

**I MINA'TRENTAI SIETTE NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN
RESOLUTIONS**

Resolution No.	Sponsor	Title	Date Intro	Date of Presentation	Date Adopted	Date Referred	Referred to	PUBLIC HEARING DATE	DATE AUTHORS REPORT FILED	NOTES
436-37 (LS)	Therese M. Terlaje Frank Blas, Jr. Amanda L. Shelton Tina Rose Muña Barnes Chris Barnett Sabina Flores Perez Joanne M. Brown Christopher M. Dueñas Jesse A. Lujan William A. Parkinson Roy A. B. Quinata Joe S. San Agustin Dwayne T.D. San Nicolas Telo T. Taitague	Relative to recognizing the observance of "War Survivor Remembrance Day" on June 28, 2024, as part of the celebration of the Eightieth (80th) Anniversary of Guam's Liberation, to honor and remember every survivor of Guam's wartime atrocities for their inspiring courage and resilience.	6/25/24 3:23 p.m.	6/28/24 12:00 p.m.						

I MINA'TRENTAI SIETTE NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN
2024 (SECOND) Regular Session

Resolution No. 436-37 (LS)

Introduced by:

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 Frank Blas, Jr. *FB*
 Amanda L. Shelton *AS*
 Tina Rose Muña Barnes *TRMB*
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 Joanne Brown *JB*
 Christopher M. Dueñas *CD*
 Jesse A. Lujan *JAL*
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Relative to recognizing the observance of “War Survivor Remembrance Day” on June 28, 2024, as part of the celebration of the Eightieth (80th) Anniversary of Guam's Liberation, to honor and remember every survivor of Guam's wartime atrocities for their inspiring courage and resilience.

1 **BE IT RESOLVED BY *I MINA'TRENTAI SIETTE NA LIHESLATURAN***
2 ***GUÅHAN*:**

3 **WHEREAS, Guam Public Law 33-56, designates June 28th as "War Survivor**
4 **Remembrance Day," it is a poignant and significant legislative act that acknowledges**
5 **and honors the resilience, courage, and sacrifices of those who survived the harrowing**
6 **experiences of World War II on Guam. This day is observed annually to commemorate**

1 the profound hardships endured by the Chamorro people, who faced unimaginable
2 adversities during the Japanese occupation. The law serves not only as a tribute to the
3 past but also as an enduring reminder of the strength and tenacity of the human spirit in
4 the face of overwhelming challenges; we must do everything we can to honor the
5 memories and the stories of those who endured permanent sufferings. The legacy of our
6 war survivors, known as our “Greatest Generation,” should be recognized by all of the
7 people of Guam; and War Survivor Remembrance Day is an appropriate day to honor
8 the survivors who have gone before us, celebrate the lives of those still with us, and
9 remind future generations that they must never forget the “Greatest Generation” of our
10 island's history; and

11 **WHEREAS**, the Japanese occupation of Guam began on December 10, 1941,
12 just days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, and lasted until the island was liberated by
13 American forces on July 21, 1944. During this period, the people of Guam faced severe
14 repression, forced labor, internment, and brutality. Many were uprooted from their
15 homes, suffered the loss of family members, and endured severe physical and emotional
16 trauma; and

17 **WHEREAS**, the Japanese occupiers imposed harsh labor conditions on the
18 Chamorro people. Many were forced to work on military installations, airfields, and
19 fortifications. They were made to carry out grueling manual labor with little food, rest,
20 or medical care. The Japanese sought to fortify the island against a potential American
21 invasion, and the Chamorros were coerced into contributing to these efforts; and

22 **WHEREAS**, families were made to live with extreme restrictions under threat
23 of harm to them or other family members, many were forced to march to encampment
24 sites. These camps were overcrowded, and the living conditions were deplorable. Basic
25 necessities such as food, water, and medical supplies were scarce, leading to widespread
26 malnutrition, disease and death. Several forced marches ended in massacres. Some of
27 the notable encampment and massacre sites include: *Mañenggon, Chagui'an, Asinan,*

1 *Pigo, Fena, Faha, Tinta, As Mateo, Umafít, Besbes, Payesyés, Eda' Agaga', Fonte,*
2 *Mata, Utan, Kâlaguak, Inalâhan, Atâte, Hâgat, and Sumay, Ta'i;* and

3 **WHEREAS**, the Japanese occupiers also sought to erase Chamorro culture and
4 impose their own. Chamorro language and customs were banned, and the people were
5 forced to adopt Japanese customs, language, and even names. Schools were required to
6 teach Japanese history and culture, and any form of resistance to these cultural
7 impositions was met with severe punishment; and

8 **WHEREAS**, the food shortages that plagued the island were severe. The
9 Japanese commandeered much of the local food production for their own troops, leaving
10 the Chamorro population to survive on meager rations. Starvation became a constant
11 threat, and many Chamorros resorted to eating roots, leaves, and other inedible materials
12 to stave off hunger; diseases spread rapidly in the unsanitary conditions of the
13 internment camps. Without adequate medical supplies or care, many Chamorros
14 succumbed to illnesses that could have been easily treated under normal circumstances;
15 and

16 **WHEREAS**, the Japanese military imposed a regime of fear and violence to
17 maintain control over the Chamorro population. Beatings, torture, and executions were
18 common punishments for those suspected of disloyalty or resistance. The brutality
19 extended to public spectacles designed to instill fear, including beheadings and other
20 forms of execution; and

21 **WHEREAS**, one of the most harrowing accounts of this period is the story of
22 the Fena Massacre. In July 1944, as American forces began their invasion, Japanese
23 soldiers executed nearly fifty Chamorro men and boys in the Fena area. They were
24 bound, blindfolded, and led to their deaths in an attempt to prevent them from aiding
25 the American forces; Japanese soldiers also targeted women and children during this
26 tragic event; and

1 **WHEREAS**, the psychological impact of the occupation was profound. The
2 constant fear of violence, the loss of loved ones, and the daily struggle for survival left
3 deep emotional scars. Many Chamorros who lived through the occupation suffered from
4 long-term psychological trauma; and

5 **WHEREAS**, personal accounts from survivors provide a vivid and heartbreaking
6 picture of life during the occupation. Survivors describe the terror of nighttime raids,
7 the anguish of watching family members being beaten or killed, and the constant
8 struggle to find enough food to eat. Despite these hardships, many also recount acts of
9 quiet resistance, solidarity, and the small ways in which they tried to maintain their
10 dignity and humanity; and

11 **WHEREAS**, the book, "Families in the Face of Survival," offers a deeply
12 moving account of the personal experiences of wartime survivors. These stories provide
13 valuable insights into the resilience and courage displayed by the Chamorro people
14 during one of the darkest periods in their history; one excerpt from the book recounts
15 the harrowing experience of a young survivor Rosa Salas, who described the moment
16 her family was forcibly removed from their home: "*We were taken in the middle of the
17 night, with no time to gather our belongings. The fear in my mother's eyes was
18 something I will never forget. Yet, despite the terror, she held us close, whispering
19 words of comfort and strength*"; and

20 **WHEREAS**, another powerful testimony highlights the communal spirit and
21 solidarity that emerged among the Chamorro people during the occupation. Juan
22 Taitano recalls, "*In the camps, we learned to rely on each other. We shared what little
23 we had and supported one another through the darkest times. It was this sense of
24 community that helped us survive*"; and

25 **WHEREAS**, in the small, close-knit villages of Guam, the days of the Japanese
26 occupation were marked by fear, uncertainty, and hardship. Families were uprooted
27 from their homes and forced into internment camps, where the semblance of normal life

1 seemed a distant memory. Yet, amid the darkness, the Chamorro people discovered a
2 profound strength in their unity and in the enduring bonds of family; and

3 **WHEREAS**, Maria Taitano, a young girl during the war, remembered the
4 strength her family provided. *"In the darkest times, it was our family that kept us going.*
5 *My father, though frail, would always find a way to bring us hope. He used to say, 'As*
6 *long as we are together, we can face anything."* This sentiment was echoed throughout
7 the island, as families clung to each other for survival and solace; and

8 **WHEREAS**, Antonio Santos recounted how the Chamorro spirit remained
9 unbroken despite the brutal conditions imposed by the occupiers. *"We faced hunger,*
10 *fear, and pain, but we never lost our spirit. The Japanese soldiers tried to break us, but*
11 *they underestimated the strength of our community and our will to survive."* This
12 resilience was a testament to the enduring hope that liberation would one day come; and

13 **WHEREAS**, for Rosa Camacho, hope was found in the night sky. *"Every night,*
14 *we would look at the stars and dream of liberation. My grandmother used to tell us*
15 *stories of a free Guam, and those stories gave us the hope we needed to endure each*
16 *day."* These stories, passed down through generations, became a beacon of light in the
17 darkness, reminding the Chamorro people of a time before the war and promising a
18 future beyond it; and

19 **WHEREAS**, the calm presence of loved ones provided sanctuary amidst the
20 chaos. Julio Perez vividly remembered his mother's soothing lullabies. *"The fear was*
21 *overwhelming, but we learned to hide it well. My mother's calm demeanor was our*
22 *shield. She would sing lullabies to us, even when bombs were falling nearby, and her*
23 *voice was our sanctuary."* Her courage became a source of strength for her children, a
24 reminder that love could prevail even in the direst circumstances; and

25 **WHEREAS**, in the internment camps, the Chamorro people found strength in
26 solidarity. Concepcion Cruz described the sense of unity that emerged. *"In the*
27 *internment camps, we were all stripped of our identities, but it brought us closer. We*

1 *shared everything, from food to stories, and in those moments, we found strength in*
2 *each other.” This shared suffering forged an unbreakable bond among them,*
3 *transforming strangers into family; and*

4 **WHEREAS,** Felix Aguon spoke of the profound sacrifices made by his parents.
5 *“My parents gave up everything to keep us safe. They went hungry so we could eat and*
6 *faced punishment to protect us. Their sacrifices are the reason I am alive today.”* Such
7 acts of selflessness were common, as parents did everything in their power to shield
8 their children from the harsh realities of war; and

9 **WHEREAS,** Lydia Quinata emphasized the importance of cultural identity in
10 their survival. *“We survived because we never forgot who we were and where we came*
11 *from. Our culture, our traditions, and our faith carried us through the hardest times.*
12 *Remembering our past is essential for our future.”* These traditions and values provided
13 a foundation upon which the Chamorro people could rebuild their lives; and

14 **WHEREAS,** Carlos Flores, who was just a child during the war, recalled the
15 pervasive atmosphere of fear. *“As a child, I didn’t fully understand the war, but I*
16 *remember the constant fear and the way the adults would whisper at night. Despite*
17 *everything, they always made us feel loved and protected.”* The efforts of the adults to
18 shield the children from the horrors around them were a testament to their enduring love
19 and commitment; and

20 **WHEREAS,** Beatriz Mantanona spoke of the community’s resilience. *“The*
21 *entire village became our family. We looked out for one another, shared what little we*
22 *had, and found ways to celebrate life even in the midst of war. Our community’s*
23 *resilience was our greatest strength.”* This sense of communal support helped the
24 Chamorro people endure the many trials they faced; and

25 **WHEREAS,** Ramon Sablan reflected on the lessons learned from the war. *“The*
26 *war taught us the true meaning of strength and perseverance. It’s important for the*
27 *younger generations to understand our history, so they can appreciate the peace and*

1 *freedom we have today.*” His words serve as a reminder of the importance of
2 remembering the past to honor the sacrifices made and to cherish the hard-won peace;
3 and

4 **WHEREAS,** *“impottante este na estoria, estorian put i geran Guam. Ma atakka*
5 *i tano'-ta, nu i tropan i rising sun. I Chamorro manmasâpet, manma'anña yan*
6 *manmapuno' ni manailayi na taotao, hâlom liyang yan bokkongo' ~ this history is*
7 important because it tells about the war in Guam. Our land was attacked at sunrise. The
8 Chamorro people suffered torture and were killed by the enemy from their place of
9 hiding,” these are words in Jesusa “Susie” Arceo song entitled “*Geran Guam,*” which
10 stresses the importance of telling Guam’s war story. Through these narratives, the
11 experiences of the Chamorro people during World War II come to life, illustrating their
12 incredible resilience, courage, and unwavering hope. War Survivor Remembrance Day
13 stands as a testament to their enduring spirit, ensuring that their stories continue to
14 inspire and educate future generations; and

15 **WHEREAS,** the end of the Japanese occupation brought liberation, but the scars
16 of those three years remained. The resilience and solidarity shown by the Chamorro
17 people during this period became a cornerstone of their cultural identity. War Survivor
18 Remembrance Day, established by Guam Public Law 33-56, ensures that the memories
19 of these atrocities and the bravery of the survivors are honored and remembered; the
20 narrative of the Chamorro people during World War II is one of incredible resilience in
21 the face of unimaginable adversity. It is a story that highlights not only the suffering
22 they endured but also their unwavering spirit and the strength of their community.
23 Through remembrance and education, the legacy of their courage continues to inspire
24 and teach future generations; and

25 **WHEREAS,** *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* expresses its gratitude to all of Guam’s war
26 survivors and those who helped memorialize their stories; including teachers, artists,
27 writers, songwriters, those who submitted testimony to Congress, the Guam War

1 Survivors Memorial Foundation, the *Mañenggon* Memorial Foundation, the Mayors
2 Council of Guam, and many others, for ensuring that the sacrifices and legacy of
3 Guam’s “Greatest Generation” are preserved for future generations; and

4 **WHEREAS**, our island's war survivors are the true embodiment of resilience and
5 strength. Today, we come together to honor their fortitude and perseverance, which
6 have paved the way for the peaceful life we cherish. Though the pain of the past still
7 lingers, the legacy of our island's greatest generation teaches us that forgiveness helps
8 us heal from the scars of war. It allows us to rebuild and grow stronger as a community.
9 Let us never forget the struggles and sacrifices that have made us a more vibrant and
10 resilient people; now therefore, be it

11 **RESOLVED**, that of *I Mina'trentai Siette Na Liheslaturan Guåhan* does hereby,
12 on behalf of the people of Guam, recognize the observance of “War Survivor
13 Remembrance Day” on June 28, 2024, as part of the celebration of the Eightieth (80th)
14 Anniversary of Guam's Liberation, to honor and remember every survivor of Guam's
15 wartime atrocities for their inspiring courage and resilience; and be it further

16 **RESOLVED**, that the Speaker certify and the Legislative Secretary attest to, the
17 adoption hereof, and that copies of the same be thereafter transmitted to the Guam War
18 Survivors, our island’s “Greatest Generation”; and to the Honorable Lourdes A. Leon
19 Guerrero, *I Maga'hågan Guåhan*.

DULY AND REGULARLY ADOPTED BY I MINA'TRENTAI SIETTE NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN ON THE DAY OF JUNE 2024.