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# Week in Review

SUMMARY OF NEWS OF THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS  
Prepared by Micronesian News Service

Saipan, Mariana Islands

June 25-29, 1973

## THREE DIE, IN PLANE CRASH

A plane crashed in the ocean off Lelu, the main town on the island of Kusaie in eastern Ponape District last week taking 3 lives. The U.S. Navy HU-16 amphibious aircraft crashed as it was about to take off from Lelu harbor June 25, on a medical evacuation flight with a seriously ill Micronesian woman on board. Among the three dead are the patient, her husband who was accompanying her, and a Navy crewman, who is missing and presumed to have drowned.

Witnesses said the plane appeared to take off normally, but was barely airborne when the right wing dropped sharply, catching the wingtip pontoon in the water and sending the plane spinning. Kusaie does not have an airstrip, and the amphibious landing and takeoff is always a hazardous one in the small harbor.

Of the 11 people on board, nine were Navy crewmen or the Navy medical team, who were dispatched from the U.S. Naval Base on Guam when TT officials requested the medical evacuation flight. Several of the survivors suffered injuries, but most of a relatively minor nature. Kusaie authorities reported that several local people also suffered minor injuries in the rescue attempt following the crash. As they attempted to pull in the plane's survivors who were in the water, aviation gas spewing from the wreckage caught fire, so the rescuers were forced to abandon their boats to save themselves.

A TT field trip vessel was to transport the survivors to Kolonia, the Ponape District center, where they were to be met by a Navy Board of Inquiry which will investigate the crash.

The HU-16 is a plane which is hardly used any more by the U.S. Navy, except in the Trust Territory, where they are used primarily for medical evacuation flights to remote Micronesian islands without airstrips. A Navy spokesman has expressed doubt that the Navy will be able to continue operating the planes much longer.

Despite the many miles flown routinely over the years in many different types of aircraft in the Trust Territory, the Monday crash was believed to be the worst in at least 25 years. Long-time employees of the TT Government could not recall any previous crash in which lives had been lost.

#### BALOS REPLACES KABUA ON STATUS COMMITTEE

The Congress of Micronesia has received official word that Senator Amata Kabua of the Marshalls has resigned from the Joint Committee on Future Status. The Marshall Islands delegation has selected Representative Ataji Balos as his replacement. Senator Kabua actively sought a seat on the Committee in January when he stepped down after four years as Senate President, but shortly thereafter changed his mind.

He is considered to be one of the most influential political leaders in the Marshalls. It was in May that he first indicated he might resign from the Committee. At that time the Marshall District Legislature, the Nitijela, was moving to create its own political status commission and consider the possibility of separate status talks. Senator Kabua was reported then to be in favor of those moves by the Nitijela. His official reason last May for considering resigning from the Status Committee was the press of his other congressional duties. It was also in late April and early May that Senator Kabua was involved in a highly publicized dispute with Senator Lazarus Salii, Chairman of the Joint Committee on Future Status, over the Marshalls' move toward separate status talks.

Representative Balos, Senator Kabua's replacement on the Committee, has been a consistent and outspoken critic of the United States Administration in Micronesia, particularly as it relates to Kwajalein Ebeye, and Roi-Namur, and to the plight of the people of Rongelap and Utirik. He is a member of the so-called "Independence Coalition" within the Congress of Micronesia which has expressed its opposition to the Draft Compact of Free Association which has developed out of the U.S.-Micronesia negotiations. As Senator Kabua's replacement, Balos increases House of Representatives representation on the twelve-man committee from two to three.

#### PALAU FISHING AUTHORITY FORMED

Palau District has become one of the first districts to organize its fishing authority as authorized under Public Law 5-21. The law, known as the Fishery Development Act of 1973, creates in the six districts fishing authorities whose main purpose is to provide the necessary support and guidance to fishing cooperative associations to permit them to become a primary fishery development institution in Micronesia."

The Palau Fishing Authority, which has taken 3 months to organize, is governed by a board of directors consisting of the district fisheries specialist and representatives of chartered fishing cooperatives.

#### ASTRONAUTS

America's Apollo 17 astronauts Eugene A. Cernan, Ronald E. Evans, and Harrison H. Schmitt touched down on Saipan June 29 for a three-day goodwill visit as part of a world-wide tour. At Saipan's Kobler Air Field, a police color guard was on hand, as well as a reception line of local girls who presented the astronauts and their wives with flower leis.

America's moon men had a full weekend of activities on Saipan; they were interviewed on Saipan television; they met with the public in Susupe Village, and they were hosted at an outdoor dinner-reception at Micro Beach.

After Saipan, the astronauts were scheduled to go on to Majuro, where they were to visit with Marshall Islands residents for about 3 hours. Fiji was to be the last part of their worldwide tour, but the sudden death of a government official there cancelled that trip. From Majuro, the moon men will travel to Honolulu and then on to the U.S. mainland. The Apollo 17 moon mission took place from December 7 to 19, 1972. It was the U.S.' sixth, and last, moon flight, with astronauts Cernan and Schmitt spending just over three days on the surface of the moon, from December 11 to 14. During that time astronaut Evans piloted the command module, which orbited the moon and kept in contact with the moon walkers.

Astronaut Schmitt holds the distinction of being the first civilian astronaut to land on the moon; the others are military officers. He is a geologist formerly with the U.S. Geological Survey. Cernan and Evans are both U.S. Navy captains.

NOW, BRIEFLY, HERE ARE OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST WHICH MADE NEWS DURING THE WEEK:

The TT Copra Stabilization Board has voted to increase the price for copra by \$10 per ton. Board Chairman Eusebio Rechucher indicated the increase was primarily made possible because of an appropriation by the Congress of Micronesia.

Contract papers covering the first phase of rehabilitation work on Saipan's Isley Airfield, the old B-29 base, have been signed and work is expected to get underway soon. When rehabilitation is completed, larger Isley Field will handle all traffic coming to Saipan, and Kobler Field, the present Saipan commercial airport, will be phased out.

Renovation work on the Palau Airfield has also been completed. The work was under the supervision of a Navy Sea-Bee Civic Action Team.

TT Deputy High Commissioner Peter T. Coleman has signed a charter for the Palau East Coast Farmer's Cooperative. The cooperative includes membership from three municipalities.

In Ponape, elections of municipal magistrates and councils will soon be completed.

In TT Personnel news, Trust Territory Liaison Officer on Guam Gordon Findley retired last week; he has held the Guam LNO position since 1962. No permanent replacement has yet been named but Tommy Perez of Guam is serving as an acting capacity.

TT Director of Public Works Gordon W. Bradley, an architect and engineer by profession, has resigned to return to private practice. He was with the

Trust Territory Government for approximately two years.

And lastly, Fred A. Robinson, TT Supervisory Surveyor Engineer, is retiring after more than 15 years of service with the TT Government.

TT Social Security Administrator Yosiwo George has returned to Saipan from nine months of specialized study in the U.S. At Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana, he took courses designed to upgrade his skills and knowledge in the field of life insurance and other insurance fields.

Radio announcers from Micronesia's six district broadcast stations have just ended a four-week training period at the TT Broadcast Division on Saipan. The session was the fourth the Broadcast Division has conducted for Broadcast personnel throughout the Territory.

The Office of the High Commissioner has approved the issuance of a foreign business permit to a Guam-based firm for the construction of a 50-room hotel on the tiny island of Pagan in the Northern Marianas. The hotel will be the first business development of any kind on Pagan, which has a population of about 50 and is located some 200 miles north of Saipan.

And finally, Diane Maddex has replaced Mike Malone as the Micronesia correspondent for the Saipan office of the Pacific Daily News and Pacific Dateline, Guam's two newspapers.