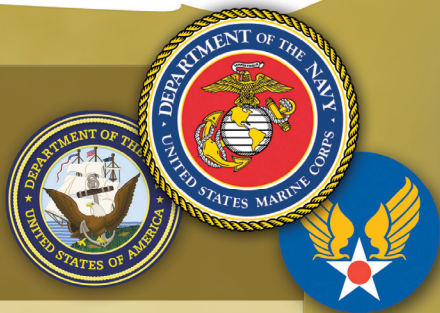


October 24th, 1944

## 1ST LT. GIRVIS HALTOM, JR.

United States Marine Corps, VFM-122 Squadron  
FG-1 Corsair from the US base on Peleliu Island



**The Man:** The wreckage you see today is what remains of an FG-1 Corsair flown by 1st. Lt. Girvis Haltom, Jr. of Arkansas after his final mission. On the morning of October 24th, 1944, Girvis and seven fellow pilots from the Marine fighter squadron VFM-122 took off from the island of Peleliu to bomb and strafe targets on Yap. The purpose of the mission was to insure the continued inoperative status of the Yap airstrip. The island had been hit hard over the previous six months by high-flying, long-range B-24 bombers of the US Army Air Force as well as raids from US carrier aircraft. Both airstrips were out of commission and few buildings remained standing on the island. After dropping bombs on the main airfield and revetment area Girvis and his wingman, Ed Zolnier, circled the island looking for anti-aircraft positions to attack. They approached low and fast from the south while firing at gun positions. At 600 feet, Girvis's plane was struck by anti-aircraft fire. His plane was witnessed in a slow roll to the right before it crashed and exploded. After the war 1st. Lt. Girvis Haltom, Jr.'s remains were found near this site and returned to Stephens, Arkansas for burial.

**The Plane:** The FG-1 was a Goodyear-manufactured version of the inverted gull-winged F4U-1 Corsair fighter. It was the most capable land and carrier-based fighter bomber of World War II. The Japanese allegedly nicknamed it "Whistling Death" for the noise made by airflow through the 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 fighter-bomber missions, dropped 15,621 tons of bombs during the war (70% of total bombs dropped by fighters during the war).

**The Base:** Girvis's VFM-122 Squadron was based on the island of Peleliu when he was shot down. Peleliu is one of the islands in the nation of Palau. The island was the site of the vicious Battle of Peleliu between September and November 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 for over two months. It remains one of the war's most controversial battles, due to its questionable strategic value and high death toll. The fighting continued on Peleliu as 1st Lt. Girvis Haltom took off to bomb Yap on his fateful mission.

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



*Girvis W. Haltom, Jr.*



**A man is not dead unless he is forgotten!**

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