

**RESTORATION INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES (FUDS)
PROJECT FACT SHEET
JULY 1996
TAG REVIEW DATE: 26 March 1997**

1. **SITE NAME:** Reading Army Air Field

SITE NUMBER: C03PA045900

LOCATION:

City: Reading
County: Berks
State: Pennsylvania

PROJECT NUMBER: C03PA045903

CATEGORY: OE

INPR RAC: 3

ASR RAC: 5

2. **POC's:**

TECHNICAL MANAGER:

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

GEO DISTRICT POC:

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

GEO DIVISION POC:

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

HEADQUARTERS POC:

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

SUPPORT DISTRICT (ASR) POC:

Name: Gerald V. Schwalbe
Office: CELMS-PM-M
Phone: 314-331-8788

ASR TAG REVIEW POC:

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

3. **SITE DESCRIPTION:** The former Reading Army Air Field, consisting of 806.79 acres, is located northwest of the downtown Reading business district, Berks County Pennsylvania. The site can be reached via State Route 183. The site serves as the Reading Municipal Airport and is owned and operated by the Reading Municipal Airport Authority (RMAA). Sections of the property have been, and are continuing to be developed with airport related enterprises and other commercial, industrial, and

institutional facilities. Specifically, industrial parks south of the site along Bernville Road (Route 183) and northwest of the site in the Northfield Business Center along State route 3055 are being developed.

The Schuylkill River flows around the site from the north to the south around the east side. Local runoff from the area travels through creeks, ditches and storm sewers to the Schuylkill River and the Tulpehocken Creek. Tulpehocken Creek flows through the southern boundary of the site. Terrain is flat to gently rolling. Vegetation is present in forests, grasslands and agricultural areas. The site is accessed by a major highway, and primary paved and secondary unpaved roads.

4. SITE HISTORY: The U.S. Government acquired a total of 806.79 acres for use as the Reading Army Airfield through purchase and lease beginning in 1942. The Reading Municipal Airport, containing 538.0 acres, was leased from the City of Reading on 1 June 1942 by Contract No. W-1098-ENG-2463. The remaining 268.79 acres were acquired from various landowners between 1943 and 1951. The apparent discrepancy between the acquisition dates of some parcels (1951) and the excess dates by DOD (1948-49) is due to the lengthy legal proceedings associated with the Declaration of Taking No. 1, Civil No. 2682.

Reading Army Airfield was originally designed as a training base with housing for approximately 2,250 officers and enlisted men and a 93 bed hospital. As a sub-base of Harrisburg Army Air Field, it functioned as a training base for a short time. On 15 May 1943, however, the Commanding General of the Third Air Force issued a directive to convert the site from a sub-base to a One Observation Group Air Support Command Base. Aircraft known to have been present at the site include B-24, P-47, P-51, and C-119 variations. The 309th Base Unit had the mission of B-24 aircraft storage. The repairing and processing of aircraft were a part of the B-24 storage project. Upon completion of the repairing and servicing of the B-24s, members of the 309th Base Unit placed the aircraft in storage until the planes were needed at other army airfields for training purposes. A portion of the area was also used for a prisoner of war camp housing 256 prisoners, 2 officers and 40 guards. Facilities included fencing, guard towers and housing.

The entire 806.79 acres was declared surplus to the War Assets Administration (WAA) on 1 April 1946. WAA assumed accountability on 8 March 1948. The contract for 538.00 leased acres with the City of Reading was terminated by the WAA effective 8 March 1948. The remaining 268.79 acres fee were conveyed to the City of Reading by two (2) Quitclaim Deeds dated 26 May 1948 and 23 November 1949. These deeds contained

recapture clauses and no restoration provisions. The City of Reading maintained control until 1958, when the newly-created Reading Municipal Airport Authority (RMAA) assumed all responsibilities and covenants for the property from the City of Reading.

5. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Size, Acres:	806.79
Former Use:	Army Air Field
Present Use:	Municipal Airport
Probable End Use:	Same as present
Ordnance Presence:	None
Type:	Not Applicable

6. CURRENT STATUS: The draft Archives Search Report for Reading Army Air Field was completed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District, in July 1996.

7. STRATEGY: NOFA; (RAC 5)

8. ISSUES AND CONCERNS: The strategy is NOFA with a score of RAC 5. This strategy, finalized during the TAG Review, differs from the ASR strategy of EE/CA, RAC 1 which was concurred in, with modifications, by W. Walters in CEHND Form 7 dated 1 October 1996. The ASR states that the site can be considered free of ordnance except at three locations: the shoot-in-butt, skeet ranges/obstacle course, and landfill areas. The ASR indicates that there is only potential for spent small arms at the first two areas thereby eliminating those areas from further consideration for EE/CAA. It then states, "The most likely location for disposed OE(CWM) would be in a rather large hole (landfill) in or near the woods and the former skeet range and ordnance site". In an interview, there was testimony confirming items of an ordnance/explosive nature were deposited in this landfill. The ASR states that potential OE would be M38 100-lb practice bombs; small arms ammunition (.30 cal, .45 cal, .50 cal); CN tear gas grenades, smoke pots, det cord and dynamite. Since the conclusion of the ASR writer was that the only potential for OE at the site was at this landfill area, this is an HTRW project with the stipulation that if any OE would be found, the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville would be contacted. Policy is that no OE projects are proposed for cleanup of landfills. The Site Survey Team only observed small caliber spent projectiles at the site.

HNC Safety Comment: There was disagreement by HNC Safety with inclusion of a value for War Gas Identification sets in the ASR RAC Form, Part 1E. Elimination of the War Gas ID sets from the RAC was recommended which would reduce the Hazard Severity from catastrophic to critical without changing the RAC score of 1.

Comments back from the writer of the ASR concurred that the RAC should be corrected since there is no evidence that ID sets were ever at the site. The ASR states, "Reading Army Air Field was not listed as having any CW material on hand in the 1945 list of Controlled & Other Critical Items of Equipment Report for army airfields. **The support district needs to make a new RAC Form and include it in the ASR before it is finalized, to include the consensus of the TAG that the site has a strategy of NOFA, RAC 5.**

Areas of Former Ammunition Usage: Gunners aimed and fired .50 cal mounted on aircraft at the **Shoot-in-Butt**. There is an HTRW project to sample the soil for lead contamination. It was determined that there is no potential for ammunition at the **Sub-Depot Area** and **Squadron Armament Area** where material was stored and planes were armed. Similarly, the **Ordnance Storage Area**, where small arms ammunition, pyrotechnics, prima cord, dynamite, 100 lb. practice bombs and tear gas munitions were stored, also does not have potential for ammunition. This area is now developed with commercial buildings. The **Obstacle Course, Skeet/Rifle Range**, consisting of an estimated 40 acres, was used for small arms firing and training involving CN, HC, prima cord and dynamite. The ASR states that there is "a high potential for spent small caliber rounds and likely other OE debris".

Significant Past Ownership Other than DOD: The INPR also noted an additional 220 acres were used under a Department of the Army Lease No. DA-49-080-ENG-1016, dated 15 February 1952 (later superseded by Lease No. DA-36-109-ENG-6882 dated 16 June 1958). The exact location of these 220 acres is unknown and it is also not known whether or not the acreage was included within, or in addition to, the 806.79 acre eligible DERP-FUDS site. It is believed that the Pennsylvania Air National Guard was located onsite (on the 806.79 acre eligible portion of the site) subsequent to the Army's disposition of the property and remained onsite until the mid 1960's at which time they vacated the airport. It is also known that the leases described above were associated with the Pennsylvania Air National Guard use of the site.

Other Comments Regarding the ASR: (1)F, para 5.1, pg 5-1, INPR lists contract as W-1098-ENG-2463 in lieu of W-1098.-ENC-2463 in the ASR, (2)F, para 1.4 on Pg 1-2, Reads "**ARS FINDINGS**" rather than "**ASR FINDINGS**". (3)C&R, para 3.1, pg 3-1, In the second paragraph, "into" is used rather than "for". (4)C&R, para 2-5, pg 2-7, "remain" is used instead of "remaining".

Other Environmental Actions: The Baltimore District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in addition to sampling the soil at the

former Shooting-in-Butt range for lead in an HTRW project, is also investigating four USTs and an associated fueling system.

Natural Resources: Federally- and State-listed species may occur within the site area. A description is provided in the ASR Findings, page 3-4, paragraph 3.5. An on-site inspection by appropriate State and Federal personnel may be necessary to verify the presence, absence or location of listed species, or natural communities.

Historical Resources: No cultural or historical sites associated with this site are reported in the ASR. However, any intrusive measures taken within the area will require oversight by the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) and/or other like organizations.

9. **SCHEDULE SUMMARY:** NOFA

10. **FUNDING/BUDGET SUMMARY:** NA NOFA