

A (Rehabilitation)  
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30 June 1947

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Repair and replacement of native structures continues but it is a slow process since for the most part only native materials are available. Local inhabitants are encouraged to use thatch, bamboo or rough logs wherever possible and nearly all native dwellings are so constructed. There is a strong demand for lumber of all kinds and sheet metal for construction but these materials are not available at present. Moreover there is some question as to the advisability of establishing a "sheet metal" economy. Houses of thatch are more in accordance with local culture and resources, although their longevity is considerably less, they are more subject to damage in case of high wind, are more difficult to maintain in a sanitary condition and frequently leak in heavy rains. Rehabilitation has progressed for private dwellings to the point where all families have shelter but many of them are not as sturdy as desired. This is particularly true of the Chamorros living on the island who have rebuilt their homes from rusty sheet metal and scrap lumber. They had fairly comfortable homes under the Japanese and have an earnest desire to regain the higher standard of living.

(a) Assistance by USNMGU has been a policy of encouragement rather than tangible aid because materials have not been available for transfer.

(b) A total of 14 schools have been rebuilt and are now in operation. Of these, thirteen are of native type construction and the 14th is a repaired concrete building in Yaptown. This last is considered suitable for temporary use only and plans are going forward for construction of Quonsets for school use.

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(c) One repaired Japanese building is serving for a church at the present time. With the expected arrival of a Catholic Padre in September it will be necessary to provide a more adequate church building and also living quarters. It is believed one 20'x48' quonset could be partitioned and serve temporarily for both purposes. Church members have offered today the material and perform the construction. Arrangements are being made to secure needed materials from the roll-up at Ulithi or Peleliu, at no cost to the church.

(d) Of the community buildings important in local culture the pabai (guest house) and falu (allmen's house) assume a major place in lives of Yap people. They serve as council meeting houses, for social events and as a focal point for community activities. All were systematically destroyed by the Japanese during the war. Fourteen of them have now been rebuilt and are in regular use. They are all of native type construction with a minimum of Western type materials. Military Government in a few cases furnished some nails and scrap lumber for use in construction. Considerable progress has also been made in the rebuilding of woonbay (stone dancing platforms), important in the social and cultural life of the people. These, also, have been repaired with little help except encouragement from MGU. They are built of a paved areaway of flagstones with back rests placed intermittently on either side. Usually the back rests are large pieces of stone set vertically deep enough in the ground that they do not fall over but occasionally upright pieces of stone money are used to lean against while watching a dance.



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(e) Two communities in Degore and one in Rumu were flooded when heavy rains came. The Sea Bees had placed from three to four lines of barrels under the roadway for culverts but these did not handle the water and caused the flooding of the areas. One native village leader has been instrumental in replacing two of these already, while one is still under construction. They were planned and constructed entirely by native volunteers, using the frames from Japanese trucks and corugayed steel for the frame work. The only expense to the government was a few bags of cement and the use of cutting and welding torches in stripping the trucks. The new culverts are about six feet at the bottom, five or six feet high and ten feet at the top. They will now take care of any flood waters. This is an important rehabilitation factor to those communities and an improvement in the roads.