



# Glimpses of Micronesia

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Dancing girl of Ulithi.  
Photo by R.H. Rahe.



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# Peace Corps Spirit Thrives in Micronesia

## Despite Growing Pains

The idea to form an "army" to work for world peace became reality when the U.S. Peace Corps was established by President John F. Kennedy in 1961.

Since then more than 70,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have served abroad in 64 countries operating within local institutions, working side-by-side with citizens of the "host" country. One such country has been the U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands which includes over 2,200 Micronesian islands spread over three million square miles of ocean.

Late in 1966 an invasion — since then compared to that of the U.S. Marines during World War II — was launched by the Peace Corps. Within one year, more than 700 volunteers were working in the Marshalls, Carolines and Marianas. In relation to the territory's population, that was about one volunteer for every 93 Micronesians, the greatest concentration of volunteers anywhere in the world.

"The original introduction of Peace Corps into the Trust Territory in 1966 was based on a decision to move the United States trusteeship in-

to a more dynamic posture after some 20-years of relative immobility," according to a Peace Corps briefing paper.

"In a bold experiment, Washington reasoned that several hundred bright, dedicated, young generalists, given their special training in language and culture, could effect significant results by temporarily filling the need for middle-level manpower in selected areas. English was the vital link between far-flung multi-lingual outposts, and its use could be accelerated by the infusion of several hundred native speakers," the paper said. "Agriculture volunteers could live with farmers and act as extension agents. Villages could be organized for self-help. The low-budgeted Trust Territory government could have a link to seldom visited outer-islands to avoid the kind of misconceptions which plague all desk-bound headquarters."

And so it began on a grand scale. After decades of "benign neglect" by Washington, such an overwhelming presence of Americans working in the

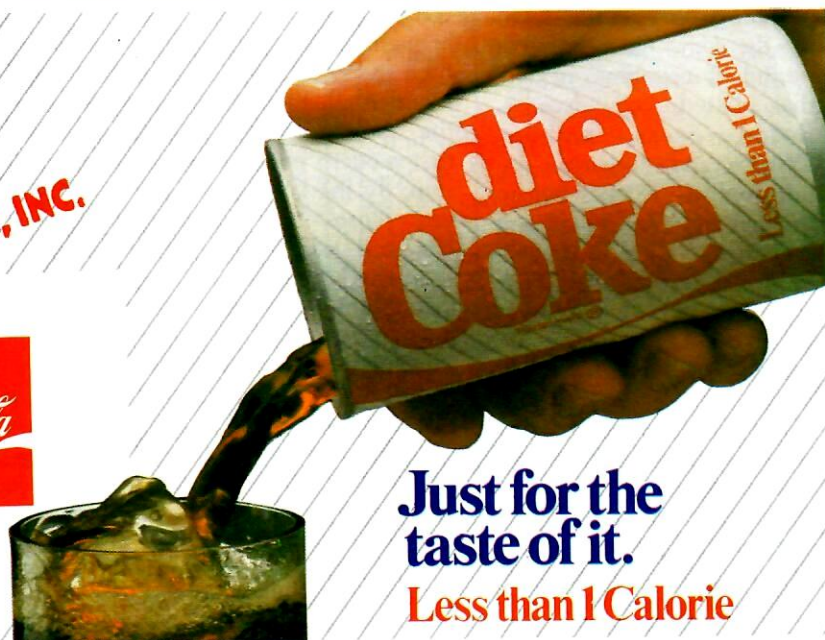
fields of education, health, agriculture, fisheries, business and community development had a dramatic effect. Almost overnight, volunteers began teaching in thatch-hut classrooms on remote islands or working alongside expatriate contract teachers in the district centers. And it wasn't without some interesting side effects: the Peace Corp's sudden presence became a subject of controversy for Micronesians and Americans alike. News reports reaching the U.S. mainland stereotyped a few bearded volunteers with guitars as "hippies" and questioned Washington's wisdom of sending them to the islands. But the contributions of those volunteers spoke for themselves.

Politically astute Micronesians questioned if an overwhelming presence of volunteers could result in a rapid Americanization of the islands. Seemingly by coincidence, a document called the Solomon Report, initiated by the National Security Council during the Kennedy administration, recommended the use of the Peace Corps as teachers and

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## ISLAND VIEWS



community action program coordinators "...because it is of critical importance to plebiscite attitudes" (a plebiscite to decide Micronesia's political status was originally requested for 1972). Due to the report's controversial political, economic and social recommendations — an obvious conflict with America's obligations under the U.N. Trusteeship Agreement — the document was labeled by island leaders at the time as a "blueprint for annexation."

However, if such a scheme was actually initiated by national security planners in Washington, it backfired.

Citing the growing activism among the ranks of volunteers during the late 1960's, a top-level U.S. administrator in the islands declared the Peace Corps "...one of the worst things Washington did to 'Americanize' Micronesia." Although explicitly prohibited from doing so, some volunteers became involved in politics. From Palau in the west, where generals and admirals eyed prime real estate for future bases, to the

army's Kwajalein Missile Range in eastern Micronesia, the ramifications of the Vietnam War were felt throughout the islands. Some volunteers believed that because Micronesia was a United Nations "trust" administered by the U.S. Interior Department, they should not be compelled to act as America's "agents of change." Later, even Peace Corps officials in Washington questioned such wide involvement in Micronesia. And by the end of the organization's fourth year in the islands, all Peace Corps attorneys and media specialists were temporarily phased-out.

But on the other hand, some island leaders were more reflective about the quiet revolution then taking place in the islands. One key senator once chided a volunteer: "You criticize America for its mercenary attitude. Explain to me how a country with such an attitude could support such an idealistic luxury as the Peace Corps?"

The Peace Corps has definitely helped. The vast

majority of volunteers did separate political issues from matters of development. By 1968 over 400 volunteers were involved in the biggest education project ever in the islands. Nearly 50 inexpensive new schools were built in outlying areas under a school partnership program using funds raised by "sister schools" on the mainland. Volunteers provided the link to the island communities which provided free labor for construction. Visitors to remote islands today find a high degree of English language competence among young people. In addition, other programs in the areas of health, community development, fisheries, and agriculture thrived as volunteers worked side-by-side with host country personnel providing a kind of grass-roots involvement never seen before — or since — in the islands.

By the early 1970's, Peace Corps officials in Washington began replacing fewer and fewer volunteers due to budget cuts and the political problems encountered during the pro-

gram's initial years in Micronesia. Only 300 volunteers remained by the mid-1970's; today less than 100 remain, mainly on rural outer-islands. Volunteer programs in the Mariana Islands were closed in 1980 after the islands voted to become a permanent U.S. "commonwealth" similar to Puerto Rico.

Since 1981, Micronesia has been one of the few places in the world where volunteers are required to live with local families. Prior to that, some violence was directed towards outsiders and a number of women volunteers were raped and male volunteers beaten. Under the new policy, however, volunteers were no longer isolated Americans but part of an integrated, extended family and enjoyed the same social protection as Micronesians.

As the phase-out of the Trust Territory government begins in Micronesia, Peace Corps planners are looking to the future. According to Ms. Jerry Penno, the Ponape-based director of Peace Corps, the emerging governments of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republics of Palau and the Marshall Islands have been asked to reexamine their Peace Corps programs in preparation for the post-trusteeship era.

Meanwhile, the spark of idealism that launched the Peace Corps during the 1960's is still alive and well in Micronesia. "The volunteers speak the languages and are integrated to the cultures as well as they can be," says Director Penno.

And in that spirit, young and old Americans continue to volunteer two years of their lives to the old-fashioned idea of helping others, quietly and without fanfare.



# Guam's Winds Blow for Cocos Cup

By Clayton Feeter

Photos by Ed Crisostomo



It began with a leisurely Windsurfer sail from Guam's Merizo Village to Cocos Island Resort, two miles across the lagoon, and ended five months later as a \$25,000 international boardsailing regatta drawing the best talent from seven countries.

The DHL International Cocos Windsurfing Cup didn't have a name last January when I met with resort president Terry Payne. "Sure, we'd be interested in such an event," he told me, "How much money do we have to put up?" "Er, well," I stalled, "It's going to take about \$25,000 to draw the best sailors."

"No worries mate!" Payne responded in his native Australian tongue.

I sailed back to Merizo with butterflies in my stomach. "This would be a

big one," I thought. "It would make a good name for Guam. But it could also be disastrous without proper planning. If visiting sailors are dissatisfied they'll never come back as was the case in a debauched Fiji contest last year."

A lonely, where-do-I-go-from-here feeling crept over me until Henry Simpson, president of Island Imports, tapped me on the shoulder and offered his office and staff assistance as a contest communication headquarters to write, call and telex around the world. Simpson, organizer of the annual Winston-Salem Smokin' Wheels event, later purchased 60 new sailboards for the Cocos Cup, thus making it easier for world class sailors to fly to Guam — not having to worry about transporting heavy

race boards.

The date was set for May 6-14, a period local sailors will remember as "a howling time of year." The prize money was sure to draw several top racers, but only if the Cocos Cup could be tied in with the other major event in the Western Pacific, the \$60,000 Japan Cup.

The next step was to promote the event during

than they prefer a hot shower — the Marianas Yacht Club, with their years of race management skills, worked with the Clipper Cup chairmen to set a course within the vast, turquoise Cocos Lagoon. A race rules seminar tuned local boardsailors to international racing procedures, and two days of preliminary races before the event determined

Hawaii's World Windsurfing Cup, which is sponsored by Pan American World Airways. The airline sent local boardsailor Linda Yeomans and myself to the Hawaii event in March to set up a Cocos Cup booth sporting Guam Visitors Bureau posters and pamphlets, a Guam slide show and contest sign-up sheet.

If not for the Hawaii trip, the DHL Cocos Cup may have been a contest with no contestants. When we arrived, the Cocos Cup was only a "rumor" to most world sailors. But we left with 20 top competitors signed up and anxious to see the island they've come to know only through old war movies.

Knowing that world class racers demand properly run courses — perhaps more

the top 15 men and women from Guam that would challenge the pros.

It was Christmas in May for some 200 Marianas area sailboarding enthusiasts — a chance to see the big names step off the early morning Pan Am flight and a chance to sail with world champions Mike Waltze of Maui, Johnny Myrin of Sweden and Santha Patel of New Zealand. Matt Schwietzer, an eight-time world champion whose father, Hoyle Schweitzer, invented the sport 15-years ago, enjoyed a Guam welcome. Australian champion Scott O'Conner, Swedish ace Johan Salen and Hong Kong champ Monty Spindler also arrived to enjoy the 80-degree water and a chance at the \$6,000 first prize. The stage was set and all the local news media caught the fever



with photos, interviews, video reportage and contest updates.

Most international regattas are forced to wait for wind, but not the Cocos Cup. Everyday it blew from sunrise to sunset allowing top competition on the triangular course adjacent to the resort. Sailors stayed in comfortable resort bungalows tucked neatly under the trees next to the lagoon race site.

From the first day it became apparent the top challengers were Matt Schweitzer and the two Swedes, Salen and Myrin. Waltze and Alex Aguera of Florida won two races each but as the week progressed, "Salen to Victory" caught the local headlines. Prize money

At the event of the week, a reception at Government House jointly sponsored by Gov. Ricardo Bordallo and the Guam Visitors Bureau, Cocos Island Resort President Terry Payne announced that next year's prize money would be raised to \$40,000.



Guam's first DHL International Cocos Windsurfing Cup ended with another "first": an International Windfishing Derby, the first time a major regatta has ever hosted a sailboard fishing contest. The event's sponsor, KSTO radio's Ed Poppe, rigged lures and line for 12 contestants, each putting ten dollars into the pot. Mike Waltze, within 20 minutes of his venture through the lagoon's southern channel, hooked the catch of the day, a 15-pound mahi mahi that earned him \$65 of the pot. Anne Byerly and Linda Yeomans teamed up on two small reef fish to win the most catches award of \$45.

At sunset the hotel's staff sashimied Waltze's mahi and cooked the other catches. The sun green-flashed on the lucrative contest where a handful of pros put on a show for the local sailors and took fond memories back to their countries.



went to 37 racers, including Japan's top three sailors, Atsushi Iwahashi, Hideki Makino and Mistuharu Nijima. With the Japanese racers came a host of that country's boating and sailing photographers.

The 12 to 20-knot winds kept daytime competition exciting as local week-long hospitality rolled on every night, ranging from a chili cookout, barbecues and an impressive slideshow titled "Underwater Micronesia."

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# LETTERS

## Acquainted

I've been a subscriber to that beautiful magazine of yours ever since I got acquainted with it on a trip I made back to the islands.

I just want you and everybody else that work so hard to know how I appreciate that beautiful magazine. By the way, I'm a native of Mokil and I've been in the states for over 10 years and you could imagine how I miss all the pretty islands. I haven't seen any pictures of the atolls (lower islands). But I bet you it's more out there than you thought.

If I could be a help to you in anyway, please do let me know.

Thank you,  
Ricky Y. Albert  
New Bern, N.C.

## Imagination

Our family recently spent several weeks in Guam and Micronesia and now we have returned to our home in the deserts of Saudi Arabia. Now only our imaginations, helped by the stories and pictures in *Glimpses*, bring us back to those beautiful islands.

Thank you.  
John T. Cummings  
APO New York

## Home

After 28 years on Guam, receiving our *Glimpses* is getting news of "home" for us. We thoroughly enjoy *Glimpses* for its excellent articles.

Thank you,  
J. Hino  
Honokaa, Hawaii

## Worthwhile

I thoroughly enjoy *Glimpses*. You do a wonderful job in making it worthwhile, interesting and fun to read. I even enjoy reading the advertisements in minute detail because I enjoyed my two years on Guam so much.

Thanks again.

Sincerely,  
William B. Garrett  
Fairfax, Va.

## Interested

I understand you might be including a special article on the Coast Guard in a future issue. I am very interested in any pictures or information you might have on this. My son is presently stationed in Guam with the Coast Guard.

Sincerely,  
Margaret Gregg  
Athens, Ala.

## Enjoy

The Micronesian students here at East Texas State University enjoy reading the magazine very much and getting the news from home.

Sincerely,  
Linda Edwards  
East Texas State  
University

## Fascinated

Yours is a magazine sorely needed, since current information from your corner of the globe is rather in short in supply. Yours is one of the finest publications I've ever seen. I picked up a copy on a Northwest Orient Airlines flight and was fascinated.

Thanks in advance!  
Larry Kwiatkowski  
Seattle, Wa.

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