



Former Camp Wheeler FUDS Project

Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study
May 2009

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Savannah District

Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS) Program

Congress established the Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) Program in 1986 to clean up properties that were formerly owned, leased, possessed, or used by the Army, Navy, Air Force, or other defense agencies. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers manages the FUDS Program.

Former Camp Wheeler, located approximately six miles southeast of Macon, Georgia, in portions of Bibb and Twiggs Counties. The purpose of this investigation is to determine the presence and extent of ordnance contamination at the former camp due to the prior ordnance training that was conducted by the Department of Defense between 1917 and 1944.

Site History

The War Department used the site area of Camp Wheeler as a mobilization center from 1917 to 1918 and as an infantry replacement center from 1940 to 1945. The first Camp Wheeler was established on July 18, 1917, as a temporary training camp for National Guard units in federal service and consisted primarily of tents in a cantonment area for the 29,000 officers and enlisted men. The first Camp Wheeler was officially closed on April 10, 1919.

On October 8, 1940, the second Camp Wheeler was established, with construction beginning on December 21, 1940. Rather than being used to train entire units, the camp was an Infantry Replacement Training Center where new recruits received basic and advanced individual training to replace combat casualties. The camp was divided into three major portions: a cantonment area, a maneuver area, and a main impact area. At the height of the training effort, the camp contained 17,000 trainees and 3,000 cadre personnel. The camp was declared excess on January 19, 1946. Following a decontamination operation in the fall of 1946, the land was returned to the owners. Additional decontamination operations were completed in 1947 and 1949 to remove Munitions and Explosives of Concern (MEC) from the site. After the decontamination operations, more MEC was discovered at the site. At this time, the South Atlantic Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) instituted a policy that provided for an annual visual inspection of the camp. While this policy was in place, until 1966, MEC was regularly

found each year of the inspection. During this time, several landowners of the former camp area sued the United States for the depreciation of the property value as a result of the kaolin deposits due to the presence of MEC. In nine of these cases the owners received monetary consideration.

Ordnance Investigation

As part of the FUDS Program, the Corps has investigated the presence of unexploded ordnance and explosive items on property within the Former Camp Wheeler boundaries. The Corps' Engineering and Support Center in Huntsville, Ala., and EOD Technology, Inc., a private contractor, have worked together on the ordnance investigation known as a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) for this site.

The RI/FS is designed to characterize site conditions, determine the nature and extent of possible MEC, assess risk of human health and the environment, and to conduct feasibility study to understand the appropriateness of response action.

Early stages of the RI/FS are designed to effectively scope the project which includes review of preexisting data from previous investigations such as the Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis and Removal Actions.

Once the Remedial Investigation (RI) is complete, the Feasibility Study (FS) will propose response alternatives for the ordnance contamination.

Questions or Comments

If you have questions about the Former Camp Wheeler project or the FUDS Program, contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District Public Affairs Office at (912) 652-5014.

Safety and Unexploded Ordnance

If you find any item that you suspect might be ordnance, **DO NOT DISTURB IT**. Notify local law enforcement officials immediately. Note the location of the suspicious item but never touch, move, or disturb the item. Ordnance, regardless of its age or physical shape, can be dangerous.

Remember the 3Rs of Unexploded Ordnance Safety:

- Recognize -- what may be UXO**
- Retreat -- safely leave the area**
- Report -- call 911**

Former Camp Wheeler

Rights of Entry - How You Get Involved in the Project

We can not come on to property to remove ordnance without the landowner's permission. Permission is given in the form of a written right-of-entry agreement.

The Corps asks landowners to sign voluntary right-of-entry agreements to allow the Corps and its contractors onto their property to investigate and remove Munitions and Explosives of Concern (MEC) if found. We will not enter land parcels without a signed right-of-entry agreement.

- Landowner's permission is required for the Corps or its contractor to enter private property.
- A right-of-entry agreement does not compromise or change your rights as a landowner.
- Participation is voluntary.
- Right-of-entry forms have been mailed to all identified landowners.
- The right-of-entry agreement gives the Corps temporary access to your property to perform work.

We will leave your property the way we find it.

We will be respectful of your home, surrounding structures, yard, and landscaping throughout the project. The equipment we use is small and is not likely to damage your yard. We may need to dig in your yard to remove ordnance but will backfill any holes we make and restore the area.

It is important that you get involved in the project and completing a right-of-entry agreement is the most effective way to do so. Your participation helps in the successful clean-up of MEC. Because of this, we ask that you encourage your neighbors to also participate in this project. This will increase the ability of the Corps and its contractors to clean up MEC hazards and make your community safer as a whole.

Former Camp Wheeler

Performing the Work - How We Find Munitions and Explosives of Concern (MEC)

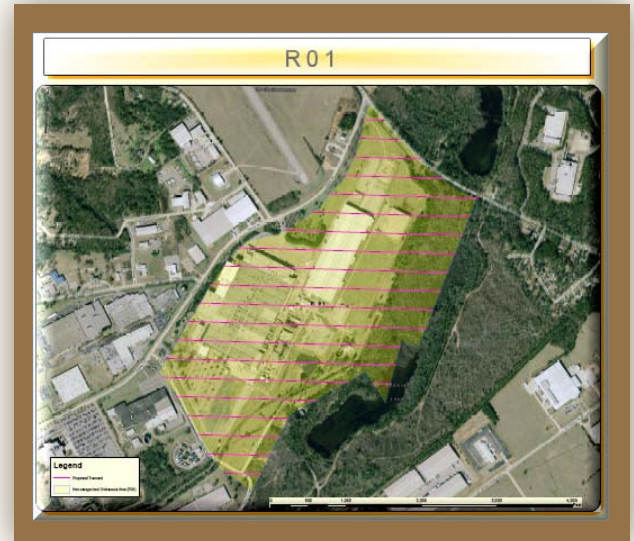
We use a process to locate MEC that has been proven effective at more than 2,000 similar sites across the United States.

Brush Clearing

The process of removing MEC begins with brush clearing. Brush clearing is required in some areas so that we can access the entire site to look for MEC.

We clear brush using a variety of tools, depending on what is most appropriate. We do not clear brush without permission from the land owner and we do not cut down trees larger than 5 inches in diameter.

After brush clearing, we lay out the transect at a predetermined location. This allows us to work in a more organized way.



Locating MEC

Our MEC experts are trained by the military to recognize and respond to MEC safely. They find and remove MEC by completing the following 5 steps:

- Step 1: Our experts work in teams and walk in a line called a transect.
- Step 2: As they walk, they use an advanced magnetic metal detector to locate metal items below the surface.
- Step 3: The items that are located are marked with a flag.
- Step 4: Our experts then dig the item by hand.
- Step 5: They inspect the item to determine if it is hazardous.



Our experts use a Schonstedt magnetic metal detector to locate items. The Schonstedt magnetic metal detector emits an audible tone that changes in pitch when the instrument detects magnetic metal in the ground.

Former Camp Wheeler

Evacuations - How we Protect You During the Project

When we dig for a Munitions and Explosives of Concern (MEC) item, there is always a possibility that it could accidentally detonate. An accidental detonation is likely to cause serious injury and/or death.

To protect your safety, we will need to evacuate you from your home during portions of this project. We have worked to develop an evacuation plan that will help make this process as comfortable as possible.

- We will not ask you to be away from your home except when it is absolutely necessary.
- We will only require you to evacuate between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- We will only ask you to evacuate on weekdays Monday through Friday as needed.
- We will provide you a schedule of the days you will need to be out of your home.
- We will work closely with each resident to ensure that you are comfortable when it is necessary for you to be away from your home.
- We will protect your home during our work.



Portions of roads may be blocked off during the project. Road blocks will be limited to the hours between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. We will work with the Postmaster and parcel delivery services during these times so that deliveries are not affected.

The locations of our work determine when we may need you to evacuate. We will provide each homeowner with a schedule that details the days during which you will need to be away from your home as far in advance as possible. In this way, we can accommodate you more effectively.



Former Camp Wheeler

Detonation - How We Dispose of Munitions and Explosives of Concern (MEC)

MEC, regardless of age, is still very dangerous. If we find a MEC item, we must dispose of it. Our experts will inspect each item and determine if the item is hazardous and if it is safe to move.

We will dispose of MEC through the “blow-in-place” method. This means that we will destroy the item where we find it unless we determine it is safe to move.



We take a number of precautionary steps during a detonation to protect surrounding structures. We use water and sandbags to reduce fragmentation from the detonation.

Once the detonation is complete, we clean up the area, backfill any holes, and restore the property as needed.

A detonation is not likely to disturb the exterior or interior items of your home. Items have been detonated immediately adjacent to a home, and the home was not impacted in any way.

- Our experts have experience detonating all types of ordnance anticipated to be found on this site.
- The Removal Action Team cumulatively has more than 75 years of experience performing this type of work.
- We coordinate with local authorities when we detonate items as an extra precaution.

