

THE CIVIC ACTION TEAM IN TRUK

by

Benhardt Xavier

Catherine Drin

Nixon Maras

Augustine Sue

Ernie Paul

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Xavier High School

Town Study Project

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In 1962, sixteen years after the Second World War, the first Civic Action was formed in the United States. This organization was funded by the U.S. Department of Interior and the Department of Defense. The Civic Action Team was composed of three different military divisions: The Navy, Air-Force, and Army. The Civic Action first entered Micronesia in 1969, with the agreement between the Federated States of Micronesia and the United States that they will remain in Micronesia until the Trukese do not need the Civic Action Team's help anymore. Their mission in Micronesia is to help with Socio-economic development and to maintain a favorable U.S. military image. In attempting to achieve their goals in Micronesia, the Civic Action Team has established four ways to carry out their mission: 1) Development and Construction of needed island projects, 2) Training native people in practical fields, 3) Giving medical assistance, and 4) Constantly trying to improve relations between Trukese people and U.S. personnel. The Civic Action Team is helping Micronesia under a voluntary basis, which means that the United States, and not Micronesia, is paying the Civic Action Team members for the work they are doing since they are technically United States government employees who have volunteered to come overseas and serve Micronesia in that capacity. Truk, specifically, is one of the states in Micronesia receiving aid from the Civic Action Team. The Civic Action Team stationed in Truk has so far had two different military divisions assigned. One is the Navy, which worked in Truk for five years, beginning in late 1969 until early 1974. They were replaced by the Air-Force which has

been in Truk for eleven years: from 1974 to 1985. So far seventeen different groups of unique American people have helped the State of Truk. The present team, like all of the other teams before it, is here to assist the people of Truk with their socio-economic development, and they do their best to serve Truk State and its people's needs, but they are limited by what Truk can and cannot provide in terms of money, materials, and cooperation.

CIVIC ACTION COORDINATING COMMITTEE

The CATeam, negotiates with the native people of Truk State in order to serve them in accordance to their expectations. The Civic Action Coordinating Committee (CACC) serves as "spokesman" between the people and the Civic Action Team. In other words, it is this committee that the people of Truk State contact if there is any project in particular that they want the Civic Action Team to work on. This committee is composed of representatives of the government offices that deal mainly with matters concerning the environmental improvements of Truk State. It is much easier for the CATeam to have these people in charge of these offices to work out things together with them. That is because these offices are important to the work the CATeam does. They work with these offices on related projects; furthermore, these are the offices that can solve the kind of problems they must face in Truk. There are seven members on the committee and they are the following: Kachutosy Paulus, a special assistant to the Governor, who acts as the chairman; Mike Duncan, captain of present CATeam; Roger Mori, head of Planning Office; Mel Morris Director of Public Works; Redley Killion, Director of Resources and Development (R & D); Sasuo Haruo, Director of Land Management; and Michael Ormsby, a federal programmer and a temporary member of the CACC. These men are appointed by the Governor, Erhart Aten, to represent the people of Truk State.

The Civic Action Coordinating Committee meets once every month. In their meetings they discuss the current projects of the CATeam, the unavailabilities of materials for certain projects, and new

projects suggested by the people of Truk State, if there are any. In one of their meetings, held in February of 1985, the captain of the CATeam presented the committee with the problem of finding a dredge-site. This problem was discussed and it was finally agreed that Sasuo Haruo, the director of Land Management would try to negotiate with landowners for a dredge-site. In this same meeting, the director of Public Works, Mel Morris requested the aid of the CATeam in accomplishing a ten to twenty mile road around Fefan. The captain of the CATeam agreed, and set his men to work immediately the following week. The road on Fefan was originally a project for the Public Works Department; however, Public Works was never able to finish it.

The CACC members are the means by which the Trukese people may request help from the CATeam. The CATeam is not here to serve the state government only, but to help the entire population of Truk State in any way they can. The CACC is a "tool" that enables the CATeam to hear the voice of the Trukese. It is this committee that the people of Truk State (no matter who, even an individual Trukese with a worthy project) seek with projects that need the aid of the Civic Action Team. As representatives of their own people, the CACC should take each one of the projects into consideration, and present those to the CATeam that are most important and capable of being completed. As long as the projects are already funded, have materials provided and waiting, or cost nothing except for the skills and equipment of the CAT, the CAT goes out and fulfills one of their goals here on Truk - Service to the people. It is the CACC that plans with the CATeam to do service that is benifitial for each and everyone of the Trukese people.

PROJECTS

One of the purposes of having a Civic Action Team on Truk is to assist the Trukese people through constructional projects. The projects help the Trukese greatly and their efforts add to the work of the Public Works Department and also sets an example for the Trukese people to see and follow. One of the main reasons the CATeam is on Truk is to work on project; therefore, the legislature and the CATeam Coordinating Committee (CACC) come up with projects for the CAT to

work on which are dictated by the needs of the Trukese people. The projects are categorized into horizontal and vertical projects. Horizontal projects are project dealing with "flat" construction. The building of roads, docks, playgrounds, and similar type projects would be considered "flat" construction. Vertical projects involve the construction of structures such as sea walls, school buildings, water catchments, and fences.

Although there may be numerous projects suggested by the CACC, not all of them can be worked on by the CATeam because of drawbacks such as shortages of materials, a lack of funds, or both to begin or complete a project. Every CATeam faces the problem of wasted time in Truk. The CATeam is partially compensated by the fact that there are usually projects that basically involve only the assistance of heavy equipment and individual skills. One such example is bulldozing to level a field and then compacting it to make a playground or a ballfield. Another example would be the leveling of roads, like what the present CAT is doing on Dublon and Fefan. However, coral sand and rocks are needed to complete roads. The roads on Dublon have been completed by the 84-19 team and the ones on Fefan are still in progress, as of February, 1985.

The funding for the projects are provided by the Federated States of Micronesia Congress and by the Truk State legislature. Usually, the amount of funding expected is not met, which is one reason for delays in the CATeam's work. Captain Mike Duncan says that he hopes the funding and necessary materials will be prepared a year before the arrival of future CATeams, so that upon arrival, a team can get right to work on schedule and have much of the projects done before their departure.

According to a survey interview (February, 1985) on the Trukese people's perspective of what the CATeam is doing on Truk, the majority of native Trukese express a misunderstanding of the CAT. Approximately seventy percent of those interviewed, which are exactly

123 native Trukese, from ages twenty-one years and over think that the CATeam's only purpose in Truk is to make roads. So that people may know the other projects that the present CATeam has proposed to them, here is a list of the projects obtained by the CATeam from the Civic Action Coordinating Committee:

- a. LDS Church Fence and Basketball Court
- b. Water Catchments for Ag Station, Coconut Factory and fisheries.
- c. Truk High School Recreation Area
- d. Repair Road from Pou Bay to Sapuk
- e. TOCA Electrical Assistance
- f. Construct Road to Top of Tonachau Mountain
- g. Repairs to Xavier High School
- h. South Field Public Park
- i. Playground Equipment for Schools
- j. Cholera Eradication
- k. Community Assistance Projects

There are other projects "onhold" because they have yet to be completely defined, and others for the future, waiting for the current projects to be completed. Here is a list of the projects awaiting materials and permanent sites.

- a. Public Market - awaiting firm siting
- b. Upgrading Mechitiw-High School Road - awaiting coral purchase
- c. Water Catchment for Sewer Plant - awaiting materials
- d. Moen Youth Center - awaiting site from Linda Mori
- e. Renovation of Toilets at Truk High School awaiting materials
- f. Dredge Site - Crane down
- g. Neuo-Wichap-Epinup Road Renovation - need productive dredge site

The CAT is working in Truk to physically improve the islands, using what skills and materials they have at their disposal. Trukese people should be aware of their purpose and know that they are here to serve the Trukese people. The Trukese government should be prepared to work with the CATeams in the future, and the people of Truk State should make use of the CaCC in expressing their needs. CaTeam members request to come and work in Truk, and it is these volunteers who have earned the privilege of coming to Truk that are ready to work from the moment they get off the plane until they leave eight months later. The Trukese are just as eager to work with the CATeam upon their arrival, but steps must be taken prior to their arrival to insure that the Team will work to its potential.

TRAINEE PROGRAM

The Trainee Program was established for the native people of Truk as part of the CAT's mission execution, or as part of what they are trying to accomplish here in Truk State. The purpose of this program is an attempt to enable the Trukese people to depend on their people in the future: in other words, the Trainees of today will try and take the place of the CATeam in the future development of Truk State. Sponsoring the program is the Truk State legislature under the supervision of the State's Construction Skills Training.

The funding money for the program is approximately twelve thousand dollars a year. In order for a native Trukese to be eligible for the trainee program, he must fill out an application for one of the different positions of the program. The applications enable the CAT to find the Trukese applicants that are most qualified for the program. English Skills are an important requisite for the program. The CAT usually picks the applicants that can work with them while using the English language. The trainees are trained, at most eighteen months. After the trainees complete their courses with the CAT, they may often go somewhere and further their education.

The different positions in the training program are the following: Heavy equipment operator, engineer technician, carpenter, and

mechanic. Out of the many Trukese natives that apply, only six are accepted every year, due to the fact that more than six would probably slow down the CATeam's work. Of course, the trainees can decide to drop out, if they wish, but this is unusual. At the present time, (March, 1985) there are six trainees and below they are listed with their type of job while in the Trainee Program.

<u>NAME:</u>	<u>JOB:</u>
Kelor S. Eram	Equipment operator
Rio Wilbur	Equipment operator
Narcy Diamond	Engineer technician
Elias Pintat	Carpentar
Maurice Pauliz	Mechanic
Hermant Press	Mechanic

As well as learning a great deal, the trainees have been a great help to the CATeam. They provide the CATeam with additional man power for the different projects on which they work. For example, if they work on the road, the two trainees for the heavy equipment will take the initiative of operating the Bulldozer and the Loader. The trainees also take the responsibility of advising the CATeam about the Trukese culture and people. Therefore, it is a worthwhile program, especially for the good of the Trukese, but also for the CATeam members. The CATeam members agree that their work would be much slower if it was not for the aid and assistance that the trainees give them.

The Trainee Program does much for the community of Truk. The trainees when they graduate will possess practical skills which are very valuable. They will be qualified to do limited professional work in their fields. They could possibly continue their education or simply begin putting their new knowledge to work on Truk.

CAT AND TRUKESE RELATIONS

The Civic Action Team contributes mostly to the development of Truk State physically, but, in addition to this, the Civic Action Team develops a freindly, relationship with the Trukese and their government.

The relationship of the Civic Action Team and the Trukese develops in everything they do together, and is visible in their joint recreational, spiritual, intellectual, and political activities.

Recreationally, there are a variety of ways that the Civic Action Team gets to know and share with the local people of Truk in their free time. The Civic Action Team participates in many community activities. Team members play volleyball and baseball with youth group members from many villages, and they sponsor things for both. Other than just playing with the local people, the Civic Action Team members do other things for the Trukese. The Civic Action Team provides movies for children in many villages and schools, as well as Truk Hospital. The relationship of the Civic Action Team with local people has more potential for growth when team members are seen with local families when they go and spent their weekends on the other islands in the lagoon. That means, they become closer to and maybe part of those families. Often times, members are invited as guests to attend weddings at or other formal occasions. Other times, team members go out with local people to the small islands for picnics and diving. Team members invite local friends up to their camp and socialize with the Trukese people.

Spiritually, the Civic Action Team also develops their relationship with the Trukese when they go and attend mass in the local churches. Team members can be seen sitting among natives during mass at Berea church and in the church at Nepukos. They join in the church singing; and as a matter of fact, many of the team members know how to sing some of the Trukese religious songs. In addition to this, the Civic Action Team knows that by going and attending mass in the local churches, they will at least become acquainted with some customs and belief of the Trukese Christian Communities.

Intellectually, the Civic Action Team sponsors a training program to assist the Trukese in improving and developing their skills and Knowledge by learning about the unique work the team members are expert in. The Civic Action Team has found that the training program is a better way to get to know more about the Trukese, and vice versa. This indirectly develops an even more active and strong relationship between the Trukese and the Civic Action Team.

Politically, as informal ambassadors, the Civic Action Team continually works at its role as mediators between the Americans and the Trukese. Because of the work, the Civic Action Team has done in Truk State, they also improve ties between the United States and the Truk State Government. If the Civic Action Team is successful in their mission, they will have a good relationship with the local people of Truk. Everything the Civic Action Team does has impact upon the Trukese which then affects the viewpoint of the Trukese towards the Civic Action Team and the United States. As of the previous Civic Action Teams, they have been very good in doing what they should do according to their mission. They have been working very hard to continue maintaining a favorable tie or relationship with the Trukese people.

The Civic Action Team has been able to continually strengthen its relationship with the Trukese people, in spite of some problems Team members face in association with their work in Truk. This is largely due to the fact that the Trukese and Civic Action Team members do not share a common culture and language. However, it is very clear that the relationship between the Trukese and the Civic Action Team members has been growing actively, as a result of the CAT's openness and generosity towards the Trukese as well as the natural hospitality the Trukese have shown the CATeam. CATeam members offer their skills and knowledge to support and assist the Trukese in their development in all possible areas. But, this is only the beginning since the CATeam also tries to meet the Trukese on a social level. The CATeam tries to develop and maintain a good relationship between the Trukese and the United States Government by continually works at its role as mediators and as well as informal ambassadors.

PROBLEMS/OBSTACLES

The Civic Action Team members, considered some of the most experienced men in their field, have been doing their work well in Truk State, but delays in their work have come about from problems that involve funding, a lacking of materials, weather, and land affairs.

The funding of projects in Truk is not easy and projects often delayed. The Truk State Government is slow in funding projects because they usually ask for money from the United States Government. When a project for the Civic Action Team needs money, the Truk State Legislature reviews the monetary request from the CACC decides whether or not it should be approved, depending upon how important the project is and the amount of money it will require. Even though the money the Truk Government asks for is normally granted by the United States, it comes too slowly. When the projects are delayed, the Civic Action Team starts working on jobs, some of which they are over qualified for. The projects which require money or materials would normally make the best use of the Civic Action Team's talents. Some examples of project that need money are fixing and development of roads, building water catchments, and houses.

Sometimes, the CAT can not start working because the place where they are going to work goes through private land. The landowner will often stop the project if money is not given to him, therefore, the Truk Government must negotiate with landowner until the landowner grants permission to the Truk Government to use his land, so that the Civic Action Team can begin work on their project. The landowners of Truk put a very high value on their lands, and they do not give up their land easily.

At other times, projects are delayed or slowed down because of weather problems. Often times, when it rains for long periods of time, landslides occur and delay whole projects. As a matter of fact, rain delays many of the CAT's projects. In 1984, with an usually large amount of rain, the CAT lost somewhere between twenty and thirty percent of their regular working time.

The Civic Action Team has encountered problems in Truk, some of which can-not be controlled and others that can be controlled, and almost certainly, some of the problems will always come up if the people of Truk do not do anything about them. Problems that can-not be controlled like the weather, must be tolerated. However, problems with funding, materials, and land affairs can be worked upon and possibly settled prior to working time. It is in the best interest of the Trukese people to be prepared to work with the Civic Action Team in the future. This can be done if Truk obtains the necessary money and materials for the projects and clears the sites which are to be worked a head of time. It would also help to inform people about the Civic Action Team and their purpose on Truk, so that they may wish to genuinely welcome them and cooperate with them as they try to improve Truk State.

The Civic Action Teams through their efforts have tried very much to help the people of Truk State. The CA Teams volunteered to serve in Truk and the people of Truk should try to help them as they work to learn and understand the culture and customs of the islands in Truk. The Civic Action Teams are doing their part in helping to create an independent Micronesia. For instance, the skills which the trainee refine with the Civic Action Team will hopefully be used in the future. It is hoped that the native Trukese, in the future, will accomplish what the Civic Action Team is doing at the present time. The Trukese should not rely too much on the Civic Action Team's assistance in the future. The government, too, should come to understand that the Civic Action Team cannot be here forever and that they should concentrate more on the skills and capabilities of its native people. However, one should not forget that the service the teams have provided and still provide the islands in Truk is commendable. The Civic Action Teams, in accomplishing their missions, have always encountered obstacles. However, these obstacles merely changed the focus of the Civic Action Teams and forced them to complete the projects that they could with the resources which were available to them. The Trukese people should realize that the Civic Action Teams

have been trying their best to help them prepare for the future. The Trukese should be better prepared to cooperate with the Civic Action Teams so that they may best take advantage of the opportunities which the CATeam presents to the Trukese. The CATeams offer a chance for Truk State to develop confidence and independence as they work to improve the islands in Truk. Though it is the Truk State government which will decide when the services of the CATeams will no longer be needed, one should remember that all good things must come to an end. The Trukese are fortunate to have the CATeams and they should make sure that their time in Truk is well spent.