

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: FORGOTTEN OUTPOSTS: WORLD WAR II JAPANESE
MILITARY STRUCTURES AND AMERICAN PACIFIC
BATTLEFIELDS.

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Degree and Year: Master of Arts in Historic Preservation, 2004

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This thesis discovers factors considered in the preservation of modern battlefields as historic landscapes. In order to optimize efforts at interpretive preservation planning, is it possible to find that the battlefield has a “voice” to guide preservation efforts? The settings chosen as a test case for application of a thematic approach are a pair of World War II historic landscapes located in the Pacific, on the islands of Rota and Tinian. The locations were considered for evaluation because of their remote nature and the significant World War II resources on each island. The research shows that the characteristics that are associated with the commemorative or historic voice in a given landscape can help guide preservation professionals in assessing and determining

preservation goals, i.e., which voice would be considered more appropriate as a guiding strategy for preservation activities. To provide context for the discussion of preservation options based on voice, the history of the islands in the region is summarized, from pre-contact, and concluding with emphasis on the Japanese era. The thesis begins with an overview of the Pacific setting, then describes modern battlefield landscapes. This is followed by an examination of battlefields in the Pacific and a more detailed look at Rota and Tinian. World War II resources on each island are selected as test cases, and the results are examined. Potential strategies for interpretive preservation planning are discussed, and the two options presented for emphasis are the historical or the commemorative voice. Different characteristics of each voice in a battlefield landscape are also covered. Both voices can coexist in a given battlefield landscape, but the dominant one of the two can be instrumental in finding the most effective strategy for future interpretive preservation activities. Taking advantage of the existing voice that is dominant in a landscape can function as a tool to help preservation professionals make the better decision when it comes to options in preservation planning. The Union Civil War General Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain called battlefields “fields of mighty memory.” Tapping that memory of the land, and allowing it to speak decisively through a distinctive voice enhances the experience of anyone who strolls across a historic landscape, and listens.