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DEAR

CQ MAGAZINE:

WH6BLQ

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I AM SUBMITTING THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION FOR YOU TO CONSIDER PUBLISHING IN CQ... POSSIBLY IN YOUR SECTION ON DX. I HAVE ENCLOSED TWO PHOTOS, TWO QSL CARDS USED FOR MY CONTACTS FROM "GOONEY BIRD ISLAND," AND A BROCHURE TELLING ABOUT THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, WHICH INCLUDES FRENCH FRIGATE SHOALS AND GOONEY BIRD ISLAND. AN SASE HAS ALSO BEEN ENCLOSED FOR RETURNING JUST THE PHOTOS AND QSL CARDS, WHEN YOU ARE DONE WITH THEM. THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION OF PRINTING THIS INFORMATION.

### "DX'ING WITH THE GOONEY BIRDS"

FROM MAY 16-20, 1988 GEORGE BALAZS, WH6BLQ, OPERATED ON BATTERY POWER FROM A TENT AT GOONEY BIRD ISLAND IN THE FRENCH FRIGATE SHOALS (PORTABLE KH6), 480 MILES NORTHWEST OF HONOLULU. GOONEY BIRD ISLAND, SHOWN ON MOST MODERN MAPS AS "EAST ISLAND," IS A SPARCELY VEGETATED 12 ACRE SAND BAR. IT IS HOME DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS FOR THOUSANDS OF NESTING SEA BIRDS, GREEN SEA TURTLES, AND THE RARE HAWAIIAN MONK SEAL (SEE QSL CARDS). THE ISLAND AND SURROUNDING REEFS ARE PART OF THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, ADMINISTERED BY THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE.



GEORGE WAS THERE ON A RESEARCH EXPEDITION AS PART OF HIS WORK AS A BIOLOGIST TO TAG TURTLES COMING ASHORE TO LAY THEIR EGGS. THE LAST PERMANENT HUMAN INHABITANTS ... COAST GUARDS MEN OPERATING A LORAN "A" STATION .. VACATED THE ISLAND IN 1952. WH6BLQ IS BELIEVED TO BE THE FIRST HAM IN OVER 35 YEARS TO OPERATE FROM THIS SITE. HIS FIRST CONTACT, WHICH WAS PLANNED FOR IN ADVANCE, WAS ON SSB 40 METERS WITH HARRY FINCH, W6PWF, IN MALIBU, CALIFORNIA. HARRY WAS STATIONED ON GOONEY BIRD ISLAND DURING WORLD WAR II AND HAS FOND MEMORIES OF THE YEAR HE SERVED AT THIS REMOTE LOCATION. IN 1976 HARRY RECEIVED SPECIAL PERMISSION TO MAKE A SHORT RETURN VISIT TO PLACE A BRONZE PLAQUE ON HIS FORMER ISLAND HOME. THIS WAS IN COMMEMORATION OF THE MEN WHO SERVED THERE IN LONESOME ISOLATION. UNFORTUNATELY, CIRCUMSTANCES DIDN'T ALLOW HIM TO TAKE HIS HAM GEAR ALONG.

GEORGE CREDITS AND THANKS HARRY FOR HIS ENCOURAGEMENT AND HELP OVER SEVERAL YEARS THAT EVENTUALLY LED HIM TO BECOME LICENSED AND UPGRADE TO ADVANCED CLASS.



HE HAD DREAMED OF BECOMING A HAM AS A TEENAGER, AND IT FINALLY WAS REALIZED AT AGE 43. HIS 9 YEAR OLD SON CHRIS (WH6BLP) PASSED HIS NOVICE TEST WITH DAD AT THE SAME EXAM.

DURING HIS TIME ON GOONEY BIRD ISLAND, GEORGE MADE 51 CONTACTS OPERATING WITH HIS IC-735 RUNNING AT 30 WATT TO A 4BTV, GROUND MOUNTED JUST 20 FEET FROM THE OCEAN. A WIRE FENCE WAS PUT UP AROUND THE CAMPSITE TO PREVENT 300 LB TURTLES FROM DIGGING INTO THE TENT, AND UPROOTING THE ANTENNA. CONTACTS INCLUDED ZL'S, CE'S, JA'S, G'S, VK'S, VE'S, STATESIDE, AL? AND EVEN AN LX. A SMALL GASOLINE GENERATOR TAKEN ALONG FAILED TO WORK, IN SPITE OF CAREFUL TESTING BEFORE-HAND. CONSEQUENTLY, THERE WAS ONLY A SINGLE FULLY CHARGED MARINE BATTERY FOR POWER. NEVERTHELESS, OVER 7 HOURS OF OPERATING TIME WERE OBTAINED, MUCH OF WHICH WAS TAKEN UP RAG-CHewing WITH HARRY AND GEORGE'S XYL LINDA, NH6PA, BACK HOME IN HONOLULU.