

BY AIR, SEA, AND LAND

World War II's devastation tore across the Pacific Ocean on a scale never before experienced in human history. The warring nations—the United States, Japan, China, British Empire, Netherlands, and many others—were based thousands of miles away. Caught in the crossfire were the people of the Pacific islands in whose homelands and waters combat raged for four years.

endured the destruction of their homes and livelihoods, forced labor, imprisonment, and executions. On July 21, 1944, US forces returned to retake the island.

War in the Pacific National Historical Park commemorates the bravery and sacrifice of all those who participated in or were affected by World War II's Pacific Theater campaigns. The park conserves and interprets Guam's outstanding places, artifacts, history, and culture. Remnants of combat and occupation—artillery, earthworks, battlegrounds—slowly succumb to the elements. What endure are the spirit, dignity, and bravery of those caught up in a world at war.

Hours after their surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, Japan bombed the US Territory of Guam and within two days invaded the island. Like countless indigenous people occupied by invaders, Chamorros

Top: US forces retake Guam, July 1944
NATIONAL ARCHIVES



USS Maryland and capsized USS Oklahoma, Dec. 7, 1941
NATIONAL ARCHIVES



Japanese kamikaze pilots prepare for a mission, 1944
NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND



3rd Marine Division taking Asan Beach, July 21, 1944
US MARINE CORPS / FREDERICK R. FROTHIER



Japanese prisoners of war, 1945
NATIONAL ARCHIVES

FOR THE PEOPLE OF GUAM, WAR CAME EARLY AND STAYED LATE

1941

Dec. 7 (Dec. 8 in Guam and other points west of International Date Line) Japan's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor cripples the US Pacific fleet; Japan moves to occupy much of Southeast Asia and western Pacific.

Dec. 8 Japanese bomb islands of Wake, Guam, and the Philippines. On Guam, the targeted minesweeper USS Penguin is sunk outside Apra Harbor.

Dec. 8-23 Wake Island falls to Japanese; 45 Chamorro civilian airline workers are stranded.

Dec. 10 Japanese forces invade Guam. Insular Guard attempts to halt Japanese advance

but is soon driven back. Capt. George J. McMillin, USN Governor of Guam, surrenders to Japan.

1942

Jan. 10 McMillin, American military and civilian personnel, and American and Spanish clergy are taken to POW camps in Japan.

Feb.-Mar. Japanese rename island of Guam *Omiyajima*; the *keibitai*—Japanese naval police—now govern.

April After Battle of Bataan, thousands of US and Filipino prisoners perish in 62-mile forced march to Japanese prison camps.

May 4-8 Battle of the Coral Sea: Japanese sink

US carrier *Lexington*; US stems Japanese advance.

June 4-7 Battle of Midway; Japan suffers major losses of ships, aircraft, and men.

Nov. 12-15 The decisive American victory in the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal prevents Japanese from landing reinforcements.

1943

Under *keibitai* rule, Chamorros may remain on their ranches but are forced to learn Japanese language and customs. English is forbidden. Chamorros suspected of hiding family members wanted by the Japanese or aiding Americans are harassed, beaten, tortured, or executed.

1944

Mar. 4 Anticipating American invasion, Japanese return to Guam to reinforce southern Marianas. Social activities are banned, schools closed. Laboring at bayonet point, Chamorro men, women, and children work in fields, build defenses, and dig hundreds of shelter caves for Japanese occupiers.

June 15 US forces invade Saipan, suffering heavy losses.

June 19-20 Battle of Philippine Sea; US Navy carrier forces devastate Japanese fleet.

Early July 10,000-15,000 Chamorros are forced to march to jungle camps with little

food or water. Many do not survive march; many others die from horrific conditions in camps or on work crews.

July 21 55,000 US troops land on Asan and Agat beaches; despite 18,500 Japanese defenders, both beaches are secured.

July 24 US forces invade Tinian.

Aug. 10 US declares Guam secure. Liberation costs over 7,000 American and about 17,500 Japanese casualties. Japan's grip on the Marianas is broken.

1945

Guam transformed into military fortress. From here, US B-29s

execute bombing raids on Japan, and Apra Harbor becomes world's busiest port.

Feb.-Apr. After 36 days of bitter fighting, US Marines take Iwo Jima; Okinawa soon secured in largest amphibious landing of Pacific war.

Aug. 6 US drops atomic bomb on Hiroshima and, 3 days later, Nagasaki.

Aug. 14 Japan accepts Allied terms for unconditional surrender; signs formal treaty Sept. 2.

AFTERMATH

1945-49 144 persons, mostly Japanese with a few Chamorros, are tried on Guam for war crimes; 134 convicted.

They fought together as brothers in arms; they died together and now they sleep side by side . . . To them, we have a solemn obligation—the obligation to ensure that their sacrifices will help make this a better and safer world in which to live.”

—Fleet Adm. Chester W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas, 1945



JULY 1944 From two beachheads on Guam's sheltered west coast, US forces battled for 20 days to recapture the island. Gold arrows show the general direction of the American assault.

A decree was sent out that night that all men should go work in the *fama'ayan*, the rice field. . . . All the men, young and old, were made to work from seven o'clock in the morning until six o'clock in the evening. They didn't feed us anything, we ate whatever we found. When it rained we continued working in the rain, even when we were soaking wet. . . . When harvesting time came, we had gained nothing . . . Everything went to the Japanese soldiers.

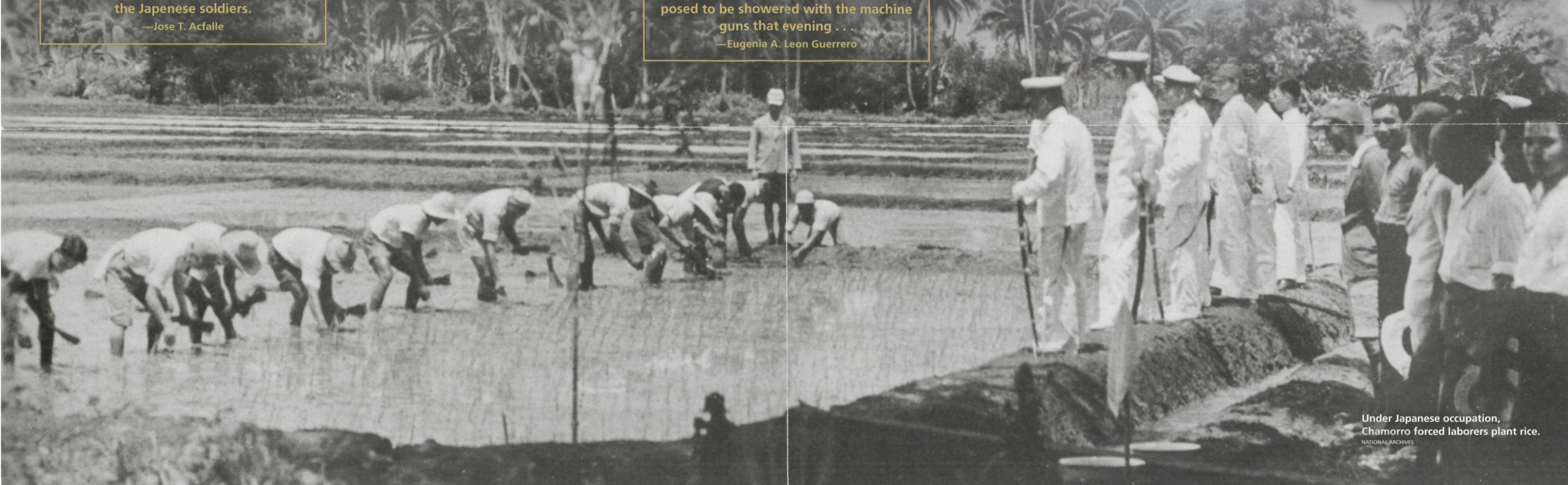
—Jose T. Acfalle

In order to support us my mother had a soap factory . . . Mama would go from house to house with the carabao cart to collect all the ashes for the soap. We used the soap to barter, one bar of soap about the size of the regular GI bars. . . . Every piece of soap we'd trade for one chicken or fish or vegetable. . . . My mother was killed by the Japanese.

—Lorraine Mesa Aguon

Every morning we would come out of our house to salute the Emperor. It happened that just one day before the Americans came, when we were supposed to come out that morning to be killed by the Japanese, the Japanese were all gone from camp. They had left the camp to meet the enemy. . . an interpreter was there at the time . . . the leader had told us that we were very, very lucky because we were supposed to be showered with the machine guns that evening . . .

—Eugenia A. Leon Guerrero



Under Japanese occupation, Chamorro forced laborers plant rice.
NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Experience Your National Park on Guam



Rare Japanese midget submarine at park visitor center

View of WWII invasion beach from Asan Bay Overlook

Memorial Wall bas-relief sculpture, Asan Bay Overlook

Japanese 14-cm coastal defense gun, Piti Guns Unit

Japanese 20-cm coastal gun at Ga'an Point

PLAN YOUR VISIT

War in the Pacific National Historical Park invites you to explore Guam's World War II experience as well as its natural world.

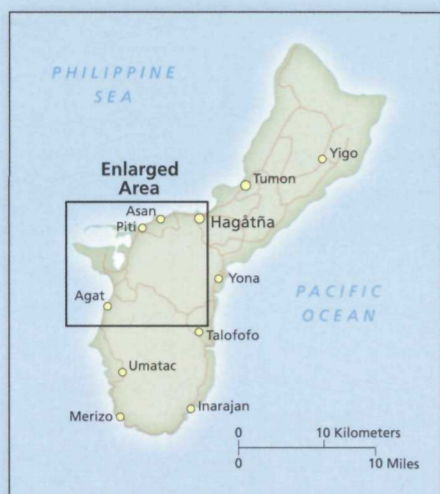
Start at the T. Stell Newman Visitor Center in Sumay on Marine Corps Drive (Rt. 1). Interactive exhibits and films portray the events of the Battle of Guam and tell the stories of combat veterans, as well as Chamorros and other Pacific Islanders.

The Pacific Historic Parks Bookstore, operated by the park's nonprofit

partner group, offers a comprehensive selection of Pacific Theater and Guam history publications, films, and memorabilia.

STAY SAFE, PROTECT THE PARK
Historic structures, military equipment, and earthworks like foxholes and trenches date from the 1940s or earlier and are very fragile. Help us protect these features by not disturbing them.

Federal law protects all natural and cultural features on land and in the water. Please leave



cultural and natural objects in their original place. Contact a park ranger if you have any questions.

For your safety do not open or enter any caves or tunnels; they are fragile and may contain hidden explosives.

Some lands in the park are privately owned. Please respect these property rights and do not trespass.

ACCESSIBILITY
We strive to make our facilities, programs, and services accessible to all. To learn more, ask at the visitor center or check our website.

MORE INFORMATION
War in the Pacific National Historical Park is one of over 400 parks in the National Park System. To learn more about National Park Service programs, visit www.nps.gov.

War in the Pacific National Historical Park
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www.nps.gov/wapa

National Park Foundation.
Join the park community.
www.nationalparks.org

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EXPLORE—AND MORE

Amphibious assaults. Bombardments. Hard jungle fighting against well-entrenched Japanese forces. The events on Guam echo the island-to-island combat throughout the Pacific Theater. Learn more at these park sites.

ASAN BEACH UNIT

On July 21, 1944, US Navy ships bombarded the island while the US Third Marine Division rushed ashore to retake Guam. The remains of an American landing craft, encrusted in coral, lie just offshore. Look for the large cave along the ridgeline; it was built during the war by Chamorro laborers.

The Liberators' Memorial at Asan Point, installed for the 50th anniversary of the battle, honors the US military forces and local Guam Combat Patrolmen who fought on the island.

The Asan Ridge Trail leads to spectacular views of the beach as well as the remains of hidden Japanese fortifications.

ASAN INLAND UNIT
Dense jungle growth and swordgrass savanna obscure this site where entrenched Japanese troops attacked US

Marines fighting to take the high ground.

The Asan Bay Overlook features a Memorial Wall etched with the names of Americans who died defending and liberating the island, along with the names of the people of Guam who suffered the hardships of war and who lost their lives.

PITI GUNS UNIT

A trail leads you to three WWII Japanese coastal defense guns. Chamorros built Japanese defense structures like these throughout Guam. This historic trail leads you through the dense mahogany forest planted in the 1920s.

FORTE PLATEAU UNIT

This is the former command post of General Takeshina, commander of the Japanese forces on Guam. Secluded in the cliffside among dense vegetation, the U-shaped concrete bunker protected Takeshina and his staff. Nearby is a former quarry from which coral was taken for road construction on the island.

MT. CHACHAO/ MT. TENJO UNIT
Undeveloped site. In 1944 this Japanese

strongpoint had caves and tunnels fortified by foxholes and machine gun nests. From here, US Marines and Army forces joined in pushing the Japanese troops to the northern end of the island.

AGAT UNIT

A significant Japanese stronghold defended the bay. Elaborate camouflage made it all the more deadly to advancing US Marines and Army troops who stormed the southern beachhead in July 1944. Several pieces of American military equipment remain underwater near the edge of the reef.

From this unit you can view Orote Peninsula where US forces captured the airfield and Marine air power was used for close combat support missions during the battle for Guam.

MT. ALIFAN UNIT

Undeveloped site. From the high ground Japanese troops could spot incoming US military forces, landing craft, and warships. These hills saw heavy fighting between the United States and Japanese forces.



MODERN BATTLES ON A NEW FRONT

The park protects coral reefs (right), seagrass beds, savanna grasslands, bogs, streams, limestone forests, coastal and forest wetlands, offshore islets, and a mahogany forest.

With rare and endangered animals, these habitats create a living laboratory for scientific research. They also face a variety of threats: disease, invasive species, habitat loss, and climate change.



An astounding number of organisms live in and around the park's reefs (left), especially rich—and vulnerable—communities. More species of invertebrates, fish, and corals inhabit these reefs than Hawaii's.

This biodiversity forms a complex ecosystem. On Guam reefs, you will find herbivores like *kichu* (convict tangs) and *palakse* (bullethead parrotfish) as well as predators like groupers and jacks.

These fish were an important part of the traditional Chamorro diet and are still taken for food today.

Over time coral reefs have been used—and abused. Natural occurrences like storms and wildfires permanently alter shorelines. Human impact continues to take its toll. Fossil fuels release greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and contribute to global warming. Clearing and

burning vegetation allows more sediment to wash into the ocean and onto coral reefs. Taking fish from the reef faster than they can reproduce disrupts the balance of the food web.

As you explore the park's lands and waters, keep in mind your role as a steward of these irreplaceable treasures.



Flags on Asan Beach
BACKGROUND: NPS / KELLY CARROLL, OTHER
PHOTOS THIS SIDE NPS UNLESS OTHERWISE CREDITED