



War in the Pacific National Historical Park

In the early summer of 1944, the United States sought to retake the Marianas Islands, which included Guam, Saipan, and Tinian. The retaking of these islands was essential to the United States to end World War II in the Pacific. By doing this, they could cut the strategic line of communication from Japan to its island holdings in the South Pacific and effectively isolate the garrisons there.

YOU are an American military general in 1944. You know that Guam was particularly important in implementing a successful victory in World War II because it would do three things:

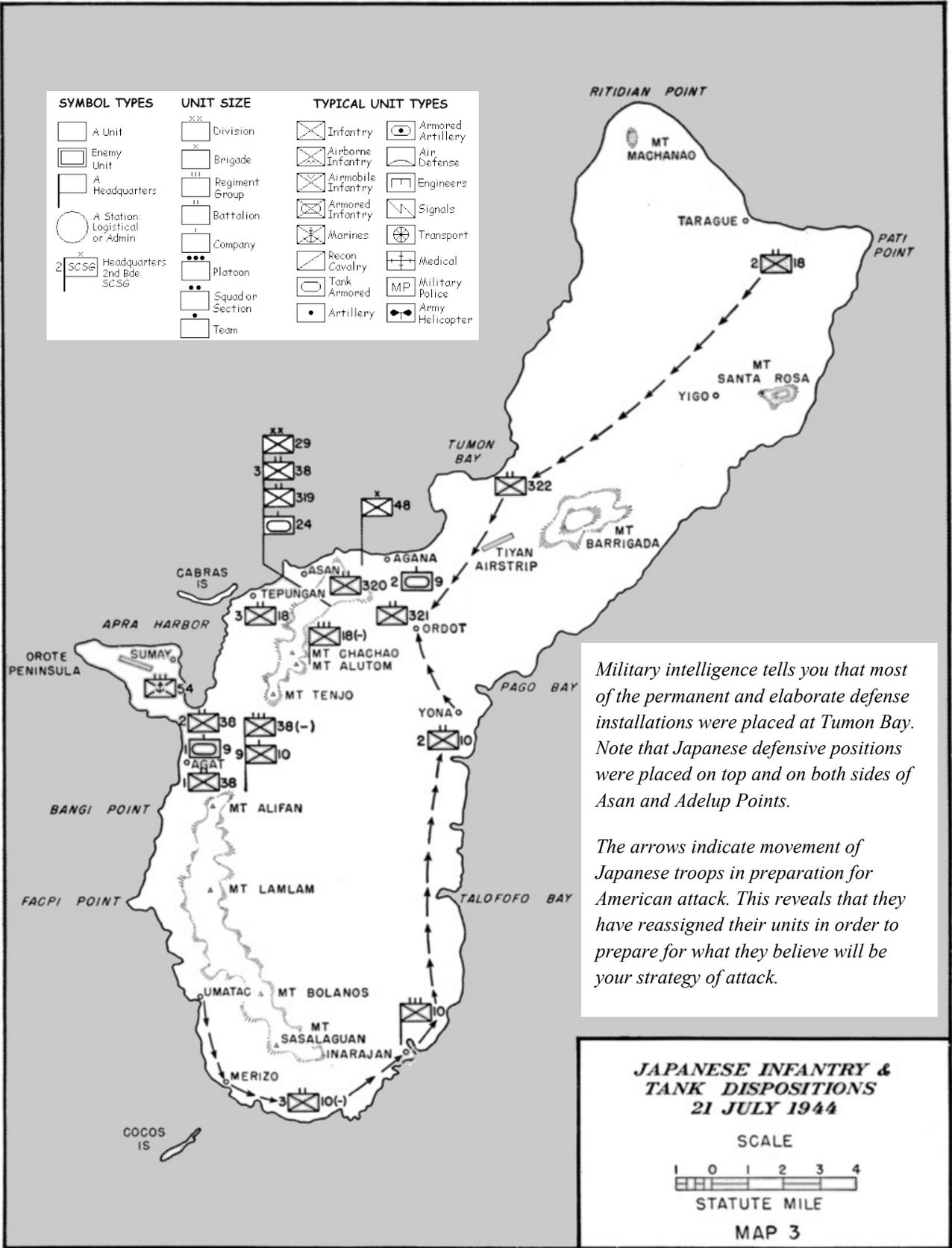
- (1) The U.S. could use the airfields to launch their B-29's to initiate raids on the islands of Japan
- (2) It would permit the establishment of a submarine refueling point much closer to enemy areas
- (3) Apra Harbor offered a good anchorage for an advance naval base

Your military intelligence unit gives you the following TOP SECRET information:

1. In order to make a successful invasion, you must make amphibious landings. This means your men will ride in Landing Ship Tanks (LSTs) over the ocean to Guam and land on one of the island's beaches.
2. Orote Peninsula is **extremely** important to secure because of the airfield and entrance to Apra Harbor as a supply port.
3. You have bombs to drop from flying airplanes.
4. Many of the Japanese soldiers have found shelter in a complex cave system in Asan Ridge and on Adelup and Asan Points. Also, Japanese leaders are hidden and giving commands in areas of higher ground (such as mountains).
5. You have the following military groups ready to be launched on your signal:
 - 1st Provisional Marine Brigade (which includes the 4th Marine Division and the 22nd Marine Division)
 - U.S. Army's 77th Infantry Division, which consists of the 305th Regimental Combat Team
 - 3rd Marine Division, which is composed of the 3rd, 9th, and 21st Marines (rifle regiments)
 - Underwater Demolition Teams (UDT) – They are an elite special purpose force established by the United States Navy during World War II. Their primary function is to investigate and destroy enemy underwater defensive obstacles prior to landings.
6. For a more detailed image of the Japanese plan as of July 21, 1944, see the Japanese Infantry & Tank Dispositions map of Guam.

So what is Your Goal?

Recapture Guam from the Japanese. How will you do it?





War in the Pacific National Historical Park

Planning the Invasion

In the modern era of warfare, an amphibious landing of infantry troops on a beachhead is the most complex of all military maneuvers.

As a group, discuss your strategy of how to recapture the island. Write your responses to each of these important questions. Each group will turn in one sheet.

1. Where will you assign each military unit?

Military Unit	Where do you want to place them? (Write the beachhead location you will assign them to)	What is their goal at this place? (Why did you place them there?)
4th Marine Division		
22nd Marine Division		
U.S. Army's 77th Infantry Division, 305th Regimental Combat Team		
3rd Marines		
The 9th Marines		
The 21st Marines		
Underwater Demolition Teams (UDT)		

2. Estimate how long (days, weeks, months, years, etc) this invasion will take place:

3. Describe what you will do with the bombs that can be dropped from airplanes.



War in the Pacific National Historical Park

So what really happened?

In order to prepare for the invasion, US cruisers, battleships, and aircraft bombed and shelled Asan and Agat beaches on June 16, 1944. The U.S. strafed and bombarded Guam from planes, battleships, cruisers, destroyers, and carriers, in preparation for the invasion.

Next, members of the **Underwater Demolition Teams (UDTs)** came in three days prior to military landings. They blasted away obstacles in the offshore waters, such as palm log cribs filled with coral and joined together by wire cable. This enabled the LSTs to be more effective.

After days of heavy air and naval bombardment, the landing of 55,000 U.S. troops began early on the morning of July 21, 1944 (also referred to as W-day). The first landings took place on the beaches at Asan and Agat. The code name for the Guam operation was “Stevedore.”

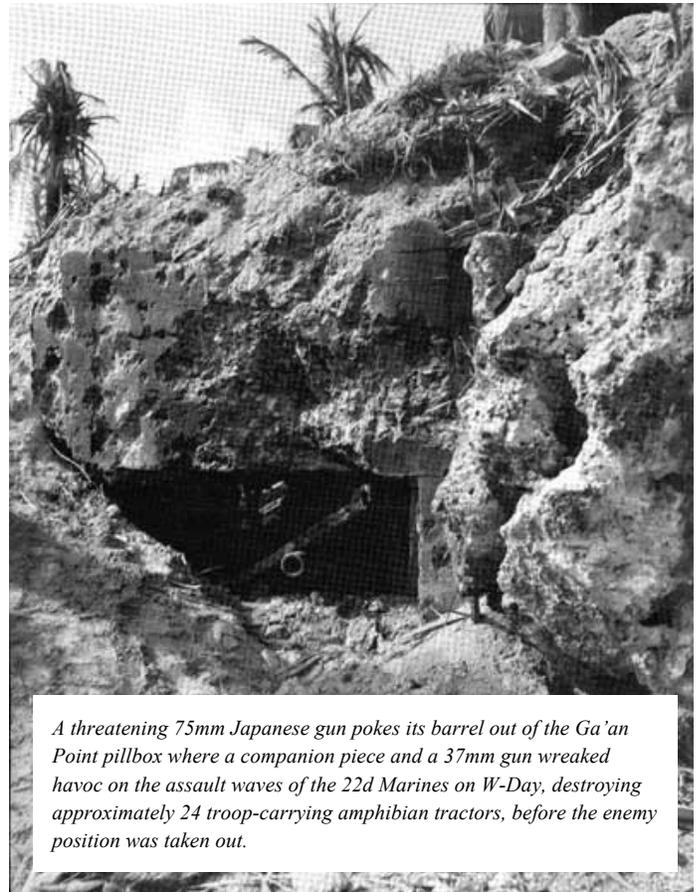
Why Agat Beach?

Ga'an Point in Agat Beach was chosen in order to help secure Orote Peninsula to the north. Ga'an Point was the geographic center of the Agat Beachhead and served as a strategic firing base for Japanese coastal defense weapons in the area. If they overtook Ga'an Point, the entire beach front at Agat could be used to offload supplies and equipment that were critical for the inland advance to Orote Point.

They planned to establish a southern beachhead, secure old Agat Village, link up with the troops landing at Asan, and drive north to the Orote Peninsula, one of the prime targets of the invasion force.

The **4th Marines of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade** stormed onto the beach and established a beachhead. They protected the flank of the brigade and then proceeded to secure Mt. Alifan.

The **22nd Marines of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade** also landed at the beach and



A threatening 75mm Japanese gun pokes its barrel out of the Ga'an Point pillbox where a companion piece and a 37mm gun wreaked havoc on the assault waves of the 22d Marines on W-Day, destroying approximately 24 troop-carrying amphibian tractors, before the enemy position was taken out.

secured Agat Village and drove north and cut off Orote Peninsula.

The **77th Army Infantry Division's 305th Regimental Combat Team** landed later that day at 2 pm. Their goal was to make a passage of lines for the 4th Marine Division and protect that sector of the beachhead. The Army's 77th Infantry Division eventually took Mt. Alifan and the Force Beachhead Line from Facpi Point to Mt. Tenjo.

The Japanese 38th Regimental Combat Team had command post headquarters at Mt. Alifan and the Japanese forces heavily fortified the area from Facpi Point to Agat Bay. The Japanese defense weapons placed at Ga'an Point included a single-barrel, Japanese dual-purpose 25 mm machine cannon and a 20cm short barrel naval gun, a 25mm machine cannon, and a double-barreled anti-aircraft gun. The Japanese also had extensive defenses consisting of numerous pillboxes built in coral outcroppings, and concrete blockhouses that held a 75mm and 37mm gun to fire upon the beaches.

The fighting at Agat was severe and it took 3 days to firmly establish the southern beachhead. On July 24, 1944 the reported losses of US forces numbered near 1,000.

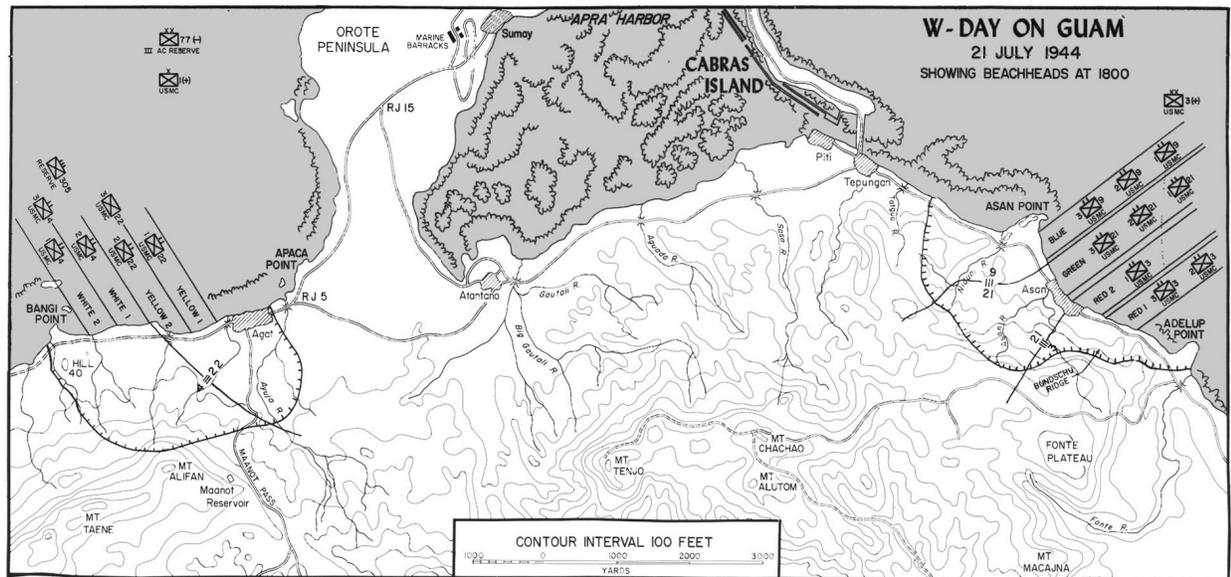
Why Asan Beach?

The United States forces used the **3rd, 9th, and 21st Marines of the 3rd Divisions** to storm the Asan beachhead and move further inland.

Their mission was to make the beachhead secure: (1) for US Marines and Army soldiers to live, sleep, eat, and stockpile supplies,

(2) to gain access to the higher grounds of Adelup Point, Chorrito Cliff, Bundchu Ridge, Fonte Plateau,

and Mt. Tenjo, and (3) to push forward and westward to secure Cabras Island, and ultimately Orote Point.



The first step in securing Asan Beach involved the Underwater Demolition Teams, who came in to destroy obstacles before the US Marines landed. Then bombardment of the island began at 5:30 am on July 21, 1944. Then at 7:00 am they moved toward shore in Asan to unload 180 armored landing vehicles full of assault troops. The Japanese held their fire until the landing vehicles were close to shore and the 3rd U.S. Marines received heavy fire from Adelup Point and Chorrito Cliff on their left flank.



Upon reaching the beach, Marines quickly unload over the gunwales of the Amtrac, which brought them in and rushed off the Asan beaches. As the frontlines advanced, succeeding waves of amphibian tractors carry the troops further inland.

The 3rd Marine Division operation called for the three regiments to land abreast, capture the high ground immediately inland, and prepare for further operations to the east and southeast. Marines assaulted beaches, took Orote Peninsula, and the land behind Asan and the Force Beachhead Line from Adelup Point to Mt. Chachao/Mt. Tenjo. Meanwhile, the Army's 77th Infantry Division fought in Agat and took Mt. Alifan and the Force Beachhead Line from Facpit Point to Mt. Tenjo.



Often, in attacking up the ridges, there was very little cover and hardly any concealment as the Marines and soldiers advanced in the face of heavy artillery, mortar, and machine gun fire. Evacuation was extremely difficult under these conditions.

On the nights of July 25-26, the Japanese launched their last major counterattack against the 3rd U.S. Marine Division. When Japanese commanders felt the fighting was favoring a US triumph, they initiated banzai charges as a last attempt to overcome the opposition. This occurred with the 9th U.S. Marines

on the slopes of the Fonte Plateau. In banzai charges, Japanese soldiers wielded pitchforks, sticks, ballbats, pieces of broken bottles, and normal infantry weapons to attack the US soldiers in an attempt to drive the Americans back into the sea. It had been a severe struggle, but the Americans held

their position, and the Japanese break-through attempt had been stopped.

On July 27, the 3rd U.S. Marines Division launched an all-out attack on the Fonte area. By July 28th, all the Fonte area was in American hands except for a depression on the plateau, which was silenced on July 29. Each side fought fiercely, but on July 29, the beachhead was secured and the Japanese retreated to the north of the island.

The Aftermath

On August 10 the Americans declared the island secure. By this date, they had successfully eliminated organized Japanese resistance on the rest of the island. Out of the 55,000 U.S. troops that landed on the island, 1,747 were killed in action or died of wounds. There were over 7000 American casualties in the battle for Guam; the exact number of Guamanian casualties is unknown. Japanese forces on Guam numbered close to 18,500; just over 1,000 of these were taken prisoner. The rest were killed in action, died of wounds, or committed suicide.