

FIJI & ROTUMA ISLAND DX PEDICTION 2013

by LZ1GC, LZ2HM & 3D2DD

I want to apologize in advance if you detect any laxities or mistakes in the text below.

Fiji and Rotuma island 2013 DX Pediton by Stan LZ1GC /3D2GC/, Andy LZ2HM /3D2RA/ and Rocky /3D2DD/ is already a history!

The idea for this DX Pediton occurred me during the 3D2R DX Pediton in 2011 I remember that a few hours before the 3D2R DX Pediton final I was the operator transmitting at 12 meters band on CW. The pile up from European stations was huge. A lot of radio-amateurs obviously needed Rotuma on 24,9 Mhz.Hrane, YT1AD and me then were the last/ones/ who went on board of the yacht, which left with the 3D2R team back to Fiji. I remember that the captain at the yacht had told us should sail away at 12:00 GMT that day and we striving to transmit till the last moment. Hrane, YT1AD and me jumped on the board of the yacht seconds before the departure, when the crew began to untill the last of the ropes which hold the yacht!

Then I told to myself "I should visit Rotuma Isl. again one day, and I should activate this island to the radio-amateur bands". Despite the activation at Rotuma Island again in December 2011 and January 2012 by Antoine 3D2AG / 3D2AG/P / and by the Americans N7OU and W7YAQ in February 2013, my idea of activating the island didn't fail! The preparation for this expedition began already in November/December 2012! The team at first was expected to consist of 3D2GC and 3D2DD but subsequently in order to activate Rotuma on 6 m via EME and to other digital modes Andy LZ2HM (3D2RA) was also involved. The task for 3D2DD was the transportation of the expedition equipments as well as assuring a suitable accommodation and place for transmitting from Rotuma Island.

My idea was to stay at the local high school and to make transmitting from there. However at Rocky's insistence and decision this idea was not implemented and we were informed and assured by him that he had found more suitable place for our expedition! For the equipments transportation and purchase tickets Fiji-Rotuma and other things necessary for the expedition to Rotuma. I personally sent by Western Union and later gave by hand nearly \$ 5000 to Rocky, 3D2DD. This money came from our private funds as well as all the aid of individual and club sponsors! With some part of these resources Rocky 3D2DD had to buy ropes, wires and fuel needed for the expedition. Stan LZ1GC / 3D2GC / and Andy LZ2HM / 3D2RA / had the task of securing the equipment for the expedition, as well as its prior promotion. It was created a website for the purpose and was sent e-mails to popular clubs and organizations for financial support. I want to thank once again all of our sponsors who responded and helped us for the expedition. I

want to thank to all those who were willing to help us but were unable to do so. I want to thank these organizations that we asked for help but did not even condescend to inform us even for their refusal or inability to help us and thus we realized we cannot rely on them. This is where we re-emphasize our great thanks to all the individual sponsors and especially to brother_Oms, PP5EG and to all DX Clubs and organizations: GDXF, SEDXC, CDXC, DANISH DX GROUP, NIPPON DX ASSOCIATION, DX WIRE, 50 MHZ UKSMG, ARAUCARIA DX GROUP, ACOM LTD, SYLPA LTD and GOLD PRINT SERVICE for their daring logistical, technical, equipment and financial support. That DX Pediton would not be successful without this support, really! Thanks!

So after ten months of preparation on 18.09.2013 Fiji and Rotuma 2013 DX Pediton started with Stan's LZ1GC (3D2GC) departure to Fiji on the route: Sofia / LZ / - Frankfurt / Germany / - Seoul/ South Korea / - Nadi / Fiji Republic /.

On 19.09.2013 in 20:35 GMT after a long and difficult travel Stan LZ1GC / 3D2GC / was already at Airport Nadi. The same day I was accommodated at "Club Fiji Resort" hotel, room 26. This hotel is with an excellent location at the Ocean's shore, 4 km away from airport Nadi. Next day, after several hours of hard labour, Rocky 3D2DD and I managed to put up exp GP Antenna from 40- 10 meter bands. It wasn't easy at all because we used plastic water- pipes with different diameters for 10 meters mast of the antenna! The same day 3D2GC was on the air. I tried to work on different radio amateur bands as longer as I could. I slept no more than 4 hors a day and I had meals once daily – in the morning. Thus, from 20 Sept. 2013 3D2GC made 9700 QSOS from 40- 10 meters, mostly on CW.

The antenna was taken apart on 26 Sept. 2013 and I left the hotel. The second part of the expedition lied ahead the next day – our traveling to Rotuma and its activation on radio amateur bands. Rocky 3D2DD and I, 3D2GC met Andy LZ2HM/ 3D2RA / at Airport Nadi on 26 Sept. 2013, who traveled on the route Bulgaria- Netherlands – China – New Zealand – Nadi, Fiji Republic. We gathered in Rocky's 3D2DD home in the evening and after a brief dinner and conversation we prepared the luggage we should transport to Rotuma isl. We were up after five hours sleep and we went early to the airport in Nadi. We looked forward the acceptance of our luggage and our take-off to Rotuma. We boarded the 12 - seated plane which flied away for Rotuma at 7:00 local time. The weather was fine and we enjoyed the beautiful view from above during the flight. There were the Ocean and maguiticent islands under us. Our plane landed at the airport on Rotuma Island at 10:00 local time. We

were eager, we burned with desire to be in the air as soon as possible. On Rotuma we stayed at a big house at the Ocean-shore, a possession of a local resident who had worked as a chief manager in Fiji Bank. A huge palace at the time but neglected after his death, the house hadn't been well-kept maintained for many years – with a big yard, unfortunately overgrown with palm trees but it was still comfortable for radio activity. However, since our arrival we found out there were not enough coaxial cable, wires and ropes for the antennas. The fuel was only 200 liters, enough only for a week. We were unpleasantly surprised by Rocky, 3D2DD. Before the expedition he assured us that he had transported fuel enough for two weeks, he affirmed us these was plenty of wires and ropes. But the reality was different! Fortunately I carried with me from Bulgaria about 60 meters coaxial cable and a wire EXP. GP antenna with ropes. Initially I had been planned to use this antenna for my activity from Fiji, but heading from Fiji to Rotuma something made me get it with me! I had a bad feeling – that's why I took this antenna and it proved right! Although our initial disappointment at the lack of many things that we were assured they were there began putting up the EXP.GP antenna, needed for 40-10 meters bands immediately after our arrival. At dusk the call-sign 3D2RA already sounded on the air.

On 28 September 2013 local time, early in the morning Rocky 3D2DD and our landlord Phillip began to assemble the 6 el. yagi antenna for 50 mhz, especially given by W7GJ for the expedition. At the same time Stan, LZ1GC/ 3D2GC / began the assemblage of 160/80 meters GP antenna. Both antennas were assembled and tested around lunch on the same day. A workplace with ACOM 1000 on 50 Mhz was established. Both 3D2RA and 3D2GC/P were on the air streaming from Rotuma Island. Unfortunately, due to operator (ours) mistake an hour after the initiation of ACOM-1000 on 50 Mhz it malfunctioned. That complicated our work. 3D2RA kept on streaming at 50 Mhz with 100 watts but with no particular success. Having only one amplifier left – ACOM 1011 - we had to stream from only one workplace. We were taking turns on every 8-10 hours. That way both 3D2RA and 3D2GC/P were available on different bands.

Rocky, 3D2DD did not take any desire to work on station from Rotuma and did not establish any contacts / QSOs /.

Rotuma activity was maintained from 27.09.2013 until 2.10.2013 instead of how it was planned – until 10th October. The main reason for the short active period on Rotuma (only 6 days) was lack of fuel for the generator and Rocky 3D2RA's reluctance to stay any longer. Either way, Andy - 3D2RA and Stan, 3D2GC/P had arranged with Rotuma's immigration authorities the sojourn to continue until 11.10.2013. During the period activity from Rotuma Island – 27.09.2013 till 2.10.2013 3D2RA established 4929 QSOs on SW/SSB/RTTY from 160÷6 meters. 3D2GC/P established 5299 QSOs only on CW from 160÷10 meters.

Our stay at Rotuma Island will be remembered with the personal attention shown by the chairman and council of Rotuma! He paid us a visit and invited us for a walk around the island which was a splendid experience.

During our stay at Rotuma Island we were visited by representatives from the local police and immigration authorities. There were no problems at all between us and them. The later were doing their jobs and also showed interest in our hobby – the radio! We demonstrated how to establish contacts on an amateur frequency and our fantastic hobby really intrigued them! This is where I should express my gratitude for the support shown by both the local chief of police and the immigration officer. Mr. Tevita, Thank you! On 3rd October 2013 3D2GC/P and 3D2RA disassembled the antennas and then visited the local high school where we received a very warm welcome. We utilized the day in repairing the local radio amateur's / 3D2R / yagi antenna. The repair activities continued until dark but we managed to complete them. After that we engaged in discussions with Denis – 3D2R operator, the local police chief and the high school's principal. I want to make a remark that we were very warmly welcomed by everyone at the high school and most of them felt sad that we're going to stay there for just one day. They couldn't make out why we hadn't stayed with them since the beginning! I was impressed by those hungry for knowledge eyes and I will never forget how the students had embraced their textbooks and notebooks as if they were afraid of losing them!

People on Rotuma are good in nature, friendly and always smiling. I made a conclusion that they were materially poor but at the same time really happy! They are happy, because their souls are clean. I am certain that despite the fact they are materially poor and live a hard life they are morally rich and a lot happier compared to the Europeans!

Our stay at Rotuma Island ended on 4.10.2013 at 10:30 local time. Our plane headed to Nadi, Fiji Republic. After a three-hour flight we landed at Nadi airport. Andy 3D2RA and Stan 3D2GC headed to "Club Fiji Resort". We checked again at room 26 there and commenced preparing the antennas for all HF bands.

We had to buy 200m wire for antenna support and another 100m coaxial cable from a local store in Nadi. It was a bliss that we could find those! Nightfall was nearing and we didn't manage to complete the antennas.

Early in the morning on 5.10.2013 we continued our work. We prepared the EXP. GP for bands 40÷10 meter bands, GP for 160/80 meters and 3EL DELTA LOOP on 28 Mhz. All of the antennas had SWR 1÷1,3 and worked well!

We were active between 5th and 14th October on all HF bands with initials 3D2GC and 3D2RA/P. We used one operator's place but from time to time 3D2RA/P became the second operator place with his K3 transceiver / 100W /.

During those ten days 3D2GC established about 11 000 QSOs on CW and SSB, while 3D2RA/P established 7 700 QSOs on CW/SSB/RTTY. The result from Fiji & Rotuma Island DX Expedition is:
1. Rotuma DX activity – between 27 September and 02 October 2013:

3D2GC/P – 5299 CW QSOs on all bands
3D2RA – 4927 CW/SSB/RTTY QSOs on all bands

Total: 10266 QSOs

2. Fiji DX activity:

3D2GC – 20 550 QSOs on CW / SSB
3D2RA/P – 7 700 QSOs on CW/ SSB/RTTY
Total: 28 250 QSOs

At lunch time on 12th October Andy 3D2RA/P concluded his work and headed to Hong Kong for a business meeting.

Stan 3D2GC continued his activity from Fiji Republic until 14th October. On 15th October he disassembled all antennas and on the following day headed back to Bulgaria riding the Korean Air.

On the same day / 16.10.2013 / I was already on Incheon airport in Seoul / South Korea /. I was warmly welcomed by Aves Kang, DS2AGH and Choi HL5FUA. I will not forget this pleasant meeting with my Korean friends. I thank them for that!

On 17th October 2013 at 13:30 I was already boarded on one of Korean air's planes, heading to Frankfurt, Germany.

At Frankfurt airport I was welcomed by Emil, DL8JJ and his wife Virji DO9JJ. We had a dinner at a local Chinese restaurant and then headed to their home. There we had a long conversation and after that a couple of hours of sleep. Thank you, Emo and Virji for your warm welcome and hospitality. I was exhausted. The long journey and time spent away from my homeland took their toll.

On 18th October at 21:45 local time and after a two hour flight from Germany I arrived in Bulgaria. I'm not the one to evaluate Fiji and Rotuma DX Expedition by LZ1GC, LZ2HM and 3D2DD, but based on feedback I can conclude the following:

This expedition was a good one for CW & SSB, satisfactory for RTTY and unsuccessful for 6m EME. I would like to thank all radio amateurs - all around the world for your kind feedback and ratings. We also had one bad comment from a German radio amateur. I am a tolerant person and I accept all reasonable criticism.

Whether this expedition was good or bad is up for you to comment my fellow radio amateurs. Have in mind that it was in its bigger part implemented by LZ1GC and LZ2HM. I don't want to undervalue Rocky's / 3D2DD / contribution, but have in mind that we provided the resources to support everything he did. Moreover, we were rather unpleasantly surprised by him! I will not comment on the "surprise" Rocky brought us. Just remember, when someone is constantly saying to you "no problem, everything's alright", that is the time when you should be on alert, that is the time when something is not alright!

To those of you who doubt our experience with Rocky and think we have "blackened" his name I would like to say:

I don't reckon anyone would travel 35 000 km just to go somewhere and blacken another person's name!

Why would someone do that at such distance when it can be done whilst sitting at home?!

In conclusion I would like to thank everyone who supported us, experienced our problems and success, and who were worried about us!

Thank you to all individual and club sponsors as well as different organizations who made this expedition possible!

73s and GOD BLESS YOU!

Stan, LZ1GC / 3D2GC & 3D2GC/P /