



Remedial Investigation at Formerly Used Defense Site Suffolk County Army Air Field Bombing and Gunnery Range

February 2024

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

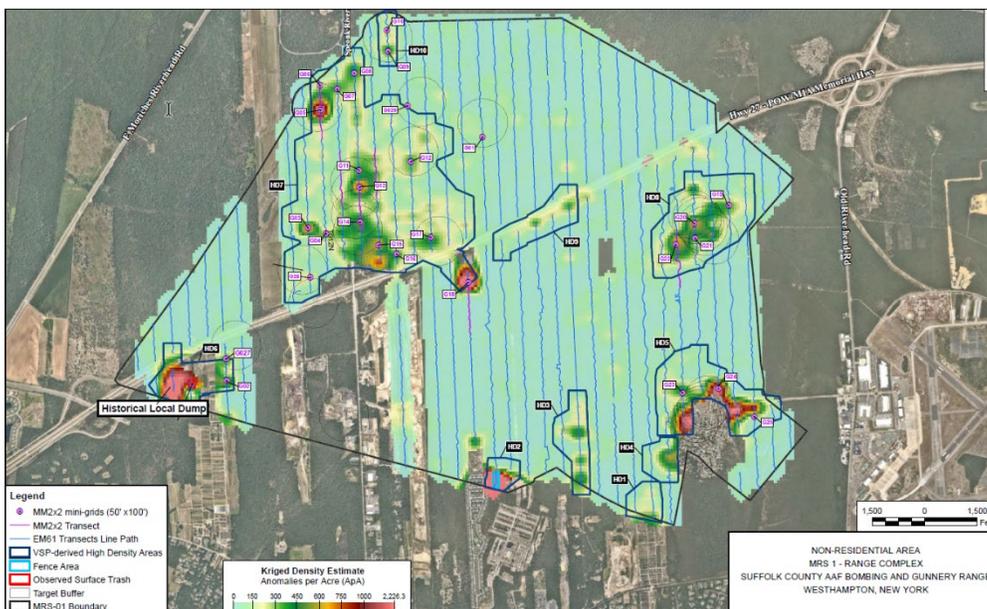
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Overview

Under the Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS) program, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, New England District (District) is conducting an environmental investigation at the former Suffolk County Army Air Field (AAF) Bombing and Gunnery Range (BGR) Munitions Response Site (MRS) located in Suffolk County, New York, approximately 2 miles north of Westhampton Beach. The purpose of this Remedial Investigation (RI), is to evaluate whether historical Department of Defense activities at the former Suffolk County AAF BGR MRS have impacted current environmental quality at the site from munitions and explosives of concern (MEC), and if so, to identify what cleanup or remediation is needed to protect human health and the environment. The investigation and remediation process is being conducted in accordance with federal regulations and is coordinated with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC).

Site History

The Suffolk Co AAF BGR MRS is 4,297 acres in size and was activated in 1943 for bombing, strafing, and rocket fire training exercises for fighter pilots. Most of the training exercises appear to have been .50 caliber machine guns, practice bombs, and practice rockets. However, from May 1943 through January 1944, 100-lb and 500-lb high explosive (HE) bombs, incendiary bombs, and 4.5-in HE rockets were reportedly used on the numerous targets located throughout the MRS. Military use of the Suffolk Co AAF site ceased in 1946. Except for two target silhouettes constructed of painted boulders, a destroyer, and an aircraft carrier, no military structures remain at the MRS.



Investigation Status

Geophysical investigations (Phases 1 and 2) were conducted to help define the horizontal and vertical boundary as well as the possible type of buried munitions. Phases 1 and 2 of the Investigation are complete. Phase 3 field work will begin in 2024.

- **Phase 1:** Transects placed approximately 500 feet apart through the MRS were walked with geophysical equipment to map any areas of metallic responses.
- **Phase 2:** In areas of metallic responses identified during Phase 1, grids (50 x 100 feet) were traversed with geophysical equipment to develop a target dig list.

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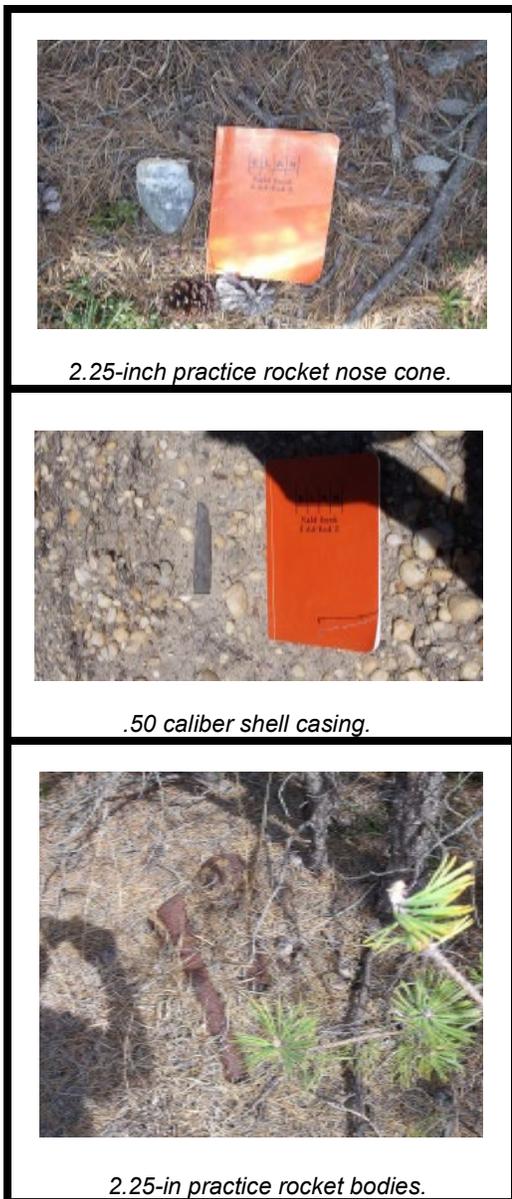
- **Phase 3:** Unexploded ordnance (UXO) technicians will dig the target locations to determine the sources of the metallic response. In coordination with local authorities, safety zones will be established during digging operations and may result in the need for temporary displacement of building occupants and road shutdowns during normal weekday business hours (8AM-5PM). Residents and Businesses who are directly impacted by field activities and will require temporary displacement will be contacted directly. Soil and potentially groundwater samples will be collected based on the results of the investigation and sampled for explosives and select metals associated with munitions and explosives.



Example of UXO technicians digging target locations.

If any munitions are found that potentially have an explosive hazard, the onsite RI contractor will safely dispose of the munitions through intentional detonations.

During field work, access through privately and publicly owned parcels was established through a Right-of-Entry form sent to each property owner where the investigation may enter their property.



2.25-inch practice rocket nose cone.

.50 caliber shell casing.

2.25-in practice rocket bodies.

Safety Reminder

If you find any object that looks like or you believe to be a munitions items, follow the three Rs:

- **Recognize** the item as potentially hazardous,
- **Retreat** from the area without touching or moving the item; and immediately
- **Report** the items to the local police by calling 911.



Project documents are available for public review in hard copy at the document repository established at:

Westhampton Free Library
7 Library Avenue
Westhampton Beach, NY

Or they can be found on the project website:

<https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Projects-Topics/Suffolk-County-Army-Air-Field-Bombing-and-Gunnery-Range-FUDS/>

For more information, contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' New England District POC: Project Manager Julie Rupp by email at: julia.m.rupp@usace.army.mil or by phone at 978-318-8962.