



# Foundation Document Overview

## War in the Pacific National Historical Park

### Guam



#### Contact Information

For more information about the *War in the Pacific National Historical Park Foundation Document*, contact: [wapa\\_superintendent@nps.gov](mailto:wapa_superintendent@nps.gov) or (671) 477-7278 x1007 or write to: Superintendent, War in the Pacific National Historical Park, 135 Murray Blvd., Suite 100, Hagåtña, Guam 96910

## Park Description



Japanese coastal defense gun (Piti Guns Unit)

War in the Pacific National Historical Park, on the island of Guam, was created on August 18, 1978, to “commemorate the bravery and sacrifices of those participating in the campaigns of the Pacific Theater of World War II and to conserve and interpret the outstanding natural, scenic, historic values and objects on the island of Guam.” Conserving park resources and interpreting uses of the land helps preserve Guam’s history for future generations. The forest, freshwater, and marine resources within park boundaries rank this park as the most biologically diverse park in the national park system.

The park protects seven units within, adjacent to, and surrounding the villages of Asan, Piti, and Agat, all significant key features of the battles that took place on Guam in 1944. To protect the “historic values and objects,” the park is working to restore elements of the historic landscape by maintaining the open space, reintroducing native vegetation, and allowing for the traditional uses of the land. The significant key features of the 1944 battles such as the invasion beaches, pillboxes, caves, and historic structures are preserved as reminders of the tangible World War II resources that help tell the Battle for Guam story. The **T. Stell Newman Visitor Center** provides visitors with an orientation to the park, events surrounding the Pacific War, and the Battle for Guam.

The **Asan Beach Unit** includes all of Asan Point, the landing beaches, and fringing coral reefs. The unit includes several memorials, a network of concealed caves, gun emplacements, and Japanese pillboxes. The **Asan Inland Unit** includes the Asan Bay Overlook Memorial Wall with the inscribed names of the American war dead who defended the island in 1941 and those who took the island from Japan’s control in 1944 and the names of the people of Guam who died or suffered war atrocities.

The **Fonte Plateau Unit** is a former Japanese naval communications center and the site of one of the more bitter battles between the U.S. Marines and the Japanese military.

The **Agat Unit** includes Apaca Point, Ga’an Point, Bangi Point, and Bangi, Alutom, and Pelagi Islands. The Agat Unit features caves, bunkers, several pillboxes, and a World War II latrine foundation—a remnant of the former refugee camps where thousands of Chamorros were left homeless. The invasion beaches and upland units, once bloody battlefields where Americans fought to gain ground and where Japanese military dug in to defend the island, now remain silent with open green spaces, limestone forests, freshwater aquatic life, diversity of coral reefs and marine life, more than 400 species of plants, and breathtaking scenic views of the landscape.

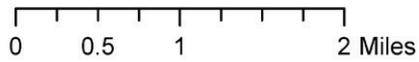
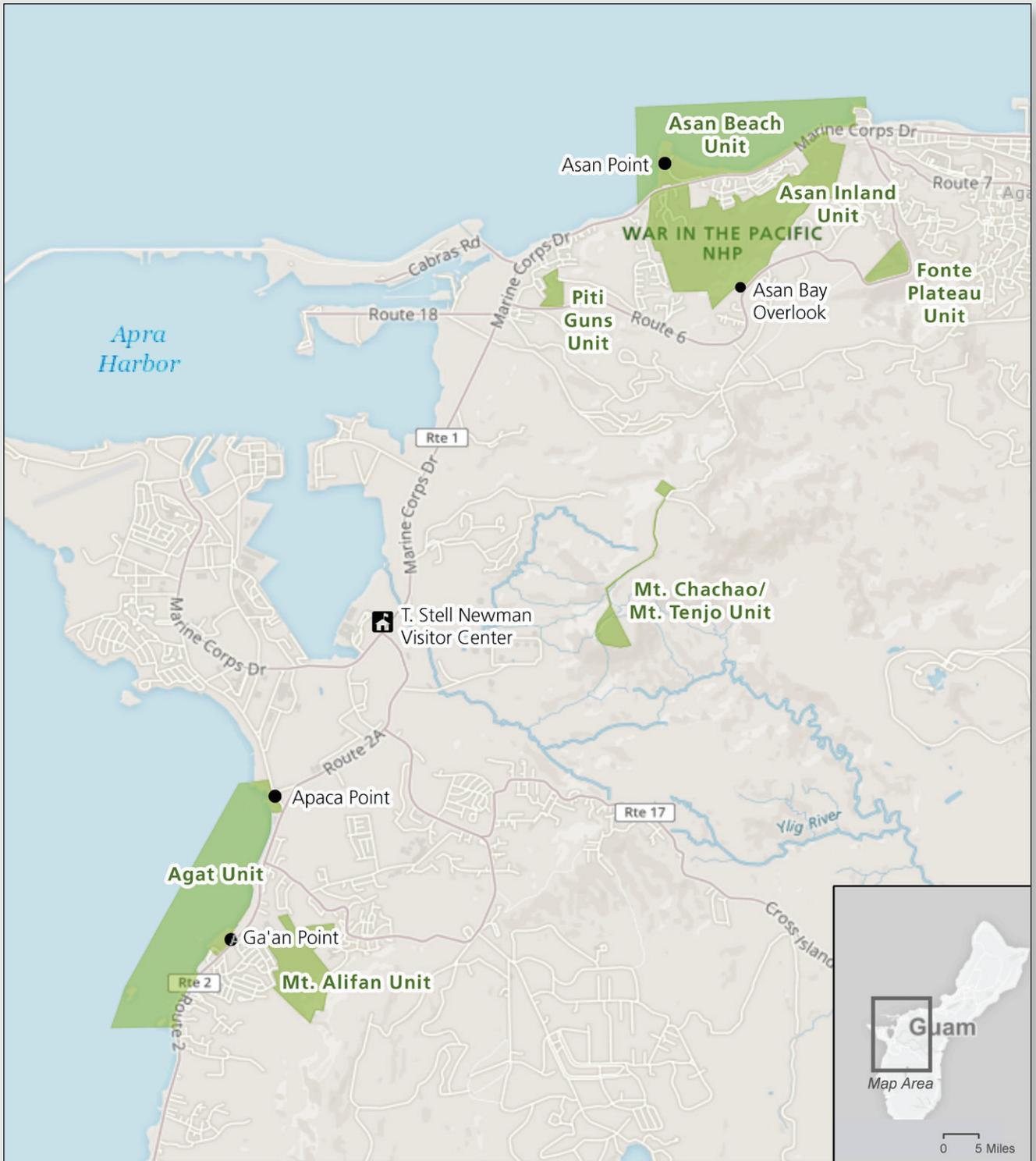
The **Mt. Alifan Unit** located above Agat beaches, served as the former Japanese command post and contains a network of bomb craters, foxholes, and trenches. The **Piti Guns Unit** preserves three Japanese 140mm coastal defense guns concealed within the rich mahogany forest planted in the early 1920s.

The **Mt. Chachao/Mt. Tenjo Unit**, the high ground the Americans captured in 1944, is where the two U.S. invading forces, from Asan and Agat, linked up.



U.S. Marines land at Asan Beach July 21, 1944.

# Map



War in the Pacific National Historical Park

## Purpose



Illuminated flags in honor of the American military and people of Guam war dead (Asan Beach Unit)

War in the Pacific National Historical Park (Guam) and American Memorial Park (Saipan) are co-managed. Each park has a unique “purpose” for why it was established and which guides its preservation. The National Park Service team developed the Foundation Documents for both parks together.

*WAR IN THE PACIFIC NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK commemorates the bravery and sacrifice of all those who participated in or were affected by the campaigns of the Pacific Theater of World War II. The park conserves and interprets outstanding natural, scenic, and historic values and objects on Guam.*



Clownfish and sea anemone (Agat) © Dave Burdick

## Significance

Significance statements express why War in the Pacific National Historical Park resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- War in the Pacific National Historical Park on Guam and American Memorial Park on Saipan tell the history of the Pacific Theater of World War II and the devastating loss of life during the Marianas Campaign. The Mariana Islands were strategic colonial outposts governed by the United States and Japan and became battlefields for control of the Pacific during World War II. More than 70,000 Japanese, Americans, and civilians died over the 61 days of the Marianas Campaign.
- War in the Pacific National Historical Park and American Memorial Park, located in the western Pacific, are uniquely situated to introduce the national park idea to diverse, non-English-speaking, international visitors from the Pacific and Asia.



Memorial Day Flag Display (Asan Beach Unit)

# Significance



View of Asan beach from the Asan Bay Overlook (Asan Inland Unit)

- War in the Pacific National Historical Park interprets the air, sea, and land battles of the World War II Marianas Campaign that resulted in the amphibious invasions of three islands (Saipan, Tinian, and Guam). The park preserves the dramatic landscape setting (invasion beaches, battlefields and surrounding hills) that help interpret the Battle for Guam story. The tactics used to retake Guam by American forces and the Japanese defensive strategies were representative of the island-by-island fighting techniques used throughout the Pacific.
- War in the Pacific National Historical Park has more species of plants and animals than any other national park. There are more than 400 terrestrial and freshwater species, including rare and endangered species endemic to tropical limestone forests on Guam. The Guam coral reefs have more than 3,500 species, including more than 400 known corals, more than 1,000 fish, and several threatened and endangered marine species. Most of these species as well as protected marine mammals are present in park waters.
- War in the Pacific National Historical Park honors all those who participated in the campaigns of the Pacific Theater of World War II and memorializes the sacrifices and war dead of the peoples caught in the conflict between two warring nations.
- War in the Pacific National Historical Park commemorates the unique experiences of the Chamorro people and other island communities during World War II.



Guam Silver Star recipient Tony Duenas with family (July 7, 1945)

## Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

The following fundamental resources and values have been identified for War in the Pacific National Historical Park:

- **The power of place (historic landscapes).** The park's seven units preserve the former World War II battlefield landscapes of Guam from the offshore waters, to the landing beaches, to the high ground—all critical objectives to liberate the island. Within these landscapes are the remnants of submerged military equipment, fortifications and defensive positions, and guns from the Battle for Guam.
- **The Asan Bay Overlook and Memorial.** The Asan Bay Overlook provides an opportunity to experience a solemn, peaceful, and reverent space where one can remember the fallen and also reflect upon the battlefields below. The memorial wall's black granite panels list the names of the American servicemen who died defending Guam in 1941, those who died liberating the island from the Japanese occupation in 1944, and the people of Guam who suffered and died during the 31 months of brutal enemy occupation.



Bas relief sculpture (Asan Bay Overlook)



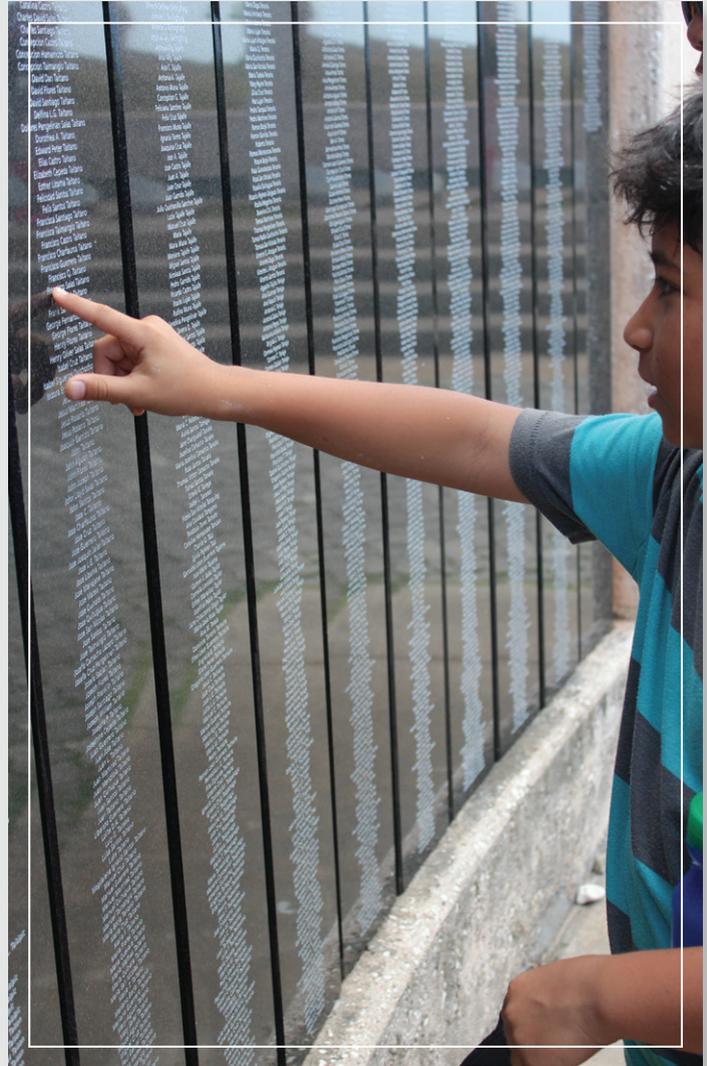
Museum collection items (WAPA/Guam)

- **Museum collection.** The park museum collection of more than 100,000 items includes World War II photographs, artifacts, war memorabilia, and oral histories that help tell the diverse stories of the Pacific War and the war years on Guam.
- **Marine resources.** More than half of the War in the Pacific National Historical Park's area consists of coral reefs with the highest biological diversity of any NPS area. Marine resources include endangered corals, sea turtles, sharks, protected marine mammals (dolphins), fish, invertebrates, and productive sea grass habitats. Traditional Chamorro and recreational fishing is practiced in most park waters and a part of the park's reefs are protected as a marine preserve to sustain fishery stocks.
- **Terrestrial resources.** The park's terrestrial habitats support native plants and animals in limestone forests (unique in the national park system), tropical savannas, riverine forests, and beach strand communities. When control of the brown tree snake is accomplished, these habitats will be suitable for the restoration of native plants and for the reintroduction of birds, bats, and lizards. Listed, threatened, and endangered plants and animals include the protected population of *Tinospora homosepala*, an endemic vine with fewer than 50 individuals remaining worldwide.
- **Education, telling the story.** War in the Pacific National Historical Park staff, and its nonprofit partner, Pacific Historic Parks, share compelling stories through outreach programs and provide unique opportunities to connect the public and youth to park resources and values, encouraging stewardship of our national parks and Guam's heritage.

## Other Important Resources And Values

War in the Pacific National Historical Park contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- **Other monuments at Asan Beach.** The Marine Monument, Liberator's Monument, and the 3rd Marine Division Monument honor the military armed forces involved in the Battle for Guam. The Mabini monuments, installed before the establishment of the park, honor Philippine national hero Apolinario Mabini, who was interred at Asan Beach during the early 1900s.
- **Public use.** Public use and recreation occurs throughout the park where not in conflict with the site's solemnity. Facilities and spaces provide for gatherings, appropriate special events, large picnics, swimming, diving, snorkeling, water sports, and fishing.
- **Traditional uses.** War in the Pacific National Historical Park allows for the continued traditional uses of the land and sea (food harvesting, fishing, and family gathering) by the indigenous people of Guam.
- **Connection to other relevant sites.** As directed through its enabling legislation, War in the Pacific National Historical Park interprets the campaigns of the Pacific Theater of World War II. Historical, cultural, and other World War II-related sites outside of War in the Pacific National Historical Park and Guam (including submerged World War II shipwrecks and aircraft) provide opportunities for the park to convey its broad scope and allow for resource sharing within a local, regional, and global context.



Memorial Wall (Asan Bay Overlook)



Youth volunteer monitoring coral reef health



Sunken Amtrac at Agat

# Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- War in the Pacific National Historical Park and American Memorial Park tell the stories of the tragedy of war and promote reconciliation, friendship, and peace among former enemies.
- Throughout the Pacific, residents and indigenous island people were trapped between global warring nations and were deeply impacted by a war not of their making. The people of the Pacific Islands endured invasions, occupation, warfare, relocation, recovery, and reconciliation, while retaining their cultural identity, language, and traditions.
- The parks honor the extraordinary sacrifices and exceptional courage of military personnel who fought for their countries.
- The natural ecosystems of Guam and Saipan changed greatly during and after World War II. Vegetation and coral reefs have largely recovered from the devastating impacts of the war, but face new threats from invasive species, development, and climate change.
- The parks provide for continued cultural and traditional uses of the land and ocean where families and the public can perpetuate their heritage.
- As national parks in the remote western Pacific, War in the Pacific National Historical Park and American Memorial Park convey the significance of the Marianas Campaign and the role it played in helping to end the Pacific Theater of World War II. This significant historical event connects the Marianas people and international visitors to our nation's heritage.



Ranger Rufus leads interpretive talk (Piti Guns Unit)



WWII Veterans return for the 70th Anniversary Liberation of Guam



Valor in the Pacific listening station (T. Stell Newman Visitor Center)