

MORE NEWS FROM ALLIANCE

After cruising the Islands around Samarai, we set sail with PANACHE, TOOLKA T and QUAAHLEE OF SYDNEY for the Trobriand Islands. We were made very welcome here and bought some lovely carvings. The Nationals here were a bit too friendly and every time we stepped onto the back deck, out they came. We finally had a word with the Chief, Tom, and he passed the word around that we had all the carvings that we wanted. We had been told to miss the Trobriands, as the Nationals were a little aggressive, but we never found this, in fact just the opposite. Whilst we were in the Trobriands, our gen set decided to act up, so we decided to leave the others and to take off for Rabaul.

We had a good 2 days sail and arrived at Rabaul at day break, dropped our pick and started to get organised. The next moment a dinghy came alongside and an American voice said "Welcome to Rabaul". We found out that Dan and his wife Peggy had been in Rabaul for 6 months. They had engine trouble, and were trying to organise parts from the States. They kept in touch with the local Customs Officer, as to their holdup. The last we heard was that they had "overstayed" not only their visa but their welcome and were kicked out of PNG but made to leave their yacht behind. They are now in Honiara trying to get the American consul to arrange for their yacht to be released. It would seem to us that the Nationals don't mind a small extension on a visa but 6 months is pushing your luck.

Whilst we were in Rabaul, a lovely square rigger, the GLORIA from Columbia came in and anchored. We took ALLIANCE over to the anchorage to take some photos, the Cadets were all on deck doing jobs and yelling out "Hi, Senor - you speak Spanish". We made them understand that we were not bilingual and could they understand English. It's surprising what a wave and a smile can do. The next day we went ashore for the Queen's Birthday celebrations which is quite a big day in

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Rabaul. The Town Band was out and we all followed the band up the street to the RSL Hall and stayed for a lovely service at the War Memorial. Some of the Officers and Cadets from GLORIA marched also. The next thing, 2 young Cadets came over and said that they recognised us from the big yacht. The outcome was that Luis and Giovanni came back to ALLIANCE for drinks and they then took us for a tour of GLORIA.

GLORIA is a brigantine-barque, 64.60m long with a beam of 10.60m. Her first cruise was in 1967 and she has sailed over 300000 miles and visited more than 50 nations. We met Captain Jose Carvajal and he in turn invited us to his cocktail party before GLORIA left Rabaul for Sydney. We were given lots of gifts not only from the Captain but also from Luis and Giovanni. In fact everytime our mail arrives there is a letter from Luis. We have exchanged addresses and who knows one of these days we may get to visit Colombia - no, not by yacht!!!

After Rabaul we sailed to New Ireland and anchored in English and Irish Cove. The nearest village was a few miles away so we had a very peaceful visit there. The villagers had to paddle to English Cove to get fresh water and some of them stopped to say hello and sell us vegies.

We then did an overnight sail to Bougainville and went through Buka Passage. We managed to hit a reef there, thank goodness for steel, no damage to us but I suspect some damage to the reef. We then cruised down the east coast of Bougainville and stopped at some very nice anchorages. Some we missed; after all when the locals tell you that there are rascals in some of the bays, you would be stupid to ignore their advice. We finally arrived at Kieta but could not anchor in front of the yacht club as the water was 30m deep and there were no spare buoys. So we went around to Kobuan.

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On the way to Kobuan we called into Bishops Bay. We had noticed quite a few yachts and power boats in the bay and decided to check it out. We were pleased we did as we got to know a lot of the Ex-pats working for Bougainville Mine and the Power House. Here we met a lovely couple, Vicki and David Mitchell, who have a house at Underdale, but are doing a 2 year contract for the Power House. We discovered that David used to work with Gil Morcom at Osborne and Vicki's sister lives in a unit in the same block as ours. They loaned us a car so we were able to not only shop at Kieta but also at Arawa, 12 miles away. Arawa is a large town built by Bougainville Copper, so we were able to stock up at the Supermarket.

Whilst we were anchored at Kobuan, we had become friendly with John and Tabiang Ovia and their lovely family. John let us park the car in his yard each night so that the rascals could not steal it. Also Osi, their eldest son used to "babysit" ALLIANCE whenever we went to Vicki and David's for an evening meal. We used to leave Osi a bottle of coke, some biscuits and a sailing magazine, and he used to bring his fishing gear out and sit on the back deck. Ovia's also had a lovely daughter, Taita. We took Osi and Taita with us to Kieta when we went to fill up with diesel. They thought it was great; Osi helmed the yacht and Taita spent most of her time in the galley doing the dishes.

We cleared Customs at Kieta and entered the Solomon Islands at Korovou in the Shortland Group. We spent 2 days at Korovou and then moved to the Treasury Islands and more particularly, Falamai. The Falamai villagers are devoted Uniting Church followers, their church being the pin around which all activity revolves. There is a service every night at 7 pm except Thursday. Such is the magnificence of the congregation's voices that attending a church service could prove a highlight of

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a Solomon Islands trip. Whilst there, we met Andrew who claims to be 83 years old. He was a Scout for the NZ Army in World War II, and he can tell some interesting tales. We also met John who is in his late seventies and his wife, Myra. John was delighted to meet some one else named Myra and word quickly sped through the village, and when I went ashore people would call out to me and then giggle.

Just across the Bay from Falamai is Stirling Island and here Howard found the remains of American fighter bombers. The airstrip was built by the Americans and New Zealanders. During the Japanese occupation of the Treasury Islands, the church was used as a magazine. This was eventually hit and destroyed. After the war, the Allies rebuilt the church as a gesture of appreciation for the assistance given by the Falamai villagers. My donation was to go up to the church armed with a tin of Brasso and clean the church brass.

After Falamai, we did an overnight sail to Gizo where we found another yacht from Adelaide, JAYWALKER. We spent 8 lovely days in the company of her owners Lyn and Barb, and enjoyed the 10th Birthday Celebrations for the Independence of the Solomon Islands. Howard and Lyn took time out to do a Scuba course, while Barb and I just relaxed and attended the various activities put on for the celebrations. Howard was enthralled with all the WWII wrecks. They are still apparently in very good condition and fairly intact. One of the wrecks, TAO MARU a 450' merchantman still had crockery, cutlery and saki bottles on board. The saki bottles, much to Howard's dismay, were empty. On the deck was a tank with a shell still in the breech. The TAO MARU must have sank just as the tank was about to let fly. Howard would like me to learn diving, but the only way I like water is coming out of the shower or with a drop of brandy.

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From Gizo we sailed to Bairoko Harbour on New Georgia Island. In the North East corner of Bairoko is the wreck of a Japanese freighter which was hit by American bombs. She sits on the bottom close to the shore with her fore and aft masts projecting out of the water. These masts make good fore and aft pile-berths. We had a quick look around Bairoko and went on to Enoghae Inlet. On the southern headland are 4 giant guns. These were established by the Japanese and on viewing them one can only marvel that the Americans ever got around them. While we were walking around them we spotted lots of spent cartridges and stacks of coke bottles. We then sailed through the Diamond Narrows - aptly named and were pleased not to meet another yacht coming the other way.

We arrived at Munda not without a lot of hassle looking for beacons. We both loved Munda and visited the local hospital where I made a beeline for the maternity section and got to nurse a lot of new babies. At Munda there is a very interesting airfield. Desperately needing a base close to Guadalcanal with a view to taking Henderson Field on Guadalcanal, the Japanese dug their heels in at Munda and the surrounding area. Being so close to the enemy and their objective it was imperative that an airfield be built without the Americans becoming suspicious. This was achieved by interconnecting the tops of every tree in a plantation on Munda Point. The trunks were then cut away from the large percentage of the trees leaving a few to act as supports for the suspended fronds. By working quickly, they soon had an immense area cleared under a roof of palm tops making the job of clearing the "roof supports" a rapid uncovering of an enormous airstrip. The strip is so long that one end cannot be seen from the other end. We walked to Lambete at the other end of the strip, so I can guarantee its length.

When we got to Viru, we found 4 people from Smithton

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in Tasmania who are working for a logging company. We cruised Smithton in 1987 and while we didn't meet these people, we discovered a lot of mutual friends. During our stay at Viru we were approached by Aly, a Grade VI teacher and asked to give a talk on Australia to his class. We really enjoyed this experience and probably spent the best part of a morning with them.

Another lovely place was Nono Lagoon. We dropped anchor in front of Seghi Village. Seghi was a famous Coast Watcher's Station and was a main base for the radio network worked around the Islands. We met Benjamin and his friend Elliot at Seghi and Ben invited us to use his house on the Island of Matakuri. We went ashore and had a shower and fed Ben's cat on Australian roast lamb. Ben lived at Seghi as he was a Special Constable. Ben has told us that if we ever want to fly to "Ben's Island" we are welcome to live in his house. This is the sort of hospitality we found all through the Solomons.

After Nono, we called into Ugholo on Rendover Island. Rendover Harbour has a place in history as being the PT base where John F Kennedy commanded PT 109 and lost her after being run down by a Japanese destroyer in the Blakett Straits. After PT 109 sunk, the men made their way ashore clutching debris. They landed on an island near Gizo and after many days collecting food, avoiding the enemy and literally swimming from island to island, they made it back to base by native canoe.

During our stay at Ugholo I was invited to a wedding. I was considered almost as important as the bride and groom as I had a camera. While I was at the wedding, Howard had gone with Kelly and 4 pregnant ladies over to Munda Hospital for pre-natal visits. (Have just read this and realised it's the ladies for the classes, not Howard!!!) He went to see if we could clear Customs at Munda instead of going back to Gizo. Kelly has a large dugout canoe with an outboard motor, so Howard

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went in style. Before leaving Ugholo we brought ALLIANCE alongside a small wharf at the village. There we brought the TV set and video machine out on the side deck and had a film evening. We had about 60-70 people and showed "Jewel of the Nile". This went down very well and all in all we felt rather sad that our trip was coming to an end.

After clearing Customs at Munda where I had to type the forms up for the Officer as they were all out of them, we took off for Misima. There we were allowed to re-enter PNG for 72 hours until the weather cleared. Unfortunately it had rained for about 10 days so Misima was a quagmire. When the weather cleared we sailed to Bagaman Island in the Louiseades and we waited for the right weather conditions.

We arrived back in Cairns on 20th August 88 and after clearing Customs, hired a car and headed for the nearest Pizza Hut. All the time we had been away we had talked about a pizza but more particularly, a lovely crisp salad. The waitress must have thought we were little pigs the way we loaded up our plates with lettuce and tomatoes.

We thoroughly enjoyed our cruising of PNG and the Solomons and if any one would like more information about the area, we will be only too pleased to help. After a short visit to Adelaide late in October, we will then fly back to Gladstone and start sailing ALLIANCE home to Adelaide. We have decided that a little shore leave is in order. We have been living on board for 4 years and would now like to have a break and catch up with family grandchildren and friends.

Look forward to seeing you all.

MYRA WRIGHT

AROUND THE WORLD IN EXPEDITUS CONTINUED

The options on departing the east coast of the USA are to leave in early summer and take a northern route across the Atlantic, or to leave in late autumn/early winter and head for the Caribbean. Since one generally leaves the Caribbean in spring time/early summer to avoid the hurricane season, it then means a stay in the States is destined to be either 6, 12, 18 months etc. We elected to spend a full year in the States, and spent our time travelling 25000 miles all the way around the country in a VW campervan. It was a great time and we found it immensely stimulating and rewarding. Our sailing was now giving us other things to do rather than being an end in itself, and after all it would have been a pity to just visit a few ports on the east coast and not see anything of the interior.

We visited many of the famous parks and attractions and had difficulty in deciding what was best. So many things had appeal - the awe inspiring redwoods, spectacular tetons, the deep red canyons and cliff dwellings at Canyon de Chelly, colourful Navajo indians, and so much else. Visiting friends we had made while in Arabia and making new and sincere friends also made our travels rewarding.

Finally we returned to Annapolis and did some work on EXPEDITUS in preparation for her trip back to Australia. There was antifouling, topsides repainting, fluoro replacement, a proper mount for the satnav antenna, self tailers for winches, and the numerous other little jobs you can always find to do. We left White Rocks Marina (they gave us 3 weeks free at the marina berth after relaunching) and proceeded South down the Chesapeake Bay with day trips of 25 to 40 miles. Each night we stopped at anchor in some delightful spot, using this period to get our sea legs, get shipshape, and psyched up for the Atlantic crossing to the Azores. The first hurricane of the season had already come North from the Caribbean, and we wanted to get out and away before the