

Centennial Celebrations

ROYAL PAPUA YACHT CLUB

LIFE MEMBERS

SIR RAMON THURECHT O.B.E



Sir Ramon Thurecht O.B.E. or “RT” as he is better known around the city of Port Moresby and PNG generally, was born on the 30th of May 1932. He first arrived in Port Moresby in June 1954, on a stop-over during an around the world working holiday and has never left. Rumour has it that RT is still saving up for the ticket for the next leg of his journey.

Sir Ramon completed his secondary education at Westmead Boys Home, an orphanage run by the St Vincent De Paul and the Marist Brothers in Westmead, Sydney. Having turned 16, RT had to leave the orphanage and so he moved to Brisbane and completed a Linotype and Fitting & Turning apprenticeship at the Brisbane Telegraph newspaper. After that he worked for the Brisbane Courier Mail for a short period before he set off to Port Moresby.

Upon his arrival in Port Moresby RT became a member of the then Port Moresby Aquatic Club. He learnt to sail and even managed the Club from 1964 for 2 years whilst working for South Pacific Post, the precursor to the Post Courier. He had the floor of the clubhouse polished up (much to the disgust of prominent Club member and Life Member Bruce Lamont, who slipped up on his first entry into the Club after the polishing); introduced Saturday morning and lunchtime trading and was the first in PNG to offer chilled glasses. RT also taught the staff to detect theft, the largest loss accumulator at the time and 12 months after he took over, the second extension to the Club- house was being designed. Learning to sail RT became very competitive in Vee S dinghy’s which was a very popular class in the early days as championships were held throughout the Australian states and the Territory of Papua New Guinea.

Sailing both the Vee S and Sharpie class RT held four Club Championships over the years, introducing the new sail cloth, Dacron, to PNG at the time and winning his first race after that by 20 minutes! It was not very long before the rest of the fleet followed suit. Eventually he transitioned to the A-Class becoming Club Champion in all classes and his sons, R.J. and Mike, then took over both becoming Club Champion in the 16 foot Hobie Class.

Over the next 37 years RT became deeply involved in civic affairs throughout the community holding numerous positions on responsible Committees both professional and social. RT received his OBE award at Buckingham Palace on 31st December 1982 for services to Commerce and Industry and in 2007 RT received his Knighthood for services to flying. He was President of the Aero Club and introduced Nationals to learn to fly.

RT recalls “straight after the war it was decided to upgrade from the Native canoe or vanagi, to a “proper” sailing boat. Bill McMahon, at that time the first Headmaster of Idubada Technical College, designed the Moresby Class sailing dinghy. This was based on the Vee Jay but much beamier, approximately five feet, with a blunt nose and bow sprit and sporting Vee Jay Sails and mast. It had a miniature cockpit, just large enough to hold a bottle of “Cold Tea” wrapped in a towel. The reasoning for this design was to be able to handle the “rough conditions” in Moresby Harbour. We noted that they still went over like lambs to the slaughter in the bullets past Paga Point. The Vee S eventually replaced these ‘Old Man’ boats, as we called the Moresby Class”.

RT has made many contributions to the Yacht Club over the years, as competitor; sponsor; Club printer, at no charge; Manager; donator of trophies, as well as contributing many hundreds of hours to the Club on his own time.

The RPYC Members honoured RT’s long association and contributions by awarding him Life Membership at the 1991 AGM and looks forward to continuing the long association over the coming years.

