

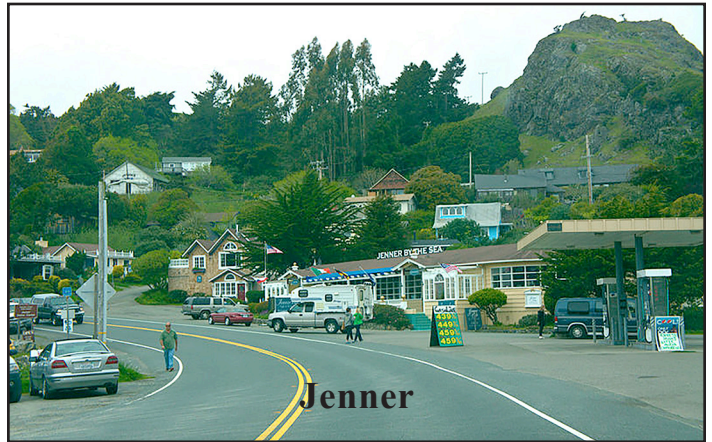
RANCHO BODEGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Jenner World War II Days: A Childhood Recollection

by *Adrianus G. Boudewyn - 2011*

In 1952, Kathleen V. Genelly was a girl of 11, nicknamed “Goat Rock Kid.” As the daughter of the Goat Rock Park ranger, she was a self-described tomboy who liked to roam and investigate and recalls this:

“Jenner was a sparsely populated place. I had a lot of fun out there by my lonesome. When not attending school, first at Bodega Bay, then in Jenner, and later Sebastopol, I would make little adventures. This was around 1952-53 and one day I found myself at the top of a hill on the Karkov property and I saw a round cement bunker, a machine gun nest, with slits and a roof and it was all surrounded by barbed wire to keep intruders out. It had a 360 degree view of the ocean and of Jenner and the mouth of the Russian River. There were a number of empty buildings nearby that the military had used until a few years before. They were still in good shape and showed no signs of deterioration. It was quite a trek up that hill. Nearby was a wooden target, painted white, for use by pilots when practice bombing.”



Kathy was second oldest of four children (two boys, two girls) of California State Parks Ranger Edgar Strouse and his wife, Virginia, who were resident at Goat Rock Park. They had previously lived at ranger quarters at “Death Rock” (now Duncans Landing). On Aug 22, 1946, Alexander and Mabel Karkov purchased 37.38 acres from descendants of the Wright Trust (W.S.M. Wright Bodega Ranch)

World War II Days: Bombing Target Practice at Jenner (2011) A separate story was the designated dive bombing target practice location two-and-a-half miles south east of Jenner near the area of Sunshine Rocks, located 2.5 miles South East of Jenner (Coordinates: Lat. 38° 26' 00" Long. 123° .07' 00"). It was known as Jenner 12th Naval District Target No. 29, a circular area having a radius of 1.5 miles. A large wooden target painted white was at the center of this designated danger area. Archived imagery from 1945 shows the condition of the site during Navy use and the target is clearly visible as a 100 foot diameter white ring with the target center about 25 feet across.

Jenner 12th Naval District Target No. 29

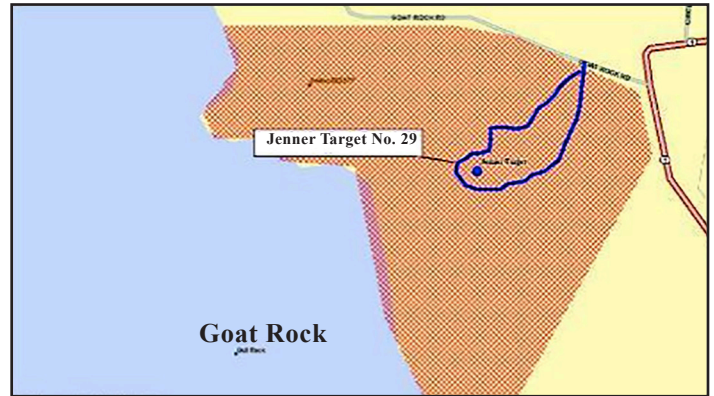
Jenner, CA

It was used by various Auxiliary Air Stations and Auxiliary Air Facilities under the jurisdiction of the Naval Air Center in Alameda. This area covered approximately 126 acres leased from heirs of the estate of W.S.M. Wright (annual rent of \$378). Note: There was also one four miles south of Valley Ford.

Here is how a government report described the need for these activities: “In the development of Naval Air Bases, it was necessary to establish various sorts of targets for special training. These targets were established from Crescent City in Northern California as far south as King City, and in Nevada from Fallon

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to Winnemucca and to Lovelock. A constant search for suitable target sites and their establishment continued from January 1943 until 1945 and purchases were made throughout that period. Search for these targets sites was carried out by Operations Officers of Naval Air Bases staff and Fleet Air and Public Works officers. After suitable sites were located it was necessary to obtain clearance from the property owners and the Inter-departmental Air Traffic Control Board (LATCB). The Twelfth Naval District Legal Officer submitted the details to the Bureaus concerned and eventually the sites were either purchased or leased. A number of these targets have been used jointly by the Army and the Navy.”



The report quotes RBHS member Glenice Carpenter describing what she as a young girl saw during those practice runs by aircraft. “At the ranch just south of Goat Rock was an area where the training planes would tow long sock like targets for other airplanes to shoot at. At the ranch they would drop these targets to be picked up. We would watch and at times help gather up these white material practice targets for the Army to take back to Hamilton Field.”

The sand bombs used for practice simulated a general purpose bomb of the same size. It was constructed of light sheet metal, approximately 22 gauge, shaped by rolling a rectangular sheet of metal into the form of a cylinder approximately 8 inches in diameter with a spot-welded seam. These practice bombs were about four feet in length and weighed 100 pounds full when loaded with sand and a spotting charge.

In all, 144 acres for use in connection with the Naval Auxiliary Air Station in Santa Rosa was acquired at \$3 rent per acre. The Jenner site was used from 1944 through 1946. It appears that the Navy originally filed a condemnation suit to gain access to the property before acquiring the parcels by lease. The leases for the two parcels took effect on Dec. 29 1944. Parcel #1 consisted of about 126 acres from the Girault S. Wright (Trustee) estate. Parcel #2, an estimated 18 acres, was California State Park land along the Pacific Coast shoreline. Today, the area is utilized for recreational purposes and contains a number of residences within a two-mile radius of the former target area.

During an April 28, 1999, site visit by government contractors, there were several anomalies detected within a 25 foot radius of the rock outcropping believed to have been the center site of the former B.T. No. 29, located south east of Sunshine Rocks. A partially submerged AN-MK 23 miniature practice bomb also was discovered in that vicinity.

The land owned by State Parks was previously owned by W.S.M. Wright from 1893 until 1934 (the ranch was broken into six lots and consisted of 3,524.08 total acres), when Lathrop B. Wright, Girault S. Wright, Winfield R. Wright, Olive B. Voss, Esther G. Sauer, Sarah Jessie Giffen, James Calhoun Johnston, and Nellie W. Hall conveyed it via deed to the State of California. This land included two 100-foot easements as well as a strip of land from the western boundary of the ranch to the Pacific Ocean. One of the 100-foot easements was used as an access road, and is presently known as Goat Rock Road. The other 100 foot easement was used for State Highway 1. The conveyed strip of land was used for a State Park.