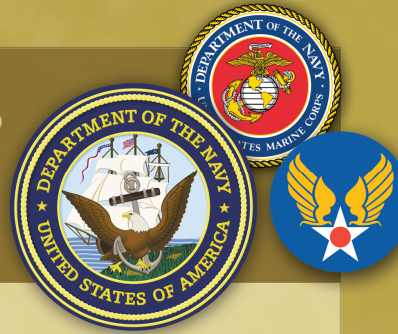


JAPANESE LIGHTHOUSE AT DALAP

July 27th, 1944 * US Navy, VB-2 Squadron
SB2C-1C Helldiver from the carrier USS Hornet (CV-8)



History of Japanese Lighthouse: During their occupation, the Japanese built lighthouses in three parts of the FSM territory—Puluwat (early 1930's), Chuuk (1937), and Dalap (early 1940's). All three were constructed of stone and concrete. The lighthouse complex at this site includes the toppled main structure, generator building, keeper's quarters, entry posts, water and food storage areas, and other abandoned support infrastructure used by the Japanese during its construction and short defense. During the war the site was protected by numerous anti-aircraft guns and troops.

Lighthouse Need: All lighthouses are aids to navigation, placed on or near navigable water to provide visual guidance to mariners. To guide ships to Yap, the Japanese strategically placed the Dalap lighthouse on the hilly eastern coast of the Gagil municipality. The lighthouse normally would have included a powerful flashing light but it is thought that the Japanese never made it operational.

Destruction of the Lighthouse: American forces started targeting the lighthouse in July 1944 and continued throughout 1945. It was a prominent Japanese landmark that was easy to identify from the air. It often served as a marker for American aircraft attacking Yap. The bullet holes you see in the lighthouse and the craters you see around it were created by American bombs dropped by a variety of aircraft including F4U Corsair, F6F Hellcats, TBM-1C Avengers and SB2C-1C Helldivers. Although numerous attempts were made by American planes to destroy the lighthouse, it was the Japanese who finally took matters into their own hands by blowing it up with dynamite. This stopped the continuous bombing and shelling by the American forces.

American Losses: On July 27, 1944, an American naval taskforce descended upon Yap and launched a large attack of fighters, dive bombers and torpedo planes. Four SB2C-1 Helldivers from the USS Hornet were sent to attack the lighthouse. A few of them scored near misses north of the structure. One plane, flown by Ens. George M. Armbruster Jr. and gunner Arm3c. Harold Billings, lost part of its wing during a glide bombing approach. It went into a spin and crashed a short distance from the lighthouse. Remains of the two crew members were located near the crash site after the war and were returned to the US to be buried at Zachary Taylor National Cemetery in Louisville, Kentucky. Numerous other American planes tried to destroy the lighthouse before it was toppled by the Japanese in late 1944. Today the site is much like it was before the war, covered with papaya trees and dense foliage. The toppled lighthouse ruins and other structures lay quietly among the jungle, masking their turbulent past.

THIS SITE WAS RECOVERED AND MAINTAINED BY TODAI YOUTH CLUB OF YAP.



The Wreckage at Dalap

