



# Guampedia.com

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Know our island. Know our history. Click to know! — Volume IV. Issue VII.

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# Bringing the Voices of Our Elders Into the Future

This July marks the 77th anniversary of the end of [World War II in the Marianas](#). Being in the midst of this global pandemic has caused hardship that many of us have never before faced. In contemplating the ways in which our lives have changed, we call to mind our [manâmkô](#) (elders) and how their lives were forever shaped by the experience of war. The suffering and sacrifice they endured stand as firm as the *latte* pillars that serve as the symbolic foundation of a living legacy of perseverance and fortitude. Today, we honor and celebrate our elders - who not only endured occupations and invasions in a war not of their making, but forged ahead, with the scars and memories of this hardship. After the war, these cultural values continued to guide them through the complete reformation of islands and their ways of doing and knowing. We honor them by remembering and sharing their stories of struggle, the living testaments of their cultural legacy of [inafa'maolek](#) - always striving to do good and maintain balance and harmony! We bring them the greatest honor when we carry on their cultural legacy as our way of knowing and doing in our journey *mo'na* (forward)!

## David Sablan Sr.

*This first story comes from an interview with David Sablan Sr. Born in 1932 on Saipan, Sablan was nine years old when the war began.*

Two months later there was an invasion of Saipan. Again my dad said we cannot stay in this ranch. I know that the Japanese will come over to look for me and so let's go up into a cave near the Tapachao area and stay there. So we all hiked up to this cave near the southwestern side of Tapachao. We hid there for three weeks. We had three dozen people in that cave. Every morning before sun up, we send the able bodied down the hill to cut sugar cane for our meal for three weeks. We had nothing but sugar cane. And funny thing, our teeth are still there. Anyways, three weeks after, this

was about July one, two three weeks after July, the able bodied ran into a Japanese patrol and so they hid in the sugar cane field until they disappeared. On the horizon there were a lot of [US] ships bombarding Saipan.

They saw these people crawling up the hill and sent three Marines to look for those people. So they started shooting at the area but by then the three people hid back in the cave. The three Marines that were sent up there saw the crucifix and he says, "we cannot find these people." We all headed into the extreme corner of the cave where we hid. Then a little baby cried and that gave away our direction. So my dad immediately jumped up, followed



Photo Courtesy of the Saipan Tribune

by my eldest brother and he said, "I surrender." Then he said, "you speak English," he says, "little bit." Then he says "by any chance, is your name Elias Sablan?" He says, "yes." He says "well we got several thousand natives that we've already liberated down in Camp Susupi and they told us to look for you and Gregorio Sablan, because you speak English and can help us translate."

# Josefa Cruz Baza



Photo Courtesy of the Guam War Survivors Memorial Foundation

*This second story comes from Josefa Cruz Baza. Baza was born in 1930 on Guam and was raised in the village of Malesso'. She was 11 years old when the war began.*

The Japanese had found a home to use as their quarters at the southern end of the village, which was close to the Malessos pier. When they came to our house, which was closer to the middle of the village, they liked it because it was one of the more well-constructed homes. We were told to find our own home anywhere. Fortunately, our family had some land near the beach near Achang Bay and that's where we moved. We hurriedly packed our things and moved there, and my Dad built a "sagidani," a little ranch with the thatched roof of coconut leaves and bamboo. We stayed there until the end of the war. While we were living there, the Japanese forced us to work even though we were still children. We were expected to pull weeds, clean and to plant vegetables in the designated area near where

our house was. The Japanese would take all the vegetables, including the breadfruit and eggs, and would leave nothing for us. We would hide our provisions and when we killed the pig, we would try as much as possible to avoid having the Japanese smell the meat, because if the Japanese found out that we had food, we would get slapped. We would take the taro leaves and the bananas and prepare them, sometimes in coconut milk, and hide them. When we slaughtered a pig, we would do so at night and then my mother would season it with salt and we would dry it near the ocean so the Japanese won't smell or see it. The same went for the breadfruit. We would pick it at night and cook it and then wrap and hide it. We would eat it with coconut milk, and that's how we would have our meal.

## Recording and Remembering the Stories of Our Elders

### Culture of Connecting

For those of us whose elders have passed on, we are reminded that there are still many resources that help us keep them and their memories present in our lives. Last year, we hosted an open forum in our Culture of Connecting series centered around the war experience. This forum brought together the young, the old, and the in-between to speak and discuss with attendees about the lessons learned from the island's most challenging time in the modern age. Themes like survival off the land and the importance of *remembering* were discussed, not only in their applications in the war, but their persistence today. If you weren't able to attend last year, don't worry, these discussions were recorded and uploaded to be viewed on our Vimeo page. Click here to [explore this series!](#)



# Hasso Sumay: A Tradition of Remembrance



In the years following the war, the island would serve as a key installation in the Pacific theater. Plots of land were occupied by US forces to fortify the island and organize incoming troops and materials. One of the primary places utilized in this endeavor was the village of [Sumay](#). All people living on the island would have their lives forever changed by the travesty of war, but for residents of Sumay, this would come in the form of giving up their ancestral lands and entire village. Once a pivotal center for economic growth, after the war had ended, the village of Sumay became the site of a new military

base. The residents of Sumay were relocated to what is now present day Santa Rita. Despite the normal restrictions that would prevent civilians from entering the base, decades of public lobbying paved the way for the residents of Sumay and their descendants to visit the graves of their ancestors for one day every year. The Back to Sumay event was also an effort to keep the tradition of remembrance alive across generations of descendants. Click [here](#) to view our photo gallery of the [Back to Sumay](#) event and [here](#) to [listen to our elders](#) as they recount their lives in the village of Sumay.

## History Through Sites and Sources

### Annotated Bibliography: WWII in the Marianas



Photo courtesy of the Pacific Daily News

World War II historian Dave Lotz has generously shared his extensive war in the Marianas bibliography with Guampedia just in time for the 77th Liberation anniversary. Researchers will find this annotated bibliography of hundreds of books extremely helpful to finding out everything about WWII in the Marianas from battle sites to various types of war vehicles and stories by both local people and war veterans. Click [here](#) to take a look at this [new addition](#). We appreciate the share! Si Yu'os Ma'ãse' Dave Lotz!

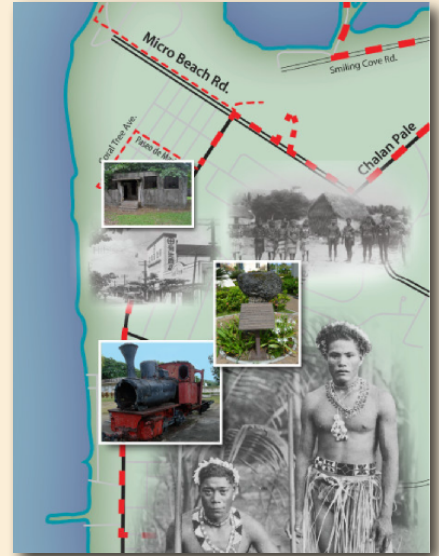
# Garapan Heritage Trail

The Fourth of July is Liberation Day for the Northern Mariana Islands. It is a day fraught with bittersweet memories of WWII and a reminder of the liberation and resilience of the Chamorro/CHamoru and Carolinian people. Though it has been 77 years, there are still physical remnants and sites around the islands that are constant reminders and help to share the stories of what took place. Some of these remains can be found on the [Northern Marianas Humanities Council's](#) online tour of Garapan Village through the Garapan Heritage Trail.

Located in Saipan, Garapan has been the main host of historical and cultural events for over 3,000 years. The Garapan Heritage Trail identifies twenty sites that one could consider "off the beaten path" with the

first located on the small reef islet of Mañagaha/Ghalaghal. Mañagaha/Ghalaghal is the burial place of Carolinian Chief Aghurubw who, according to oral traditions, established the village of Arabwal (the Carolinian name for the Beach Morning Glory vine) which later came to be called Garapan.

From there, you are taken through Japanese machine gun pillboxes in juxtaposition with the American Memorial Park, which honors the sacrifices made during WWII. Moving along the trail, there is a Chamorro/CHamoru latte monument marking the reburial of 60 ancient Chamorro remains and the Carolinian Utt - a traditional Carolinian meeting house. There is also a Spanish church site with a belltower marking the strong, religious influence of the Catholic



Courtesy of the Garapan Heritage Trail

faith, and the oldest surviving structure - the German steps, to name a few sites. Each site is marked on the map and includes a brief history of what took place then and what takes place present day. Click here to get a [glimpse of these sites!](#)

# Exploring Guam's Capital

This month, take a guided tour of Hagåtña with the Pacific Historic Parks Guam Geocaching Hagåtña Adventure. This app combines your phone's technology with the world around you as you solve riddles to uncover unique facts about our island's capital. Click here to [read more about this program](#) and scan the QR code below to download the app and begin your adventure!



**GUAM GEOCACHING**

## HAGÁTÑA ADVENTURE



**HOW TO PLAY:**

1. Download the free Adventure Lab® mobile app on an Apple or Android device.
2. Once in the app, create a free account
3. Go to Plaza de España in Hagåtña and access this Adventure in the Adventure Lab® mobile app by scanning:

<SCAN QR code> or search and select Guam Geocaching Hagåtña Adventure



Bring the whole family for a fun outdoor educational experience and play Pacific Historic Parks' Guam Geocaching Hagåtña Adventure!

Find virtual caches by solving riddles within historic Hagåtña. Every riddle solved gives you special access to a video filled with fascinating tidbits about each unique location you visit.

The adventure will take you on a 1.5 mile loop around Guam's capital. Bring good walking shoes, water, sunscreen, and mosquito repellent. You must have an active data connection on a mobile device in order to complete the adventure.

**LET'S GO!**



This Adventure is made possible by funding from the Guam Economic Development Authority Qualifying Certificate Community Contribution Grant.



www.pacifichistoricparks.org