

# Six Days At Sea

The Adventurous Tales of Sailing Around  
the Island of Saint John

Steve Lohmueller



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Around The Island of Saint John



Compiled by Steve Lohmueller

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Declan McGrath  
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Brad Wilkens  
Petey Wilkens  
Nick Young  
Nathan Young





*“All of the days were so long, but the week was so short.”*

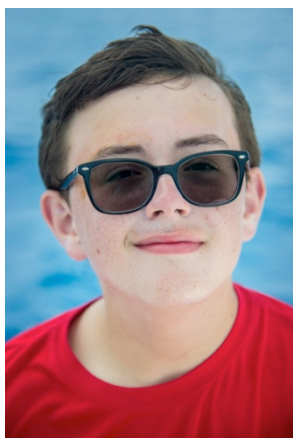
Jack O’Dea





### Crew Participants

The crew consisted of 7 scouts and 5 adults. Declan McGrath served as the Crew Leader, and Mr. McGrath was the Scoutmaster and lead organizer. We had 11 participants from the Troop, and since the trek allowed 12, Nate Booher invited a friend from Troop 674, located in Montgomery, OH, to join the crew. Thus, Jack O'Dea became the 12<sup>th</sup> crewmember.



Wesley Anglin



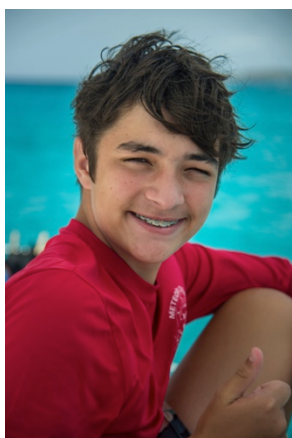
Nate Booher



Isaac Lohmueller



Declan McGrath



Jack O'Dea



Petey Wilkens



Nathan Young



Mr. Jess Anglin



Mr. Steve Lohmueller



Mr. Tim McGrath



Mr. Brad Wilkens



Mr. Nick Young

## **History of the Sea Base**

The Sea Base Adventure program began in 1974 as a local program in the Florida Keys. The program was created by Sam Wampler, a professional Scouter from the South Florida Council, and was called the Florida Gateway to High Adventure. The program offered sailing programs using local marinas and chartered boats to sail to the Bahamas and back. The program thrived in the early years and attracted the attention of the National Council. In the late 1970s, the program joined the National Council's high adventure program along with the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico and the Northern Tier High Adventure Base in Minnesota. In 1979 Sea Base acquired a permanent facility on Lower Maticumbe Key and the program was renamed the Florida National High Adventure Sea Base.

The popularity of the program continued to grow and in the early 1980s, scuba diving was added to the list of adventures available for the scouts. In 1984 the BSA received the gift of Big Munson Island from Homer Formsby. The island is over 100 acres in size and is one of the few islands in the Florida Keys that remains undeveloped. The island, surrounded by the crystal-clear water off Big Pine Key, remains as it was when pirates first rowed ashore in search of freshwater and food. The island shows up on old nautical charts as Newfound Harbor Key and on newer charts as Big Munson Key.

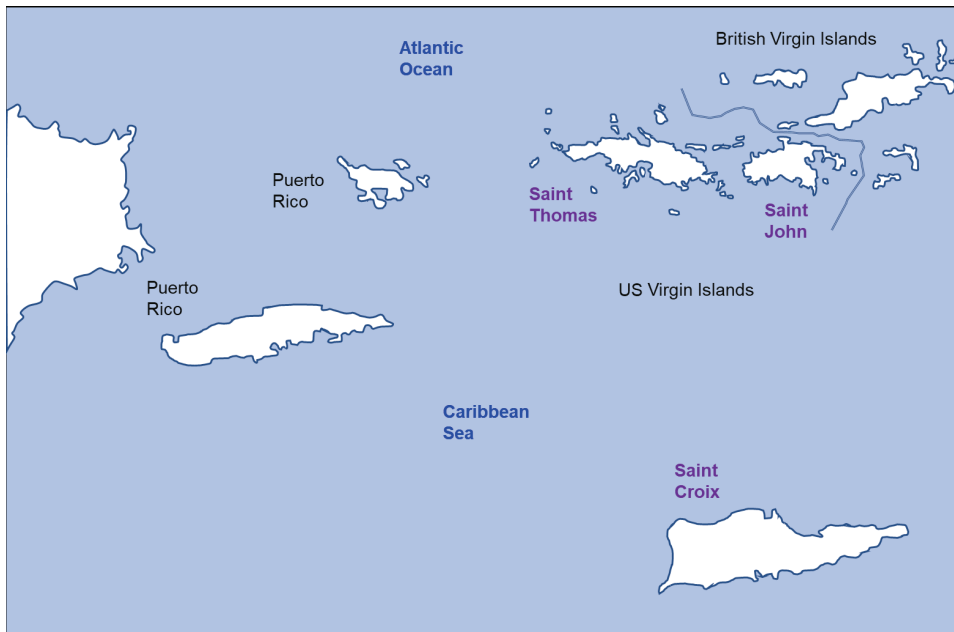
Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s Sea Base experienced tremendous growth in participation levels and continued to develop various programs and build infrastructure. Sea Base Saint Thomas began sailing operations in 2014 under the direction of General Manager Captain Paul Beal and Program Director Mike Lucivero.

Today, Sea Base operates 18 different adventures out of 7 locations:

- Florida Sea Base in Islamorada, FL
- Brinton Environmental Center, Summerland Key, FL
- Big Munson Island, Florida Keys
- Dry Tortugas National Park
- Bahamas Sea Base, Marsh Harbor, Bahamas
- St. Croix Sea Base
- St. Thomas Sea Base

## History of the US Virgin Islands

The US Virgin Islands are a group of islands in the Caribbean Sea that are an unincorporated territory of the United States. The territory consists of the main islands of Saint Croix, Saint Thomas, and Saint John, along with around 50 surrounding smaller islands. The main islands have nicknames often used by locals: "Twin City" (St. Croix), "Rock City" (St. Thomas), and "Love City" (St. John). The total land area is 134 square miles, which is only about twice the size of the city of Cincinnati, OH. The territory has a population of around 107,000 people, mostly of Afro-Caribbean descent. The residents of the islands are US citizens.



Historians believe that Christopher Columbus was the first European to see the islands during his second voyage to the New World in 1493. The name of the islands was coined by Columbus as "Santa Ursula y las Once Mil Virgenes" in honor of the legend of Saint Ursula and the 11,000 virgins.



According to legend, Ursula was a princess who, at the request of her father King Dionotus of Dumnonia in south-west Britain, set sail with 11,000 virgin handmaidens to join her future husband, the governor Conan Meriadoc of Armorica, which was located in current-day France. Before the wedding, Ursula and the handmaidens undertook a pilgrimage across Europe. Around 380 AD, Huns from Eastern Europe attacked her entourage near Cologne, Germany and all were beheaded in a massacre.

France, Spain, Britain, and Denmark disputed control of the islands for several centuries, until Denmark took control of the islands in 1754, naming the colony the Danish West Indian Islands.

The glory days of the Danish colony occurred from around 1750 to 1850, relying on the profits generated by the triangular trade routes. Firearms and other manufactured goods were exported from Denmark to Africa in exchange for slaves. The slaves were then transported to the Caribbean to work the sugar plantations, producing sugar, rum, and molasses, which were then exported back to Denmark. The Danish West Indies Company controlled these trade routes for Denmark. This company was established in 1670 by a group of investors for trade and received an official charter from King Christian V of Denmark. The charter granted special rights and privileges to the company from the Danish government. The charter gave the company the Danish trade monopoly between Denmark, Africa, North America, and the Caribbean.

The economic model of the triangular trade routes began to unravel in 1847, when Denmark ruled that slavery would be abolished in all Danish territory over a 12-year period, beginning with the newborn babies of enslaved women, and ending with a complete abolishment of all slavery by 1859. Many slaves, however, feared that they would not live long enough to experience freedom. This led several hundred slaves on the island of St Croix to revolt in July 1848. They gained control of the island and threatened to burn down the city of Frederiksted and the rest of the island if they were not granted their freedom. Peter von Scholten, the Governor-General for the Danish West Indies, saw no other option to prevent the insurrection than granting all slaves their freedom.

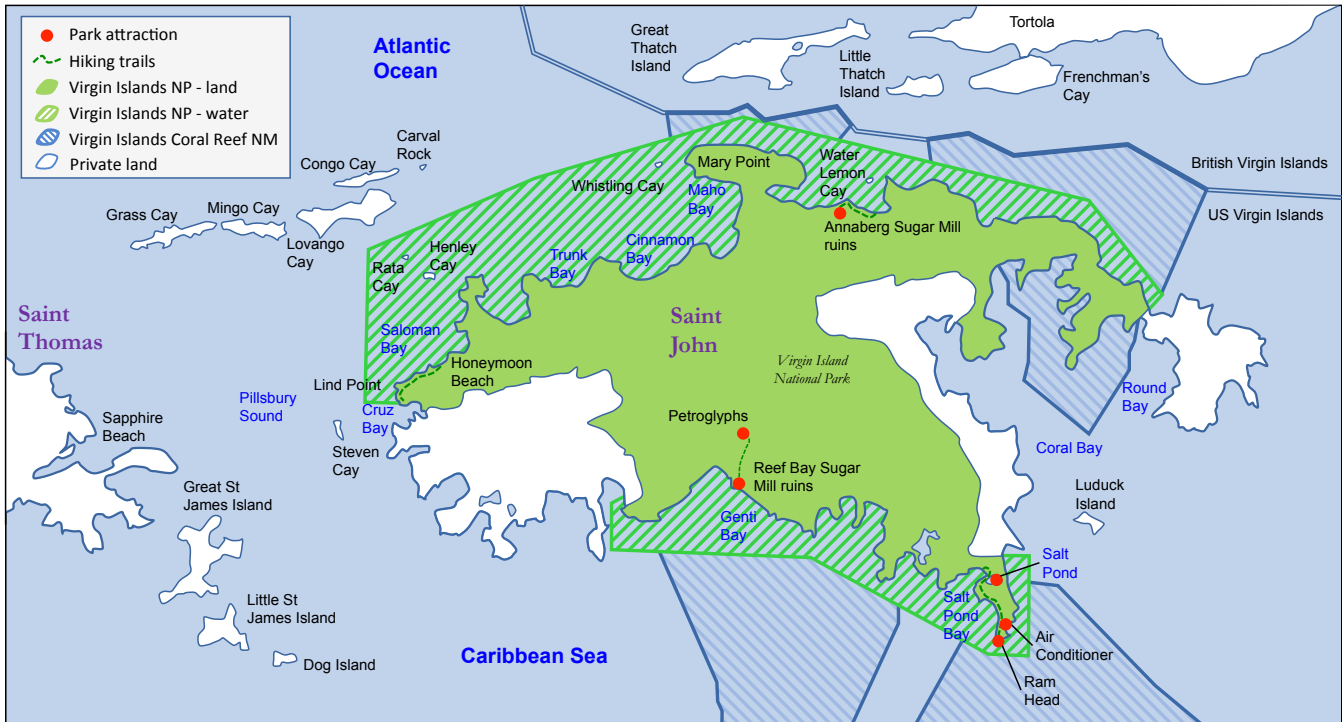
By around 1850, the production of cane sugar in the Caribbean was being challenged by the cultivation of sugar beets in other parts of the world. This overseas competition, combined with a loss of slave labor, made the islands increasingly unprofitable and expensive to govern from Denmark.

For many years, the United States had expressed an interest in purchasing the islands to support a possible Caribbean naval base. After lengthy negotiations, the Treaty of the Danish West Indies was signed in 1917 by both countries to formally transfer ownership of the islands to the United States in exchange for \$25,000,000 in gold.

In 2017, Category 5 Hurricane Irma caused catastrophic damage, particularly to Saint John and Saint Thomas. Two weeks later, Category 5 Hurricane Maria struck Saint Croix. It was estimated that 90% of the buildings in the Virgin Islands were damaged or destroyed.

## History of the Virgin Islands National Park

Most of the trip was spent in either the Virgin Islands National Park or the Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument. These are properties administered by the National Park Service to preserve the natural beauty of the area.



The Virgin Islands National Park preserves about 60% of the land area of Saint John, nearly all of Hassel Island just off the island of Saint Thomas in the Charlotte Amalie harbor, and more than 5,500 acres of adjacent ocean. The Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument preserves nearly 13,000 acres of ocean.

The National Park is well known for scuba diving and snorkeling in the surrounding coral reefs and has many miles of hiking trails throughout the tropical rainforest of the island. The beaches within the park are often ranked as among the best in the world.

The land now occupied by the park was donated to the National Park Service by the Jackson Hole Preserve, Incorporated. This organization is a non-profit conservation foundation whose primary mission is the protection of natural areas. Laurance Rockefeller, an American businessman, philanthropist, and conservationist, founded the organization in 1940 to promote his love for the wilderness. Laurence was the grandson of the famous John D. Rockefeller, the oil magnate who became the wealthiest American of all time. Like his father and grandfather before him, Laurance amassed tremendous wealth through business, focusing on venture capital. Venture capital is a type of private financing where investors provide money to startup companies and small businesses that are believed to have long-term growth potential, in return for partial ownership of the company. Two highly successful companies that he helped finance were Intel and Apple Computers.

In 1956 the Jackson Hole Preserve purchased around 5,000 acres of land on Saint John Island and donated them to the National Park Service under the condition that the lands had to be protected from future development.

Being included within the national park has protected a large majority of the island's waters, coral reefs, and shoreline. President Bill Clinton extended this protection in 2001 when he created the Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument. The national monument includes nearly 13,000 acres of submerged land. The waters in the national monument support a diverse and complex system of coral reefs, seagrass beds, and shoreline mangrove forests. In 2006 the conservation organization The Trust for Public Land purchased 415 acres of private land near Maho Bay with the intent of selling it to the National Park Service as federal funds become available, further expanding the size of the park.



**Background on the boat *Celebration***

The boat we would sail on is called the *Celebration*. The owner and captain of the boat is Captain Matt.

The boat was built by the Irwin Yacht Company in 1985 as the model type Irwin 52. The number designates the overall length the boat's hull at 52 feet. This model type, designed to target the Caribbean charter yacht market, was introduced in 1976 and was discontinued in 1985 after 250 boats were made, making the *Celebration* one of the last of its model type that were produced.

The basic design of the boat is that of a ketch class yacht. A ketch sailboat is a two-masted sailboat whose mainmast is taller than the mizzen mast in the rear of the boat.

Below deck the *Celebration* has two beds at the bow of the boat in a small room called the V-berth. Midship on the port side, there is a room with one bed and a head (bathroom). On the starboard side is another head. Sternward from those rooms is the saloon, which is the common area with a table and seats. Sternward from the saloon is another room with 2 beds, the stairs up to the top deck, and the galley (kitchen). In the stern of the boat is the captain's quarters.



V-berth



Bedroom midship



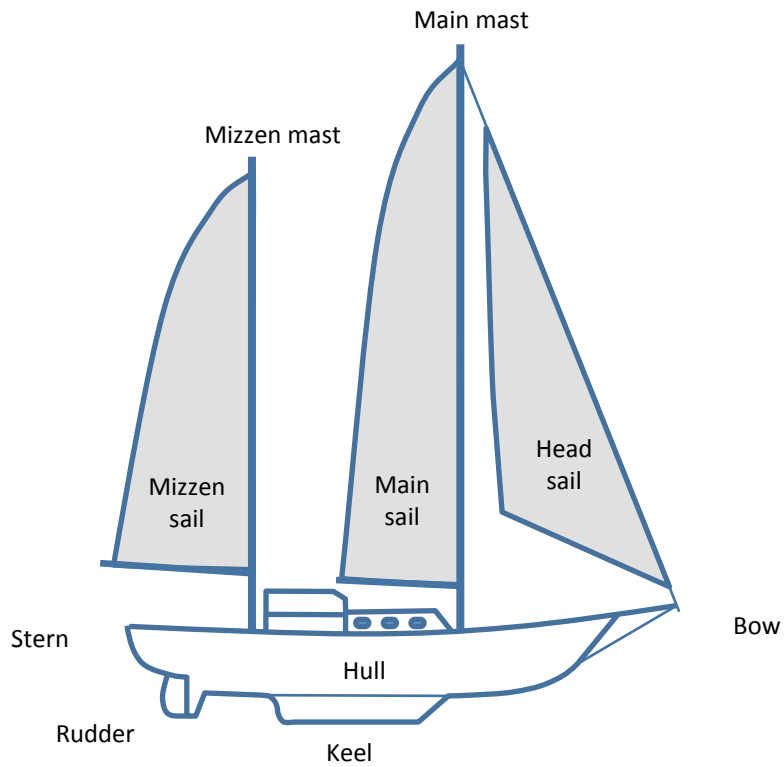
Sternward bedroom



Galley



Saloon, looking forward towards the bow



Representative Irwin 52 style boat, the type of sail boat on which we sailed. Our boat was called the *Celebration*.

## Preparations

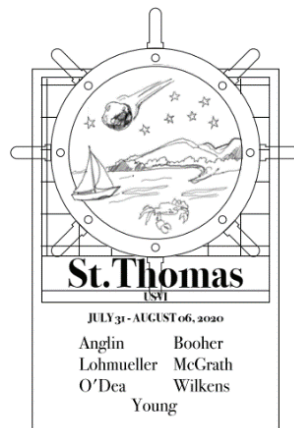
Mr. McGrath announced in August 2019 his goal of taking the Troop to Sea Base in the summer of 2020 for a high adventure trip.

Mr. Young volunteered to coordinate efforts for making a custom shirt design for the Troop. The Scouts had almost an hour brainstorming session before honing in on a concept. Isaac Lohmueller drew up the basic design, and as a Troop the scouts worked together to further refine the concept. Also, the nickname “Meteor Crew” was coined, as there was a meteor shower that was going to occur during the time we would be on the trek.

Front design



Back design



Mrs. Young made up custom masks and bag tags for all participants as well.



Isaac Lohmueller



The bag tags had each person's initials

The trip was originally booked for Friday, July 31 through Thursday, August 6. However, less than a week before the trip was to start, Sea Base notified the Troop that there was a tropical storm heading for the Virgin Islands and that if it were to become a hurricane the boats would have to be evacuated to Puerto Rico. If this was the case, the boats would not have enough time to make it back to the Virgin Islands before our trip was to start. The storm, named Isaisas (pronounced ees-ah-EE-ahs) didn't become a hurricane by the time it passed over the island, but by then the decision had been made to evacuate the boats anyway. Fortunately, Sea Base was able to have us start a few days later, on August 3 instead, and Delta was able to push back our airplane tickets to accommodate. Isaisas went on to become a Category 1 hurricane with sustained winds of 85 mph by the time it made landfall in North Carolina.





**Monday, August 3**

It was time for the trek to formally get started, and it was an early start indeed. The Troop met at the Greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Airport at 5:30 AM.



Jack O'Dea, Mr. Brad Wilkens, Nate Booher, Isaac Lohmueller, Mr. Jess Anglin, Petey Wilkens, Mr. Steve Lohmueller, Declan McGrath, Wesley Anglin, Nathan Young, Mr. Nick Young, Mr. Tim McGrath

We had no issues with check-in or getting through security, and soon it was time to board the plane. From Cincinnati, we flew to Atlanta for a layover and then onto the US Virgin Islands, landing at the Cyril E. King Airport in Charlotte Amalie, the capital of the territory, on the island of Saint Thomas. The airport was named in 1984 to honor Cyril King, who was born in the Virgin Islands and later served as the second elected governor of the territory from 1975 until his death in 1978.



Sunrise in Cincinnati



Our airplane in Atlanta  
Boeing 737-800



Petey Wilkens, Mr. Wilkens



The Atlanta skyline on the approach



Nathan Young, Declan McGrath

The weather was hot and humid when we landed. The airport is relatively small with only one runway and 11 gates. The airport doesn't use jetways, so we had to walk across the airport apron to get to the terminal building. We had to go through temperature checks before entering, and then we were able to get the checked bags.



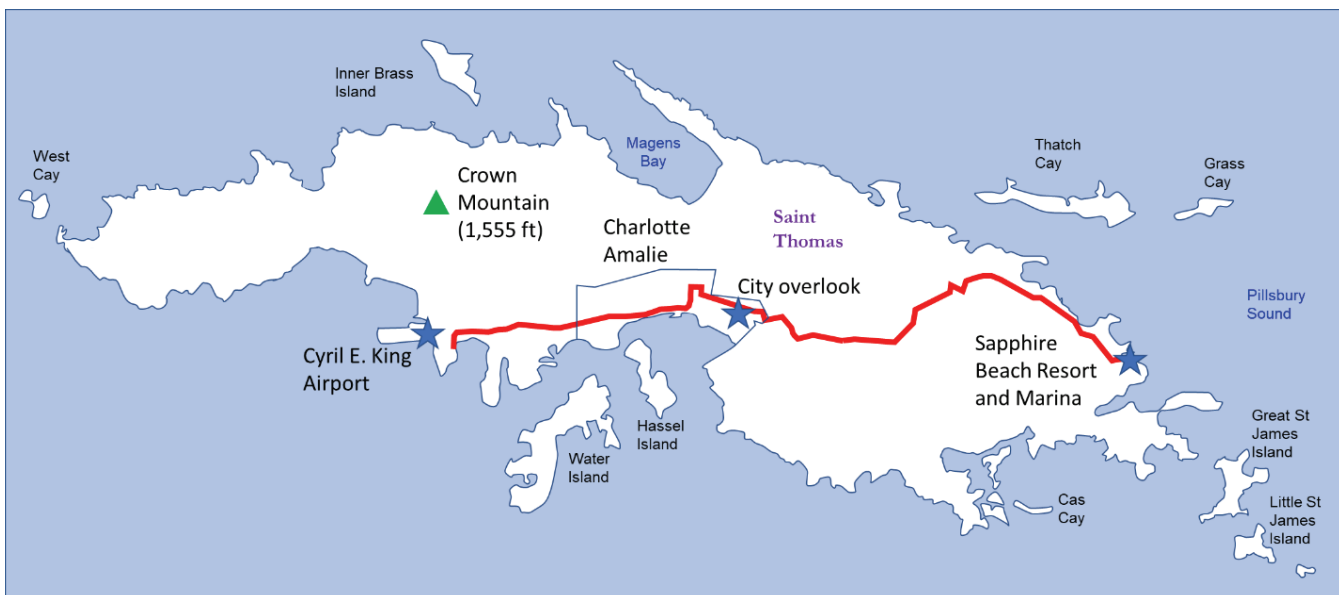
Declan McGrath on the airport apron



Waiting in the USVI airport for our bags

We had arranged for a shuttle to take us from the airport to the marina. Franklin was our driver, and he provided a lot of information about the island as we drove. One interesting fact we noticed right away is that people drive on the left side of the road, although they use American cars.

It was about a 25-minute drive across the island to the Sapphire Beach Resort and Marina, from where our trek was slated to start. It was a very hilly, twisty drive.



Map of the island of Saint Thomas, USVI, showing our route from the airport, through the city of Charlotte Amalie, to the marina

For lunch we ate at the Sapphire Beach Bar and Grill, which was next to the marina. Kathy, our guide from Sea Base, met us and took us to meet our boat and captain. We would be sailing the *Celebration* under Captain Matt.





Lunch at the Sapphire Beach Bar and Grill – burgers and fish tacos were on the menu



The Sapphire Beach Marina, our port of departure



The *Celebration*

On the way to the airport in the morning, Petey had the realization that he left his water bottle at home. They were too far down the road to return home, so they just planned on finding something at one of the airports. At CVG, all they were able to find were disposable bottles of water, so they bought 2. After landing in the Atlanta airport, Petey and Mr. Wilkens went searching for a shop that might sell water bottles. Most shops hadn't opened yet as it was still early, but they eventually found a store with water bottles. After purchasing a bottle and rejoining the group, they were reminded that we weren't supposed to use metal bottles on board the boat. A bit later, Mr. McGrath was out looking for a shop to get some food and found a plastic water bottle and picked it up for Petey. Little did Petey know that he was an Atlanta Braves fan.



Petey Wilkens's new water bottle

That should have been the end to the story, but the bittersweet end came once the boys were on the boat and unpacking their bags. Petey zipped open his duffel bag, and there, right on top, was his Nalgene water bottle. He may have tried to hide it, but Declan immediately saw it and called him out on the spot. With 5 water bottles, Petey no longer could complain about running out of water.

We stowed our gear, loaded the food, and then we set out to sea. We were under motor power while we did introductions and the captain explained how we would operate during the trip.



Captain Matt



Nate Booher, Declan McGrath, and Mr. Young, as we were leaving the marina



Declan McGrath



Leaving the marina

We motored across the Pillsbury Sound to Lovango Cay, about 2 miles from the marina, where we moored for the night. Pillsbury Sound is the area where the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea meet and has the nickname Pillsbury Pound because the waters can be rough in the area. We did a quick swim check swimming around the boat, then had a chance to do some snorkeling before dinner.

We had a few minor bouts of seasickness, particularly when people were down in the cabin trying to prepare dinner, but overall the crew held up quite well.

For sleeping arrangements, we just slept on deck. The cabin of the boat was a bit stuffy and hot, while on deck, the weather was cool and breezy. The moon was full that night and the sky was clear. The water was a bit choppy, so the boat was rocking most of the night. There were a couple of spells of spotty rain throughout the night, but nothing that warranted leaving the deck of the boat.



Crossing Pillsbury Sound. Sapphire Beach Marina is in the distance on the right hand side of the background.



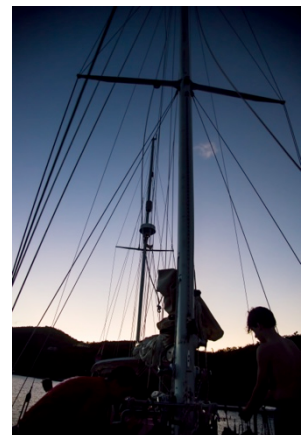
Petey Wilkens



We did swim checks by swimming around the boat

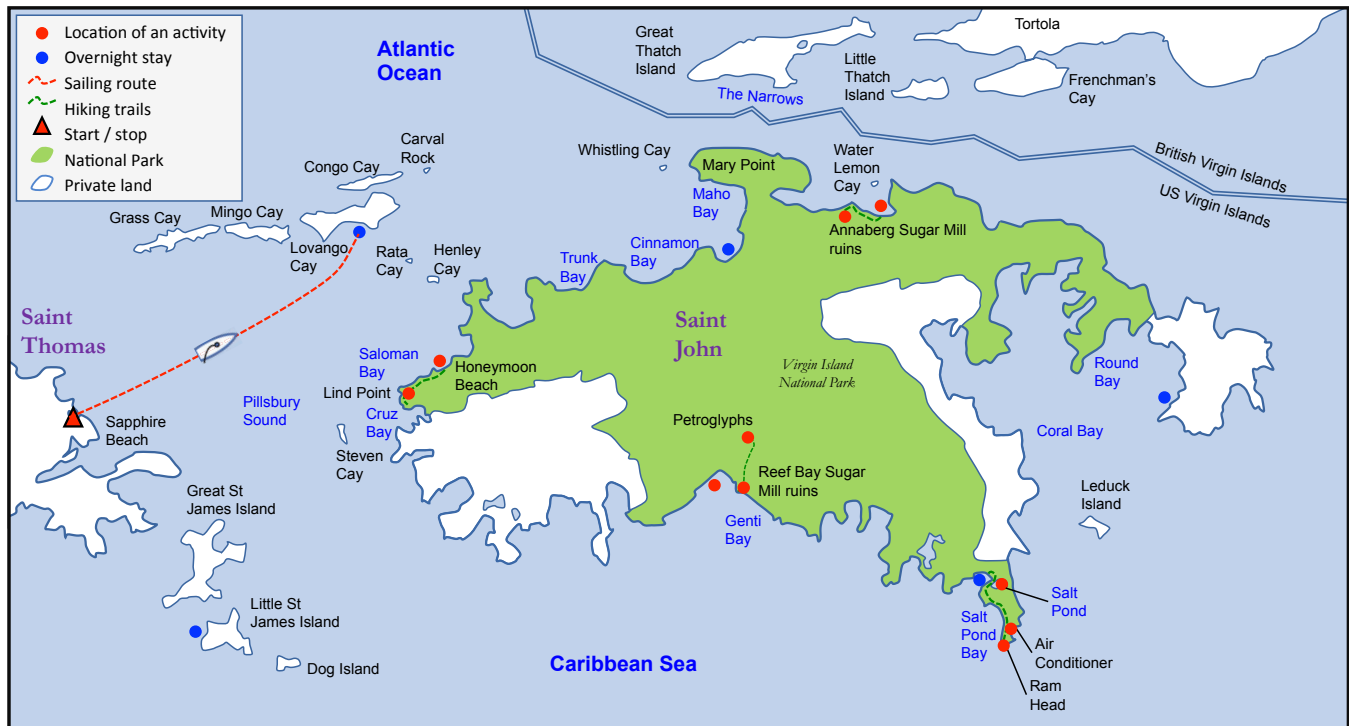


Sapphire Beach Marina is in the distance on the left hand side of the distant island.



Silhouette of the ship's rigging

Map for Monday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>.







**Tuesday, August 4th**

Slowly the boat came to life after the first night on the water, as people woke up from their unique sleeping arrangements.



Nate Booher



Petey Wilkens



Nathan Young (foreground)  
Petey Wilkens (background)



Nathan Young and Isaac  
Lohmueller making  
breakfast



Wesley Anglin learning how to use  
a winch



Petey Wilkens and Isaac Lohmueller doing  
the breakfast dishes



Looking back towards St Thomas



Isaac Lohmueller



Jack O'Dea



Hanging out in the cockpit



Declan McGrath



After an oatmeal breakfast, we learned how to raise and lower the sails and mooring lines, and all the scouts had the opportunity to practice.

The scouts first learned how to raise and lower the mizzen sail. This is the sail near the stern of the boat.



Nathan Young and Isaac Lohmueller receiving instructions



Nathan Young



Nathan Young



Nathan Young



Isaac Lohmueller



Isaac Lohmueller



Once raised, the winch is used to tighten the sail



Petey Wilkens, untying the line from the cleat and raising the mizzen sail



Nate Booher, learning how to untye the boat from the mooring.



We left Lovango Cay and motored across Pillsbury Sound towards St John. During this time, the scouts practiced raising and lowering the mainsail.



Declan McGrath and Jack O'Dea raising the mainsail



Jack O'Dea



Wesley Anglin and Nathan Young practicing how to coil a length of line so that it is organized and ready for use



After some brief instruction from Captain Matt, Declan was quickly able to untie the cleat, raise the mizzen sail, use the winch to tighten the sail, and tie the line off at the cleat again.



Petey had the honor of being the first scout to man the helm and steer the boat

We arrived at the island of St John and moored in Salomon Bay. While snorkeling to shore on Honeymoon Beach we saw some coral, a sea turtle, and a variety of fish.



Isaac Lohmueller



Mr. Tim McGrath

To start snorkeling we would jump off the side of the boat.



Whenever we went ashore we would use the inflatable dinghy to carry all of the gear we wanted to stay dry. Two scouts would swim and tow the dinghy behind them to shore





Mr. Lohmueller, Mr. Wilkens, and Mr. Young, with a panoramic view of Saloman Bay



Green sea turtle



*Celebration* moored in the bay



Salomon Bay

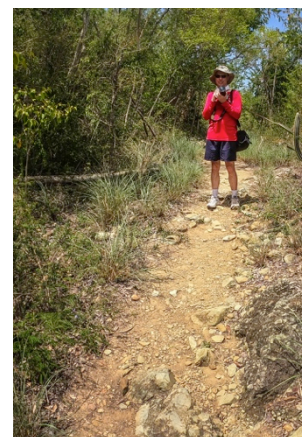
Once ashore, near the home of the Virgin Island National Park ranger, we dried off and went for a hike to Lind Point about 1 mile from the beach. Lind Point provides a panoramic view of the town of Cruz Bay and its harbor. In normal years, scouts can take the Lind Point trail all the way into town, where they can shop, get some cold treats, etc. This year, however, due to COVID restrictions, we were not allowed to go into town.



At the trailhead: Wesley Anglin, Nathan Young, Mr. Anglin, Jack O'Dea, Mr. Wilkens, Declan McGrath, Nate Booher, Petey Wilkens, Isaac Lohmueller, Mr. McGrath, Mr. Young



Heading up the trail to Lind Point



Mr. Lohmueller with his camera





View from Lind Point overlook out to the inlet into Cruz Bay harbor, with a departing ferryboat



The town of Cruz Bay and the harbor



Mr. Lohmueller, Mr. Wilkens



Mr. Wilkens



Heading back to the beach



Hermit crab seen along the trail



Iguana seen at Honeymoon Beach. He was about 3-4 feet long.

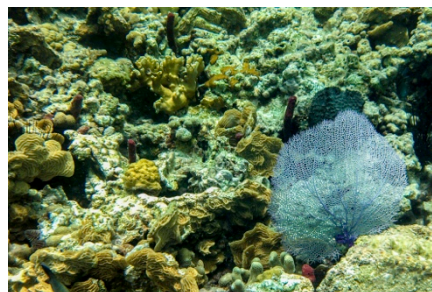


Getting ready to snorkel

Back on the beach, we went snorkeling on the reef in Salomon Bay. We were able to see a wide variety of fish and coral. The biggest attraction was a 5-6' nurse shark lying amongst the coral.



Brain coral



Sea fan



Stoplight parrotfish

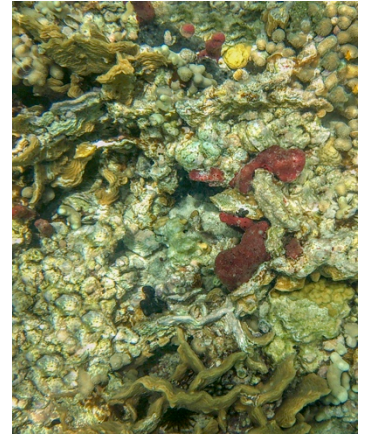




Smallmouth grunts, sea urchins, brain coral, and mustard hill coral



Black hamlet fish, sea urchin, and mustard hill coral



Scaled lettuce coral, strawberry sponge



School of French grunt fish



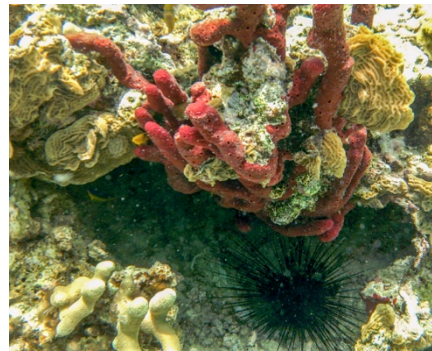
Scaled lettuce coral, mustard hill coral, strawberry sponges



French grunt fish among blade coral



Elkhorn coral



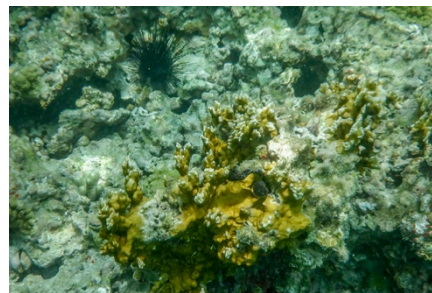
Strawberry sponge, scaled lettuce coral, sea urchin



Sergeant major fish with sea urchins



Yellowtail snapper



Blade fire coral



Sea fan

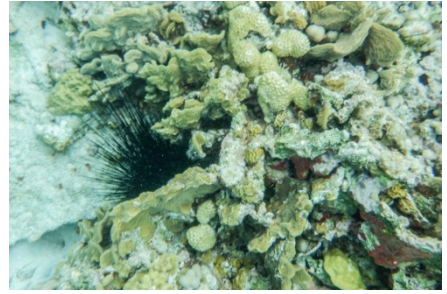




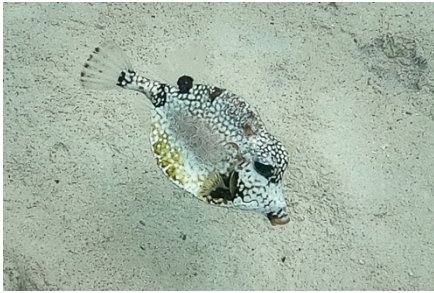
Lace coral



French grunt and sea rod coral



Coral with a long-spined sea urchin



Smooth trunkfish



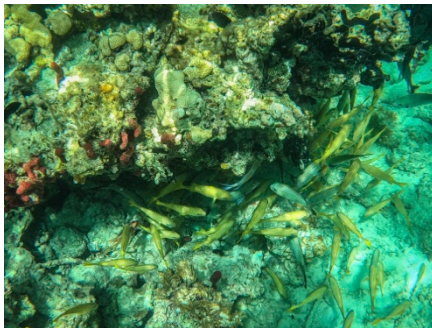
Blue tang



Brain coral



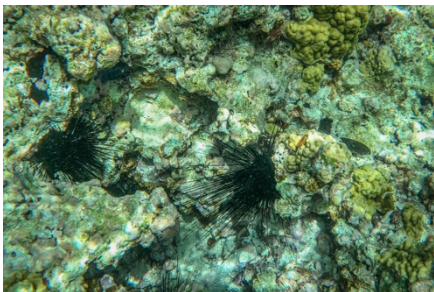
Bar jack



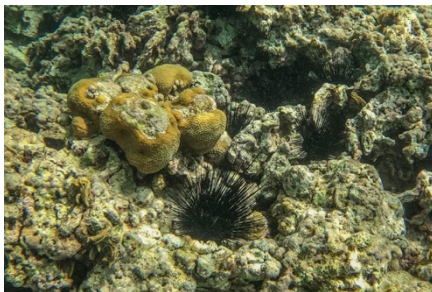
School of French grunts and blue striped grunts



Nurse shark



Long-spined sea urchins



Various types of coral and a long-spined sea urchin



Stoplight parrotfish



Mr. Young



Mr. Lohmueller



Isaac Lohmueller





Mr. McGrath



Mr. Lohmueller



Petey Wilkens



Isaac Lohmueller



Mr. Anglin



Nathan Young



Nathan Young



Mr. McGrath, Mr. Lohmueller



Wesley Anglin



Petey Wilkens



Salomon Bay



Petey Wilkens, Wesley Anglin, Declan McGrath, Nate Booher





Petey Wilkens, Jack O'Dea, Mr. Lohmueller, Wesley Anglin, Mr. Anglin, Mr. Wilkens, Mr. McGrath, Isaac Lohmueller, Declan McGrath, Nate Booher, Nathan Young, Mr. Young



The *Celebration* waiting for us to return



Heading back to the *Celebration* for lunch

Several of the scouts had never snorkeled before, but everyone picked up the skills needed right away and looked like snorkeling veterans before we headed back to the *Celebration* for lunch. After cleaning up after lunch, the scouts practiced raising and lowering the sails while we motored out into the open water. Once clear of the bay, we shut off the motor and starting sailing towards Maho Bay. Each scout had the opportunity to steer the boat.



Isaac Lohmueller raising the mizzen sail



Nate Booher raising the mizzen sail



Wes Anglin raising the mainsail



Looking out over the bow of the boat



Rigging on the mainsail boom



Hanging out on top deck



We sailed past Carvel Rock, a small, uninhabited island less than 2 acres in size. The waters around the island are a popular destination for scuba divers, but its sheer cliffs and lack of a beach make landing on the island practically impossible. Sometime during the 1700s the island was mistaken for an enemy ship and was bombarded with cannon fire. Scuba divers are still able to find some of the cannonballs on the ocean floor around the island.



Carvel Rock



View looking east between Lovango Cay (left) and Henley Cay (right) looking at British Virgin Islands



Captain Matt took a crew photo while Petey Wilkens steered the boat



Mr. Lohmueller, Nate Booher, Mr. McGrath, Nathan Young, Petey Wilkens



Nate Booher



Mr. McGrath, Declan McGrath



Wesley Anglin



Jack O'Dea



Mr. Lohmueller, Isaac Lohmueller



Nathan Young





Wesley Anglin



Sea Base flag that each boat flew



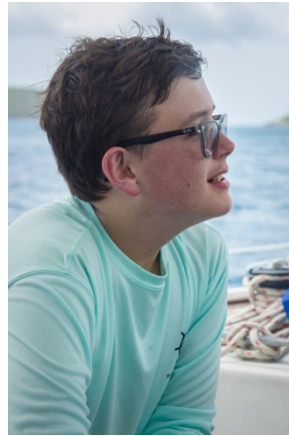
Listening to Captain explaining the plan for the day



Petey Wilkens



Mainsail in the wind



Wesley Anglin



Tang was a popular drink during the week.



Isaac Lohmueller



Nathan Young



Hanging out on deck while Nathan Young steered



Main sail catching the wind



Declan McGrath



Nate Booher

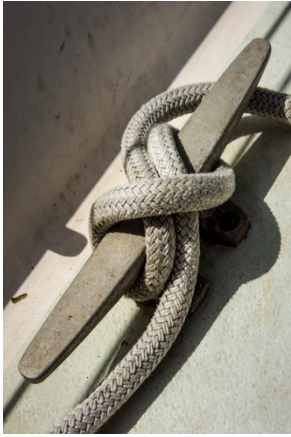


Mr. McGrath



Mr. Wilkens





The cleat hitch is an important knot used in sailing to secure a line. The boys quickly learned how to tie it.



Declan McGrath, pointing out to his dad some interesting detail in the landscape



Isaac Lohmueller



The saloon is the name of the common area below deck. Above deck, the roof over the saloon was a spacious open area where the boys liked to congregate while we were sailing, providing a great opportunity for the boys to hang out together.



Wesley Anglin



Petey Wilkens



Jack O'Dea



After passing Carvel Rock, we turned into the wind and headed east towards Trunk Bay. As we got close to shore, Captain Matt was able to point out some of the houses owned by rich and famous people. Many luxury homes dot the hills of the island.



View of some of the houses on St John Island



From Trunk Bay we sailed over to Maho Bay for the day's destination. We got our first glimpse of the Annaberg Sugar Mill ruins as we neared the bay. We lowered the sails, started the diesel engine, and motored into the bay.



The ruins of the windmill at the Annaberg Sugar Mill, peaking above the treeline, came into view as we neared Maho Bay



Maho Bay



Petey Wilkens, getting the line ready to attach to the mooring ball



Nathan Young, lowering the mainsail as we entered Maho Bay

Within the national park, boats are not allowed to use their anchors, as the anchors would destroy the coral below. Therefore, the park provides mooring balls that boats must use for anchoring. The mooring balls float on the surface of the water and are permanently anchored to the seafloor. A length of line called a pennant extends from the mooring ball and has an eyelet at the end to which a boat can tie off. Typically, the pennant will have a smaller flotation buoy to make grabbing the pennant easier from the boat.

Each night as our boat was pulling into a bay, the Captain would call out that it was time to moor. That was the signal that two scouts would have to go to the bow of the boat. Using a long hook, one scout would point in the direction of the mooring ball and call out how far the boat was from the mooring ball. The Captain would use this information to steer the boat up near the mooring ball. The scouts would then reach down with the hook and grab the flotation buoy on the pennant and then attach the boat to the eyelet, successfully mooring us for the night.



Nathan Young, using a pole to point out to the captain the location of the mooring ball

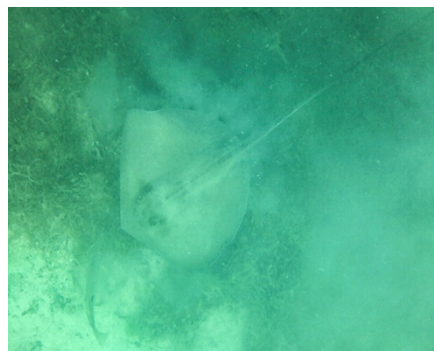
After mooring the boat, we were able to snorkel in the bay. Maho Bay does not have a lot of coral, but what makes this spot a great area for snorkeling are the green sea turtles. The bay has lots of seagrasses that provide food to the turtles. Captain Matt promised we would see lots of sea turtles, and he was right. We were able to see 8 to 10 turtles in the area, with the largest being 24-30" in length. Most of the turtles were spotted eating seagrass along the ocean floor, but several times the turtles swam to the surface, allowing us to swim alongside them.



Green sea turtle



Green sea turtle



Southern stingray



Mr. McGrath



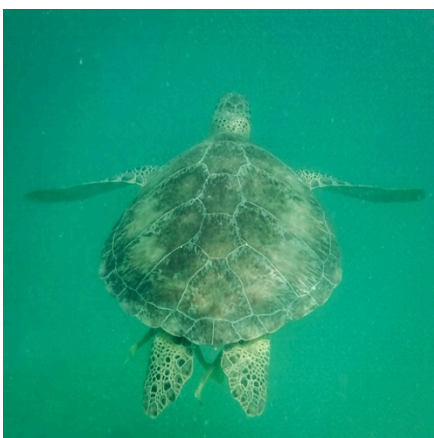
Mr. Young



Mr. Anglin



Yellowtail snapper



Green sea turtle



Long-spined sea urchins

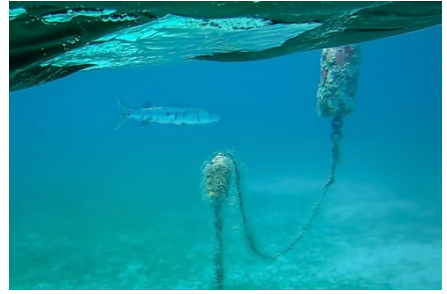




Sea fan



Mr. McGrath giving instructions on where to snorkel next



Barracuda



Mr. Wilkens



Green sea turtle



Southern stingray



Mr. Young



Many of the sea turtle have remora fish on them. The remora uses a sucker-like organ to hold onto the turtle's shell, using the turtle for locomotion and food, as it eats the waste of the turtle.



Isaac Lohmueller



Mr. Lohmueller swimming with a turtle. A remora is attached to the belly of the turtle



A green sea turtle eating sea grass



After snorkeling we grabbed the supply dinghy and headed to shore for dinner

Mr. Young was swimming with some of the sea turtles, videotaping them as they swam to the surface, when he got more than what he was looking to get on video. As he was swimming behind one of the turtles, it pooped in his direction.



Once we finished snorkeling, several scouts started getting ready for a grill out on the beach. On the west end of the beach, there are several picnic pavilions and grills that we were able to use. In the meantime, Petey, Declan, and Nathan spent the time tossing a football out in the water. Burgers were on the menu that night, and Isaac stepped up to man the grill. He had brought some spices from the boat and at dinner, everyone raved at how tasty the burgers were. His secret ingredients? Oregano, curry, and cinnamon.



Isaac Lohmueller



Isaac Lohmueller's secret spices



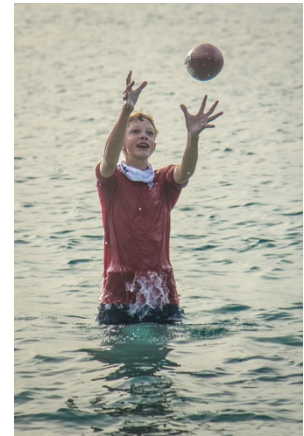
Declan McGrath



Petey Wilkens



Declan McGrath



Nathan Young



Great toss by Petey Wilkens



Petey Wilkens



Nathan Young



Petey Wilkens



Petey Wilkens



Wesley Anglin writing in the sand:  
"SEA BASE 2020  
TROOP 598, 674"





The *Celebration* waiting moored in the bay



Wesley Anglin, writing in the sand:  
“ WOW. WHY DID I WRITE THIS?”



Mr. Anglin, Jack O'Dea, and Isaac Lohmueller helping Captain get his dinghy on shore



Jack O'Dea



Mr. Young



Laughing gull



Declan McGrath



Isaac Lohmueller



Petey Wilkens, Isaac Lohmueller



Petey Wilkens





Declan McGrath



Nathan Young, Petey Wilkens, Isaac Lohmueller



Nathan Young



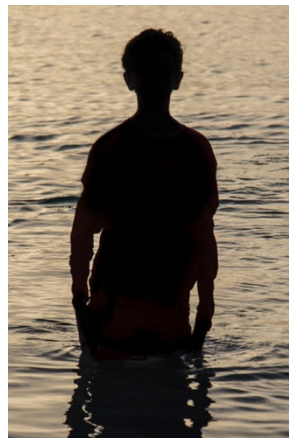
Mr. Lohmueller



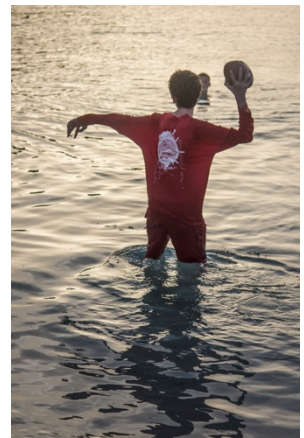
Isaac Lohmueller



Mr. Wilkens



Nate Booher



Nate Booher



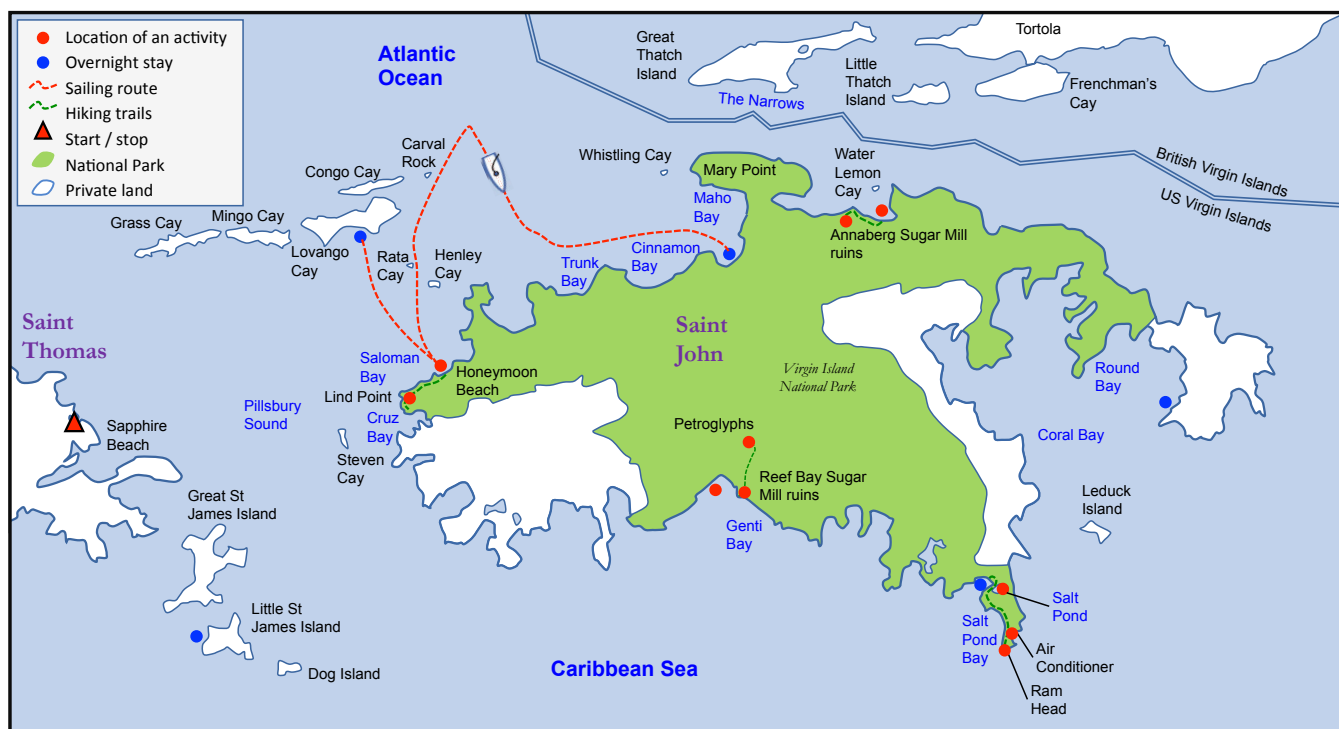
View of the bay with several boys playing in the water



Sunset over Maho Bay

It was completely dark by the time dinner was done. While walking back to our snorkeling gear Captain Matt pointed out some bioluminescent animals in the sand and surf. Once we got all the dry gear packed on the inflatable raft and our snorkels on it was time to head out to the boat. Captain Matt had turned on several lights on the boat before joining us for dinner, so we had those to use as a guide, and Captain Matt went ahead of us on his dinghy and held a light to also help guide our way. We were joking that we were on a SEAL Team Six special ops mission.

Map of the sailing route for Tuesday, August 4th.







**Wednesday, August 5**

Nate was on breakfast duty this morning, and blueberry pancakes were on the menu. Nate turned to several of the people around him and announced that he was also known as the “Flapjack Master”. It sounds like we had the right person on the job this morning!



Nate “Flapjack Master” Booher at work in the galley



Checking out our route on the map of the island



Declan McGrath



Breakfast time



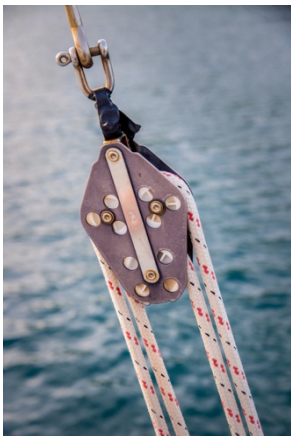
Petey Wilkens doing the breakfast dishes. We would use salt water from the ocean for the initial washing but then rinse the dishes with fresh water



Hanging out on deck while dishes are being washed



View of the bay with the shelters on the beach we used the night before for dinner



Pulley in the rigging



Nathan Young



Declan McGrath, Nathan Young talking to Petey Wilkens in the saloon



After breakfast Captain Matt asked if we could send him one of our council shoulder patches, as he was interested in collecting patches from the various Troops that he took on trips. Fortunately, we had a spare patch with us and were able to give him one while on the trip. This is the third patch that he has collected.



Dan Beard Council's shoulder patch

As we were leaving Maho Bay we passed by Whistling Cay, which contains the ruins of the Customs House. The building was built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century by the Danish government to guard the shipping lane between the Danish and the British Virgin Islands against pirates. Officials working the Customs House would stop and inspect boats as they passed through the area. It replaced an earlier Customs Guardhouse on the north shore of Mary Point.



Ruins of the Customs House

We rounded Mary Point and headed east out into The Narrows, the channel between the British Virgin Islands on port side and the US Virgin Islands on starboard. The winds picked up as we were sailing out of the downwind area behind the islands and into the trade winds.. Trade winds are winds that permanently blow from the east to the west along the area around the equator, so called because for centuries these winds allowed ships to cross the Atlantic Ocean and enabled colonial expansion and trade between Europe, Africa, and the Americas.

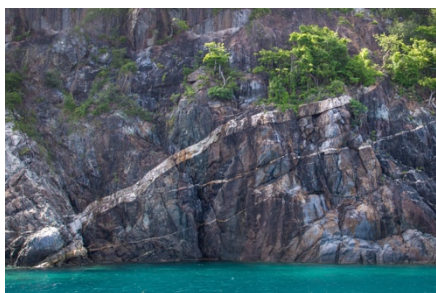


View looking east down The Narrows



View looking east down The Narrows

The cliffs around Mary Point are made of granite, but there are large veins of white quartz that striate through the granite. Along the north side of the island, the shoreline becomes more dramatic with rocky outcroppings due to the rougher Atlantic Ocean eroding the island more than the Caribbean Ocean on the southern side of the island.



Rocky cliffs at Mary Point on the north side of St John Island, showing the white quartz striations through the granite

Mary Point played a noteworthy role in the history of the island. In 1733, slaves from the island revolted against their white owners due to the harsh living and working conditions. The insurrection involved around 150 slaves from the land of Akwamu (present-day Ghana in Africa). The rebellion lasted around 9 months, making it one of the earliest and longest slave revolts in the Americas, during which time the slaves were able to take control of most of the island. To restore order Danish officials appealed for help from French troops in the area who, with superior firepower and troops, were able to restore the planters' control of the island. Some of the slave rebels decided to commit suicide by jumping off the cliffs at Mary Point rather than being captured and returned to slavery.

After passing Mary Point we headed for Waterlemon Cay, where we would have the opportunity to do a hike and go snorkeling. The hike would be about 40 minutes long one way, down along the beach, to the ruins of the Annaberg Plantation Sugar Mill.



Isaac Lohmueller



Jack O'Dea



Wesley Anglin



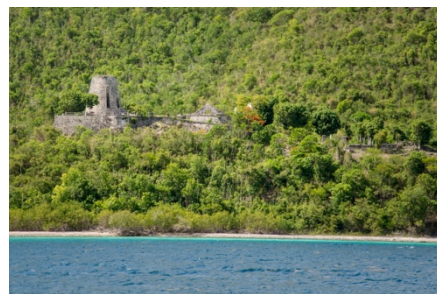
Mr. Lohmueller, Isaac Lohmueller



Mr. McGrath



Nathan Young



The ruins of the Annaberg Plantation Sugar Mill come into view



View of Leinster Bay. Islands in background (left to right): Great Thatch Island, Little Thatch, Waterlemon Cay



The *Celebration*





Declan McGrath, trying to rinse the sand off his feet but keep his shoes dry



The trail to the ruins goes down along the beach



Captain Matt took a picture of us from the boat as we were hiking to the ruins



The view out over Leinster Bay

The Annaberg Plantation was first settled in 1758 when Saloman Zeeger Jansoon purchased some land on the island of Saint John with the intent of establishing a sugar mill. Through the Danish West Indies Company he purchased the slave labor from Africa he needed to run the plantation, and sold his sugar, molasses, and rum to European markets.

While living on Saint John, he married Anna deWindt, the daughter of a prestigious plantation owner. The couple had 4 daughters, who eventually took over control of the mill after Saloman's death. The daughters renamed the plantation Annaberg, which translates as Anna's Mountain, in honor of their mother.

James Murphy purchased Annaberg in 1796 along with several surrounding plantations. Murphy expanded operations to include nearly 530 acres of sugar cane fields and the island's largest slave labor population of over 600 slaves. It was during this time that Annaberg became incredibly profitable for Murphy, producing over 100,000 pounds of sugar each year. However, along with the rest of the Caribbean sugar mills, Annaberg began to falter and ultimately fail starting in the 1850's due to the competition from sugar production from sugar beets in other parts of the world and by the abolition of slave labor in all Danish territories in 1848.



The windmill at the sugar mill is the main focal point at the ruins and was the largest windmill in the Virgin Islands. Built between 1797 and 1805, the windmill could produce between 300 and 500 gallons of sugarcane juice per hour. Slaves were used to pass the sugarcane through rollers powered by the windmill, which made the juice that was caught below. The juice flowed over to the factory where it was then boiled to make the finished products. When the wind wasn't blowing, a horse mill was used to provide the power.



The stone base that held the windmill is all that is left. The top turret, the wind blades, and the inner workings are long gone.



When the wind died, oxen, mules, or horses provided the power for the factory. The animals, harnessed to a drive shaft, would walk in circles in this area to turn the machinery.



These walls made up the factory, where the sugar cane juice was boiled to make sugar, rum, and molasses.



Wall of the main factory room



Copper pot to boil the sugar cane juice



Remnants of the factory building





Papaya, a native tree that produces an edible fruit



The factory walls are covered with an intricate pattern of small stones



Local flower growing in the factory ruins



Dodder vine



Taking a break before heading back: Isaac Lohmueller, Declan McGrath, Nate Booher, Petey Wilkens



View of Mary Creek Bay



View of the inlet to Mary Creek Bay



Hiking back to the boat

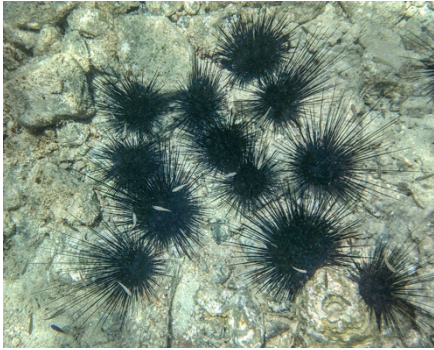


Waterlemon Cay

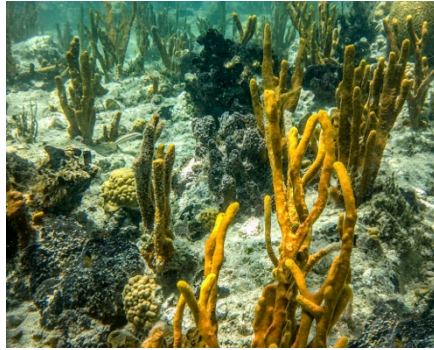
While on the hike back to the boat from the sugar mill we met another scout troop on a Sea Base adventure. They were supposed to have 22 people attending, but due to COVID restrictions only 7 were able to attend.

After a simple lunchmeat sandwich lunch we went back into the water for some more snorkeling. From the boat, we snorkeled out towards Waterlemon Cay and then circumnavigated the small island. This was the longest snorkel so far, and on the far side of the island, we were swimming against the current. The extra effort was worth it as there was a significant coral reef with a large number of fish on the far side of the island.





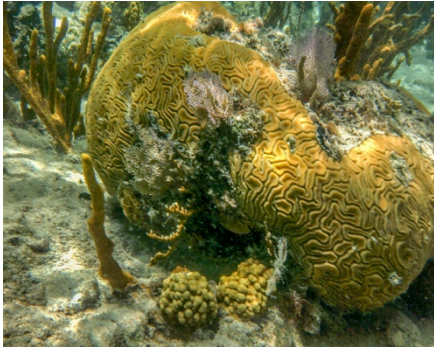
Long-spined sea urchins



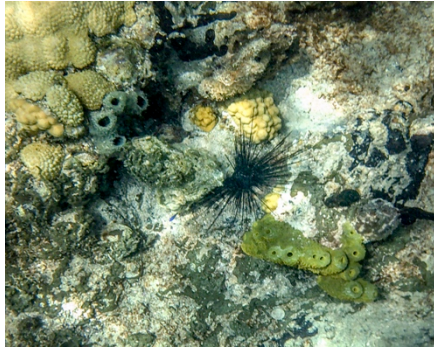
Rope sponges



Mustard hill coral and black paddle sponges



Brain coral



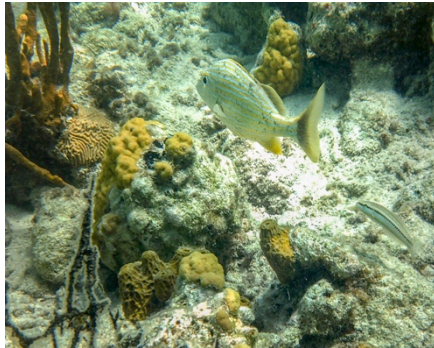
Mustard hill coral, tube sponges, and a sea urchin



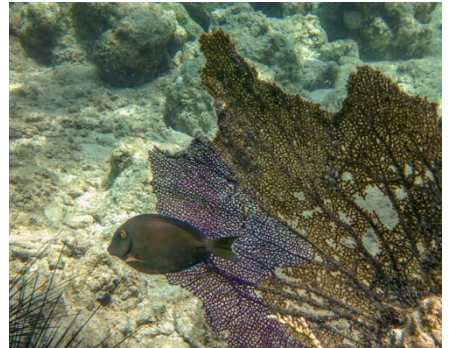
Tube sponge



Southern stingray



Bluestriped grunt



Black hamlet fish and a sea fan



French angelfish



Snorkeling in Waterlemon Bay



Tube sponge





Camouflaged fish hiding on the sea floor amongst the rocks



Blade fire coral with a yellowtail damselfish



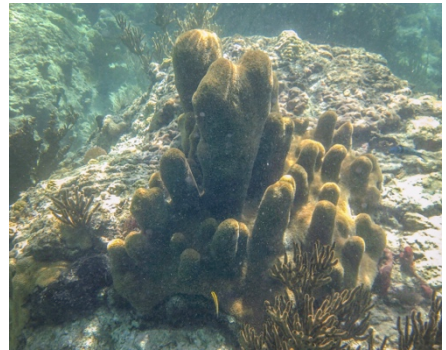
Parrotfish, black hamlet fish, brain coral in background



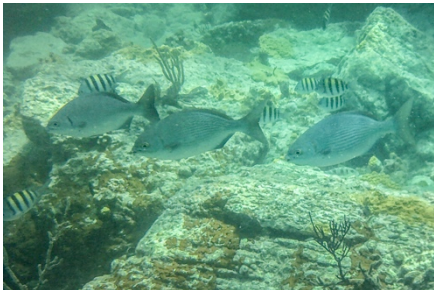
Tube sponge



Brain coral



Pillar coral



Chubs and sergeant majors



Sea fan and fire blade coral



Rock covered with coral



Brain coral



Juvenile beaugregory damselfish

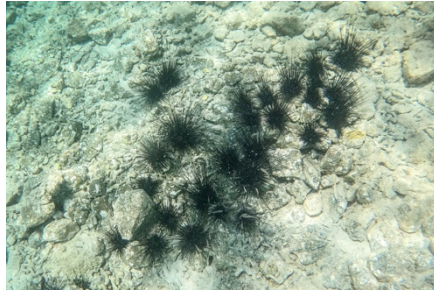


Blue tang, long-spined sea urchins, branching vase sponge





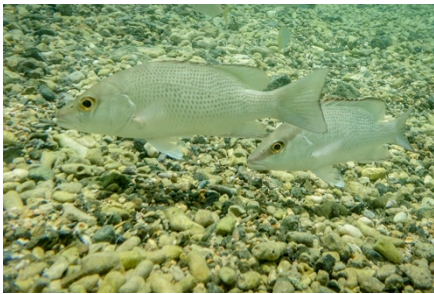
Elkhorn coral



Long-spined sea urchins



White mullet



Gray snapper



Sea rods



School of French grunts



Mr. Young



Snorkeling in Waterlemon Bay



Snorkeling across the bay



Jack O'Dea, Wesley Anglin



Jack O'Dea



Mr. McGrath giving directions on where to snorkel next





Swimming back to the boat after a day of hiking and snorkeling



The deck becomes a bit messy as everyone gets out of their snorkel gear



Group picture before leaving the bay

While snorkeling, Mr. Wilkens lost his Fitbit. It occurred in the same area where there was a small sunken boat on the seafloor. Back on board the boat the scouts were pondering what impact that could have on a future archeologist who might be exploring an old sunken ship and discovers more advanced technology in the same location. Might it be time travelers who brought the technology back in time?



View of Waterlemon Bay from the boat, with Waterlemon Cay visible on the left



Isaac Lohmueller raising the mooring lines



Isaac Lohmueller teaching Wesley Anglin how to use the mooring lines



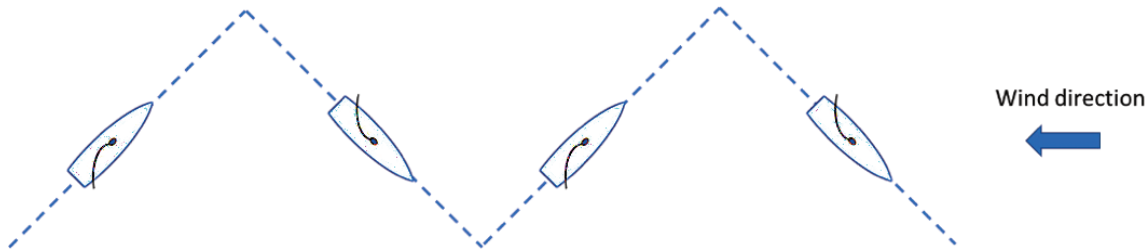
Jack O'Dea raising the main sail



Declan McGrath

Today's goal was to make it to Round Bay but also to get in as many sailing miles as possible in the process of getting there. Since we were heading in an easterly direction, against the prevailing trade winds, we spent the morning tacking back and forth along the channel.

Due to the physics of sailing it is not possible to sail directly into the wind. The best that a boat can achieve is heading to within around 40 degrees of the direction from which the wind is coming. This range of direction is called the no-go zone, in which a boat won't sail. If a boat is caught in this range, it is called being in irons. To avoid this situation, if the desired destination is in line with where the wind is coming from, a series of zig-zag movements are needed as shown in the picture below.



To make this zig-zag motion, the boat is first pointed at an angle relative to the wind, and then the bow is turned towards the wind. The boat enters the no-go zone and the sails stall, meaning that they don't provide any power to the boat. The momentum of the boat carries the boat beyond the direction of the wind, changing the wind from one side of the boat to the other. Once the boat is past the other side of the no-go zone, the sails once again fill and provide power. This process of turning the bow of the boat through the direction of the wind is a maneuver called tacking. Using a series of tacks to progress in the direction of the wind is called beating the wind.

An indispensable instrument in sailing is called the windex. This is a wind vane located at the top of the main mast that shows the direction of the wind. Two fixed indicators show the no-go zone of direction in which the boat can not sail. These can be seen in the picture below as the 2 thin lines that end with squares. The arrow points in the direction from which the wind is blowing.



Windex atop the main mast

Whenever we were sailing we kept a close eye on the windex to keep the wind roughly perpendicular to the boat, which is called sailing at beam reach. This tends to be the fastest. When the boat's direction gets close to the no-go zone, you can hear the sails starting to flap, called luffing. This would be an indicator that the helmsman would need to steer the boat further away from the direction of wind.



Isaac Lohmueller teaching Wesley Anglin how to coil a line



The main sail billowing in the wind



Isaac Lohmueller working the winch during a tack maneuver





Wesley Anglin getting ready to tack



Isaac Lohmueller working the winch during a tack



The headsail at the bow of the boat



The headsail at the bow of the boat

During this stretch of sailing, the adults got the opportunity to take turns at the helm while sailing. The scouts had been manning the helm previously, so Captain Matt had the sons teach their dads what they had learned.



Mr. Anglin, Wesley Anglin



Mr. Anglin



Nathan Young, Mr. Young



Mr. Young



Mr. Lohmueller



Mr. Wilkens



Declan McGrath, Mr. McGrath



Mr. McGrath



While sailing to our destination for the evening, Declan and later Mr. McGrath were practicing tying a bowline knot. This is a critical knot to know for sailing and we needed to be able to tie it quickly. After repeating the knot multiple times, they were challenged with tying the knot with their eyes closed. Both succeeded in their first attempt.



Mr. McGrath practicing the bowline knot



Declan McGrath practicing the bowline knot



Mr. McGrath tying the bowline knot with his eyes closed



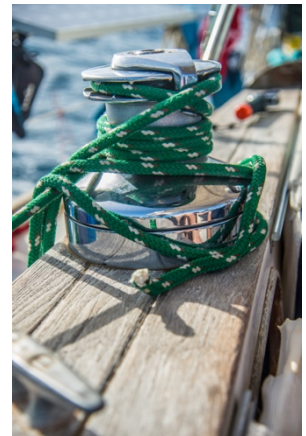
Jack O'Dea



Declan McGrath



Mr. Young practicing his knots



Headsail winch



Mr. Anglin



Mr. Anglin



Jack O'Dea working the winch during a tack



The headsail at the bow of the boat





Nate Booher and Captain Matt on the working line for a tack maneuver



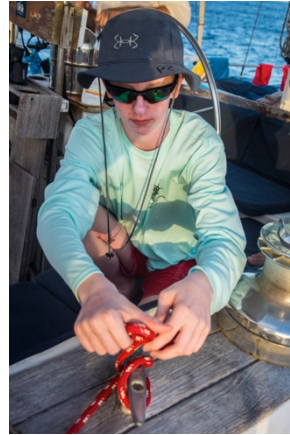
Nate Booher on the working line for a tack maneuver



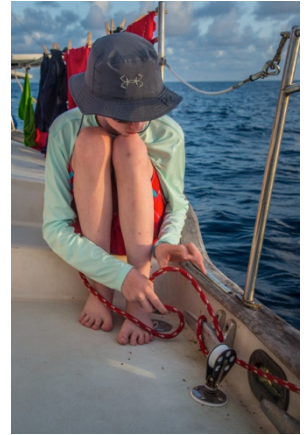
Petey Wilkens working the winch for another tack



Mr. Wilkens practicing tying the bowline knot



Nate Booher tying off the lines on a cleat



Mr. Wilkens



Nate Booher, cleating off the headsail line after a tack



View of the British Virgin Islands in the distance



Hanging out on deck while Nathan Young steered the boat



Declan McGrath turning the helm over to Isaac Lohmueller



Mr. Wilkens and Mr. Young hanging out on the saloon roof



One of the islands we saw as we were sailing this day is Norman Island, part of the British Virgin Islands. This island is one of a number of islands reputed to be the inspiration for Robert Louis Stevenson's pirate novel *Treasure Island*. The novel is a story of buccaneers and buried treasure, and has greatly influenced popular perceptions of pirates by creating images of treasure maps marked with an "X", the Black Spot, deserted tropical islands as the location of buried treasures, and one-legged seamen bearing parrots on their shoulders.

Norman Island is an uninhabited, privately owned island covering about 600 acres. The island is supposedly named after a pirate who bought the island some time during the early 1700s. The island's first documented connection with pirate booty, however, came in 1750. In that year a Spanish treasure galleon named *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* sought shelter from a storm off of the coast of North America. While sitting in port, the crew mutinied and after loading two merchant ships with 55 chests of silver coins and other valuables, escaped towards Saint Croix. The first boat was lost at sea, but the second boat, manned by Owen Lloyd, successfully made it. Lloyd disposed of some of the money, but took the rest and buried it on Norman Island. Lloyd and the crew were eventually arrested, but word of the treasure leaked out, drawing many treasure hunters to look for it. Some of the booty was recovered, but the majority was never officially discovered.

Mr. Wilkens had brought a drone with him on this trip, and he was able to get some footage of the *Celebration* from the sky.



View looking over the bow of the boat westward across Coral Bay



View of the *Celebration* from Mr. Wilkens' drone



The headsail at the bow of the boat



Wesley Anglin, lowering the mainsail as we approached Round Bay for the night



Jack O'Dea, lowering the mizzen sail as we approached Round Bay for the night



Nate Booher, pointing to the location of the mooring ball



We sailed to Round Bay for the night. Grilled pork chops were on the menu, and Isaac and Nathan manned the grill. Isaac took care of the spices again, and the chops were a big hit with everyone. Captain Matt made mashed potatoes from real potatoes, which isn't typical for a scout meal. The meal was rounded out with peas and carrots, gravy, and cookies. Mr. Wilkens rated this as one of the top five scout meals he has ever had, possibly even #1.

While using the grill for dinner, one of the boys accidentally knocked a shirt off the boat railing into the water below. Captain Matt was nearby and quickly taking off his shirt and hat, dove over the railing in a smooth arc into the water, thereby saving the shirt.

As an appetizer, Captain Matt made up a batch of Cuban black bean dip and served it with chips. He had gotten the recipe from a former girlfriend whose grandma was from Cuba. This too was a big hit with everyone.

<i>Grandma's Cuban Black Bean Dip</i>
<b>Ingredients</b>
1 tbl olive oil
1 red onion
3 cans black beans (must be Goya brand)
2 limes
salt and pepper

<b>Directions</b>
Heat oil in a pan.
Dice onion and add to the pan. Cut limes in half, squeeze limes into pan and add the rinds.
Saute onions until pink
Add 2 ½ cans of beans, undrained
Puree ½ can beans and add to pan
Add salt and pepper to taste

Map of the sailing route for Wednesday, August 5<sup>th</sup>.



## Thursday, August 6

Around 3:00 AM it started to rain, just a few drops at first. A few people woke up, but nobody reacted, expecting it to quickly pass as it had the first night. After a few minutes, it became clear that it wasn't just a brief light drizzle. At that point everyone scrambled down into the cabin. Rather than waiting it out and then returning to the deck to finish out the night, it was decided that we should just spend the night in the cabin. By the time we awoke the sky was clear and we had a pretty sunrise.



Panoramic view of Round Bay in the morning

Overnight we shared the bay with a luxury yacht, the *Starfire*, and during breakfast, Captain Matt was telling us how it is possible to look up details on yachts from all over the world by searching on the vessel's name. As an example, we looked up the *Starfire*. We were able to see all of the boat's specs, such as the fact that she was built in 1998, is 177 feet long, has a cruising speed of 12 knots, can accommodate 12 people, and that you can charter the boat for a mere \$288,000 per week!



The *Starfire*



The *Starfire*

We also shared the bay with the the Scout troop that we met on Wednesday during the hike to sugar plantation.



Another Sea Base boat



Mr. Anglin



Round Bay



Petey Wilkens, Isaac Lohmueller,  
Nate Booher



Our destination for the evening was Salt Pond Bay, where we could go for a hike as well as snorkeling.



Jack O'Dea



Wesley Anglin



Declan McGrath



Captain Matt was happy with another successful tack



A 180 degree panorama of the boat



Hanging out on deck while Jack O'Dea steered the boat



All Sea Base yachts flew this flag



The cabin hatch door created an interesting shadow



Petey Wilkens, Nathan Young getting ready for a tack



Sailing close to shore



Nate Boohar



Nathan Young



Earlier in the week, we were heading east, against the trade winds. In that situation, turning maneuvers are called tacks. On this day we started heading west, in line with the trade winds. In this situation, turning maneuvers are called jibes. In both tacks and jibes, the boat is turned such that the wind switches from one side of the boat to the other.



Isaac Lohmueller



Mr. Anglin, Nathan Young



Captain Matt giving a knuckle bump after a successful jibe maneuver



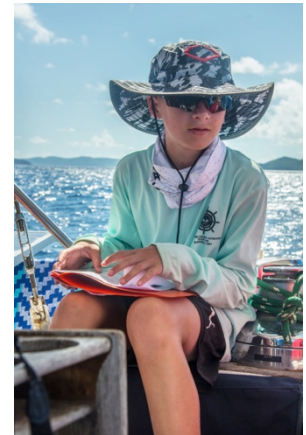
Nathan Young on the headsail working line for a jibe



View of the headsail



Nate Booher



Declan McGrath



View of the mainsail



Mr. Anglin



Nate Booher



Nate Booher working the headsail line during a jibe



Cleat hitch



Mr. Anglin





Wesley Anglin at the helm



Nate Booher, Nathan Young



Nathan Young



Isaac Lohmueller and Captain on the headsail line during a jibe



Our first view of the Ram Head



After 2 jibes we ended up closer to the Ram Head. Ram Head is the high point on the left. The Air Conditioner is the notch on the right.



View looking north to St John. The Ram Head is the rock outcropping on the right.



View looking northeast: tip of the Ram Head (foreground), Leduck Island (midground) and the hills surrounding Round Pond (background)



Captain Matt told us some of his stories from the time that he worked on the luxury yacht *Perseus 3*. He had a magazine that he shared with us that featured the yacht. This yacht is 197 feet long and has the world's tallest carbon fiber main mast at 243 feet. The current owners are looking to sell the boat, and it can be yours for only \$30,236,000

Magazine article about the yacht *Perseus 3*





View looking east towards the Air Conditioner and Ram Head (far right)



Nathan Young



Jack O'Dea lowering the mainsail as we headed into Salt Pond Bay

When we arrived in Salt Pond Bay, we found that there was no floatation buoy attached to the mooring ball. The floatation buoy normally holds the eyelet that the boat attaches to while moored. As a result, we had to lasso the mooring ball directly. It took several tries, but Captain Matt finally made the catch.



Mr. Wilkens



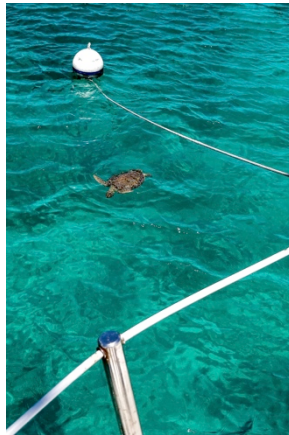
Mr. Wilkens, Captain Matt



The water in the bay was very clear. While getting ready to snorkel we saw several turtles popping up to the surface of the water around the boat. We spent some time snorkeling around 2 small rock outcroppings in the bay. We had to deal with more waves than we had to previously, so we had to maintain extra distance from the coral to prevent being pushed by the waves into the coral. There were some beautiful coral features, lots of fish, and several large stingrays. Mr. Wilkens and Mr. Young led the crew, Mr. McGrath watched the flank, and Mr. Anglin and Mr. Lohmueller guarded the rear, all working together to keep the scouts safe.



Getting ready to be ready to snorkel



Sea turtle swimming by the boat



Underwater view of the *Celebration's* keel, propeller, and rudder



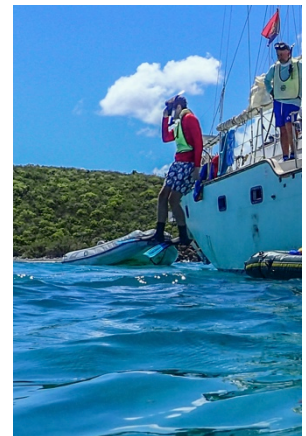
Nathan Young



Petey Wilkens



Nate Booher



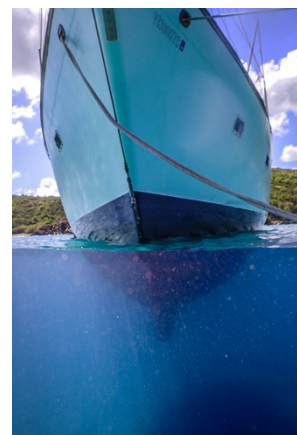
Jack O'Dea



Wesley Anglin



Isaac Lohmueller

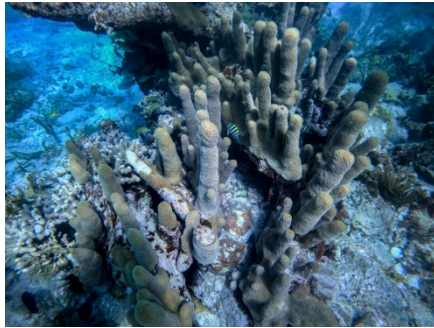


*Celebration's* bow





Blue tang fish swimming next to blade fire coral



Pillar coral



Snorkeling over the coral reef



Sea whip coral



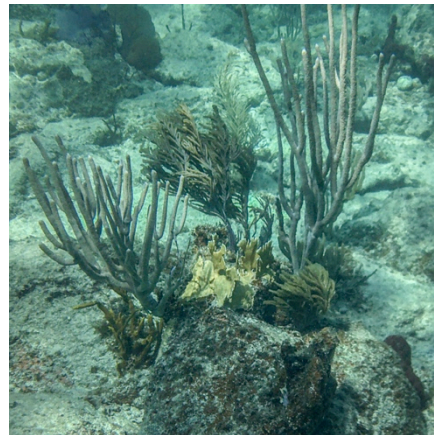
Sea rods and sea fan



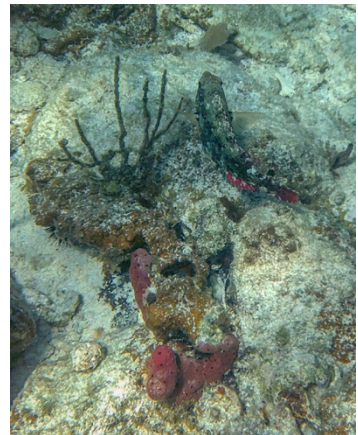
Declan McGrath snorkeling over the coral reef



Sea rod coral



Sea rod coral



View of the sea floor



Snapper



Sea whips

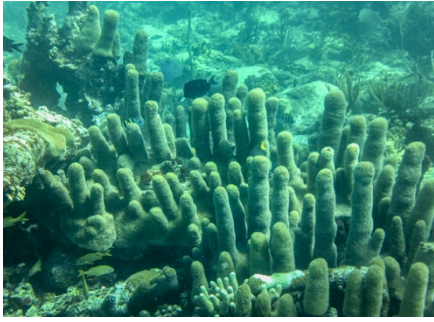


Blue tang fish and tube sponge



White sea urchins

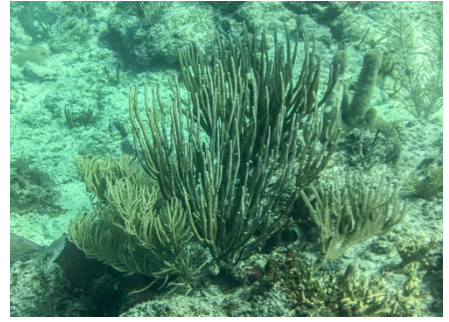




Pillar coral



Princess parrotfish hiding in sea rod coral



Sea rod coral



Sea whip coral



Juvenile bluehead wrasse, blade fire coral



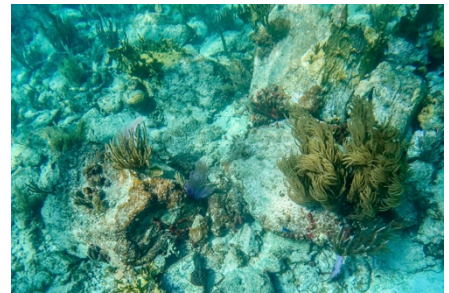
Sea rod coral



Elkhorn coral



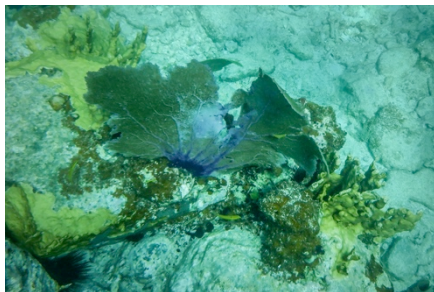
Rock covered with coral



Sea whip coral



Massive starlet coral



Sea fan



Yellowtail parrotfish



Nathan Young



Isaac Lohmueller



Declan McGrath

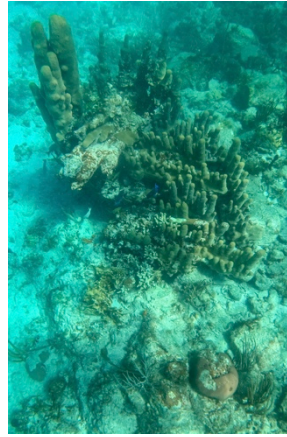




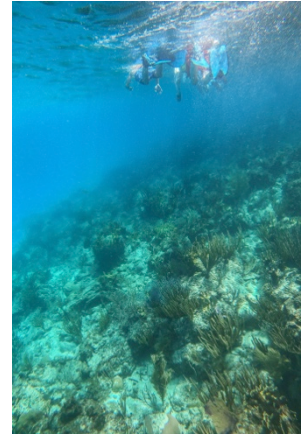
Southern stingray



Sea rod coral



Pillar coral



Snorkeling over the coral reef



View of one of the rock outcroppings from above water ...



... and from below water



Scenic views looking seaward from Salt Pond Bay

After making it around the outcroppings, we went back to the boat, picked up the supply raft, and started heading to the beach. Nathan and Petey saw a snorkel lying on the bottom of the bay, about 15-20 below. They turned to Mr. McGrath and asked if they should dive down to retrieve it, but he responded that we would do it later. Noticing that Mr. McGrath was missing his snorkel Nathan and Petey then reworded the question, asking if they should dive down to retrieve Mr. McGrath's snorkel. Upon realizing he was missing his snorkel he quickly changed his answer to yes.





Declan McGrath, Captain Matt, Petey Wilkens



Captain Matt



On the beach of Salt Pond Bay

After drying off we started a hike up to the Ram Head. The Ram Head is a small peninsula of land that juts out into the bay. From the distance, the profile of the land looks like the head of a ram. Captain Matt also came ashore, although in his motored dinghy, and led us on the hike.

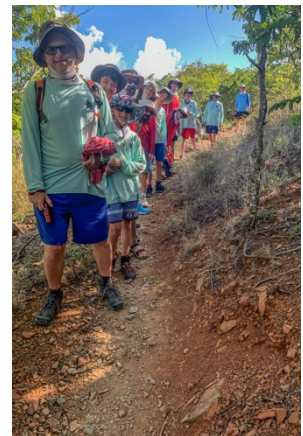
The trail starts from Salt Pond Beach and then passes the inland Salt Pond. Halfway to Ram Head the trail crosses Blue Cobble Beach, which is covered with cobblestones. Visitors often create stone sculptures on this beach.



View from the Ram Head Trail looking out over Salt Pond Bay and the *Celebration*



View looking eastward to the Ram Head



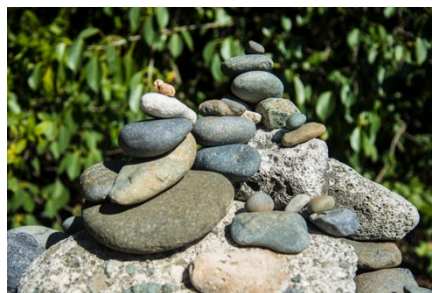
Taking a break on the trail to the Ram Head



View looking westward along the southern shore of St John



Blue Cobble Beach



Several of the stone sculptures along the trail on Blue Cobble Beach







The trail up to Ram Head with Salt Pond Bay in the distance



The trail up to Ram Head with many Turk's Cap cacti on the side of the trail

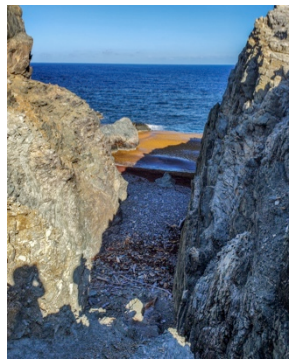


The trail up to Ram Head

Just short of Ram Head, there is a notch in the terrain that channels the ocean winds into a strong jet past the trail. Locals call this the Air Conditioner, an appropriate name. The jet of cool air felt good after the hot hike up to the spot. From the Air Conditioner, it was only a short jaunt up the hill to the point of the Ram Head for a total of about 45 minutes of hiking.



The Air Conditioner



View looking down the gap of the Air Conditioner



Enjoying the view and the cool breeze at the Air Conditioner

The overlook at the Ram Head is about 200 feet above the ocean and provides an awesome panoramic view of the surrounding islands and the turquoise blue water. The vantage point offers a view of St John's South Shore and its many bays to the west and the islands of the British Virgin Islands to the northeast.



View looking east towards Round Bay



View looking northeast towards Salt Pond Bay



Wesley Anglin, Declan McGrath, Petey Wilkens



Crew shot at the top of the Ram Head



The rocky hillside leading up to and surrounding the Ram Head was covered with a multitude of cacti called Turk's Cap. Once the plant matures the barrel cactus forms a woolly bulbous structure at the top of the plant called a cephalium, from which small flowers and later fruit grow. The name of the cactus is derived from the similarity of the reddish, wool-covered cephalium to the Fez hat worn by Turkish male citizens during the late Ottoman Empire.

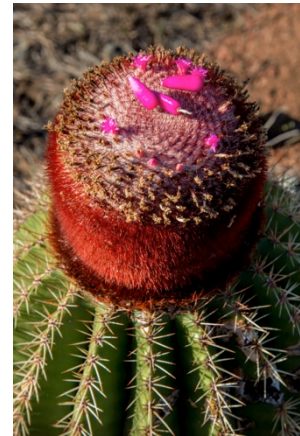
Captain Matt pointed out that the small, pink fruit of the cactus is edible. Since this land is part of the Virgin Islands National Park, however, we practiced good outdoor ethics and left the fruit – *“Take nothing but pictures!”*



Turk's Cap cactus



The hill was covered with Turk's Cap cactus



Fruit of the Turk's Cap cactus



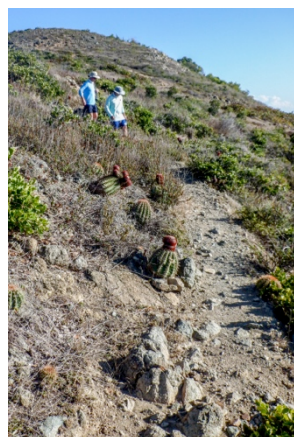
Turk's Cap cactus

Captain Matt hiked bare-footed, even though the trail is very rocky. He has spent many years living bare-footed on board a boat, which caused the skin on his feet to become very calloused and thick. The rough and cobbled rocks did not bother him at all.

Mr. Wilkens brought his drone on the hike and was hoping to get some dramatic shots of the surrounding island below. Unfortunately, the Ram Head is part of the national park, which prohibits drone usage.



Organ pipe cactus



Trailside view



View looking back up the trail



Taking a cooling break by the Air Conditioner on the way down





Hiking back to the boat



Blue Cobble Beach



Parts of the trail had a lot of pipe organ cacti



Crossing Blue Cobble Beach



Salt Pond Bay and the waiting *Celebration*

One of the awards that the scouts could earn during the trek is the 50 Miler Award. The main requirement for this award is to sail under wind power for at least 50 miles in a single trip. One of the other requirements is to perform 10 hours of service towards an environmental project. We knew that we wouldn't be able to get the full 10 hours on this trip, but we would do some service and finish the requirement at home. The boys opted to pick up litter along the hike and the beach.

Back at the beach, we spent some time working on the requirements for Snorkeling BSA. One of these requirements was to dive and retrieve an object from the ocean floor at a depth of at least 15 feet.



Wesley Anglin



Declan McGrath



Mr. Young



Nate Booher



Posing for a picture before heading back to the boat for the night



Swimming back to the boat for dinner





Isaac Lohmueller preparing dinner

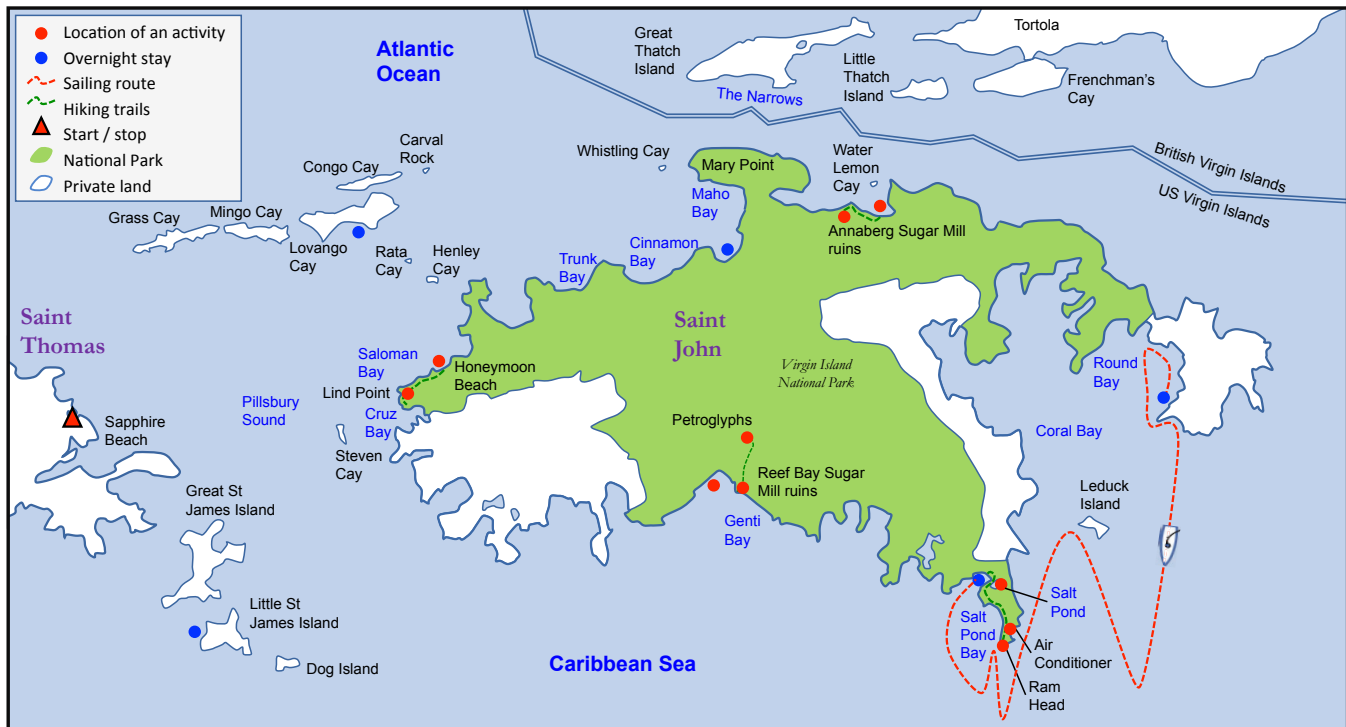


As crew leader Declan McGrath had to record notes everyday about trip details

Nathan was excited to grill the chicken for dinner this night after the glory that he and Isaac received from the pork chops last night. Wesley wanted in on it, too. So, Nathan taught Wesley what Isaac had taught him the night before.

In the evening, Isaac noticed that he had a splinter in his finger and went down into the cabin to seek help to get the splinter out. Mr. Young and Mr. Lohmueller were both available to help in the cabin. It should be noted, however, that Mr. Lohmueller has developed the reputation amongst the Troop for proposing the use of amputation for pretty much any first aid need. Isaac came down the steps, saw his father on one side of the room, and immediately turned to Mr. Young on the other side to ask for help.

Map of the sailing route for Thursday, August 6<sup>th</sup>.



**Friday, August 7**

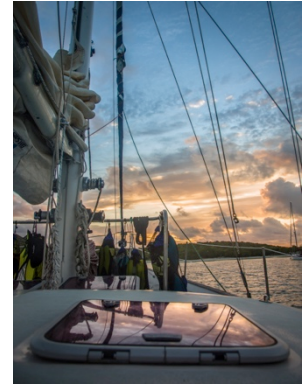
The morning started with a great sunrise with lots of color and dramatic clouds.



Sunrise over Salt Pond Bay



Unfortunately the best part of the sunrise was when most of the Scouts were still sleeping.



Sunrise over Salt Pond Bay

It was Jack's turn to cook breakfast, and after he got up a light breeze arose, catching his unattended sleeping pad. Petey was asleep downwind and the pad slapped him in the face, waking him up with the pad wrapped around his head. It was a bit of a rude awakening for Petey, but he saved Jack's pad from taking a swim in the ocean.



A 180 degree panorama of Salt Pond Bay



Captain Matt returning to the boat after disposing of the week's garbage on shore



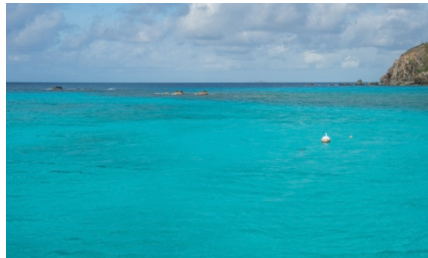
Isaac Lohmueller, Nate Booher, and Nathan Young hanging out on the deck



Petey Wilkens



Declan McGrath and Nathan Young taking it easy on the roof of the saloon



View out from Salt Pond Bay, showing the small rock outcroppings we snorkeled around the day before



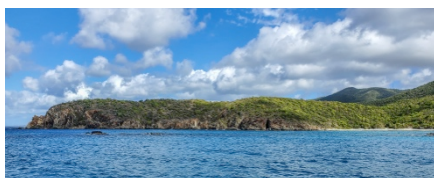


View through a port hole



The boat is secure to the mooring ball

After breakfast, we started sailing. We were heading to Genti Bay to go snorkeling and to take a hike on the island to see the historic sugar mill ruins and petroglyphs. The goal for the end of the day was to make it to Little Saint James to spend the night. This was going to be the longest day of sailing, in terms of distance, as we would have the trade winds at our back.



View across Salt Pond Bay towards Kiddel Point



Mr. Young at the helm



Mr. Wilkens at the helm



Jack O'Dea, Nathan Young



View towards the stern



Nathan Young



Relaxing on deck



Mr. Young steering the boat



View over the cockpit canopy





Mr. McGrath at the helm



Isaac Lohmueller



This shows the boat heeling, or leaning, due to the wind on the sails



This shows the boat heeling to starboard due to the wind on the sails



Petey Wilkens



Headsail starboard winch



Mr. McGrath, Declan McGrath, Wesley Anglin



Nate Booher manning the headsail working line during a jibe



Declan McGrath



Mr. McGrath



Scouts enjoying the smooth sailing





Nathan Young, Captain Matt and Jack O'Dea on the jibe



Nathan Young



We jibed away from land to get some more miles



Jack O'Dea



Hanging out on deck



Jack O'Dea lowering the mainsail



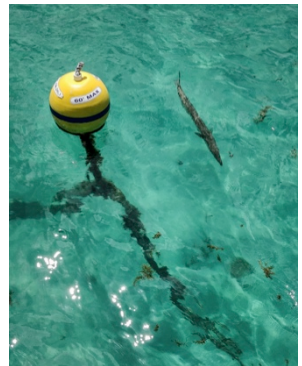
Scouts hanging out together



The common area, also called the saloon



The kitchen, also called the galley



Barracuda swimming next to the boat

We made numerous jibes throughout the day since we were trying to get in 50 miles of sailing during the trip. By mid-morning, we had arrived at Genti Bay.



Mr. Anglin and Wesley Anglin tying up the mainsail after arriving at our destination



Nathan Young, Isaac Lohmueller, and Petey Wilkens getting ready to capture the mooring ball



Nathan Young and Petey Wilkens working the mooring lines



After mooring, we snorkeled ashore for the hike. Mr. Wilkens and Mr. Young joined a pair of scouts to tow the gear raft to the beach. The rest of the scouts followed with the rest of the adults in the rear. The lead group saw a very large stingray, measuring around 4-5' in span, on the seafloor. It slowly turned and swam out to sea as the group passed.

Once we all assembled at the beach, we stowed our raft & snorkel gear, got hats, shoes, water bottles, and troop gear like the first aid kit, and put on more suntan lotion in preparation for our hike. Right before departing, however, someone noticed that Mr. Anglin had a decent size cut on his forehead, although he had no idea how he got cut. Wesley put on a rubber glove from the first aid kit, used an alcohol wipe to apply pressure and stop the bleeding, and then applied triple antibiotic ointment and a Band-Aid. We were then ready to start hiking.



Getting ready to head to shore for the hike to the sugar mill and petroglyphs



The *Celebration* in Genti Bay



Isaac Lohmueller



Mr. Anglin's mysterious cut



Wesley Anglin applying first aid

From the beach, we hiked a short distance to arrive at the ruins of the Reef Bay Sugar Mill. The ruins are one of the best surviving examples of a West Indies sugar operation. Many of the buildings' walls are still standing, along with some of the equipment used to process sugarcane.

The first sugar plantation near Reef Bay was started in 1725. In the early 1800s, a new sugar factory was built to use animal power to crush the sugarcane for producing sugar, rum, and molasses. In 1861 the factory was modernized with the addition of steam power to replace the need for animals and remained in operation producing sugar until 1908. The factory was used for a brief period in the early 1900s to produce bay oil before being completely abandoned. Reef Bay was the site of the last operating sugar mill on the island. The site was restored in the 1960s by the Virgin Island National Park.





Ruins of the Reef Bay Sugar Mill



Reading the descriptive sign



Outside view of one of the mill buildings



The steam boiler that was added after slave labor was abolished



The steam was fed into the steam engine to produce power



The power was then transferred to the rollers to crush the cane to yield juice



The cane juice was then fed into a series of vats where it was boiled



Close-up of a vat for boiling cane juice



Two old gears used in the crushing machinery



Looking through several rooms



An abandoned boiler



Looking through several rooms





Foundation for an out-building



White spider lily

The boys chose to pick up trash on this hike as well for the service project required for the 50 Miler Award. Fortunately the trail and beach were fairly clean, but the same wasn't true for the area surrounding the sugar mill. We picked up a lot of trash around that area.



Petey Wilkens,  
Declan McGrath



Declan McGrath carrying  
the trash bag on the hike

About 30 minutes further up the trail, we came to a set of petroglyphs. Petroglyphs are a form of rock art, created by various ancient civilizations and found throughout the world, that involve carving symbols into the rock face. Typically petroglyphs were used in spiritual rituals. Archeological discoveries in the nearby Cinnamon Bay area confirmed that these petroglyphs were carved around 900 to 1500 AD by the Taino people. The nearby pool of water and the rock carvings were sacred places for the Taino as dwelling places and ritualistic sites for the spirits of their ancestors. Archaeologists believe that the Taino used the petroglyphs to help them communicate with the supernatural world of their ancestors. The Taino people became extinct in the early 1500s after the Spanish arrived on the island, due to warfare, enslavement, and a devastating smallpox epidemic in 1518.



Petroglyphs



Petroglyphs



Petroglyphs





Nathan Young looking at the petroglyphs



Mr. Wilkens, Declan McGrath



Crew shot at the petroglyphs



During rainy season there is a water fall and a stream next to the petroglyphs



The trail back to the beach



Wild pineapple

On the hike back, Petey and Declan led the crew and ended up within six feet of a mature deer that was standing near the path before seeing her. It just serenely walked away as we stopped and watched her.

We spent some time combing the beach picking up litter, but the winds began to pick up and we went straight back to the ship to unload and eat a late lunch. The Sea Base menu called for chicken salad or tuna salad sandwiches, but most of the boys were pretty unfamiliar with eating – let alone making – those. So, Mr. Young and Mr. Lohmueller helped them make it and some tried it, but PB&J was still pretty popular.



Isaac Lohmueller



Declan McGrath taking care of lunch dishes

After lunch we left the bay and headed out to sea. Our destination for the evening was Little Saint James Island.



Nathan Young taking the boat off the mooring ball



Declan McGrath, Nathan Young, and Petey Wilkens working together to raise the mainsail



Captain Matt pointing out to Isaac Lohmueller where to steer the boat



Petey Wilkens, Mr. Wilkens, Captain Matt  
Nathan Young



Mr. Wilkens set up a GoPro camera to capture a time-lapse video of life on the boat

Often, as we were sailing close to shore, we would notice houses under construction. Captain Matt explained that many houses are still under repair from the hurricanes in 2017, but also that in the Virgin Islands, tax law is written such that homeowners do not have to pay real estate taxes while a house is under construction. Many homeowners take advantage of this loophole by adding an unfinished room to their house with no intent of finishing the room, thus not having to pay real estate taxes.



Homes on the island

After a bit of smooth sailing, we jibed to turn back towards the land, only to see a large rainstorm forming near the island. We did a second jibe almost immediately after the first to head back out to sea to avoid the rainstorm. It was a dramatic and action-packed back-to-back set of jibes.



Wesley and Captain Matt were sitting and talking near the mainsail boom. Wesley saw an interesting knot hanging from the boom and he asked Captain about it. Captain explained that it was called a daisy chain, and that it was a simple knot that can be used to store long ropes. He then proceeded to teach Wesley how to tie it.



Captain Matt teaching Wesley Anglin how to tie a daisy chain knot



Wesley Anglin with a correctly tied knot



Declan McGrath working the winch during a jibe



Captain Matt



Jack O'Dea, Petey Wilkens, Nathan Young



Jack O'Dea



Captain Matt, Petey Wilkens, Isaac Lohmueller



Captain Matt



Isaac Lohmueller



Declan McGrath lowering the mizzen sail



Petey Wilkens at the helm



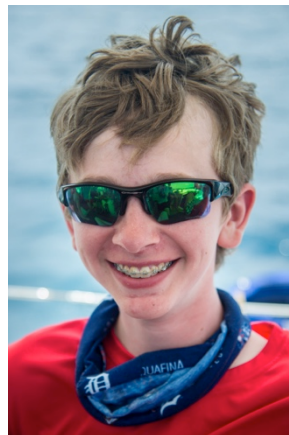
Passing by Great Saint James Island

We had our best and most advanced sailing this afternoon and ended up with nearly 16 miles sailed for the day. We moored for the night on Little Saint James Island with the promise of snorkeling the best coral reef in the USVI in the morning.

For dinner this night the menu called for hot dogs, but as we got the food ready, we found that all the buns were moldy. To supplement the hot dogs, we opened some cans of beans. To everyone's great dismay, Nate ate multiple plates of beans. Fortunately, disaster was averted, as he had no ill effects. We did get some comedic effect from it all the next day, though, as shown in the pictures below. At first, Nate refused to smile for the picture, as seen in the picture on the left, but all it took was someone in the background shouting, "You want any beans?" to get the picture on the right.



Nate Booher, before "Beans"



Nate Booher, after "Beans"

After dark, several people stayed awake looking for meteors. Mr. McGrath, Captain Matt, and Wesley all saw meteors that night. The meteors are part of the yearly Perseid meteor shower, so-called as it appears to originate from the constellation Perseus. This shower is often referred to as the best meteor shower of the year based on the number of meteors typically viewable, which can be as high as 100 per hour. This year, however, a full moon greatly reduced the number of visible meteors.

Meteors are formed when the Earth passes through a cloud of dust and debris left behind by a comet. Occurring about 50 miles above the Earth objects as small as ping pong balls burn up as they pass through the Earth's atmosphere, creating a brief flash of light streaking across the night sky. In the case of the Perseid shower, the source for the dust is comet Swift-Tuttle, first discovered in 1862. The comet returns every 133 years, replenishing the dust cloud.

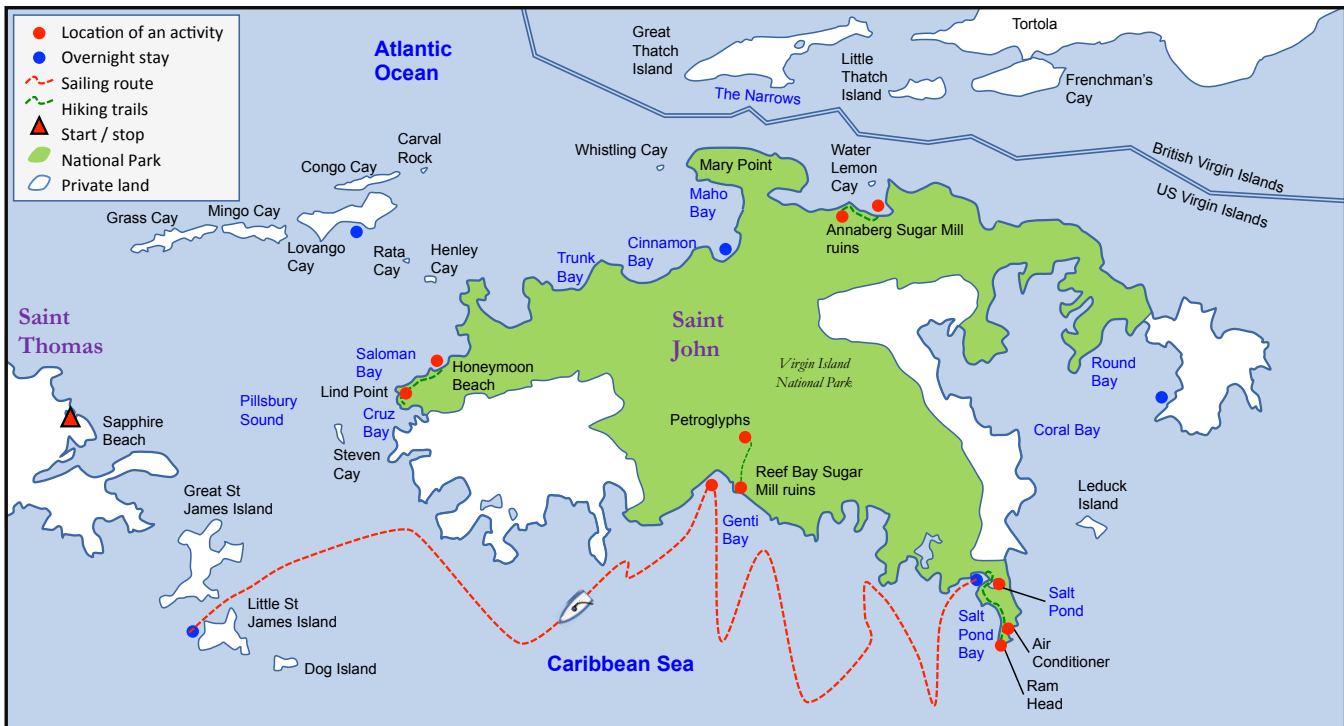


Each day the crew has been doing prayers and short devotionals together. The crew seemed to enjoy them and they have been a great way to keep everyone grounded, thankful, and mindful of what we were experiencing and can take away for life after Sea Base.

Captain Matt had several sayings that he used frequently over the course of the week as the relevant situations arose.

- When encouraging people to look on the positive side of a situation:  
*“No rain, no rainbows.”*
- When acknowledging the need to take personal initiative:  
*“Be on it like a bonnet.”*
- When teaching the scouts to be proactive, to think ahead about what needs to be done for a given activity, and to be prepared:  
*“Get ready to be ready.”*
- When we were talking about how to safely do a certain activity:  
*“You know what’s funny about safety?”* he would ask with a big grin on his face.  
 He would then pause a second, and then with a very serious look on his face would say *“Nothing!”*

Map of the sailing route for Friday, August 7<sup>th</sup>.



**Saturday, August 8**

During cleanup for breakfast, Captain Matt learned that he needed to be very literal with Isaac. Captain Matt handed Isaac the empty French coffee press and asked him to rinse it out and then toss it over board. Isaac looked at him with a serious face and asked if he was giving up making coffee, as it seemed he no longer wanted his coffee press. Captain Matt then had to clarify that he wanted Isaac to rinse it out and toss the water overboard, and not the press.



Morning on the boat

Mr. McGrath announced to the crew that today was Mr. Wilkens' 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. Everyone cheered for him. He told the scouts that "they are the first people to experience Version 50 of me", which elicited a round of applause and a hearty version of "Happy Birthday!".

After an easy breakfast of cereal and pop tarts, we each made lunchmeat sandwiches and put them in Ziplocks in the refrigerator. We had an awesome coral reef to explore and many miles of sailing to do before returning the *Celebration* to port, so we wanted a quick lunch already prepared. Captain Matt wanted to give us as much time snorkeling and sailing as possible on our last day.

Once we cleaned up from breakfast we went snorkeling on the reef next to Little St James Island. Mr. Wilkens was the first to enter the water and decided to jump in with style. He created a large splash and in the process, caused a small fish to flip up onto the boat deck. The fish was quickly returned to the water, having had a whopper of a story to tell his friends about learning to fly.



Mr. Wilkens



Nate Booher



Petey Wilkens



Declan McGrath



Jack O'Dea



Wesley Anglin



Mr. Young





Isaac Lohmueller



Mr. Anglin



Mr. McGrath

The reef in the bay was fairly long and wide, so we snorkeled in a zig-zag pattern to see it all. The water was very clear, and there was a large array of colorful coral with lots of fish to see. For those who dove down to see the coral up close, they could see a tremendous amount of tiny details in the coral as well as many more tiny fish.



Strawberry sponge



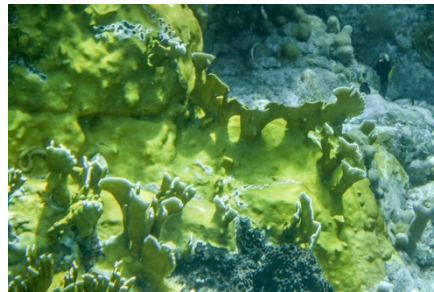
Blue tang



Blue tang swimming near blade fire coral



Sergeant major fish



Blade fire coral



Tube sponges, blade fire coral, and a sea fan



Nathan Young



Isaac Lohmueller



Mr. McGrath



Petey Wilkens





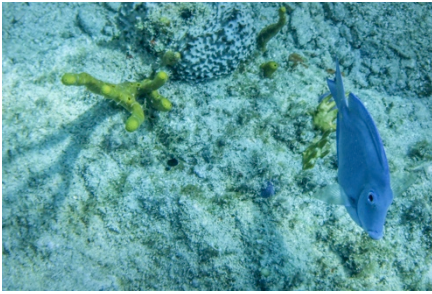
Schoolmaster snapper



Blue tang swimming near blade fire coral



Strawberry sponge



Blue tang swimming near sponges



Honeycomb cowfish



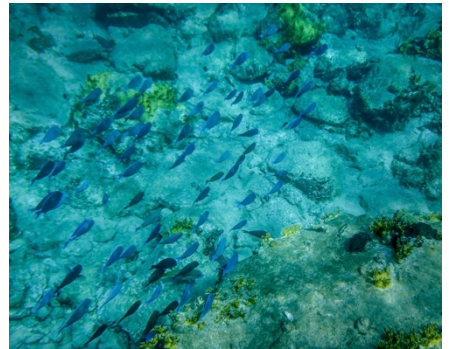
Sargassum



Blade fire coral



Tube sponge



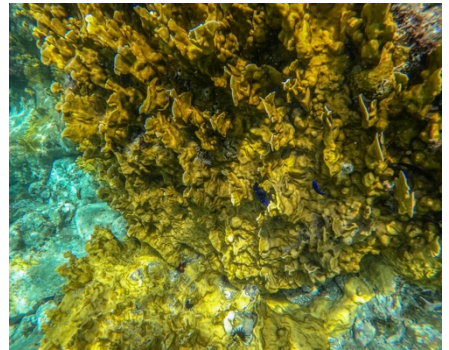
School of blue tang



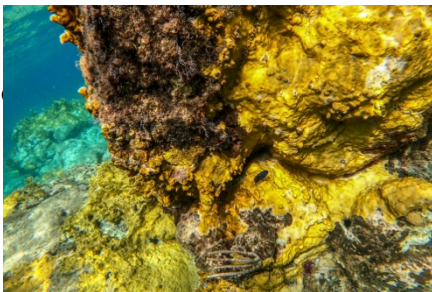
Nathan Young



Jack O'Dea



Blade fire coral



Blade fire coral



Declan McGrath



Nate Booher



One interesting feature within the reef is a small arch formed by the coral. The arch was around 3 feet across.



Coral arch



Coral arch with the crew in the background

During our snorkeling, it was often possible for most of us to get to see something that a fellow crewmember spots and points to. But of course, sometimes we individually get to experience something that changes before others get to it. It makes for an interesting combination of shared-yet-unique experiences.

One example of this was when Mr. Young and Mr. Wilkens were in the lead, slowly taking the group around a giant wall of coral when all of a sudden a school of blue tang fish emerged from the other side and swam about 20' in front of the group. It was a giant pipeline of fish, maybe five fish tall and a few wide, that seemed to go on and on. Fortunately, almost the entire crew got to experience it. On the other hand, there were other moments experienced by only one or two people, such as Mr. McGrath seeing a very large stingray swimming below.



Mr. Young pointing out an interesting find



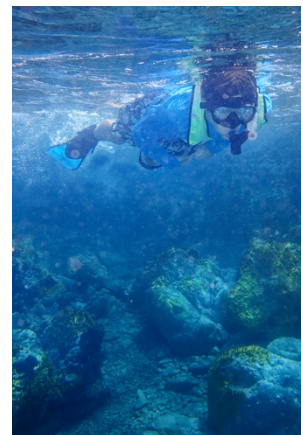
School of blue tangs



Petey Wilkens



Mr. Young



Jack O'Dea





Nate Booher



Mr. McGrath, Declan McGrath



Mr. Young



Petey Wilkens



Declan McGrath



Wesley Anglin

After snorkeling, we set sail for the last leg of our journey as we headed towards the marina. The wind was from behind and we hit 6.8 knots (almost 8 mph), the fastest we had traveled along the entire journey. The boat is rated for 8-9 knots, so we were approaching the upper limits of the boat design. Captain Matt was excited for us and his enthusiasm was very contagious to all of the crew.



Petey Wilkens waiting for the command to unmoor the boat



Isaac Lohmueller getting ready to raise the main sail



Jack O'Dea, Mr. Anglin, and Petey Wilkens readying the main sail



Petey Wilkens, Declan McGrath, and Mr. Wilkens



Nathan Young, Mr. Young





Mr. Lohmueller, Declan McGrath, Wesley Anglin



Captain Matt giving some directions and Petey Wilkens acknowledging



Jack O'Dea and Nate Booher during a jibe maneuver



Full sails



Isaac Lohmueller



Mr. Lohmueller



Nate Booher



Nathan Young



Petey Wilkens



Petey Wilkens



Declan McGrath



Declan McGrath at the helm



Hanging out on deck



Scouts giving their "VI" gesture





Wind coming from starboard side



Mr. McGrath at the helm



Nathan Young



Adjusting the head sail during a jibe



Declan McGrath



Getting ready to jibe



Captain Matt explaining some detail about the surrounding area



Getting ready to jibe



Looking up the mast of the mainsail



Getting ready to jibe



Petey Wilkens, Wesley Anglin, Declan McGrath, Nathan Young



Wesley Anglin



Declan McGrath steering the boat



As we were heading across Pillsbury Sound, the water started getting a bit rough. We were hitting 8-10 foot waves, making for dramatic sailing.

On this day, Wesley and Declan were sitting on the cabin roof chatting, when out of the blue Wesley asked Declan if he wanted to learn how to tie a daisy chain knot. Declan said yes and for the next few minutes, Wesley taught Declan the knot, passing on the knowledge that he had learned earlier in the week.



Declan McGrath practicing tying a daisy chain



Example of a daisy chain



Jack O'Dea and Petey Wilkens working the head sail line



Petey Wilkens working the head sail line



Captain Matt



The sailing got a bit rough for a while



Laughing gull



Captain Matt



Isaac Lohmueller



All week the saloon roof provided a great space for the boys to hang out and spend quality time together





Approaching the marina, located between the white and dark buildings

The adult leaders throughout the week stepped back and allowed the scouts to manage the tasks associated with sailing. The scouts all took turns at the helm to steer the boat. They learned to listen to the sail to tell if they were too close to the direction of the wind. If they heard the sail flapping, they learned that they had to steer slightly away from the wind until the flapping stopped and the sail stayed full. They learned to keep an eye on the windex to stay in the best direction relative to the wind. They learned how to switch the orientation of the front sail when tacking and jibing, using the winches and cleats. The fluidity of their movements by the end of the week was poetry in motion and a beautiful thing to witness.

This was best exemplified late in the day today. All 6 scouts were sitting on the saloon roof, naturally leaning to the high side of the boat, smiling, laughing, and enjoying the companionship of one another. Captain suddenly yelled “Jibe, ho!”, meaning that we needed to make a jibe maneuver. All six scouts yelled “Yes, captain!” and immediately exploded into action, jumping up to get into position to work the sails. No one hesitated or wondered what needed to be done. The scouts performed like a well-oiled machine. Once the boat was again on a straight trajectory after the jibe, they returned to their huddle on the saloon roof to pick up their conversations where they had left off.

As we neared the marina, we stowed the sails and began to motor into port. Captain Matt played the “Happy Birthday” song by Stevie Wonder in honor of Mr. Wilkens and then the song “Celebration” by Kool and the Gang. The crew clapped to the beat as we pulled in and docked the boat.

Once back at the marina, everyone began the process of thoroughly cleaning the boat. All the gear was packed and brought onto the deck so that we could clean inside the boat. This involved cleaning the heads, emptying the refrigerator, sweeping the floors, wiping down the railings, etc. Once that was done, the gear was brought back downstairs and the entire deck surface wiped down.



Nathan Young and Isaac Lohmueller



All hands were on deck for the cleaning of the boat



After a few hours of relatively complaint-less hard work, the *Celebration* looked great and we thought it might be about time for us to wash ourselves. We washed up using a hose on the dock and a bottle of Joy dishwashing liquid. We reasoned that if it is good enough for oil-covered Alaskan waterfowl, it would be good enough for us. Mr. McGrath picked up the hose and pointed it in the direction of the crew, saying that this was the moment he had been waiting for all week, the chance to have a “Meteor shower”.

Several people were also able to wash clothes for the trip home. Dinner was provided by Sea Base from a local restaurant and we ate Mahi Mahi sandwiches and pasta salad on the dock. After dinner, Mr. Wilkens and Mr. Young snuck out to buy some cold drinks as a treat for the Troop.



Declan McGrath, Jack O’Dea, and Nate Booher enjoying some free time before dinner



Mr. Lohmueller having a dockside dinner



Mr. Wilkens enjoying a Bimbo sandwich cookie for dessert

In the evening we convened around the helm and Captain Matt talked about the accomplishments of the week. He let the boys know that he was very happy with their performance, behavior, and attitudes during the week. He announced that the boys had earned the Captain’s Club award. This is a award that the Captain can give out to honor Troops who perform well on the trip. We also had a “Roses, Buds, and Thorns” discussion. Each person, in turn, talked about three topics:

- Roses: these were the highlights of the trip or things that went well
- Thorns: these were the challenges or difficulties the person faced during the trip
- Buds: these are the things that the person is looking forward to at home or things that they learned from the trip that they can apply at home

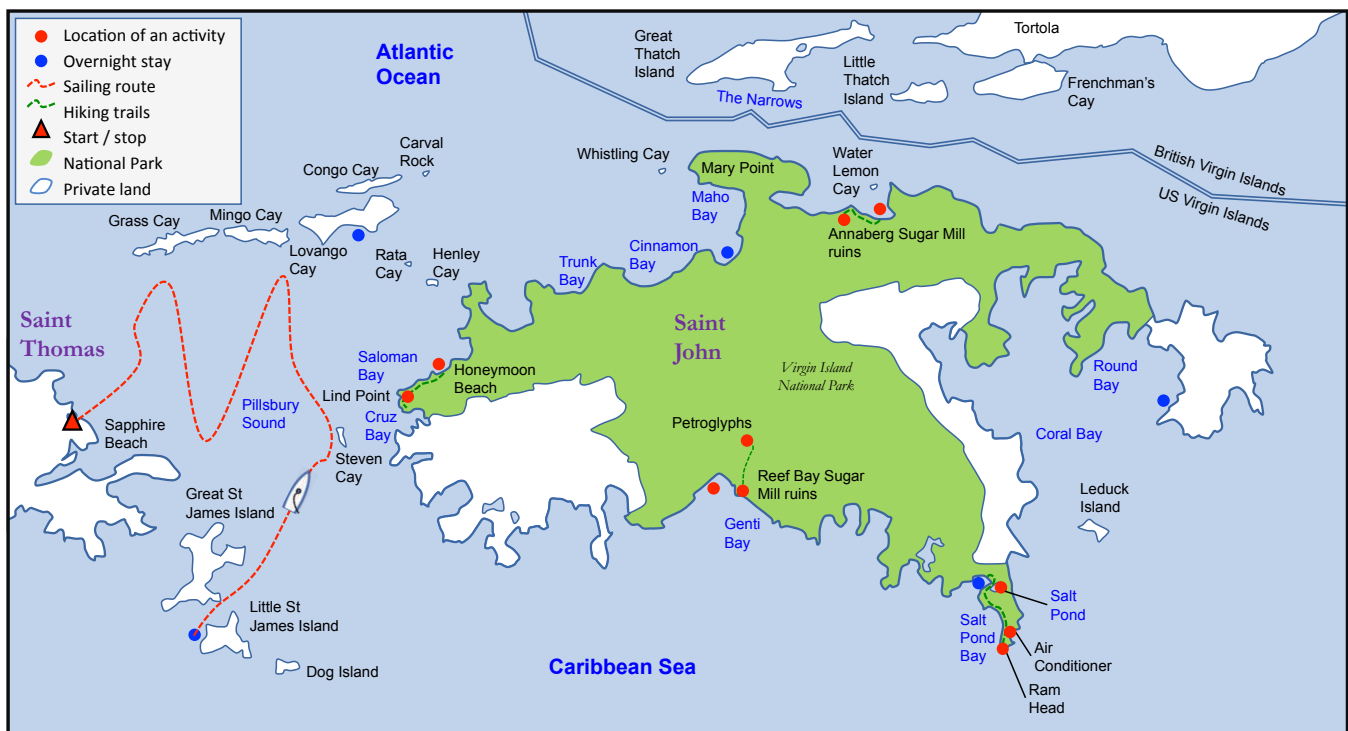
It was during the discussion throughout the evening that the *Celebration* became known as a vintage yacht to highlight the class and dignity of the fine boat that she is.



Awards ceremony

Looking over the past week it was easy to see how the boys have improved as a team and as sailors. They were all comfortable at the helm, raising or lowering the main and mizzen sails, and unfurling the front sail. They quickly tied bowlines, operated winches, coiled rope, and cinched cleats. They jumped into action and filled needs almost as they happened. They seemed to all feel comfortable at the helm even when making the 60' *Celebration* tack or jibe in a new direction.

Map of the sailing route for Saturday, August 8<sup>th</sup>







Sunday, August 9

The morning started with a colorful sunrise.



Nathan Young, Isaac Lohmueller, and Petey Wilkens still asleep



Looking east across Pillsbury Sound towards St John



Sunrise over Pillsbury Sound



The *Celebration* docked at the marina



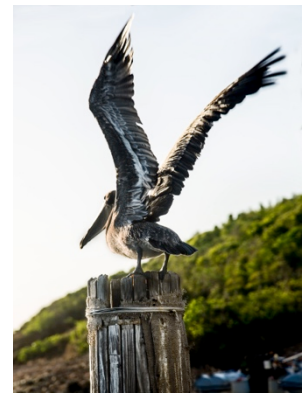
Sapphire Beach Resort marina



Cleat on the dock



Serene seating looking over Pillsbury Sound



Brown pelican

We spent the night on the boat as usual, but so as to not mess up the boat, which we painstakingly cleaned the day before, we had breakfast on the dock. We had some time before the shuttle was to come to pick us up, so we just hung out on the boat for the time being.



Petey Wilkens having breakfast



Captain's "Boat Stuff" t-shirt



*Celebration*





Nate Booher



Jack O'Dea



Nathan Young and Isaac Lohmueller playing a game of *Battleship*



Playing games while waiting for the shuttle



Palm tree

The time to go finally came. We took our last group photo on board the boat, grabbed our bags, and bade farewell to Captain Matt and the *Celebration*.



Mr. McGrath, Nate Booher, Mr. Wilkens, Nathan Young, Petey Wilkens, Mr. Young, Declan McGrath, Mr. Anglin, Captain Matt, Wesley Anglin, Mr. Lohmueller, Jack O'Dea, Isaac Lohmueller



Louis was our shuttle driver to take us back into town. Once we got near Charlotte Amalie, we stopped at an impressive overlook of the city and the surrounding islands in Long Bay. Louis was able to give some history of the city and point out some key features.

Just below the overlook, there were several trees called Flamboyants, and the trees had 4 or 5 iguanas climbing around on them, eating the red flowers.



Panoramic view of the city of Charlotte Amalie



Iguana in a Flamboyant tree



Nate Booher, Jack O'Dea, Isaac Lohmueller, Mr. Anglin, Wesley Anglin, Mr. Lohmueller, Nathan Young, Declan McGrath, Mr. Wilkens, Mr. Young, Petey Wilkens, Mr. McGrath



City scene



Driving on the left side of the road



Heading into town



After spending some time at the overlook, Louis took us into downtown Charlotte Amalie to do some sightseeing and souvenir shopping. The town has a lot of older architecture that has a New Orleans' French Quarter feel. Almost every local we met would greet us warmly as we walked around town.

Louis mentioned to us that there are almost 500 tourist shops in town. We walked around town looking for some souvenir shops, but we only found 1 open shop. We also found a local bodega shop, a tavern, and several restaurants that were open. Between this being hurricane season and travel restrictions due to COVID, almost the entire town was shut down.



St Peter and Paul School



View west down Dronningens Gade



Post Office



View east down Dronningens Gade



Public library



Building representative of the architecture in the area



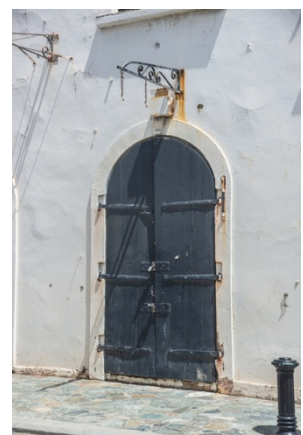
St Peter and Paul Cathedral



Local bodega



View through the front door of the one souvenir shop that was open



Typical style of door for the shops in town

Mrs. Anglin likes to collect shot glasses, and had requested Mr. Anglin to bring one back from the trip. With almost all of the shops closed, it looked like we were out of luck. Even the one souvenir shop that was open didn't have any for sale. Mr. Anglin and Mr. McGrath tried stopping into the one tavern that was open to see if they sold any shot glasses as promotional items, but again, our efforts came up empty. The prospects that Mr. Anglin would be able to return home triumphantly with a shot glass in hand was quickly diminishing. It looked like the quest was to fail, but at the last possible moment, one of the scouts noticed a small souvenir shop in the airport waiting area, and by jove, they sold shot glasses. Victory at last. Mr. Anglin could return home with his head held high.

We ate lunch at Gladys' Café, a quaint local restaurant located down a narrow alley.



Walkway to *Gladys' Cafe*



Welcome to *Gladys' Cafe*



View inside of *Gladys' Cafe*

After lunch, Louis picked us up again and took us to the airport.



Waiting at the airport



Crossing the apron to the waiting airplane



Our plane home

While boarding the airplane, Mr. McGrath and Mr. Lohmueller met the captain of the plane on the airport apron. The entire Troop was wearing our red trip shirts, so we must have caught his attention. The captain asked several questions about the Troop and about our trip. A few minutes later on the plane, when the captain came on the PA system to provide flight details to the passengers he gave a shout-out to the Troop, specifically welcoming us aboard the plane.



Mr. Lohmueller and Mr. McGrath talking to the captain of the plane





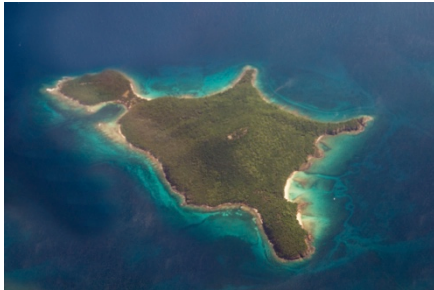
Takeoff – farewell USVI



Mr. Lohmueller



St Thomas Island



Uninhabited Caribbean island  
(Cayo Luis Pena, Puerto Rico)



Puerto Rico

We flew through Atlanta again before reaching home. Both flights were uneventful. Once back at CVG, we circled up for final reflections, passing out the participation patch, and a final prayer before heading our separate ways. The trip came to a very successful end.



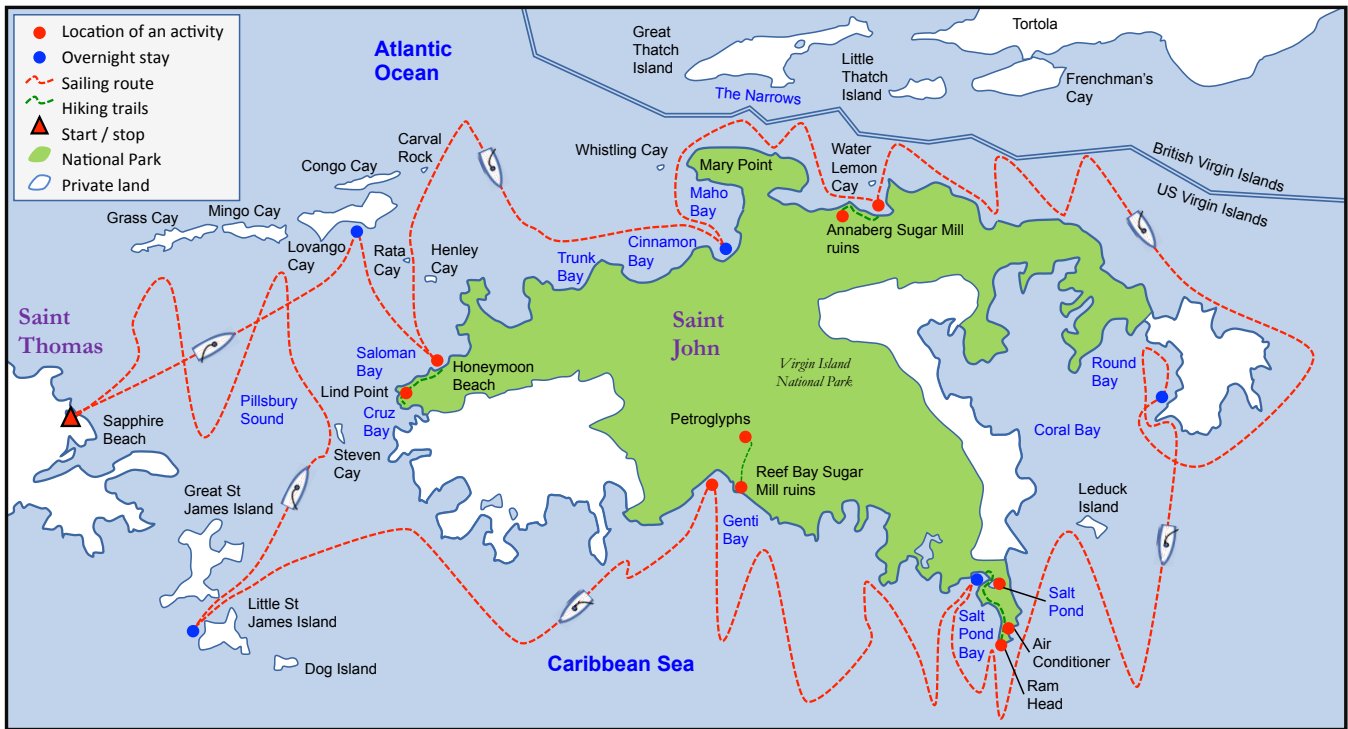
Sea Base crew flashing a “VI” symbol



Closing remarks from the Crew Leader,  
Declan McGrath

The 2020 Sea Base Virgin Islands trek is now in the history books. Time to start focusing on the next big adventure – Philmont Scout Ranch.

The map below shows the complete sailing route around the island of Saint John, along with the locations of the activities and nightly stops during the trip.







## Wrap Up

We had several follow on activities to wrap up the trip. For the Fifty Miler award, we still needed to do 6 hours of service towards an environmental project. Mr. McGrath coordinated with Gorman Heritage Farm to complete this task. We met at the farm one weekend on Saturday and Sunday and worked to clean up the trail to the Upper Meadow. The vegetation along the trail was starting to overgrow the trail, so we went along and trimmed back the vegetation. Along the way, we also removed any of the invasive honeysuckle that was growing next to the trail.



View down the trail successfully cleared



Wesley Anglin



Clearing the trail



Nathan Young, putting his foot on the stump of the honeysuckle bush he cut down with a loppers



Mr. Anglin, Wesley Anglin, Declan McGrath, Nate Booher, Isaac Lohmueller, Petey Wilkens, Mr. Wilkens, Mr. Lohmueller, Mr. McGrath (taking picture)

Wesley found a white flower near the trailhead that he found fascinating. A little bit of research showed that the flower was from the wild potato vine.

A week later we had a wrap-up party at the Booher household. In their pool, we were able to complete the last of the requirements for the Snorkeling BSA award. After a pizza dinner, we were able to have a story sharing session so that the parents who didn't go on the trip could enjoy the trip as well. Mr. Wilkens read from his journal about many of the details of the trip, with other adults piping in from time to time.

The scouts returned from Sea Base as a more mature, cohesive group. They will be reliving the stories from this trek for many years over campfires, as they reminisce amongst themselves and regale younger scouts with all that they did. Hopefully, they will also take away a deeper appreciation for the beauty of God's creations, both in nature and among fellowship with others, as well as a deeper confidence in their abilities to learn and grow.



## Awards Earned

The Troop had the opportunity to earn up to 6 patches on this trip, as shown below.

### Participation award

This patch is awarded to any participant who completes a trek at the Sea Base.



### Captain's Club

The purpose of this award is to recognize units that excel during the trek. To earn this award units must: properly prepare for the adventure, elect a seasoned Youth Crew Leader, assume all vessel responsibilities, utilize proper sailing techniques, become proficient snorkelers, and adhere to the Scout Oath and Law. The award is granted at the Captain's discretion. The entire crew received this patch.



### 50 Miler Award

This award is designed to stimulate interest in outdoor adventure and to promote activities that improve personal fitness, self-reliance, knowledge of the outdoors, and a connection to conservation.

To earn the patch participants have to complete a minimum 50-mile, 5-day trek by an unmotorized means, such as biking, boating, hiking, or canoeing. Each participant also needs to complete 10 hours of conservation.



During the trip, we were able to exceed the 50 miles by sailing. During two of the hikes, we spent time picking up litter along the trails and beaches. The crew finished up the 10 hours of conservation by helping to clear trails at Gorman Farm after we came home. The entire crew received this patch.

### Duty to God

The “Duty to God” program is designed to expand participants’ awareness of the bountiful creation around them, to emphasize their responsibility to the land, air, and sea, and to encourage them to examine their relationship to God.

To earn the patch participants have to lead 2 prayers and 1 devotional during the trip, and to participate in two additional devotionals.

The patch was earned by Declan, Petey, Nathan, Wesley, Nate, Mr. Wilkens, Mr. Young, Mr. Lohmueller, and Mr. McGrath.



### Snorkeling BSA

The purpose of this award is to introduce Scouts to the specific skills, equipment, and safety precautions associated with snorkeling, to encourage the development of aquatics skills that promote fitness and recreation, and to provide a foundation for those who later will participate in more advanced underwater activities.

The Troop was able to complete most of the requirements while on the Trek, with the remaining items being completed once we got home.

The entire crew earned this award.



### Mile Swim

The purpose of this award is to encourage strong swimming skills and to recognize those who swim one mile or more.

The Troop completed the requirements while preparing for the trek, using the Evendale Community Pool. The patch was earned by Mr. McGrath, Declan McGrath, Mr. Young, and Nathan Young.





## Flora and Fauna Identified

The island offered a tremendous variety of plant and animal life. The list below highlights the great diversity of life that we were able to identify.

### Land plants

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Dodder vine	Hibiscus	Organ pipe cactus
Pineapple	Prickly pear cactus	Turk's cap cactus
White spider lily		

### Trees

Flamboyant  
Palm  
Papaya

### Marine plants

Mermaid's fan  
Sargassum  
Sea grass

### Crustaceans

Hermit crab

### Fish

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Bar jack	Barracuda	Beaugregory damselfish
Bicolor damselfish	Black hamlet	Blue striped grunts
Blue tang	Bluehead wrasse	Checkered puffer
Chub	Four eyed butterfly	French angelfish
French grunt	Gray snapper	Honeycomb cowfish
Nurse shark	Princess parrotfish	Remora
Rock hind	Schoolmaster snapper	Sergeant major
Smallmouth grunt	Smooth trunkfish	Southern stingray
Spotted eagle ray	Stoplight parrotfish	Tarpon
White mullet	Yellowtail damselfish	Yellowtail parrotfish
Yellowtail snapper		

### Reptile

Green sea turtle  
Iguana

### Echinoderms

Long-spined sea urchins  
Sand dollars  
White sea urchins

### Sponges

Black paddle sponge  
Branching vase sponge  
Rope sponge  
Strawberry sponge  
Tube sponge  
Branching vase sponge

### Coral

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Brain coral	Blade fire coral	Branching finger coral
Elkhorn coral	Fire coral	Knobby cactus coral
Lace coral	Massive starlet coral	Mustard hill coral
Pillar coral	Scaled lettuce coral	Sea fan
Sea rod coral	Sea whip coral	

### Birds

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Brown pelican	Laughing gull	Royal tern
Snowy egret		

## The Trip By The Numbers

Participants		
Scouts	7	
Adults	5	
Approximate cost of the trip per person	\$2,100	
Approximate cost per patch	\$420	
Miles covered by boat		
Total	63.0	
Total by sailing	51.4	
Monday	0.0	
Tuesday	5.8	
Wednesday	8.1	
Thursday	13.7	
Friday	15.6	
Saturday	8.2	
Number of hikes	4	
Miles hiked	6.7	
Lind Point	1.6	
Annaburg Sugar Mill	1.5	
Reef Bay Sugar Mill	1.6	
Ram Head	2.0	
Number of snorkel sessions	7	
Total number of photographs taken	4,341	
Number of cameras used:	13	
Number of images used in the book	758	
Nights spent on the boat	6	
Year the boat was made	1985	
Birthyear of the Captain	1985	



## Personal Notes

## Personal Notes



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