



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.

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. Throughout the park are remnants of combat and occupation—artillery, earthworks, battlegrounds—slowly succumbing to the elements. What endures is 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, the Chamorros endured the destruction of their homes and

Top: US forces retake Guam, July 1944



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



Japanese kamikaze pilots prepare for a mission, 1944



3rd Marine Division taking Asan Beach, July 21, 1944



Japanese prisoners of war, 1945

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.–March** 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

**1944**  
March 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

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

AFTERMATH

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

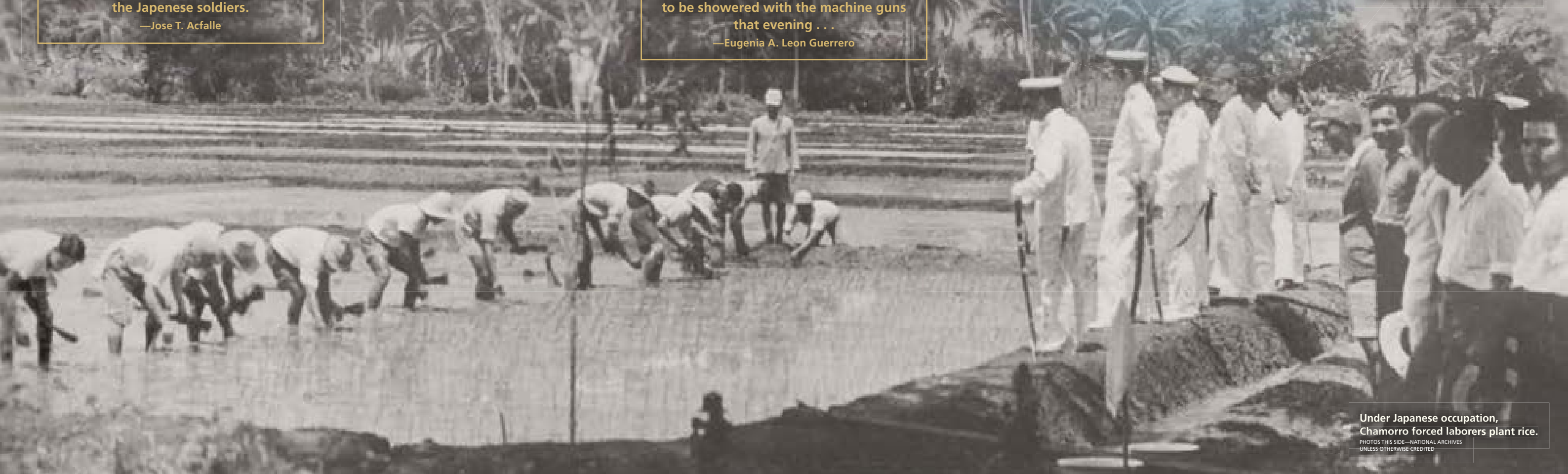


**JULY 1944** From two beach-heads on Guam's sheltered west coast, US forces battled for 20 days to recapture the island. Gold arrows show the general direction of the American assault.

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. PHOTOS THIS SIDE—NATIONAL ARCHIVES UNLESS OTHERWISE CREDITED



# 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 and contact a park ranger if you have 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](http://www.nps.gov).

War in the Pacific National Historical Park  
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[www.nps.gov/wapa](http://www.nps.gov/wapa)

**National Park Foundation.**  
Join the park community.  
[www.nationalparks.org](http://www.nationalparks.org)

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## EXPLORE—AND MORE

Aerial and naval barrages. Amphibious assaults. Hard jungle fighting against well-entranced 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.

**MONTE 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.

**MONTE CHACHAO/ MONTE TENJO UNIT**  
*Undeveloped site.* In 1944 this Japanese

strong point 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.

**MONTE 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, seagrass beds, savanna grasslands, bogs, streams, limestone forests, coastal and forest wetlands, offshore islets, and even 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 on Hawaii's reefs.

This biodiversity makes for a complex ecosystem. On Guam reefs, you will find herbivores like *kichu*, (convict tangs), and *palakse* (bullethead parrotfish), and preda-

tors 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—HEP KELLY CARROLL. OTHER PHOTOS THIS SITE WPA UNLESS OTHERWISE CREDITED