

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

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**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

**NRIS Reference Number:**99001231

**Date Listed:**10/11/99

**Property Name:** Breakers Point Naval Guns

**County:** Tutuila Island, Eastern

**State:** American Samoa

**Multiple Name:** N/A

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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.

Patrick Andrews  
**Signature of the Keeper**

10/18/99  
**Date of Action**

=====  
**Amended Items in Nomination:**

(See attached comments)

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**DISTRIBUTION:**

**National Register property file**

**Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD (continued)**

**NRIS Reference Number:99001231**

**Date Listed:10/11/99**

**Property Name: Breakers Point Naval Guns**

**County: Tutuila Island, Eastern**

**State: American Samoa**

**Multiple Name: N/A**

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**Attached Comments:**

In Section 3 (State/Federal Agency Certification), no level of significance is marked. An amendment is made to add a **national** level of significance. A national level of significance is appropriate because of the National Historic Landmark status of Blunts Point Battery, located on the west side of Pago Pago Harbor across from the Breakers Point Naval Guns. Blunts Point and Breakers Point have the same design and were installed after the dispatch of the 7th Marine Defense Battalion to Pago Pago in December 1940. According to the NHL nomination:

The battalion was a composite infantry-artillery unit with a strength of only 25 officers and 392 enlisted men. The naval governor received authorization to construct coastal defenses and anti-aircraft guns were already in storage at the naval station. The 6-inch guns were installed in two batteries, at Blunts (Tulutulu) Point on the western side of Pago Pago Harbor and at Breakers Point on the eastern side. The anti-aircraft guns were placed mostly on the hills behind Pago Pago, and a number of 155 mm guns mounted to guard against enemy landings to the east and west of Pago Pago Harbor.

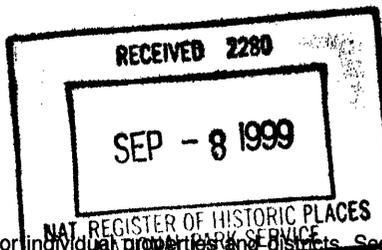
The Breakers Point Naval Guns were an important part of the Navy's defense system to protect Samoa--the only link at that time from the United States to Australia and New Zealand. The Breakers and Blunts Point batteries are rare in that they were left *in situ* and stand testament to the war efforts in the South Pacific.

Minimal documentation is provided in this nomination. Further and more in-depth documentation must be provided in order to consider the Breakers Point Naval Guns for NHL designation.

In Section 8 (Statement of Significance), Criterion D is marked. While most often applied to archeological districts and sites, Criterion D can also apply to structures that contain important information. In order for these properties to be eligible under Criterion D, they themselves must be, or must have been, the principal source of the important information. No documentation is provided in the nomination that indicates if the Breakers Point Naval Guns are the principal source of information on America's military activities (the corresponding Area of Significance) during WW II on American Samoa. An amendment is made to delete Criterion D from the nomination.

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National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



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This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Breakers Point Naval Guns

other names/site number Island defenses, Tutuila, Breakers Point

2. Location

street & number Breakers Point  not for publication

city or town Lauli'i  vicinity

state American Samoa code AS county Sua code 001 zip code 96799

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 8/13/99  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

American Samoa Historic Preservation Office  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Patrick Andrews Date of Action 10/18/99

Breakers Point Guns  
Name of Property

Sua CO., American Samoa  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DEFENSE/Fortification

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century American  
Other: military armaments

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls \_\_\_\_\_

roof \_\_\_\_\_

other METAL/Steel

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Breakers Point Guns  
Name of Property

Sua Co., American Samoa  
County and State

### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

#### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

#### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

#### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

MILITARY

#### Period of Significance

World War II

#### Significant Dates

1940-46

#### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

#### Cultural Affiliation

Euro-American

#### Architect/Builder

U.S. Navy/Utah Construction Co.

#### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:



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Sua Co., AS

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The Breakers Point gun battery is located atop Papatele Ridge, on the east side of the entrance to Pago Pago Harbor, which nearly bisects American Samoa's principal island of Tutuila. The two six-inch 50-caliber guns, which were emplaced in 1941, are Mark 8 Model 2 naval rifles. This model was introduced in 1902, and was used as secondary armament on *Pennsylvania* and *Tennessee* class battleships and *St. Louis* class cruisers. By 1940, 6-inch guns had been replaced by 5-inch, 38-caliber rapid fire models, and thus the obsolete 6-inch rifles were available for coastal defense purposes. The guns at Breakers Point were built in 1907 by the Midvale Steel Company in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Each gun weighs 19,482 pounds. Some parts are missing, and the guns are rusted; otherwise, they are in surprisingly good condition. Their breaches are frozen open, and they are inoperable. They are sited at approximately 200 feet above sea level, and are on private (i.e. communal) agricultural land (bananas) belonging to the Tiapula family, under the control of High Talking Chief Tiapula Imo Mamea.

The emplacements are circular concrete platforms surrounded by concrete parapets four feet high and 25 feet 6 inches in diameter, with two-inch drain holes located where the parapets meet the floor. The design is the same as the Blunts Point gun emplacement on the west side of the harbor. (This gun was entered on the *National Register of Historic Places* in 1973, and was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1987). The emplacements are dry, with some vegetation growing within the gun pits. Concrete bunkers, which are entered through heavy metal doors, open off the inland sides of the walls into the mountain; steps lead downward from these into ammunition storage vaults. The guns were emplaced in August, 1941 by a unique method. Alex Jonsson, an Icelander who supervised the Utah Construction Company's activities in American Samoa, had ordered steel rails and small railway flatcars from the U.S. mainland. These would be used to build a miniature railway, which would be powered by a 'donkey engine', connected to the flatcars by a system of cables and pulley wheels. The ten-ton guns would be secured to the flatcars, and pulled up the mountain to their sites. As the threat of war with Japan

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drew closer, Jonsson grew impatient waiting for the rails and cars to arrive. He therefore engaged the services of Samoan master carpenters, who carved temporary rails and flatcars (with flanged wheels) from *ifi lele* (*Intsia bijuga*), a very dense Samoan hardwood. This wooden railway was emplaced, connected to the engine and pulleys, and used to move the guns. When the steel railway parts arrived, they replaced the *ifi lele* system.

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The Breakers Point battery in American Samoa is symbolic of the grim months following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, when the Japanese advances in the Pacific appeared to be unstoppable. Samoa was a vital link in the route from the United States to Australia and New Zealand, and Japan's 1938 Basic War Plan called for its seizure. There was considerable evidence in early 1942 that Japan was preparing to seize Samoa, especially after its advance into the Gilbert Islands to the north and New Britain to the west. The United States rushed the 2nd Marine Brigade to strengthen American Samoa's defenses and the 3rd Brigade to defend Western Samoa and the Wallis Islands. American Samoa became the headquarters of the Samoan Defense Group, which was the largest Defense Group in the Pacific, and included American and Western Samoa, the Wallis and Ellice Islands, French Polynesia and Tonga. It also housed the Marines' Advanced Jungle Warfare Training Center, and was the largest Marine Corps installation in the Pacific Ocean.

After the Battles of Coral Sea and Midway, the threat of a Japanese invasion diminished and then disappeared. Samoa became a strategic backwater, but its large naval hospital (Mobile Base Hospital No. 3 ["MOB 3"]) and destroyer repair base were significant rear area facilities. In 1944, the Breakers Point battery, and its sister installation across the harbor at Blunts Point, were allowed to deteriorate. Unlike most other Pacific coastal guns, which were dismantled or shoved into the ocean, both the Breakers and Blunts Point batteries were left *in situ*. Today, these extremely rare guns stand silent guard over the entrance to Pago Pago Harbor--symbols of America's commitment to its only possession in the southern hemisphere.

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9. Major Bibliographic References:

Anonymous:

"History of the First Samoan Battalion, United States Marine Corps Reserve." N.p., June 28, 1945. Typescript: copy on file at the American Samoa Historic Preservation Office, Department of Parks and Recreation, American Samoa Government, Pago Pago, American Samoa, 96799. (Hereinafter cited as "Copy on file at ASHPO").

"Report of Inspection of Tutuila by a Board of Officers Representing the Navy Department, Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd, Senior Member, May 30-31, 1942." N.p., n.d. Copy on file at ASHPO.

Bates, First Sergeant Cecil R., USMC. "The Fita-Fita Guard." *Leatherneck*, October, 1940.

Burke, Lt Cmdr John, USNR. "The United States Naval History of the Samoan Defense Group." Document 386. Pago Pago, American Samoa: Headquarters, South Pacific Area and Force, 1945.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The United States Naval History of Tutuila, American Samoa." Document 387. Pago Pago, American Samoa: Headquarters, South Pacific Area and Force, 1945.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The United States Naval History of Western Samoa." Document 388. Pago Pago, American Samoa: Headquarters, South Pacific Area and Force, 1945.

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The above are declassified microfilmed typescript histories which are held at the U.S. Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C. Copies on file at ASHPO.

Coletta, Paolo E. (ed.). *United States Navy and Marine Corps Bases Overseas*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985.

Condit, Kenneth W., Gerald Diamond and Edwin T. Turnbladh. *Marine Corps Ground Training in World War II*. Historical Branch, G-3, Headquarters, United States Marine Corps. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956.

Denfeld, D. Colt. "American Samoa: From Coaling Station to World War II Outpost." 1988. Typescript on file at ASHPO.

Hough, Lt Col Frank O., Major Verle E. Ludwig and Henry I. Shaw, Jr. *History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II. Vol. I: Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal*. Historical Branch, G-3; Headquarters, United States Marine Corps. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1958.

Hudson, Jack C. and Kay G. "American Samoa in World War II." Seabrook, Texas: Cultural Resource services, 1994. Copy on file at ASHPO.

Kennedy, Joseph. "A Report Concerning Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) Investigations in American Samoa." Haleiwa, Hawaii: Archaeological Consultants of Hawaii, 1985. Copy on file at ASHPO.

Metzger, Lt Gen Louis, USMC. "Duty Beyond the Seas." *Marine Corps Gazette* 66 (1): pp. 28-37, 1982.

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Parsons, Captain Robert P., USN, MC. *MOB 3: A Naval Hospital in a South Sea Jungle*. Indianapolis: Bobb-Merrill, 1945.

Sherrod, Robert. *History of Marine Corps Aviation in World War II*. Washington, D.C.: Combat Forces Press, 1952.

Thompson, Erwin N. "Sailors and Satraps in Samoa." 1987. Typescript on file at ASHPO.

\_\_\_\_\_. "U.S. Naval Station Tutuila." *National Register of Historic Places* Nomination Form for the U.S. Naval Station Tutuila Historic District. 1988. Copy on file at ASHPO.

U.S. Navy, Bureau of Yards and Docks. *Building the Navy's Bases in World War II: History of the Bureau of Yards and Docks and the Civil Engineer Corps, 1940-46*. 2 vols. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947.

Woodbury, David O. *Builders for Battle: How the Pacific Naval Air Bases Were Constructed*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1946.

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The property is a semi-circular parcel at the tip of Papatele ridge approximately 500 feet long and 100 feet wide at the widest point.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes the terrace that was cut out of the ridge to construct the gun emplacements.

