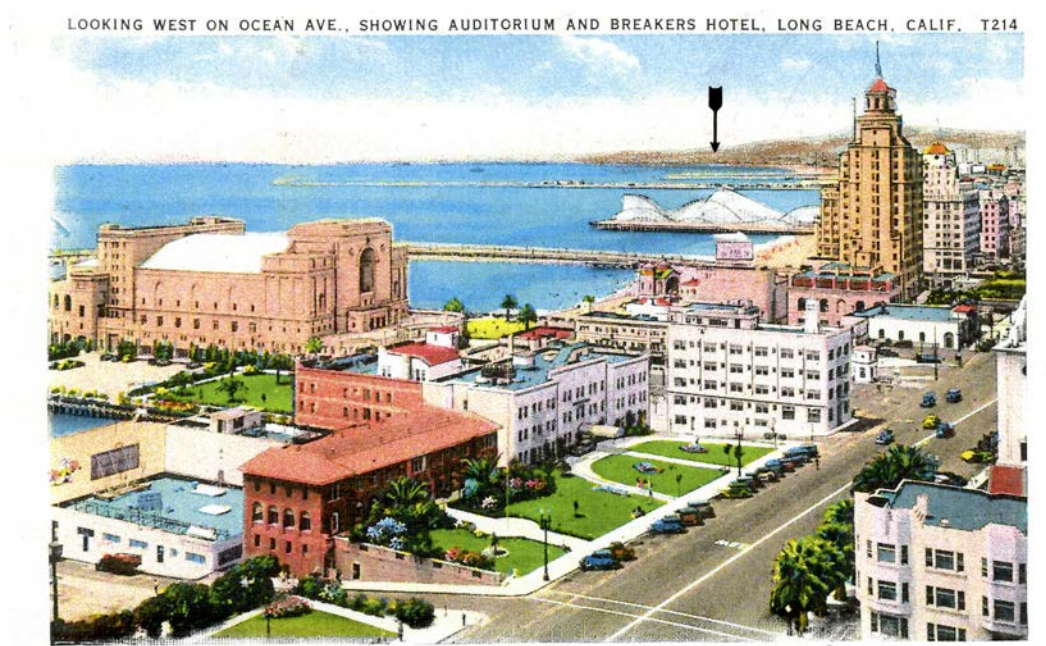


The Breakers Hotel Base End Station, Long Beach, California

Charles H. Bogart

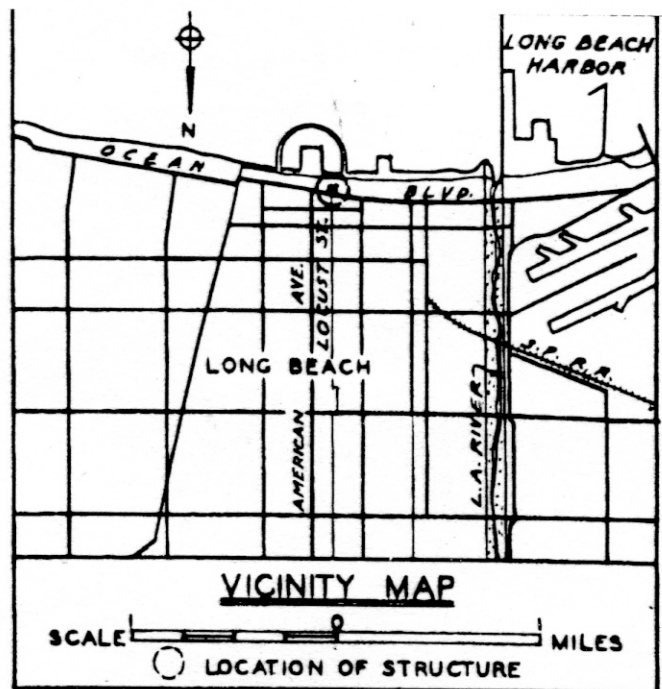
In 1925, Fred B. Dunn opened the 330-room Breakers Hotel at 210 East Ocean Blvd., in Long Beach, California. The building consisted of a single-story base structure that spanned an entire city block and housed various retail and commercial establishments. Shooting skyward from the base was a 13-story central tower that housed the hotel's rooms. As the back of the hotel fronted on the Pacific Ocean, the tower was crowned by a decorative cupola that offered guests a place to observe the ocean and the U.S. Navy Pacific Fleet when it was at anchor off San Pedro. In 1929, the hotel was sold to a group of local investors just before the Great Depression. The hotel was soon in bankruptcy and sat closed for a number of years.

In 1938, the building was purchased by Conrad Hilton, who re-opened the Breakers as part of the Hilton Hotel chain. The hotel prospered during World War II, renting its rooms to military officers and their families. In 1943, the Harbor Defenses of Los Angeles grafted a concrete extension onto the ocean side of the hotel's cupola to house base end stations, designated Site No. 9.



The Breakers Hotel is the tall building in the upper right. The large armory-style building in the upper left was the Long Beach Convention Center, where military and naval units shipping out for the Pacific Theater in WWII had farewell dances and dinners. The roller coaster to the left of the Breakers was at "The Pike," the local amusement park with its dance hall where sailors and soldiers met local girls. Long Beach Naval Shipyard is just beyond "the Pike." The arrow points to Fort MacArthur and Battery 241. Bolsa Chica, with Batteries 128 and 242, is 8 miles behind the photographer.

Postcard, postmarked July 2, 1936, Tichnor Art Co., L.A. Author's collection.



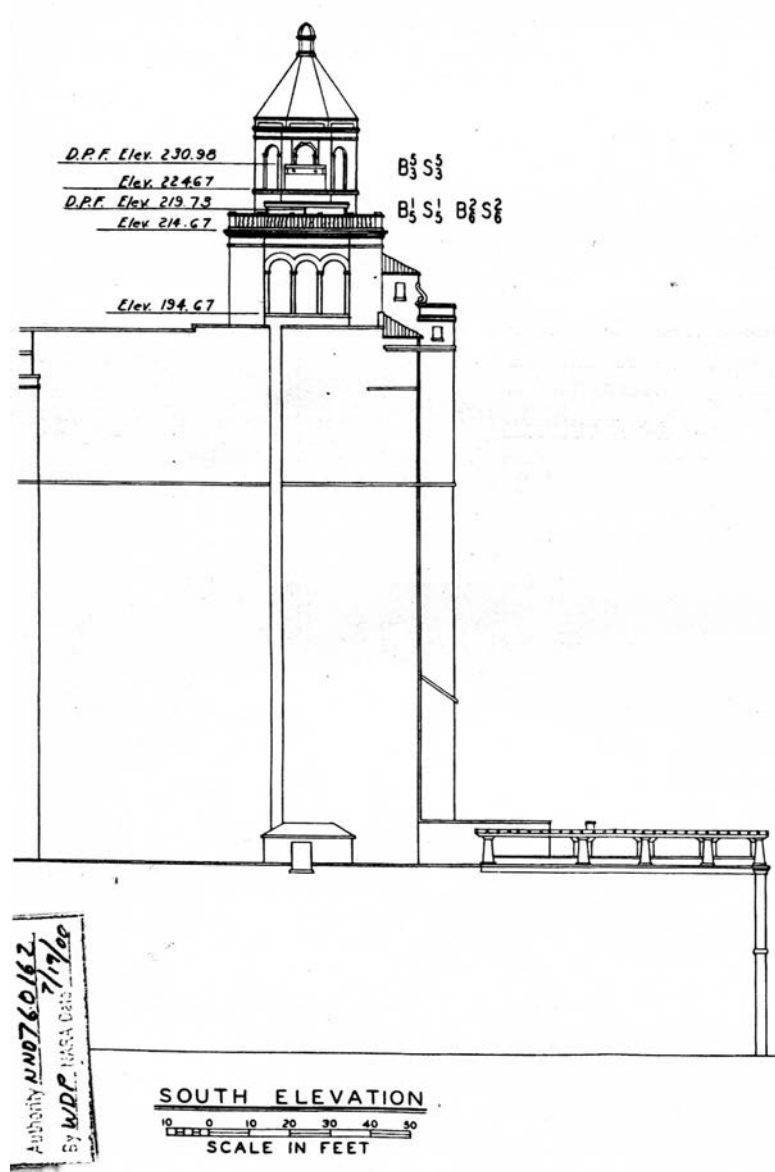
The vicinity of the Hilton Hotel base end station. 1944 HD Supplement, HD LA, NARA.

The station was transferred to the coast artillery on May 12, 1944. According to the RCW and the 1944 Harbor Defense Supplement for Los Angeles, the upper station contained the fifth base end and spotting stations for Tactical Battery No. 3 (Battery 241 at Fort MacArthur), which was never completed. The DPF was at an instrument level of 230.98 ft, while the azimuth spotting instrument was at 224.67 ft. Below that were two DPFs, the primary station for Tactical Battery No. 5 (Battery 242 at Bolsa Chica) and the secondary station for Tactical Battery No. 6 (Battery 128 at Bolsa Chica). However, construction of Battery 128 was terminated November 23, 1943. Whether the instruments for Batteries 128 and 241 were ever installed is not known. Both the lower DPFs had instrument elevations of 219.73 feet. In front of the two lower DPF were spotting instruments for the same two batteries, with M1910A1 azimuth instruments, at 214.67 feet. Data transmission for all stations was by telephone.

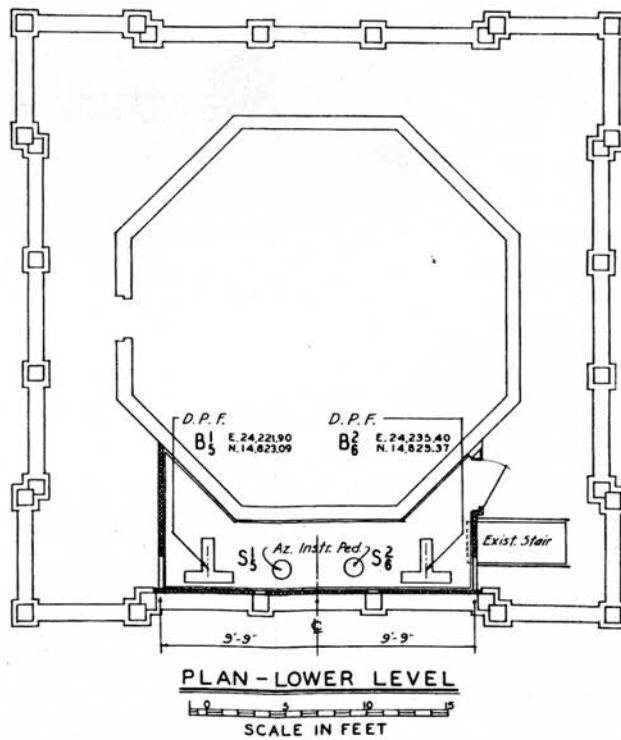
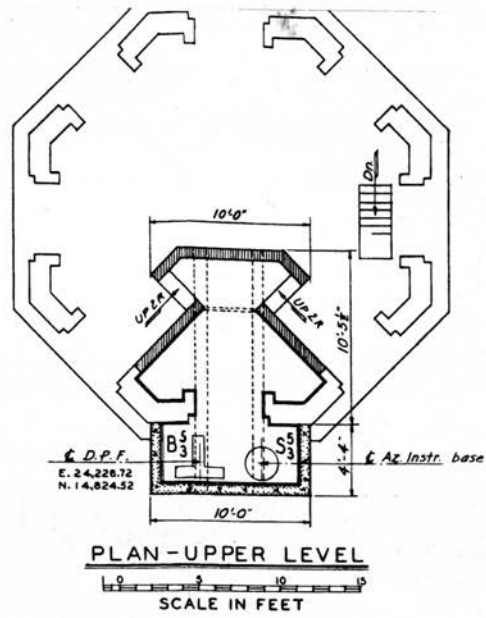
After World War II, the Breakers went through the hands of a number of owners, none of whom were able to make any money with the property as a hotel. Since 1991, the Breakers has been a high-end retirement home and assisted living facility. All that remains within the Breakers cupola base end station are two concrete mounts for M1910M1 azimuth instruments. The concrete extension built into the cupola for the Coast Artillery Corps still looks out over the Pacific Ocean.

Sources

- Zink, Robert. "The Six-Inch part of the Harbor Defense Modernization Program of 1940." *Coast Defense Study Group Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (May 1994), p. 26.
- War Department. Report of Completed Works, "Fort MacArthur B53 S53 – B15 S15 – B26 S26," 2 August 1944. RG 77, Entry 1007, NARA, College Park, MD.
- War Department. "Supplement to the Harbor Defense Project, Harbor Defenses of Los Angeles," 1944, Exhibit 15-B. RG 407, Entry 366, NARA, College Park, MD.



Hotel showing cupola. 1944 HD Supplement, HD LA, NARA.



Cupola with fire control instrument bases. 1944 HD Supplement, HD LA, NARA.



The Breakers base end station. *Author*



The Breakers base end station, 1992.
Bolling Smith



Inside the cupola fire control station 1992. *Bolling Smith*



View to seaward from the Breakers fire control station 1992. *Bolling Smith*