

Hamilton Field, Service Club  
(Facility No. 438)  
6th Street between Escolta and Hangar Avenues  
Novato  
Marin County  
California

HABS No. CA-2398-X

HABS  
CAL  
21-NOVA,  
IX-

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  
Service Club  
(Facility No. 438)

HABS  
CAL  
21-NOVA,  
IX-

HABS No. CA-2398-X

**Location:** Hamilton Army Air Field  
Novato, Marin County, California  
Service Club  
Facility No. 438 (6th Street between Escolta and Hangar Avenues)

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:**

In 1942, this Service Club was completed in response to the needs of the growing base for a facility where the enlisted men could host visiting relatives and conduct social activities. Building 438 is considered significant for its association with Air Force history in northern California, and with World War II actions in the Pacific Theater. The architectural detailing evident in the entryway and landscaping efforts were unusual during the war years and attest to the importance of this social club to the enlisted population on base.

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 service club is basically an H-shaped building with a central rectilinear mass flanked by two irregularly shaped wings. It is of frame construction, one story high. The roof is a low-pitched cross gable structure covered with composition shingles with numerous metal ventilators along the ridgeline. The exterior walls are horizontal board, clad in asbestos shingles. The foundation is concrete wall, with wooden subflooring. The primary entrance is accessed by brick steps with a metal pipe hand rail and is through double solid core wood doors with four lights above recessed wooden panels. A concrete service ramp is present in the back. Several glass and panel single doors provide emergency exits from the rear and sides of the building. The entrance hall projects from the central front of the main wing and consists of a Classical Revival portico supported by four square pillars. A rough fieldstone fireplace, six-foot-wide with a four-foot-wide opening, with an exterior brick chimney is located on the rear wall. Exterior landscaping consists of a concrete courtyard with a circular lawn, ornamental shrubbery, and trees.

Interior walls and ceilings are covered with gypsum board and the main room has wood wainscoting. The floors are covered with eight-inch-square vinyl asphalt tiles. Ceilings are suspended acoustical tiles. The interior floor plan consists of a central large reception room (capacity 950) with several smaller reception, socializing, and telephone rooms in the wings. The large reception area is accessed from the double entry doors by passing between two mortared sandstone planter boxes, each 4.5 feet high. There are four telephone rooms in the southeast corner of the building. Each telephone room contains a "Wesix-ionix" wall-mounted electric heater made in San Francisco, and a circular fluorescent two-tube fixture. Each room is soundproofed and has a built-in table, telephone wires and outlets, and is accessed by a glass and panel door.

Lighting is varied and includes original suspended "schoolhouse" fixtures with porcelain canopies and milk glass globes, and two-tube fluorescent fixtures, mounted flush with the ceiling, some covered with diffused plastic panels and others with open industrial-type metal hoods. Recessed track lights flank either side of the fireplace and inset single incandescent bulbs light the hallways.

The main bathrooms were updated and modernized in 1964 and include Sanitized Lien Fixture flush valve toilets (3), wall-mounted urinals (3), three hand sinks mounted on the wall, and a cast iron mop sink. The women's bathroom has three toilets separated by formica partitions, and three wall-mounted sinks. This facility has pink formica wainscoting and a one-inch-square ceramic tile floor. A Lien Chemical Company Deodorizer unit is mounted on the wall, along with chrome paper towel holders and a large mirror. A third, smaller bathroom is located off the office and has a shower, a flush valve toilet and a cast iron, floor-mounted sink.

The kitchen is located in the northwest corner of the building and contains a large, sheet metal sink with a cast iron enameled top, made by American Standard Product and American Radiator and Standard Sanitary Corporation. Metal flues vented the ovens and protrude from the roof ridgeline. The kitchen connects to a small enclosed snack bar added onto the northwest corner of the building in 1957. The "Blue Jet Snack Bar" has an three-foot oval overhang with two order windows. The bottom wall is white four-inch-square ceramic tile with a black tile bullnose. Plexiglass jalousie windows on each end of the snack bar provided some ventilation for those working inside. The overhang has corrugated fiberglass trim. An outside dining area, covered with corrugated fiberglass supported on posts, is adjacent to the snack bar. Recessed cans with single bulbs and flood lights illuminated the area.

In 1964 the interior of the service club was renovated. Plans dating to this work indicate that the interior was divided into a large recreation room and separate television, reading, phone, listening, music, game rooms and a lounge. There was also a kitchen, storage rooms and offices. At that time a wallpaper mural was put on the recreation room and reading room

walls. Pictures were placed in the hallways and on walls in other rooms and a redwood entry was constructed.

**Historical Context:**

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

The service club was completed in August 1942 for a cost of \$38,852.93. It was intended to serve as a recreational social gathering place for enlisted men living in the many surrounding temporary barracks and as a facility where the men could host visiting relatives. The club is remembered fondly by many ex-Hamilton personnel for its dances, relaxed atmosphere, cheery fireplace, and central social point during the war years. It was in use until base closure in the mid-1970s. Today ceilings and wooden subfloors are deteriorating and the facility is abandoned.

**Sources:**

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

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 Warshaw 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.

**HAMILTON FIELD  
Service Club  
(Facility No. 438)**

**HABS No. CA-2398-X Page 4**

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: April and May 1993

