

1940s
1944?
**Isle Made
For War Now
Is Unwanted**

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HONOLULU, Oct. 14.— French Frigate, the air field lifted out of the sea in the most fantastic construction project of the Pacific war, is now an unwanted child.

Abandoned by the Navy, unwanted by the Territory of Hawaii, which owns French Frigate Shoal, the tiny air base has been returned to its original inhabitants, the birds and the fiddler crabs.

There was a time when this deserted place, 550 miles northwest of Honolulu, might have influenced the course of the war.

The Battle of Midway demonstrated to Navy strategists the need to get fighter planes from Oahu to Midway, 1,300 miles distant, in a hurry. The catch was that no fighter planes at that time could carry enough gasoline to fly nonstop to Midway.

French Frigate, an almost forgotten shoal approximately midway between Oahu and Midway, was the answer, providing an air field could be built there. Crescent-shaped, 18 miles long and two to three miles wide, French Frigate Shoal is an outcropping of a submarine mountain range that runs all the way from Midway to Hawaii.

The Seabees built the field and its installations, but it was P. N. A. B. (Pacific Naval Air Bases), the vast construction combine which built Navy bases all over the Pacific, that dredged up the coral fill.

The result was an unslakable aircraft carrier, 3,100 feet long and 250 feet wide, ringed with sheet metal piling to keep it from washing away. The field cost nearly \$2,000,000.

The fact that it never paid off was nobody's fault except the Japanese. They never again attacked Midway.