



Friday, December 7, 2001 A.D.

Annadorf

A German Town In The San Gabriels

Part 1 of 3

German Village Remembered New WWII Training Facility

by
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by
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Firing! Explosions rent the air
Ridin' my cayuse not a mile from
there.

Curious: I cantered Montie up the
dirt trail:

Here stood a soldier with a gun;
I turned pale.

"Where you goin' Miss?" was his
query

"You can't enter here if it's not
necessary."

Up the rutted dirt path is a sight to
behold- -

A sloping street of shops, as if turned
from a mold -

Complete with gasthus, fountain,
church & barbed wire,
Many years later destroyed by a fire.

Lovingly created from an old movie
set

"Annadorf" fascinates us who knew
her, yet

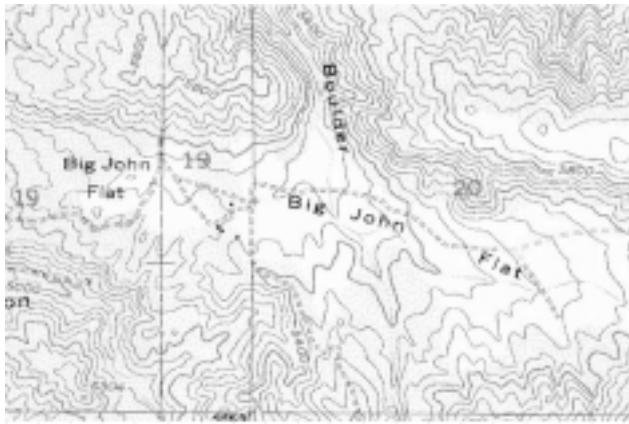
she slowly settles into rust and dust,
A small part in our memories: left in
our trust.

The time was mid-summer, 1943. The place, a remote area of the San Gabriel Mountains known as "Big John Flat." A military jeep and three soldiers were standing before a ramshackle "Western Village" stair stepped up a brushy slope. An old "movie set". The site had been chosen for conversion to an Army training facility.

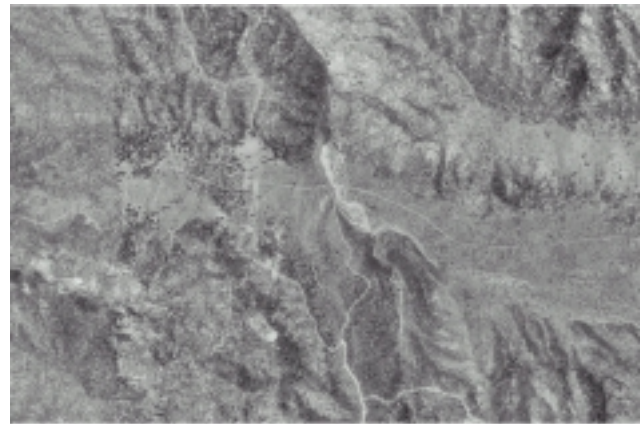
The military group sent out to scout the area came from Camp Santa Anita, Arcadia, California, now home to the Second Ordinance Battalion. Camp Santa Anita, had in less than two years, been the site of assembly for citizens of Japanese ancestry and



InterNet m10455gt.tif
Topographical Map Showing Big John Flats,
Location Of Annadorf [Lower 2/3rds, Right.)
(July 1, 1988)



InterNet m098244gt.tif
**Topographical Map of Big John Flats,
 Location Of Annadorf. (July 1, 1988)**



InterNet m09825gt.tif
**Satellite Photograph of Big John Flats, Location
 Of Annadorf. (May 28, 1994)**

scheduled for detention camps through the Western states. Then almost overnight, a swarm of military ordinance men and civilian workers converted the stables, the grandstands, and constructed 662 prefabricated buildings to house and train military ordinance candidates.

These Were Talented Builders

For the uninformed, such as the author, an Ordinance Battalion is composed of all the building trades plus mechanics, millwrights, welders, gunsmiths and related ancillary units such as motor pool, battalion, mess facilities and a full medical group to surgery level. Even a veterinary squad was available to treat the area's military livestock.



Mountaineer-Progress foto7112.tif
**Live Fire Training At Annadorf, "German village"
 from WWII era..**

A Full-Blown "German Village"

The Commanding Office at Camp Santa Anita, Brigadier General Bethel W. Simpson, had selected Major Roy L. Smillie, Second Ordinance Battalion, to determine the viability of converting the old movie set into a full-blown "German Village". The project was designated "Priority Training Facility" with all possible security.

Not to be repeated to anyone!

Major Smillie's wife, Betty, noted the Major's cryptic comment about this trip to "Wrightwood" -



Pat Krig Collection m10010gt.tif
Annadorf Topographical Model. (1944 ca)



Pat Krig Collection m10008gt.tif
Transforming A Movie Set Into The Mayor's House. (1944 ca)

“Not to be repeated to anyone.” Unfortunately, there is no record of what was said by the three soldiers who were surveying the weathered buildings now populated by woodrats, ground squirrels and rattlesnakes. The final decision, however, was that it could be done and Major Smillie conveyed that opinion to General Simpson.

More Than Sheep Grew Here!

Well, Big John’s sheep ranch began to grow tents, trucks, tools and men. Carpenters, plasterers, painters and support personnel began the conversion of “Grimy Gulch” into “Annadorf”, a 1940s version



Pat Krig Collection m10009gt.tif
Completed Mayor's House. (1944 ca)
of a German village.

Annadorf!

False fronted movie sets became complete buildings. Rustic, weathered walls were transformed into cut granite stone

Roofs were constructed and sheathed with European tile and shingles. Native stone and plaster enhanced the sides of buildings. A classic church emerged next to “Boot Hill”. A Nazi flag waved over a grim cut stone police station.

German language signs appeared proclaiming “RATHAUS” and “BADEREI” and featuring



Pat Krig Collection m10003gt.tif
Annadorf Resident Home. (1944 ca)



Pat Krig Collection m10013gt.tif
Small House In Annadorf. (1944 ca)



Pat Krig Collection m10041gt.tif
Assembling The Annadorf Church. (1944 ca)

“APPLE STRUDEL”, all in classic German script. A complete bar was constructed and armed with booby traps: pick up a bottle of Schnappes and ‘bang’ you’re dead! Many structures were amazingly detailed inside, complete with pictures, advertising and restroom signs. Tables, chairs, closets, cabinets, credenzas and desks, beds, toilets, drapes, blinds and curtains, gave everything the lived-in look. The middle of the Street featured a fountain and pool structure. Dry unfortunately, but still providing the realism needed to train troops in house to house combat.



Pat Krig Collection m10014gt.tif
Annadorf's Little Church & Cemetery. (1944 ca)

Many Ate At Mt. Top Café

All supplies came from Camp Santa Anita. A round trip of 180 miles according to military archives. A soldier from Middleton, Wisconsin. T-4 Walter Whitney, transported lumber and supplies to the site during the late summer and fall of 1943. Whitney and Private Donald Granger of St. Joseph, Michigan, had stopped at the Mt. Top Café for coffee and a piece of Doris Lovett's apple pie. Mrs. Lovett had a scrapbook for soldiers to sign: Name, rank, outfit and home address. Fifty-two years later, Mr. Whitney answered his phone and agreed to an interview about his part in the construction of the German Village. His comments have enhanced this story.



Pat Krig Collection m10004gt.tif
Annadorf Main Street. (1944 ca)

Work Completed By Mid-1943

Under Major Smillie's competent direction, the



Pat Krig Collection m10011gt.tif
Annadorf Main Street. (1944 ca)



Pat Krig Collection m10007gt.tif
Annadorf Building. (1944 ca)

work was completed mid-fall of 1943. A training group of “German soldiers” moved in and set up barbed wire obstructions (some still visible in 1994), machine gun mounts on all four corners, booby traps and related unpleasant training devices. A medical dispensary was put in place and “Annadorf” was ready for business.



Pat Krig Collection m10005gt.tif
Old Movie Set In Annadorf. (1944 ca)

Annadorf Scrapbook

Thankfully one of Major Smillie’s staff had a camera and the ability to take some excellent pictures. From the beginning of construction to the early stages of training activities, the camera recorded this unique facility. The pictures were placed in a hand made scrapbook titled: “ANNADORF” and given to Major Smillie. The name “Anna” refers to General Simpson’s daughter. One wonders how many lives this facility saved as the men it trained moved across Europe a year later.



Pat Krig Collection m10015gt.tif
Dressmaker's Residence In Annadorf. (1944 ca)



Pat Krig Collection m10019gt.tif
Resident House In Annadorf. (1944 ca)



Pat Krig Collection m10023gt.tif
School In Annadorf. (1944 ca)



Pat Krig Collection m10017gt.tif
Annadorf Town Square. (1944 ca)

Bibliography

Mountaineer-Progress, April 1, 1999, by John Lovett

Part 2 Next Month

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Pat Krig Collection m10040gt.tif
Snow In The Annadorf Town Square. (1944 ca)



Pat Krig Collection m10016gt.tif
Annadorf's Artwork In The Town Square.
(1944 ca)