

C21GC DX PEDITION 2014

By Stanislav Vatev, LZ1GC

C21GC - Nauru island DXpedition by Stan, LZ1GC took place from 28 September 2014 until 14 October 2014. It was finally realized after more than 10 months of preparation and with the incredible logistics support of my friends who have been living in Australia for many years – xyl Olga, LZ1QG, xyl Bozhana Gerova and their families. This DX pedition turned out possible due to the decisive information help rendered by Pista, HA5AO and Peter Ford, VK3TAN.

C21GC expedition also turned out possible and thanks to the whole-heartedly support of Emil, DL8JJ, xyl Virjy, DL9JJ and Aves Kang, DS2AGH.

These friends devoted a lot of their spare time and provided me comfortable shelter during my stays on the way to Nauru and back. They did their best to make me feel good in order to quickly recover from the long and heavy trip. That was really important to me. Thank you, my friends!



The trip to Nauru isl. and back was indeed long and heavy. I traveled around 30 000 km both ways on an airplane. The trip was realized on the following route: Sofia/Bulgaria/ - Frankfurt/Germany/ Frankfurt/Germany/ - Seoul/South Korea/ Seoul/South Korea/ - Brisbane/Australia/ Brisbane/Australia/ - NAURU Island.

On my way back from Nauru Isl. my route was the same with 1 day stay at Seoul, South Korea and 2 days stay at Frankfurt/Germany/.

In order to implement C21GC DXpedition I took off from Bulgaria to Nauru island on 24 September 2014. This DXpedition was possible and I hope successful due to the powerful support of my INDIVIDUAL, CLUBS AND CORPORATIVE SPONSORS. They were so many that it is impossible to name them all without missing anyone but people interested in all sponsors who supported me before the expedition can find them on WWW.C21GC.COM under SPONSORS tab.

Thank you to all INDIVIDUAL SPONSORS who supported me after the expedition.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart, guys. It is indeed delightful that I was also sponsored by non-radio enthusiasts, such as SYLPA LTD and KONTRAX LTD – Bulgaria.

On 28 September 2014 at 7:40am local time, after an extended and heavy traveling with Boeing 737 airplane I arrived at Nauru's airport. I was alone with 70kg of luggage – 1 pack with 2 pcs. Spider Fiberglass Poles, a box with Linear Amplifier Acom- 1011, 1 bag with wires and supporting cables for EXP.GP antenna from 40-10m and GP for 160/80 meters.

The laptop bag which was on my shoulder was 13kg. In it there were: 15,6" Laptop"LENOVO", transceiver TS-480SAT + power supply, as well as other accessories for the radio station – cables and an RTTY modem.

With my arrival at the airport my passport was taken with the explanation that it was a normal procedure for arriving foreigners. The same was returned three days later. I received it from the local immigration authorities along with a Visa card for 1 month sojourn on the island.

Honestly, I was not worried that my passport was taken upon my arrival. I was familiar with the fact it was a standard procedure and all my attention was focused towards reaching hotel MENEN where I had a reservation.

I was mostly thinking of how to raise the antenna as fast as possible and begin working with the radio station. It turned out that there are no taxis on the island. According to the information I had the hotel was around 4-5km away from the airport. It was impossible to reach it with 70kg of luggage!

I asked one of the airport employees how to find someone with a vehicle to drive me to the hotel. Instead of explaining me and after he'd seen my luggage he responded "Wait, I'm going to call my colleague and drive you to the hotel with my car /jeep/. It is a long way!"



This is the place where I should emphasize that locals are very polite, helpful and friendly people. They are very sociable and conscientious. They are not very fond of working and like to enjoy themselves!

With the help of the forementioned employee I successfully reached and accommodated in MENEN hotel – room 109 which was reserved for me.



MENEN Hotel

As soon as I entered the room I unpacked my luggage and installed the equipment on a suitable table. The Radio Shack was ready and I started preparing the multi band GP antenna for ranges 40-10 meters. I deployed the 12 meter Spider fiberglass pole right at the beach situated around 15-20 meters away from my room.

I prepared the braces and antenna wiring. It was ready to be raised! I hurried as quickly as I could but things weren't happening as fast as I wished!

I asked one of the locals, who was laying in the shade nearby to come and help me with raising the mast. To him my activities seemed interesting and he accepted to help me. His task was to step on the mast's base so I can raise it vertically.

IT WORKED!

We quickly raised the mast and I began to fix it with braces. The heat was sweltering. Perhaps that caused the rapid diminishing of my helper's enthusiasm. After he repeatedly stated that it was too hot he headed back to his shade.



C21GC Antenna view

He did help me enough though! We had managed to raise the mast and fix it with three braces. I continued assembling the rest of the antenna parts. After 3-4 hours of continuous work antenna installation was finalized with tracing and connecting of coaxial cable. It was really hot and humid outside but I didn't pay attention

to that fact. I immediately tested the antenna and concluded with gratification that it worked well on all bands it was intended for.

I began broadcasting on 7 Mhz at 06:57 GMT on 28 September 2014.

C21GC was on the air!

My first contact was with G3XHZ. It was a huge Pile Up!

For the first couple of hours I remained on different bands for 30-40 minutes with the purpose of testing the antenna and the propagation. During the first 2-3 hours I activated C21GC from 40-10 meters on CW and SSB. With almost no sleep and small breaks I aimed to be on all radio-enthusiast bands NON STOP from 06:57 GMT on 28 September to 16:05 GMT on 14 October 2014.

During the first 3 days I broadcasted on 40-10 meter bands for CW and SSB. On the fourth day I solely raised the antenna for 160/80 meters. Its building and adjustment took me around 4 hours. Continuous work once more without any breaks under sweltering heat. Temperature was 40° C in the shade. While I was building the 18 meters mast there was nobody outside. Even the dogs had taken cover in the shade. But what will not a radio enthusiast do in the name of his hobby?!



C21GC shack view

I successfully adjusted the antenna to 160/80m – with SWR 1,0 on 3502 Khz and SWR 1,1 on 1822,5 Khz. I was pleased with myself! It felt great. At that moment I felt neither heat nor hunger. I did not feel the need to sleep despite the fact that for the past 3-4 days I had had no more than 6-7 hours of sleep!

Please, understand me correctly – it is irresponsible, an actual crime to go to an expedition to Nauru and sleep! There were times when my eyes would involuntarily close due to the need to sleep but I kept on working on different bands. My wrestle with sleep was not easy. I took frequent cold showers as well as drank coffee and tea to help me stay awake.

Alas, there were moments when insomnia prevailed. For example, one of these moments was when I was about to respond to someone who was calling me and in the next minute I had difficulties inputting his callsign in the computer. I allowed myself 2-3 hours of sleep!

Another troublesome moment during my C21GC activity was a pack of 4-5 dogs. These dogs chewed the radials on 160/80 antenna every other night, leaving torn pieces of it.

I had to repair the radials at 2-3 am local time by splicing and straining under the attacks and barking of that pack of dogs.

First night was the toughest, the first battle with them. While working on 160m I noticed that antenna's SWR became larger. I quickly ran outside to check the antenna and was surprised by the dog pack.

I was naked from my waist up, with shorts and bare handed! Dogs tried to surround me, kept on barking and attacking! They were on around 1,5 – 2 meters away from me. I managed to instill respect by kicking their leader in the head! It worked! It was a good hit in the right place! Luckily I managed to grab a nearby plastic tube around 2m long. I instilled respect by swinging the tube and it all ended well. I repaired the 2 damaged radials within 10-15 minutes. The dogs kept on barking and growling but I was "armed" and they did not approach closer than some 10 meters.

It was easier during the following nights because I carried the same tube with me and the pack kept their distance.

Truth be told, in the times when I had to repair the radials, not dogs but even a lion couldn't keep me away from repairing my antenna!



Island view

From 28 September until 14 October 2014 C21GC conducted 23 500 QSOs from 160 - 10 meters, on CW, SSB and RTTY. I disassembled the 160/80 antenna four hours before checking out and 7 hours before my return flight. Again alone, under extreme conditions. This time, however it was early in the morning local time. Before leaving the hotel I prepared and packed my luggage.

On 15 October 2014 at 14:35 Nauru time I left Nauru island with Boeing 737 of Nauru airlines, after 16 days of almost continuous activity on radio amateur bands, CW/SSB and RTTY.

I left both Spider fiberglass poles, 100 meters of Coaxial cable and around 300 meters of ropes to the only local radio amateur - Darkey, C21DJ. Same has

not been a QRV for the past 10 years since a lightning damaged his FT - 757 GX and TL - 922.

Writing those final lines I'm thinking it would be nice if we could organize and help him with equipment so there is at least one active radio-enthusiast on Nauru! Since we only visit for a certain time and leave afterwards!

I will never forget the moment I was received a C21GC LICENCE and the long and friendly conversation I had with Mr. Criden Appi, Director telecommunications and Regulator of Nauru,



I will never forget the friendliness of local residents I had contact with during my sojourn but most of all I will always remember the unforgettable hours and days I spent broadcasting as C21GC. I will remember for a long time the wonderful QSOs with Jan - DO2AT on 15 meters, Neil - G0JHC on 80 meters, SM3EVR on 80 and 160m. All QSOs with my good friends JG1UKW, F5UKW, OM3PC, LB2TB, LA7DFA, OE4VIE, DJ9ZB, DJ8NK, W3YX, K6MKF and many, many others will also remain unforgettable.

As an ending to this article I would like to say that C21GC DX PEDITON 2014 is history but I hope it left a lot of lasting good memories in you!

Once again, I thank everyone who supported me and were empathetic so I can accomplish this, hopefully successful, DXpedition!

73! Stan, LZ1GC / C21GC



QSL of C21GC

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