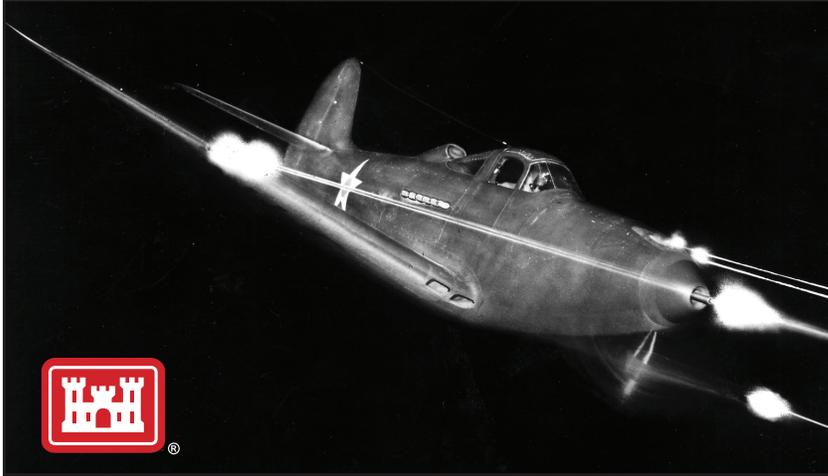


FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES | Passage Key Air-to-Ground Gunnery Range

DECISION DOCUMENT AND PUBLIC AWARENESS



September 2020

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

During World War II, air crews assigned to the Sarasota Army Airfield used Passage Key for a strafing and skip bombing range. There were two banks of six targets each, facing north and south, about 500 feet apart. Crews trained with machine guns, practice and, possibly, live bombs. The targets are now completely under water.

The Passage Key Air-to-Ground Gunnery Range Formerly Used Defense Site in Manatee County comprises 13,147 acres most of which is the water around Passage Key in Tampa Bay. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service owns the island and manages it as the Passage Key National Wildlife Refuge. It is not open to the public.

ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATIONS

The Corps has completed a number of studies of the island, and in 2018, we completed a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study. It involved a number of steps designed to identify the target locations and to determine if anything remained from the military's training. The Corps collected data using digital and analog metal detectors along paths (called transects) on land and in the water and within grids (rectangular areas) in the water to determine the type, density, and distribution of potential munitions. A total of 212 metallic items were investigated, of which 4 were munitions, 21 were munitions debris (pieces from practice rockets and bombs), 25 were expended cartridge casings, and



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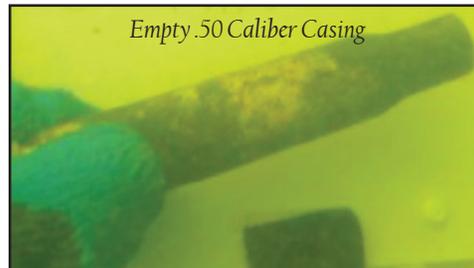
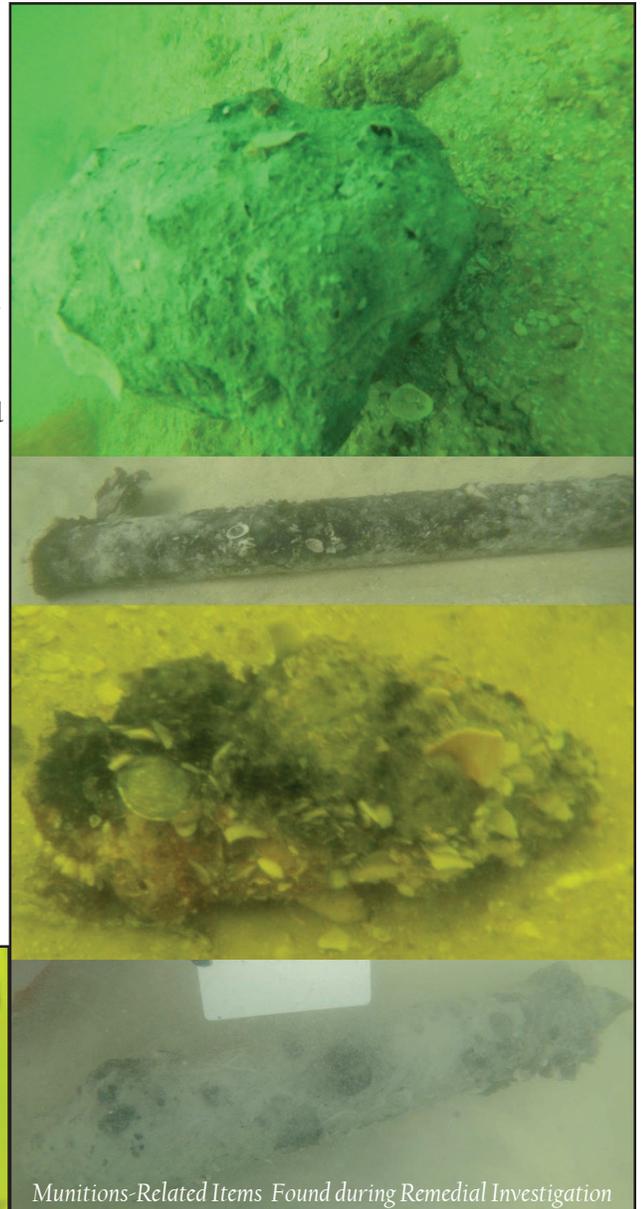
99 were pieces of scrap metal. The munitions were a fuzed 37-millimeter projectile, a 4.5-inch aerial rocket, and two bomb burster/fuzes from 100-pound photoflash bombs. They were found at depths ranging from 6 to 36 inches below the sediment surface in water approximately 5 to 15 feet deep. No munitions were found on land.

Based on the results of the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study, the Corps divided the site into two Munitions Response Sites: Remaining Waters (12,498 acres) and Air-to-Ground Target (649 acres). The data indicate there is a low potential risk from people encountering munitions in the Air-to-Ground Target, and no unacceptable risk in Remaining Waters.

While the potential for encountering munitions associated with the military's training is low, the Corps is implementing what is known as Land Use Controls which includes mechanisms for making the public aware of the historic use of Passage Key and what to do if someone finds something that could be munitions related.

Even though potential munitions are old and may have been in the water for a long time, they could still be dangerous. They also may not be easily recognizable (see the photo collage to the right), so if you did not drop it, do not pick it up. If you suspect you see something that could be munitions, remember and follow the 3Rs: Recognize, Retreat, Report. Recognize the item may be a munition and could be dangerous. Retreat from the area without touching the item but make note of its location. Report it by calling 911.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact us at 800.710.5184 or FUDS.Florida@usace.army.mil. This fact sheet, reports, and other documents are posted on the project website at www.saj.usace.army.mil/PassageKey.



Munitions-Related Items Found during Remedial Investigation

SAFETY FIRST: REMEMBER THE 3Rs

While the potential is low, munitions could potentially be present on Passage Key and in the water. 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.

RECOGNIZE - The item you found could be dangerous.

RETREAT - Do not touch it in any way, and leave the area.

REPORT - Call 911 immediately.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit:

Project documents can be viewed at:

Island Library

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