

RESTORATION INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES (FUDS)
PROJECT FACT SHEET
ORIGINAL DATE: 12 NOVEMBER1997
TAG REVIEW DATE: 20 MAY 1998

1. SITE NAME: Fort Michie

SITE NUMBER: C02NY061200

LOCATION:

City: Great Gull Island, Long Island Sound

County: Suffolk

State: New York

PROJECT NUMBER: C02NY061203

CATEGORY: OE

INPR RAC: 4

ASR RAC: 5

TAG RAC: 5

2. POC's:

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3. SITE DESCRIPTION: Fort Michie is located on Great Gull Island, in Long Island Sound, Suffolk County, New York. The reservation contains about 17 acres and includes the island called Little Gull Island. It is about 3 miles east northeast of Plum Island and 12 miles from New London, Connecticut, at Latitude 41 12' 6" Longitude 72° 7' 6". Fort Michie was constructed on land initially purchased by the United States of

America on behalf of the Treasury Department in 1803, for the erection of a lighthouse and accommodations. The Great Gull Island was conveyed to the American Museum of Natural History for educational research programs. The site is currently used as a bird sanctuary and research facility for the declining common and roseate tern populations.

4. SITE HISTORY:

a. Great Gull Island was transferred from the Treasury Department to the War Department on September 18, 1896, for the purpose of erecting a coastal defense site. It was named Fort Michie in 1899. Maps indicate that the first battery scheduled for construction on the island consisted of two 12-inch breach loading rifles, model M1895. This battery became known as Battery Palmer. The second battery scheduled to be constructed consisted of two 10-inch breach loading rifles, model M1896, and became Battery North. Both Battery Palmer and Battery North were completed in approximately 1900. Three other batteries were built in approximately 1908. These were: Battery Benjamin, which consisted of two 6-in guns, model M1900; Battery Maitland, which also contained two 6-inch, model M1900 guns; and Battery Pasco, which contained two 3-inch rapid firing guns, model M1903.

b. Fort Michie had facilities for about 450 officers and men. However, in the period between the wars, the post was manned by a caretaker force only. This post was originally a sub post of Fort Terry (WWI time frame and earlier) and later became a sub-post of Fort H. G. Wright (post WWI time frame).

c. Battery North was closed in 1917. Construction of Battery J. M. K. Davis was authorized in 1919, and it was constructed in about the same location as Battery North. Battery Davis consisted of one 16-inch gun, model M1919, and was in service by 1923. In 1943, two 90mm Anti-Motor Torpedo Boat Guns were installed as Battery 912. Semi-mobile air defense guns of the 40mm and 3-inch or 90mm calibers were installed on the island but, because of their semi-mobile status, little construction of firing sites would have occurred. One document, a report of completed works, dated November 1, 1926, does show that at least two 3-inch anti-aircraft gun positions were prepared on the island. Another document refers to the storage of anti-aircraft battery ammunition in the closed Battery Pasco.

d. Battery Pasco was deactivated in 1934, and the remaining batteries were deactivated in the 1944-1946 timeframe. Placed in inactive status on July 31, 1947, the fort was declared excess in 1948, and was eventually transferred by Quitclaim deed to the American Museum of Natural History.

e. It is assumed that all guns located on Fort Michie were fired in training at various times. Evidence exists that units from the New York Harbor area also used the guns at Fort Michie in training. The number of rounds fired from the guns would be relative to their size, with the larger guns firing the fewest number of rounds. Documents indicate that by December 1945, Gun Number 1 at Battery Palmer had fired 169 rounds and Gun Number 2 had fired 50 rounds. Ready ammunition was stored on Fort Michie to support the batteries and associated air defense guns. This ammunition was stored in the gun casements. No evidence has been uncovered indicating that ammunition was disposed of on the site.

f. It is important to note that this fort, and several other forts in the area, fired at water targets in the area. Tidal and wave action can cause ordnance items to be moved from the sound bottom and deposited on the shores of this island or any other shore in the area.

g. There is no evidence of CWM activities having been conducted on this facility.

h. In 1948, as part of the property disposal process, the Post Engineer certified that the property was inspected and found free of any ammunition or explosives.

5. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Entire Site:	Size, Acres:	Approximately 17
	Former Use:	Coast Artillery Fort
	Present Use:	Bird Sanctuary
	Future Use:	Same as above
	Ordnance Presence:	Potential
	Type:	.50 caliber, 37mm, 40mm, 90mm, 3" through 16" rounds

6. CURRENT STATUS: The Archives Search Report (ASR) for Fort Michie was completed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District in October 1997.

7. STRATEGY: Entire Site: NOFA

8. ISSUES AND CONCERNS:

a. The Huntsville Center Technical Advisory Group reviewed this ASR on 20 May 1998 and determined that NOFA is required for this FUDS. Although various types of coastal artillery ammunition were stored on and fired from this island, it is highly unlikely that any ammunition was disposed of or abandoned on this island. The 40mm shell casing that was discovered

apparently washed up on shore. Actual site inspection and interviews revealed that there was no evidence of surface OE. Also the Post Engineer certified the property to be free of ammunitions and explosives in 1948.

b. This island is a bird sanctuary for the federally endangered roseate tern and the threatened common tern. Access to the island is restricted by the nesting season of the endangered birds and must be coordinated with the American Museum of Natural History, New York, NY, which owns the island.

9. SCHEDULE SUMMARY: NOFA

10. FUNDING/BUDGET SUMMARY: NA NOFA