

What is That Thing?

—Ellen Chiri

This cement pylon, anchored on the reef just offshore below the Moss Beach Distillery, is a weathered remnant of World War II military operations. During the war, the Navy operated an anti-aircraft training center on the bluffs at Point Montara.

When artillery target practice was in progress a flag was hoisted atop the pylon, to warn local air and marine traffic.

In addition to gunnery practice, the Navy trainees learned how to use the first-generation radar that was newly developed.

The pylon, originally sporting a 15-foot wooden octagon atop it, was reportedly a calibration target for the radar transmitters that had to be calibrated each time they were used. The octagon was a known distance from the transmitters, and the gunners used it to correlate readings, checking the radar's accuracy.

Part of the octagon atop the pylon was still there into the 1990s, but the wind and weather has destroyed it. All that remains is the mysterious concrete pylon.



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