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The Peace Corps in **MICRONESIA**



There are Problems in Magellan's

Understaffed schools. Bad roads. Insufficient medical facilities. Inadequate water and sanitary systems. In short, there are problems in paradise.

Micronesia, discovered by Magellan in 1521, consists of 2,141 islands and atolls scattered over 3,000,000 square miles, sitting just north of the equator in the western Pacific.

Occupied by American military forces after some of the bitterest fighting of World War II, the area be-

came a United Nations Trusteeship under U. S. administration in 1947. It was America's first attempt at administering a mandate.

But time has passed Micronesia by. Americans always seemed to have more urgent problems at hand—in Korea and Viet Nam, in Birmingham and Watts.

In May 1966, Micronesia requested that the Peace Corps send "middle-level manpower" to help build the social, economic and political basis for future self-government. They asked for teachers, engineers, surveyors, community development workers, health workers, people who could work in agriculture, help from cooperatives and provide various other skills.

They did not want advisers, but men and women willing to pitch in alongside themselves to get the job done. And they knew that in the last six years, more than 25,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have provided this kind of assistance to more than 50 independent nations around the world.

The Peace Corps responded immediately. An intensive program was developed to train liberal arts graduates in the necessary skills.

In the first phase several hundred Volunteers were sent to the Trust Territory by November 1966, to initiate programs in elementary and secondary education, community development, public health and public works. The second phase, which began in November 1966, concentrated on education programs, cooperative and credit union development, public administration, public works, and communications. Other phases are being planned.

Teaching and Community Development

As a Volunteer working in elementary or secondary schools, you will be teaching English as a second language in order to help overcome the communica-

The islands of Micronesia are beautiful. Coral reefs and atolls and lush volcanic ranges. But it is one of the most impoverished areas in the modern world.



the first time many of the districts will have had resident craftsmen. In future projects, the Peace Corps plans to expand the number of Volunteers in Public Works so that the outer islands also may have professional and technical assistance.

MICRONESIA

(The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands)

Micronesia consists of three island groups in the Western Pacific—the Marianas, Marshalls, and Carolines.

AREA: 3,000,000 square miles of water hold 2,141 islands with a total land area of 700 square miles.

POPULATION: The 97 inhabited islands have 90,000 people.

CLIMATE: The islands are warm and humid, averaging 75 to 85 degrees in the Marianas and from 80 to 92 degrees in the Carolines and Marshalls. There are two seasons—the dry and the rainy.

BEST KNOWN ISLANDS: Saipan and Tinian in the Marianas; Palau, Ulithi, Yap, Truk, Ponape and Kusaie in the Carolines; Bikini, Eniwetok, Majuro and Kwajalein in the Marshalls.

LANGUAGES: The nine major Micronesian languages, with dialectal variations, are related to Malay. English is becoming the lingua franca.

EDUCATION: 202 public and private elementary schools accommodate 21,000 students. (A crash classroom building program has raised the enrollment from 12,000 since 1960.) There are 15 public and private secondary schools for 4,000 students. Many elementary school teachers have not completed high school.

ECONOMY: Copra accounts for about 85 per cent of all exports. Living standards are being improved through the introduction of agriculture and marine products. Among the food plants are breadfruit, taro, yams, tapioca, pandanus, bananas, coconuts and cocoa.

Agriculture

Current Peace Corps plans in Micronesia call for a contingent of Volunteers with agricultural skills to arrive in the islands during 1967. Some will be involved in the development of truck farms and crops. Others will help develop cattle, poultry and swine. As an agricultural Volunteer, you will also encourage greater production of indigenous foods like coconut, breadfruit, yams and copra, the major source of income to Micronesia.

The project's goal is to reduce significantly the quantity of food now being imported as well as to increase the quantity and variety of agricultural products for sale.

Public Administration

Lawyers, small business advisors, youth and recreation leaders, and secretaries provide other necessary ingredients for Micronesian development.

Volunteer lawyers use their skills as public defenders, as general counsel to district legislatures, and to codify land laws. Other Volunteers with skills in economics and business administration assist in the establishment and operation of co-ops, credit unions, and small businesses, to produce income, provide employment opportunities, etc. Volunteers working as youth and recreation leaders train Micronesians to institute activities to combat juvenile unrest.

Volunteer secretaries provide essential services for the Peace Corps staff in each of the district offices. The Peace Corps is anticipating requests for increasing numbers of Volunteers to work in the area of Public Administration.

Public Health

In many countries the Peace Corps' principal contribution to health programs has been the result of utilizing large numbers of liberal arts graduates who are trained to work with professional medical personnel.

The Peace Corps in this way has developed effective control programs for filariasis, leprosy and tuberculosis. In Malawi, Brazil and Chile, Volunteers have been able to organize and carry out immunization programs and administer projects in environmental health and sanitation.

As a health Volunteer in Micronesia, you will identify the prevalence of leprosy, tuberculosis and filariasis, as well as assist in bringing them under control. In



Peace Corps Volunteers will teach English as a foreign language in rural areas to Micronesian children whose families look eagerly forward to self-government.

addition, you will promote environmental sanitation—pure water supplies, waste disposal and pest control projects—that will reduce disease transmission.

There are also specific health projects for medical and para-medical Volunteers. For example, nurses work and teach in district hospitals; and pharmacists, x-ray technicians, and medical technologists provide technical services and on-the-job training of Micronesians.

History: *Spaniards, German*

Although written history of Micronesia begins with the Portuguese navigator, Ferdinand Magellan, who discovered the Mariana Islands in 1521, folk chants of the Southwest Pacific people tell of a culture antedating Rome.

Ancient Polynesians, perhaps the greatest sailors in history, navigated 5,000 miles by the stars to reach Palau from Tahiti, centuries before Phoenician galleys commanded the Mediterranean.

But until the 19th Century, little was known of the Micronesians—first cousins to the Malays and more distant cousins to the Polynesians—or the three million square miles of ocean in which they lived. It was then that Spain extended its administrative control to include all three of the major island groups: the Carolines, the Marshalls and the Marianas.

In 1885, the Marshall Islands were seized by Germany. Following Spain's defeat by the United States in the Spanish-American War (1898), the Carolines and Marianas—except for Guam, which was ceded to the United States—were sold to Germany.

With the outbreak of World War I, Japan took over the entire area included in the present Trust Territory, and on December 17, 1920, it was entrusted to Japan under a League of Nations mandate. Upon its withdrawal from the League in 1935, Japan began to fortify the islands and in World War II they served as important Japanese military bases.

Several of the islands, Palau, Kwajalein, Saipan, Tinian and Truk, were the scene of bitter fighting during the war. Indeed, Saipan and Tinian were B-29 bases from which the home islands of Japan were bombed. And, from Tinian, the *Enola Gay* dropped the world's first atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

As each island was occupied by American troops, it became subject to U. S. authority in accordance with the international law of belligerent occupation. In 1947, Micronesia became a United Nations Trusteeship under U. S. administration. Four years later, the administrative responsibility for the Territory was transferred from the Navy Department to the Department of the Interior.

The Trust Territory was divided into six administra-

s, Japanese and Americans Have Occupied the Islands in the Past Eighty Years

tive district: The Palau, Yap, Truk and Ponape districts in the Caroline Islands; the Mariana Islands District; and the Marshall Islands District. Authority for the Territory is vested in a high commissioner, appointed by the President of the United States and un-

der the immediate authority of the Secretary of the Interior.

The Peace Corps entered the Territory on the eve of its twentieth anniversary as a United Nations trusteeship.

The first group of Marshall Island Peace Corps Volunteers, briefly delayed in the District Center en route to their remote sites, immediately set about to rehabilitate a dilapidated dispensary. They worked side by side with Micronesian villagers and each night were fed by village ladies who streamed to the work area with baskets of coconuts, fish and native foods.

