

Preliminary Assessment Questions and Answers



April 2020

**What did the Preliminary Assessment determine?**

- The Navy conducted solid waste disposal operations off base from 1942 through 1947 based on a verbal agreement and a written letter from the representative of the landowner.
- The Naval disposal operations concluded after the restoration activities were completed in February 1948.
- There is a potential risk at the Off-Base Disposal Area resulting from the Navy's disposal by burning and burying military debris.
- The Findings and Determination of Eligibility states the Formerly Used Defense Sites eligible property is 25 acres, but photographic interpretation indicates possible military disposal activities or grading may have impacted a larger area (potentially up to approximately 52 acres).
- Analysis indicates that following the Navy's restoration of the site in 1948, additional disposal activities may have occurred in the early 1950s, but evidence of Department of Defense involvement was not found. Contractors and developers constructing homes and installing utility lines in the area may have further dispersed the buried debris over an even larger footprint.
- While Munitions Debris (items without explosives) have been found (inert practice bombs), there is no evidence of Munitions and Explosives of Concern.

**Why do you think the area may be larger than initially stated?**

The eligibility documentation (Findings and Determination of Eligibility), signed August 24, 2019, was based on a 1947 aerial and determined 25 acres were impacted by Navy disposal operations. As the team began collecting and evaluating data for the Preliminary Assessment, other aerial photographs were analyzed that led the team to add an additional 7 acres to the land that appeared to have been used for disposal activities, bringing the total to 32 acres. As part of the Preliminary Assessment, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) requested the U.S. Army Geospatial Center provide a Historical Photographic Analysis. Their team further evaluated all of the available photographs and concluded



Image from EPIC analysis over current map

the military's activities may have impacted up to approximately 52 acres; however, not all of that area was used for burning or disposal operations. The smaller footprints (25 and 32 acres) were estimated based on those areas with evidence of clear and more significant disposal activities. (Please see the map on the back page.)

**What is photographic interpretation?**

Photographic interpretation is an analysis of aerial photographs. Specialists look for disturbed soil, excavation, distressed vegetation, vehicles, surface debris or material stockpiles, and the like. Until the Corps has an approved project and can initiate fieldwork, we will not be able to verify the actual extent of the disposal area.

**What are Munitions and Explosives of Concern and why do you differentiate it from Munitions Debris?**

Munitions and Explosives of Concern refers to a specific category of military munitions that may pose unique explosives safety risks such as Unexploded Ordnance, Discarded Military Munitions, or explosive materials that are present in a concentration that could pose an explosive hazard. By definition, Munitions and Explosives of Concern (more colloquially referred to as "munitions") contain an explosive hazard. Munitions Debris refers to remnants of munitions remaining after use or disposal that do not contain explosives and are not considered dangerous. While they may look like "munitions," they do not pose the same risk and are simply pieces of metal. Anything that looks like munitions (even practice bombs) should be considered dangerous until a trained technician can evaluate the item. We always encourage people to remember and follow the 3Rs: Recognize, Retreat, Report. 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 911.

**Why are we receiving this information now?**

The Corps was asked to reevaluate the site in October of 2018. While conducting research at the National Archives, the team found documents indicating that while the Navy did not own or lease the property, they did have an agreement with the property owner to use it. The document making the disposal area eligible for the Formerly Used Defense Sites program, the Findings and Determination of Eligibility, was signed August 24, 2019. Our previous correspondence was sent to the properties within the 32 acre footprint of the Off-Base Disposal Area. Based on the completion of the Preliminary Assessment, this mailing includes the property owners within the larger, potentially impacted 52 acre area.

**What will happen next and when?**

Based on the results of the Preliminary Assessment, the Jacksonville District will request project approval and funding for a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study. We will notify the community when the project and funding for the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study have been approved.

Once the Corps receives funding for the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study, it will take several months to award the contract, prepare the Work Plan, coordinate with the necessary agencies, request and receive rights-of-entry from property owners, and initiate fieldwork. We will attempt to expedite the process as much as possible.

**What happens if a project is approved and the Corps has funding for a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study?**

The Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study evaluates what is present, where, and in what amounts; this is known



December 8, 1947 aerial image over current map

