SAIPAN, CNMI (Saipan Tribune, June 30, 2009) – The National Park Service announced Friday the award of a $49,967 grant that will be used to fund an archeological investigation of submerged World War II remains in the Tanapag lagoon.

The grant is part of some $1.36 million that is being released to help preserve and protect America’s significant battlefield lands.

The grant for the CNMI will be given to Ships of Exploration and Discovery Research, an underwater archaeology research institute founded in 1989. The institute will help develop an underwater maritime heritage trail in the Tanapag lagoon.

This year’s grants will also provide funding at endangered battlefields from the King Philip’s War (1675-1676), Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Second Seminole War, Mexican-American War, Civil War, World War II and various Indian Wars. Awards were given to projects in 23 states or territories entailing archeology, survey, mapping, documentation, planning, education and interpretation.

The Battle of Saipan, which was fought between American and Japanese forces in the Mariana Islands during World War II, was one of the most politically and militarily significant battles of the war. American capture of Saipan brought land-based, long range B-29 bombers within range of striking Japan.

Through archeological survey, and GIS mapping of Invasion Beach at Tanapag Lagoon, this project will identify and document submerged remains of the Battle of Saipan for use in the future development of the heritage trail.

These grants are administered by the National Park Service’s American Battlefield Protection Program. Federal, state, local, and tribal governments, nonprofit organizations, and educational institutions are eligible to apply for these battlefield grants each year. ABPP promotes the preservation of significant historic battlefields associated with wars on American soil.

For more on the American Battlefield Protection Program, please go to http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/abpp