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Phases of i pilan Semu



Homhom i Pilan
New Moon
July 25



Sinåhi
Waxing Moon
August 1



Pulan Gualåffon
Full Moon
August 9



Kuatton Kresiente
Waning Moon
August 16

Lunar phases sourced from
timeanddate.com

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Photo of the 81st Liberation Asan Memorial Ceremony.

81st Liberation Day Lessons From Our Manåmko'

Liberation is a solemn and joyous time in Guam. This year is the 81st anniversary of the Liberation of Guam from 32 months of Japanese occupation in [World War II](#), a war not of our making. From pageants to memorials to parades, our people commemorate an era in our history that changed our island and ourselves forever, marked by horrific atrocities and heroic battles. As our WWII survivors, deemed Guam's greatest generation, pass on their stories of faith, family, suffering, and survival, we, the *manña'tatte*, are entrusted with carrying on their legacy and lessons learned for all generations to come.

Throughout the month of July to early August, many WWII memorial ceremonies are held to honor the liberators, victims, and survivors of concentration camps and massacres throughout the island. These community-coordinated ceremonies elevate our *manñaina's* personal, firsthand war stories and experiences in the

grand narrative of World War II. Ms. Agnes Concepcion Santos, *taotao* Piti, *familian* Sombrero, attends the Chagui'an Memorial to honor her father Juan Concepcion Concepcion, who volunteered to replace his son bound for forced labor, then met his violent end along with 51 other sons of Guam. Memorializing his bravery, sacrifice and love, she said, "Dad, I never met you, but I love you." Ms. Maria Gayle, *taotao* Piti, was the guest of honor at this year's Asinan Memorial as a survivor of Asinan, the second largest concentration camp on the island during WWII, and a grand marshal for this year's Liberation Day Parade. At the end of her story, read by her daughter Betty Gayle on her behalf, Ms. Gayle imparted, "Material can be rebuilt, but faith and family endure." These commemorations pray for and venerate those that have perished, are deeply healing for those who survived, and are

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profoundly illuminating for those who are now learning this part of our history.

World War II changed our people and islands forever. There is so much wisdom to receive from our survivors' war experiences that will guide us through all kinds of battles we will face in the future. They live on through us. If our elders can survive war, we as their children can survive anything, we just have to remember how. The legacy of Guam's greatest generation is not their pain nor their suffering, their legacy is their love, their resilience, their faith, the unbreakable bond of family, and forgiveness. Who are the war survivors in your family? What are their stories and experiences? What is to be learned through their hardship and healing? What can you do to carry on their legacy?



(Left) Stephanie Flores giving opening remarks at the Asinan Memorial Ceremony. Maria Gayle, a Grand Marshal at this year's Liberation Parade seated in front.

(Right) Agnes Concepcion Santos and son at the CHagui'an Memorial honoring her father Juan Concepcion, one of the men who lost their lives at this site.

WWII Memorials

Asinan Memorial, Yoña
CHagui'an Memorial, Yigo
Hasso' Fena, Santa Rita-Sumai
Hasso' Inaláhan Memorial
Hasso' Malesso': Tinta yan Fâha
Kalâguak Memorial, Barrigada
Let The Phoenix Arise, Tã'i, Mangilao
Mañenggon Memorial, Mangilao
Sumai Memorial

Click to view our full list!



*Na' mähgong na taihinekog minahgong-ñiha
 Āsaina, ya ti māmatai na mina'lak u inina.
 Ya u sâga gi minahgong, taiguenao mohon.*

*Eternal rest grant unto them O' Lord.
 May the perpetual light shine upon them.
 May they rest in peace.*

Oral Histories Portal

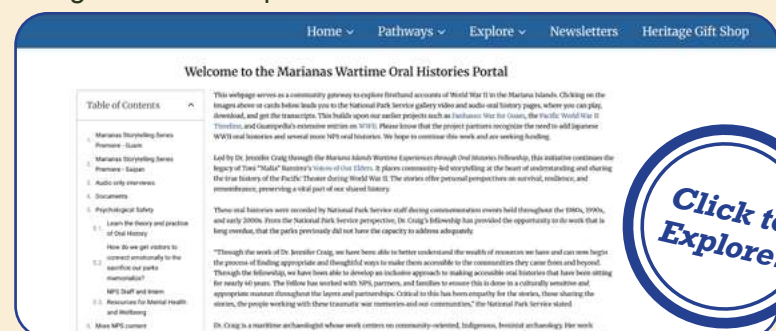
A Collaboration with the National Parks Service

Over the last few years, we've been hard at work with the [National Parks Service](#) in continuing our mission of preserving, uplifting, and commemorating the voices of elders through the editing and transcribing of interviews surrounding the WWII experience. Led by Dr. Jennifer Craig, a maritime archaeologist, the Mariana Islands Wartime Experiences through Oral Histories Fellowship continues the legacy of Toni "Malia" Ramirez's [Voices of Our Elders](#) and builds upon our earlier projects such as [Fanhasso: War for Guam](#), the [Pacific World War II Timeline](#), and Guampedia's extensive entries on WWII.

The bulk of this work centered around reviewing, editing, and transcribing oral histories recorded by National Park Service staff during commemoration events held throughout the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s. From CHamoru/Chamorro war survivors to American soldiers to military correspondents, the collection of these stories places community-led storytelling at the heart of understanding and sharing the true history of the Pacific Theater during World War II. The project's progress was shared in regular community gatherings in the Marianas

Storytelling series beginning in March 2024 and ending this past month in June 2025.

This year of work culminated in a new section on Guampedia, the Mariana Islands Wartime Oral Histories Portal. In this new feature, you can explore firsthand accounts of World War II in the Marianas Islands and read up on each of the Marianas Storytelling sessions we've had in Guam and the CNMI. Additionally, this webpage serves as a community gateway. Exploring this page will lead you to the National Park Service gallery video and audio oral history pages, where you can play, download, and get the transcripts.



Click to Explore!

Voices of Our Elders

Stories From Our War Survivors

In this issue, we honor two stories from CHamoru/Chamorro war survivors. Listening to the voices of our elders, and these powerful accounts of resilience, hardship, and faith, remind us of the beauty and strength of the CHamoru/Chamorro people and our stories. Click the links below and visit Guampedia to access more oral histories and other resources about the lasting impact of World War II in Guam and the Mariana Islands.



Ana Sablan Palomo (1927-2023)

[Ana Sablan Palomo](#) was only 14 years old when she lost her mother, Nicolasa Camacho Santos Sablan, and her eldest brother, Vicente Santos Sablan, in a Japanese ambush. The group was attempting to flee to Yigo only two days after the bombing of Hagåtña on 10 December.

During the occupation, Palomo was subjected to long days of hard work in the rice fields, often without much food to sustain her. While working in the muddy water of the rice fields, she experienced one of the greatest blessings of her life: "You know our statue in Piti, the Assumption of Our Lady? That was found in the rice field at the Japanese occupation of Guam." She believed that the statue came from a Spanish galleon that had stopped in Guam, and remembered putting the statue on a table when her family was taken to the Asinan concentration camp in Yoña.

Palomo had complicated feelings about the treatment of CHamorus/Chamorros in the aftermath of the war: "I don't honor the Liberation. My father, Enrique Castro Sablan, was in the military. He retired, and then

he was commissioner of Piti. He died in 1936. I used to go to the commissary, but when my mother was killed and my brother, they didn't want me to go to the commissary after that. I was only 16. That's what I don't honor, and then we're not paid for the war reparations. It's the US responsibility to pay us and they don't. It's sad."

An accomplished accordion and piano player, Ana Sablan Palomo was married to fellow musician [Joaquin "Ding" Palomo](#). They had six children: Dorothy, Maryanne, Sheila, Geraldine, Joseph, and [Patrick](#), a celebrated jazz musician.

Ignacio "Buck" Cruz (1927 - 2017)

[Ignacio "Buck" Cruz](#) was a public servant, World War II survivor, and was the mayor of [Malesso'](#) for 21 years. Cruz was the youngest of six children, and the son of Ramon Padilla Cruz and Justa Santiago Cruz.

Born in Malesso' in 1927, Cruz attended Japanese school during the wartime occupation. His father was killed in the Tinta Massacre.

Throughout his life, Cruz used education and hard work to preserve and serve his village community. He studied Psychology and Sociology at the University of Guam, and graduated with honors. Cruz worked as a teacher before enlisting in the US Marine Corps in 1951, and held the distinction of attaining the rank of Master Gunnery Sergeant, the highest enlisted rank in the US Marine Corps. He also served as the Chairman of the Malesso' Municipal Planning Council Foundation, and as a Notary Public in and for the Territory of Guam.

Cruz was instrumental in creating the [Tinta and Fåha Massacre](#) Memorials in Malesso', honoring his father and other villagers whose lives were lost in the caves during World War II.

Cruz was married to his wife Maria for 60 years, and they had two children — Steven and Lelani.



Photo courtesy of Shannon Murphy.

The Organic Act of Guam

75 Years of Local Government

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the [Organic Act of Guam](#), which was signed into law by US President Harry S. Truman on August 1, 1950. The Organic Act established a non-military civil government on Guam, ending the era of harsh [US Naval rule](#), and granted US citizenship to those who were residents of Guam in 1950, and to their descendants. The passage of the Organic Act also formally solidified Guam's status as an unincorporated territory of the US. 75 years later, we reflect on the legacy of the Organic Act — what it meant to the people of Guam in 1950, and what we learn from the lessons of the past.

Prior to the passage of the Organic Act, CHamorus/Chamorros were not US citizens, and did not have any protected rights or liberties under US Naval rule. Naval officers were appointed as governors of Guam, and held complete executive, legislative, and judicial powers.

At the time, the Guam Congress, a bicameral legislative body of local representatives, functioned as an advisory body and only had the ability to make recommendations to the Naval governor. On March 5, 1949, the 9th Guam Congress unanimously approved "The Bill to Provide an Organic Act and Civil Government for the Island of Guam" to be forwarded to the US Congress. The Bill demanded US citizenship and civil government. Guam Congress member Antonio C. Cruz mentioned that the body adjourn and not reconvene until the US Congress acted on the proposed Organic Act. Thus, the [Guam Congress Walkout](#) of 1949 began.

With their limited power, the assembly members had to be creative and strategic to accomplish their goals. Assembly member Carlos P. Taitano reported news of the Walkout to national reporters, and the story was picked up by

major outlets including The Honolulu Star Bulletin, New York Times, and The Washington Post. The public's attention was now drawn to the CHamoru/Chamorro people's struggle against the Naval government in Guam. Just two months later, President Harry Truman ordered the Department of Interior to begin plans to take over administrative authority in Guam and on August 1, 1950, the Organic Act of Guam was signed into law.

This however, was merely the first step in a series of efforts and movements to further advance and develop local self government for the people of Guam.

Lobbying efforts in both Guam and Washington would lead to the passing of the [Elective Governor Act of 1968](#) and the [Congressional Representation Act of 1972](#), allowing for the people of Guam to vote for their own governor and an official non-voting delegate to the US House of Representatives. Momentum would continue to grow, prompting the Guam Legislature to form the [Constitutional Conventions](#) of 1969 and 1977 to seek the drafting of a new document to replace the Organic Act. While this draft constitution was ultimately rejected, it highlighted how invested the people were in not just expanding powers of local government, but in ensuring that these expansions would serve to protect, preserve, and perpetuate the cultural beliefs, customs, and traditions that the people held close to their heart.

From the passing of the Organic Act in 1950 there have been a total of 14 civilian governors, 38 Guam Legislatures, and 75 years of local government. [Read more on Guampedia!](#)



*House of Council, 9th Guam Congress.
Courtesy of the Sanchez Collection.*



*President Truman signs the Organic Act.
Courtesy of the MARC.*



*1st Guam Legislature
Courtesy of the Judiciary of Guam.*