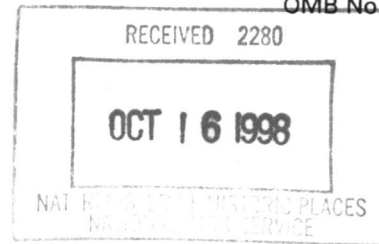


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



1347

1. Name of Property

historic name: Hamilton Army Air Field Discontiguous Historic District
other name/site number: Hamilton Field, Hamilton Army Air Force Base

2. Location

street & number: Hamilton Army Air Field/SR 101 ☐ not for publication
city/town: Novato ☐ vicinity
state: California code: CA county: Marin code: 041 zip code: 94949

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this
☐ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my
opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register-criteria. I recommend that this property be considered
significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☐ locally. (☐ see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

See Attached cover letter
Signature of certifying official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet.)

[Signature]
Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date Aug 12, 1998

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain): _____

[Signature] 11/20/98

[Signature] Signature of Keeper of Action Date _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(check as many boxes as may apply)

- ☒ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☒ public-Federal

Category of Property

(check only one box)

- ☐ building(s)
☒ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

Noncontributing

108	4	buildings
2	--	sites
17	2	structures
1	--	objects
128	6	Total

Number of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DEFENSE/air facility

DEFENSE/military facility

GOVERNMENT/public works

HEALTHCARE/hospital

DOMESTIC/institutional housing

RECREATION/sports facility

RECREATION/theater

LANDSCAPE/natural, street furniture

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

DOMESTIC/institutional housing

RECREATION/sports facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/ Spanish Eclectic

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/ Mission Revival

MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Modern

MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco

NO STYLE

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE, WOOD

roof CERAMIC TILE, ASPHALT

walls CONCRETE, STUCCO, ASBESTOS

other METAL, CONCRETE Decorative detail

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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Property Name Hamilton Army Air Field Discontiguous Historic District

Subsequent to the closure of Hamilton Air Force Base in 1974 elements of the base, land and buildings, were transferred to the United States Navy, Army and Coast Guard. The remainder was reported excess to the needs of the Department of Defense and transferred to the General Services Administration (GSA). The Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC) of 1989 directed the Army to close and dispose of its property on the former Hamilton Air Force Base. As part of its environmental reviews for the disposal, the Army surveyed the entire base to identify those buildings and structures that would qualify for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Army's evaluation found that the portion of the former Air Force Base that had been the Hamilton Army Air Field through World War II retained sufficient integrity and possessed the historical significance required to qualify for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. In 1993, for purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the Army in consultation with the California State Historic Preservation Officer determined that the Hamilton Army Air Field Historic District qualified for listing in the National Register. Subsequently, GSA and the Army conveyed most of their holdings at the former Air Force Base to the New Hamilton Partners, a private for-profit development corporation. Immediately thereafter, the New Hamilton Partners commenced work on transforming the former Air Force Base into a new community. In the process many of the original buildings and structures and most of the World War II temporary construction within the Hamilton Army Air Field Historic District was razed, street patterns changed and a levy built between the former Air Force hangars and the runways of the airfield.

The 1993 BRAC amendments included direction for the Navy to close and dispose of its property on the former Hamilton Air Force Base. The property, known as the Department of Defense Housing Facility, Novato, consisted of military family housing and related support facilities. In preparing its environmental reviews for the disposal of this property, the Navy retained PAR Environmental Services, Inc. of Sacramento, California. PAR had made the initial historic evaluation for the Army to reevaluate the historic district in view of the changes brought about by the New Hamilton Partners. This evaluation found that the integrity of the Hamilton Army Air Field Historic District had been compromised. Only three discontiguous areas of the former historic district were found to possess sufficient integrity to qualify for inclusion in the National Register. The California SHPO concurred with this conclusion and the Navy prepared this National Register Nomination for the Hamilton Army Air Field Discontiguous Historic District.

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Property Name Hamilton Army Air Field Discontiguous Historic District

SUMMARY

The proposed Hamilton Army Air Field Historic District consists of the original buildings designed by the Office of the Quartermaster General, Washington, D. C., under the direction of Captain (later Colonel) Howard B. Nurse between 1932 and 1935. All of the original buildings, from the elaborate Headquarters to the simplest electrical vault, were constructed of concrete, tile, and stucco. Pivotal buildings and domestic housing were designed in the Spanish Eclectic style with Mission, Moorish, Spanish Baroque or Churrigueresque, Art Moderne, and Renaissance elements.

ARCHITECTURAL OVERVIEW

The buildings present at Hamilton reflect several construction eras. The majority of the base architecture was constructed between 1932 and 1935 when the base was being established. Minor building efforts continued sporadically into the 1960s and early 1970s.

Initial Construction

Approximately 135 buildings on base were constructed during initial buildup at Hamilton. Designed and built under the direction of Captain Howard B. Nurse, an engineer with the Office of the Quartermaster General in Washington, D.C., these buildings are the most architecturally detailed on base, reflecting the personal inspiration and care of Nurse. Nurse was assisted in his endeavors by a group of local civilian architects and engineers led by H. P. Spencer, Chief Architect, and F. W. Salfinger, Chief Engineer (Spencer 1935).

In a departure from traditional base architecture, Nurse and his staff designed the buildings in a Spanish Eclectic style, popular in America between 1915 and 1940. Bertram G. Goodhue's design of the California State Building at the San Diego Panama-Pacific Exposition in Balboa Park, 1913-1915, brought a revival of the Spanish Churrigueresque style to California (Woodbridge 1988:86). This style, much more elaborate than the Mission Revival style that had spawned a large number of buildings around the state, was thought to be more appropriate for the festivities surrounding the opening of the Panama Canal.

Inspired by the exhibition's publicity, many other architects began to look to the rich architectural traditions of Spain and Latin America for inspiration. Called Spanish Colonial Revival, this sequence of architectural traditions was used in the construction of numerous buildings during its heyday. The style was well-suited to the climate of California and the Southwest, and thousands of residences, commercial and industrial buildings, railroad stations, resorts, and military bases were built during the 1920s and 1930s when use of the style reached its apex.

Because the buildings at Hamilton contain so many different design elements, including Moorish, Renaissance, Spanish Churrigueresque, Mission, and Art Moderne, Spanish Eclectic appears to be a more appropriate and inclusive name for the architectural style used in the base design, as opposed to any one revival style in particular. The primary method of construction for the administrative and industrial buildings was reinforced concrete covered with stucco exteriors and Mission tile roofs. Churrigueresque elements, as seen on the ornate facades, were used in some of the more important buildings: group headquarters, non-commissioned officers' (NCO) barracks, the base theater, and the base hospital. The bachelors officers' quarters (BOQ) has many Moorish elements, including arches, brackets,

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decorative tilework, and use of metal railings. Art Moderne elements, including corner pillars, incised designs, and stepped parapets, appear on many of the base buildings, mostly in the industrial sector in hangers.

Some architectural elements reflect the military function of the base, including the use of the eagle and shield on the NCO barracks and the group headquarters building; the caduceus in the brackets supporting the hospital portico; and the Army five-pointed star on the hangers and other buildings.

The officers' and non-commissioned officers' quarters on base also reflect the Spanish Eclectic style, with the use of cantilevered metal and Mission style balconies and covered porches, French doors and casement windows, focal windows, heavily carved and panelled doors, decorative stucco vents, decorative tiles, and elaborate bronze and metal lighting fixtures and sconces. All of the quarters are of hollow tile construction, faced with stucco, and with Mission tile hip and gable roofs. Foundations of all buildings were constructed of 12-inch thick reinforced concrete, in consideration of the seismic activity in the region.

In addition to the structures, Nurse was responsible for much of the landscaping evident on base in the housing area. Mature vegetation and repeated placements and types of vegetation are evidence of his overall scheme. Conifers and New Zealand draeconia were used to frame doorways and accent the corners of buildings. Palms line the edge of base around the housing area. The plants, including the palm trees, shrubs, and bushes, were presented to the base by the local community at the request of Nurse. In the residential area in particular, landscaping was designed to offer shade and privacy. The rock retaining walls, walkways, signs, and street light standards present in the core of the base were also conceived and installed during the initial construction phase, as were the tennis courts, amphitheater, and other recreational facilities.

While the majority of initial construction was completed in 1935, the theater was built between 1938 and 1940 after the base had opened and Nurse had departed for Hickam Field. This building, however, was included in Nurse's original post plans and adheres to the architectural style of the existing permanent buildings.

ARCHITECTURAL DETAIL

Area A

Officers' Housing

The southeastern portion of the district includes 96 single family or duplex residences, a three-story building used as the bachelor officers' quarters (BOQ), tennis courts, swimming pool, seven electrical vaults, gas and electrical compound and five non-contributing elements. The original officers' club (Facility No. 203) although built in the 1930s and early 1940s, has been extensively altered, enclosed, and enlarged and is a non-contributing building. A second BOQ (Facility No. 227) was built in the 1960s and is not a contributing building. One structure, an electrical vault (Facility No. 279), represents modern construction on base and is not considered a contributor to the district. The bathhouse (Facility No. 204) was built in 1934, but has been significantly modified and is not considered a contributor to the district. The Pool Water Treatment building (Facility No. 209) was built in 1971 is a modern structure and not a contributing element.

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Property Name Hamilton Army Air Field Discontiguous Historic District

Permanent army housing includes 62 single-family residences for field and company officers, and 34 duplex units for 68 non-commissioned married officers and their families. These units consist of 12 different architectural designs and floorplans. Increasingly elaborate floorplans were designated for areas furthest from the technical section of the base, and at the highest elevations with the most spectacular views. The largest and most complex residence was traditionally occupied by the base commander. Building size, complexity, and elevation decreased along with the rank of the designated residents. Below the commander's house were homes for other field officers of highest rank, then company officers, and finally non-commissioned officers in duplexes.

Generally, the housing resembles standardized Spanish Colonial Revival units constructed at Randolph Field in Texas and at other bases (Fine and Remington 1972:48; Thomason and Associates 1993). Captain Nurse blended the standard design with Mission, Art Moderne, and other stylistic elements, resulting in a unique Spanish Eclectic style. Completed in 1933 and 1934, the housing is all of hollow tile and stucco construction, and has Mission tile roofs, and reinforced concrete foundations. Steel bars were used during construction in consideration of the seismic activity of the region. The houses have red oak flooring, panelled oak entry doors, fireplaces with molded mantels of cast stone, and hammered iron lighting fixtures and brackets. All of the housing is complete with a laundry and storage basement, an attached garage, built-in closets and cabinets, and tiled bathrooms and kitchen counters. Most of the original steel sash or casement windows have been replaced with aluminum sliders. Kitchens were remodeled in 1955 and original cabinets, appliances, hardware, flooring, and lighting were replaced. In 1962, the tile countertops and backsplashes in the kitchen were removed and replaced with post-formed plastic laminate. Kitchen floor coverings were replaced with vinyl asbestos tiles. A recessed light fixture was added over the sinks at this time.

The single-family residences vary from three to five bedrooms (the higher the residents' rank, the more bedrooms) and are outfitted with maids' quarters and elaborate butlers' pantries. Most of the housing plans include an open porch covered with red quarry tile and complete with large, permanently mounted, terra-cotta flower pots. The homes sit in well-landscaped grounds with lawns, mature oak and palm trees, shrubs, and flowers. Accent upright trees frame the doors and corners of many buildings. There are no fences; each yard flows into the next, and the plantings, rock retaining walls, cast concrete and iron street lights, and curved roads lined with palms and fruit trees provide a cohesive feeling to the area.

Base Commander's Quarters - Field Officers' Quarters, Type B (Facility No. 299)

The base commander's residence is the largest of the permanent housing units and is the only one of its type on the base. It is an H-shaped building with hipped Mission tile roof above a decorative cornice. The house is two stories high on the north side and one story with a basement and double garage on the remainder. The central portion of the plan, which contains the living room, has a pair of arched multi-pane windows that dominate the exterior facade and provide a spectacular view of San Pablo Bay. The carved and panelled entry is located in the two-story section, recessed beneath a small porch with tile flooring and supported with square pilasters. The walls are all at right angles, except for the northwest corner which is built on an angle and recessed beneath the upper story. Fenestration, except for the arched windows, consists of 6/1 pane casement. The exterior of this five bedroom house has not been altered.

Some interior fixtures in the house have been removed and replaced with modern fixtures. The porch was enclosed in 1956. However, none of these alterations are significant and do not diminish the structure's National Register eligibility.

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Field Officers' Quarters, Type A (Facility Nos. 222, 253, 280, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 296, 297, and 298)

These field officers' homes are two stories high, L-shaped, with low-pitched Mission tile cross gable roofs. The quarters have a central front entry, in the corner of the L, recessed beneath a decorative arch. Tile steps lead to the carved and panelled front doors. Over the entry is a wooden balcony, supported by decorative beams, with turned posts and railing that support a shed roof with Mission tiles. The facades of the projecting portion of the wings have many Spanish Eclectic elements: the second story has a series of decorative applied arches beneath the front gable roof, decorative vents, and double multi-pane frame French doors opening onto a cantilevered balcony with metal grille. On the lower story an arched window, with multiple panes, is located immediately beneath the balcony. Each home has a small side porch with concrete steps and a Mission tile shed roof supported with turned posts. Except for occasional minor alterations (removal of a pot or light fixture), these four-bedroom homes are intact.

The sun porches were enclosed in 1956 with the installation of jalousie windows. The primary access to the homes is through a central hall, with a living room and porch on one side and dining room, kitchen, pantry, and maid's room and bath on the other. Rooms on the second floor include a master bedroom with bath and dressing room, and three smaller bedrooms and a bathroom. The primary staircases consist of oak treads with stained oak newels, banisters and turned balustrades. Basement stairways are wood, with two-by-four-inch banisters, and non-skid treads.

Archways provide access from the hallways to the living and dining rooms and from the master bedrooms to their hallways and dressing rooms. Picture molding is located at the cornice level in the living room, dining room, hallways and bedrooms. Each home has a living room fireplace constructed of cast concrete with a chimney breast inset with a central niche. Plaster-covered brick pilasters and leaf brackets support the mantel and surround the firebox. Hearths are six-inch-square red quarry tile.

Company Officers' Quarters, Type A (Facility Nos. 210, 214, 217, 220, and 223)

These company officers' homes are L-shaped with two stories on one side and a large one story living room wing on the other side with a chimney in the end wall of the wing. They have low-pitched Mission tile cross gable roofs, exposed rafters, and louvers in the gable ends. The central carved and panelled entry door is recessed beneath a shed porch with a Mission tile roof. The porch roof is supported on either side of the entryway by two large decorative wood brackets. Fenestration on the lower floor consists of three large multi-pane windows recessed beneath decorative windowheads with a small pointed arch. On the second story, French doors lead to a small cantilevered balcony with a metal railing. Each home has a porch on the side, supported by large stucco posts that create an arched entry. This style of home has an exterior stepped brick chimney, a decorative element in its own right. These three-bedroom homes have not been altered.

A partially stucco-clad brick chimney is located on the exterior living room wall of each building. Three bands of brick circle the chimney halfway up its length. Cast iron cleanout doors and frames are at the base of the chimneys. The primary access to the homes is through a central hall with a living room and porch on one side and dining room, kitchen, pantry, and maid's room and bath on the other. Rooms on the second floor include a master bedroom with bath and dressing room, and two other bedrooms and a bathroom. The living rooms have gabled wood ceilings with four sets of exposed Mission-style double beam rafters. The enclosed porch has a wood beam ceiling. Original furnishings are built in and include wood bookcases flanking the living room fireplace with windows in a recessed square above the cases. A telephone cabinet is in the hall and linen closets are upstairs. Some bedrooms have built-in dressing room cabinets with drawers. Original kitchens had a porcelain-topped cabinet with a mounted flour sifter and sugar canister and a ventilated vegetable cupboard. These were replaced in 1955 with wood cabinets with Mission-style hammered metal hinges and latches.

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Company Officers' Quarters, Type B1 (Facility Nos. 211, 215, 218, and 221)

These homes are L-shaped and are two stories high. They have low-pitched end gable Mission tile roofs and chimneys in the gable ends. The upper story front facade consists of a 6/6 pane casement window and a Mission style cantilevered wooden balcony with square posts with decorative brackets and turned newels. The balcony is supported by decorative beams. A large, arched multi-pane window is the focal point of the lower facade; the remaining fenestration consists of multi-pane windows. The central entry door is panelled and surrounded by decorative tile. It is recessed beneath a small porch and is accessed via tile steps. A small porch, with concrete steps and turned posts, is located on the side of the building. Similar to Type A homes, these three-bedroom units have not been altered, with the exception of some porches being enclosed in 1934 and others in 1956.

A rectangular stucco-clad brick chimney is located on the exterior living room wall of each building. The primary access to the homes is through a central hall, with a living room and porch on one side and dining room, kitchen, pantry, and maid's room and bath on the other. Rooms on the second floor include a master bedroom with bathroom, and two smaller bedrooms and a bathroom. Flooring in the bathrooms is one- by one-inch, one by two-inch, or one-inch hexagonal ceramic tile in a variety of color schemes (lavender/purple, sea green/olive green, cream/black). All bathrooms have marble thresholds.

Door casings and baseboards are wood and simple in design. Picture moldings are located at the cornice level. Each home has a living room fireplace constructed of cast concrete with pilasters and brackets supporting a mantel and sloped chimney breast with a central niche with a wood shelf and an outlet for an electric clock. Original built-ins include wood bookcases flanking the front living room arched window. Telephone niches with wooden shelves and doors are located in the first floor hallways. Other built-ins include linen closets by the bathrooms, dressing room cabinets and drawers, and a china cabinet in the dining room. Original kitchens had tile counters and backsplashes; these have been replaced with formica tops.

Company Officers' Quarters, Type B2 (Facility Nos. 213, 216, and 219)

These quarters are L-shaped and are two stories high. They have low-pitched Mission tile end gable roofs with chimneys in the gable ends. The upper story front facade consists of French doors leading to a cantilevered metal balcony supported by metal brackets, a small multi-pane window surrounded by decorative stucco work, and multi-pane windows. The panelled entry door is centrally located on the lower front facade and recessed beneath a tile-roofed porch supported by square pilasters. The front picture window is multi-paned and recessed beneath a decorative pointed arch; other fenestration is multi-pane casement. The house has a side porch with tile roof supported by Mission style brackets, concrete steps, and an enclosed railing. The floor plan is exactly the same as the Type B1 plan, with living room, dining room, kitchen, and maids' quarters on the lower floor and three bedrooms on the upper. These units are unaltered.

Company Officers' Quarters, Type C (Facility Nos. 226, 232, 236, 240, 246, 256, 260, 266, and 278)

These quarters are one story high with a laundry room, garage, and storage area in the basement. The buildings are almost square in shape, with low-pitched front gable roofs on each side and a cross gable roof connecting them. The houses have a central small Mission style porch with wooden posts and brackets supporting a tile roof. The porch contains the main entryway, which is reached via a concrete and tile stairway with enclosed railing. One side of the front facade contains French doors that open onto a cantilevered balcony with metal railing. Casement windows beneath an arched windowhead are located on the opposite facade. The remaining fenestration consists of multi-pane

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sash. Decorative stucco vents are located in various places on the gable ends and the front facade. The units have not been altered, although some light features may have been removed.

The primary access to the homes is through an entry from the front porch to the living room, which is flanked by a dining room, kitchen, butler's pantry, and maid's room and bath on one side and three bedrooms and two baths on the other. The gabled living room ceiling is wood with decorative noted *vigas*, rafters and trusses. Door casings and baseboards are wood and simple in design. Picture molding is located at the cornice level of the living rooms, dining rooms, hallways, and bedrooms. Each home has a living room fireplace constructed of plaster with a three-sided chimney breast overhanging the traver hearth pilasters, and a recessed ceramic tile niche in its center. Hearths are three-piece traver tile.

Original furnishings are built-in and include wood bookcases on one side of the living room fireplaces. Telephone niches with wood panel doors are located in the hallways. Other built-ins include linen closets by the bathrooms, dressing room cabinets and drawers, and china cabinets in the dining rooms. All have white glass or porcelain knobs and recessed wood panel doors. The pantries feature original solid-core wooden cabinets and doors with recessed panels. Original kitchen cabinets had tile counters and backsplash; these have been replaced with formica counters.

Company Officers' Quarters, Type D (Facility Nos. 224, 228, 230, 234, 238, 242, 248, 258, 264, 270, 272, and 276)

These residences are one-story-high with a basement garage, boiler room, and storage room. They are T-shaped with low-pitched cross-gable Mission tile roofs. The front facade consists of French doors leading to a cantilevered metal balcony, a central entryway accessed via tile and concrete steps with an enclosed railing, a multi-pane window, and a partially enclosed porch with tile shed roof. The panelled doorway is recessed beneath a shell-patterned archway. The original porches were screened and had turned posts and railings; some have now been enclosed. Decorative vents are located in the gable ends and in several places on the front facade. The interior floorplan consists of a living room and central corridor, which is flanked by a dining room, kitchen, pantry, and maid's room and two baths on one side, a porch and two bedrooms on the opposite, and a master bedroom and bath on the rear.

Each living room fireplace is constructed of cast concrete with a chimney breast featuring a central niche; concrete pilasters support the mantel and surround the firebox. Hearths are six-inch-square red quarry tile. The lintels are reinforced concrete cast in forms imitating rough wood that produce a wood grain effect. The lintels are stained to resemble wood. Telephone niches are located in the hallways. Other built-ins include linen closets by the bathrooms, dressing room cabinets and drawers, and a china cabinet in the dining rooms.

Company Officers' Quarters, Type E (Facility Nos. 244, 250, 252, 254, 262, 268, 271, and 274)

These quarters are rectangular in shape with a series of low-pitched intersecting and cross gable multi-level Mission tile roofs. The residences are one story high with a garage, laundry, storage room, and boiler room in the basement. The central portion of the facade, with a front gable roof, is located above the garage and has a large multi-pane picture window above a stucco bracketed cornice. A porch, which faces the front of the house, is located on one side of the building. The porch railing is a screen wall composed of decorative arched vents, which are also present on the wall beneath the two central front multi-pane windows. Other fenestration is multi-pane sash. Decorative vents are located beneath the gables and on the front facade.

The primary access to the homes is through the front porch to the living room, which is flanked by a dining room, kitchen, and pantry on one side, three bedrooms and two baths on the opposite, and a hallway, maid's room, and bath on the rear. Each home has a living room fireplace constructed of cast concrete with horizontally-set slate surrounding

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the firebox and supporting a pine mantle. An arched niche with an outlet intended for an electric clock is present above the mantle. Hearths are slate.

Company Officers' Quarters, Types H1, H2, and H3 (Facility Nos. 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, and 289)

All of these company officers' quarters are rectangular in shape, one story high with low-pitched hip, gable, and cross-gable roofs, and have the same floor plans, although reversed. The interior floorplan consists of a living room, dining room, kitchen, porch, and three bedrooms. Each also has a screened porch on the rear corners, some of which have been enclosed, and basement garages and laundry rooms. The facades, however, are different. Type H1 (Facility Nos. 282, 285, and 288) has an end-gable roof and a panelled entry door recessed beneath a shed-roofed portico supported by Mission-style beams and brackets. An exterior stucco-clad chimney is located on the gable wall. A recessed multi-pane picture window is located on one side of the entryway, while the other side of the facade contains a multi-pane sash window, decorative vents in an X pattern, and a pair of arched multi-pane windows.

The housing units are entered from the front portico to the living room and porch on one side, with two bedrooms and two baths in the front, separated by a hallway from the dining room, kitchen, and bedroom on the rear of the house. The living rooms feature "Tray" ceilings. Each home has a living room fireplace constructed of cast concrete with concrete pilasters with chamfered posts supporting the mantel; decorative three-inch ceramic tiles surround the firebox.

Built-in bookcases flank the central front living room windows. Telephone niches with a shelf and door are located in the hallways. Other built-ins include linen closets by the bathrooms, dressing room cabinets and drawers, and a china cabinet in the dining rooms.

Type H2 (Facility Nos. 283, 286, and 289) has a cross-gable roof with a circular window in the gable end above an arched multi-pane picture window. The entryway, a recessed panelled door surrounded by decorative tilework, is also located in the front gabled section. The remaining fenestration consists of multi-pane sash windows above decorative brickwork in a chevron pattern. One of the windows is barred with a metal grille.

The Type H3 residences (Facility Nos. 281, 284, and 287) have a hip and cross-gable roof. The front gable contains a decorative stucco window above a multi-pane picture window recessed beneath a shell patterned arch. The panelled entry door is recessed beneath a small porch adjacent to the front gable. Multi-pane sash windows and X-patterned decorative vents compose the remainder of the facade. An exterior gable end chimney is covered with stucco and provides a decorative element.

Double Non-Commissioned Officers' Quarters, Type A (Facility Nos. 170 and 220)

Housing units Type A, B, C and D are duplex units with mirrored floor plans on each story. These quarters are two stories high with a low-pitched end gable roof. The U-shaped structure contains two living units, one on each side, with a basement with garage and storage unit beneath. Each unit has a second story Mission-style balcony with turned wooden posts and railings. Between the balconies are two cantilevered balconies with metal railings and French doors. The entryways are located on small porches, recessed beneath the upper story porches with two multi-pane sash windows between. The remaining fenestration is multi-pane sash. Each unit has a rear porch with turned posts, tile roof, and metal railing.

The primary access to the units is through a central hallway from the front porch. The hallway provides access to the living room. A dining room is located adjacent to the living room and a kitchen projects beyond the rectangular mass of the building. On the second floor of each unit is three bedrooms, an enclosed sleeping porch, and bath

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surrounding a central hall and a stairway which provides access from the first floor. The sleeping porch and one bedroom are located in the front of the unit, with the other bedrooms and bath to the rear.

Each of the main rooms has a picture molding cornice. Each unit has a living room fire place constructed of "cast stone" concrete and has decorative pilasters on either side, and a 12-inch red quarry tile floor and hearth. In the bathrooms, the original ceramic toothbrush and glass holders, soap dishes, toilet paper holder, and black plastic-covered wood towel racks are extant as is the mirrored metal medicine cabinet above the sink.

A wooden shelf supported by a bracket provided telephone storage in the lower floor hallway. There is a built-in bookcase in each living room, and a china cabinet in the dining room. The china cabinet has two sets of panelled doors, two drawers, and a recessed niche.

Double Non-Commissioned Officers' Quarters, Type B (Facility Nos. 160, 180, and 230)

These quarters are two stories high with a basement garage and laundry room and a Mission tile hipped and cross-hipped roof. The front entryways are located on each corner of the building, on a recessed porch supported by square columns. Immediately above the porches are large multi-pane windows above cantilevered metal balconies. Multi-pane sash windows are located in the center of the building on both floors, and continue on the sides and rear walls. Each unit has a rear porch with turned posts, tile roof, and metal railing.

Double Non-Commissioned Officers' Quarters, Type C (Facility Nos. 150, 190, 270, 271, 234, 244, 254, 260, 270, and 280)

These units are two stories high, rectangular, with an end-gable Mission tile roof and an exterior stucco-clad chimney with a metal bracket in the central facade. Flanking the chimney are French doors and cantilevered balconies with metal railings. Small, paired multi-pane sash windows are located on the upper corner front facades above recessed porches supported by square columns. Between the entryways, flanking the chimney, are large, multi-pane windows above decorative stucco vents. Small porches with tile roofs, turned posts, and metal railings are located on the rear of each unit. There is a living room, dining room, and kitchen on the first floor and three bedrooms on the second and a bath on the second.

Double Non-Commissioned Officers' Quarters, Type D (Facility Nos. 240, 239, 250, 251, 260, 261, 143, 151, 171, 181, 221, 231, 241, 251, 261, 271, 285, and 291)

These residences are two stories high, rectangular, and have low-pitched end-gable roofs. A cantilevered balcony with metal railing and curved metal brackets is located on the central upper front facade and accessed via a pair of French doors. Small windows with metal grilles flank the porch, and decorative stucco vents are located above it and on the sides of the building. Access to the units is via recessed porches located on either end of the building. The porches have round support columns and a double arch in front and a single one on the side. Between the porches and on the rear and side walls are multi-pane sash windows.

Bachelor Officers' Quarters (Facility No. 201)

The BOQ is a three-story reinforced concrete and stucco rectangular building with cross-gable roof. The central lower story comprises five arched and bracketed bays that lead to a central garage. The main entry is located on the south facade and consists of a recessed porch with a Moorish-style arch surrounded by decorative tile wainscoting. An arched arcade with round columns over a tile stairway leads upward from the lower story along the south wall to a

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second-story apartment. A balcony, with pierced and decorative railing, is located on the second story above the garage bays. Arched and rectangular multi-pane windows that lead to the balcony are present across the facade of the building. Three semi-circular cantilevered balconies with metal railings and French doors are located on the third-floor facade and are separated by multi-pane sash windows. The north facade has decorative arched corncicing beneath a front gable roof. The roof on the south side has projecting towers on the corners and a chimney decorated with stucco vents.

The apartments consist of 17 sets of quarters for bachelor officers and a dormitory for visiting officers. A minimal apartment includes a bedroom, living room, closet, and bath, while the most elaborate has a living room and study, bedroom, bath, fireplaces, balcony, and numerous closets. The interior of the building has many elaborate Spanish Eclectic elements including tile stairways with decorative tile wainscoting, metal railings, and metal lighting fixtures and sconces. The baths have marble surrounds and stall dividers, as well as decorative tilework. There is a large kitchen, with tile floor and walls, and a dining room located on the second story. The remainder of the BOQ consists of suites with living rooms, bedrooms, and baths. This building remains essentially unaltered, with only a small number of the original apartments modified by partition walls or other minor additions.

Officers' Swimming Pool (Facility No. 205)

Completed by September of 1934, the officers' swimming pool is located atop a small hill in close proximity to the officers' mess and club. This structure is rectangular with an area of 7,200 square feet and a capacity for 265,000 gallons of water. It is made of reinforced concrete with standard tile edging and is a contributing structure to the district.

Tennis Courts

One of Hamilton's two sets of tennis courts is located in the officers' housing area, between the non-commissioned officers' duplexes and the single-family residences. This recreational structure was completed along with the officers' quarters in 1934. It has four regulation courts with asphalt pavement, high fences, and a parking area. The officers' tennis courts have been maintained over the years and are currently used by Navy personnel. They are a contributing structure.

Utility Meter House (Facility No. 551) and Main Electric Switching Station (Facility No. 552)

This small complex of two structures was completed in 1933 and designed by Captain Nurse and his staff at Hamilton. They are one story high with Mission tile gable roofs. Construction is hollow tile faced with stucco; foundations are concrete. These two contributing structures have decorative vents in the gable ends, rectangular windows (one set in a recessed arch), and panelled doors. Windows are protected with metal bars. The complex is surrounded by a chain-link fence, and is located near the Double NCO Quarters.

Electric Transformer Vaults and Switch Stations (Facility Nos. 225, 231, 241, 247, 251, 261, and 295)

These electric transformer vaults and switch stations were constructed between 1932 and 1934. These seven identified structures are apparently constructed from the same plan and are small, one-story concrete and stucco vaults with low-pitched gable and shed roofs. They have metal doors and industrial sash pane windows. Floors and foundations are concrete. They are scattered throughout the housing area.

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Miscellaneous Base Contributors

Like the utility vaults and tennis courts, several other architectural features at Hamilton are located throughout the base or in more than one of the areas discussed separately above. There is a variety of street furniture used on base, such as street lights and directional sign posts. Finally, the system of rock retaining walls, terraces, and rock planters are an integral part of the landscape architecture throughout the 1930s base properties. All of these features are considered contributing structures to the historic district; each type is counted as one structure.

Base Exterior Lighting

The Spanish-style 1930s street lights and other exterior lighting fixtures on the base are located primarily along the streets in the permanent housing sections and flanking the entries to the three permanent barracks buildings in Area C. The electric lights are contained in octagonal glass lanterns with ornamental cast metal casings topped with sharp-pointed finials. The lanterns are supported by tapered six-sided cast metal standards that are either full length for curbside lighting or half-length posts when mounted on the railings of the two entrance bridges. The exterior lights on the permanent barracks are attached to either side of the entries with ornamental cast metal brackets.

Two styles of World War II-era street light standards were noted around the base theater, amphitheater, and the hospital hill area. They are more utilitarian in nature than the original decorative lighting on the base.

Rock Wall Terraces, Retaining Walls

The rock terracing throughout the original base property serves to simultaneously separate individual residences while visually uniting various sections of the base into an overall city-like plan. They were built as part of the final phase of original post construction in 1935 (Hamilton Official Photos 1934-1935). The majority of this construction consists of varied sizes of small retaining walls in the sloping lawns of the permanent base housing (Appendix C, Photo 10), although an elaborate terraced area in front of the hospital, as well as the amphitheater, are also part of the rock wall landscape architecture (Appendix A, Photo 4). The walled semi-circular terraces in front of the hospital have a central rock stairway with stepped sidewalls, leading to a concrete fountain at the top that is no longer extant. Double sets of palm trees and other landscape trees flank the top of the terraced area. The rock walls are counted as a structure. The historic landscaping throughout Area A is considered a contributing site.

Street Signs

Directional street signs are installed throughout the housing area to identify buildings and streets within the post. The earliest type of sign posts have either two metal posts with a connecting rail to support a large board sign or a single post with a small suspended sign. Both sizes have decorative Spanish-style metal brackets compatible with other decorative metal features of base architecture. A later type of sign post also prevalent on the base is a simple F-shaped device composed of welded pipe rail sections. These Moderne style sign posts were installed during the 1940s. Both styles of signs are contributors to the district.

Area B

The post hospital building and staff quarters are situated on a small hill overlooking the main base area, including the base theater and amphitheater located at the base of the hill. The central location of the hospital reflects not only its central importance as the base medical facility, but also the contributing role of medical detachments during World

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War II. All three buildings and the structure in this area are contributors to the historic district. Rock-supported terracing in front of the hospital and throughout the amphitheater reflects original landscaping on base. The landscaping is counted as a contributing site.

Base Hospital (Facility No. 515)

Designed under the direction of Captain Nurse, the base hospital is three stories high, built of 24-inch-thick concrete, and coated with stucco. The front facade consists of a central front gabled section flanked by two wings. The central gabled section has round concrete pillars on each end, topped with decorative finials. Cornicing, consisting of a series of cast concrete arches, decorates the front facade; immediately beneath the cornicing is a circular vent pierced with four round holes. There is an ornate portico in the center front facade, with concrete floor and brick steps, supported by cast concrete Corinthian columns, pilasters, lattice, and decorative brackets. The three porch entries are arched and have Moorish-style decorative details, including a pierced screen that is supported by brackets decorated with cast concrete caduceus motifs.

The front entry doors are modern glass and metal. The windows on the front of the building have arched windowheads, but the original wooden sash has been replaced with aluminum. Many of the windows on the rear of the building, however, are original and have decorative tilework. Cantilevered porches, with arched supports and cast metal railings, are located on both the front and side facades of the wings.

When in use as a hospital, the lower floor was occupied by laboratories and an X-Ray room, the second by offices, and the third by operating rooms. Many of the walls are covered in ceramic tile: yellow in the hallways, green in the operating theaters, pink and black in the offices, and black and white mosaic tile floors in the bathrooms. The kitchen has a quarry tile floor; the remainder of the floors are wooden with asphalt tiles. The stairways retain their original metal and wood handrailings and the large interior wooden doors are also original. Initially patients wards were within the hospital itself. During World War II, however, temporary wooden barracks were constructed around the hospital for use as wards. Most of these quickly erected temporary buildings have been demolished. The remaining temporary buildings are not included in the discontiguous district.

Non-Commissioned Officers' Quarters, Type C (Facility No. 513)

This duplex residence is a Type C plan as described fully above in the permanent housing section, Area A. It is located behind the hospital, where it functioned in the 1930s as housing for emergency staff medical officers and their families. In 1942 it was converted to nurses' quarters, and after the war it once again became family housing for hospital personnel.

Post Theater (Facility No. 507)

The base theater was completed in 1938, as funding gradually became available to complete the permanent post construction. It is a two-story rectangular concrete structure with low-pitched Mission tile front gable roof. The exterior walls are pilastered, corniced, and windowless throughout the main auditorium portion, while the lobby section is marked on the exterior by a single tower buttress on either side. The auditorium has two basement-level exits toward the rear of the building with stairways and metal railing enclosures. The lobby at the front of the building has two side entrances and a pair of windows on each side of the second story with decorative ridged concrete surrounds. Vent panels with chevron designs also decorate the exterior sides of the lobby. The roof is topped with a decorative elevated vent having a small tiled roof of its own.

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The front facade consists of a full-width arcade supported by four square columns on the lower floor, two windows with ridged concrete surrounds above, and a large vent window in the front gable with a Spanish Churrigueresque surround in cast concrete. The central double entry doors are metal and glass. This building retains its original exterior appearance, although interior space was reconfigured in 1976.

Amphitheater

This semi-circular structure is located against the east slope of Hospital Hill and west of the tennis courts on Escolta Avenue in the temporary housing area. It was constructed in 1935 by the Constructing Quartermaster's Office and is a part of the landscape and rock retaining wall system installed throughout the base under the planning direction of Captain H. B. Nurse. The amphitheater is constructed of terraced stone benches with a surrounding double stone wall that contains trees and landscape shrubs. A flat area in the front center is located between the amphitheater and the Olympic-sized airmens' swimming pool; the pool has been filled in with soil, is no longer visible, and does not retain integrity.

Area C

Area C consists of the group headquarters, non-commissioned officers' (NCO) barracks, hangars, and industrial areas for plane testing, fueling, and servicing. Although many of the auxiliary facilities were constructed in the 1950s or 1960s and the World War II-era air freight and landing strip facilities have been removed, the hangars remain essentially intact and original. Area C contains eight contributing buildings, two contributing structures, and two non-contributors to the district. Two non-contributing structures consist of fuel storage and utility facilities built after 1950. One non-contributor is built of concrete block and does not detract from the historic appearance of the air field. The other non-contributor is a heating facility (Facility No. 371). This structure is the heating facility for Facility No. 370. This modern structure was constructed in 1962 and is not a contributor to the district.

Double Hangars (Facility Nos. 370, 380, 390)

These three hangar buildings are essentially identical H-shaped structures with a central shop area and hangars on either end. They are built of concrete covered with stucco. The hangars have metal truss, low arched roofs with circular louvers in the facades. The corners are anchored with large square towers with narrow, vertical rectangular recessed panels of windows. Each hangar has ten sliding metal and glass doors on each end. Fenestration on the sides of the hangars consists of multi-pane metal industrial windows, frosted and embedded with chicken wire; there are two rows on the west sides and one on the east side. A one-story concrete and stucco section with multi-pane metal windows and 12 square concrete pilasters is attached to the west walls of the hangars. Large working platforms, cranes, and other facilities are located within the hangars. The one-story shop areas, between the hangars, have stepped pedimented facades, double glass and panel central doors, and multi-pane sash windows. All but one have been altered or have additions to their facades, made during World War II.

Hangar 390 has been upgraded to modern standards and is maintained at present by the United States Coast Guard. It retains its historic appearance, and its mass, shape, basic plan, and architectural features have not been altered. Hangar 370 has been somewhat altered by numerous additions to the shop area between the double hangars from 1942 to 1962; these changes are not significant. Hangar 380 has had very few alterations and is the most original in appearance.

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Air Corps Shops and Hangar #9 (Facility No. 350)

This facility, finished in July of 1933, was the first of the air field buildings to be completed. The hangar and shop are identical to the other double H-shaped hangars on the exterior, but half of the interior of the building was designed as a shop area. The interior of Hangar 8 is identical to the other hangars with working platforms along the upper walls and a monorail for crane equipment. The interior of the shops hangar is divided into assembly, repair, and machine shops, with a painting booth and a row of specialty shops along the west side. Connecting the hangar and shops is an office and supply area with stepped pedimented facade, double glass and panel central doors, and multi-pane sash windows. An addition was made to this central section during the 1940s, somewhat obscuring the original facade, but the remainder of the building appears to be in original condition.

Flagpole (Facility No. 1)

The base flagpole was erected along the axis point at the front of the hub configuration that forms the core of the main base area. A concrete sidewalk extends from the entry of the headquarters building and past the flagpole to the outside edge of the semi-circular lawn that forms the top of the hub. Around the flagpole is a circular area containing four concrete seating benches. The 75-foot metal flagpole rests in a circular corniced cast-iron base placed on a stepped hexagonal platform of concrete. In 1944 the base dedicatory plaque in the memory of Lloyd A. Hamilton was moved from the base entrance and was cemented onto the flagpole's platform. This landscaped area, with the central flagpole and view of the headquarters building, provided a favorable first impression of the base. The flagpole, with its historic plaque, is the only contributing object within the Hamilton Army Air Field Discontiguous Historic District.

Headquarters Building (Facility No. 500)

The main administration building was designed by Hamilton's Constructing Quartermaster Office under the supervision of Captain H. B. Nurse (Hamilton Plans 1934) in a Spanish Eclectic Style and is the pivotal building on base. It is T-shaped, with a central two-story section flanked by one-story wings. The building is constructed of concrete with a stucco coating. The front facade consists of a central portion with low-pitched front gable roof over an entry and balcony flanked by two wings with end-gable roofs in the central portion and front gable roofs on the ends of the wings. The roofs are covered with Mission tile.

The central front facade has decorative arched cornicing and a circular vent containing a six-pointed star. A Spanish Churrigueresque portal is the focal point of the front facade and has ornate pilasters, finials, scrollwork, and emblematic motifs all in cast concrete. A cantilevered balcony with grillwork railing forms the center of the two-story portal. The central recessed front entry has double glass and panel doors with an arched transom. A pair of multi-paned arched metal casement windows provide access to the balcony above the entryway. Quarry tile steps lead to the entry, with clay pots flanking the doorway. The entry is framed with tall, cylindrical conifers.

The rear entry, which faces straight down palm-lined 4th Street to the air field, consists of a central recessed glass and panel door topped with a flat cornice supported by bracketed pilasters in cast concrete. Pairs of multi-pane casement windows flank the entry while three such pairs extend across the second story of the rear facade. This entry is reached via eight concrete steps enclosed by a solid concrete railing. The bottom stair is flanked by two short columns with flat rimmed tops. A metal hand rail divides the stairway in half. A palm tree is located on either side of the staircase.

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The two wings that flank the central portion of the building have arcaded walkways with four arches supported by square pillars. A band of decorative tilework extends the length of the covered walkway beneath the windows which are centered behind the arches. At the end of each arcaded walkway is a front-gabled extension with central casement windows. A concrete pathway, with a central flagpole surrounded by four concrete benches, leads to the entrance.

The interior of the building consists of a central lobby with quarry tile floor. The lobby has many Spanish Eclectic elements, including unique bracketed ceiling beams cast in concrete to look like rustic Spanish-style *vigas*, and cut metal lighting fixtures with an Air Corps motif. From the lobby three corridors, one on each side and one to the rear, are flanked with offices and other small rooms. A concrete stairway with metal railing leads to the second floor offices. Other than the tiled lobby, interior floors are concrete or linoleum tile.

The headquarters building is in its original condition except for some interior modifications, such as carpeting and the replacement of some of the original metal sash windows with aluminum frames. Measuring 31 feet by 32 feet in the two-story center, with 32- by 72-foot wings on either side, it was one of the first buildings completed on base and was the group headquarters from its completion in 1934 to the base closure in 1975 (Hamilton Facility Cards 1957-1971).

Non-Commissioned Officers' Barracks (Facility Nos. 420, 422, and 424)

Originally used as the non-commissioned officers' (NCO) barracks, these buildings were constructed by the K. E. Parker Company in 1933 and 1934 (Hamilton Plans 1933, 1934; Wampler 1964). They are three stories high and are built of reinforced concrete with a stucco finish. Large, square, stepped buttresses support the wings of the H-shaped buildings. They have low-pitched cross hip and gable roofs covered with red Mission tile and supported by decorative exposed rafters. There are three dormers on each side of the roofs.

The architectural detailing that went into the original construction of the base is evident in the central entries to the barracks buildings. The front entries are surrounded by a Spanish Churrigueresque facade, two stories high, with decorative cast concrete pilasters, crests, eagles, and other emblematic motifs. The double entry doors are arched, with carved wooden panels and turned half posts over glass, while multi-pane French doors provide access to the cantilevered porch above. Decorative metal work includes the porch railing and sconces that flank the entry. Open loggias that were located on all three floors of the rear facades were enclosed with concrete block and glass in 1957, but these additions do not significantly alter the historic appearance of the buildings. The barracks buildings appear to be in original condition, except for the addition of the aluminum windows that replaced the original 6/6 pane sash on the rear facade and the porch enclosures.

The primary access to the barracks is through a central entrance and vestibule. Originally a barber shop and Company Officer's room were located on either side of the main entrance of each building. Rooms for a cook and 1st Sergeant were across the hall or adjacent to the Company Officer's room. One wing housed a squad room and day room, now divided into individual offices and accessed from a center double-loaded corridor. The opposite wings contain the former dining room (mess hall) accessed by the center corridor. The remainder of the wing contains the kitchen and serving area. The subdivision of the buildings into office space occurred in the 1950s and 1960s; the original configuration consisted primarily of open space barracks. When Building 420 was converted into a computer center in 1969, the east side of the main floor was utilized as a "U. T. A." area, with crypto room, tape library, and computer room, necessitating the raising of some floors and lowering of some ceilings.

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The second floor originally had open squad rooms on each wing, some of which have been converted to office space. The central portion of the buildings houses a toilet, shower, and rooms for a tailor, four Second NCOs and one Third NCO. Access is by one central interior staircase and an exterior staircase that connects the exterior rear balconies. The floor plans consist of central double-loaded corridors with office space on each side. Latrine facilities are located on the east sides of the central stairways. The third floor plan is the same. The attics consist of a large open space with a concrete floor. The wings in some of the attics have been enclosed with frame and wire walls and an indoor rifle range was established in Building 420 in 1960.

Original latrine fixtures are present initial three barracks, although Facility No. 420 has the greatest integrity. A central bathroom is located on each floor. The shower room has metal and porcelain faucets with four tile wall dividers. The washroom has back-to-back sets of five to six porcelain sinks mounted together using cast iron brackets with mirrors on a metal frame. Tin soap dispensers with glass fronts and paper towel holders are mounted over the sinks and below the mirrors. Each bathroom contains a total of eight to ten flush-valve toilets in two rows separated by marble partitions and wood doors. The back wall of each contains a cast iron mop sink with chrome rim and five or six flush-valve urinals. Latrines are plumbed with overhead exposed cast iron pipes.

Electrical Transformer Vault #1 (Facility No. 352)

The electric transformer vault was constructed in 1933. It is similar to other electric transformer vaults in Area C of the district and was apparently constructed from the same plan. It is a small, one-story concrete and stucco vault with low-pitched gable and shed roof. It has a metal door and industrial sash pane windows. Floors and foundations are concrete.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

MILITARY

ARCHITECTURE

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1932 - 1946

1942-1945 WWII

Significant Dates

1932 (completion of the road system)

May 12, 1935 (Date of base dedication)

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Nurse, Captain Howard B., Quartermaster General

Office, Construction Quartermaster

Spencer, H. P., Chief Architect

Salfinger, F. W., Chief Engineer

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SUMMARY

Hamilton Army Air Field was constructed as a bombardment base and headquarters of the 1st Wing of the Army Air Corps, one of only three wings in the nation. Conceived at a time when aviation was rapidly developing, the base was assigned the mission of defending the entire western United States, a role it maintained until 1940. Hamilton also played a significant role in national defense and training during World War II, when it served as one of three major bases of the west coast wing of the Air Transport Command's Pacific Division and parent group of the Operational Training Unit Program, a role critical to the war effort in the Pacific. As such, it is eligible under Criterion A. Designed under the direction of Quartermaster's Constructing Officer Captain Howard B. Nurse between 1931 and 1935, Hamilton represented a significant departure from accepted Army base architectural style and layout. The carefully planned landscaping that incorporated natural oak groves, knolls, and hills; the cohesive design of all buildings in a Spanish Eclectic style; and the conception of an Army base as a planned community were creative and daring innovations that represent the work of a master and add to Hamilton's architectural importance under Criterion C. The original administrative and residential core of the base evoke a sense of time and place.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Land Acquisition: 1929-1932

Following the success of aviation development during World War I, the newly formed Air Corps began planning facilities across the nation for defense purposes and for flight training and test operations. Early in 1929 the Army determined to establish an air field for a bombing squadron somewhere near San Francisco. The air field was conceived as part of a strategic aviation unit including March Field in Riverside, California, Selfridge Field in Michigan, and the Army's official aviation center at Kelly Field in Texas (*Marin Herald*, December 16, 1934; Thomason and Associates 1993). A site in the vicinity of San Francisco was preferred because of its midway location between Canada and Mexico and the natural protection offered on the eastern side by the coastal mountain range (Nurse 1934). The San Francisco Junior Chamber of Commerce immediately requested the cooperation of all Bay Area communities in procuring this air base for the region (Bailey 1932; Ehat 1983).

The concept of a military installation in Marin County took hold in 1930 when a lobbying committee, assembled by the "Marvelous Marin" countywide Chambers of Commerce and the Marin County Board of Supervisors, first convinced the County Supervisors that free land would be required in order to attract the Army base to Marin. When the promise of a sale of 630 ideal acres was secured from the California Packing Company, the committee presented their proposal to obtain the air base to a host of significant government officials and Army representatives (Bailey 1932; Ehat 1983). The Marin County site was chosen by the Army for a number of reasons, including the land donation. One deciding factor was that the location on San Pablo Bay afforded about 250 clear days a year, providing an excellent climate for aviation training and test maneuvers, particularly when compared to the foggy condition in San Francisco and other Bay Area communities (Chappell 1981).

In 1930, President Hoover passed the Kahn bill, introduced by Marin Congresswoman Florence Kahn, to secure funds for construction of an air field at Marin Meadows north of San Rafael (Coady 1976; Wampler 1964:2). Soon after the law was passed, Marin County was asked to raise \$121,000 in order to obtain the needed acreage from the California Packing Company. The Board of Supervisors voted for an increase in the tax rate in order to secure the funds, anticipating a boost to the local economy once construction started (Wampler 1964:2).

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Although a series of setbacks in 1931 resulted in a delay in property acquisition, the Army continued plans to construct the base. In March of 1931, an appropriation of \$1.4 million for construction of the air field passed through Congress (Rathburn 1944). The Army began preliminary survey work at the site of the base, confident that the problems would be resolved and that they would soon have clear title to the property (Wampler 1964:3).

Coincidental with the arrival of appropriated funds for preliminary work was the decision in Washington to name the new base Hamilton Field. Prior to May 1931, the project was referred to locally as Marin Meadows Air Field. The Army named the base in honor of First Lieutenant Lloyd Andrews Hamilton, a World War I Air Corps aviation pilot from New York who had received the Distinguished Service Cross at Varssonaore, Belgium, for "Extraordinary Heroism in Action" (Chappell 1981:1; Coady 1976). Hamilton was killed in action near Lagnecourt, France, on August 26, 1918, 13 days after receiving his Distinguished Service Cross (Chappell 1981:1).

Although the Army received funding for preliminary work at the new base, it was nearly a year before they received clear title to the land. In 1931 Marin County was asked to provide an additional \$53,400 to pay for the purchase. The County, in an economic bind, was unable to raise more than about \$30,000. In despair, they went to nearby communities who stood to profit from the presence of a local air base and asked for donations. Although it took three months to raise the money, the county received contributions from Oakland, Sonoma County, and San Francisco to help meet the financial goal (Bailey 1932). The Army bought the land from Marin County for one dollar, and the deed to the entire 927-acre parcel earmarked for use as a base was transferred to the Army in a formal presentation on March 17, 1932 (Wampler 1964:5).

Construction Phase: 1932-1935

Even while the land acquisition problems were being resolved, the Army was planning base construction. In late April 1931, the local papers announced that Captain Howard B. Nurse was being detailed to Marin County as Construction Quartermaster for the project (*Pacific Service* April 27, 1931:1). Captain Nurse (later Colonel Nurse) was an engineering graduate of the Mechanics Institute and had practiced in Rochester, New York (Fine and Remington 1972:48). Unlike other Army ventures, Nurse was given sole responsibility for determining the style of the new base. As a boy, Nurse had often visited his uncle's ranch in Solano County and was enamored with the Spanish Mission style of architecture found in California. He decided that this "early California" feel was appropriate for the area.

In the mid 1920s the Army had begun a radical departure from traditional base construction. Rather than haphazard building with no set plan or design, the trend was toward a cohesive plan, fitting the architectural style to the climatic conditions and historical associations of the area (Spencer 1935:13). Nurse was an advocate of this approach and intended to design Hamilton as a small planned community, a "city within a city" (Nurse 1928).

In 1928 Nurse published an article in *The Quartermaster Review* that discussed the planning and layout of Army installations or posts and proposed several "laws" to be considered in post planning:

UNITY (coordination of various parts of the post with one another);

CONSONANCE OF DESIGN (recurring geometrical figures, parallels, diagonals, similarity of style and scale, use of one construction method);

NATURAL BEAUTY (truth that identity does not exclude individuality);

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BALANCE (symmetrical disposition of the elements on either side of axial lines); and

RADIATION (various parts of any post radiate from or otherwise refer back to common centers) [Nurse 1928:14-17].

These laws were applied to the design of Hamilton, as seen in the similarity in mass, shape, and facade treatment of all the buildings constructed during the initial phase of the base, layout of streets, use of open space, landscaping, and location of residential, administrative, and industrial buildings in relation to topographic features. Many of the features found at Hamilton (winding streets, use of hillsides, old growth oak groves, open space between administrative buildings) are design elements discussed by Nurse in his 1928 article (Nurse 1928:14-17) and put into practice at Hamilton.

Nurse was assisted by a corps of civilians headed by H. P. Spencer, Chief Architect, and F. W. Salfinger, Chief Engineer. As the director of this operation, Nurse was enthusiastic about the fact that this post would be built from scratch, so to speak, and that he was "not cramped for space and had no other buildings on the site to set a precedent for the design" (Spencer 1935:13). Nurse's community was planned around topography. Administration, air field, hangars, and industrial areas were designed for the flat terrain near San Pablo Bay. The layout of housing areas, clubs, and social centers was designed around the knolls surrounding the bay (Spencer 1935). Nurse's plan relied heavily on the natural oak groves, complemented with landscaping compatible with the early California style (Wampler 1964). In addition to the plants, the base plan called for compatible street lights and signage, rock features (e.g., Greek-style theater, seating area, and fountain by the hospital), and retaining walls to connect housing areas and blend in with the landscaping scheme.

Nurse and his team of architects designed reinforced concrete buildings covered with white stucco and red tile roofs and other features such as arcades and ornamental door surrounds in a basic Spanish Colonial Revival style. The addition of other elements borrowed from Moorish, Mission, and Art Moderne styles gave an eclectic look to the base. Even the hangers, although based on a standard technical plan found elsewhere in the country, were styled with sleek, Art Moderne geometry combined with arched rooflines and white stucco walls compatible with the Spanish-style buildings. By the time the Army was given clear title to the land, the architectural plans for more than 150 buildings had been finalized.

The Army finally received the deed to the entire 927-acre parcel designated for the base on March 17, 1932, and the construction phase began immediately. The first buildings erected on base were wood framed nurseries (needed to start cultivating Bermuda grass for the air field and plant clippings for the rest of the base) and a temporary office for Nurse and his staff. The War Department also detailed Captain F. C. Peters and Lieutenant J. H. Veal, both with the Quartermaster's Corps, to Marin County to act as Nurse's assistants (*Novato Advance* May 28, 1932). By June 4, 1932, the first contracts were out to bid. This initial work consisted of clearing the site, laying 3,300 linear feet of spur railroad track to the base, grading 2,600 feet of entrance road, and constructing two steel and concrete overhead highway bridges on base (*San Rafael Independent* June 4, 1932). The Army had committed over \$1,400,000 for construction during these early phases, a sizeable amount given the economic depression throughout the country (Wampler 1964).

The majority of work in 1932 revolved around completion of more than eight miles of paved and three miles of gravel roads and laying of 7.25 miles of sewer lines, eight miles of water mains, and six miles of gas mains. The technical area of the base, being approximately one foot below sea level, needed critical reinforcement before permanent structures could be built. To resolve this, 4,922 piles were driven into the ground on the sites of the larger buildings (*Novato Advance*, January 26, 1935). By January of 1933 more than 300 men were employed in the

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construction effort, concrete was being poured, steel was being put up for the hangars, and several buildings were ready to be plastered inside and stuccoed outside (*San Francisco Call Bulletin* January 7, 1933). In addition, landscaping of the base grounds and planting the landing field to Bermuda grass were also underway.

As part of the landscaping effort, Captain Nurse requested assistance from "civic-minded Marin county citizens." According to the *San Rafael Independent* (January 7, 1933), Nurse needed shrubs, flowers, and palm trees to carry out his landscaping plans. Unfortunately, money to beautify the base was not available. To this end, he asked for donations of plants or palm trees and noted that removal of the palm trees would be done without expense to the donor.

Nurse's landscaping plans were consistent with nationwide trends of the time. Popular landscaping elements included fine-textured green uprights with influence from classical formal gardens. Bold or contrasting plant forms were reserved for accenting and were consistently used in a formal and symmetrical manner to frame doorways or other architectural features designed to draw attention. In particular, the liberal use of New Zealand dracaena, with its bold and distinctive upright appearance and strong contrast to the green of the conifers, shows that boldness and contrast were valued during the landscaping of the base. Primary streets, such as the main street leading to the headquarters building, were lined with palms, as was the perimeter of the base in the housing area (Hrusa 1993).

In addition to the formal framing of doorways and building corners, Nurse placed terra cotta pots along walks, on porches, or at doorways. These pots were very popular in California gardens of the 1930s, and at Hamilton they were provided at each house as part of the landscaping. In addition, terra cotta pots were placed at several of the administration buildings (Hrusa 1993).

Plantings in the administration area and level parts of the base were designed to provide shade along streets and to act as physical barriers delimiting corners and channeling traffic away from the buildings and onto sidewalks. Conifers were planted to frame doorways of the headquarters buildings and the non-commissioned officers' barracks. Landscaping in the housing areas was planned to function as windbreaks, natural barriers between houses for privacy, foundation concealers, and accents. As the military rank of the occupants increased, so did the size and quality of the housing and the diversity, density, and uniqueness of the landscape plantings. In addition to plantings, rock walls and terracing were planned into the landscape of the housing areas (Hrusa 1993).

More than 7,000 trees of 80 different varieties were eventually planted throughout the base, as well as an assortment of shrubs and other plantings (Rathburn 1944:10). The climax of the landscape effort occurred on January 31, 1933, when a 40-foot-tall cedar tree was transported to Hamilton from Mather Field in Sacramento via a "special" truck and trailer. The tree was planted in the "great circle" away from the landing field (*San Rafael Independent* January 31, 1933) and was wired with lights by Captain Nurse. It became a cherished part of Hamilton's Christmas celebrations in years to come and may still be seen today in the North Circle among the officers' residences (Wampler 1964:9).

Hamilton received, in 1933, \$3,698,302 of Public Works Administration money set aside for improvement of military bases (Coady 1976:249). By the end of 1933, the payroll on base had reached about \$30,000 a week and close to 800 men were employed. Where possible, Nurse drew on the local labor pool, and the construction work at Hamilton provided income to many families suffering from the Depression (Wampler 1964:9). Local labor was recruited from a list of unemployed furnished by the "Marvelous Marin" countywide Chambers of Commerce (*Fairfield Gazette* November 26, 1932).

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By August of 1934 the base was about 90 percent finished and was attracting even more attention as it neared completion. A newspaper article published in the *San Francisco Call Bulletin* on Friday, August 3, 1934, is quoted below at some length in order to convey the enthusiasm for the base that was universal in the region.

Hamilton Field, Uncle Sam's newest air base, hailed by experts as the most complete aerial ground plant in the world today is rapidly nearing a stage of completion. Army officers hope to have the plant in full operation by November, when approximately 700 enlisted men and thirty-five officers will make it their flying base. . . The last of the ten hangers, which will have a capacity of nearly 200 planes, is under construction. Every type of technical maintenance and repairing facilities is included in the installation.

But laymen marvel at Uncle Sam's lavish, modern spirit in the non-military features of the new post - especially the officers and non-commissioned officers' quarters, and the enlisted men's barracks. They make up one of the home beauty spots of the Redwood Empire.

The latter are the answer to the private's prayer - boasting dormitories with indirect lighting, tiled showers, and many other conveniences. The non-commissioned officers' homes would be the envy of higher ranking officers in many posts. All of the buildings are of the California-Spanish style of architecture - also a new development in army construction.

The article in August was not far off target regarding a November completion date: the first major transfer of men to Hamilton occurred in early December 1934. Orders were received at March Field in Riverside, California, on November 27, 1934, that 518 officers and men of the 7th Bombardment Group would be shifted to Hamilton effective December 4. Included in the group were the 9th, 11th, and 31st Bombardment Squadrons and 30 bombing planes. With the arrival of the men and their families, Hamilton contained nearly 1,000 people and was ready for business (*San Rafael Independent* November 27, 1934). Major Tinker assumed command of the base with Captain Don Hutchins acting as his executive officer.

While the airmen arrived at the base in December 1934, the base was not dedicated until May 12, 1935. Thousands of people turned out for the ceremony to see California Governor Merriam turn over the base to the Army. At the ensuing ceremony, Brigadier General Henry "Hap" Arnold noted that "Hamilton Field stands today as the most modern and best equipped, up-to-date military air field in the United States" (Wampler 1964:20). A highlight of Dedication Day occurred when Major Tinker flew above the crowd and broadcast from the aircraft to the ground, the first time ever that air to ground communication was successful (Palmer 1993). The local population knew the base was officially complete, however, when Captain Nurse, after spending four years in Marin County, was transferred to Hawaii in June 1935 and ordered to build Hickam Field.

The Bomber Years: 1935-1940

Even while construction was underway the Army was putting the base to good use. In August 1934, with the base about 90 percent complete, fliers from the 316th and 367th observation squadrons, made up of reserve airmen from around Northern California, were undergoing annual training (*San Francisco Call Bulletin* August 3, 1934).

While the use of the field for training was appropriate, it did not reflect the true mission of the base during these early years. On December 31, 1934, the General Headquarters Air Force (GHQAF) was established within the Air Corps. The new air force had three wings that would provide a mobile striking force capable of protecting the country

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rom attack by sea. All existing bombardment and observation units within the Army were reassigned to a GHQAF wing (Wampler 1964:17).

Hamilton, upon its completion, was the headquarters of the 1st Wing, commanded by Brigadier General H. H. "Hap" Arnold. All appropriate units on the west coast, including the 7th Bombardment Group at March Field, were assigned to the 1st Wing to provide Pacific Coast defenses. The 7th Bombardment Group was composed of the 9th, 11th, and 31st bomb squadrons (equipped with 30 Martin B-12 bombers) and the 70th service squadron. The 2nd Wing was based out of Langley Field, Virginia, on the Atlantic Coast, while the 3rd Wing was stationed in Georgia and protected the middle and southern parts of the country (Wampler 1964:17).

Throughout the remainder of the 1930s the 1st Wing operated out of Hamilton with little change. In September 1935, the 88th Observation Squadron (Amphibian) was assigned to the group. The squadrons were all composed of World War I combat groups who represented some of the most experienced airmen in the Air Corps. While at Hamilton these squadrons participated in a wide variety of experiments and contributed to the tactics and techniques being developed at the time for employment of bomber aircraft. For example, environmental experiments were conducted to determine problems associated with extreme cold operating conditions on both bombers and men (Wampler 1964:18). Bombardment units also took part in large-scale war games and maneuvers on the west coast, using a bombing range at Hamilton as well as targets set up in the California desert for practice (Wampler 1964:19).

The end of the 1930s and the awareness of growing tensions overseas resulted in a number of changes at the base. First, the 31st bombardment squadron was transferred to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in 1938. This transfer represented attempts by the government to strengthen the defenses in the Pacific in light of uncertainties over Japan's intentions. In 1939, the 22nd Bombardment Squadron arrived at Hamilton as a replacement for the 31st. Their stay was short-lived, however, on account of the development of the B-17, a four-engine bomber plane for which the runway facilities at Hamilton were not adequate. The 1st Wing and its bombardment squadrons were transferred to a Utah base in September of 1940, representing the end of Hamilton as a bomber base.

Pursuit Groups: 1940-1942

Following the departure of the bombardment squadrons, the 10th Pursuit Wing was reassigned from Moffitt Field to Hamilton. This wing was composed of two pursuit groups (with three squadrons each) and the 88th Observation Squadron (Wampler 1964:20-21). The overall mission of the wing was to provide aircraft and crews for the defense of the west coast. In addition, the wing provided training for transient airmen. The base population was expected to reach a high of 3,000 permanent residents, with an additional 2,000 transient members (Wampler 1964:21).

The original base was organized to house about 1,000 people. With the arrival of the 10th Wing this number immediately jumped to about 1,700 enlisted men (and families) and 170 P-36 and P-40 aircraft, resulting in an immediate housing crisis (Wampler 1964:20). In order to alleviate the problem as early as 1939, the Army began to construct plain, frame barracks with no architectural embellishment and only the bare essentials in the interior. These buildings, constructed as quickly as possible, soon began to outnumber the original stucco and tile housing units and were used to fill the space between the original buildings, as well as other areas on base. This phase of temporary housing and frame building construction continued throughout World War II (Wampler 1964:20).

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The pursuit groups remained at Hamilton for two years, completing defense and training missions. Aircrews were trained at Hamilton and then sent to fighter troops that were being activated. Trained squadrons were also transferred to areas where an increased military presence was deemed essential in light of growing tension with Japan (Wampler 1964:22).

In March 1941, the Air Corps reorganized into four continental air forces. The Fourth Air Force took on responsibility for defense of the west coast. Hamilton was assigned to the Fourth Air Force and began to take on new responsibilities as a result of this change (Wampler 1964:22).

World War II: 1942-1946

At the outbreak of United States involvement in World War II, Hamilton was pursuing the work started by the 10th Wing: training. As the Air Force expanded to meet the demands brought about by the war, the need for adequate training facilities increased. Hamilton expanded its facilities and became an important training facility, partially because of its proximity to the Pacific Ocean and the San Francisco Presidio. Hamilton also became the center of the interceptor pursuit and patrol system for the Pacific Coast. As such, the base began to acquire sub-bases from the Bay Area to Redding, with the flight strips used as dispersal points for fighter aircraft. By 1943, Hamilton has sub-bases stretching from the Bay Area to Redding, California, with Oakland Airport becoming the most important (Wampler 1964:23).

Another function of Hamilton during the war years was as a parent group of the Operational Training Unit Program (OTU). A parent group trained combat groups, provided experienced personnel to newly formed groups, provided equipment and aircraft to groups during training, supervised and assisted satellite groups, and served as a model for those groups. The use of Hamilton as an OTU resulted in a revolving pool of men who supervised training and then shipped out to combat zones. A core of experienced men remained on base to train the newly arriving units (Wampler 1964:26).

The majority of service women at Hamilton were members of the Women's Air Corps (WAC), later known as Women's Air Force (WAF). These women served as training instructors, medical technicians and clerks, among other things. Those working in the World War II medical units were also joined by civilian women.

Hamilton's strategic location in the Bay Area was an ideal point of departure for Pacific-bound air troops, and for the majority of the war Hamilton was designated the official point of departure for bombardment air units bound for the Pacific. This role lasted from early 1941 until December 1944. Crews heading out arrived at Hamilton and were housed, fed, and given last minute flight data. Base facilities were used to complete pre-flight inspections and conduct any necessary repairs or maintenance on arriving aircraft. Mass movement of aircraft overseas began in May 1941 when 21 crews of the 19th Bombardment Group departed for the Philippines via Hawaii from Hamilton. Of note was the departure of the 38th and 88th reconnaissance squadrons, who left Hamilton on December 6, 1941 in B-17s, and arrived at Hickam Field during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor (Wampler 1964:26-27).

After November 1943, Hamilton was also responsible for processing heavy bomber aircraft and crews for overseas combat. Additional training and outfitting of the B-24 combat crews and aircraft occurred at Hamilton. To accommodate the transient crews, temporary housing, including tents, was constructed all over the base. After March 1945, the function of processing out troops was transferred to Salinas, California, relieving the housing situation at Hamilton (Wampler 1964:28).

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The arrival of all these transients at Hamilton created critical housing problems. According to Wampler (1964:28), hundreds of crews arrived each month and they all had to be housed and fed. To convey an idea of the problems confronting the base commander, between November 1943 and February 1945, a total of 2,695 B-24 crews with aircraft arrived at the base, and 2,446 were processed out to overseas theaters. A crew consisted of 10 to 11 men with aircraft. An additional 1,172 crews without aircraft were also processed out through the base (Wampler 1964:28).

In order to minimally meet the housing needs created by so many transients, temporary structures were constructed as fast as possible wherever there was room on base. At one time, a tent city was set up to accommodate the men. Permanently assigned personnel were often forced to double (or worse), or vacate their quarters entirely to make room for incoming transients. In 1941 and 1942, the row-upon-row of temporary buildings gave a new, crowded appearance to the formerly spacious base grounds, emphasized by the darkened colors of the camouflage paint (Palmer 1993; Wampler 1964).

At the onset of the war, construction operations on Army posts were reassigned to the Army Corps of Engineers, who began immediate emergency construction programs in order to supply bases all over the country with critically needed temporary housing. Building specifications for temporary barracks, administration buildings, and warehouses were used for construction, while planning and the allocation of construction funds was overseen by the captain of the Army Corps of Engineers. Construction at the individual bases was carried out by a small staff of Army engineers (Fine and Remington 1972), enabling other military personnel on base to concentrate on the tasks assigned to Hamilton during these war years.

In addition to the tasks mentioned above, Hamilton was mandated to provide replacements to overseas combat theaters on an emergency basis. This included both personnel and equipment (supplies, aircraft, etc.). These emergencies often left the base understaffed or without crucial supplies. In order to meet the base needs, service women were reassigned to jobs usually performed by men, including motorpool or bus drivers (Wampler 1964:29).

During the war years Hamilton served as one of the three major bases of the Pacific Sector of the Air Corps Ferrying Command, later known as the Air Transport Command's (ATC's) Pacific Division. The mission of the ATC was to manage the dispatching and safe transport of Pacific-bound ferry and tactical aircraft in the vicinity of the war zones. ATC units provided transportation for freight and passengers traveling to the Pacific or returning to the states. By the end of 1942, this dispatching unit was staffed by about 1,800 officers and enlisted men, and regularly scheduled flights were operating between Hamilton and Australia (ATC n.d.). Thousands of wounded men and prisoners of war returned to the States through Hamilton from June 1944 until well after the war ended in 1945 (Palmer 1993; Wampler 1964:30).

In order to accommodate the ACT duties, new facilities were built, including a freight and passenger terminal. In addition, Barracks 422 and 424 were vacated and turned into hospital wards and even more temporary buildings were constructed. At one point Hamilton processed more than 4,000 patients per month. One particular evacuation arrival of note was on February 24, 1945, when 68 American nurses liberated by MacArthur's forces from a Japanese prison camp in Manila arrived at Hamilton on their way to a cheering United States. Another highlight at the base occurred in June 1945 when President Harry S. Truman arrived at Hamilton on his way to the first United Nations Conference in San Francisco. Representatives from nine other countries also used Hamilton for their arrival and departure point (Wampler 1964:34).

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Reorganization: 1946-1950

The end of the war brought about a reorganization in Hamilton. During the final year of war activity, the primary mission of the base had been to support the ATC operations. While the base was legally under the jurisdiction of the Fourth Air Force, the ATC actually managed the facilities. On June 19, 1946, the Fourth Air Force took over management of the base and the role of the ATC diminished at Hamilton. In 1947 the ATC reorganized as the United States Air Force. The Fourth Air Force remained at the base until 1960 (Wampler 1964:37).

This change in management was reflected in the change of the facility's name from Hamilton Field to Hamilton Air Force Base. By 1947 fighter squadrons were reassigned to Hamilton, and remained at the base until the early 1960s. The primary purpose of the base during this period was air defense and training, although Hamilton continued to provide support and facilities for other military groups, including the Tactical Air Command, Military Air Transport Command, and the U.S. Air Force Auditor General's Office (Wampler 1964:41-42).

Renewed Growth and Development: 1950-1964

With the change to an air force base, the number of families assigned to Hamilton increased, resulting in another critical housing shortage. More than 1,000 units were built in the 1950s near the entrance to the base, partially in response to the need to gear up for the Korean conflict. The base maintained a full complement of units during the 1950s and continued in its air defense and training mission.

During this time old facilities were renovated, a few new buildings were constructed, and the runways were increased in length. Major changes occurred in 1959 when the runways were upgraded to accommodate F-101 and F-104 operations. Jet fuel accommodations were also completed at this time and an additional hangar, used to house pilots and planes capable of becoming airborne in less than six minutes, was constructed (Chappell 1981:2). Also during the Korean conflict, the base continued to be used as a receiving facility for homecoming wounded (Wampler 1964:42-45). By 1964 the size of the base had increased to 2,184 acres. Old facilities were being renovated, runways had increased in length, and many of the frame buildings put up during the war years were deemed substandard and demolished.

Decline: 1964-Present

After the Korean conflict the use of Hamilton was scaled down, although the Fourth Air Force and Air-Sea Rescue units were still in residence. One major change that occurred in the late 1960s was the use of the base hospital. In the past, the hospital had been used as a receiving facility for homecoming wounded. During the Vietnam War, however, the wounded were treated at Oak Knoll Hospital in Oakland or were sent to Letterman at the San Francisco Presidio, as the Hamilton facility was outdated. Instead, the Hamilton Hospital was used by base residents, retirees, and dependents.

As outside development escalated in the mid to late 1960s, some of the problems anticipated as early as 1961 occurred. New housing developments close to base raised concerns about noise levels and the possibility of air collisions over residential neighborhoods (Wampler 1964:49). These concerns, combined with the diminished importance of the base in the overall air defense and training scheme, resulted in the excess of the base. The majority of Air Force property at Hamilton was excess beginning in 1974, putting an end to the long air defense mission at the base. The role as a transfer station and training facility continued, however. In fact, Hamilton acted as a reception

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center for the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration during the influx of refugees from Southeast Asia during the 1980s. According to local accounts, more than 180,000 Cambodian, Laotian, and Vietnamese refugees were processed through Hamilton in the early 1980s (*San Rafael Independent Journal* April 29, 1983).

The end of the old Air Force base occurred in 1984 when the Army took possession of the buildings and the name was changed to Hamilton Army Air Field. Today, the base is owned by several branches of the armed forces, including the Army, Navy, and Coast Guard, and excessing of property continues.

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE

The period of significance for the district begins in 1932 when Nurse began issuing contracts and completed the road system that is still in place today. This initial planning and construction phase was characterized by a massive work effort on the parts of military and civilian workers to ready the new installation for occupation. May 26, 1935 is significant as the date of formal dedication for the base. The importance of the facility continued during its years as a bombardment base. The World War II years, 1942-1946, are also significant because Hamilton played a critical role in the Pacific theater operations. The period of significance ends in 1946 when Air Transport Command relinquished its World War II role as base manager and Hamilton's relative significance on the West Coast began to decline.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Hamilton Army Air Field Historic District is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C.

Criterion A: Historical Significance

The base is important for the role it played in national defense in the 1930s and 1940s. The conception of a bombardment base on the west coast came at a time when aviation was rapidly developing as a result of the success of airmen during World War I. The base was constructed as a headquarters for the 1st Wing of the Air Force, one of only three such bases in the nation. As such, it was given the mission of defending the entire western United States, a role it maintained until 1940.

The base also played a significant role in national defense and training during World War II. During this period it served as a major training facility and processing-out base for overseas units. Its role as a parent group of the Operational Training Unit Program was critical to the war effort in the Pacific. Also important during the war years were base processing activities and Hamilton's function as an overseas staging area. Hamilton was one of three major bases of the west coast wing of Air Transport Command's Pacific Division during the war and played an important role in the processing of wounded and prisoners of war back into the United States.

While Hamilton continued its mission as a training and processing facility in the 1950s, it was reassigned numerous times during this period, most notably to the Air Force. Expansion during the 1950s consisted primarily of housing units, and the base did not recapture the excitement and energy of the 1940s. Decline of the facilities and use of Hamilton escalated in the 1960s, when the processing of wounded during the Vietnam War was transferred to other Bay Area hospitals on account of the inadequacy of Hamilton's facilities. This decline continued in the 1970s when excessing of the property began.

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Criterion C: Architectural Significance

Hamilton is eligible under Criterion C for its architectural merit, overall layout and design, and representation as a work of a master, Howard B. Nurse. Hamilton Army Air Field was designed by the Office of the Quartermaster General under the direction of engineer Captain Howard B. Nurse. All of the original buildings, constructed between 1932 and 1935, are of hollow tile or reinforced concrete construction with stucco coverings and Mission tile roofs. The architecture is Spanish Eclectic with Mission, Moorish, Spanish Churrigueresque, Renaissance, and Art Moderne elements, reflecting the popularity of Bertram Goodhue's design of the San Diego Panama-Pacific Exposition in 1915 and representing a departure from traditional Army base architectural style and layout.

The completion and success of Hamilton represented early stages of a growing trend in the construction of military bases that involved the design of buildings in a style compatible with the history, climate, and flavor of a region. The Spanish Eclectic style used by Nurse resulted in unusually beautiful buildings (for a military installation) that retained the functional importance for which they were intended. Even the simplest structure was clad with stucco and given a Mission tile roof in efforts to maintain a cohesive feel throughout the district.

Landscaping on base was designed under Captain Nurse's guidance, using trees and plants donated by Marin County residents, and reflects his beliefs regarding Unity, Consonance of Design, Natural Beauty, Balance, and Radiation. The placement of buildings, structures, roads, walkways, light standards, and recreational facilities was also planned according to these unifying criteria. The use of topographic features such as knolls and hills for residential areas and flatlands for administration and industrial buildings followed Nurse's concept of a base as a planned community, a "city within a city." Nurse's retention of native oak groves, use of rock walls and terracing, accent plants to frame doors and building corners, and terra cotta pots reflect his unique approach to landscape architecture, yet is in keeping with the trends of the time. The intact condition of the landscape features planned by Nurse increases the integrity of setting of the district as a whole.

The historic buildings constructed during the original base buildup appear as they did in photographs taken during the 1932-1935 period except for some deterioration and the presence of some remaining World War II buildings. All of the buildings and structures have cohesive design elements, workmanship, material, and association and form the integrated core of the original base. They are unique to Hamilton Army Air Field and remain as a profound example of military architecture designed in the Spanish Eclectic style during the 1930s. The sense of time and place that can be felt on base today, particularly within the original family housing areas, is a tribute to Nurse's overall dream to create a special place at Hamilton, and is consistent with his philosophy regarding military post planning.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☒ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☒ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
CA-2398
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☒ Federal agency
- ☒ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of Repository:

Novato Historical Guild

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property A: 34.4 acres B: 5.739 acres C: 137.736 acres 177.875 Total Acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing		
A1	10	541900	4211880	A2	10	542070	4211895
A3	10	542600	4211682	A4	10	542850	4211690

☒ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Mary L. Maniery, Historian, and Cindy L. Baker, Historian

Organization: PAR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, INC.

Date: April 28, 1998

Street & Number: 1906 21st Street

Telephone: (916)739-8356

City or Town: Sacramento

State: CA

ZIP: 95814

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 9 Page # 1

Property Name Hamilton Army Air Field Discontiguous Historic District

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Air Transport Command

- n.d. The Air Transport Command in the Pacific: 1942. Prepared by the Historical Section, Intelligence and Security Office, Headquarters, West Coast Wing, PADC, ATC, Hamilton Field, California. On file, Novato Historical Guild, Novato.

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Coady, Margaret A.

- 1976 The Birth of an Air Base. In *From Old Marin With Love*, pp. 243-249. Marin County Bicentennial Commission.

Ehat, Carla

- 1983 Notes compiled by Robert Carson, preceding manuscript transcription of oral interview with Carla Ehat, May 17, 1983. On file, Marin County Free Library, Marin Branch California History Room, San Rafael.

Fine, Jesse, and Lenore Remington

- 1972 *Army Corps of Engineers: Construction in the U. S.* U. S. Army and World War II, Office of Military History.

Hamilton Army Airfield

- n.d. Facility Inventories and General Site Maps. On file, Base Installation Office, Hamilton Army Airfield, Novato.

Hamilton Facility Cards

- 1957-1971 Maintenance Cards for Base Facilities. On file, Hamilton Army Air Field Installation Office, Novato.

Hamilton General Site Plan

- 1952 General Site Plan of Hamilton Army Air Field. On file, Hamilton Army Air Field Installation Office, Novato.

Hrusa, Fred

- 1993 PAR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, INC., Staff Botanist, personal communication with Mary L. Maniery.

Kretz, Ray, and Fran Kretz

- 1993 Ray Kretz, U. S. Army Chief Warrant Officer, Retired, and Mrs. Fran Kretz (Technical Sergeant). Oral interview with Mary L. Maniery and Leslie Fryman, 1993. Transcript on file, PAR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, INC., Sacramento.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 9 Page # 2

Property Name Hamilton Army Air Field Discontiguous Historic District

Nurse, Howard B.

1928 The Planning of Army Posts. *The Quartermaster Review* September/October 1928: 14-17. Washington, D.C.

1934 Hamilton Field. Bulletin compiled by H. B. Nurse. Marin County Historical Material, Scrapbook #3. On file, Marin County Free Library, Marin Branch California History Room, San Rafael.

Palmer, William

1993a Personal communication with Mary L. Maniery.

1993b Videotaped interview with Dana McGowan and David Donnenfield at Novato Historical Guild Museum, Novato. On file, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District Office, Planning Department, Sacramento.

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n.d. Computer Inventory of Hamilton Facilities. On file, Presidio Planning Office, San Francisco.

Rathburn, Gail D.

1944 History of the Hamilton Field Air Base Area: February 1929 through March 1944, 3 vols. Ms. on file, Novato Historical Society, Novato, California.

Spencer, H. P.

1935 Hamilton Field, the Army's Newest Air Base. *California Arts & Architecture* April.

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1993 *Randolph Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas*. Cultural Resource Survey, Final Report. Nashville, Tennessee. On file, State Office of Historic Preservation, Austin, Texas.

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1964 *Hamilton Air Force Base: Its First Thirty Years, 1934-1964*. On file, San Francisco Presidio Museum Archives, San Francisco, California.

Woodbridge, Sally B.

1988 *California Architecture*. Chronicle Books, San Francisco.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 10 Page # 1

Property Name Hamilton Army Air Field Discontiguous Historic District

UTM REFERENCES

	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
A5	10	543222	4210940
A6	10	543370	4210930
A7	10	543240	4210740
A8	10	542750	4210650
A9	10	542760	4211140
A10	10	542625	4211440
A11	10	542040	4211598
B1	10	542320	4211920
C1	10	542295	4212140
C2	10	542370	4212180
C3	10	542575	4212285
C4	10	542520	4212400
C5	10	542640	4212480
C6	10	542700	4212365
C7	10	542640	4212325
C8	10	542700	4212230
C9	10	542760	4212260
C10	10	542940	4211900
C11	10	542840	4211890
C12	10	542610	4212220
C13	10	542400	4212100
C14	10	542330	4212080

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Area A

The boundary of the nominated property, as indicated on the Novato 7.5 minute USGS map, is delineated by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the UTM reference points provided above.

Area B

The boundary of the nominated property, as indicated on the Novato 7.5 minute USGS map with the UTM reference point of B1 10 542320 4211880, corresponding to the center of the property.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 10 Page # 2

Property Name Hamilton Army Air Field Discontiguous Historic District

Area C

The boundary of the nominated property, as indicated on the Novato 7.5 minute USGS map, is delineated by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the UTM reference points provided above.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Area A

The boundary for Area A encompasses the entirety of Captain Nurse's original base housing. The modern housing area on the north has been excluded.

Area B

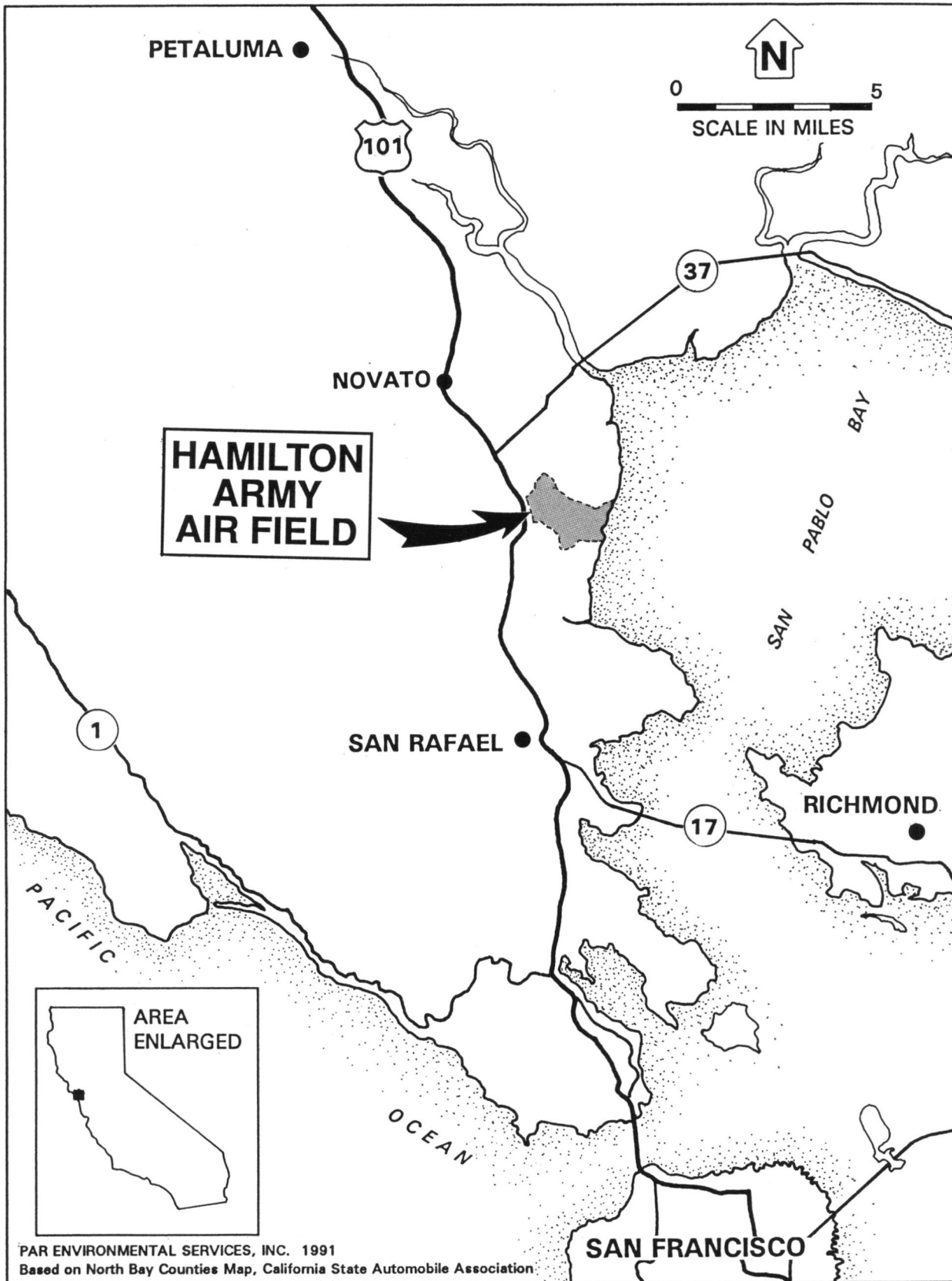
The boundary includes the hospital, medical staff housing, theater and amphitheater that have been historically part of Hamilton Army Air Field and that maintain historic integrity. Extant World War II and temporary structures not in Nurse's original plan are excluded.

Area C

The boundary includes the headquarters building, three NCO barracks, the hangers and Air Corps Shops building that have been historically part of Hamilton Army Air Field and that maintain historic integrity. Building 365, the control tower and hanger, has been excluded as it no longer retains integrity.

274

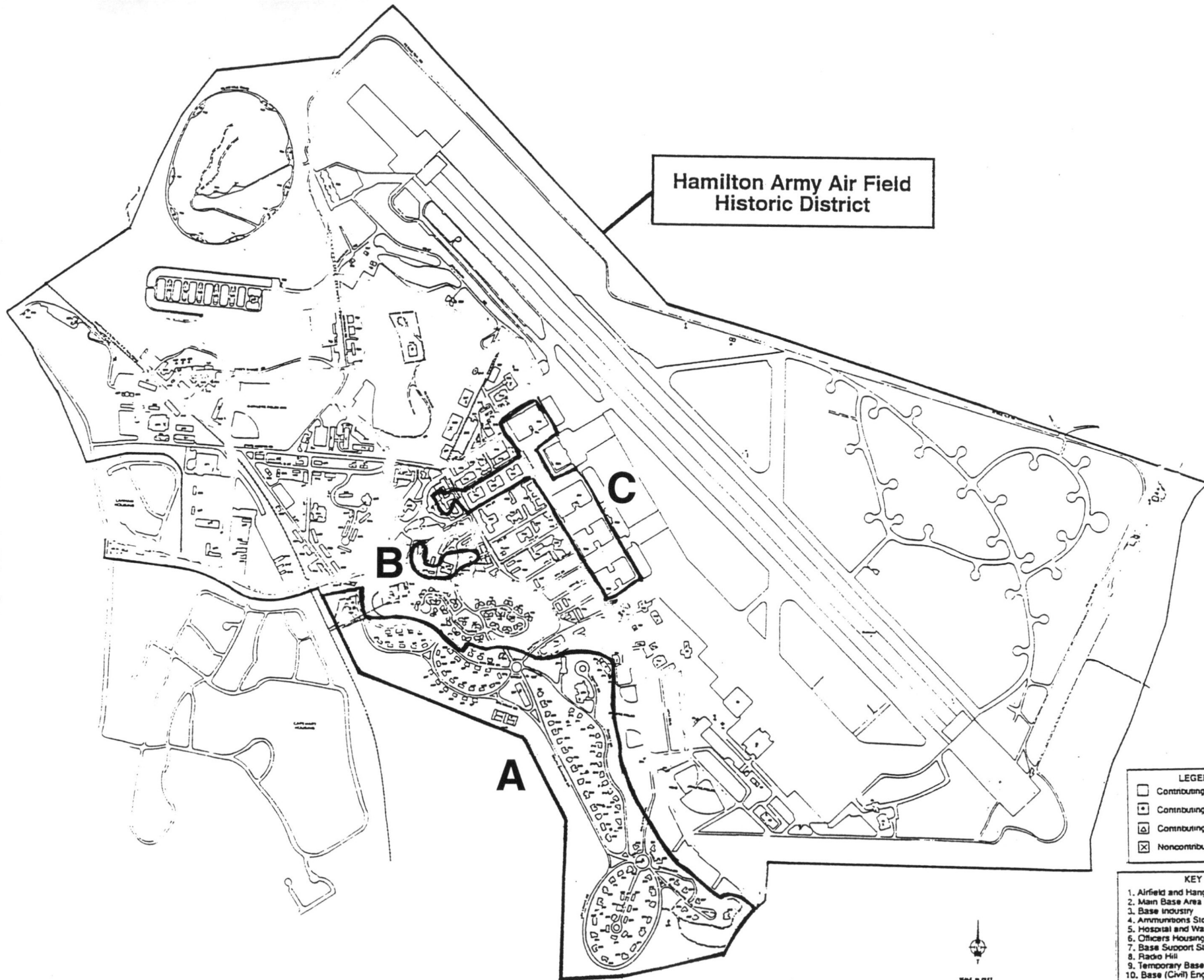
MAPS



Vicinity Map

Hamilton Army Air Field Historic District

Hamilton Army Air Field Discontiguous Historic District

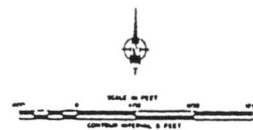


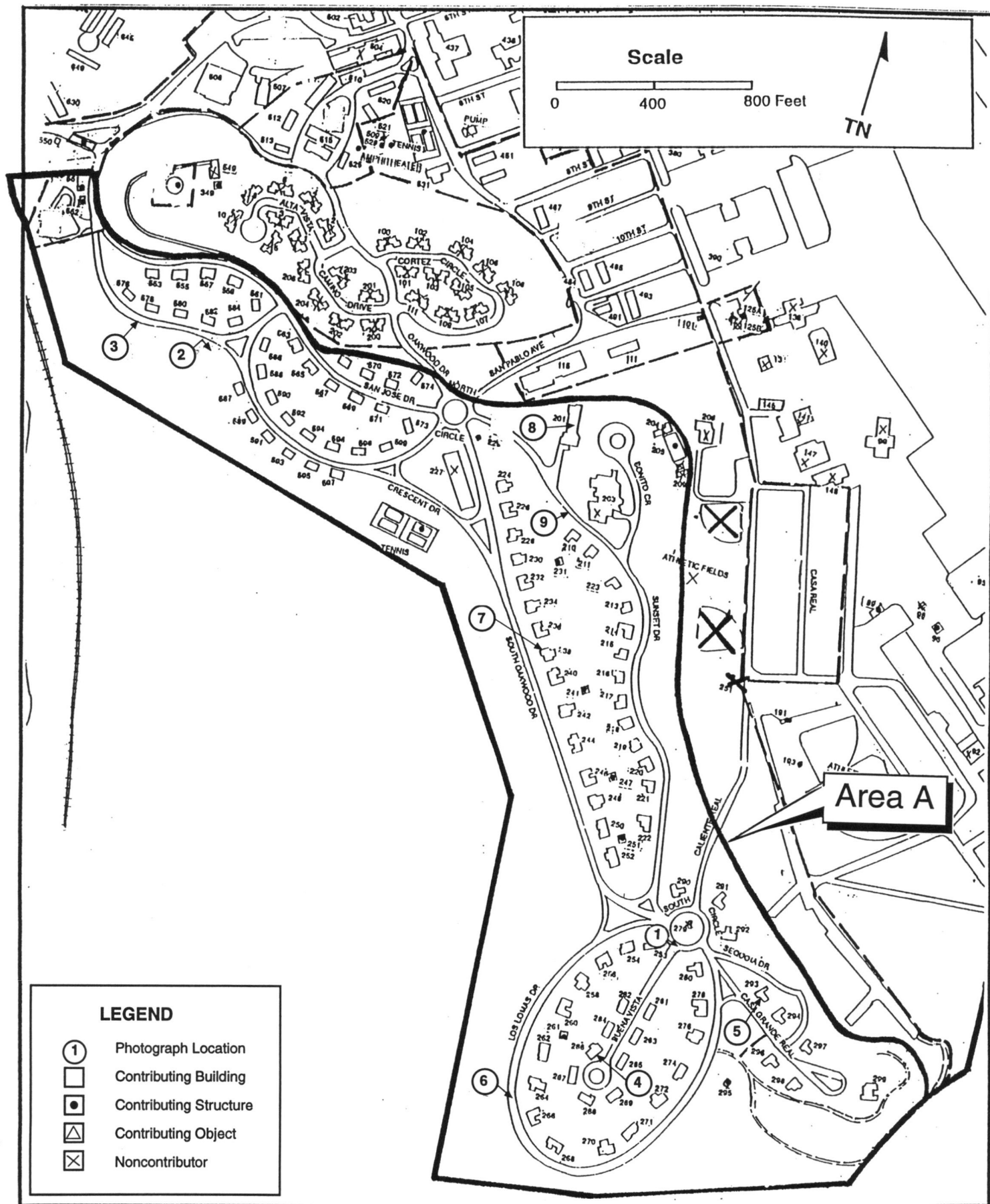
LEGEND

- ☐ Contributing Building
- ☒ Contributing Structure
- ☒ Contributing Object
- ☒ Noncontributor

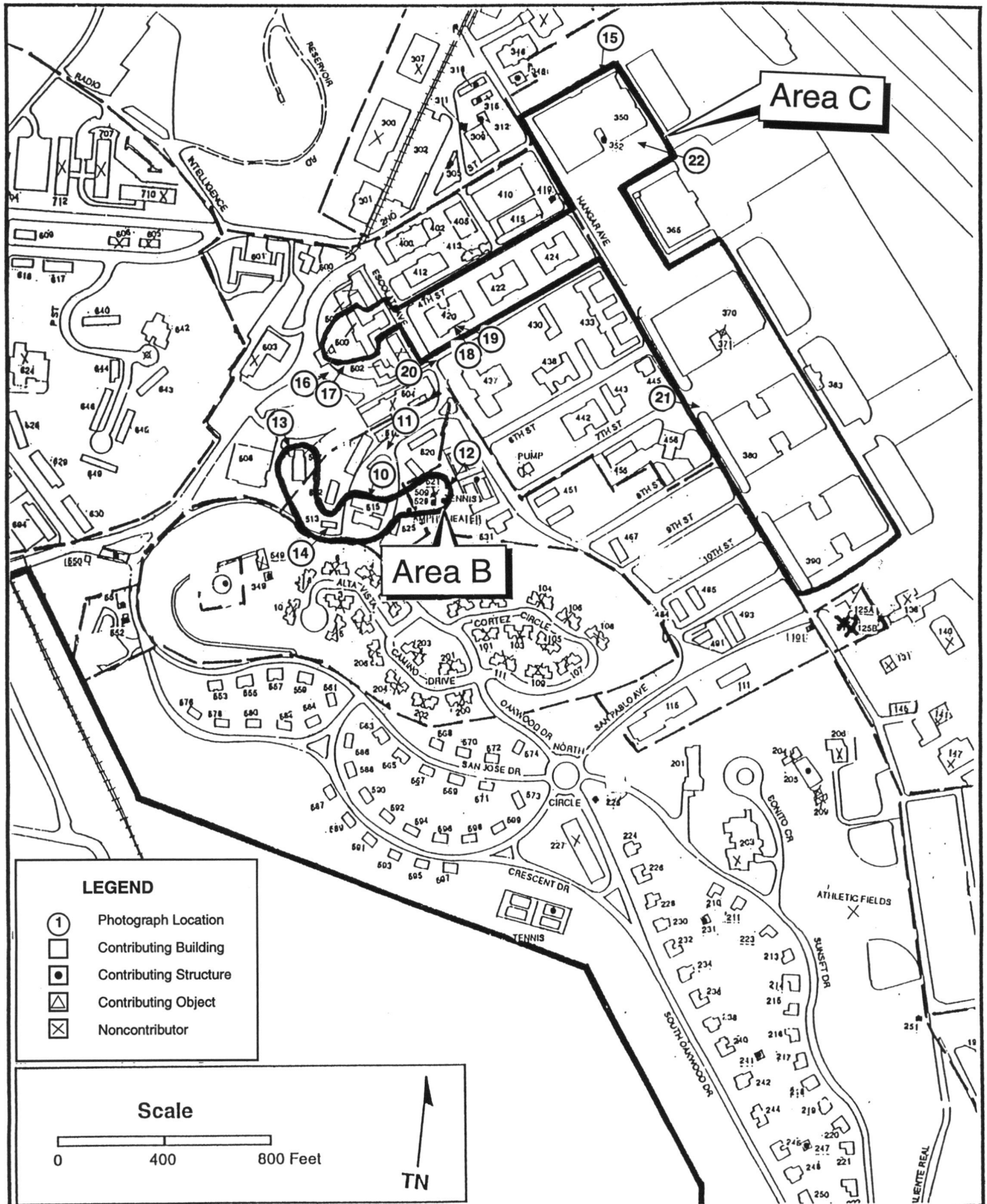
KEY

1. Airfield and Hangars
2. Main Base Area
3. Base Industry
4. Ammunitions Storage
5. Hospital and Ward
6. Officers Housing
7. Base Support Stations (5)
8. Radio Hill
9. Temporary Base Industry (2)
10. Base (Civil) Engineering Group
11. Temporary Housing Areas (3)





Hamilton Army Air Field Discontiguous Historic District - Area A



Hamilton Army Air Field Discontiguous Historic District - Areas B and C



HAMILTON ARMY AIRFIELD
DISCONTIGUOUS HISTORIC
DISTRICT
MARIN COUNTY, CA

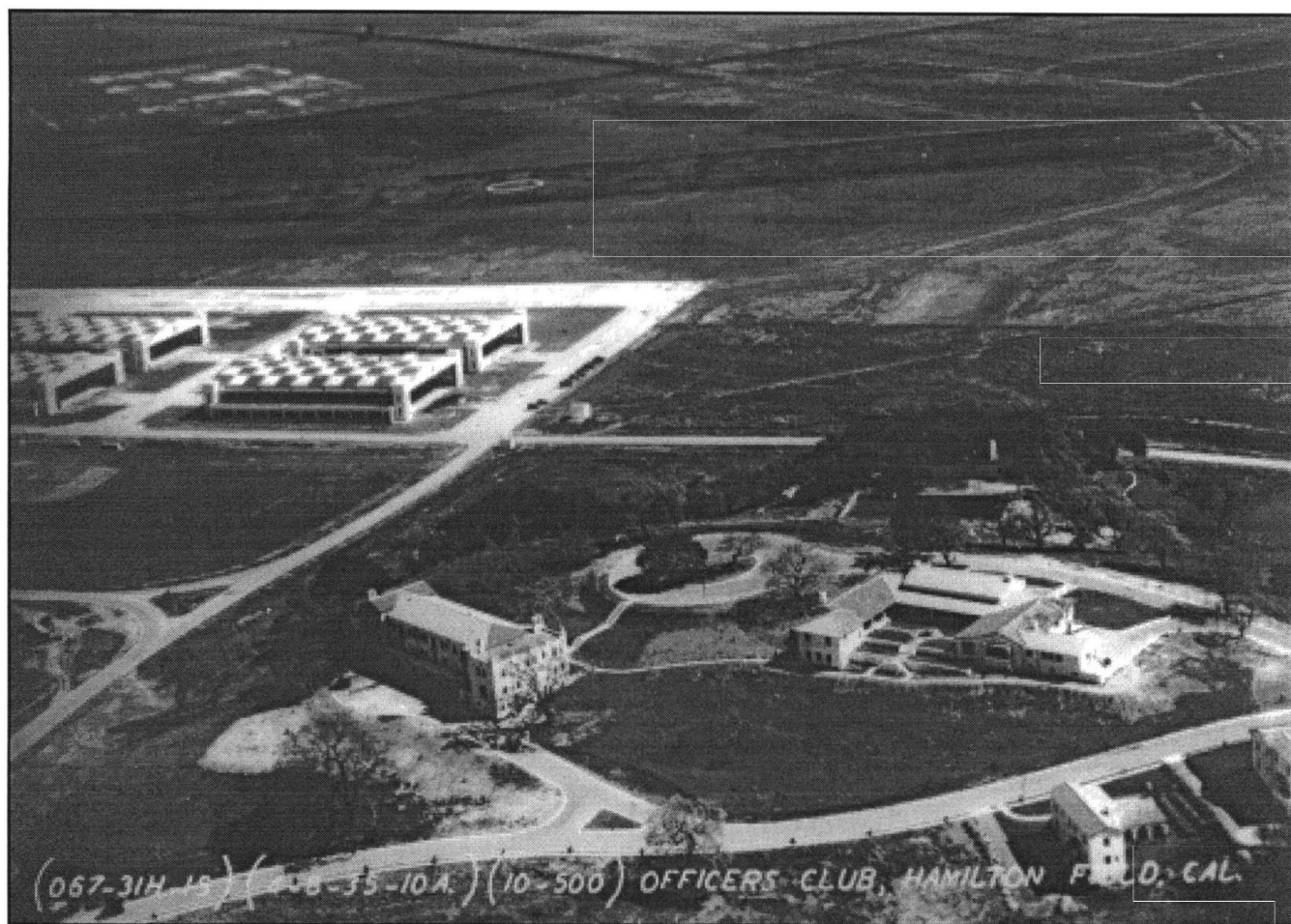
UTM REFERENCED

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A3 10/542600/4211682
4214
A4 10/542850/4211690
A5 10/543222/4210940
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B1 10/542320/4211720
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C4 10/542520/4212400
C5 10/542640/4212480
C6 10/542700/4212365
4212
T. 3 N.
C7 10/542640/4212325
T. 2 N.
C8 10/542700/4212230
C9 10/542760/4212260
C10 10/542440/4211900
C11 10/542840/4211890
C12 10/542610/4212220
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C13 10/542400/4212100
C14 10/542330/4212080

(PETALUMA POINT)
1560 III SW

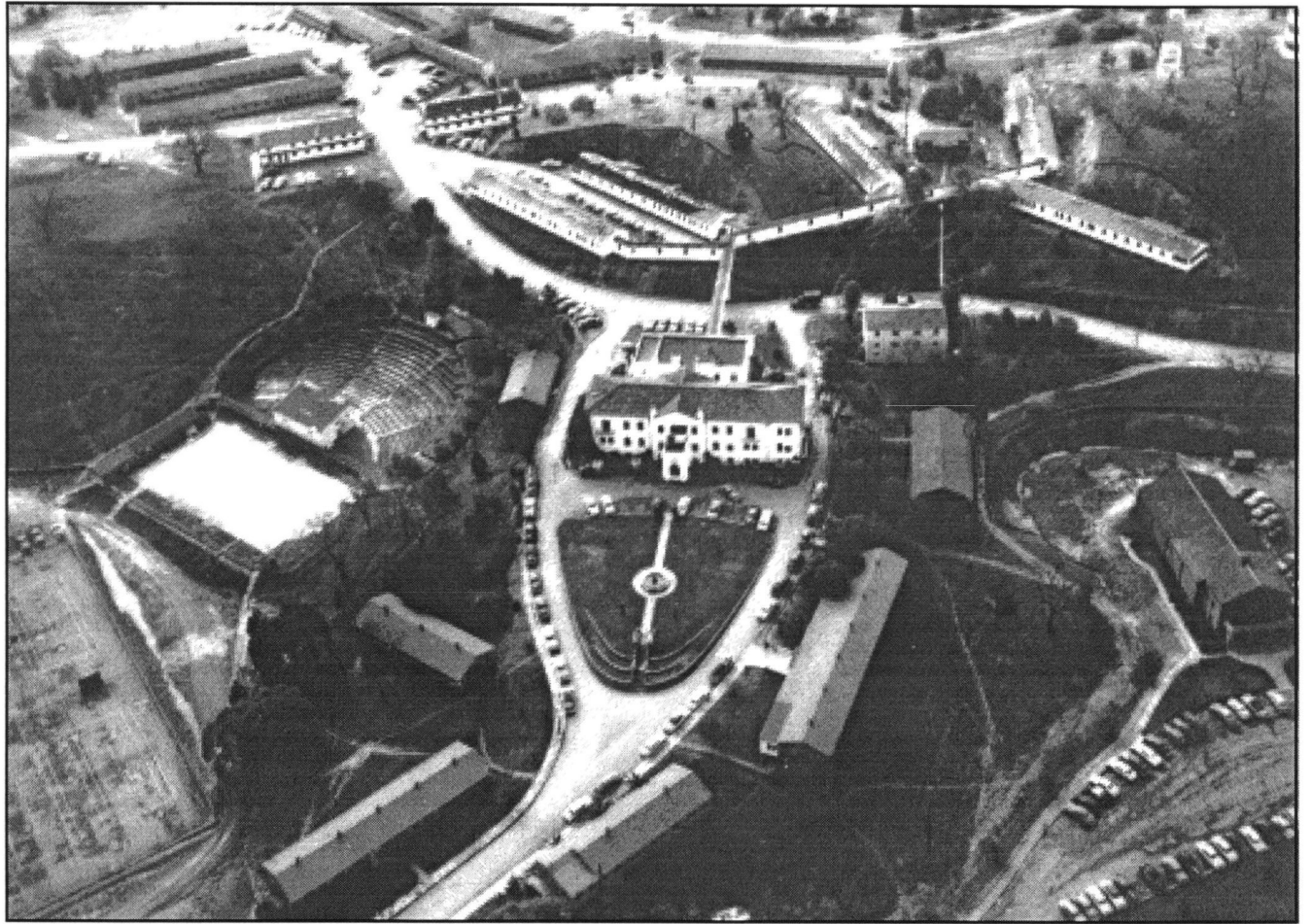
2'30"

4210



(067-314-15) (2-8-35-10A) (10-500) OFFICERS CLUB, HAMILTON FIELD, CAL.

Bachelor Officer's Quarters and Officer's Mess, #201 and #203,
Hamilton Army Airfield Discontiguous Historic District,
Area A + C partial overview
Marin County, California
#9, photographer unknown, copy negative at PAR Environmental Services,
Sacramento
Looking northeast

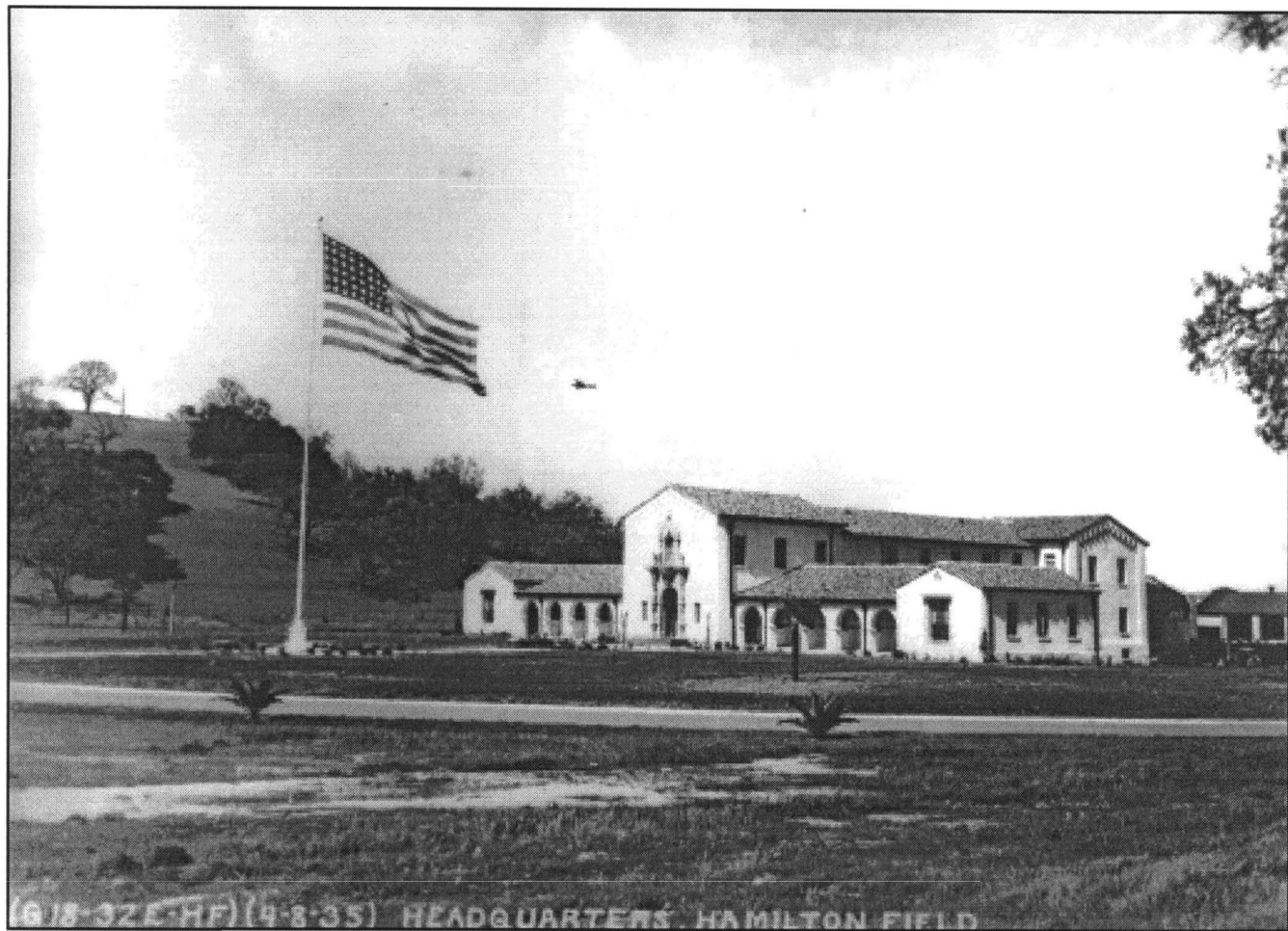


Hospital, #515, Hospital Drive, Hamilton Army Airfield
Discontiguous Historic District, Area B
Marin County, California
#11, photographer unknown
Aerial view looking south, circa 1950
Roll A, #17



(062-31H-15) (4-8-35-10A.) (10-5) HANGAR LINE, HAMILTON FIELD, CAL.

Overview of Base, Hamilton Army Airfield
Discontiguous Historic District
Marin County, California
#15, photographer unknown (official Army photographer)
Aerial view, looking southwest, 1935

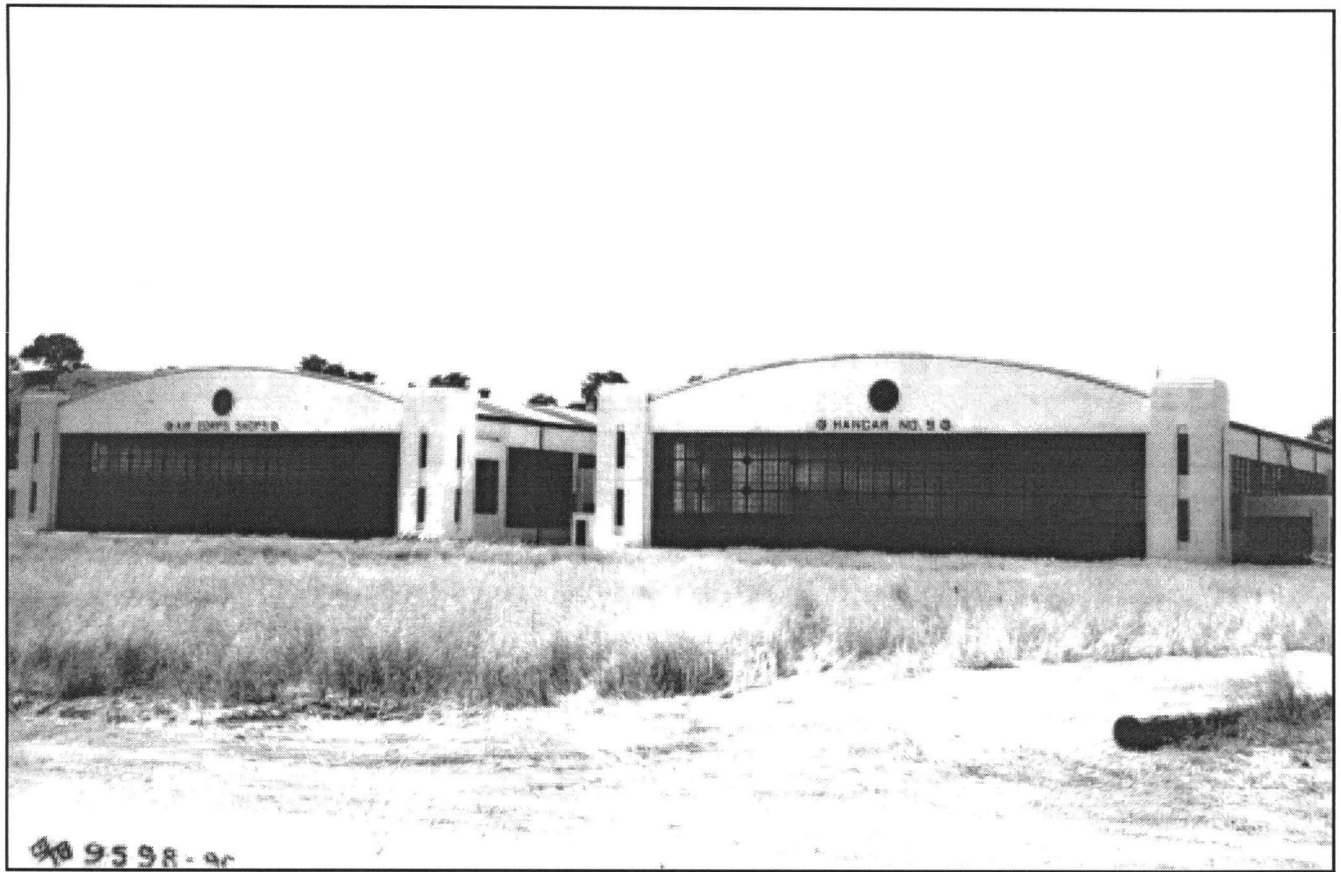


(618-3ZE-HF)(4-8-35) HEADQUARTERS, HAMILTON FIELD

Base Headquarters, #500, Palm Drive, Hamilton Army Airfield
Discontiguous Historic District
Marin County, California
#17, Photographer unknown, Roll C, #32
View North, 1935



NCO Barracks Facade, 5th Street,
Hamilton Army Airfield Discontiguous
Historic District, Area C
Photo 18
Marin County, California
Roll 12, #12
View north, 1-29-1993



Hangar #9 and Air Corps Shops, #350, Hangar Avenue,
Hamilton Army Airfield Discontiguous Historic District
Marin County, California
#22, photographer unknown (Official Army Photographer)
View North, 1935

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Hamilton Army Air Field Discontiguous Historic District

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: CALIFORNIA, Marin

DATE RECEIVED: 10/16/98 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 10/27/98
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/12/98 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/30/98
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 98001347

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

___ACCEPT ___RETURN ___REJECT _____DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

The Hamilton Army Air Field Discontiguous Historic District is significant under National Register Criteria A and C (in the areas of Military History, Architecture, Community Planning and Development, and Landscape Architecture) for its association with broad national and regional themes in the history of military aviation and Army Air Corps construction on the West Coast. The three separate elements of the discontiguous district represent the core residential, office, and service areas of the historic Army Air Field that retain integrity from the historic period 1932 to 1946.

The history of the Air Field's development and pivotal use as one of the earliest permanent Army air stations on the West Coast has important associations with the early development of military aviation in the United States. Hamilton Field served as a significant base of operations for Army Air Corps bomber, coastal defense, training, and transport activities during the period immediately prior to and during World War II. Architecturally, the district elements illustrate a significant application of community planning on a comprehensive installation level and the emergence in military architecture of regional design forms and architectural styles fitted to local climatic conditions and historic associations. The buildings at Hamilton Field reflect the characteristic elements of eclectic Spanish Colonial Revival design in their consistent use of materials, plan, details, and architectural forms, complemented by substantial planned landscaping and site work.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept Criteria A+C

REVIEWER Paul R. Lusignan DISCIPLINE HISTORIAN

TELEPHONE _____ DATE 11/19/98

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y



BUENA
VISTA
DRIVE





















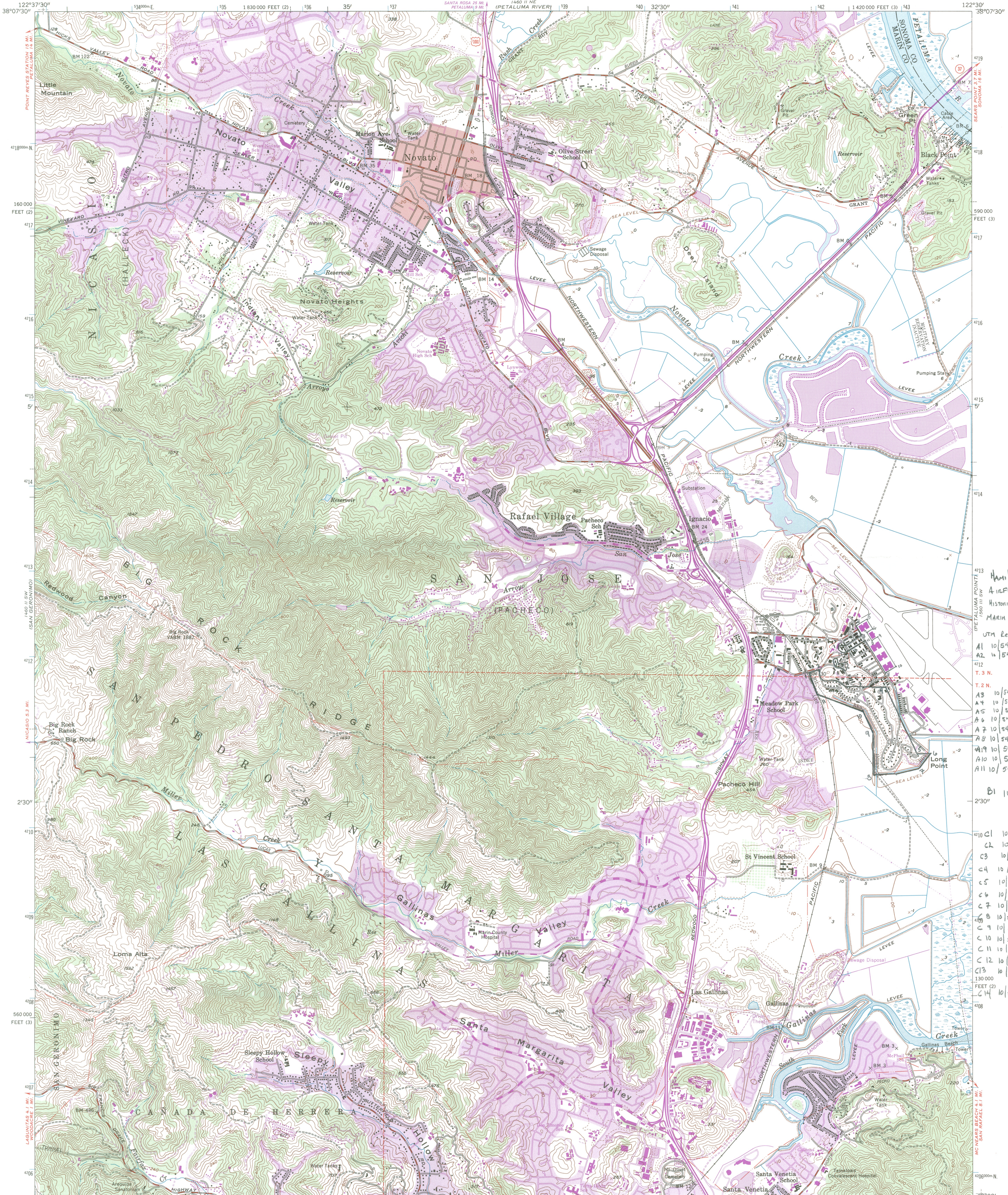




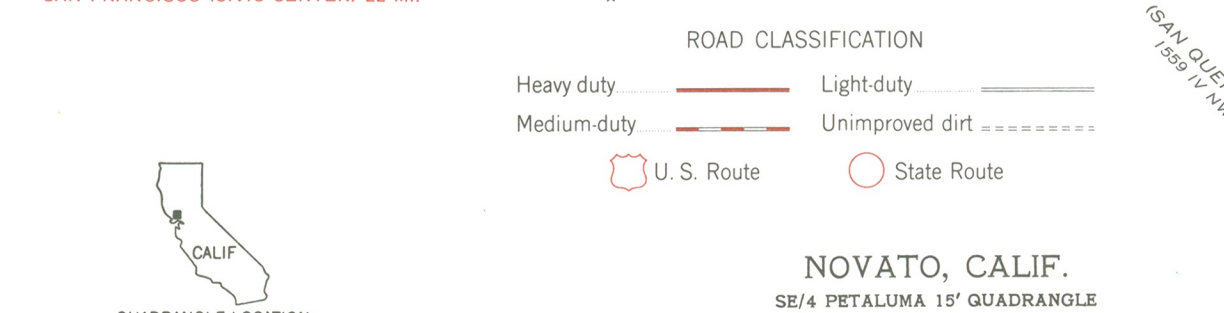
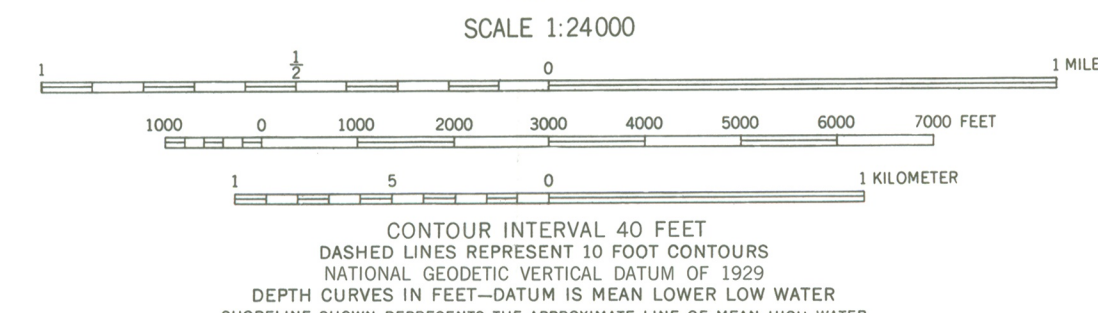
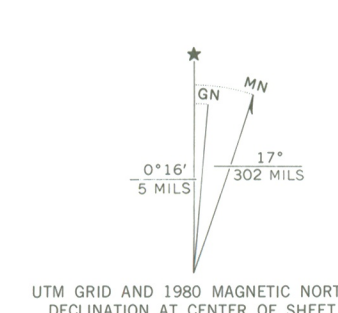








Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and USCE
Topography from aerial photographs by multiplex methods
and by planetable surveys 1954. Aerial photographs taken 1952
Hydrography compiled from NOS chart 5533, (1952)
This information is not intended for navigational purposes
Polyconic projection. 10,000-foot grid based on California coordinate
system, zones 2 and 3. 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid
ticks, zone 10, shown in blue. 1927 North American Datum. To place
on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines
15 meters north and 96 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Dashed land lines indicate approximate locations
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries
of the National or State reservations shown on this map



NOVATO, CALIF.
SE/4 PETALUMA 15' QUADRANGLE
38122-A5-TF-024

1954
PHOTOREVISED 1980
DMA 1460 II SE—SERIES V895

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled from
aerial photographs taken 1979 and other source data
This information not field checked. Map edited 1980
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

Hamilton Army
Airfield Discontinuity
Historic District
MARIN County, CA
UTM Reference
A1 10/541900/4211800
A2 10/542070/4211895
T. 2 N.
A3 10/542000/4211692
A4 10/542050/4211690
A5 10/543320/4210940
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C11 10/542840/4211890
C12 10/542610/4212220
C13 10/542400/4212100
C14 10/542330/4212080

OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

P.O. BOX 942896

SACRAMENTO, CA 94296-0001

(916) 653-6624

FAX (916) 653-9824



August 14, 1998

Captain Ernest R. Hunter
Attn: Louis S. Wall
Department of the Navy
Engineering Field Activity, West
Naval Facilities Engineering Command
900 Commodore Drive
San Bruno, CA 94066-5006

Dear Captain Hunter:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the National Register nomination for Hamilton Army Air Field Discontiguous District. The nomination is well documented and makes a good case for the significance and integrity of the three remaining collections of buildings and other features.

I have signed the nomination as commenting official. If you have any questions or need additional information, please call Maryln Bourne Lortie of my staff at (916) 653-8911.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cheryl E. Widell", written over a horizontal line.

Cheryl E. Widell
State Historic Preservation Officer

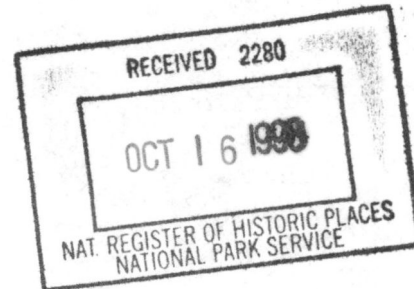


DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
(INSTALLATIONS AND ENVIRONMENT)
1000 NAVY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-1000

October 8, 1998

Ms. Carol D. Shull
Keeper, National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
P. O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

Carol
Dear Ms. Shull:

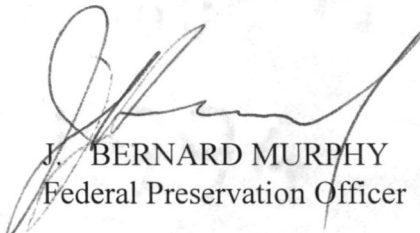


I am enclosing for your consideration a nomination to the National Register of the Hamilton Army Air Field Discontiguous Historic District, a Navy property located in Marin County, California.

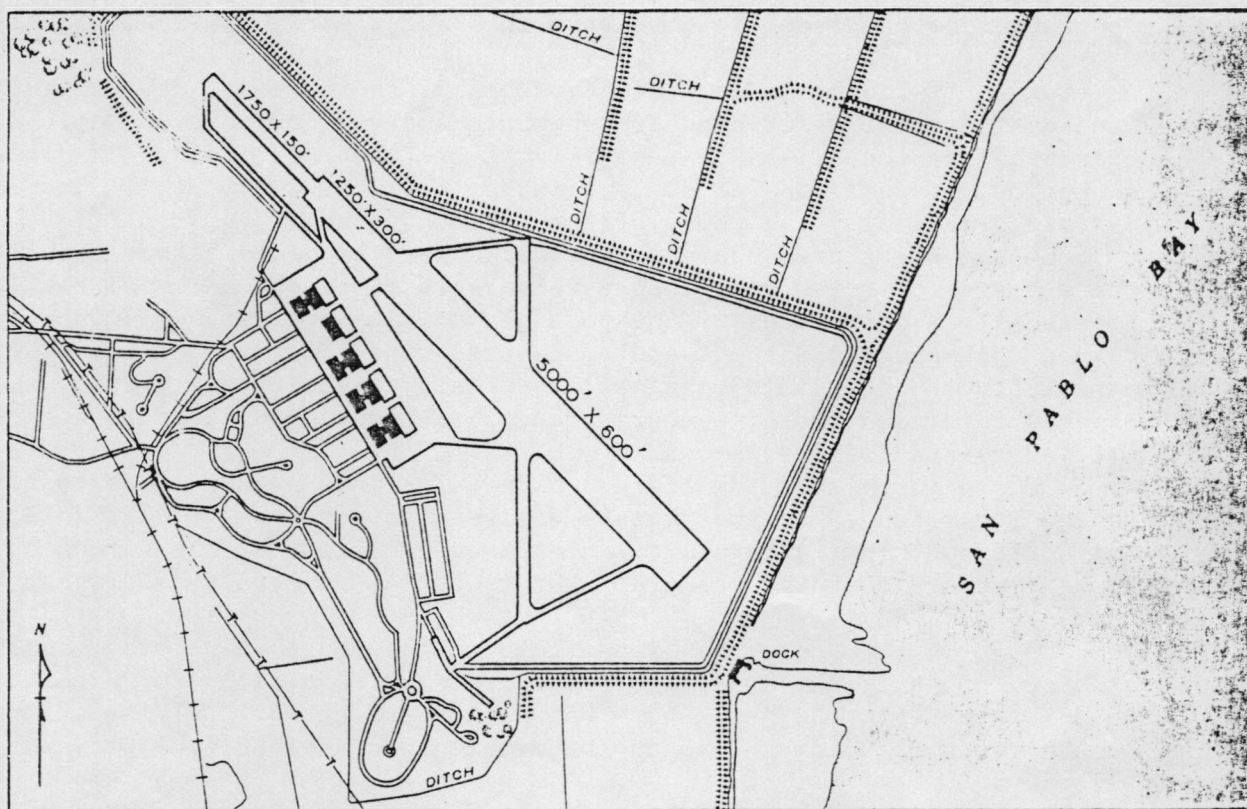
The Hamilton Army Air Field Historic District was found eligible for the National Register by the Army in 1993. Since then, however, a significant amount of the historic district has entered private hands, and much of its integrity has been compromised. The Navy's survey, conducted as part of the BRAC closure process, found three discontiguous areas of the original district that still possessed sufficient integrity to qualify for National Register. The California State Historic Preservation Officer concurs in this conclusion and has signed the enclosed nomination.

If you or your staff have questions, please feel free to phone me at (202) 685-9182. I would appreciate it if you would keep me apprised of the property's National Register status, as you evaluate its eligibility.

Sincerely,


J. BERNARD MURPHY
Federal Preservation Officer

HISTORY OF HAMILTON AIR FORCE BASE



Known at first unofficially as the Marin County Air Field, as Marin Airfield, as Marin Meadows Air Field, and as the Army Air Base at Marin Meadows, it was officially termed from 1929 until 1932 the "Air Corps Station, San Rafael." Then, with formal development beginning, it was named Hamilton Field on July 12, 1932, in honor of an air ace from Marin County killed in World War I. He was 1st Lieutenant Lloyd Andrews Hamilton of the 17th Aero Squadron, awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for heroism at Varssonaore, Belgium, in leading a low level bombing attack on a German airdrome 30 miles behind enemy lines on August 13, 1918. Thirteen days later Hamilton died in action near Lagnecourt, France.

Construction at Hamilton Field had begun about July 1, 1932, with the airfield being originally designed to accommodate four bomb squadrons and their personnel. Captain Don Hutchins of the Army Air Corps reported on duty as the first commanding officer of the new field on June 25, 1933, and Captain John M. Davies' 70th Service Squadron arrived that December as the first squadron assigned to the base. On December 4, 1934, the 7th Bombardment Group arrived to take station, having been transferred up from March Field. The new base was designated that year as General Headquarters of the 1st Pursuit Wing. The Hamilton Field Station Complement replaced the 70th Service Squadron on March 1, 1935. The original construction program was completed on May 12, 1935, at which time the field was ceremonially handed over to Brigadier General Henry 'Hap' Arnold, commanding the First Wing, by Governor Merriam of California.

Described in 1940 as "looking more like a modern residential suburb of Spanish-California homes than the Army's Pursuit Base for northern California," Hamilton Field had by that time received five million dollars for development. At that time the Field housed the 45th Air Base Group, the 20th Pursuit Group (Fighter), the 35th Pursuit Group (Interceptor), the 82nd Observation Squadron, and Weather, Signal, Ordnance, Quartermaster, Medical and Finance organizations totaling over 4,000 officers and men.

A description of Hamilton Field written in 1940 or early 1941 characterized the base:

An average of 250 clear days each year makes the mile-square, table-flat landing field ideal for huge Army bombers and fast pursuit planes. Field exercises and long-distance mass flights are the rule, rather than the exception, at Hamilton Field. One mass flight, of two months' duration, covered practically the whole of the United States.

From the Bay shore, where a canal and wharf provided harbor facilities, the reservation rises gently to a velvet-green plateau on which the low Spanish-style structures of the post gleam white against semitropical plants and shrubs. Streets and boulevards wind about the hills. The administration buildings, hangars, hospital, theater, post office, shops and quarters, and radio, electric, and fire-fighting units form a compact self-sustaining military town.

From the portals of the field a wide palm-lined avenue leads to Base Headquarters housed in a structure designed to resemble a California mission. The Officers' Club, a rambling hacienda on the crest of the promontory, looks eastward over the chameleon waters of San Pablo Bay to distant Mount Diablo.

On March 31, 1941, the base was reassigned to the Fourth Air Force, and it was later that year that a flight of twelve B-17s left Hamilton Field for Hickam Field in Hawaii, which lay next to the naval base known as Pearl Harbor. Flying all through the night, the bombers arrived over Oahu on the morning of December 7, 1941, and faced an unusual welcome.

The B-17s had arrived over Oahu during the Japanese air attack which triggered American entry into World War II. Back in California, Hamilton Field was rapidly expanded to a wartime status, with construction of additional barracks, mess halls, administration buildings, warehouses, Link trainer buildings, schools, hospital and other structures, an expansion that really didn't come to an end until July 11, 1945, by which time the war was clearly nearing its end.

The Army Air Force was now expanded into the United States Air Force, a separate military service, and soon Hamilton Air Force Base was being modified to accommodate jet aircraft. In mid-1959 the runways were upgraded to accommodate F-101 and F-104 operations. The base went through a series of command redesignations during this period--to the Continental Air Forces on April 16, 1945, to the Air Defense Command on January 1, 1951, to the Aerospace Defense Command on January 15, 1968, and as its usefulness waned, to the Air Force Reserve on October 1, 1973.

The base had been declared excess to Air Force needs as early as December 10, 1944, but it was not closed at that time, and in 1952 it had been declared a "permanent" U.S. Air Force installation. Nevertheless, by 1973 its importance had diminished, and it was finally placed in a caretaker status on January 11, 1976. Brigadier General William G. Hathaway ended, on June 10, 1976, his tour of duty as the last of Hamilton's thirty-five base commanders (not counting Captain Howard B. Nurse who had been the project officer from 1931 to 1933). Today (1981) housing and office space on the base are still used by the Air Force, the Coast Guard, the Navy, and the 91st Division (Training), Army Reserves, and management of the base is under the Navy. Occasional Air Force maneuvers still take place there. A controversy over future civilian use has developed between those supporting its adaptation into a major civilian airport, those bitterly opposed to its continued use as an airfield at all, and those holding varying intermediate degrees of opinion. The final resolution has not yet been determined as of early 1981.



by Gordon Chappell

**LIST OF HISTORICAL PLANTS
FOUND WITHIN THE
HAMILTON ARMY AIRFIELD
DISCONTIGUOUS DISTRICT**

List of Historical Plants Found Within the Hamilton Army Airfield Discontiguous District

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	Blackwood acadia
<i>Araucaria bidwillii</i>	Bunya bunya
<i>Arbutus unedo</i>	Strawberry tree
<i>Brachychiton populemex</i>	Bottle tree
<i>Buxus japonica</i>	Japanese boxwood
<i>Callistemon sp.</i>	Bottlebrush
<i>Calocedrus decurrens</i>	Incense cedar
<i>Camellia japonica</i>	Camellia
<i>Catalpa bignonioides</i>	Camellia
<i>Cedrus atlantica</i>	Atlas cedar
<i>Cedrus deodara</i>	Deodar cedar
<i>Chamaecyparis pisifera</i>	Sawara false-cypress
<i>Chamaecyparis funebris (Cupressus f.)</i>	Mourning cypress
<i>Citrus x sinensis</i>	Citrus
<i>Cortaderia selloana</i>	Pampas grass
<i>Cotoneaster lacteus</i>	Red clusterberry
<i>Crataegus sp.</i>	Hawthorn
<i>Cryptomeria japonica</i>	Japanese cryptomeria
<i>Cupressus sp. (cf. Forbesii)</i>	Cypress
<i>Curpressus sempervirens</i>	Italian cypress
<i>Cordyline australis</i>	New Zealand cracaena
<i>Eriobotrya japonica</i>	Loquat
<i>Eucalyptus leucoxylon</i>	White ironbark
<i>Fraxinus velutina</i>	Modest ash
<i>Juglans californica ssp. Hindsii</i>	Northern California black walnut
<i>Ligustrum lucidum</i>	Shiny-leaf privet
<i>Ligustrum ovalifolium</i>	California privet
<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	Southern magnolia
<i>Melaleuca ericoides</i>	Heath melaleuca
<i>Myrtus communis</i>	Myrtle
<i>Myrtus communis cv. "microphylla"</i>	Little-leafed myrtle
<i>Persea americana</i>	Avocado
<i>Phoenix canariensis</i>	Canary Island date palm
<i>Photinia serrulata</i>	Chinese photinia
<i>Picea nigra</i>	Norway spruce
<i>Pinus canariensis</i>	Canary Island Pine
<i>Pittosporum tobira</i>	Mock orange
<i>Pittosporum eugeniodes</i>	Brush cherry pittosporum
<i>Platanus x hybrida</i>	Planetree
<i>Populus nigra "italica"</i>	Lombardy poplar

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**List of Historical Plants Found Within the
Hamilton Army Airfield Discontiguous District**
(Continued)

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Populus alba</i>	White poplar
<i>Prunus avium</i>	Cherry
<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>	English laurel
<i>Prunus lyonii</i>	Catalina cherry
<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	Black locust
<i>Schinus molle</i>	California peppertree
<i>Sequoia sempervirens</i>	Coast redwood
<i>Sequoiadendron giganteum</i>	California bigtree
<i>Spiraea cantoniensis</i> cv. "lanceata" or <i>S. x vanhouttei</i> (<i>S. C. x S. trilobata</i>)	Spirea
<i>Taxus baccata</i> (cultivars)	English yew
<i>Thuja plicata</i>	Western redcedar
<i>Thuja orientalis</i> (<i>Platycladus o.</i>) (cultivars)	Arborvitae
<i>Trachycarpus fortunei</i>	Windmill palm
<i>Washingtonia filifera</i>	California fan palm
<i>Washingtonia robusta</i>	Mexican fan palm
<i>Buddleja davidii</i> *	Butterfly bush
<i>Callistemon rigidus</i> *	Stiff bottlebrush
<i>Elaeagnus pungens</i> *	Silverberry
<i>Juniperus chinensis</i> cv. "torulosa" *	Hollywood juniper
<i>Juniperus communis</i> *	Juniper
<i>Juniperus sp.</i> (cultivars) *	Chinese junipers
<i>Mahonia aquifolium</i> *	Oregon grape
<i>Nerium oleander</i> *	Oleander
<i>Phyllostachys aurea</i> *	Golden bamboo
<i>Viburnum suspensum</i> *	Sandankwa viburnum

* Plants used before and during World War II and possibly subsequently. Some of these were also planted during the 1930s.