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# World War II Wrecks of the Truk Lagoon

*Dan E. Balley*

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**World War II Wrecks of the Truk Lagoon** Dan E. Balley
Truk was an important World War II island stronghold functioning as a vital airbase and headquarters for the Japanese Navy's Combined Fleet. It became a potential "roadblock" for the American Pacific Fleet in its advance towards the Japanese Empire. These islands were targeted twice by US Navy carrier striking forces with a powerful group of battleships, cruisers, and destroyers for support. Target objectives included the destruction of the shipping, aircraft, and installations. In addition, land-based US Army Air Force B-24s and B-29s carried out an extensive bombing campaign against the islands. The Japanese defenders were overwhelmed by the concentrated bombing, torpedo, rocket, and strafing attacks by the planes of the US Navy carrier forces and by the heavy pounding given them by land-based Army Air Force bombers. Huge rusting guns in the Japanese-built caves, pillboxes, open emplacements, and a lagoon filled with ship and aircraft wrecks are an important legacy from World War II in this tropical central Pacific island group. The sheer number and diversity of the wrecks found in the relatively shallow lagoon waters brings thousands of divers to this remote location every year. Truk, now known as Chuuk State, has become one of the most desirable dive locations in the world.

This 533-page volume documents the Japanese occupation and build-up of Truk into a strategic naval base, the air campaign against the ships, aircraft, and installations, and the exploration/descriptions of the ship and aircraft wrecks that remain. Many new details of the Operation Hailstone raids of February 17-18, 1944 and the Japanese reaction have been included from information found in intelligence file references. Emphasis on the aerial combat between the Japanese and American planes, descriptions of Japanese installations and defenses, and information on the intensive US fast carrier raids of April 29-30, 1944 against Truk have been published for the first time. A total of 173 maps and drawings, 101 black and white photos, and 150 color plates are included in this book.

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