

[Paper]

Resilience in the Report *Environmental Assessment,  
General Management Plan:  
War in the Pacific National Park, Guam*

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**Keywords**

World War II, Guam, war memory, War in the Pacific National Park, environmental assessment

**Introduction**

The United States has extended and sustained a global military-base network to counter fascism during WWII, communism in the Cold War, and post-Cold War terrorism. In each phase of US history, the Pacific regions have played an integral role in US military expansion. While the United States turned Pacific regions into battlefields and nuclear testing sites, e.g., the Marshall Islands, the US military also took such island regions as Hawai'i, Guam, and Okinawa under their control to make them function as strategic bases for the United States. Chalmers Johnson's theory of "empire of bases" reads as criticism of such US military expansion. Defining the US empire of bases as a military base network to connect permanent navy bases, military airbases, army stations, intelligence bases, and military enclaves located all over the world, Johnson criticizes the US policies that guarantee its mobility through the overseas military-base network prevailing globally (Johnson 2004). Johnson's empire of bases includes Guam and Okinawa in the global chain of US military bases and management during the Cold War period because of their locations on the military front to combat Communist East Asia.

The US empire of bases has thus affected the island communities, especially those in the Pacific, by turning the island regions into strategic US military sites. On the other hand, for the islands involved in World War II, the US military presence has had a different impact on them since it associates their communal memories with their war experiences. For instance, Guam, once a battlefield, should be examined as one of the islands where war memories are successfully sustained in their collective history, embedded in militarism and militarization. In 1965, the government of Guam organized the South

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Pacific Memorial Association to construct a Japanese war memorial park in Yigo with a Japanese group that had the same name. While the Guam government expected this to bring economic benefits from tourists from Japan, US veterans who had experienced battle in Guam opposed the plan. The primary reason for their opposition was that they felt that the Guam government was more concerned about the Japanese war dead than about their American counterparts (Yamaguchi 2007, 64–76). As a result, the US government decided to construct a new war memorial for American war casualties and veterans as the War in the Pacific National Historical Park in 1978 (Arai 2016).

Guam Island, located in the southernmost part of the Mariana Islands in the Pacific, was annexed to the United States after the Spanish-American War. Not being granted political status, Guam was under the control of US naval administration. During WWII, Guam was invaded and occupied by the Japanese Army; however, the US Navy gained administrative control over Guam as of “liberation day” on July 21, 1944, which ended the Japanese occupation of Guam, which had continued since December 1941. Thus, the United States began expanding its military bases on Guam. In 1950, the Organic Act on Guam was passed in the US Congress, which granted Guam’s political status as an “unincorporated territory.” That status has been maintained to this day.

A. G. Hopkins, a historian specializing in British imperialism, explains US hegemony over overseas possessions in the Caribbean and the Pacific as an “insular empire” (Hopkins 2018). However, Hopkins’s study does not so much focus on Guam as on other island regions, e.g., Hawaii, the Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. However, other studies about contemporary issues in Guam’s history exist on such topics as, Guam under Japanese control, the law-making process for the Organic Act on Guam, Chamorro nationalism since the 1960, (Higuchi 2013; Ikeda 2001; Hattori 2005; Ikegami 2016; Nagashima 2015). Recently, with an interest in the studies of war memories in history and sociology, some researchers have described the clash of war memories between Chamorro, Japanese, and Americans (Yamaguchi 2007; Camacho 2011; Arai 2016).

This paper shall discuss Guam’s war memories in terms of the *War in the Pacific National Historical Park, Guam: Environmental Assessment, General Management Plan*, the report created by the US Department of the Interior’s National Park Service in 1983. The understudied plan suggests that the construction of the war memorial and the US military bases are both considered “militarization” in terms of environmental issues. The study of militarization as an environmental problem is also seen in Jon Mitchell’s research on US military-related land and sea pollution in Guam and Okinawa with noxious chemicals like PFOS/PFOA (Mitchell 2020). In addition, the concept of the “environment” may need to be reconsidered to accommodate the ideas of militarization as well as its impact on the living conditions of the communities in Guam. In this paper, I shall analyze the National Park Service’s 1983 report in detail and reveal how some related agencies recognize the relationship between militarization and environment in Guam’s island society.

## **Guam in the Pacific War: The Battle of Guam**

On December 7, 1941, the Japanese military began attacking the US territory of Guam only five hours after the Pearl Harbor attack. The main target was the Sumay district, located in west-central Guam near Apra Bay, where the US Navy had remained since the US confiscation of the area from Spain in the late nineteenth century. On December 10, 1941, about 6,000 Japanese soldiers began landing in Tumon Bay in northwestern Guam Island and assumed control over the entire island after occupying Agana, the administrative center of the US territory of Guam. In Guam, the Guam Minseibu (Navy Civil Administration Department) set up by Japanese Navy in January 1942 accelerated Japanization by changing place names, local education, and customs into Japanese. For example, Guam was renamed as Omiya-Jima (大宮島), Tumon as Tomita (富田), Agana as Akashi (明石), and Sumay as Suma (須磨). Education was also Japanized with the indigenous Chamorro children from ages seven to fifteen being taught the Japanese language and culture at fifteen national schools launched by the Civil Administration Section (Yamaguchi 2007, 2–7).

The Japanese military further strengthened the military base by constructing airfields in Sumay and Agana near their naval base, while they extended the military occupation to the US-controlled Philippines in February 1942 and Dutch-controlled India—present-day Indonesia—in March 1942. However, the US launched intense counterattacks as the Japanese military was utterly defeated in the Battle of Midway in June 1942. Chester William Nimitz, US Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet and Commander in Chief, Pacific Ocean Area (CINCPAC-CINCPOA) took over the Marshall Islands in March 1944 and Saipan in the Mariana Islands in June 1944 and on July 21, 1944, ordered as many as 55,000 US soldiers to land on Guam, the southernmost area of the Mariana Islands. While the Third Marine Division under the Third Amphibious Corps led the landing operation from Asan Beach, the First Provisional Marine Brigade began their operation from Agat (Crowl 1993). The Japanese Army, which retreated to the northern Yigo region after their defense units were devastated, ended their organized battle with the suicides of the Japanese Army 31st Unit Commander Hideyoshi Obata and sixty other soldiers on August 11. In this battle, out of 22,000 Japanese soldiers, only 1,200 survived. The US Navy, declaring their control over the entirety of Guam Island on August 15, resumed military control over Guam and began constructing and extending the airfields to prepare for airstrikes targeting mainland Japan (Yamaguchi 2007, 22–23).

The Battle of Guam took a heavy toll on the lives of local Chamorros. In the middle of July 1944, just before the landing of the US military, the Japanese Army moved 9,000 Chamorros on the island to the camps in Manengan, in the central part of the island. In the meantime, in Merizo Village, located in the southern part of Guam Island, forty-six local people were slaughtered by the Japanese Army (Arai 2016, 246–247) Furthermore, on July 12, 1944, the Japanese Army, searching for a US information soldier, George Tweed,

who was hiding somewhere on Guam Island, decapitated Father Duenas from Inarajan in the southeastern region of Guam since they considered him uncooperative with the Japanese military and suspected he might shelter Tweed (Yamaguchi 2007, 11–14).

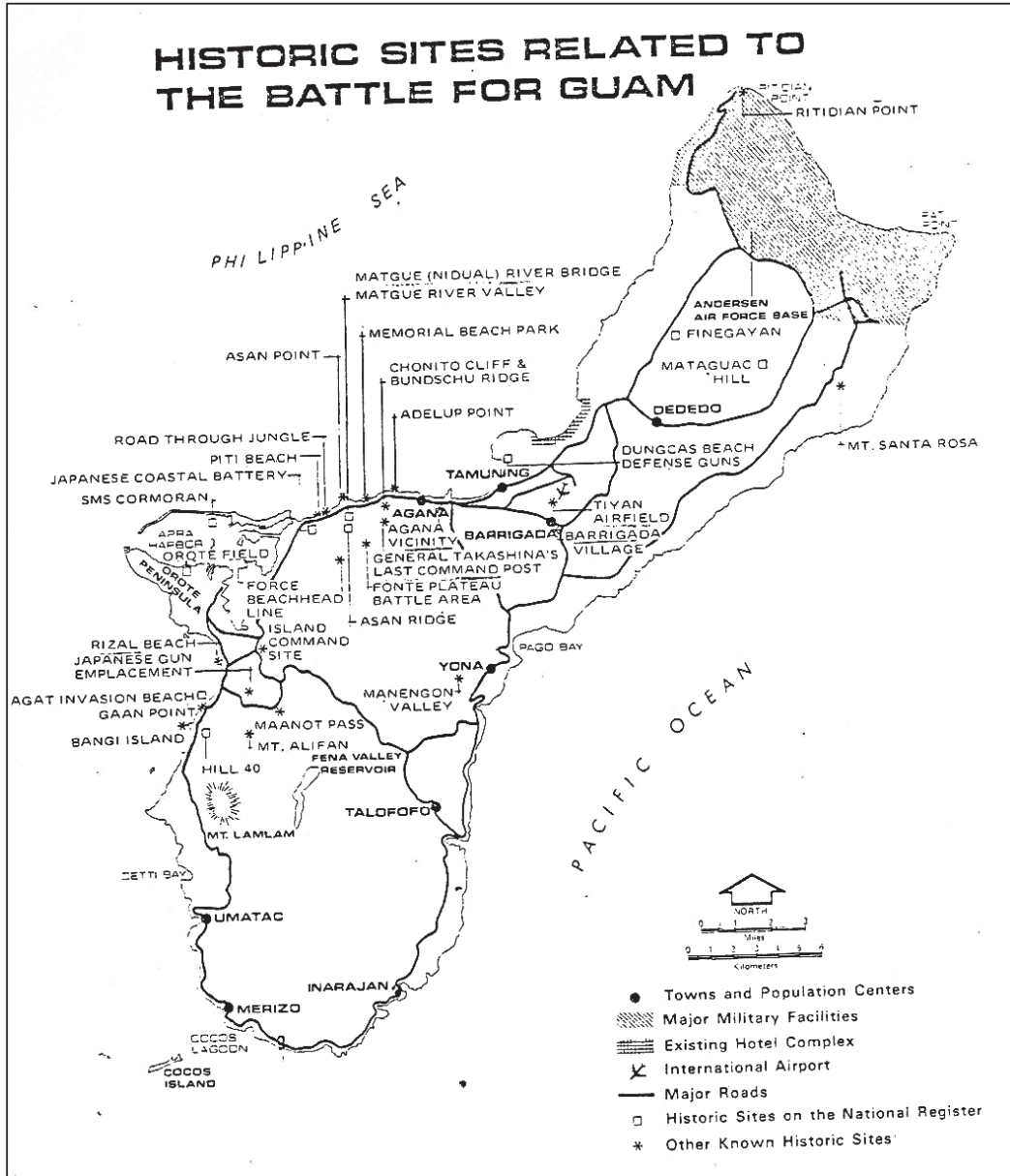


FIGURE 1. ‘Historic Site Related to the Battle for Guam’  
 Source: *Environmental Assessment, General Management Plan*, 6.

## The War Memorial Dispute during the 1960s

This section shall review existing studies about the Pacific war memorial sites on Guam in terms of the movements among the tripartite agents: Japan, Guam, and the United States. Until the 1950s, entrance to Guam was restricted due to the necessity of guarding top military secrets. Citizens from the mainland United States were no exception. The only exception was perhaps a 1953 delegation from Japan, which was allowed to visit Guam to erect a memorial monument with permission issued in response to their in-advance request. However, at other times, the surviving family members of Japanese soldiers were not allowed to visit Guam without restrictions, even if the purpose of the visits was to console the souls of their deceased family members (Yamaguchi 2007, 51, 67–68).

The situation, however, began to change in the 1960s. As the US deficit in balance of international payments increased, the United States began to pay attention to developing the tourist industry in the US overseas island territories as a strategy for defense of the dollar. As a result, the Kennedy Administration's deregulating of restrictions for entering Guam Island in 1962, followed by the Japanese government's liberalization of overseas travel, allowed the Japanese memorial delegation for the war dead to visit Guam more freely. A representative example was the visit of the "South Pacific War Memorial Delegation" (南太平洋戦没者慰霊団) led by House of Councilors member Mitsunori Ueki in July 1965. The delegation conducted an on-site memorial service, met Father Oscar Calvo in Guam, and agreed that the people from Japan and Guam should plan and work together to construct a public memorial park for war victims (Yamaguchi 2007, 52–56).

Father Calvo successfully secured the support of US President Johnson in August 1965. When Father Calvo visited Japan in November of the same year to meet Representative Ueki, Japan and Guam launched the "South Pacific Memorial Association" in each country and planned to create a memorial park in Yigo, where the Japanese Army's final headquarters was located during the Battle of Guam. They also planned to erect a thirty-meter-high memorial monument in the park. In May 1966, Representative Ueki, who revisited Guam, and Father Calvo signed on to the agreement for the plan, and the plan was to be carried out with a completion date of June 1967. It should be also pointed out that Guam's decision to join the plan surmised that economic benefits would be gained through a future increase of business opportunities brought to local communities by Japanese tourists, based on the Japanese memorial delegation's short-term tourist stay in Guam (Yamaguchi 2007, 67–72).

However, the plan met fierce opposition from veterans in the mainland United States. For example, *the Atlanta Journal*, on December 7, 1966, published a veteran's adverse voice about the construction of the South Pacific War Memorial Park, which, the veteran stated, would be just like erecting a monument in Israel memorializing Nazis.

At the same time, a *Washington Post* article on December 14, 1966, quoted a state-

ment by Congressman Richard White, who had served in the Battle of Guam, criticizing Lou Leon Guerrero, the governor of Guam, because the government of Guam endorsed the construction of the South Pacific Memorial Park (Yamaguchi 2007, 72–74). In addition, the Guam Daily News, on July 25, 1967, published the article “War Memorial Again” by the reader Janet Goodwin. The article introduced some strictly critical opinions by The American South and Central Pacific Society:

So that the public may know WHY the “Japanese monument would be an offense to us all,” the reason is contained in Bulletin No, 3, issued in April 1967, by Mr. Herbert P. Beyer, a member of the American South and Central Pacific Society: “HIS HISTORY OF WAR MEMORIALS

“NEVER BEFFORE IN HISTORY, has a group of private citizens of a FOREIGN COUNTRY, for certain economic and strategic advantages, ever conspired to USURP, CIRCUMVENT, and SUBVERT the prerogatives and function of government in the erection of War Memorials to their war dead on our soil. (Goodwin 1967)

White and other veteran members of Congress in the United States were preparing to submit a bill to stop the construction of the South Pacific War Memorial Park, while they were also drawing up a bill to propose a memorial site for deceased American soldiers. As a result, the South Pacific War Memorial Monument was erected since the construction had already started; however, the plan to create a park was canceled (Camacho 2011, 74–75). Following the incident, on August 7, 1978, the federal government decided to construct a historical park in Guam—The War in the Pacific National Historical Park in Guam—to comply with the veterans’ request (Camacho 2011, 103).

## **The Plan for the War in the Pacific National Historical Park in Guam**

### ***Meta Information of the General Management Plan***

This section closely examines how the concept of the War in the Pacific National Historical Park in Guam (War Historical Park) was implemented. A plan was made by the Western Regional Office of the National Park Service, a section of the Department of the Interior, which manages overseas island territories and national parks of the United States. In January 1983, the Western Regional Office produced an over 100-page-long document, in addition to appendices A, B, C, and D, entitled *Environmental Assessment, General Management Plan: War in the Pacific National Historical Park, Guam* (hereinafter GMP) (United States National Park Service Western Regional Office 1983). Below is the table of contents:

- I . Statement of the Problem
- II . Affected Environment
- III . Special Influence on Management
- IV . Description of the Proposal
- V . Environmental Consequences of the Proposal
- VI . Relationship of the Proposal to Other Proposals



- VII . Alternatives Considered and Their Environmental Consequences
- VIII. Consultation and Coordination during Preparation of the Draft Assessment
- IX . Consultation and Coordination during Preparation of the Final Assessment
- Appendixes A, B, C, D

Sections I, II, and III mainly depict background knowledge and explanations for the GMP, such as the process of making the document, a geographical and historical survey of Guam Island, the content of Public Law 95–348, which was the law to heed in creating the War Historical Park, and the voices of local residences that would be affected. Chapters IV to VII describe the content of the GMP in detail, such as how to fix the boundaries between the park and the surrounding areas, the management measures for the historical resources, a proposal for the use and development of the park, and the anticipated environmental consequences of this proposal. The term “environment” shown in Section V refers to the natural environment associated with vegetation and soils, marine resources, and water resources and also suggests a larger concept including such elements as historical structures, historical scene, and social, cultural, and economic conditions. Sections VIII and IX report the discussions between public and private sectors in Guam on the GMP and the negotiations with people from the local communities, as I shall discuss more fully in the fourth section of this paper. Thus, the document offers us a clue to understanding the awareness of local governments and communities about the War Historical Park.

### ***Visitors and the Use of the War Historical Park***

Sections II and IV in the GMP are critical to understanding the environmental issues in constructing the War Historical Park. The Department of Interior built War Memorial Parks in coastal areas, where the US military landed to fight the Battle of Guam, and in inland areas, where there remain batteries and positions created by the Japanese Army. They also preserved the landscapes and the remains as historical resources and installed explanatory panels to present the parks as sites to remember or imagine the Battle of Guam.

In doing so, they expected a majority of the visitors to be tourists from Japan, and therefore, paid the most attention to them in analyzing the park’s use. As Table 1 indicates, in the 1970s, 70 percent of the tourists visiting Guam came from Japan. Thus, it may be appropriate to assume that the Japanese visitors were considered highly expected tourist consumers. However, on the other hand, they analyzed the interests of Japanese tourists: “It is expected there will be considerable interest in sites associated with Japanese military operations and those suitable for memorializing the war dead. Japanese visitors also usually show a high interest in nature and natural history.” (United States National Park Service Western Regional Office 1983, 43)

TABLE 1. Visitor Arrivals to Guam by Air

| Year | Total   | Japan        | North America/<br>Hawaii |
|------|---------|--------------|--------------------------|
| 1967 | 6,600   | (est)<br>66% | not available            |
| 1968 | 18,000  | 35           | 38%                      |
| 1969 | 58,265  | 50           | 32                       |
| 1970 | 73,723  | 60           | 24                       |
| 1971 | 119,124 | 71           | 17                       |
| 1972 | 185,399 | 75           | 16                       |
| 1973 | 240,344 | 70           | 15                       |
| 1974 | 261,575 | 66           | 11                       |
| 1975 | 260,692 | 67           | 9                        |
| 1976 | 201,344 | 69           | 9                        |
| 1977 | 240,467 | 63           | 3                        |
| 1978 | 231,975 | 73           | 13                       |
| 1979 | 264,326 | 72           | 13                       |

Source: *Environmental Assessment, General Management Plan*, 9.

As stated in the previous section, the bill for the War Historical Park was proposed by veterans in the United States and approved by Congress, partly because of opposition to the Memorial Park for Japanese War Victims aroused by the spirit-consoling groups from both Japan and Guam, and partly because of the growing awareness of the necessity for publicly honoring the American war dead. The GMP, however, assumed that the remains of the Japanese Army's strategic positions and gun batteries were essential components of the park, indicating the continuing expectation for Japanese tourists' visits after the 1960s. The fact that the plan's agent was on the United States mainland and a division within the Department of the Interior, which is supposed to promote honoring the nation's public memory, might explain why the plan elicited anti-Japanese war memorial sentiment in the United States in the 1960s. Nevertheless, the plan was accepted, presumably because the National Historical Park, centered on the narrative of the Battle of Guam while excluding the Japanese war-dead cenotaph, could be appropriate for remembering the battle as a victory for the United States rather than as a defeat for Japan.

Although the scale may be small, another group of prospective park users was the residents in Guam. They were expected to use the park in this way:

Generally, they will be visiting the park as individuals, families, or other small groups. Their primary focus on most visits will be the park's natural resources and recreation opportunities. Activities such as picnicking, fishing, boating, and other informal recreational use will pre-



dominate, especially among the local Chamorro population. (United States National Park Service Western Regional Office 1983, 43)

The National Park Service carefully managed the park so that the facilities would not have a negative impact on the everyday lives of the people in the park's neighborhood. In other words, the goal of the War Historical Park was to be acknowledged as a place for the residents to enjoy their everyday leisure time.

### ***Primary Park Units***

The US government located the War Historical Parks in Guam with geographical diversity. As seen on the map in the first section (fig. 1), the park has seven units: Asan Beach, Asan Inland, Fonte Plateau, Piti Guns, Mt. Tenjo-Mt. Chachao, Mt. Alifan, and Agat. This section introduces those primary park units.

**Asan Beach Unit (109 land acres and 445 offshore acres).** As described in the first section, because Asan Beach was a US landing point on July 21, 1944, the National Park Service assumed that the site would be a popular tourist destination for off-island visitors. They thus explain: "Use for off-island visitors will include interpretation of the entire Pacific War and its background, and viewing the invasion beach and remains of bunkers, and other remnants of the battle for Guam." In addition, the site was also supposed to benefit the local people not only as a place to enjoy leisure activities, e.g., picnicking and fishing, but also as a venue for Asan Village's annual traditional memorial service event (United States National Park Service Western Regional Office 1983, 10–13, 43–45).

**Asan Inland Unit (593 acres).** The Asan Inland Unit is located on a mountainside on the major highway that runs through Asan Village. In this unit, an explanatory panel about the Battle of Guam and an observatory with a panoramic overlook of Asan Beach were proposed to be built (United States National Park Service Western Regional Office 1983, 13, 45).

**Fonte Plateau Unit.** Located further east from the Asan Inland Unit in the mountains, the Fonte Plateau Unit has the cave where Japanese Army Lieutenant General Takeshi Takashima and his 29th division placed their final position. This place also assumes off-island tourists as the significant visitors (United States National Park Service Western Regional Office 1983, 14, 46).

**Piti Guns Unit (24 acres).** The Piti Guns Unit is located in Piti Village, a village on the coast west of Asan. In the woods near the beach, a Japanese Army battery has been kept in relatively good condition. In the General Management Plan, it was proposed that the battery be preserved as a historical resource (United States National Park Service Western Regional Office 1983, 13, 46).

**Agat Unit (38 land acres, 557 water acres).** The site of the Agat Unit is the southern-most of all the primary units. Like Asan, Agat was another point of US landing in July 1944. Its historic resources include caves, bunkers, latrine foundations, and more than ten pillboxes. Therefore, Agat was expected to attract off-island visitors following the Asan Beach unit. In addition, the unit was to work as a recreation site for local Agat residents, such as for boating, fishing, scuba diving, and picnicking (United States National Park Service Western Regional Office 1983, 16, 49).

### **War Memorial Park for the Local Community**

The last section shall examine how the local community received the construction of the War Historical Park. In August 1982, the National Park Service held public hearings for the Agat, Piti, Asan, and Agana communities in creating the GMP. The following chart lists the comments from the participants at the public hearings (table 2) (United States National Park Service Western Regional Office 1983, 98–104).

TABLE 2. Individual Comments of Some Local Communities

| <b>Agat Village Meeting 8.17, 1982 (13 persons attending)</b> |  |
|---|--|
| 1   | There is particular concern related to the park failing to acquire specific private properties that are hardship cases speedily. Monies should be spent for these as soon as possible for the land in such areas as parcels at Agat. |
| 2   | An additional tank is needed at the sewage disposal plant adjacent to Gaan Point. The GMP should permit this.  |
| 3   | The Agat-Santa Rita High School, adjacent to the Mt. Alifan Unit needs land for new playing fields but is hemmed in by the park.   |
| 4   | The northwest section of Agat cemetery should be deleted from the park.  |
| 5   | A restroom is needed at Gaan Point because of increasing visitation.   |
| 6   | Fisherman, diver and other boaters need a launching ramp in the Gaan Point area.   |
| 7   | A road should be opened to a gravel source for Agat Village.   |
| 8   | The utility poles on the beachside of the highway at Agat should be moved to the inland side to restore the historic view of the reef, beach and ocean.  |
| 9   | A water line should be constructed across the upper end of the Mt. Alifan Unit to provide needed water near Nimitz Beach.  |
| 10  | There is support for providing public beach access at some point between Gaan Point and the Namu River. Public use is fairly heavy, and maintenance is difficult.  |

| <b>Piti Village Meeting 8.18, 1982 (13 persons attending)</b> |   |
|---|---|
| 11  | The park should not adversely affect the people of Piti.  |
| 12  | Existing access to the guns does not have enough parking and the route leads across land owned by the Bishop.   |
| 13  | The environment along the proposed trail is beautiful, and people will want to see it.  |
| 14  | The estimate of 25-30 people per day, visiting the guns may be too low.   |
| 15  | The bridge across the gully should be built of bamboo because it is not traditional.  |
| 16  | Develop the Pit[i] guns as soon as possible, and it is suggested that a concessionaire be allowed to sell beer or other things on-site to help pay for maintenance and development.   |
| <b>Asan Village Meeting 8.19, 1982 (7 persons attending)</b>  |   |
| 17  | A memorial should be put at the Asan Village memorial area like the Iwo Jima monument in Washington, DC. Perhaps it could be at the tip of Asan point as part of the primary visitor area.  |
| 18  | The oral history program should be done as soon as in order to obtain information from older residents.   |
| 19  | Asan Village memorial area should be set aside for use by Asan Village because of its tradition.  |
| 20  | Slowness in land acquisition program is causing problems for Asan residents.  |
| <b>Agana Meeting 8.20, 1982 (12 persons attending)</b>        |   |
| 21  | A large naval vessel should be acquired as soon as possible.  |
| 22  | The additional sites to be remarked on Guam are inadequate, and others should be included, especially those concerned with atrocities against the Guamanian People. Park seems to deal only with war action itself and does not mention some of the specific incidents involving tragedy for local residents. |
| 23  | The GMP seems to regard the park as a museum and not as an active park. This can be the cause of resentment by local residents.   |
| 24  | There is concern that the Plan does not place enough emphasis on hiring local residents for the park staff.   |
| 25  | There is not enough emphasis on the need for obtaining oral history from local citizens. The only ones mentioned are Japanese historians.   |

*Source:* United States National Park Service Western Regional Office 1983, 98–104.

Since speakers' names, ages, occupations, and gender are not available, the contexts of the comments and whether there are overlaps are unknown. However, the comments tell that the residents were aware of how the War Historical Park would relate to their everyday lives.

For example, the residents' comments collected in every public meeting reveal their awareness of the relationship between the park construction and their economic activities. Comment number five shows the resident's idea that restrooms would be necessary to attract more visitors to the park. Comment number fourteen shows concern that the estimate of the number of visitors per day is too low, perhaps, to grasp the expected economic effect accurately. Comment number twelve indicates worries about insufficient space for parking and that traffic might disturb land owned by the bishop. Comment number 16 shows the resident's willingness to offer an idea for further improvement of the park and suggests the permitting of businesses, e.g., selling beer on site, to create funds. The concern about the lack of emphasis on hiring more residents indicated in comment twenty-four expresses the residents' expectation that the park should employ local community members. Comment seventeen, which proposes erecting a monument near the landing point located in the Asan Beach Unit, is particularly interesting because it reveals that the resident expects the monument will become a major tourist destination and that the idea was inspired by the US Marine Corps War Memorial (Iwo Jima Memorial) in Washington, DC.

The residents' comments also reveal their attempt to understand the meaning of War Historical Park in the context of their community life. For example, comment three complains that the park may disturb the needs of local high school students by restricting the school's already insufficient space adjacent to the park. Comment four is also concerned that the park may affect sacred ground by having part of the cemetery acquired for the park. Other comments, such as comment eleven, which is concerned about negative impacts on the life of the local community, and number twenty-three, which requests that the park be a recreational park rather than a museum, express that the residents fear that the park will not improve the residents' lives.

Additionally, the comments reveal the residents' awareness of the significance of oral histories, as comment eighteen suggests quickly carrying out plans for oral history interviews with the older generation. Comment twenty-five also seems to problematize the lack of oral histories by the local people and the dominance of Japanese historians' findings in constructing the history of Guam.

The National Park Service's response to these comments was generally positive, and they promised to amend the General Management Plan as much as possible. It may not be too much to say that the US federal government, especially the Department of the Interior, not only attempted to use the War Historical Park as a tool to produce the national memory as public memory but also created the opportunity—or the space—to learn the anticipated influence of the park construction on the everyday life of the community and share the residents' genuine understanding and reactions to the War Historical Park.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the information in the *Environmental Assessment, General Management*

*Plan: War in the Pacific National Historical Park, Guam*, the report published by the National Park Service in the US Department of the Interior in 1983, I have presented and analyzed the essential characteristics and contents of the construction plan of the War Historical Park in Guam. Notably, the National Park Service, in their planning for the preservation of historical remains and the installation of explanatory plaques, did not necessarily prioritize the sites and remains associated with US military activities but decided to include Japanese-military-related resources, such as the remains of strategic positions and gun batteries and pillboxes, in the list of items to be preserved. I would analyze that their inclusion of those items in the construction of the War Historical Park reflected their expectation that the island would benefit from Japanese tourists, who they projected would comprise the majority of off-island visitors and would bring profits to the tourist industry and local businesses.

On the other hand, the people in the neighborhood of the War Historical Park considered the park to be a place that would support the communities rather than remind them of the Battle of Guam. The park was expected to serve the residents as their recreation area and the agent to create job opportunities. Thus, the concept of “environment” in the report does not always suggest the natural environment, such as the vegetation and geography of the island, but also the war-related remnants, the landscape of the US landing points, and even economic elements, including tourism and employment.

Analyzing the *General Management Plan* for the War Historical Park with a broader view of environment enables war memory studies to decenter its traditional approach—examining the conflicting memories among the US, Japan, and Guam—toward gaining a more extensive scope. It is, in other words, to decontextualize the sites, which otherwise may only be acknowledged as a place to keep war memories, through people’s lived experience in their everyday lives.

Decontextualization does not mean forgetting the war; rather, it enables us to understand how the people on the island continue to live with war memories and experience and how their resilience comes into play in making it possible. Studying and observing Guam in terms of militarization and environment—of which war memories are a part—will continue to revise our understanding of the reality of the island and its resilience.

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