

SOS message on the sand saves missing sailors - 1 September, 2020

Micronesia is part of the western Pacific Ocean and has more than 600 islands. Recently, three Micronesian sailors set out to sail 42 km from one island to another. Unfortunately, they got lost, and then they ran out of fuel. After a long time drifting without power in the ocean, they landed on the tiny island of Pikelot, more than 100 km from their destination.

Pikelot is just 450 metres long and 280 metres wide. The highest point on Pikelot is only four metres above sea level, it is covered in trees and it has sandy beaches. No-one lives there, and there is no water.

Three days after the three sailors set sail, they did not arrive at their destination, so ships and aircraft in the area began looking for them. But it was almost impossible to decide where to look because there are so many small islands.

In order to try and be rescued, the three sailors decided to write a message on the beach on their tiny island. They wrote a huge SOS in the sand. Luckily, people on a North American aircraft saw the SOS message and contacted an Australian navy ship that was on its way to Hawaii. An Australian helicopter from the ship landed on the beach and gave the men food and water. Soon after, a Micronesian boat arrived and rescued the three sailors. They are very lucky to be alive, and it was the SOS message in the sand that saved them.

Where is Micronesia?

How many islands are in this area?

How far were the three sailors traveling?

What happened to them?

Where did they land?

How far was this island from their original destination?

Describe Pikelot.

How long did it take for a search and rescue party to start looking for the sailors?

What did the three sailors do?

Who saw the message?

Where was the Australian Naval vessel going to?

What did the helicopter do?

Who rescued the men?

What saved the men?