

SEABEE, CIVIC ACTION TEAMS

TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

NAVY SEABEE CIVIC ACTION TEAMS IN THE TTPI

Introduction

When Seabee Team 13304 landed by LST at Moen Island in the Truk District on June 25, 1969, it marked the beginning of the civic action program in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Similar 13-man teams capable of performing all types of construction have since landed at Ponape and Kusaie islands in the Ponape District, Majuro in the Marshalls, Yap in the Yap Islands District and Rota in the Marianas.

Under an agreement between the Secretaries of the Interior and Defense, and at the specific request of the Micronesian people at each location, the Seabee Teams have been provided to assist the Micronesians in constructing facilities, roads and utilities required to enhance the economic development and conditions of health in the TTPI. While construction of such facilities provides tangible evidence of Seabee accomplishments in Micronesia, its major emphasis and greatest potential benefit is the valuable training in construction skills being made available to the people of Micronesia to enable them, eventually, to accomplish essential construction themselves.

Background

PEOPLE—Nearly 100,000 Micronesians live in three major island groupings—Marianas to the north, Carolines stretching east to west, and the Marshalls in two parallel island chains. The people are as varied as the islands. There are nine languages and 54 dialects. The pattern of living and the degree of trade often are dictated by fertility of the land,

rainfall and humidity, tides and wind currents, proximity of neighbor islands, and historical precedence.

The Marshallese are seamen, navigating among their thousand islands to fish for daily food. The Popapeans are farmers, who live in the "breadbasket" of the Carolines. The Trukese are inter-island commuters within their atoll. The Palauans are land-borne, having the largest land mass in the TTPI. The Yapese are traditionalists, declining to be assimilated easily by the successive Spanish, German, Japanese and American administrations. The people of the Marianas are Chamorros, and, because of proximity to Guam, have been closer to the stream of progress.

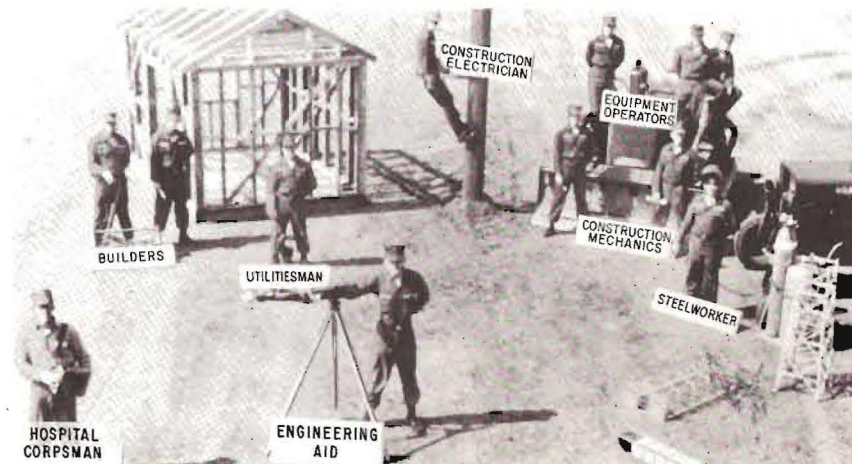
Evidence of Micronesian culture exists in the music and dancing, handicrafts and ceremonial dress visible in this area. Historical reminders such as the stone money of Yap, the bais (men's meeting houses) of Palau, the ancient ruins of Nan Madol on Ponape and rusting debris of World War II are prevalent in all districts. The legends and proverbs of the people are told and recorded. Who are the Micronesians? A vast variety of island peoples, of many clans and tribes, who have evolved a way of life in a simple paradise, far from the complexities of modern life. Now Micronesians must jet into a new age.

POLITICS—Micronesians live under two lines of authority. The traditional line proceeds from the family as the basic unit of society and progresses to the District Legislature and the Congress of Micronesia. Of note is the power and influence of the local chief, who presides over a locality and rules on matters of custom, tradition and land ownership.

The second line of authority, under which the United Nations Trust Territory is administered, descends through the Government of the United States, and through its Department of Interior to the High Commissioner, the Chief Executive of the TTPI. He extends his influence to each district through his District Administrators.

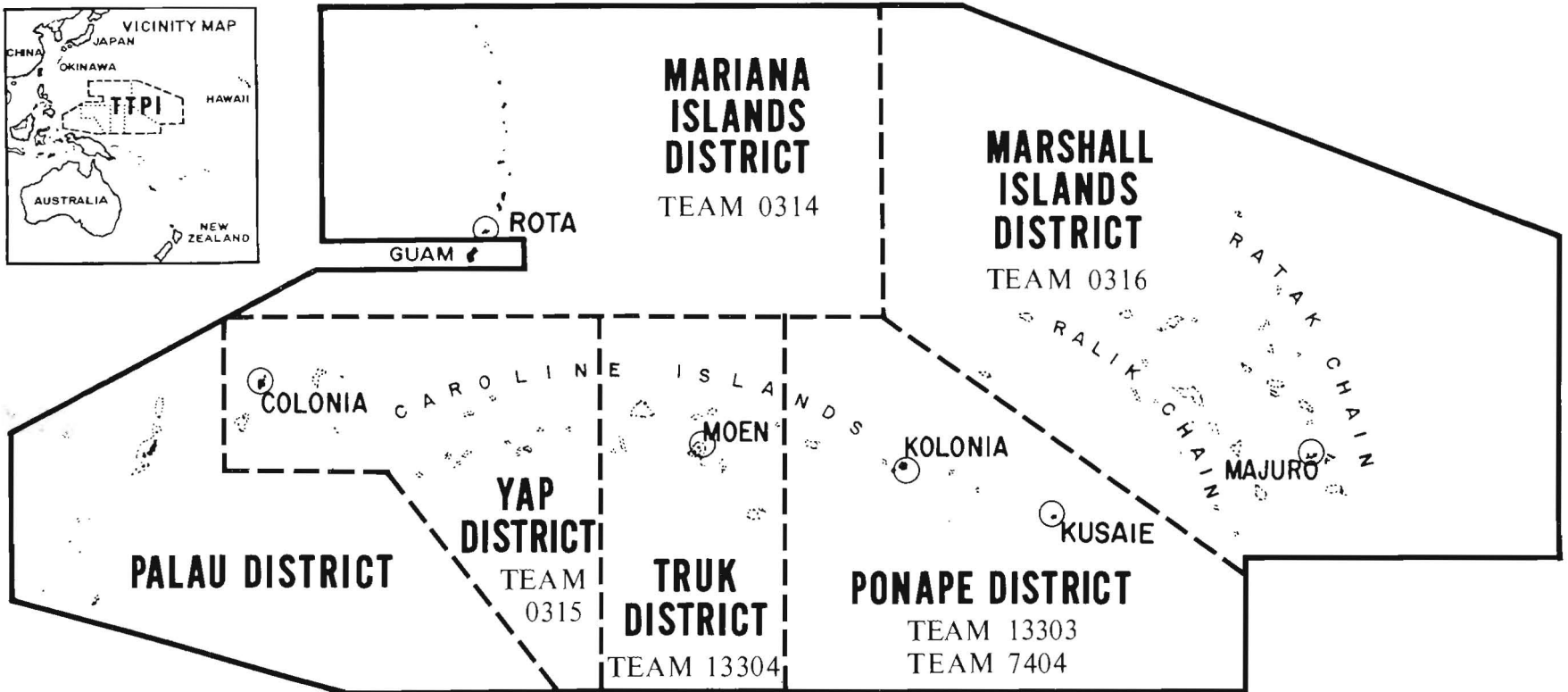
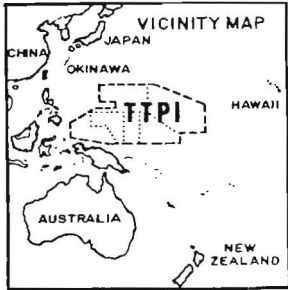
LAND—To Micronesians, land represents food and sustenance, a priceless heritage transmitted over the generations. While the degree of private ownership varies with the island regions, land is scarce, and fertile land is a trust. Some of the smallest islands have the highest population density, while some of the larger ones remain undeveloped.

The 700 square miles of land mass are scattered among 2,100 islands, islets, and atolls, many of them uninhabited. The pattern of life is tied closely to routes of rainfall and typhoons, bringing both life and destruction. The islands may be volcanic, as the high islands of the Marianas; limestone rock islands undercut by nature, as in Palau; low-lying coral reefs with bits of land-like jewels in a necklace, as in the Marshalls; or the tops of a mountain range that has sunk slowly into the sea, as at Truk. Forty per cent of the total land mass is found in two islands, Babelthup and Ponape.



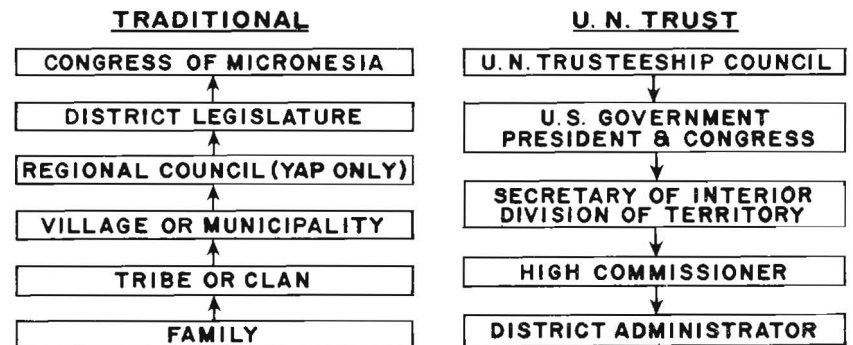
Typical Seabee Civic Action Team and Equipment.

TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS



Women and children of a traditional Yapese clan.

LINES OF AUTHORITY



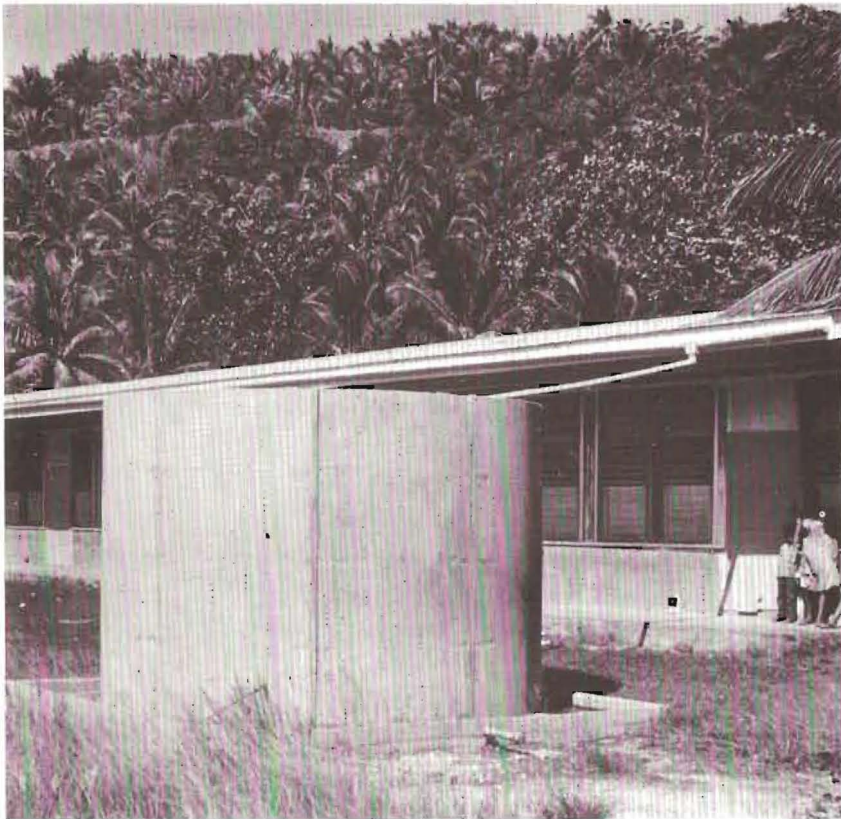
Team 13304 in Truk



Seabee Team 13304 landed at Truk on June 25, 1969. Major projects performed have been improving roads and water storage facilities on the principal island of Moen (the District center); supervising construction of two dispensaries by a local work force on Tol Island; and providing medical services to the residents of the outlying islands. The team departed the Truk District

on February 17, 1970.

During its eight-month deployment it won the acceptance of the people, including Mayor Petrus Mailo of Moen and the Speaker of the Truk Legislature, Hermes Katsura. The relieving Team 4003 will continue construction of projects requested by the people and train Trukese in construction skills.



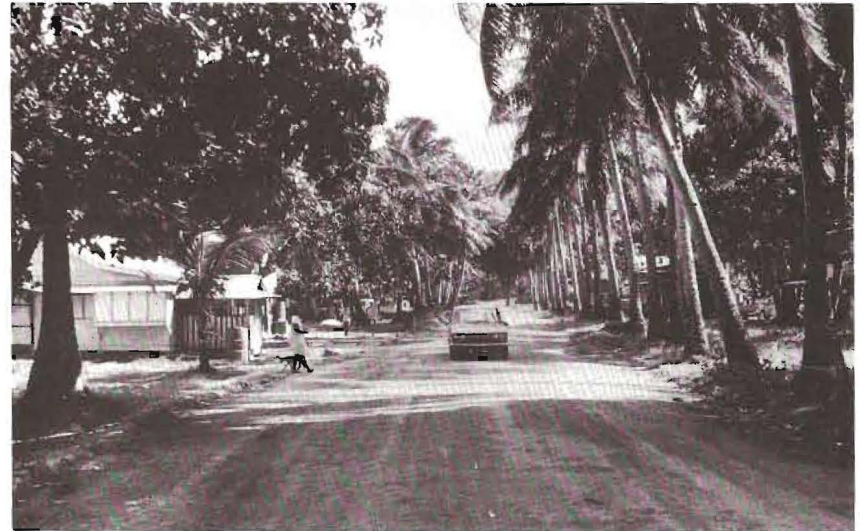
Water catchment tank at elementary school.



Watchful Seabee guides equipment operator trainee.



Typical section of unimproved road.



Seabees eliminated ruts and potholes.

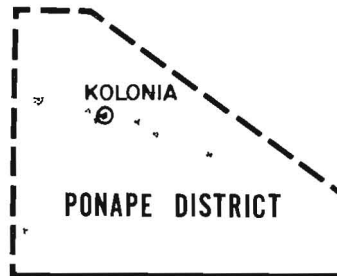


Team provided carpentry for this elementary school.



Supervised Micronesians in building Tol Island dispensary.

Team 13303 in Ponape



Seabee Team 13303 arrived on Ponape Island on June 19, 1969. As a primary project, the team designed and is building a water purification system to reduce or eliminate the high incidence of dysentery among island residents. The team also has concentrated on road building and repair, and has made significant progress toward opening the island's perimeter road. Typical of the enthusiastic acceptance of the Seabees was the naming of newborn twins "Sea" and "Bee" by a Ponapean father. Team 13303 was relieved February 15, 1970, by Seabee Team 1016 and has since returned to its homeport at Gulfport, Mississippi.



Rock can be hauled from nearby streams . . .



. . . to this Seabee-repaired crusher . . .



. . . and placed on road surfaces . . .



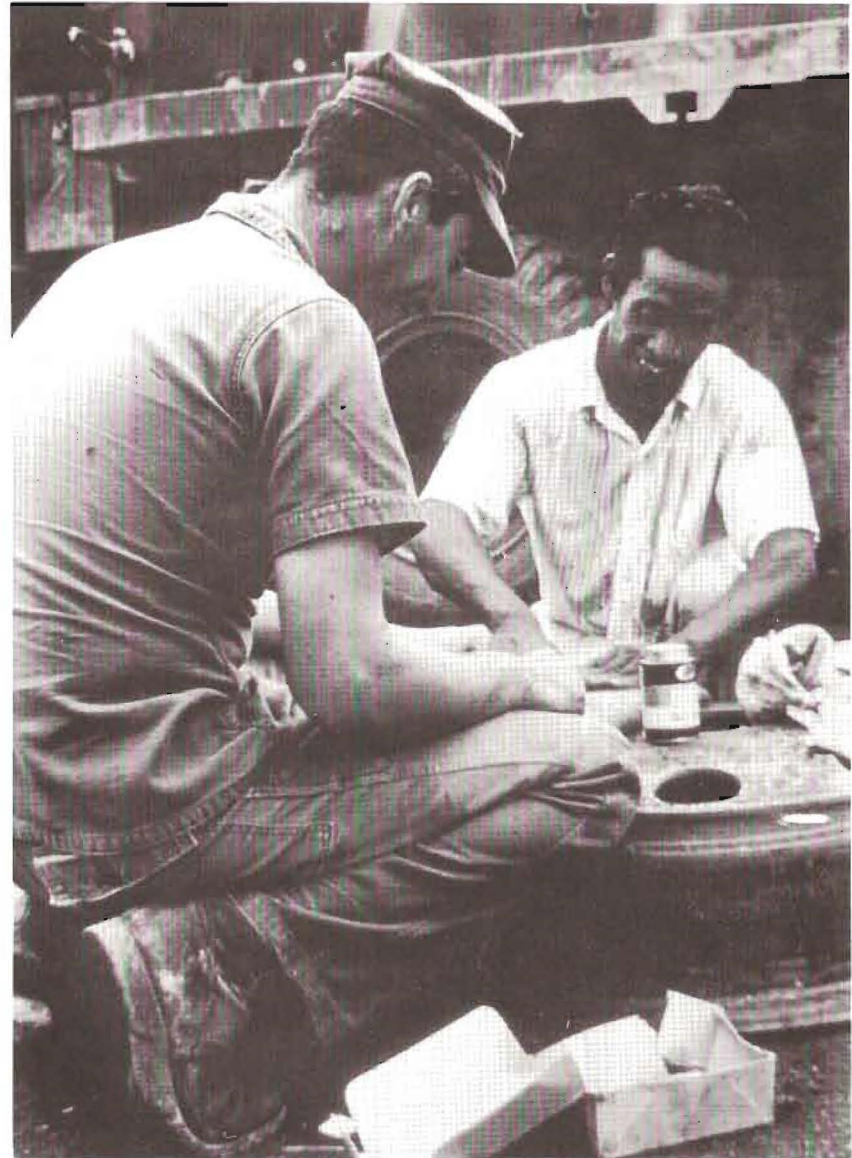
. . . to transform trails like this . . . →



Team designed, built water purification system to fight dysentery.

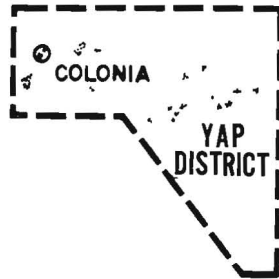


. . . into vehicle carrying roadways.



Valuable training is always provided.

Team 0315 in Yap



Seabee Team 0315 landed on Yap Island in a driving rainstorm on July 29, 1969, and immediately won the support of the islanders by opening a flooded, impassable road before unloading the team members' personal gear from their LST. The team has constructed a reinforced concrete bridge to link Gagil-Tomil and Map (below), opening Map to vehicular traffic with Colonia, the district center, for the first time. Other projects have included water catchment facilities, dispensaries and classroom/on-the-job training of Yapese workers.





Yap's road building program is important . . .



. . . as is training of its youth.

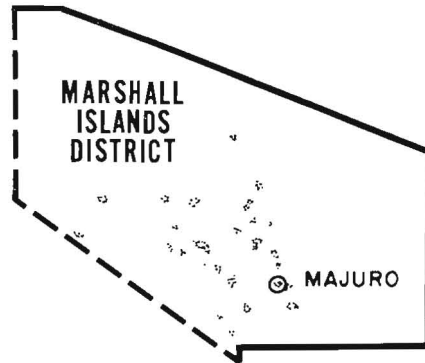


Future causeway at this site may link district center, northernmost island of Rumung.



Distad Aguiji, Chief Folmag, High Chief Roboman and Rep. Mangafel pose with COMCBPAC and team leader.

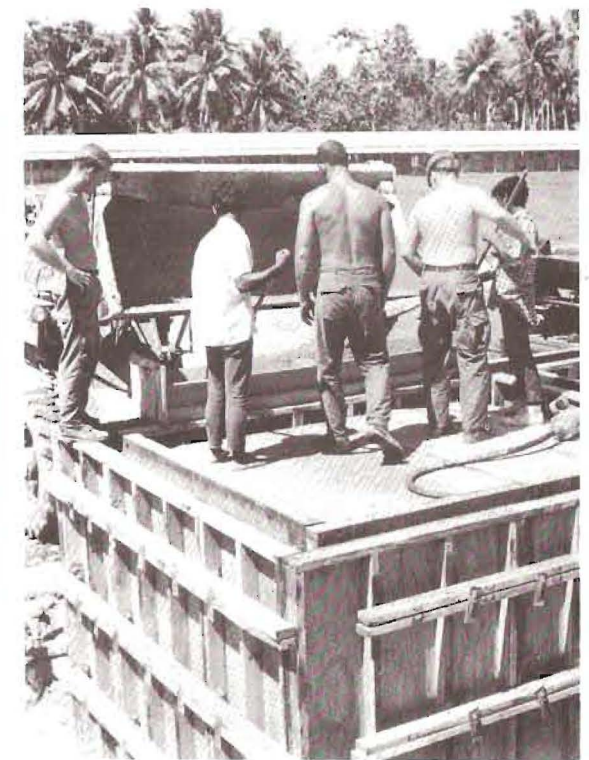
Team 0316 in Marshalls



Seabee Team 0316 arrived on Majuro of the Marshall Islands District on July 27, 1969. The team has upgraded the DUD-Uliga Road, a 32-mile stretch of roads and connecting causeways, that is the longest road in the TTPI. The team also has installed water catchment tanks to relieve critical water storage problems, built athletic fields and gymnasiums for the sports-minded Marshallese, and trained the islanders in construction skills.



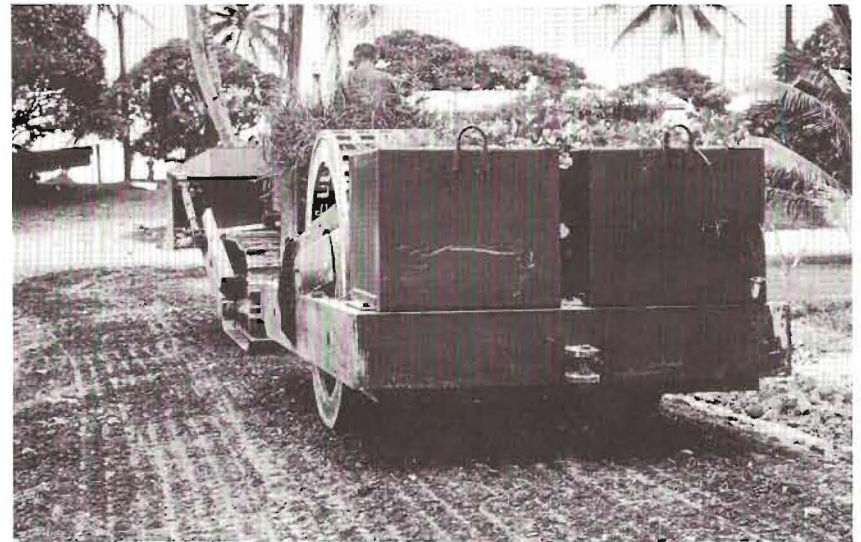
The longest road in Micronesia, rutted and poorly drained, is being upgraded.



Elementary school water storage tank.



Teams are resupplied by C-130s from Guam.



Roads must be cleared, graded, compacted.

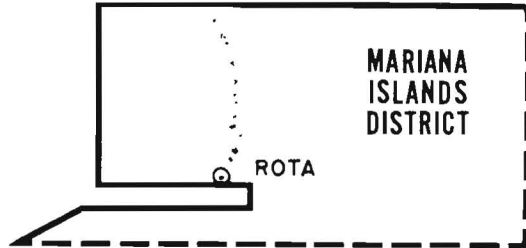


Seabees and Marshallese are sportsminded.



Students are trained while building their gym.

Team 0314 in Marianas



Since arriving on Rota Island on September 25, 1969, Seabee Team 0314 has graded, provided drainage and undertaken the resurfacing of the Rota airfield (below), and regrading of the road that links the airport with the population center at Songsong Village. The team has been received very well by the local residents, who have been hosts to the Seabees in their homes as well as at public gatherings.





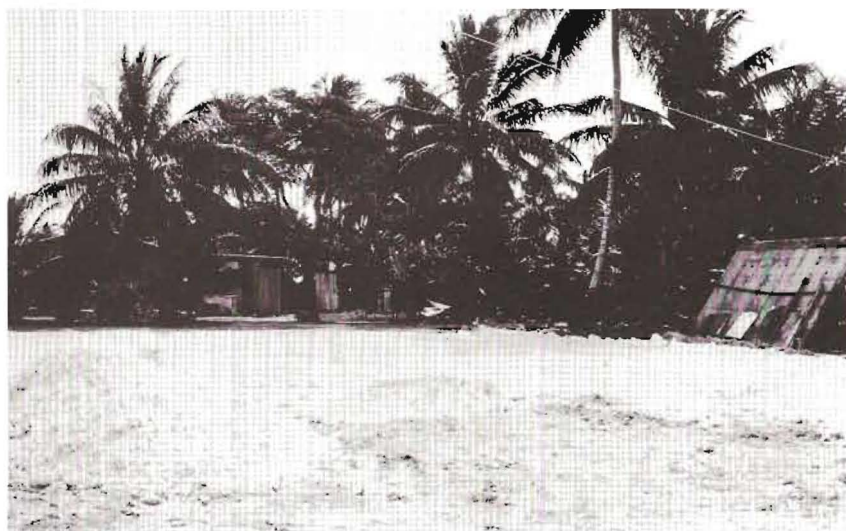
Rough 9-mile road from village to airfield . . .



Local coral is used for road work.

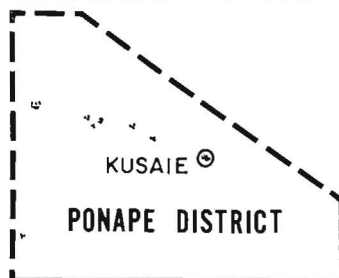


. . . is being smoothed by the Seabees.



The "Bees" cleared this library site.

Team 7404 on Kusaie



Seabee Team 7404 is in the Ponape District, on Kusaie Island, the newest civic action team site. Since arriving there on December 17, 1969, by LST, the team has upgraded electrical distribution lines to the municipal buildings at Utwe, the Malem-Utwe Road, and sanitary and drainage facilities.



Kusaie Islanders (above) await Team 7404's landing (right), welcome members along road (below).



SUMMARY

The people of Micronesia have accepted the Seabee Civic Action Teams warmly in every district where the teams are located. This acceptance

was expressed by the Congress of Micronesia in this House Resolution introduced by Representative Ataji Balos of the Marshall Islands District:

A HOUSE RESOLUTION

CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA

THIRD SPECIAL SESSION, 1970

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 1, H.D. 1

Urging the United States Secretaries of Defense and Interior to continue the present services of the Civic Action Teams and to extend the same to other municipalities in any of the Districts requesting such services.

WHEREAS, the people of the Trust Territory have seen that the Civic Action Teams are very helpful in developing our communities; and

WHEREAS, the Civic Action Teams have helped in building roads, airfields, watercatchments, and in constructing many other public projects; and

WHEREAS, the "Seabees" have worked hard in cooperation with our people, hiring our young people and teaching them methods of construction; and

WHEREAS, it will be of benefit to the people of the Trust Territory if the services of the Civic Action Teams are continued and the said services extended to other municipalities in any of the Districts requesting them; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Congress of Micronesia, Third Special Session, 1970, that the United States Secretaries of Defense and Interior be and they are each respectfully urged to continue the present service of the Civic Action Teams and to extend the same services to other municipalities in any of the Districts requesting them; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this House Resolution be transmitted to the United States Secretaries of Defense and Interior and to the High Commissioner.

Adopted: January 29, 1970

