right down and out.



The Ship's Diver Pulling the Rudder Down and Out



The Rudder is Onboard!

The rudder didn't float, but it wasn't too heavy for me to hold up in the water, and we had the security line on it.

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The Leading Edge Ding from the Big Log



The Leading Edge of the Rudder with Exposed Interior Filler

The ding looked pretty bad. Dave and Jon took the rudder ashore to a small covered shed that Nusa Island Resort kindly let us use. The first step was to grind out the ding, rinse it well in fresh water, and let it dry for a few days.

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Once it was dry, Jon and Dave started building the ding back up; first with some foam, then with epoxy putty and fiberglass. We had a little bit of old bottom paint to finish it up. The repair was kind of crude, but it fixed the hole, and we were back in business.



Dave and Jon Discussing Rudder Repair Strategy



Jon Putting the Final Touches on the Patch

I was worried about getting the rudder stock up into the tube, but it was no big deal. We had everyone from our little flotilla helping out in one way or another.

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Lowering the Repaired Rudder Back Into the Water



The Ship's Diver Hard at Work Again, this Time with Added Rudder Flotation.

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When we hauled out later, in July 2019 at Liapari in the Solomons to do some other bottom repairs from encounters with a couple of pesky reefs, the rudder looked fine.

After returning to the Philippines in November we pulled both rudders after two additional log encounters. One rudder was jammed with a bent shaft so we had been down to one useable rudder for the last 500 nm of our trip.

Good thing we have a catamaran with spare rudders and an excellent ship's diver experienced in rudder removal!

Commodores Dave and Sherry McCampbell
 s/v *Soggy Paws*
 Currently in Samal, Philippines

The image shows the Waterway Guide logo and navigation menu. The logo features the text "WATERWAY GUIDE" in a large, blue, serif font, with "THE CRUISING AUTHORITY" in a smaller, red, sans-serif font below it. To the right of the logo is a red box with the text "PLUS Ratings & Reviews on Marinas and Anchorages". Above the logo is a yellow navigation bar with icons for Marinas, Services, Anchorages, Bridges & Locks, Nav Alerts, and Fuel. A red arrow points from the "6 modes" icon to a dropdown menu listing: Marinas, Services, Anchorages & Free Docks, Bridges & Locks, Nav Alerts, Fuel - Diesel, and Fuel - Gas. Below the logo is the text "Proud Sponsor of SCA" and "Plan your time on the water with". At the bottom is a dark blue banner with the text "www.waterwayguide.com/Explorer" in white and yellow.

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