

Hamilton Field, Base Railroad Spur
State Access Road to Industrial Area
on 2nd Street
Novato
Marin County
California

HABS No. CA-2398-AQ

HABS
CAL
21-NOVA,
1AQ-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HAMILTON FIELD
Base Railroad Spur

HABS
CAL
21-NOVA,
IAQ-

HABS No. CA-2398-AQ

Location: Hamilton Army Air Field
Novato, Marin County, California
Base Railroad Spur (State Access Road to Industrial area on 2nd Street)

U.S.G.S.: Novato, CA. Quadrangle (7.5' series), 1954 (revised 1980)
Petaluma Point, CA. Quadrangle (7.5' series), 1959 (revised 1980)
UTM Coordinates: Zone 10; A: 542100/4213620; B: 544720/4212220;
C: 542760/4210650; D: 541040/4212600

Significance:

The base railroad spur is considered significant for its association with Air Force history in northern California, and with World War II actions in the Pacific Theater. The railroad spur, constructed from the main line of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad into Hamilton Field, was central in importance to the overall early operation of the base. It is a contributing structure to the Hamilton Army Air Field Historic District. The base grew to encompass a portion of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad main line during World War II.

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) for a comprehensive Statement of Significance and individual report HABS No. CA-2398-A for a condensed Statement of Significance.

Description:

The base railroad spur was constructed from the main line of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad (along present Highway 101) northeast along the main entrance drive into the base and straight to the center of the permanent industrial area. The spur line ends abruptly before entering the runway area, and is paralleled at the end by approximately 75 feet of siding for switching cars. Although the rails are still visible through the base industrial area, portions of this spur line were removed in the late 1950s or early 1960s.

Historical Context:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) and Section B in report HABS No. CA-2398-F.

During World War II, enlisted personnel were transported to Hamilton by train. One woman who worked in medical supply recalled arriving in blackout conditions (all windows covered in the train) from Chicago. She got out of the train at the passenger depot by State

Access Road and saw her first view of Hamilton. She remembers the feel of being in a park and recalls the green rolling hills and sparking bay, all visible from the train station.

Sources:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) and Section B in report HABS No. CA-2398-F.

See also CA-2398-11, CA-2398-AI-1, CA-2398-AI-4, and CA-2398-AI-5.

The line drawn sketches were drafted on site in 1994 by Keith Syda, scanned into a computer and drawn by Christopher MacDonald in 1995, and corrected and finalized by Claire Warsaw in 1996 (all PAR Environmental Services, Inc. staff).

Project Information:

Hamilton Army Air Field is owned by various federal entities including the Department of the Navy, Department of the Army, United States Coast Guard, and General Services Administration (GSA). The Army/GSA parcels are being excessed and sold to private developers. The Navy property is included in Base Closure and Realignment actions.

As part of the Army's undertaking, it has been determined in consultation with the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) that the excess sale will have an affect on properties at the air field, and that these properties are components of a district that is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Based on consultation with the OHP and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, pursuant to 36 CFR part 800, regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470f), a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was entered into by the interested parties in March 1994. The agreement stipulated that prior to excess sale the Army must contact the HABS/HAER division at the Western Regional Office of the National Park Service, San Francisco, California, to determine the appropriate level and kind of recordation for the subject properties. The MOA further stipulated that copies of the documentation be made available to the OHP and appropriate local archives designated by the OHP. This recordation has been prepared in order to meet those stipulations.

Text prepared by: Mary L. Maniery/Judith Marvin

Title: Historian/Architectural Historian

Affiliation: PAR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, INC., Sacramento, California

Date prepared: July 1995

Photography prepared by: David De Vries

Affiliation: Mesa Technical, Berkeley, California

Date of photographs: May 1993