

1941 to 1945

The Pacific Theater of World War II involved one-third of the earth's surface but only 1/145th of its total land mass. It involved vast distances and new strategy, tactics, equipment, and weapons of war. Moreover, it involved not just Japan and the United States but Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Canada, China, France, and the Soviet Union as well. Caught in the middle were the people of the Pacific islands, upon whose homelands and in whose waters the battles were fought. The following chronology touches on some of the more significant aspects of the Pacific War and provides a framework for understanding the people and events commemorated at War in the Pacific National Historical Park.



1941

7 December Without warning, Japanese planes bomb Pearl Harbor and Hickam and Wheeler Airfields on Oahu, and within 30 minutes destroy the power of the U.S. Pacific battle fleet—except for aircraft carriers *Enterprise*, *Lexington*, and *Saratoga*, which are at sea; Japan declares war on the United States and Great Britain. The Pacific war that the United States suddenly found herself embroiled in had begun many years before the attack on Pearl Harbor when Japan, lacking the raw materials for modern industrialization, looked to mineral-rich Manchuria to supply them. Japanese attacks on China led to open warfare in July 1937. As a result of Japan's involvement in China and the extension of Japan's "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" into Indochina, the United States, Great Britain, and other countries froze Japanese assets and exports, threatening Japan's industrial survival. This led to accelerated Japanese economic expansion into Southeast Asia and the Dutch East Indies, bringing her into direct conflict with western countries which also had economic interests in these areas. By 1941, Japan was committed to a policy of aggression to achieve her goals. Her inability to come to diplomatic terms with the United States, which she saw as her most formidable opponent, led to the Pearl Harbor attack.

8 December Congress declares war on Japan; Japanese bomb islands of Wake and Guam, and Clark and Iba Airfields in the Philippines; invade Malaya and occupy Thailand; and seize the international settlement at Shanghai.

10 December Japanese capture Guam and begin landings on northern Luzon.



23 December Wake Island is surrendered to the Japanese.

24 December Gen. Douglas MacArthur, commanding United States Army Forces in the Far East, begins evacuation of Manila and withdraws to Bataan.

26 December Hong Kong is lost to the Japanese.

1942

2 January Japanese occupy Manila.

7 January Siege of Bataan begins. MacArthur, headquartered on Corregidor, proclaims the Bataan Peninsula the center of American-Filipino resistance to the Japanese invasion of the Philippines. But its jungles, swamps, and mountains make supply difficult and the Bataan Defense Force suffers shortages of food and medicines throughout the three-month ordeal.

1 February U.S. Navy launches air and surface attacks against Japanese bases in the Marshall Islands.

15 February Singapore surrenders.

27-28 February Battle of Java Sea results in most severe U.S. naval losses since Pearl Harbor and leads to the collapse of organized Allied military resistance in that area.

8 March Japanese land in New Guinea, occupying Lae and Salamaua and threatening Port Moresby, last defensive post held by the Allies to protect Australia.

17 March MacArthur, who had left the Philippines six days before, arrives in Australia. Here he utters the now-famous words, "I came through and I shall return."

30 March MacArthur is designated Allied Supreme Commander, Southwest Pacific Areas (Australia, most of the Indies, and the Philippines); Adm. Chester Nimitz is designated Commander in Chief, Pacific Ocean Area.



1 President Franklin D. Roosevelt asks Congress to declare war on Japan, December 8, 1941.

2 US Navy task group returns to anchorage for repairs and supplies after strikes against the Japanese in the Philippines, December 1944.

3 Crew of carrier USS *Bunker Hill* battle fires resulting from kamikaze attack during Okinawa campaign, 1945.

4 Japanese kamikaze pilots prepare for a mission, 1944.

9 April Bataan surrenders. The starving U.S. and Filipino survivors begin a 60-mile "death march" to Japanese prison camps.

18 April Lt. Col. James H. Doolittle leads sixteen B-25 bombers from carrier *Hornet* to bomb targets in Tokyo, Yokohama, Yokosuka, Kobe, and Nagoya.

7 May Gen. Jonathan Wainwright, MacArthur's successor in the Philippines, surrenders Corregidor and all U.S. troops under his command.

4-8 May Battle of the Coral Sea. This Japanese tactical victory but strategic defeat is the first naval battle in history in which all fighting is done by carrier-based planes and the opposing ships never saw each other.

3-6 June Battle of Midway. This American victory deals the Japanese their first major naval defeat, and confirms the power of the aircraft carrier as an offensive weapon in war.

7 June Japanese occupy Attu and Kiska in the Aleutian Islands.

22 July Papuan Campaign begins as Japanese troops land at Gona and Buna, 100 miles east of Lae and Salamaua in northern New Guinea, and begins an overland drive across the Owen Stanley Mountains to capture Port Moresby on the southern coast. In the months that follow, Australian and U.S. forces frustrate every attempt to take the port and eventually drive the Japanese back to Gona and Buna.

7 August U.S. Marines invade Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands in the first American offensive of the war. Subsequent Japanese efforts to drive the Americans off the island are consistently unsuccessful.

8-9 August Japanese navy sinks four Allied cruisers in Battle of Savo Islands.



5 Japanese submarine I-370 carrying *Kaiten* one-man torpedoes en route to attack US fleet off Iwo Jima, 1945.

6 Navy officer scrambles to assist Hellcat pilot who has crash landed on the deck of carrier USS *Enterprise*, 1944.

7 US Marines hurl grenades at Japanese positions during the fighting on Saipan, 1944.

8 Japanese Gen. Yoshijiro Umezumi signs document of surrender aboard USS *Missouri*, September 2, 1945.

The Pacific Theater, 1941-45



Names in red denote major battles or campaigns of the war in the Pacific.

24 August Battle of Eastern Solomons results in sinking of one Japanese carrier by aircraft from USS *Enterprise* and USS *Saratoga*.

12-15 November The decisive American victory in the naval Battle of Guadalcanal prevents the Japanese from landing reinforcements and makes possible the final conquest of Guadalcanal by U.S. forces.

1943

10 January U.S. troops begin final offensive to clear Guadalcanal. By February 9 organized Japanese resistance on the island is ended. The American victory opens the way for other Allied gains in the Solomons.

22 January Papuan Campaign ends in the first decisive land defeat of the Japanese.

2-3 March Battle of the Bismarck Sea. U.S. and

Australian aircraft decimate a 16-ship Japanese supply convoy bound for Lae and Salamaua, New Guinea, demonstrating the effectiveness of low-level bombing.

26 March An indecisive naval battle off the Komandorski Islands prepares the way for reconquest of the Western Aleutians. By mid-August Japanese troops have been driven out of both Attu and Kiska.

5 August Munda Airfield, New Georgia, is captured, providing Allied forces a base from which to bomb Japanese air and naval facilities at Rabaul.

25 August Americans overrun New Georgia, Solomon Islands, thus removing the Japanese threat to forces on Guadalcanal.

20 November Admiral Nimitz' Central Pacific offensive to reconquer the Marshall, Gilbert, Caroline, Mariana, and Philippine Islands begins with army



landings on Makin and Marine landings on Tarawa, the keystones of Japanese defenses in the Gilberts.

26 December General MacArthur's Southwest Pacific offensive to secure the western Solomons, New Guinea, and the Philippines begins with the landings on New Britain, the largest island in the Bismarck Archipelago.

1944

31 January-4 February American forces capture Roi-Namur and Kwajalein in the Marshalls.

29 February-7 March MacArthur surprises Japanese by seizing the Admiralty Islands.

15 June China-based B-29s make their first attack on Japanese homeland. U.S. forces invade Saipan.

17-19 June Battle of the Philippine Sea (called the Marianas "turkey shoot"), in which U.S. carrier-based aircraft engage and inflict crippling losses on Japanese carrier-based aircraft.

21 July U.S. forces invade Guam.

24 July U.S. forces invade Tinian.

15 September U.S. forces invade Morotai and Peleliu.

20 October U.S. forces invade Leyte.

23-25 October Battle of Leyte Gulf, the last and greatest naval engagement of the war, results in near destruction of the Japanese Navy.

24 November Air offensive against Japan begins with B-29 attacks on Tokyo from bases in the Marianas.

1945

9 January-23 February Reconquest of northern Philippines begins as U.S. forces invade Luzon and occupy Manila.

19 February-17 March U.S. Marines invade and conquer island of Iwo Jima after bitter fighting.

9-10 March B-29 fire-bomb attack on Tokyo leaves much of the city in ashes and inaugurates a series of incendiary strikes against other Japanese cities.

19 March-21 June Battle for the Ryukyu Islands, in which U.S. carrier-based planes make large-scale attacks on Japanese ships and airfields in the Ryukyus.

1 April-21 June U.S. troops invade and capture Okinawa, main island of the Ryukyus. Japanese military forces inflict heavy casualties on American troops, but the island is finally secured.

6 August Air Force drops atomic bomb on Hiroshima. A second atomic bomb is dropped on Nagasaki three days later.

14 August Japan accepts Allied unconditional surrender terms.

2 September Japan signs formal terms of surrender.



War in the Pacific

War in the Pacific
National Historical Park/Guam

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Lt. Commander Homura, Governor of Japanese-occupied Guam, inspects Chamorro workers planting rice. Chamorro and Korean laborers were forced to work in the fields to produce food, clear run-



Assault troops of the 3rd Marine Division wade ashore under fire at Asan Beach, July 21, 1944. Their objective: capture the cliffs and high ground immediately inland and prepare for further operations to the east and south-east.



Marines take cover behind bomb and shell debris and fallen coconut trees, July 1944.



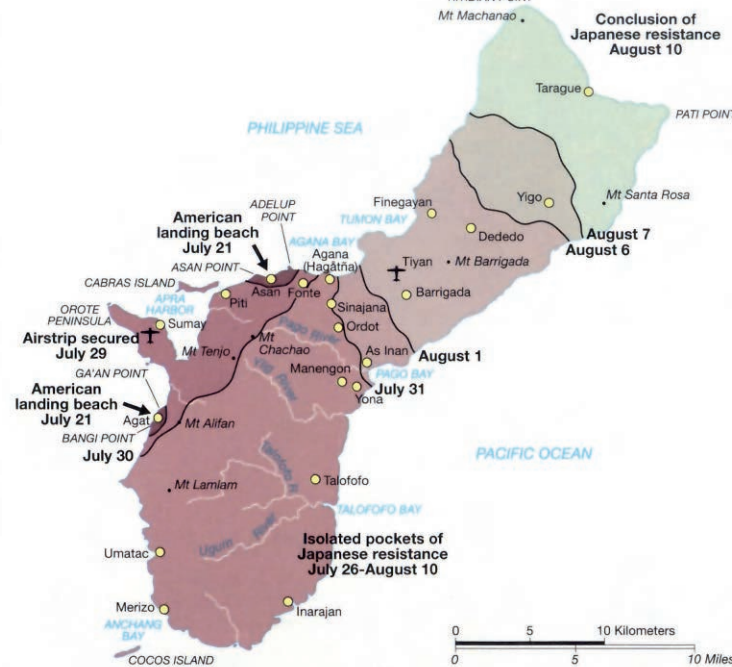
U.S. Army tanks of the 77th Infantry Division take a few moment's rest to view the damaged ruins of Agana (now Hagåtña).



Marines of the III Amphibious Corps Artillery fire one of their 155-mm. howitzers in support of the 305th Infantry's attack on the Orote Peninsula, July 22-24, 1944.

Guam 1941–1944: Conquest and Liberation

The Japanese conquest of Guam began about an hour after the attack on Pearl Harbor, when Saipan-based Japanese dive bombers launched the first in a series of raids on the island. At that time Guam's total protection consisted of 153 Marines, 271 U.S. Navy personnel, 134 civilian construction workers, and 247 members of the local Chamorro Insular Force Guard and the Naval Militia. (Chamorros are the indigenous people of Guam.) The garrison had no artillery, only a few .30-caliber machine guns, and various small arms. For two days the Japanese bombed and strafed the island and its defenders. In the early morning hours of December 10, a special Japanese naval landing party of about 400 men from the 5th Defense Force based on Saipan began landing at Dungca's Beach in Agana Bay. At the same time, a Japanese Army unit known as the South Seas Detachment landed on the beaches of Apoguan, Tumon, Togcha, Agat, and other areas. The Insular Guard made a gallant attempt to stop the Japanese advance at the Plaza de España in Agana (now Hagåtña) but was soon driven back. By 5:45 a.m. Capt. George J. McMillin, USN, the island's governor, realized that his tiny command was no match for the invasion force and began to surrender his post and the island.



The 1944 liberation of Guam, shown on the map at left, followed the same pattern as several dozen similar campaigns conducted by American forces between 1942 and 1945: the opening air and naval barrages, the amphibious assault, the contested landing, the hard jungle fighting against well-entrenched Japanese forces. The only questions were how long the campaign would last and how many lives it would cost. The black lines and dates on the map signify the stages in which the Americans occupied the island and cleared it of its Japanese defenders.

Guam remained in Japanese hands for two and a half years and Chamorros were forced to endure the hardships of military occupation in a war not of their making. For the first four months the island was controlled by army troops, who were housed in schools and government buildings in Agana. The island was renamed Oniwa Jima (Great Shrine Island) and Chamorros were required to learn the Japanese custom of bowing. Japanese yen became the island's currency, and civilian affairs were handled by a branch of the army called the minseisho. Cars, radios, and cameras were confiscated and food was rationed until supplies became exhausted. Chamorros suspected of hiding family members wanted by the Japanese, or of aiding the few Americans that did not surrender, were harassed, beaten, or tortured, and, in some instances, executed by order of the authorities.

Control of the island came under the Imperial Japanese Navy in March 1942. The keibitai, as it was known, governed the populace for about 19 months. Chamorros were allowed to remain on their farms and trade for products they needed. Social activities included parties, Japanese movies, and sports competitions. Mass meetings

were held in Agana to reinforce the "Nippon Seishen" (spirit of Japan). Schools were reopened and Chamorros were required to learn the Japanese language and customs. English was forbidden. Adults and children were taught reading, writing, math, and Japanese games and songs.

In early 1944, with the war going badly for Japan and an American invasion threatening, the Japanese Army returned to Guam, bringing with it a new and stricter form of government—the kaikontai. Social activities were terminated, schools were closed, and Chamorro men, women, and children over the age of 12 were forced to work long hours in the fields, repair or build airstrips and defense installations, and dig hundreds of Japanese shelter caves, many of which are within the boundaries of today's park. Chamorros, laboring at bayonet point, were mistreated and, in some cases, executed after completing defense installations. Without warning, 10,000-15,000 Chamorros, young and old, were forced to march with only the belongings they could carry to concentration camps in Guam's central and southern jungles. With inadequate shelter, little food, and no sanitary facilities, life in these camps was miserable. Despite the hardships, however, incarceration

proved to be a blessing in disguise. Had they not been moved, many Chamorros would have been killed by the American pre-invasion bombardment and the Japanese crossfire.

On the morning of July 21, 1944, after one of the longest and heaviest pre-assault naval bombardments of the war, the American recapture of Guam began with simultaneous landings at Asan and Agat beaches by 55,000 men of the 3rd Marine Division, 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, and 305th Regimental Combat Team of the 77th Army Infantry Division. By day's end, despite some initial confusion over landing sites and stiff resistance by the island's 18,500 Japanese defenders, both beaches had been secured. In the three weeks that followed (see map at far left), the Americans cleared Orote Peninsula and secured Fonte Plateau. They then moved north toward Agana, Barrigada, Mount Santa Rosa, and on to Ritidian Point, where the island was declared secure. The recapture of Guam cost more than 7,000 American and about 17,500 Japanese casualties. Japan's grip on the Marianas was broken and the end of the war was now just slightly over a year away.

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Seeing the Park

With the establishment of War in the Pacific National Historical Park, the United States National Park System now extends across the Pacific Ocean. Authorized on August 18, 1978, the park was established "to commemorate the bravery and sacrifice of those participating in the campaigns of the Pacific Theater of World War II and to conserve and interpret outstanding natural, scenic, and historic values and objects on the island of Guam...."



War in the Pacific National Historical Park contains numerous World War II relics, including three Japanese coastal defense guns in the Piti Guns Unit (far left) and the miscellaneous remains of American military equipment sunk offshore during the July 1944 landings.

Like many other Pacific islands, Guam contains historical features associated with World War II, especially the 1944 American liberation. The park itself consists of seven separate units. They are located in or near the villages of Asan, Piti, and Agat, on the west side of the island facing the Philippine Sea.

is also honored for helping the Americans scout out Japanese stragglers. Funding was provided by the Guam Chapters of the National Association for Uniformed Services and the Third Marine Division Association, and by the people of Guam.

The **Mt. Chachao/Mt. Tenjo Unit** provided the Japanese defenders with a view of United States troops landing at Asan Beach and a scenic overview of Apra Harbor and Orote Point. The unimproved trail leads to foxholes, trenches, and a World War I American gun emplacement.

The **Asan Beach Unit** is the site of the northern landing beach. It was here that the 3rd Marine Division came ashore for the initial assault and was met by troops of the Japanese 320th Independent Infantry Battalion. War-related structures are located at Asan Point and Adelup Point. The remains of some American military equipment and coral-encrusted ordnance lie underwater in the offshore area.

Discover hidden Japanese fortifications and historic sites along the Asan Ridge Trail. More than 50 years ago, Chamorros were forced to build these Japanese defenses.

The **Agat Unit** is the site of the southern landing beach. It was here that the First Provisional Marine Brigade and the 305th Regimental Combat Team of the 77th Army Infantry Division came ashore. They were met by the Japanese 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry. Apaca Point, Ga'an Point, Bangi Point, and Bangi Island contain historic sites and structures, including caves, bunkers, latrine foundations, and pillboxes.

The T. Stell Newman Visitor Center and Park Headquarters is located in the village of Asan, on Marine Drive. Here you will find museum exhibits and audiovisual programs telling the story of the Pacific Theater of World War II, the recapture of Guam by American forces, and the experiences of the Chamorros (the indigenous people of Guam) during the war. Programs are available in English, Japanese, Chinese, and Korean. Uniformed rangers at the information desk will answer questions and assist you.

The **Asan Inland Unit** is directly opposite the Asan Beach Unit across Marine Drive. It was on the face of these cliffs and hillsides that the American landing forces met heavy resistance. Today, thick jungle growth or swordgrass savannah covers the area, making hiking fairly difficult.

The beach and offshore area here are relatively unspoiled and provide a good impression of how they looked in 1944. Several pieces of American military equipment still lie underwater near the edge of the reef.

At Asan Point, the "Liberators' Memorial," installed during the Liberation of Guam 50th Anniversary ceremonies, honors veterans of the armed forces who participated in the 1944 landing. The Guam Combat Patrol

Asan Bay Overlook, on Route 6, contains a memorial garden in honor of Chamorros and Americans who died on Guam during the war years. Their names are inscribed on the memorial walls along with the names of Chamorros who endured the hardships of war through injury, forced labor, forced marches, and internment. Bronze panels illustrate scenes of the invasion, occupation, and liberation of the island. The site provides a panoramic view of the Asan landing beach.

The **Mt. Alifan Unit**, site of a former Japanese command post, contains the remains of bomb craters, foxholes, and trenches. The slopes of these hills saw intense battles between United States Marines and the defending Japanese forces. This area is undeveloped, making access difficult.

Things You Should Know

Guam's warm climate, sandy beaches, and turquoise waters beckon visitors to rediscover the island's rich heritage.

The **Piti Guns Unit** is on the ridge behind the village of Piti. After a steep ascent, the 1/2-mile trail leads to three Japanese coastal defense guns.

The **Fonte Plateau Unit**, site of a former Japanese naval communications center, is currently undeveloped.

Fishing, hiking, picnicking, and (for those with experience) snorkeling and diving are among the many recreational opportunities available in the individual park units and around the island.

Park historic structures and military equipment are more than 50 years old and are very fragile. Do not disturb any of the historic ground features, such as foxholes, trenches, and bomb craters.

For more information write Superintendent, P.O. Box FA, Hagåtña, Guam 96932; www.nps.gov/wapa on the Internet. (Hagåtña was formerly called Agana.)

The year-round temperature averages 27°C (80°F) and the ocean tempera-

Please do not remove or mar the historic and natural objects beneath the water's surface. They are protected by law.

For Your Safety War in the Pacific National Historical Park is a new and developing area and your safety and enjoyment are our main concern. You can ensure both by observing the following:



Use caution when swimming, snorkeling, or diving along the reefs. Use the buddy system and be aware of your surroundings. There are several species of poisonous marine life on the reef. The strong, unpredictable currents also can be hazardous.

Do not enter any caves or tunnels. Some may contain hidden explosives. Do not open any sealed caves; it is illegal and dangerous.

Most important of all: Do not disturb any ammunition that you may find on or off shore. It is extremely dangerous and may detonate at any time. Report its location to a ranger, who will have it removed by qualified personnel.

Do not trespass on private property. Some lands within the park are