

## OC-273 GORAM ISLAND DXPEDITION YF1AR/8 YB0AI/8 JANUARY 25-31 2014.

After our DXpeditions to Sebatik OC-295, Kimaam OC-275, and Kisar OC-272 received warm reception, I started making plan for the next new IOTA activation. I came across Gorom Island aka Goran, but there was scarcity of information on the island because of its isolated geography. After an extensive online research, we were able to locate a contact person who lives on the island. He visited YF1AR at the end of December 2013.

Based on preliminary information, YF1AR corresponded with Roger G3KMA in early January 2014, regarding his plan to activate OC-273. Budi YF1AR also asked Steve, W2FB to be the chief fundraiser for this activity. Budi contacted and invited Taufan YB0AI, and Lucky YD9RQX to join this effort. The dates were set January 25-31, with the possibility of an extension till 2. February if possible. Budi YF1AR secured his boat ticket from Ambon to Geser Island.

On the eve of January 24<sup>th</sup>, YF1AR and YB0AI left Jakarta International Airport and arrived in Ambon on Saturday January 25 at 6 am local time after a brief stopover in Makasar. YD9RQX was not able to join due to his prior commitment. The team rested and had breakfast at the airport while waiting to board the ship at Jos Sudarso Port for Pulau Geser. The boat was scheduled to leave at 12 noon from Ambon and arrive Geser at 8 am the next day. During the 18 hour sea trip both Budi and Taufan experienced severe seasickness due to the rough seas with high waves on Banda Sea. After arrival in Geser, they secured a chartered speedboat to take them to Goram. It took two hours and it was a pleasant trip, with calm sea and beautiful scenery.



Upon arrival in Goram Island, the team met Mr. Saf-rudin, the local contact person. After introduction and getting to know each, the team went to work to scout for location. They decided on the northern part of the island, right on the beach immediately between Namalean and Sikaru. With the help of the locals, the team was provided with the necessary logistics (tents, generator, and food). Without wasting time, the team assembled HB9CV antenna for 10-20M and 43ft vertical for 40m band. YB0AI assembled 2 elements Yagi for 12-17M and GP vertical. The team used FT450D and Ft950 rigs.



The first station in the log was YC2BYC Agus at 0925 UTC on 20M band. It was truly an honor for the team when Roger G3KMA made it in the log at 1349 UTC on 20m with YF1AR/8 and later on 15 M with YB0AI/8. Many of the curious local residents visited the team who conducted radio activities right there in the open air tent. We even slept under the stars which is something very unusual for the locals. We explained to them that we needed to be right at the beach to facilitate our transmitted signals; they understood. We succumbed to physical exhaustion and went QRT at 2 am local time and rested. Electricity was available only between 1800-0600 local time, so we utilized a generator between 06-1000 and 14-1800 local time. During the afternoon hours we took naps.

On the eve of the January 27, the weather turned very ugly, overcast all day and in the evening a torrential downpour and strong wind ruined our tent and our HB9CV antenna collapsed. We went QRT around 0100

local time. The next morning, we fired off on 15M working JA and NA. In the afternoon we built a larger and sturdier tent to withstand the wind and rain. We relied mostly on the 43ft vertical antenna. YB0AI still had his Yagi and vertical for 40-10M including WARC bands. It was another overcast day and we did not make too many QSO on January 28<sup>th</sup>. We stayed up all night and into the wee hours and had a great opening on 40M with big pileups.



On January 29<sup>th</sup>, we visited Port Ondor to check the boat schedule for our return trip which was dependent on the weather. We had no choice but to take the wooden vessel scheduled to leave that Friday morning January 31<sup>st</sup> to take us back to Ambon. Our initial plan to stay and operate until February 2<sup>nd</sup> was dashed due to lack of transportation. On January 30<sup>th</sup> we withstood the bad weather and strong wind and ended our operation at 1556 UTC with a QSO on 40m OM3DX. We packed up our radio and antennas in the darkness of the night and were ready by 0500 local time.



We left for Port Ondor at 0600 local time using motorcycles. No cars on the island. The wooden vessel was scheduled to depart at 0800 for Bula in Seram Island via Geser Island during the day.



At 1900 we arrived in Seram. We had dinner and hired a car to take us back to Ambon. We arrived at 0800 in Ambon and by 1000 we boarded our plane back to Jakarta. The plane landed at 1400 local time safely.

In total we made 2500 QSOs from 5 continents. Compared to my prior IOTAs, this one is the most grueling and challenging, almost 2 full days to make it there and 2 days to return. For 4 days during our stay in Goram, we experienced overcast weather during the day and bad storms at night right at the beach where we had our tents and operating site. It was all worth it though. Thank you for your call and donation.



See you in the next pileup. Budi Santos o, YF1AR

Edited for GDXF by DJ9HX, Prof. Dr. Uwe Jaeger