

1ST LT. GEORGE O. BEALL, JR

October 31st, 1944 • United States Marine Corps, VMF-121 Squadron
FG-1A Corsair from the US base on Peleliu Island



THE MAN: The wreckage you see today is what remains of an FG-1A Corsair flown by 1st Lt. George O. Beall, Jr. of Binghamton, New York who was survived by his wife Ethel H. Beall.

THE MISSION: On the morning of October 31, 1944, George and twelve fellow pilots from the Marine fighter squadron VFM-121 took off from the island of Peleliu to bomb and strafe targets on Yap. The purpose of the mission was to destroy a soon-to-be-operational airfield on Gagil-Tomil. The island had been hit hard during the previous six months by US forces. Maj. William Clay (who would be killed on Yap the following month) led twelve planes on a 70 degree dive from 11,000 feet. Each plane took aim from the southwest end of the airstrip and then returned southward to rendezvous five miles south of the island. Six direct hits imposed serious damage along the length of the strip; however, Lt. Beall did not rejoin the formation at the rendezvous point. Major Clay searched the field for any trace of George but no visible evidence was found. American forces discovered George's wreckage and remains near the airfield at the end of the war.

THE PLANE: The FG-1A was a Goodyear version of the inverted gull-wing F4U-1 Corsair fighter. It was considered the most capable fighter bomber of World War II. The Japanese allegedly nicknamed it "Whistling Death" for the noise made by its wing-mounted air intakes. F4U and FG pilots claimed 2,140 air-combat victories against 189 losses to enemy aircraft. The Corsair bore the brunt of land-based fighter-bomber missions.

THE BASE: At the time of his final mission George's VFM-121 squadron was based on the island of Peleliu. The island was the site of the vicious Battle of Peleliu between September and November of 1944. U.S. Major General William Rupertus, commander of 1st Marine Division, predicted that the island would be secured within four days. But due to Japan's well-crafted fortifications and stiff resistance, the battle lasted more than two months. Peleliu remains one of the war's most controversial battles due to its questionable strategic value and high death toll. The battle was waning as 1st Lt. George O. Beall, Jr. took off on his fateful mission.

This marker is in memory of 1st Lt. George O. Beall, Jr. and all the other brave men who lost their lives on Yap Island during Word War II.

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