

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



917

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Poloa  
other names/site number Poloa Beach (AS-34-083), Lealataua County, Tutuila Island, American Samoa; Sites TF8, TF10 and TF11 (from Kennedy et al., 2005); and American Samoa LUPA # 12-1135-L, from Project Notification Review System (PNRS) in 2012.

## 2. Location

street & number Poloa Beach  not for publication  
city or town Poloa  vicinity of Poloa  
State American Samoa Code AS county Lealataua code 003 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 at the following level(s) of significance:  
 national  statewide  local

David J. Herdich, SHPO 9/18/2012  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

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

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**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

**NRIS Reference Number:** 12000917

**Date Listed:** 11/14/2012

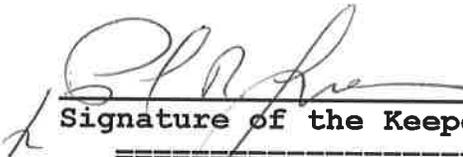
Poloa Defensive Fortifications  
**Property Name**

Western AS  
**County State**

N/A  
**Multiple Name**

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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.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of the Keeper**

11/14/12  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date of Action**

=====

**Amended Items in Nomination:**

**Name:**

The Historic name is revised to read: *Poloa Defensive Fortifications*  
[The name better describes the physical nature and character of the nominated resources.]

**Significance:**

The nomination is amended to add *Engineering* as an Area of Significance under Criterion C.  
[Properties nominated under NR Criterion C, as embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, are usually listed under either the area of Architecture or Engineering.]

The nomination is amended to add *Archeology-Historic/Non-Aboriginal* as an Area of Significance under Criterion D.  
[Properties nominated under NR Criterion D, as embodying, or likely to embody, information important in prehistory or history, are usually listed under the area of Archeology.]

The Period of Significance is amended to read: *1941—1945* and the Significant Dates are deleted.  
[The period of significance refers to the specific year or span of dates in which a property attained the significance qualifying it for listing. In order to correspond to the NRIS database format these must reflect specific dates rather than general terms, such as "World War II." Significant Dates usually mark specific events or construction activities. Properties with a period of significance spanning many years may not have any specific dates of significance.]

Criteria Consideration B does not need to be checked, as the removed cover is only a small element of the larger site and is still found in general proximity to its initial location within the nominated beachfront area.

**Geographical Data:**

The verbal boundary description is revised to add a reference to the attached (revised) sketch map. *The site comprises one (1) feature and three (3) structures within a site spanning approximately 40 meters N/S by 575 meters S/N-NW along Poloa Beach. The area is demarcated on the attached sketch marked as running from Point A [UTM 2 517860 8417179] to Point B [UTM 2 517965 8417560].* [The original verbal boundary description provided no geographical reference points with which to pinpoint the bounded 40m x 575m beach area, while the site plan was obviously intended for a different purpose and offers confusing information on project site and includes non-historic resources.]

The UTM coordinates provided in the nomination do not appear to correspond to the nominated area. Since the nominated area is less than 10 acres two single points will suffice:

Point A 2L 517860 8417179

Point B 2L 517965 8417560

These clarifications were confirmed with the AS HPO office.

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**DISTRIBUTION:**

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

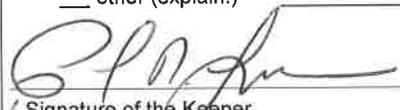
Poloa Beach, Western Tutuila  
 Name of Property

Lealataua  
American Samoa  
 County and State

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  determined eligible for the National Register  
 determined not eligible for the National Register  removed from the National Register  
 other (explain: \_\_\_\_\_)

  
 Signature of the Keeper

11/14/2012  
 Date of Action

**5. Classification**

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

- Private  
 public – Local  
 public – State  
 public – Federal

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

- building(s)  
 District  
 Site  
 Structure  
 Object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		Buildings
1		Sites
3		Structures
1		Objects
5		<b>Total</b>

**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  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MID 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN

Other: World War II Fortification

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE, METAL

walls: CONCRETE, METAL

\_\_\_\_\_

roof: CONCRETE, METAL

other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

**Summary Paragraph**

The Poloa Site is located along the coast at the village of Poloa in western Tutuila, the largest island in American Samoa. The site is associated with three features comprising multisided, flat-topped, pillbox observation posts. These fortifications were built during the World War II era and comprise unique architecture, thin stanchions supporting a flattened concrete ceiling. These defensive fortifications are atypical of other defensive fortifications in the evidenced during this period including the robust domed-top pillboxes throughout the island such as those discovered at Afao. The material paucity that characterize the observation posts at Poloa prompts questions as to why these fortifications were constructed differently compared to other defensive architecture throughout Tutuila during World War II.

**Narrative Description**

The Poloa Site (AS-34-083) comprises three defensive fortifications and an artifact, the isolated top of one of the fortifications, from World War II. The site is located along the coast at the village of Poloa in western Tutuila, the largest island in American Samoa.

The expanse of the site is located between 8417179 N, 517860 E and 8416989 N, 518265 E using WGS-84, NAD 83, Zone 2L and measures approximately 40 meters north/south and around 575 meters east/west at an elevation between five to ten meters above sea level.

The features at the Poloa Site are from World War II and comprise "multisided, flat-topped pillbox observations posts", a feature description established by Kennedy (*et al.*, 2005: 129, Figure 109). The three defensive fortifications at Poloa feature a 360 degree opening with three stanchions, which measure 29 cm in width, comprising concrete annealed with local stones over iron rods. The fortifications are emplaced to the rear of the beach area. The covering of each fortification comprised a twelve-sided concrete roof of around 10 to 15 centimeters thick. All three fortifications are in-situ and their locations remain fixed. The top of Feature 3, the northernmost structure at the site, is located 8 meters at 195 degrees from the base of the structure.

The Poloa constructions are architecturally slimmer than a majority of the defensive fortifications on Tutuila. It is noteworthy that 15 of the 16 observations posts on the Island are located on the western coasts of Tutuila and the most fragile forms of these constructions are found at Poloa (*Ibid.* 2005: 120-128). The structures at Poloa are materially more meager compared to the domed-topped pillboxes that are the most prevalent construction throughout Tutuila (see Afao Pillbox, Continuation Sheet, page 15). Also, amongst the population of observations posts, the stanchions, covers, and overall construction of the observation posts at Poloa are more meager. A comparable feature at Afono has stanchions measuring 40 cm in width with a concrete cover between 20 and 24 cm in height (see Afono Observation Post, Continuation Sheet, page 16).

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The gracile forms of defensive fortifications at Poloa might indicate defense-in-depth tactical considerations by Marine Corps units at this locale during World War II. Manuscripts from World War II state that the organization of Tutuila defenses were designed to attrite invading forces as they progressed into the interior of the island. A selection of the Marine tactics from the War are noted below:

*"(a) Positions will be organized as follows:*

- (1) Local positions back of each beach with the view to isolating the beach in case the beach defenses are overrun.*
- (2) Switch positions to localize a successful landing involving several adjacent beaches.*
- (3) Inland defensive positions to confine successful landings involving major positions of the eastern and western areas [of Tutuila Island].*
- (4) A final defensive position organized in depth and capable of withstanding any attack from any direction.*
- (5) Delaying positions will be located where possible between any of the above positions (Hough et al., 1958)."*

A "Marine headquarters building" and two rectangular concrete structures were photographed on the ridge above the coast at Poloa (Hudson, J.C. and K.G. Hudson 1994: 63-69). Although the exact proveniences of these constructions were not recorded, these fortifications are on the ridge spur that parallels the road descending towards Poloa (see Site Plan, Continuation Sheet, page 1). The presence of these interior fortifications, together with the coastal structures in this nomination, supports the implementation of defense-in-depth tactics by the U.S. Marines during World War II. That there were additional fortifications behind the initial three coastal structures at Poloa might explain the latter's' architectural paucity compared to other constructions throughout Tutuila.

The Poloa site is partly enveloped by thick vegetation, leaf litter and canopy that most likely covered the area during World War II. The site incorporates a blending of ecological zones from a barren rocky coastline with large sand granules to a mixed disturbed upland forest consisting primarily of tropical plant life including *Barringtonia* spp., *Rhus taitensis*, *Adenantha pavonina*, *Cordyline frutcosa*, and other species.

The excellent preservation of these defensive fortifications, which remain in their original positions, provides compelling evidence for the range of building designs of Marine Corps and Navy defensive structures during World War II and facilitates questions concerning the logistical and tactical factors, which affected their construction.

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**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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MILITARY  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

World War II  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1941 – 1945  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

Euro-American  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

United States Marine Corps, Utah Construction  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Period of Significance (justification)**

Poloa Beach features unique World War II era fortifications in American Samoa.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

Of the three structures at Poloa, only Defensive Fortification 3 (DF3) exhibits its concrete cover removed from the main structure and is located nearby the original edifice. Although the defensive fortifications were impacted by a tsunami in

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2009, the surge only affected DF3. In addition, all Poloa structures remain at their original locales, their architectural value elucidates a range of previously undocumented martial fortifications, and these mostly intact concrete structures derive from an important historical event (World War II). Moreover, the observation platforms continue to evidence the relationship of the properties with their former surroundings, as an initial line of defense along the coast, built to resist an amphibious invasion by Japanese forces. Furthermore, the concrete cover of DF3 was moved well after its period of significance in World War II, by the tsunami of September, 2009. This event impacted the entirety of Tutuila Island.

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Poloa Beach Site is an excellent site for inclusion to the National Register of Historic Places. Reasons justifying this proposed addition to the National Register include that it qualifies under evaluations for three criteria of significance (A, C, and D). In addition, the architectural features that comprise these multisided, flat-topped, pillbox observation posts at Poloa exhibit the thinnest concrete covers and the most gracile concrete stanchions. The uniqueness of the features prompt discussions as to the reasoning of U.S. Marine and Naval commanders for building such meager defensive works at Poloa when surrounding coastal zones contained thicker and more sturdy domed-top pillboxes or observation posts, with more robust stanchions and tops.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Poloa Site satisfies **Criteria A** because it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of history. The Site exhibits unique architecture, which corresponds to historic martial communiqués, and is part of an island-wide American defensive network constructed during World War II.

The Poloa Site satisfies **Criteria C** because the World War II defensive fortifications embody distinctive characteristics in the Pacific. The material meagerness of the defensive structures at Poloa is different from most comparative structures build during this era. This paucity prompts inquiries as to the causes behind these architectural variations.

The Poloa Site satisfies **Criteria D** because of its research potential. The unique World War II architecture at Poloa proffers insights to the strategies and tactics of U.S. Marine and Navy defensive preparations on Tutuila and in the Pacific. This nomination also facilitates questions as to the interplay between the archaeology of historic structures and military history studies during World War II in the Pacific

**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

In the months following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, on December 7, 1941, a large part of the American war effort in the Pacific centered on defense preparations and especially in American Samoa that was seen as a crucial link between America and its allies in New Zealand and Australia.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Anonymous. 1942. *Report of Inspection of Tutuila by a Board of Officers Representing the Navy Department, Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd, Senior Member.*

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Hudson, J.C. and J.C. Hudson. 1994. *American Samoa in World War II*. Seabrook, Texas: Cultural Resource Services.

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Kennedy, J. 2000. *The Early History of Roads in Amerika Samoa*. Haleiwa, Hawaii: Archaeological Consultants of Hawaii. (Located in ASHPO).

Kennedy, J., A. Bevan, and M. Elmore. 2005. *Results of an Archaeological Survey and Archival Research of WWII Coastal Defenses on Tutuila Island, American Samoa*. Haleiwa, Hawaii: Archaeological Consultants of the Pacific, Inc.

Kennedy, J., A. Amira, S. Ireland, C. Liebhardt, and E. Yoshifuku. 2010. *An Archaeological Phase I Inventory Level Survey For The Fagatogo/Utulei Ridge Project Area, Ma'Oputasi County, Island of Tutuila, American Samoa, Volume I*. Haleiwa, Hawaii: Archaeological Consultants of the Pacific, Inc.

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Kennedy, J., A. Amira, S. Ireland, C. Liebhardt, and E. Yoshifuku. 2010. *An Archaeological Phase I Inventory Level Survey For The Fagatogo/Utulei Ridge Project Area, Ma'Oputasi County, Island of Tutuila, American Samoa, Volume II.* Haleiwa, Hawaii: Archaeological Consultants of the Pacific, Inc.

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

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): AS-34-083

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 4.36 acres  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 2L 517860 8417179  
Zone Easting Northing

3 2L 518265 8416989  
Zone Easting Northing

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2 2L 517855 8417182  
Zone Easting Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The site comprising one (1) feature and three (3) structures, which span an area of approximately 40 meters N/S and 575 meters S/N-NW along Poloa Beach.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Acreage incorporates defensive fortifications from World War II.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Dr. Joel D. Klenck, Principal Investigator & Territorial Archaeologist  
Organization American Samoa Historic Preservation Office / PRC, Inc. Date September 18, 2012  
street & number 6800 Bird Road, #381 telephone (786) 277-4844  
city or town Miami, FL 33155 state Am. Samoa zip code 96799  
e-mail jklenck@paleorc.com

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets:** (See attached Continuation Sheets).
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items).

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Poloa Beach  
City or Vicinity: Poloa  
County: Lealataua State: American Samoa  
Photographer: Joel D. Klenck  
Date Photographed: 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Sixteen (16) photographs comprising a site plan (sketch map) of site, World War II maps and previously known defensive fortifications, and the three constructions at Poloa. Also, included are two

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photographs of comparative defensive structures, at Afao and Afono, typifying the majority of World War II fortifications on Tutuila, which exhibit greater architectural robusticity.

See Attached

- 1 of 16: Site Plan of Poloa Beach Site, Western Tutuila, American Samoa.
- 2 of 16: Poloa Beach Site, Western Tutuila, American Samoa.
- 3 of 16: Map of Tutuila exhibiting U.S. Marine Corps and Navy locations during World War II and previously recorded defensive fortifications (U.S. Naval Survey; Comments From November 18, 1941).
- 4 of 16: Map of Tutuila exhibiting U.S. Marine Corps and Navy locations during World War II and previously recorded defensive fortifications (U.S. Navy Map 16, 1944).
- 5 of 16: Map of Tutuila exhibiting U.S. Marine Corps and Navy locations during World War II and previously recorded defensive fortifications (U.S. Navy Map 21, 1944).
- 6 of 16: Map of Tutuila exhibiting U.S. Marine Corps and Navy locations during World War II and previously recorded defensive fortifications (from Kennedy et al., 2005: 2, Figure 1).
- 7 of 16: Diagram of Multisided, Flat Topped Pillbox Observation Post (from Kennedy et al., 2005: 129, Figure 109).
- 8 of 16: Diagram of Round, Domed Top Pillbox with Gunslit (from Kennedy et al., 2005: 130, Figure 110).
- 9 of 16: World War II Defensive Fortification 1.
- 10 of 16: World War II Defensive Fortification 1 focused on stanchions.
- 11 of 16: World War II Defensive Fortification 2.
- 12 of 16: World War II Defensive Fortification 2 focused on stanchions.
- 13 of 16: World War II Defensive Fortification 3.
- 14 of 16: World War II Defensive Fortification 3, of isolated top.
- 15 of 16: World War II Defensive Fortification, domed pillbox at Afao exhibiting robust construction and limited sights for crew served weapons.
- 16 of 16: World War II Defensive Fortification, observation post at Afono exhibiting robust stanchions, cover, and construction.

**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

Name Village of Poloa  
street & number N/A Telephone (684) 770-9512  
city or town Village of Poloa Island of Tutuila state Am. Samo zip code 96799

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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European influence in the Samoa Islands began in the nineteenth century, with the arrival of the Reverend John Williams of the London Missionary Society at Sapapali'i, Savai'i (now in Western Samoa), on August 24, 1830. Nine years later, Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, USN, commanding the United States Exploring Expedition, arrived in Pago Pago Harbor aboard *USS Vincennes*, and reported on the excellence of the harbor as a suitable deep-water, protected refuge for ships. Three decades later, in 1872, Commander Richard Meade, USN, arrived in Pago Pago aboard *USS Narragansett*, seeking rights for a coaling station. On March 2 of that year, he and Paramount Chief Mauga Manuma signed the first American-

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Samoan treaty at Gagamoe, at the western end of Pago Pago Harbor. The US Congress failed to ratify this treaty; subsequently, clashes occurred between American landing forces and Samoans.

England and Germany were also interested in acquiring rights in the Samoas. Tensions grew among three nations; war was a strong possibility, and might have occurred had it not been for the "Great Apia Hurricane of 1889", which destroyed several American, German and English warships in Apia Harbor, in Western Samoa. Ten years later, the Treaty of Berlin was signed, recognizing German control of 'Upolu, Savai'i and adjacent western islands, and American hegemony in Tutuila and Manu'a Islands. In return for this, Germany recognized Britain's suzerainty in the Solomon Islands and relinquished their interest in Tonga.

On April 17, 1900, the principal chiefs of Tutuila signed the Deed of Cession, which recognized American control over their island. Four year later, on July 16, 1904, the Manu'a Islands, located to the east of Tutuila, were similarly ceded. Tutuila and Manu'a then became known as "American Samoa." The U.S. Navy had earlier established the "U.S. Naval Station Tutuila" in Pago Pago Harbor, and its commanding officer was designated Governor of American Samoa. The first land defenses for the Naval station were built during World War I, when fears of German raiders in the Pacific led to the installation of a 3-pounder and 3-inch gun. Both guns were emplaced on Blunts Point, on the south side of Pago Pago Harbor, across from Breakers Point.

The 1920s were peaceful in American Samoa, but tensions began to grow between the United States and the Empire of Japan in the 1930s. Japan annexed Manchuria in 1931 and invaded China proper in 1937. By the early 1940s, the situation had worsened to such a degree that the Marine Corps' 7<sup>th</sup> Defense Battalion, a composite infantry-artillery unit with an initial strength of only 25 officers and 392 men, was dispatched to American Samoa, arriving in Pago Pago Harbor on March 1, 1941. Later that year, a detachment of the Utah Construction Company arrived to begin construction of the concrete fortifications for the defense of Tutuila, as part of the Pacific Naval Air Bases (PNAB) program. These defenses were constructed in accordance with a plan written in 1940 by Marine Corps Captain Alfred R. Pefley, and were completed in December, 1941. Due to these measures, American Samoa was much better prepared for defense than other American Pacific possessions such as Guam and Wake Island, which were captured by the Japanese in December of 1941 following their attack on Pearl Harbor.

After striking Pearl Harbor, Japan occupied Guam, Wake Island and the Gilbert Islands, and invaded the Philippines, Burma, Malaya, Thailand, Java, and New Britain. By early 1942, only the supply route through the South Pacific to Australia remained in Allied control. Admiral Ernest J. King, Chief of Naval Operations and Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet, ordered Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, to maintain communications with Australia "at all costs", by protecting the Hawaii-Samoa line. The concern was that Japanese forces would affect this route from their newly captured bases in the proximate Gilbert Islands.

The United States responded to this crisis by organizing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Brigade at Camp Pendleton, California. The brigade comprised the 8<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the 10<sup>th</sup> Marines, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Defense Battalion. The Brigade sailed from San Diego on January 6, 1942, aboard Matson liners *Lurline*, *Matsonia*, and *Monterey*, escorted by the aircraft carriers *USS Enterprise* and *USS Yorktown*. Meanwhile, the 7<sup>th</sup> Defense Battalion maintained its defensive positions on Tutuila. During this period, the First Samoan Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, was ordered into active duty. The extent of the Japanese threat was evidenced on January 11, 1942, when a Japanese submarine surfaced in Fagasa Bay, of the north coast of Tutuila, and fired fifteen 5.5 inch projectiles into the Naval Station. Two people were wounded and the material damage was not pronounced except for the destruction of the only Japanese owned store in American Samoa.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Brigade arrived in Pago Pago Harbor on January 23. The aircraft carrier task force, under the command of Vice Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr., continued on to conduct America's first carrier strike against the Japanese, raiding airfields in the Gilbert and Marshall Islands. The Brigade's Commanding Officer, Colonel (soon to be Brigadier General) Henry L. Larsen, was appointed as military governor of American Samoa. Navy *PBY Catalina* flying boats were attached to the Brigade, and flew reconnaissance and antisubmarine missions. By keeping lights on and working 'round-the-clock shifts, the first runway of the Tafuna Air Base was completed on April 6, 1942, and received its first aircraft a few days later. The air element consisted of one Marine fighter squadron (VMF-111, flying Grumman F4F

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Wildcats) and one scout bomber squadron (VMSB-151, using obsolete Curtiss SBC-4 Helldivers). To date, 103 concrete pillboxes have been recorded by archaeologists at potential landing beaches, in Tutuila's valleys and hills, and in Aunu'u. The Brigade's first three months in Samoa were spent building these fortifications limiting the time spent on combat training.

While the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Brigade landed at Pago Pago, Japanese troops captured the port of Rabaul, on the island of New Britain, in the Bismarck Archipelago. This occupation heightened the threat to American Samoa. Japanese martial strategies against Australia relied on an interruption of logistical routes from the United States. New Zealand appealed to the Americans for aid in defending Western Samoa, which they received as a League of Nations mandate territory after World War I. New Zealand's garrison in Western Samoa numbered less than 160; yet, they were charged with defending 1,120 square miles, in contrast to American Samoa's 76 square miles, of which Tutuila comprised the majority of the area (52 square miles).

Agreements were signed with New Zealand regarding Western Samoa, and with the Free French concerning the defense of the Wallis Islands, which are geographically near, and linguistically related to Samoa. The United States was given responsibility for the defense of all these islands. The 7<sup>th</sup> Defense Battalion transferred to Western Samoa and the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion established defenses at Wallis. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Brigade, comprising the 7<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment and the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 11<sup>th</sup> Marines, was organized in March, 1942. This Brigade arrived in Western Samoa on May 8. American Samoa became the headquarters of the Samoan Defense Group, which eventually included the Ellice Islands, French Polynesia, Tonga, and the aforementioned island groups. As such, it was the largest of the Pacific defense groups, and the largest area command in the South Pacific. Major General Charles F.B. Price, USMC, who relieved Brigadier General Henry L. Larsen on April 24, 1942, became the Group's first commander, in addition to his duties as military governor of American Samoa. Tutuila's garrison expanded again in April, with the arrival of the Marine Corps' 1<sup>st</sup> Raider Battalion. Later, a barrage balloon squadron arrived for the protection of the harbor in Pago Pago and at Tafuna Airbase. On May 31, 1942, an inspection team, commanded by Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd (the famous Antarctic explorer), found that 8,000 U.S. Navy and Marine Corps personnel were stationed in American Samoa, more than 5,000 in Western Samoa, and 2,600 in the Wallis Islands.

Encouraged by the successes of early 1942, Japanese leadership decided to accelerate their timetable for further military operations in the Pacific by capturing Port Moresby on New Guinea's south coast. This maneuver secured aerial supremacy of the Coral Sea and was followed by the capture of Midway Island, east of Hawaii. Japanese martial leadership envisioned a newly created perimeter of defensive islands to degrade offensives by the U.S. Pacific Fleet; the occupation of Samoa, Fiji, and New Caledonia, and the termination of supply routes to Australia.

Japanese efforts were complicated at Port Moresby by their strategic defeat in the Battle of the Coral Sea, from May 7 to 9, 1942. Japan's defeat at the Battle of Midway and subsequent losses, beginning in June of 1942, ended the threat to American Samoa.

Following these battles, American Samoa became an Advanced Jungle Warfare Training Center for replacements and reinforcements of Marine Corps units being forwarded to amphibious operations in the Solomon and Gilbert Islands, and elsewhere. For a seven-month period ending in July, 1943, Marine replacement battalions from the east coast of the United States trained in Samoa. However, the high incidence of filariasis compelled the Marine Corps to close the training center. MOB 3 left Tutuila on April 1, 1944, but the importance of Pago Harbor, as a destroyer repair facility, completed on February 17, 1944, continued until the end of the War.

In this context, the features at Poloa evidence defensive preparations and tactical considerations during the early days of World War II and demonstrate America's protection of its territory in the South Pacific.

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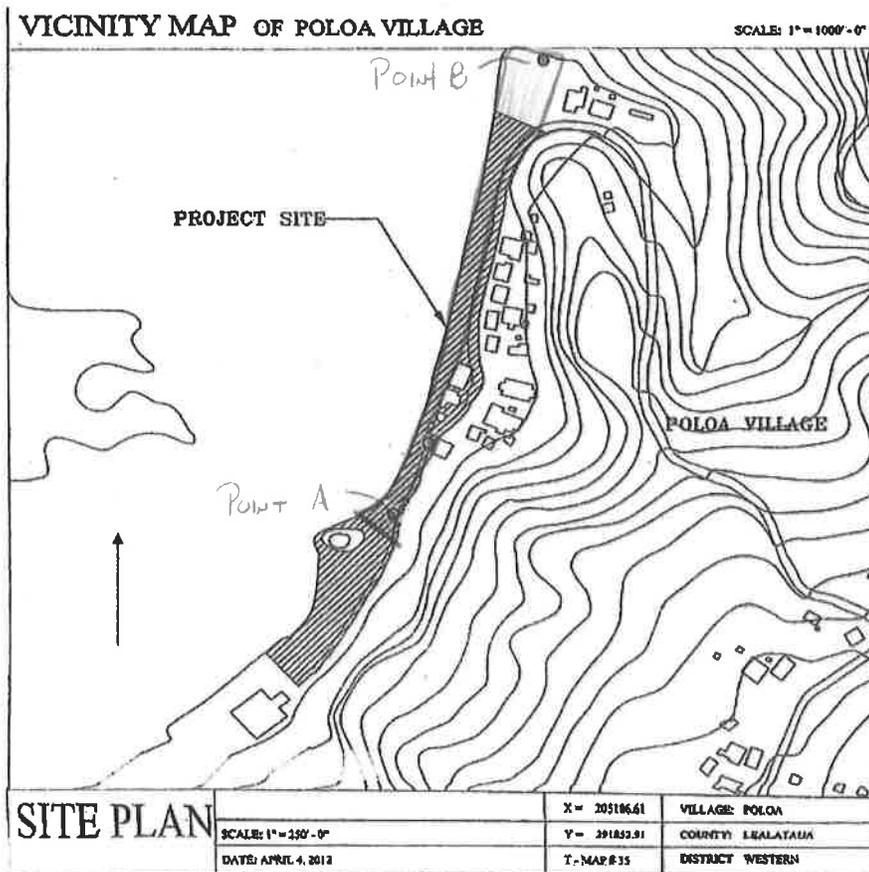
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 1

Poloa Defensive Fortifications  
American Samoa

Site Map.

DESCRIPTION: Site plan of Poloa Beach Site, Western Tutuila, American Samoa. Arrow represents orientation north. From south to north, three red circles represent Features 1, 2, and 3, respectively. Scale: 1 inch = 250 feet.



SKETCH MAP - REVISED 11/14/2012

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Point B 2L 517965 8417560

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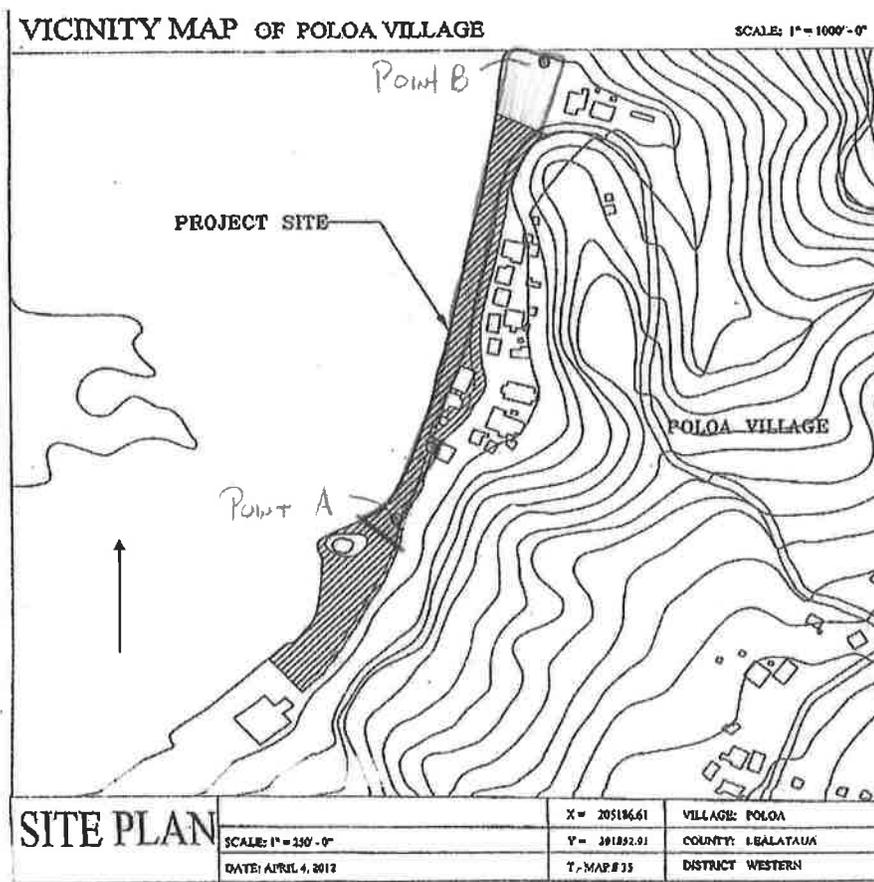
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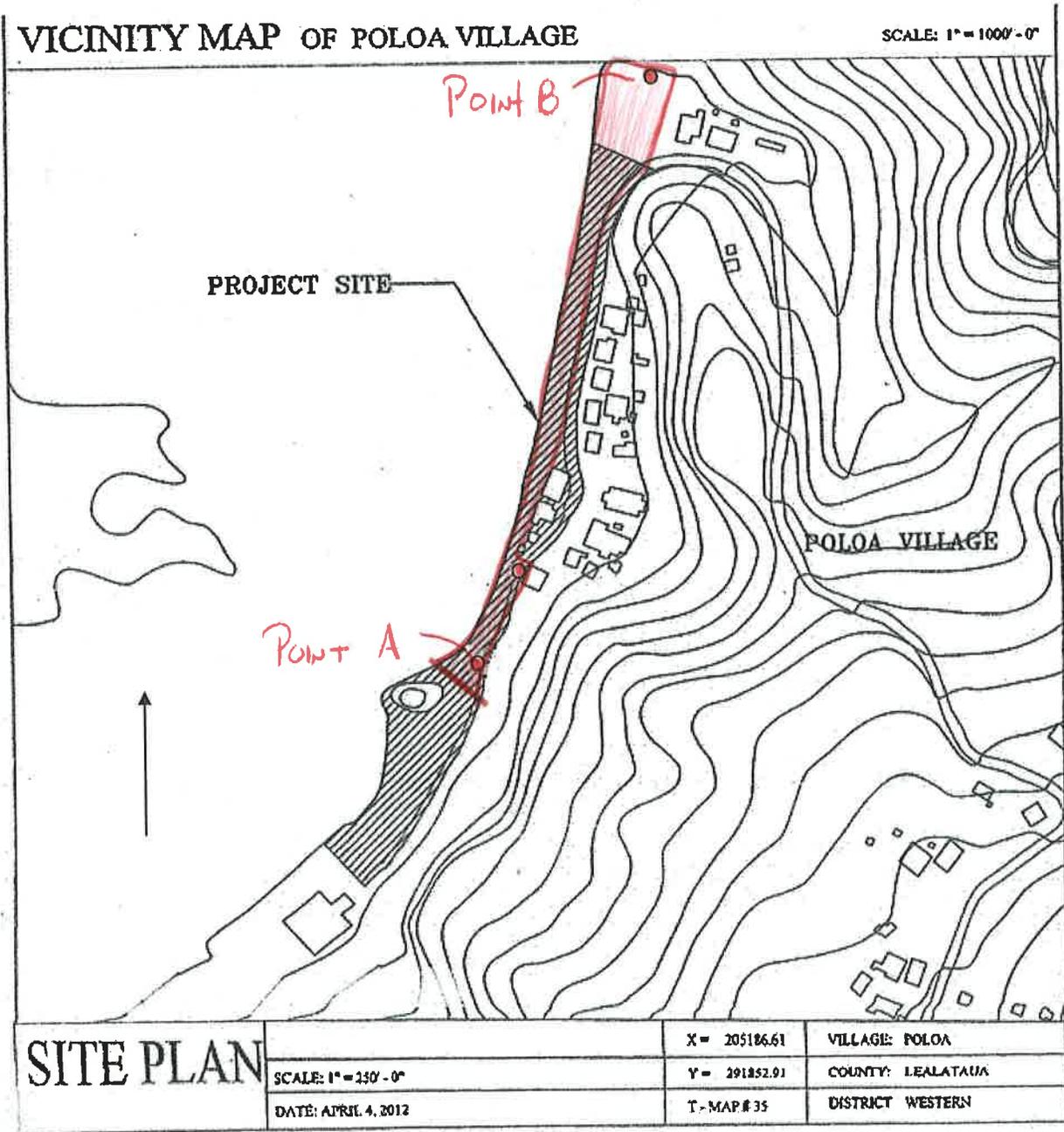
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**DESCRIPTION:** Site plan of Poloa Beach Site, Western Tutuila, American Samoa. Arrow represents orientation north. From south to north, three red circles represent Features 1, 2, and 3, respectively. Scale: 1 inch = 250 feet.



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Section 10 Page 1

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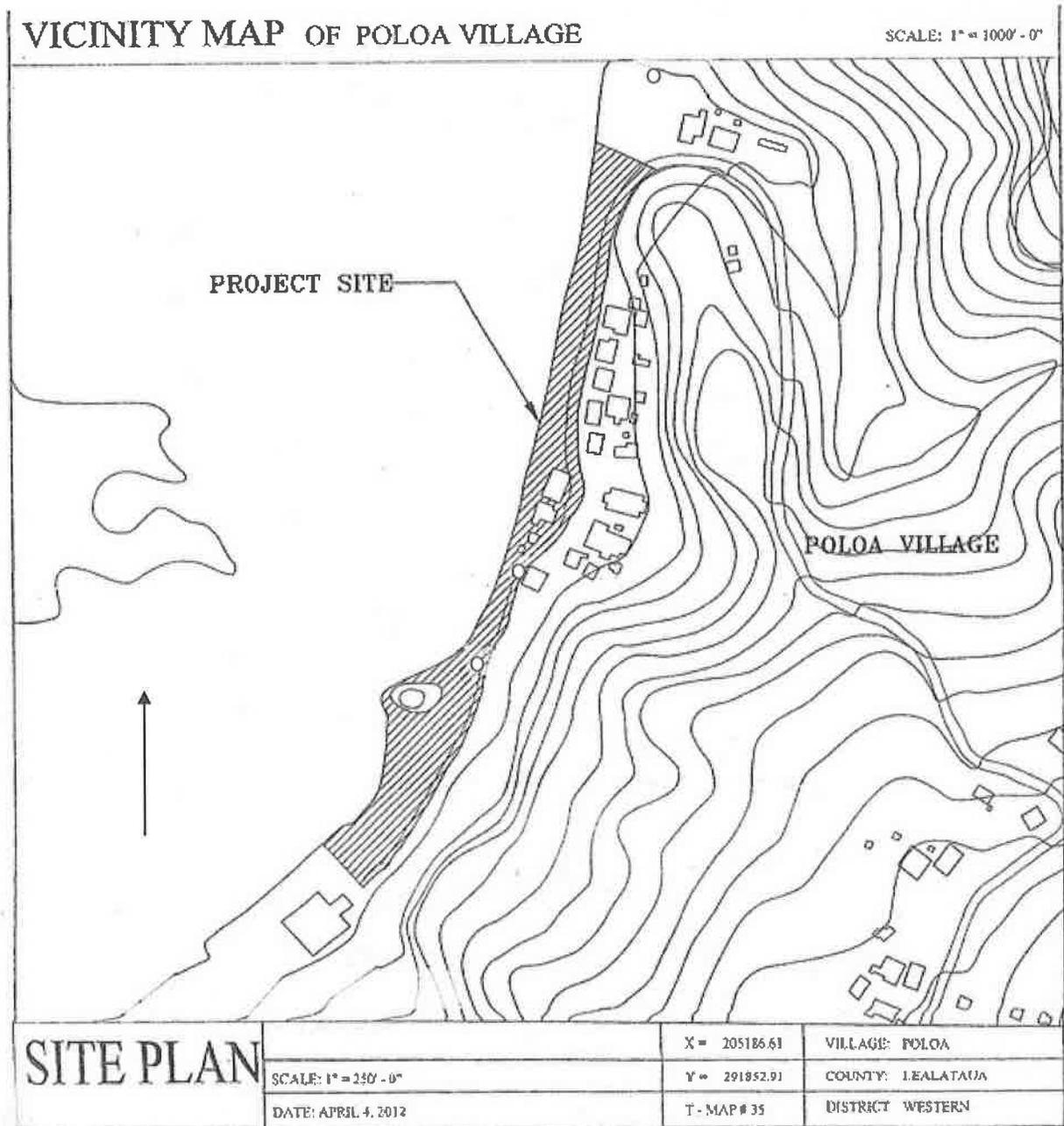
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National Park Service

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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Page 2

**DESCRIPTION: Poloa Beach Site, Western Tutuila, American Samoa.**



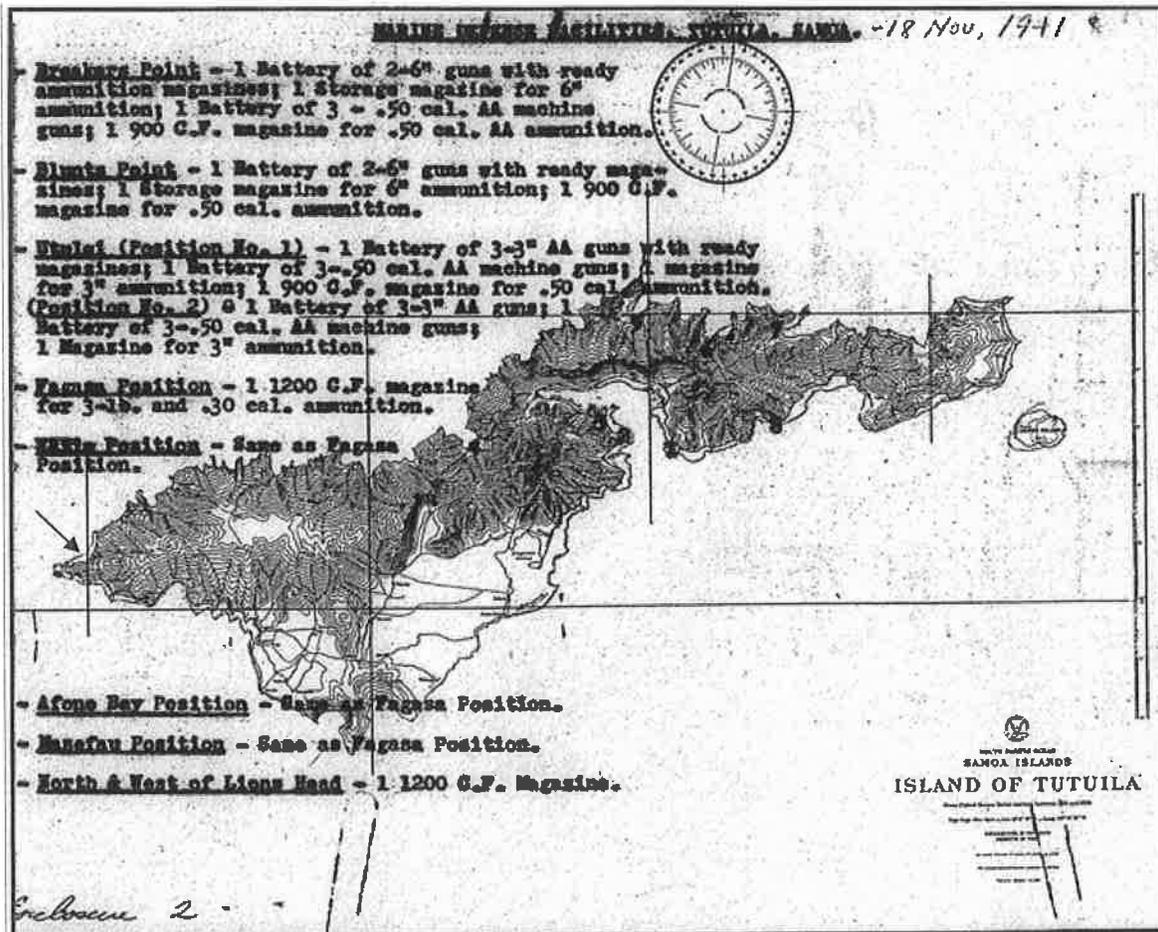
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DESCRIPTION: Map of Tutuila exhibiting U.S. Marine Corps and Navy locations during World War II and previously recorded defensive fortifications (U.S. Naval Survey; Comments From November 18, 1941). Location of Poloa marked by arrow.





0° 04' 1 MIL 204 MILS  
 UTM GRID AND 2004 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

Secondary highway, hard surface .....  
 Light-duty road, hard or improved surface .....  
 Unimproved road .....  
 Trail .....

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
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 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

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Poloa.  
 Poloa Beach, Lealataua  
 County, American  
 Samoa.  
 UTM Reference:  
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