

RESTORATION INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES (FUDS)
PROJECT FACT SHEET
JULY 1997

HNC REVISION: 31 OCTOBER 1997
TAG REVIEW DATE: 3 FEBRUARY 1998

1. **SITE NAME:** Fort Howard

SITE NUMBER: C03MD035500

LOCATION:

City: North Point
County: Baltimore County
State: Maryland

PROJECT NUMBER: C03MD035501

CATEGORY: OE

INPR RAC: 2

ASR RAC: 2

TAG RAC: 2

2. **POC'S:**

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRICT:

Name: Sheila Bloom
Office: CENAB-PP-E
Phone: 410-962-6782

GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION:

Name: Celia Orgel
Office: CENAD-PP-S
Phone: 212-264-6484

HEADQUARTERS:

Name: J. R. Gibson
Office: CEMP-RF
Phone: 202-761-4709

ASR/INPR TEAM LEADER:

Name: Richard L. Pike
Office: CEHNC-OE-DC-D
Phone: 256-895-1559

ASR SUPPORT DISTRICT:

Name: C. Lynn Frow
Office: SIOAC-ESL
Phone: 815-273-8019

ASR TECHNICAL REVIEWER:

Name: Thomas M. Meekma
Office: SIOAC-ESL
Phone: 815-273-8739

3. **SITE DESCRIPTION:** The former Fort Howard FUDS consists of 155.64 acres situated on North Point, a peninsula, in Baltimore County, Maryland, approximately 17 miles east of Baltimore. The site is accessed from I-695 by taking Highway 20 to North Point Road, which splits left to the park and straight to the VA

Medical Center. The land is presently divided into two separate parcels. One parcel of 94.64 acres is owned by the Veteran's Administration (VA) and contains the Fort Howard VA Medical Center. The Baltimore County Parks and Recreation Department owns the remaining parcel of 61 acres which is used for the Fort Howard Waterside Park. North Point is surrounded by Chesapeake Bay on the east, Patapsco River on the south, Old Road Bay on the west, and Shallow Creek Tidal Flats and the community of Fort Howard to the north. Fort Howard lies within the Sparrows Point Quadrangle. The parcels are divided by a fence, but both areas permit public access.

In recent years, the VA has declared an additional 35 acres to be excess to their needs and it is being released to the Baltimore County Park through a legislative proposal. The 35 acre parcel extends generally along the fence line that is the boundary between the two parcels.

The topography is relatively flat, with typical hospital grounds on the VA portion of the site, and a natural park setting in the park area. Elevation at the site ranges from sea level in marshes bordering the Bay on the northern boundary to a few feet above sea level around the seawall.

4. SITE HISTORY: Land acquisition to build fortifications for the defense of Baltimore, Fort Howard began on 14 April 1896 with a condemnation suit against the Canton, Sparrows Point and North Point Railroads. The site consisted of four separate parcels for a combined total of 155.64 acres. Two separate tracts of land containing 28.5 acres and 2.0 acres, respectively, were acquired by the U.S. Government from the Canton, Sparrows Point and North Point Railroads by deeds dated 25 November 1896 and 29 November 1899. A third tract containing 118.0 acres of land was obtained from Elizabeth Gunther, Administrator, by deed dated 21 December 1899. A fourth tract containing 7.14 acres of land was obtained from the U.S. Department of Commerce by Executive Order dated 19 November 1919. In 1955, 61.00 acres of the site were reacquired from the General Services Administration (GSA).

Fort Howard, established in 1898, was used by the Department of Defense (DOD) between 1899 and 1940 as the headquarters for Baltimore's Coastal Defense System for the purpose of defending Baltimore's coastline from enemy warships. Forts Armistead, Carroll and Smallwood were all under the command of Fort Howard. DOD constructed 150 buildings of temporary or permanent construction including OE related construction of ammunition bunkers and six gun batteries: Key, 12" mortars; Stricker, 12" guns on disappearing carriage; Harris, 5" guns; Claggett, 3" guns; Lazear, 3" guns; and Nicholson, 6" Rapid Fire Rifles.

After the fort was decommissioned, a portion of the property was used by the Army for Intelligence Training. A mock Vietnamese village was constructed onsite for combat training. The site was used as an infiltration, demonstration, and show-and-tell type training operation, employing blank ammunition, booby traps, trip wires, barbed wire, observation posts, search lights and tunnels.

The fort was decommissioned and the entire 155.64-acre tract was transferred from the Department of the Army to the Veterans Administration (VA) by Executive Order dated 2 August 1940. In 1955, the VA transferred 61.0 acres to the GSA. GSA transferred the property to Fort Holabird, and it was subsequently transferred to Baltimore County by deed dated 5 November 1973.

5. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

AREA A

Size, Acres:	94.64
Former Use:	Cantonment Area
Present Use:	Fort Howard VA Hospital and Medical Center
Probable End Use:	Fort Howard VA Hospital and Medical Center
Ordnance Presence:	None (1 inert Cannonball found in the river off the seawall)
Type:	Not Applicable

AREA B

Size, Acres:	61.00
Former Use:	Coastal Defense Batteries (1898-1926) Military Infantry Training Post (1926-1940) Fort Holabird Training Area(1955-1973)
Present Use:	Baltimore County Fort Howard Waterside Park
Probable End Use:	Baltimore County Fort Howard Waterside Park
Ordnance Presence:	Potential
Type:	Practice grenades, flares, signals, Simulators, screening smoke

AREA C

Size, Acres:	6,200.00
Former Use:	Firing Fan into the Chesapeake Bay and the Patapsco River
Present Use:	Commercial and pleasure craft waterway

Probable End Use: Commercial and pleasure
craft waterway
Ordnance Presence: None
Type: Not Applicable

6. CURRENT STATUS: The Archives Search Report (ASR) for Fort Howard was completed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District, in July 1997.

7. STRATEGY:

AREA A: RAC 5;NOFA
AREA B: RAC 2;EE/CA
AREA C: RAC 5;NOFA

8. ISSUES AND CONCERNS: The Huntsville Center Technical Advisory Group reviewed this ASR and has determined that a strategy of RAC 2, EE/CA for Area B and RAC 5, NOFA for Area A, applies. A strategy of NOFA applies to Area C since it is underwater. This strategy is in agreement with the ASR recommendation of EE/CA for Area B based on a historical use of training items, i.e., trip flares, booby traps, smoke grenades, etc. However, no OE of an energetic nature has been found in Area B since it was turned over to Baltimore County and used as a park. Further rationale for all areas is described below.

Area A, Veterans Administration Medical Center: The strategy for this area is NOFA as the SI team did not find any indication that OE is present on the site. Ordnance storage buildings have been removed. One workshop remains where mines were loaded with explosives for use in surrounding channels. There is no evidence of a rifle range described in historical documents: only small arms ammunition was used. Persons interviewed did state that they found cartridge cases. A cannonball found during seawall repair in 1991 was determined to be inert by EOD and judged to be an anomaly since this item was not used at Fort Howard. There was no trace left of Battery Lazear which was demolished a long time ago. There was no evidence of OE at three suspected landfills.

Area B, Park(location of the Vietnamese Village): EE/CA, RAC 2 is determined based on a historical use of training items, including trip flares, booby traps, smoke grenades, in this area. Further comments regarding this area: (1) The SI team saw no evidence of OE in this area. (2) The old mine casemate and batteries were clean. (3) Only blanks and training items were used. (4) Upon site closure and before being released by the Army on two occasions, in 1940 and 1973, the site was cleared of all arms, armament, and ammunition. (5) Mr. Al Svehla, former deputy director, Baltimore County Parks and Recreation, stated

that before turning over the land for the park, the EOD Unit from APG had been very careful in cleaning up and clearing the area the Army had used for training. (6) There is no future development planned in this area which would require movement of the soil. (7) The ASR writer states that the potential for OE in this area is very slight given that a clearance was accomplished. (8) The ASR writer also argues that it is better to err on the side of safety in setting a strategy of EE/CA based on the potential of OE in this area. (9) In 1988, a visitor to the park, using a mine detector, unearthed a dummy grenade. The responding APG EOD Unit declared it inert and noted it was of the Vietnam era vintage.

AREA C, Firing Fan: Strategy for this area is NOFA as it extends over the Patapsco River/Chesapeake Bay. DERP/FUDES policy and guidance is, "Off-shore ordnance sites beyond 100 yards of mean high tide, will not be added to the inventory data base except in special cases where a public exposure pathway exists." Documented training firing of the batteries of Fort Howard, mine planting operations, and small arms range all fall under this guidance.

Concerns Noted in ASR: (1)The Baltimore County Parks and Recreation Department are anxious to add 35 acres along the property boundary with the VA. They are concerned the land they will be receiving will be clear and clean of any OE items. (2) The potential, however unlikely, of possible residual ammunition training items on the property from 1955 through 1973, should be addressed. The cost of an EE/CA with selected sampling and a documented clearance record will be advantageous for public relations for the 61 acres in the Baltimore County Fort Howard Waterside Park. (3)Two hut structures and an old concrete building were stated to be ineligible for removal as a BD/DR project in the INPR.

Confirmation Study: In 1988, a small vial of very low level radioactive material was found in a suspected landfill area near the northern boundary of the VA portion of the site. This discovery prompted a Confirmation Study by the Corps of Engineers, to determine if contamination was present, and if it was attributable to the War Department/Department of Defense (WD/DOD).

Natural Resources: According to the State of Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), no Federally and State threatened species occur within the site area. However, an on-site inspection by appropriate State and Federal personnel may still be necessary to verify the presence, absence or location of listed species, or natural communities.

Historical Resources: No archeological or paleontological properties exist at the site. Fort Howard has been determined as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as an historic installation. Any intrusive measures taken within the area will require oversight by the State Historical Preservation Office (and/or other like organizations).

9. SCHEDULE SUMMARY: EE/CA

10. FUNDING/BUDGET SUMMARY: For Official Use Only