

# Wait, Wonder, Debate

By Ronn Ronck  
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If Tinian's delegates to the commission—District Representative Herman Mangiona and school teacher Frank Harco—can't persuade their people to move out of Tinian altogether, then the U.S. would reportedly like the present village of San Jose to be relocated.

The area being suggested for this move is located in the southeastern Marpo Valley. This is the richest agricultural land on the island, but most of its 500 acres of dark volcanic soil (the soil in the north is primarily red) lies unused.

The U.S. obviously wants the population to be farmers instead of tourist guides and Marpo is perfect.

In fact, most of the island rests on an extremely porous coral foundation. Geologic surveys indicate the presence of an iceberg-shaped underground water lens that contains at least 40 feet of fresh water floating below the salt water for every one foot above.

My talks with the residents of Tinian, however, indicate that it will take a financial miracle for the people to switch their village. True, the present San Jose Village has only been located near the harbor since 1953, but Tinianites are tightly bound to their land.

"I can say with absolute assurance," Mayor Antonio Borja told me during my visit to the island a few weeks ago, "that the people of Tinian will never agree to move their village."

Another critic of moving, Municipal Council Speaker Felipe Mendiola, stated that the idea was not even worth discussing. Mendiola, who refuses to speak English in public, would gladly welcome the Japanese back to Tinian, however.

Another outspoken resident, though, fears that the people of Tinian may have their price.

Jose Cruz, an ex-mayor of Tinian who has just started construction on a 10-room hotel, believes that a majority of the families would consider giving up the southern end of their island—the Navy definitely wants the southern harbor—if they were paid enough and the U.S. promised to build their a new harbor, airfield, hospital and high school in the northern end.

"I have always been quoted as being pro-military," Cruz said, "but moving San Jose is too much. I've always kept an open mind to all sides but I'm not about to rebuild my home somewhere else."

As I see it, the most vocal opposition to moving the present village—to say nothing of moving off the island

## 'I'm Not About To Sit Still'

Daily News Staff Writer Ronn Ronck last month spent a week on Tinian profiling the island and its future for The Daily News. Yesterday, he wrote the story outlining the sensational plans the U.S. has for the island. We asked him to summarize, for those who have never been there, a picture of what the changes on the island will mean—and what reaction they will get. This is his account.



STANDING: John Hofschneider, Florence Mendiola, Kneeling: Martin San Nicolas, William Cing, all students on Guam but Tinian residents. Ronn Ronck reports on conversation with them in attached story; copy of their statement is on page 5. (Daily News Photo)

completely—would be from the young people of Tinian.

There are a number of these young people attending high school and college off-island and yesterday afternoon I talked with four of them at the University of Guam student lounge.

Afterwards, they gave me a written statement of their position which, they said, will be sent to the United Nations.

"We're not about to see Tinian made the innocent victim of military takeover," stated Florence Mendiola, whose

father, Felipe is the speaker for the Municipal Council. "Before the military makes its final pitch the people should be educated as to what a military society is. I'm especially shocked at the suggestion that our civilian government be put under military control for security reasons and denied a normal amount of immigration."

Another young critic is John Hofschneider, whose father is a part-time farmer. "The people of Tinian should be surveyed about these recently disclosed plans. Every decision by our elected officials must be a public decision and everyone should be given an ample chance to make up their own minds. I'm not about to give up the island I love without a fight."

This weekend, Florence Mendiola, John Hofschneider, and Martin San Nicolas say they will return to Tinian in order to make a house-to-house survey of the island's reaction to the recently revealed military plans.

"We will also call a public meeting this Sunday evening in the Tinian Town Hall," San Nicolas said, "in order to air public opinion as soon as possible. We also expect to see a good many of our fellow

students who are currently studying on Saipan. I have personally talked to over 35 Tinian students at the high schools in Saipan, and, without exception, they are against the military coming back to Tinian in full force. Our elders are going to find out, once and for all, that they're not going to flush our island down the drain."

William Cing, a student of Guam's George Washington High School, also echoes the feelings of San Nicolas. "The beauty of Tinian," he said "is its isolation and peacefulness. Tinian was badly scarred by both military sides during World War II and I'm not about to sit still and watch it happen again."

The major scars that Cing makes reference to are still visible on Tinian.

There are 75 miles of virtually unused roads, eight abandoned runways, and pieces of rusting junk scattered over the island. It was much worse a few years back before much of the scrap iron was hauled away by ship. Another ugly feature of Tinian

is the miles of tangatangun growth. This tree very seldom grows anywhere but in disturbed areas and Tinian during World War II was anything but a rest home.

My father "hit the beach" at Tinian on July 24, 1944. He was then a captain in the U.S. Marines and commanded an amphibious landing craft for the 2nd Marine Division. The battle, itself, had been planned in April by Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith who later took control of the Fleet Marine Force Pacific.

Tinian, heavily bombarded during pre-landing hours, was the next stop after the liberation of Saipan. Its nearness to Saipan—a short three miles to the south—put a high priority on its capture. It had already been decided that this was to be the island that would eventually end the Pacific War by launching the B-29's that dropped the atomic bombs on Japan. They wanted to use parts of runways built by the 9,000 Japanese led by Colonel Kiyochi Ogata at Ushi, later to be better known as North Field.

The actual battle for Tinian lasted nine days. Fifteen thousand men of the 2nd and 4th Marine Divisions, under final authority of Major General Harry Schmidt attacked the northwest beaches by surprise while the 27th Division remained on Saipan. After overcoming two final hour banzai charges on August 1, 1944, the 2nd Marine Division declared the island secure. The final count of casualties, kept unusually low because of a successful sneak attack included 384 Marines dead and 1,961 wounded. Military historians consider the battle of Tinian the best executed amphibious operation of World War II.

Today, 29 years later, the U.S. military is fighting another battle over this tiny island of only 39 square miles.

## Air Mike In Tinian Flight

TINIAN — Flight 475, the first landing of a jet aircraft on Tinian, arrived yesterday full of dignitaries and company officials as Air Micronesia went through a "proving flight" for the Federal Aviation Administration.

According to Air Mike's "flying station manager" before takeoff from Saipan, less than 10 miles away, flying time would be four minutes. The flight was late getting into Tinian's West Field, a former B-29 base now utilized by Air Pacific on scheduled flights.

No one minded the slight understatement in flight time and Capt. Barney Barnwell made one pass over the runway before setting down.

About 100 Tinian residents waved at the end of the runway as the flight taxied to a stop. Capt. Barnwell waved back, the dignitaries got off and local school children received a walk-through tour.

Some 70 minutes later as the sun set, Flight 475 was again airborne for Saipan.

Air Mike representatives aboard said they did not know when regular service would begin, but that it would be started on a twice-a-week basis.

The inaugural day for regular flights would be determined when runway touchdown markers and other equipment are installed.

## Group Off To Travel

TINIAN — A seven-member delegation from the Tinian municipality will depart today for a three-week trip to the Far East to study, among other things, possible impact of a huge military presence may have of the tiny northern Marianas island.

The group plans to visit the U.S. Navy facility at Subic Bay in the Philippines, and military installations in Japan and Okinawa, in addition to agriculture and fishing facilities in Japan and Taiwan.

The delegation consists of Tinian Mayor Antonio Borja, Rep. Felipe Atah, Municipal Council Speaker Felipe Mendiola, Vice Speaker Leonardo F. Diaz, Council members Silvester Cruz, Harry Cruz and legal counsel Michale White.

### Marianas Morning

FWC 24-hour forecast:  
Partly cloudy with chance of isolated showers.  
Winds east-southeast, 8-15 mph., 4-8 mph. at night.  
Seas 1-3 feet.  
Surf conditions are slight with breakers averaging 2-4 feet on eastern reefs and exposed beaches. 1-3 feet elsewhere.  
Sunrise 5:54 a.m. with sunset at 6:40 p.m., and sunrise tomorrow will be at 5:54 a.m.  
First low tide 1:34 a.m. with height of 1.4 feet.  
First high tide 6:45 a.m. with height of 2.3 feet.  
Second low tide 2:00 p.m. with height of 0.2 feet.  
Second high tide 9:13 p.m. with height of 2.3 feet.  
Maximum temperature 86 degrees, minimum temperature 76 degrees.  
Total rainfall for May through 4 p.m. Wednesday was .92 inches.