



SEPTEMBER 2015

## 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. We are committed to protecting people and the environment and improving public safety by cleaning up these properties. 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. We conduct 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. The Corps partners 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, the military acquired 12,522.47 acres in Lafayette and Taylor Counties just south of Madison County to establish Perry Bombing and Gunnery Range to train flight crews from Perry Army Airfield, Dale Mabry Army Airfield and Thomasville Army Airfield. The Army set up several range areas to allow crews to practice strafing, dive bombing and demolition bombing. Crews fired small arms (.50, and .30 caliber rounds) at the strafing and air-to-ground gunnery ranges. At the North Demolition Range and the South Dive Bombing Target, crews dropped practice and live bombs. In addition to practice and live bombs, crews also fired 2.25-inch practice rockets at the Skip Bombing Range.



After the war, the Army no longer needed the site. A certificate of decontamination dated October 16, 1945 stated that teams searched for and removed duds, unexploded projectiles and bombs. In 1946, the land was declared surplus, and the military disposed of the property. Currently, the property is privately owned and is used, primarily, for timber production and hunting.

## ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATIONS

The Corps has assessed the site a number of times over the years to determine if there are any potential munitions-related items

## FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES | Pery Bombing and Gunnery Range

resulting from the Army's training. Through historical research, the Corps has determined how the Army trained at the former Pery Bombing and Gunnery Range and the location of the specific target range areas. Many of the targets, such as the rocket ranges, were co-located within other target areas, either completely or partially. The Corps completed a Site Inspection in 2008 to determine if further evaluation of the site may be necessary based on the past military use of the property. No munitions have been reported at the former Pery Bombing and Gunnery Range, but munitions debris (small arms and/or pieces from munitions) was found during the Site Inspection. The team identified pieces from practice bombs, 2.25-inch practice rockets and .50 caliber casings in several of the target areas.

Since the munitions debris indicates the potential for other munitions related items, the Corps will conduct a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study to determine if anything further remains in the area from the Army's training, and if so, in what amounts and locations. This is known as characterizing the nature and extent of potential military-related materials.



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 former Pery Bombing and Gunnery Range. 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 are addressed first. Since the potential risk at the former Pery Bombing and Gunnery Range is low, the Corps has not 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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Click on Formerly Used Defense Sites under Most Requested

