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### DEFENSE ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION PROGRAM FOR FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES

Across the country, the Department of Defense acquired properties, often during times of war, to use for military training, testing and demonstrations. When no longer needed, many of these properties were cleaned up according to the best practices available at the time and then transferred to other owners such as private individuals or other government entities. These Formerly Used Defense Sites can range from privately owned farms to National Parks. They also include residential, industrial and educational properties. The Department of Defense is committed to protecting people and the environment and improving public safety by cleaning up these sites if hazards from the former military operations remain. The Defense Environmental Restoration Program for Formerly Used Defense Sites was established to evaluate and, if necessary, to remediate Formerly Used Defense Sites. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) manages the program on behalf of the Department of Defense.

Congress passed the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, also known as Superfund, in 1980 and the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act in 1986. These laws give the Corps the authority for certain cleanup activities and dictate the process we must follow. The Corps conducts investigations to determine the potential risk to people and the environment from the military's use of the property. Public involvement and community participation are important components of the process. We partner with stakeholders throughout the process, including congressional representatives, state and local governments, regulatory and environmental agencies, and affected property owners.

### BACKGROUND

In July 1942, the Naval Air Advanced Training Command acquired the 276-acre St. Augustine municipal airport to use as a satellite field associated with Naval Air Station Jacksonville. The site, known as St. Augustine Satellite Field, is in St. Johns County. The Navy did not conduct any munitions training at this location but may have stored medium caliber munitions at the site that would have been loaded onto aircraft for use elsewhere. With the end of World War II, the Navy no longer needed the site, and the federal government deeded the property to St. Augustine in 1947. The site is now the Northeast Florida Regional Airport and an industrial park.

### ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATIONS

The Corps has assessed the site a number of times over the years to evaluate if there is the potential of anything remaining from the Navy's training. A facility, known as Building 9, was constructed in the early 1950s. Various companies have used the building for aircraft maintenance. There are reports that during utility line repairs between 1988 and 1992, 20 millimeter rounds were found beneath the floor of Building 9. The rounds were removed, the floor was repaired, and there have not been any further reports of munitions in this area since then. The Corps created a project for this area known as the Building 9 Burial Pit Munitions Response Site. To determine if further evaluation of the site may be necessary, the Corps completed a Site Inspection in 2011 which included meeting with local officials and the property owner. If munitions are present, they are covered by a concrete floor. However, should the building be demolished or work underneath the floor is conducted, there is the potential someone could come in contact with munitions, if present. Therefore, the Site Inspection recommended a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study to ascertain if anything remains underneath Building 9.

The Corps uses a tool called the Munitions Response Site Prioritization Protocol to rank the risk to people and the environment at Formerly Used Defense Sites, such as the Building 9 Burial Pit. This tool helps the Department of Defense prioritize studies or remediation (if necessary) for properties across the country. Sites that have a higher potential risk to people and the environment

## FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES | St. Augustine Satellite Field

are addressed first. Since the potential risk at the Building 9 Burial Pit is extremely low, the Corps has not yet scheduled the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study, but we will notify the public when we anticipate initiating further studies.

While the possibility of encountering munitions is low, always use caution in areas where the military has trained. Remember and follow the 3Rs of Explosive Safety. **Recognize** the object you found could be dangerous. **Retreat** from the area without touching the object, but make note of its location. **Report** it by calling 9-1-1.



### SAFETY FIRST: REMEMBER THE 3Rs

If you are on a Formerly Used Defense Site, do not pick up anything that you did not put on the ground. Because of previous military training, munitions may potentially be present. These could be dangerous and may not be easily recognizable. Never touch, move or disturb something you think may be a munition. Remember the 3Rs of explosive safety.

**RECOGNIZE** - The object you found could be dangerous.

**RETREAT** - Leave the area without touching or moving the object.

**REPORT** - Call 9-1-1 immediately.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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