

Exploring the crash site of Marine F-4J Phantom at NAS Barbers Point Hawaii

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F-4J Phantom, BuNo153830, Modex WD-12, from VMFA-212, over MCAS Kaneohe

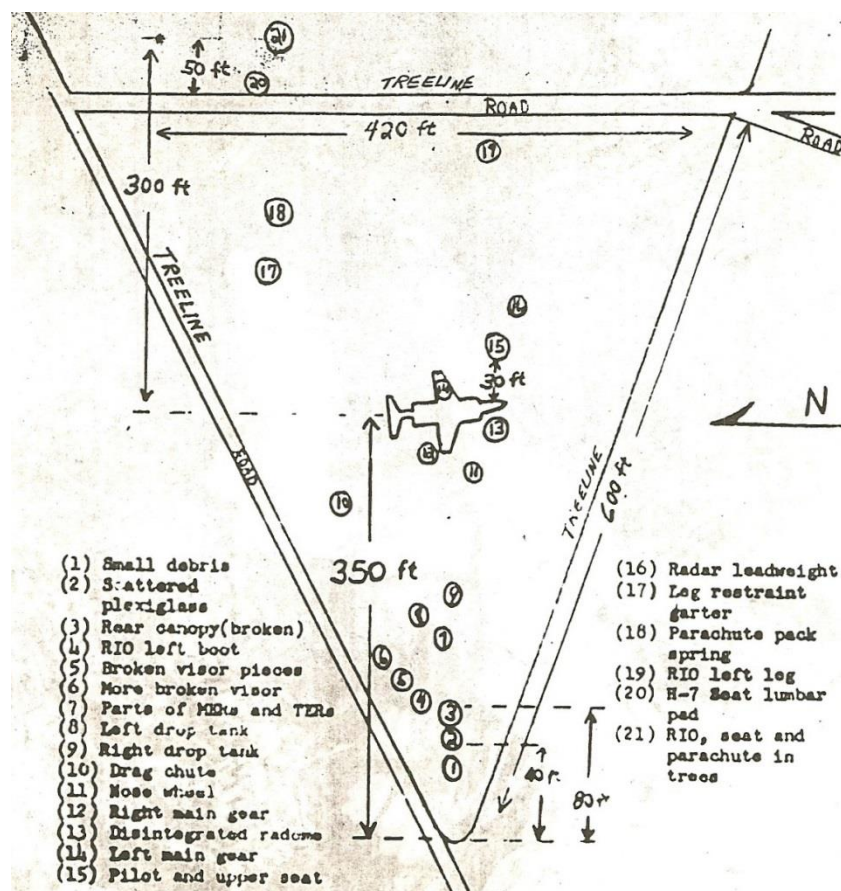


Diagram from the official accident report shows aircraft debris pattern. Some parts of the jet are still located at the same place

The crash site of F-4J Phantom, BuNo153830 was one of the first crash sites that I explored back in the mid-1990s. Back then, I was in the Navy stationed at NAS Barbers Point and just beginning my long career as an Aviation Archaeologist. At the time I was not too interested in its history because it was too new. At that time, I was mostly interested in WWII wrecks. It was many years later before I was finally able to acquire a copy of the official accident report. It was only then that I learned the full tragic story behind the crash and became more interested. I have periodically visited the site many times over the years and discovered more F-4J Phantom artifacts on every examination. Another local historian also discovered some interesting artifacts at the site as recently as 2017. Some F-4J Phantom artifacts still remain from where they were ripped from the aircraft so long ago.

The location next to an active runway has protected to site over time, but this protection may soon change. A five megawatt photovoltaic solar farm project is planned for the same area as the crash site. This story was undertaken in an effort to bring awareness of the historic nature of the site. So far the developer is interested in the history and preservation of the site. The current interim preservation plan is "Preservation via conservation" of the artifacts. This may mean that all the artifacts are to be removed from the site. Hopefully the artifacts will go to a local museum. The main concern at the site is the Hawaiian cultural vestiges and the F-4 Phantom artifacts are considered less important.

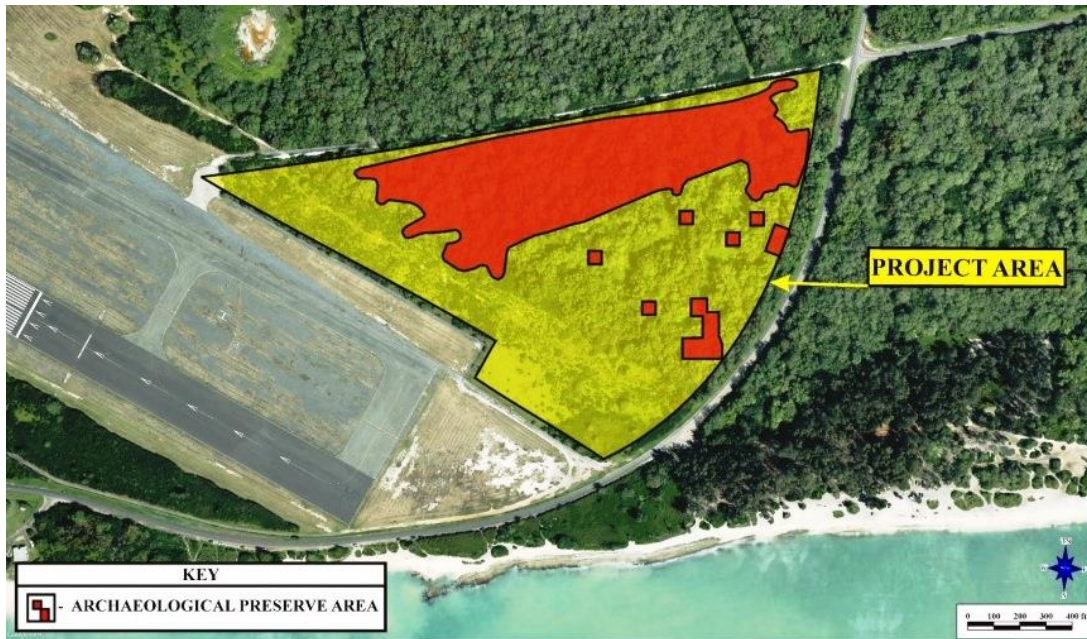


Figure 3:2013 Google Earth Aerial Image showing approximate location of the interim preservation areas in orange.

Map from the interim preservation plan of the area

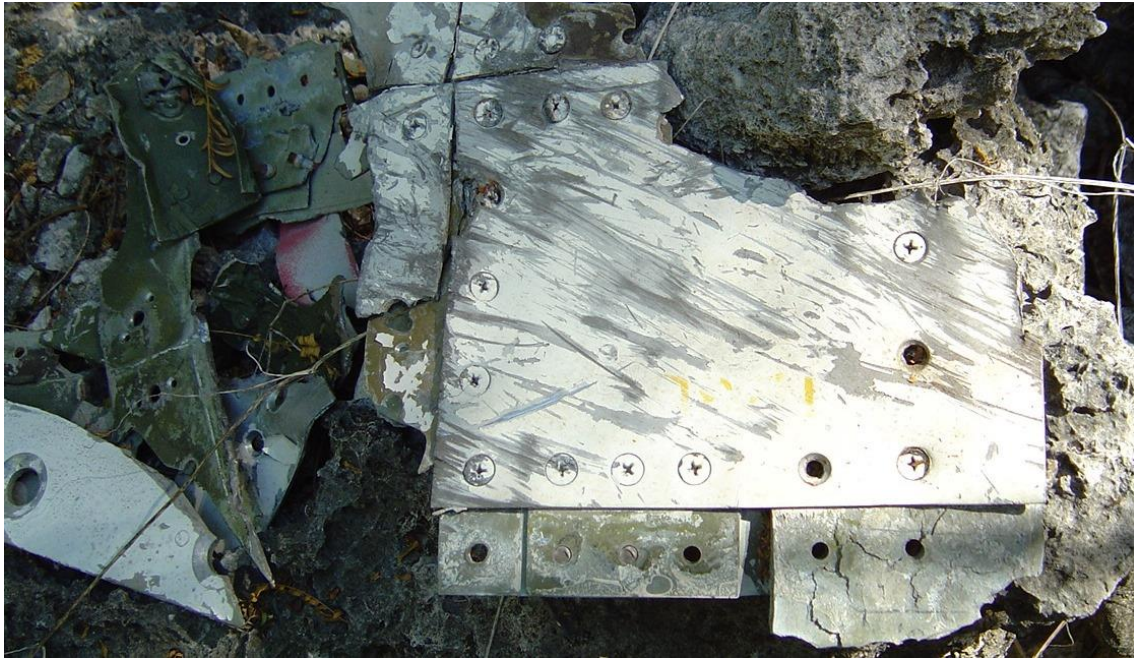


Approximate location of the F-4 Phantom crash site. The crash debris pattern map shows parts scattered throughout the area due to the nature of the crash.



This is in the general area of the trees that the jet crashed into, photo circa 2004. There were many trees down and a slight rise in terrain with big rocks in the area. It is hard to explore because crawling around the thick brush is required.

Artifacts discovered at the crash site:



This piece of fuselage shows evidence from the crash. It has scrapes on it, most likely from when the jet skidded across the ground, photo circa 2004



Large piece of Plexiglas from the canopy, many pieces of it littered the site from when the crew attempted ejection, photo circa 2007



Large piece of wing still has partial national insignia on it, photo circa 2004



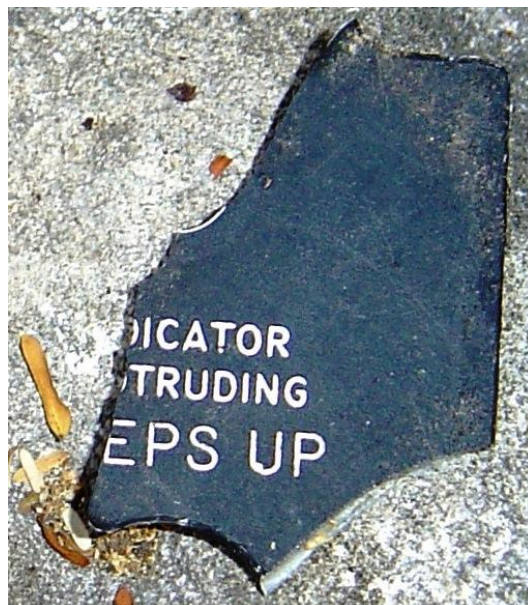
The same piece of wing flipped over, photo circa 2017



Front nose landing gear, the pilot may have tried to steer this or it may have malfunctioned, photos circa 2004 and 2007



Close up of the main landing gear wheel rim has sticker with last overhaul date of 10/69 on it, photo circa 2007



Artifact from the cockpit area, remember the cockpit section of the aircraft was destroyed in the crash, photo circa 2007



Piece of fuselage with factory marking on it, photo circa 2007. It is unknown what the number "632L" represents.



Piece from side of the engine intake that has part of the national insignia (star and bar) on it, photo circa 2007



Valve; Pneumatic 4 Way Selector, photo circa 2007



Various pieces of the jet litter the site, photo circa 2007



Bundle of wire and parts, photo circa 2013



Close-up of the bundle of wire and parts, photo circa 2013



Memorial to the crew left at the nose wheel, photo circa 2007