



Orlando, Florida

# FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES PINECASTLE JEEP RANGE

Site Summary

March 2008

## A Piece of History

In 1943, the U.S. government leased 11,833 acres of land in Orlando (Orange County) for use as a weapons demonstration range and for training troops. The range was an off-post site of the Pinecastle Army Airfield. The facility included small arms firing, air tactics evaluations and training demonstrations of strafing, practice bombing, air-to-ground rocket firing and high explosive bombing.

The Pinecastle Jeep Range was used for visual demonstrations of equipment and tactics taught to Soldiers in the classroom. The Army conducted these demonstrations regularly during World War II from 1944 through October 1945. In 1946, Pinecastle Jeep Range was declared surplus property and all leases were terminated by December 1947.

The former military property is currently planned and used for residential housing, schools, ranching, private industry, service businesses, highways, county landfill, City of Orlando facilities and future land development. Odyssey Middle School was built on the former Pinecastle Jeep Range.



*Pinecastle Jeep Range, Orlando, Fla.—Looking south on property owned by Mockingbird, LLC.*

## Environmental Investigation

In 1997, the Corps of Engineers completed an Archive Search Report/Preliminary Assessment for the former Pinecastle Jeep Range. In 2004, an addendum to the Archive Search Report was completed. This report formed the basis for the Site Inspection, which was presented to the community at a public meeting in July 2007. At that meeting, the Corps also reported that munitions had been discovered on the privately-owned (Mockingbird LLC) property adjacent to Odyssey Middle School, and that they had been safely removed by an explosives team from Patrick Air Force Base. That discovery led to the Corps' implementation of a Time Critical Removal Action (TCRA), a measure taken in response to the presence of an immediate threat or risk to the public.

Prior to the school opening for the 2007-2008 academic year, the Corps installed a temporary fence between the school and the Mockingbird property and conducted a surface sweep and soil sampling, confirming the school was safe to open on schedule. A geophysical survey indicated that subsurface anomalies, or irregularities, required further investigation; however, these anomalies posed no immediate risk to students or staff at the school and the investigation was scheduled to take place during the school's Thanksgiving and winter breaks.



*Showing off the Big Boys—Bazookas and Flame Thrower toss their fire as part of an ordnance demonstration – 1940s.*



*Firing line—Squadron Officers shooting the M1 Carbine – 1940s.*



*TCRA being performed at the Odyssey Middle School.*

About 14 tons of cultural (building, construction) debris and more than 125 munitions were removed from the Odyssey Middle School property over the holidays. In late January, a contractor working to repair the broad jump unearthed a munitions fragment that was buried under concrete and contained white phosphorous residue, which caught fire upon exposure to oxygen. As a precaution, the worker was taken to the hospital and released the same day. The munitions fragment was removed and was never a danger to students, since it had been buried about 18 inches beneath concrete.



*Munitions debris excavated near the track at Odyssey Middle School.*

The Corps further extended its TCRA to the Tivoli Gardens and Warwick subdivisions, under which contractors are conducting geophysical surveys to locate and remove metal objects or possible munitions below the surface on residential properties.

The next phase in the environmental investigation is a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) of the entire Pinecastle Jeep Range. The purpose of this study is to identify the nature and extent of risks posed by the former military use of the property and to evaluate the possible remedial options.

A contract for the RI/FS is expected to be awarded by the end of February. A public meeting will be held in late March to coordinate the plans for the RI/FS phase with the community.



*Geophysical Equipment is being used to investigate the entrance area at the Warwick Subdivision.*



*Survey team investigating the Common Area at Tivoli Gardens.*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**Documents are located in the Information Repository:**

**Orlando Public Library Southeast Branch**  
 5575 S. Semoran Blvd.  
 Orlando, FL 32822  
 407.835.7323

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**  
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