

**RESTORATION INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES (FUDS)
PROJECT FACT SHEET
MAY 1998**

**HNC REVISION: 14 SEPTEMBER 1998
TAG REVIEW DATE: 27 OCTOBER 1998**

1. **SITE NAME:** Inyokern Airfield

SITE NUMBER: J09CA040100

LOCATION:

City: Inyokern
County: Kern
State: California

PROJECT NUMBER: J09CA040102

CATEGORY: OE

INPR RAC: 3

ASR RAC: 3

TAG RAC: 5

2. **POC'S:**

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3. **SITE DESCRIPTION:** The former Inyokern Airfield, also known as Harvey Field, consisted of 1,320.02 acres located a half mile west of the town of Inyokern, Kern County, California. **The INPR states that 44.75 acres are currently owned by the Navy, so that eligible project acreage is 1,275.27.** Ridgecrest, near the

Naval Warfare Center at China Lake, is 7 miles east of the site. The site included land in Sections 13, 18, 19, 24, 25 and 30 in T26S, Ranges 38 and 39. The Southern Pacific Railroad passes through Inyokern in a north-south direction. Current property owners include the Indian Wells Valley Airport District for Inyokern Airport, which continues to operate as an airport, and private firms, which use part of the site designated as an industrial park.

Topography of the site is flat, the vegetation is very sparse, and a few intermittent streams drain the area. Channels on the west, south and east borders drain surface water at the site. Drainage is toward the northeast through tributaries of Little Dixie Wash, which is just east of the site area. Little Dixie Wash empties into the Los Angeles Aqueduct and travels southwest. The Little Dixie Wash tributaries are usually dry between periods of precipitation.

The weather at the site is typical of the high desert country, with a high percentage of sunshine. Climate is semi-arid with average annual precipitation of 3.5 inches a year. Summer temperatures exceed 100° F 60 days a year, while nights are a cool 60 to 70 degrees. Winter temperatures drop to less than 32° F an average of 60 days a year, while day time temperatures reach into the 50's.

4. SITE HISTORY: Inyokern Airfield was acquired by the U.S. Army and was used by both the U.S. Army Air Corps and the U.S. Navy. The U.S. Army acquired 1,320.02 acres in 1943: 1,135.28 acres through lease #W-2972-eng-1129 from the County of Kern on 24 May 1943, and 184.74 acres from private owners (81.53 acres from Otis H. Vanderford and 41.32 acres from Alice M. Henry by declaration of taking; 40 acres from George Michael and 21.89 acres from the Estate of Jesse H. Taylor by direct purchase). On 29 October 1943, the Interdepartmental Air Traffic Control Board reassigned use of the airfield to the Navy. On 15 June 1945, the Army transferred lease #W-2972-eng-1129 to the Navy.

The U.S. Army acquired the airport in 1943 for use as an auxiliary field, making improvements to the runways. Other improvements to the site by the Army Air Corps included a storage shack and latrine.

Significant military use began in December 1943 with the commissioning of the Naval Ordnance Test Station (NOTS). NOTS was a major weapon, research, development and test center which continues as the Naval Air Warfare Center and Naval Weapons Station China Lake. The Navy renamed Inyokern Airfield Harvey Field on 10 May 1944 and used it as the initial airfield and

temporary camp during construction of the NOTS China Lake facilities. Improvements by the Navy included terminals, barracks, hangar, fueling facilities, and ammunition bunkers.

The ordnance and explosives related features of the site included a magazine storage and armament area on the northwest side of the airfield where various types of weapons, primarily rockets, were stored, assembled and loaded for use at NOTS. It included 5 earth covered High Explosive (HE) magazines and one earth covered Fuze Storage magazine, as well as 7 other rocket storage, assembly and ready shelters. Naval use of the airport diminished with the completion of Armitage Field at NOTS. However, the Navy continued to use portions of the site, including magazines, through the early 1950's.

In 1947, a new lease, Noy (R)-43446 superseded the old lease for the airfield with Kern County. This lease reserved the right to use the landing area and returned all the land covered by the original lease to the lessor except for the Magazine Area, Gasoline Storage Area, and Water Facilities and Distribution System. The Army transferred the 184.74 fee acres to General Services Administration (GSA) on 30 October 1951. GSA conveyed the land to Kern County on 15 October 1952. The Navy renewed lease Noy (R)-43446 at least through 30 June 1952. It was not determined when the Navy finally let this lease lapse.

On 15 October 1952, Kern County deeded 44.75 acres to the U.S. Navy, who currently uses the property as a well field for China Lake Naval Weapons Center. Kern County deeded 35.71 acres to private firms for an industrial park. The remaining 1,239.56 acres was deeded to the Indian Wells Valley Airport District and is currently used as an airport known as Inyokern Airport.

5. **PROJECT DESCRIPTION** (The ASR does not mention the 44.75 acres which the INPR identifies as Navy owned property):

AREA A

Size, Acres:	88
Former Use:	Armament and Magazine Areas
Present Use:	Armament Area - undeveloped Magazine Area - storage and light industry (manufacture of pyrotechnics)
Probable End Use:	Armament Area - undeveloped Magazine Area - storage and light industry (manufacture of pyrotechnics)
Ordnance Presence:	None

AREA B

Size, Acres: 44.75 (Not DERP-FUDS)
Former Use: Part of Inyokern Airfield
Present Use: A well field for China Lake Naval Weapons Center
Probable End Use: A well field for China Lake Naval Weapons Center
Ordnance Presence: **None**

AREA C

Size, Acres: 1,187.27
Former Use: Inyokern Airfield-other lands
Present Use: Inyokern Airport
Probable End Use: Inyokern Airport
Ordnance Presence: **None**

6. **CURRENT STATUS:** The Archives Search Report (ASR) for Inyokern Airfield was completed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District, in May 1998.

7. **STRATEGY:**

AREA A: RAC 5;NOFA

AREA B: RAC 5;NOFA (Not DERP-FUDS eligible-owned by the Navy)

AREA C: RAC 5;NOFA

8. **ISSUES AND CONCERNS:** The Huntsville Center Technical Advisory Group met and discussed this ASR on 27 October 1998 and determined a strategy of NOFA, RAC 5 for the entire site (A revised Risk Assessment Code form is attached). Reasons are: (1) There is no record that energetic OE was ever found at the site. (2) All evidence indicates that no ranges existed at the site and that all testing and firing of OE occurred at the NOTS location 10 miles east. (3) The findings by the site inspection team of ordnance packaging and assembly debris listed on page 2-5 of the ASR Conclusions and Recommendations are entirely consistent with operations performed at the base: various types of weapons, primarily rockets, were stored, assembled and loaded for use at NOTS. (4) The ASR reason for further action at the site is a theorized suspicion that OE may be buried on site based on ground scars, a depression in the area, and findings of packaging and assembly debris. This is not a valid reason as there is no substantiated indication of burial such as a witness report or historical document. Also, the ASR states that a historical aerial photograph shows there was a structure of some sort in the area where the depression is located. (5) The ASR

authors state that an ESI strategy, to include the policing of packaging and assembly debris in the Armament Area, could "verify or dismiss speculated burial of OE items." Again, the subject is unsubstantiated speculation; it is doubtful that OE is buried on the site and even more improbable that an ESI would identify the presence of buried OE.

HNC Safety Comments: Concurs with a RAC score of 3 and recommends continuation of the OE EE/CA process. States that the depression shown in the ASR photograph looks like a crater and states that there is evidence of rocket testing that was accomplished at the site. **The ASR states that testing and firing occurred at NOTS. The depression is said to be the site of a structure of some sort identified in a historical photograph; the depression could just as well be the result of excavation at the site to remove the structure identified. It is unlikely that rockets were tested within the small acreage where rockets were being stored and assembled for use at NOTS.**

Clearances: The ASR includes a historical document, a Certificate of Clearance dated 8 August 1951 by the 9800 TSU-CE Detachment #6, Bomb and Shell Disposal Team, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, which states that all lands within tracts 5, 6, 7 and 8 (i.e. the northern 184.74 acres) of the Inyokern Airfield were given a careful visual inspection and had been cleared of all explosive materials reasonably possible to detect. The land was recommended for any use for which the land was suited. The ASR did not reveal any certificates for the leased portion of the airfield.

CWM: The archives search uncovered no documentation relating to Chemical Warfare Material at Inyokern Airfield. The archives search team found no indication that Inyokern Airfield conducted CWM training, storage, or disposal.

Other Projects: None

Natural Resources: State and federal threatened species occur in the vicinity of the site and are listed in the ASR Findings, paragraph 3.5, page 3-4. 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: The ASR does not address the presence of historical/cultural resources at this site. Any intrusive measures taken at the site will require oversight by the State Historical Preservation Office and/or other like organizations.

9. SCHEDULE SUMMARY: NOFA

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