

**RESTORATION INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES (FUDS)
PROJECT FACT SHEET
OCTOBER 1997
HNC REVISION: 20 FEBRUARY 1998
TAG REVIEW DATE: 19 MAY 1998**

1. **SITE NAME:** Needles Division Camp

SITE NUMBER: J09CA050500

LOCATION:

City: Needles
County: San Bernardino County
State: California

PROJECT NUMBER: J09CA050501

CATEGORY: OE

INPR RAC: 3

ASR RAC: 4

TAG RAC: 4

2. **POC'S:**

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3. **SITE DESCRIPTION:** The former Needles Division Camp consists of 79,366.59 acres, located in a vast area north, south, and west of the city of Needles, in San Bernardino County, California. Of these acres, 776.84 were investigated under a separate DERP-FUDS project number, J09CA007101, CAMA Auxiliary Airfield-Needles. In addition, the ASR team identified 32,628 acres of land, a

maneuver area, extending west and southwest of the western boundary of Needles Division Camp. The recommended project acreage is therefore 111,217.75 acres. The majority of the site (63,211.59 acres) is currently owned by the Department of the Interior and is under the control of the Bureau of Land Management. Lands in and around the city of Needles, located on the eastern site boundary, have been developed for both residential and commercial uses by numerous private landowners.

The current city of Needles is located approximately 10 miles north of the airport on the eastern site boundary. Interstate 40 passes through both the northern and eastern parts of the project area. California Highway 95 passes north-south through the eastern and southern portions of the project area. The western portions of the site are not easily accessible from major roadways.

The majority of the former camp area is comprised of barren rolling desert terrain characterized by roughly parallel mountains separated by alluvial basins. Standard vegetation types scattered through this desert area are creosote bush, grasses, and abundant low desert shrubs. Large iron wood and palo verde trees also are present in the many shallow washes of the area. No permanent bodies of water are present, although the Colorado River flows past the eastern boundary.

The climate follows the desert pattern of hot, dry summers with temperatures exceeding 100° F, and cool winters with January minimums of 37° F. Day to night temperature differences are 30 to 35 degrees. Average annual precipitation is less than four inches.

4. **SITE HISTORY:** The Army acquired a total of 79,366.59 acres for establishment of Needles Division Camp as follows: 37,701.27 acres transferred from the Department of the Interior by Public Land Order No. 1, dated June 20, 1942; 25,510.32 acres from the Department of the Interior by Use Permit dated April 24, 1942; 15,840 acres from Southern Pacific Company by Permissive Use Agreement dated February 11, 1942; 315 acres leased from the State of California under Lease No. W04-193-eng-2403.

In the establishment of the Desert Training Center, later called the California-Arizona Maneuver Area (CAMA), the Needles Division Camp was one of the locations selected for a divisional cantonment to be used as a campsite and maneuver area during WW II troop training exercises. The CAMA involved approximately 12 million acres of land under the jurisdiction of the Army Ground Forces for the special purpose of training mechanized units to live and fight in the desert, to test and develop suitable equipment, and to develop tactical doctrine, techniques, and training methods.

Improvements to Needles Division Camp included 14 showers, 29 latrines, 62 administration buildings, and one miscellaneous building. Specifically, facilities included 2 site hospitals, an evacuation hospital, an aid station, a railhead, storage depots for the storage of training chemical agents, storage depots for the storage of ordnance and explosives, storage depots for the storage of general supplies, a communications center, a water supply point, an air field, and a campsite.

Despite the title of the site, an army division was not positioned at Needles. The 3rd Special Troops Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment was positioned in Needles to supervise and administer Army Service Units who supported divisional units from that location. Also, the 355th Engineer General Service Regiment was assigned to Needles from 17 December 1942 to 9 August 1943. The purpose of this type of regiment was to provide specialized construction and development services.

All acreage (79,366.59 total) was declared surplus on March 16, 1944. Disposals were as follows: 37,701.27 acres relinquished to the Department of the Interior on January 13, 1947 by Public Land Order 342; 25,510.32 acres relinquished to the Department of the Interior by letter dated April 18, 1949; 15,840 acres by Permissive Use Agreement from the Southern Pacific Company terminated on January 16, 1956; 315 acres, Lease No. W09-193-eng-2403, leased from the State of California terminated on June 5, 1944.

5. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

AREA A

Size, Acres:	64,652.00
Former Use:	Cantonment/Campsite Area
Present Use:	Residential, Commercial, Barren Desert
Probable End Use:	Residential, Commercial, Barren Desert
Ordnance Presence:	Potential
Type:	Bombs, Projectiles, Grenades, mines, Small Arms Ammunition

AREA B

Size, Acres:	14,715.00
Former Use:	Maneuver Area "A"
Present Use:	Barren Desert
Probable End Use:	Barren Desert
Ordnance Presence:	Potential
Type:	Bombs, Projectiles, Grenades, mines, Small Arms Ammunition

AREA C

Size, Acres: 32,628.00
Former Use: Maneuver Area "B" (Additional Land)
Present Use: Barren Desert
Probable End Use: Barren Desert
Ordnance Presence: Potential
Type: Bombs, Projectiles, Grenades, mines,
Small Arms Ammunition

6. **CURRENT STATUS:** The Archives Search Report (ASR) for Needles Division Camp was completed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District, in October 1997.

7. **STRATEGY:**

AREA A: RAC 4;EE/CA
AREA B: RAC 4;EE/CA
AREA C: RAC 4;EE/CA

8. **ISSUES AND CONCERNS:** The Huntsville Center Technical Advisory Group reviewed this ASR on 19 May 1998 and determined RAC 4, EE/CA for Areas A, B, and C based on: (1) Historical documents which state that bombs, mines, grenades and projectiles may be present on CAMA lands (ASR, Appendix H documents), and (2) Deduidding maps which indicate past and present evidence of OE. Also, although the ASR inspection team did not find any evidence of OE on the surface of any area lands, they did find an explosive ordnance disposal report concerning discovery and destruction of a 75mm high explosive round 30 minutes south of Needles. In addition, a newspaper article states a man drove up with a 75mm projectile in the back of this truck. These 75mm cartridges could have been found in any one of the three areas. Records of maneuvers occurring at or near the Needles Division Camp could not be located. **Recommend the geographical district add the acreage in Area C to this project.**

HNC Safety Comments: Safety concurs with the recommendations and conclusions of the ASR. He mentions that CWS was used at the site and that mines should be added to the RAC form. This would not affect the RAC score of 4.

Area A, Cantonment/Campsite Area, 64,652.00 acres: This area includes 800 acres of developed land in the vicinity of Needles. De-duidding maps indicate that this area was de-dudded and cleared for unrestricted use. Even so, because Areas B and C border this area, there may be the potential for OE. The acreage of 64,652 must be reduced by 776.84 acres, which was investigated in 1994 as a separate DERP-FUDS project, CAMA Auxiliary Airfield-Needles, project number J09CA007101.

Area B, Maneuver Area "A", 14,715.00 acres and Area C, Maneuver Area "B", 32,628.00 acres : A de-dudding map and documents indicate that these areas were de-dudded maneuver areas with surface use only restrictions due to possible subsurface bomb, projectile, and missile hazards. The ASR states that although these areas are remote, they are becoming increasingly popular with off road vehicle enthusiasts. Danger signs are posted but seem to have little effect in deterring entry. **Recommend inclusion of Area C in this project.**

Other Considerations, Areas A thru C: Poisonous snakes, spiders, and scorpions may be present in all of the site areas. Four wheel drive vehicles are necessary to access most of the site lands. On site visits must be coordinated with the local Sheriff's Office. Access to site lands are predominately uncontrolled.

Natural Resources: Federally and State threatened species occur within the site area. They are listed in ASR Findings, para 3f and Table 3-2, pages 6-7. 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: Records indicate that a cultural resources survey has been conducted on only a very small portion of the project area and that cultural or historical resources do exist. Based on an incomplete survey, 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:** EE/CA

10. **FUNDING/BUDGET SUMMARY:** For Official Use Only