

German Village (Dugway proving ground)

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German Village was the nickname for a range of mock residential houses constructed in 1943 by the U.S. Army in the Dugway Proving Ground in Utah, roughly a hundred kilometers southwest of Salt Lake City, in order to conduct experiments used for the bombing of Nazi Germany.

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History

Dugway was a high-security testing facility for chemical and biological weapons. The purpose of the replicas of German homes, which were repeatedly rebuilt after being intentionally burned down, was to perfect tactics in the fire bombing of German residential areas during World War II.

The US Army employed German émigré architects such as Erich Mendelsohn to create copies as accurate as possible of the dwellings of densely populated poorer quarters of Berlin. The main goal was to find a tactic to achieve a fire storm in the city center. The working-class areas on which the test buildings were based, such as Wedding and Pankow, had been communist strongholds before Nazi repression suppressed dissent.

The architects who worked on the German village and on the Japanese equivalent also included Konrad Wachsmann and Antonin Raymond.



German village during tests of the M69 incendiary



German and Japanese village, aerial view, 1943



Interior of German village. To ensure that the fires spread as realistically as possible, typical German home-interiors were included, and the wood was periodically doused to simulate conditions in the more humid German climate

The US Army hired Standard Oil Development Company to assist in the practical testing and construction. Erich Mendelsohn and Konrad Wachsmann advised on construction techniques and materials.^[1] Paul Zucker, Hans Knoll and George Hartmueller advised on designing authentic interior furnishings.^[1]

The village was authentic down to the smallest details, including authentic German heavy furnishings, clothes hanging in closets and children's toys.^[2]

Wood and paint, both for interior and exterior, was selected so it would be authentic both in the German and Japanese village; in the Japanese village there were chopsticks on the tables.^[3] The German village cost \$575,000 to build.^[2]

It was found that it was easier to set fire to Japanese housing, but that German houses were more likely to have uncontrollable fires.^[2]



German village in 1994, oblique angle. The roof construction was added in the 1960s

See also

- Japanese Village
- Fire bombing
- Terror bombing

References

- Robin Schuldenfrei, *Atomic Dwelling: Anxiety, Domesticity, and Postwar Architecture*, pages 117, 118
- Lynn Eden, *Whole World on Fire: Organizations, Knowledge, And Nuclear Weapons Devastation*, pages 88–90
- Stewart Halsey Ros, *Strategic Bombing by the United States in World War II: The Myths and the Facts*, page 107



Dresden after the 1945 firebombing raid

Further reading

- Mike Davis, "Berlin's Skeleton in Utah's Closet," in *Dead Cities: And Other Tales* (New York: The New Press, 2002; paperback 2003), 64-83; ISBN 978-1-56584-765-1 or ISBN 1-56584-844-6.

External links

Media related to German Village (Dugway) at Wikimedia Commons

- Aerial view of German and Japanese villages, May 27 1943 (<http://www.dugway.army.mil/germanvillage/images/Close-up-of-Enemy-Village.gif>)
- Assault on German village (<http://principality-of-sealand.eu/pdf/sealandbrief0503e.pdf>) (Translation

of article below)

- Angriff auf "German Village" (<http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/0,1518,50307,00.html>) Der Spiegel 11.10.1999
- German Village' may soon crumble (http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4188/is_20060407/ai_n16191651/)
- Historic Evaluation of German Village at U.S. Army Dugway Proving Grounds (http://oldsite.dri.edu/deesprojects/wj_dugway.htm)
- US Army Bases (http://themilitarystandard.com/army_base/ut/dpg.php)
- Dugway MIL site on the village (<http://www.dugway.army.mil/germanvillage/>) (With images of the village)
- Goodbye to Berlin (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2003/may/12/architecture.artsfeatures>)
- Background and drawings from the US government (<http://memory.loc.gov/pnp/habshaer/ut/ut0500/ut0568/data/ut0568data.pdf>)
- themilitarystandard (http://themilitarystandard.com/army_base/ut/dpg.php)

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 | Buildings and structures completed in 1943 | Buildings and structures in Tooele County, Utah
 | Weapons test sites

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