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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

1. Name of Property

historic name: TINTA MASSACRE SITE

other name/site number: TINTA (66-06-1223)

2. Location

street & number: ESPINOSA AVENUE

not for publication:     

city/town: MERIZO

vicinity: X

state: GU

county: MERIZO

code: 010

zip code: 96916

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: PRIVATE

Category of Property: SITE

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing

Noncontributing

ONE

ONE

TWO

     buildings  
     sites  
     structures  
     objects  
     Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A



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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification:

NO STYLE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Materials: foundation N/A roof N/A  
walls N/A other \_\_\_\_\_  
N/A

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: HISTORIC SITES \_\_\_\_\_.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : G,F

Areas of Significance: MILITARY  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period(s) of Significance: 1944

Significant Dates : JULY 15, 1944

Significant Person(s): N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. X See continuation sheet.

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreage of Property: HALF (1/2) ACRE

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing      Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>55</u>	<u>248360</u>	<u>1467490</u>	B	<u>55</u>	<u>248400</u>	<u>1467470</u>
C	<u>55</u>	<u>248370</u>	<u>1467420</u>	D	<u>55</u>	<u>248340</u>	<u>1467460</u>

\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Boundary lines are as indicated on the accompanying USGS map.

Boundary Justification: \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

The boundary of an half (1/2) acre is set to protect the integrity and the setting of the massacre site.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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Name/Title: Kenneth R. Perez/ Historian; Antonio E. Martinez, Jr./ Archeological Technician I; Alejandro B. Lizama/ Archeological Technician II

Organization: Guam Historic Preservation

Date: May 10, 1991

Street & Number: 490 Chalan Palasyo Rd.

Telephone: (671) 477-9620

City or Town: Agana Heights

State: GU ZIP: 96919

NPS Form 10-900-a

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

(8-86)

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The site of the Tinta Massacre is located at the base of the hills on the eastern edge of the Geus Valley. Unlike the massacre site at Faha, this site has not been marked out by concrete markers. The single commemorative marker on the site consists of a wooden cross placed in what is now a shallow gulley that run through the middle of the site.

The site is overgrown with heavy vegetation, with the exception of a 36 square foot area that is the gulley mentioned above.

The gulley is most likely the remains of the dugout cave. It is now largely filled in with soil run-off from the top of the hill.

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The site at Tinta meets criteria A for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, notwithstanding criteria consideration G. Tinta was the site of a massacre of civilians by Japanese troops six days prior to the liberation of the island on July 21, 1944. The site retains the same, natural setting that was present at the time of the event.

On the night of July 15, 1944, soldiers of the Japanese Imperial Army attempted the deliberate massacre of thirty people from the village of Merizo, Guam. In an area called Tinta, these soldiers succeeded in killing sixteen of the villagers, leaving the rest for dead.

Under the pretense of gathering a work crew, thirty men and women from Merizo were herded together and told to march to the site at Tinta. There they were told to rest for the night in a dugout cave located at the foot of the hill.

Soon after the villagers shuffled into the cave, the Japanese began lobbing hand grenades through the opening. Several the victims were members of some of Merizo's leading families. Among them was Mrs. Maria L. Mesa, a prominent pre-war educator.

According to one of the survivors, Manuel Charfauros, the soldiers were not satisfied with the results of the grenades and sought to ensure that no one was left alive. He recounts:

"At the signal from the officer the other soldiers entered the cave with their sabres to kill anyone left alive. Those who had survived the grenades pulled the bodies of the dead and wounded over their own for protection and in that way survived the butchering."

Despite the gruesome efforts of the Japanese, fourteen people did survive. However, the next day, July 16, 1944, the soldiers were even more thorough in their methods. In a place known as Faha, thirty more men from Merizo were led to an area and butchered. No one survived this massacre.

Obviously, the event itself is of significant importance not only to the people of Merizo, but to the people of Guam in general. The site holds value in its historic context and in its symbolic qualities as well. Such symbolic value allows the site to fall under criteria consideration "F". The site at Faha serves to represent the suffering and hardships that the Guamanian people were forced to endure during the Japanese occupation of the island.

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The sites of the massacres of U.S. Nationals on Guam represent some of the few places within current U.S. jurisdiction where civilians were so directly affected by the hostile acts of the Japanese during the war. As such, these sites should be considered as having a national level of significance as well as the obvious significance at the local and "state" levels.

The massacre at Tinta represents the suffering and hardships that the Guamanian people were forced to endure during the Japanese occupation of the island. It also became the lynchpin for two subsequent events, the massacre at Faha on July 16, and the rebellion at Atate on July 20.

Considering its association with an event that occurred during World War II, the site at Tinta falls under the criteria consideration "G" That is, it is a site that has achieved importance within the past fifty years. The event has had exceptional importance in all accounts of the events of the war on Guam.

The island of Guam remained under hostile occupation from Dec. 10, 1941 through Aug. 10, 1944 when the island was declared secured. In this period the people of Guam were forced to endure numerous hardships, many of which, it seemed to the people, did not have any bearing on the war effort.

As the tide of war turned against the Japanese, their once impregnable defensive perimeter began to inexorably recede. Guam, once considered as a safe zone by the Japanese, now became the front line. As the summer of 1944 moved closer, preparations for the inevitable American invasion continued at an even more frantic pace.

Lacking the machines and materials necessary for the construction of defensive positions, the work became increasingly labor intensive. That is the Japanese forced the local population into building the fortifications that would protect them from their liberators.

At that time, although Guam had been an American possession for over forty years, its people were not American citizens and as such were not protected by the Constitution. Nevertheless, the Guamanian people were quite patriotic and placed great faith in the United States.

During the occupation the Japanese had tried to eradicate any and all vestiges of Western culture on the island. Japanese language and culture were the rule and sought to define the newly renamed island of Omiya Jima. Any sympathy or inclination toward America, whether real or perceived, was dealt with quickly and severely.

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While many punishments were dealt out by the Japanese for perceived violations of law, some attacks on the Guamanians appear to be senseless and random. Yet, there is the appearance that the massacres seem to represent a Japanese plan to kill as many of the local population as possible before the American invasion.

As mentioned, there were many instances of brutal attacks on the local people. But certainly the most notorious in terms of numbers and in public recollection, were the massacres of 46 men and women at Tinta on July 15, 1944, and Faha on July 16, 1944.



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Palomo, Tony. An Island in Agony. Washington, D.C.: 1984.

Sanchez, Pedro C. Guam 1941-1944, Wartime Occupation and Liberation.  
Tamuning: 1983.

Carano, Paul and Pedro C. Sanchez. A Complete History of Guam. Rutland: 1964.

Owings, Kathleen R.W. (editor). The War Years on Guam: Narrative of the Chamorro  
Experince. Micronesia Area Research Center: 1981.

Guam Daily News. "Chamorro Sailor Tells His Story". p.30-31.  
Agana: 1969.

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National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91001720 Date Listed: 11/26/91

Tinta Massacre Site  
Property Name

Guam County Guam State

N/A  
Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*for* *Antoinette J. Lee*  
Signature of the Keeper

6/10/92  
Date of Action

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Amended Items in Nomination:

Statement of Significance: The level of significance is Statewide.

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DISTRIBUTION:  
National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

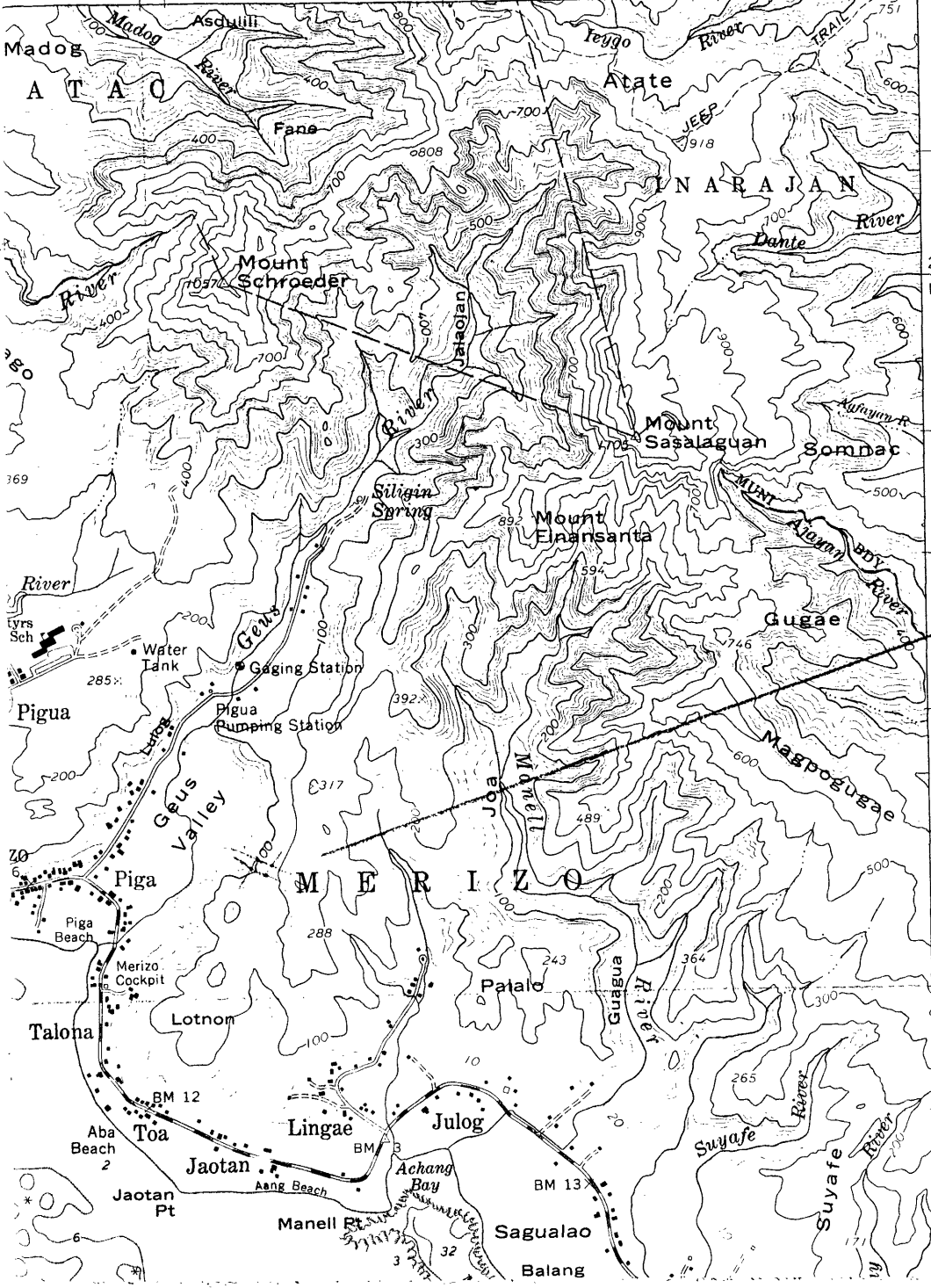
1223)

MERIZO QUADRANGLE  
MARIANA ISLANDS - ISLAND OF GUAM  
1:24 000 SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

(TALOFOFO)

248 <sup>000</sup>

44 000 METERS 144° 42' 13" 17' 30"



29 000 METERS

TINTA MASSACRE SITE

1467 <sup>000</sup>