

American Memorial Park

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

American Memorial Park was established to honor the American and Marianas people who gave their lives during the Marianas Campaign of WWII. On June 15, 1994, the U.S. Memorial was dedicated during the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Saipan. At the Park's Court of Honor and Flag Circle, the American flag flies proudly, flanked by flags of the U.S. Marine Corps, Army, Navy, and Air Force, with the names of more than 3,500 American military personnel memorialized.

SIGNIFICANCE

On June 15, 1944 military forces of the 2nd and 4th Marine Divisions began the assault on the island of Saipan. Located only 1250 miles southeast of Tokyo, Saipan was a vital Japanese supply and communication center for imperial forces in the Central Pacific. In the weeks following, Marine units, supported by soldiers of the 27th Infantry Division, fought a savage and costly battle. Of the 71,000 American who took part in the liberation of Saipan, 16,525 were wounded, killed or listed as missing in action.

The capture of Saipan was a bold undertaking and one of the key operations in the Pacific War. The previous major land battle between American and Japanese Imperial forces had been fought in February, 1944 in the Marshall Islands, more than 2,000 miles from Tokyo. The U.S. victory on Saipan brought the Japanese homeland within striking distance of American B-29 bombers. The end of the war with Japan followed 14 months later.

At 0635 on August 15, 1945, the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet and Pacific Oceans areas, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, ordered all offensive action against the Japanese to cease. The guns fell silent. The long postwar process of healing, reconstruction and building of a basis for mutual trust and lasting peace began.

HISTORY

Although the Park was not the scene of major fighting, several historical structures are scattered throughout this area. Before WWII, much of the Park was residential, commercial and agricultural. In the early years of the war, Japanese bunkers, pillboxes, anti-aircraft gun emplacements, fuel storage tanks and other military facilities were developed. These features have been recommended to the National Register of Historic Places.

RECREATION

The Park concept for a "Living Memorial" offers activities enjoyed half a century ago by American G.I.'s. Visitors to the Park can enjoy similar activities today, including water sports, tennis, softball, jogging and bicycling. Bordering the Park is Micro Beach, one of Saipan's finest

white sand beaches, beckoning windsurfers, snorkelers, sunbathers and picnickers. A photographer's fancy, Micro Beach provides a breathtaking view and evening sunset. For the tennis enthusiast, the Park offers four tennis courts with night lighting for evening sets. The Park's 1,200-seat Amphitheater recently opened for public use is already taking center stage for a wide variety of local events such as the annual Liberation Day Celebration, arts and crafts festivals, concerts and graduations.

The Park harbors a 16.5-acre wetland and mangrove forest -- a habitat quite rare in the Northern Marianas. The wetland is an excellent environment for native bird species including the collared kingfisher, bridled white-eye, fufous-fronted fantail, nightingale reed-warbler and Marianas common moorhen. The latter two species have been listed as endangered with their survival dependent upon preservation of suitable habitat.

Future Developments: Park improvement plans include a memorial garden, commercial boat marina, recreation center, track-soccer-football field, nature center and trail along with additional picnic sites and barbecue pits.

Location: American Memorial Park is located in the main village of Garapan on the island of Saipan, the cultural, political and economic center of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (U.S. Commonwealth). Saipan is 46.5 square miles with a population of approximately 45,000 consisting mainly of native Chamorros and Carolinians, U.S. Mainland residents and Asian non-resident workers. The island's rich history is a result of diverse contributions of Spanish, German, Japanese and U.S. administrations.

Things to know: The average temperature for Saipan is 81.5 degrees F (27.2 C) - sunny, with humid and rainy periods throughout the year. The period of heaviest rainfall and possible typhoon activity occurs from July through October. Wear comfortable summer attire and walking shoes.

For your safety: American Memorial Park is a new and developing area and your safety and enjoyment are our main concern. You can ensure both by observing the following:

- Please help protect our historic and natural features and do not disturb, remove or mar them - they are protected by law.
- To keep our trees healthy, do not build fires near them.
- For everyone's safety, there are no motorized vehicles or scooters allowed on the bikepath.
- Keep your park free of litter.

Most important of all: Please do not disturb or remove any ammunition that you may find on or off shore. To do so is extremely dangerous! Inform a ranger about its location so it can be removed by qualified personnel.

For more info contact: American Memorial Park, P.O. Box 5198, CHRB, Saipan, MP 96950. Phone: (670) 234-7207 or fax (670) 234-6698

