

Chapter 1

Underwater Archaeology of a WWII Battlefield

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Introduction

The underwater archaeology of ancient battles and warships is not a new study but one that spans back to the beginning of the watery discipline; however, the underwater archaeology of modern military or conflict sites such as Second World War (WWII) battlefields is more recent (for Pacific examples, see Lenihan 1989; Rodgers et al. 1998; Jeffery 2007; Van Tilburg 2007). Because of its nascent status, many of the ethical and professional decisions about how we approach such sites, how we interpret the sites, and how we protect the sites remain to be considered. Conflict archaeology on land has been actively addressing these professional and ethical issues for a few decades and as Schofield (2009:27) points out, “there is a duty on those charged with presenting recent military sites to balance numerous responsibilities: to remember the fallen; to avoid trivialising contributions to the war effort; but also (I would argue) to ensure some emotional engagement with the subject.” To say that conflict archaeology underwater is different from conflict archaeology on land is a gross misstatement; therefore, we must look to our dry colleagues to understand the issues related to archaeology of modern conflict sites.

In recent decades, there exists a growing body of research and literature on conflict archaeology and modern conflict archaeology, some of which was born out of the North American traditional battlefield archaeology, but much of which was the result

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of a new group of scholars, particularly in the United Kingdom, focused on sites more recent than pre-twentieth-century wars. Modern conflict archaeology is the study of twentieth- and twenty-first-century heritage, which is anthropological in nature and multidisciplinary (Saunders 2012:x). Modern conflict archaeology, because of its more recent subject matter, is complex as it is still a part of living memory, and often those involved or affected by conflict are still alive or their families are present. Furthermore, it involves recent or existing political and social strife and can involve ethnic and social issues of power struggles and inequality. This makes the investigation, interpretation, and protection of such sites more difficult and sensitive.

“The human need to confront the past, even its unpleasant aspects, is ingrained in our culture, as shown by tourism of battlegrounds and other ‘sacred’ sites sanctified by great loss of life in war or visiting scenes of disaster...The tourists at Pearl Harbor, Custer Battlefield, Johnstown, Dachau, and Hiroshima confront their human mortality and perhaps reaffirm their joy in personal survival” (Delgado 1991:np). Interestingly, sites associated with conflict and warfare “probably constitute the largest category of tourist attractions in the world” (Smith 1998:248). Battlefields and modern conflict sites are a massive draw for tourists around the world; in the United States, Civil War battlefields are recognized as a positive contributor to local economies both directly and indirectly. An example of how popular modern conflict sites are with the public is the USS *Arizona* Memorial at Pearl Harbor that averages 4,500 visitors per day.

Because these sites not only involved warring world powers but noncombatant civilians, their promotion and interpretation as tourist attractions demand professional and ethical considerations of the multiple layers of significance and meaning for those involved. “Professionals working at significant places need to understand how their work can potentially impact local communities, indigenous peoples and ethnic communities” (Little and Shackel 2014:42). Archaeology and heritage management is a political act and has to be considered as such, particularly when sites are interpreted and promoted. Interpreting heritage in such a way that it does not privilege one history over the other or trivialize the experience is critical.

The WWII Battle of Saipan in the Mariana Islands (June 15–July 9, 1944) is an example of such a modern conflict site that is multifaceted, having involved two world powers, Japan and the United States, as well as hundreds of civilians from multiple ethnic backgrounds including Chamorro, Carolinian, Korean, Japanese, and Okinawan (Fig. 1.1). The battle lasted twenty-five days but the lead up to it, the battle itself and the aftermath affected tremendously those who willingly participated and those who did not. Thousands of civilians and soldiers were killed or committed suicide, families were uprooted from their homes, lands were lost, crops devastated, and the very fabric of the landscape and seascape was altered permanently. Today, reminders of the battle on the island are inescapable, from the strafed and hollowed-out Japanese structures to the tanks sitting in the coastal waters, to the memorials that line Banzai Cliff, to the pillboxes dotting the picnic beaches. Yet all of these scars and features blend into the daily goings-on of island life and seem relegated to the fascination of curious tourists.

The cultural heritage of the Battle of Saipan has been the focus of a large-scale archaeological project from 2007 to present. The project primarily involved

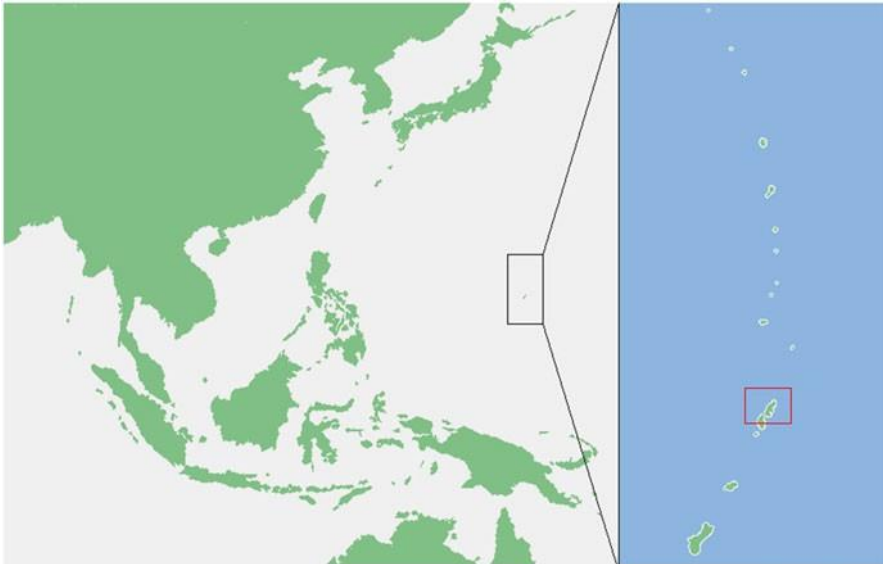


Fig. 1.1 The Mariana Islands and Saipan's location

researchers from the nonprofit organization Ships of Exploration and Discovery Research, Inc. (Ships), Flinders University, and East Carolina University (ECU); however, many individuals and organizations were partners or assisted with the project (see Chap. 4). The work was partially funded through two National Park Service (NPS) American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) grants and a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Pacific Region Grants Cooperative grant, as well as a tremendous amount of in-kind support and funding. In short, the project was multinational, multidisciplinary, and interagency and involved a close partnership between academia and nonprofit, public, and government agencies. In a total of four years, historical and archaeological research and survey was conducted on 24 sites underwater and even more sites on land (see Chap. 4) a nine-site underwater heritage trail was created including posters in English and Japanese, underwater guides in English and Japanese, and a website; a 2D and RealD 3D 18-min interpretive film was produced in English with Japanese subtitles; an in situ conservation survey was conducted on 15 sites and a management plan was developed and written.

WWII Heritage in the Pacific and Heritage Tourism

The development of a WWII heritage project originated in 2007 during conversations with the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Historic Preservation Office (HPO). At that time, the HPO was interested in developing an underwater program or division that dealt specifically with underwater heritage.

They were keen to have staff trained in the methods of underwater archaeology and to attract researchers interested in conducting underwater archaeological research to CNMI's waters. The HPO had already organized a NPS-funded contract to conduct remote sensing of the entire western lagoons (Tanapag and Garapan), which was carried out by Southeastern Archaeological Research, Inc., (SEARCH) in 2008 (see Chap. 3). They organized a second NPS-funded contract to support the writing of a historical and archaeological maritime heritage context publication, which was carried out by Ships of Exploration and Discovery Research (Ships) in 2009 (Carrell 2009). What was missing from the plans was a public outreach component that could provide HPO with a presence on the water, facilitate more interaction with the diving community, and promote the preservation of Saipan's underwater heritage. In addition to this missing piece, Saipan's weakening economy was foremost on the minds of government officials and community, and conversations at the very top levels of government were centered on tourism, in particular eco- and heritage tourism. As a result, it was agreed that the development of an underwater heritage trail to promote Saipan's diverse WWII resources would be an apt solution to all of the issues outlined above.

Anecdotal evidence from other areas of the world where similar trails exist suggests that the development and promotion of underwater heritage trails helps to foster an appreciation for local heritage and contributes to its preservation into the future (Scott-Ireton 2005). By involving and educating the public, a sense of ownership and stewardship begins to develop and the communities begin to rally behind protecting the resources for future generations. However, Saipan's situation is different from other areas of the world where trails exist, in that the users that are attracted to and visit Saipan's underwater heritage sites are primarily tourists, not locals. Nevertheless, it is the locals who regulate and maintain the industry and therefore their livelihood depends on the heritage's sustainability.

"Cultural tourism has been regarded as the panacea to cure the economic troubles of the Pacific Island communities, particularly of the Pacific micro-states" (Spennemann et al. 2001:1). "Cultural," "heritage," and "ecotourism" are growing, and museums, heritage sites, and traditional festivals are drawing tourists to cultural attractions in the Pacific with more frequency. Heritage and ecotourists are generally attracted to the rarity and significance of particular natural and cultural sites and are generally more aware of the vulnerabilities of the resources. Perhaps due in part to the prefix, ecotourism is commonly held to be "softer" on the cultural and natural resources than mainstream tourism (Spennemann et al. 2001:31). Unfortunately, if eco- and heritage tourism, with its sustainable practices, is not encouraged in the planning practices of a community, impacts on prominent and renowned sites in the Pacific and in the CNMI will continue and worsen. The *CNMI Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan (2009–2014)* states: "In the case of the CNMI, tourism has served as the primary industry followed by the garment industry. However, with the complete closure of the garment industry by 2009, tourism remains the only major industry to support the islands" (Commonwealth Economic Development Strategic Planning Commission 2009). Thus tourism is seen as not just *an* answer but the *only* answer for CNMI's economy, and further to the point, there is no mention of sustainable practices such as eco- or heritage tourism offer.

According to Spennemann et al. (2001:30), the development of heritage tourism opportunities worldwide has left Micronesia the last largely unassessed region. In 2000, the CNMI HPO and the NPS organized a Micronesia-wide symposium for the purpose of discussing methods of developing sustainable heritage tourism in Micronesia. Upon arriving, attendees were polled concerning their knowledge of heritage tourism and their expectations regarding the management of Micronesian environmental and cultural resources (Spennemann et al. 2001:30). Nearly 64 % of respondents agreed with the statement that heritage tourism does not exist as a bona fide industry but is a portion of the overall tourism industry. In spite of this, 91.6 % also thought that heritage tourism is more than a popular trend and has a remunerative future (Spennemann et al. 2001:31). Of ten options provided in the survey, archaeological sites were ranked as having the highest perceived tourism potential. However, non-Indigenous heritage locations (e.g., WWII sites) were ranked the poorest in terms of their potential for promoting ecotourism. As stated by Spennemann et al., “the fact that non-Indigenous heritage sites, and in particular WWII sites ranked so poor may be due to the negative perception of the war by the local population” (2001:32).

Western styles of cultural preservation tend to focus on tangible heritage while Micronesians display a preference for intangible heritage (e.g., traditional skills and knowledge). Therefore, they value more and have a stronger connection with their own intangible and tangible heritage. The obvious question not raised is: Why should islanders care about WWII heritage to begin with? Much like the archaeology of the Western Front in France and Belgium, Pacific War heritage can be considered “orphan heritage” because it is located on the lands and in the water of counties and communities who may not wish to recognize it (Price 2006). WWII in the Pacific, a momentous event in world history from a Western and Eastern perspective, is simply a brief interlude of colonial intervention from the Indigenous Pacific Islanders’ point of view. With few exceptions, Pacific Islanders did not actively choose to be involved in the war. This view, though pragmatic, has the potential to hinder the effective preservation of non-Indigenous heritage resources. Nevertheless, it cannot be ignored. As Poyer et al. (2001) found when interviewing Micronesians about the war, WWII remains are of little interest to most, “but they want to preserve this history and to correct the imbalance that makes Islanders nearly invisible in American and Japanese accounts of the Pacific War.”

CNMI’s focus on tourism would undoubtedly stimulate the local economy, attracting visitors and drawing money to the islands. However, the connection between economic gain and heritage preservation is a precarious one in that heritage sites are vulnerable resources and almost certainly will be harmed by tourism activities. Over two decades ago, Carrell pointed out (1991:335): “developing tourism operations of the CNMI could cause heavy visitation to these sites by scuba divers. There is already a commercial tour submarine on Saipan that offers tours of some underwater sites. There have been reports of this tour submarine damaging some of the sites.” This warning rings true today; therefore, an effective plan for promoting Saipan’s underwater heritage sustainably through heritage trails while ensuring that the resources are not negatively impacted is timely and necessary.

Tourism and preservation of underwater heritage in the CNMI need to include careful consideration of all stakeholders and particularly a Pacific Islander's perspective, include education and training opportunities for agencies that regulate heritage, provide training opportunities for the dive industry that facilitates tourism, and conduct full-scale archaeological survey and site assessments. This project concerned itself with those special needs and designed a plan involving community outreach and involvement, training, education through interpretive materials, and cultural heritage management strategies for protection and sustainable use.

Stakeholders

Collaboration with local and descendant communities is critical to the archaeology of conflict sites. Archaeologists have discussed collaboration in various practices or processes including public archaeology and community archaeology. Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson (2008) suggest that collaboration is a sliding scale from resistance to participation to collaboration, in that collaboration is comprised of full involvement from ideas to decision-making, where information flows freely both ways, and all parties' needs are recognized. This project endeavored to achieve this form of collaboration; in fact, the very idea of working on WWII sites was that of the local community (in contrast to the researcher's desires to study Spanish colonial sites from the outset). As a result, the project from the beginning included a wide range of active participants from agency staff to divers to community members who had the opportunity to provide their opinion, voice concerns, and make decisions.

Three agencies on the island played a crucial role in determining the success of the project efforts: the HPO, the Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and the Coastal Resources Management Office (CRM). In areas of the world where budgets, resources, and staff are limited, it is crucial to involve multiple agencies as they can collectively pool their resources for common interests (McKinnon 2014). This proved very true in the CNMI. Initial meetings and consultations were held with these agencies to assess their interest and involvement with the project (McKinnon and Carrell 2011). All three agencies contributed staff, equipment, and in-kind support throughout the project as well as oversight and input on interpretive materials and reports and publications.

Other partners and collaborators included: the Marianas Visitors Authority Office (MVA), a government-funded office focused on the development of tourism; the NPS American Memorial Park on Saipan and War in the Pacific National Historical Park on Guam; the Northern Marianas Humanities Council (NMHC), a nonprofit, government-funded program; the Pacific Marine Resources Institute (PMRI), a nonprofit organization with interests in traditional Micronesian fishing; the local dive club Marianas Dive; and Mariana Sports Club, Inc., the only dive industry organization on the island.

Interviews with Chamorro and Carolinian elders within the community were sought and encouraged throughout the project. Often these meetings were arranged

by younger generations connected with the project who wanted their family's story recorded. The interviews were used to fill in the details of the history of the battle and expand the perspective of the story to include civilian and Indigenous interpretation.

Throughout the project, several public meetings and lectures were held on the island. These included PowerPoint presentations and question-and-answer sessions during which the public could comment on the work conducted. Crowds beyond 100 attendees were achieved which, for a small island, is remarkable participation. In addition to lectures, both TV and radio sessions were filmed in English, Chamorro, and Carolinian. These served the purpose of getting the word out and letting the community know how they could become involved in the project or provide input. Newspaper articles were also regularly published and all opportunities to be interviewed were accepted. The point of discussing the media activity of this project is to demonstrate that the project was never designed, nor was it executed as a "fly-in, fly-out" activity. As researchers, we were keenly aware that the Pacific has been plagued not only by multiple colonial interventions but also colonial researchers who fly in and collect the "earliest dates of occupation" to process in their laboratories elsewhere and report on in their academic journals. Instead, the project strove for transparency and communication with the public through media—budgets were published and the research objectives were broadcast widely. As Little and Shackel (2014:77) have rightly pointed out, "We have passed the tipping point; there is no way back to a heritage practice that operates as an expert-only domain independent of interested stakeholders."

Training

Not only was training necessary to provide valuable information to the agencies and the public about underwater heritage, it was also seen as a chance to drum up local support for the project and possibly even train volunteer divers to assist with the survey. A training course was run in conjunction with Flinders University in July of 2009. The training provided participants with theoretical and practical knowledge about underwater archaeology. Participants were given two days of lectures and hands-on practice and then were involved in the mapping of an underwater archaeological site and an intertidal shipwreck site for non-divers. Twenty people participated in the training including three staff from HPO, twelve staff from CRM, one staff member from the Northern Mariana Island of History and Culture Museum, and four volunteers from Marianas Dive, a local dive club.

Two Heritage Awareness Diving Seminar Trainings (HADS) were run in April 2011 on Saipan in conjunction with the Florida-based Public Archaeology Network. The training was sponsored through grant funding from the NOAA Pacific Region Grants Cooperative. The grant was awarded to a collaborative partner on the island, PMRI, a local nonprofit organization concerned with environmental and historical research and sustainability. The training is a specialty course through the three largest

diver certification programs in the world, NAUI, PADI, and SSI, for course directors, instructor trainers, instructors, dive masters, boat captains, and dive shop owners. It was developed to provide diving professionals with a greater knowledge of how to proactively protect shipwrecks, artificial reefs, and other submerged marine cultural heritage sites through acceptable diver behavior (Scott-Ireton 2008). The outcomes and benefits of HADS include increasing awareness of the fragility of submerged heritage; teaching proper anchoring, mooring, and diving behavior on such sites; and demonstrating the need for preservation of heritage for future generations and the economic benefits of heritage diving tourism.

A total of 16 participants took the free HADS training including dive shop owners, the president of a local dive organization, boat captains, dive instructors and dive masters, US Coast Guard staff, and a staff member from the NMHC. Participants attended a two-day course which included one day of PowerPoint presentations delivered by archaeologists and local agency staff including HPO and CRM and a second day of two boat dives in which they dived a site that is pristine and one that is heavily dived in order to compare the difference and understand diver impacts.

The Trail

One of the challenges for heritage managers is to balance the protection of heritage with the provision and promotion of public access. Public outreach programs and education appear to be an effective management tool because they foster an appreciation for heritage and deliver important messages about valuing the past and preserving it for the future. The development of underwater or maritime heritage trails has proven to be a successful tool for balancing management needs with public access since their introduction in the mid-1980s (Spirek and Scott-Ireton 2003; Jameson and Scott-Ireton 2007; Scott-Ireton 2005). However, these products are not a one size fits all and need to be carefully researched to account for local needs; identify stakeholders; assess economic, political, and social concerns; and account for the multiple narratives present.

The WWII Maritime Heritage Trail: Battle of Saipan consists of nine stops with a total of twelve vehicles. Three US Sherman tanks, two Japanese landing craft, a Japanese Aichi E13A aircraft, a Japanese Kawanishi H8K aircraft, a US PBM Martin Mariner Aircraft, a US Avenger aircraft, a possible Japanese submarine chaser, a US Landing Vehicle Tracked (LVT), and a Japanese freighter comprise the trail (Fig. 1.2). Their locations vary from very nearshore in shallow water (2–3 ft) up to 30 ft of water on the barrier reef. Some of the sites can be accessed from shore via snorkel, making it accessible to those who are not scuba certified. Site selection was informed by consulting with the diving industry as well as diversity in vehicle type and ethnic association (i.e., Japanese and American).

After much public and agency consultation, it was decided that two types of interpretive products would be produced for the heritage trail. Nine underwater guides inclusive of site plans, site descriptions, access information, and a conservation



Fig. 1.2 Bow of possible Japanese submarine chaser (Photo: Valeo Films)

message were produced on 100 % waterproof, 100 % recyclable, and 100 % tree-free paper (Fig. 1.3). Four themed posters also were produced including: *U.S. Aircraft*, *Japanese Aircraft*, *Shipwrecks*, and *Assault Vehicles*. The posters are 18×24 inches and double sided; the front includes a glossy photograph of a site and the back is populated with photographs as well as historical and archaeological information about the battle and the wrecks. The posters are inclusive of multiple viewpoints and include quotes of several individuals from varying ethnic backgrounds involved (i.e., Chamorro, Carolinian, Korean, Japanese, etc.). They also include a message about the importance of protecting sites, examples of diver impacts through intentional and non-intentional behavior, and specific information about the legislation that protects underwater sites. The posters and guides were designed in such a way that additional sites can be added to the trail if future funding and interest is available. All products were only printed in English and Japanese as funding was unavailable to print in Chamorro, Carolinian, Chinese, Korean, and Russian. The final PDF production prints of all the material were distributed to HPO, CRM, MVA, NPS, and NMHC so that reprints can be made based on local need. Copies of the posters were sent to the library and each school on the island to be used in education curriculum.



Fig. 1.3 Interpretive underwater guide of Aichi A13A in Japanese

The Film

One of the challenging and disappointing aspects of interpreting underwater sites is that non-divers cannot visit the site or participate in the discovery of swimming up to a shipwreck and sitting on the sandy bottom covered with fish and corals. It is just not the same standing on shore and reading a kiosk about the history of a shipwreck while looking over the expanse of the sea. Taking non-divers to sites, particularly NPS sites, is currently a focus of the NPS Submerged Resources Center (SRC)—and they are now doing the tours in 3D! After the trail was developed, a relationship came to fruition whereby the NPS SRC in collaboration with the Woods Hole Oceanographic institution (WHOI) would film all of the trail sites and create an interpretive film; this was supported by a second ABPP grant (see Chap. 11). The production of a film was launched and an 18-min colored, English (with Japanese subtitles) 2D and RealD 3D film was created. The film provides a mechanism for both divers and non-divers alike to visit the sites and learn about their history. It is shown at the NPS American Memorial Park on Saipan and War in the Pacific National Historical Park on Guam and is being considered for viewing at the USS *Arizona* Memorial in Honolulu. Copies of the film were sent to all schools on the island of Saipan so that it may be used as an educational tool in the classroom, and the film is on YouTube for free viewing and download. As a result, hundreds of thousands of people will now learn the history of the battle and can visit the aircraft, shipwrecks, and assault vehicles as they lay on the seabed.

In Situ Survey and Management Plan

The need to develop a management plan for submerged WWII maritime heritage in Saipan's waters was identified during the planning stages and implementation of the trail. Throughout the archaeological survey and subsequent development of the trail, it was noted that certain sites were being negatively impacted by both natural and cultural factors (McKinnon and Carrell 2011). These impacts were identified as contributing to an overall loss of archaeological and historical context and affecting the structural integrity of the sites and their long-term survival. While some of these impacts were recorded during the archaeological survey for the development of the trail, they were not the primary focus of the project and were treated cursorily. Upon completion of the trail, it was deemed important to revisit selected sites and record baseline data to develop a plan to monitor, mitigate, and manage the sites into the future. A plan to conduct further archaeological survey and initiate in situ conservation surveys was developed and supported by the second ABPP grant (see Chap. 9). Understanding the condition of the resources through in situ and archaeological surveys is an important step in the management process. An agency cannot manage a site if they have no knowledge of its condition. The HPO needed information about the condition of the sites in order to make informed decisions about their management.

In situ surveys and studies are critical to regions such as the Pacific because there are limited resources (i.e., funding, staff, and facilities) to conduct recovery and conservation of submerged objects and sites. While the CNMI does benefit from grant funds distributed by the NPS, this funding is limited and often only covers a small portion of the compliance needs of the HPO (Ronnie Rodgers, personal communication, 2010). This means that the conservation and management of the resources must be done in situ.

Additional archaeological survey was conducted alongside the conservation survey in order to record new "control" sites not on the trail, so that they may be monitored long-term for comparison purposes. A steamship, a US aircraft, a US LVT, and a Japanese landing craft were added to the list of sites with archaeological and conservation data. Baseline conservation and archaeological data collected on new sites will be critical for HPO's understanding of the differential impacts of site visitation on those included in the trail. Plans to regularly collect conservation data for the purposes of monitoring the sites on and off the trail are underway, and this data can be collected by off-island specialists or by HPO staff.

Finally, all of the conservation and archaeological data was incorporated into a 111-page preservation and management plan that was reviewed and approved by the HPO. The plan identified the natural and cultural threats currently impacting underwater WWII sites in Saipan and provided recommendations for mitigating these threats and managing the sites in the short and long term. Each recommendation was made based on discussions with managing agencies and the dive community tempered with knowledge of the sites, their historical and archaeological context, the environmental and cultural impacts affecting the sites, and the social, economic,

and political conditions of Saipan. Further, it was tempered with the knowledge and awareness that the plan was funded by an *American* battlefield grant, which presented yet another layer of postcolonial complexity when “recommending” what a community should do with *its* heritage.

The recommendations were separated into four broad categories: policies and procedures, programmatic recommendations, site-specific recommendations, and public outreach. Included within policies and procedures were legislative initiatives, capacity sharing and strategic planning, and interagency cooperative agreements. Programmatic recommendations focused on those areas that are mandated by various legislative requirements. Site-specific recommendations included direct and indirect site monitoring, while public outreach is self-explanatory. Each recommendation was followed by a discussion of underlying issues that constrain or impact implementation and then an action item with a proposed time frame. All of the recommendations were catered to suit the local conditions of the Saipan community and HPO so that the success of managing the sites will be that much more attainable.

O’Neill and Spennemann (2001:46) argue that efficacious preservation of cultural resources is dependent upon several factors: political will, community interest, and availability of resources. Saipan struggles in each of these areas; however, the largest roadblock is availability of resources. As Saipan’s economy continues to weaken or remain stagnant, the impact on agencies that are charged with managing, protecting, and interpreting underwater heritage and the environment has had their budgets and personnel reduced. This presents particular challenges in the development of both community and agency action planning and implementation.

Conclusion

The Battle of Saipan was an incredibly significant event for those residing on Saipan and for those who fought for control of the island. For better or worse, it has left a lasting, tangible legacy in the form of an incredible collection of heritage sites both underwater and on land. In fact, it can be said with certainty that this collection of shipwrecks, aircraft wrecks, and vehicle wrecks are like none other in the Pacific. However, these sites have multiple meaning to the multilayered community of Saipan. For some, they represent valor and success, but for others, they represent oppression, coercion, defeat, and colonial interference. “By opening up such sites to the popular gaze, archaeologists have the power to bring these debates into the public sphere, potentially undermining the hegemony of officially sanctioned memory and making the production of meaningful pasts a more inclusive process” (Moshenska 2006:58). The task of opening up these sites to the public becomes more than a celebration of war—it involves a close reflection of all narratives and a chance to confront the past for purposes of understanding the present.

Due to its remoteness, the CNMI’s underwater cultural heritage sites have retained much of their historical and archaeological integrity and therefore are in

need of more research and protection. The following chapters represent the efforts thus far of a research project aimed at recording, researching, and protecting Saipan's WWII underwater heritage sites. Lest we forget however that, "...the archaeology of modern warfare...is also an archaeology of us, reflecting our changing attitudes to conservation and to the need for preserving memories of past conflict in contemporary society" (Schofield 2009:137). This book then is a reflection of the editors' and authors' ideas and attitudes toward preserving and interpreting Saipan's WWII history, and it is also a community's and a network of colleagues' and collaborators', for which the work could not have been accomplished were it not for their ideas and their assistance.

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