

RESTORATION INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES (FUDS)
PROJECT FACT SHEET
31 August 95
TAG REVIEW DATE: 6 June 96
HNC REVISION: 15 August 1997
SECOND TAG REVIEW DATE: 5 NOVEMBER 1997
HNC REVISION 2: 22 MAY 1998
THIRD TAG REVIEW DATE: 3 JUNE 1998

1. **SITE NAME:** Ontario Army Airfield and
Air National Guard Training Site

SITE NUMBER: J09CA053100 & J09CA052200

LOCATION:

City: Ontario/Los Angeles
County: San Bernardino
State: California

PROJECT NUMBER: J09CA053103 & J09CA052200

CATEGORY: OE

INPR RAC: 3

ASR RAC: 5

TAG RAC: 5

2. **POC'S:**

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3. SITE DESCRIPTION: The former Ontario Army Airfield (OAAF) is now known as the Ontario International Airport (airport) and is located in San Bernardino County, California. Centrally located in the City of Ontario, the airport is approximately one mile south of Interstate 10, at the south end of Vineyard Avenue.

The Airport is the commercial air hub for the eastern Los Angeles Basin. It is the most common arrival point for air passengers traveling to San Bernardino and Riverside, CA. During its tenure as an army airfield, OAAF encompassed about 845 acres.

The Airport is bounded by Cucamonga Avenue on the west, the Union Pacific Railroad on the south, the Southern Pacific Railroad on the north and Haven and Archibald Avenues on the east. The California Air National Guard (CANG) has operated from a location in the southeast corner of the FUDS.

There are a number of commercial aviation related businesses located on Airport property, including Federal Express, United Parcel Service, General Electric Corporation, Lockheed, Harriott, Fluor, Otto's Instruments, Wells Aviation, and Beechcraft West. The CANG still occupies land once part of the former OAAF.

4. SITE HISTORY: In 1921, local flyers organized the Ontario Aircraft Corporation to begin flying the "Jennie" Bi-plane aircraft. In 1929, the corporation graded a small dirt landing strip near the corner of Mission Boulevard and Grove Avenue, the southwest corner of the present site. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) began construction on two concrete runways in 1941. The airport continued general aviation usage until the start of WW II. To initiate operations as the OAAF, the Army obtained control of the Ontario Municipal Airport by lease (466.2 acres), and then expanded by developing agricultural land adjacent to the airport (357.11 acres fee, 21.3 acres lease, and .26 acres easement). In 1949, the airport property was turned over to the City of Ontario. From this time through the present, segments of the property have been leased to private enterprise for commercial and industrial purposes.

In 1942, after the Army's acquisition of the property, the 311th Air Base Squadron was activated. The airfield fell under the jurisdiction of the 4th Army Air Corps Force, headquartered at Hamilton Army Airfield, CA. The 69th Observation Group arrived on 1 June 1942, and the airfield became known as the Ontario Observation Aerodrome. The 69th flew the O-47 and L2A8 "Maytag Messerschmitt" observation aircraft. The two-fold mission of the 69th was to patrol the coastal areas around Los Angeles on an anti-submarine patrol, and to photograph the local harbor defenses and War Industries. This mission continued until

October 1943, when the 384th Fighter Squadron arrived to begin training. Equipped with the P-38 "Lightning" aircraft, the 384th Fighter Squadron trained in air-to-air gunnery. Tail gunners fired at long sleeves pulled by modified "Ventura" bombers of the 11th Tow Target Squadron. With the arrival of these squadrons, the airfield became a full-fledged air facility known as the OAAF. During this period, the 4th Army Air Corps Force stationed the 35th, 389th, 786th, and 797th Anti-Aircraft Battalions at the airfield. This was due to the airfield's similarity to terrain found in southern Europe.

Training ceased at the end of hostilities of WW II. The Army declared the airfield surplus on 15 November 1945, when it went to an inactive status. On 29 October 1946, the airfield was transferred to the War Assets Administration (WAA). The City of Ontario was interested in resuming commercial airport operations and received the deed for the property on 25 March 1949. The first commercial plane, operated by Western Airlines, landed on 27 October 1949. Military usage would continue, when in 1949 an Air National Guard Training Station was established at the airport. In April 1949, the City of Ontario granted a lease for certain airport property to the U.S. Air Force. The site was then used by the CANG. An Armory for the 149th Control and Warning Squadron was constructed; and later CANG activities had a major impact on the airport. In 1952, in response to the desire of the Air National Guard to base fighter aircraft at the airport, the city initiated the first of the three runway extensions. After two additional runway extensions, the airport had a 10,000 foot runway to service both commercial and military traffic. The first modern control tower was constructed in 1953 and commercial air traffic continued to increase. The 196th Tactical Air Support Group and the 163rd Tactical Support Group were stationed here from July 1952 until 1983. In 1983, the 196th Tactical Air Support Group was transferred to March Air Force Base, Riverside, CA. Since 1984, the 148th Combat Communications Squadron has been stationed here. The 148th conducts radar operations, maintenance, and training on the property. From 1967 until 1985, the LADA operated and maintained the commercial operations for the City of Ontario until in 1985, the airport was formally deeded to the LADA.

CWM Presence Evaluation: Chemical warfare training was conducted at OAAF, as it had on many other WW II airbases. Records show a chemical officer started a program of chemical training in September 1942, and by February 1943, he had initiated a base Chemical Defense Plan. A Chemical Warehouse and Office was constructed by 10 May 1943, on Victory Boulevard (southeast side of field). The Gas Chamber (Building 81) was utilized for

exercises that included the use of tear gas and chlorine. Later in 1943, the Chemical Warehouse (Building 71) and Pyrotechnics Magazine (Building 28) were relocated to near the Bomb Storage Area in the northeast sector of the airfield.

Documents collected during this archives research also indicate the Army stationed the 813th Chemical Company at the airfield in 1944. These troops were mainly responsible for the filling of smoke screen tanks with FS. Smoke missions were conducted in 1944 with pilot training consisting of the placement of smoke screens directly over the field.

One major demonstration of chemical warfare materials took place in December 1944. Trainers acquired demonstration bombs of Mustard Gas, Lewisite, Phosgene and Chloropicrin, 30 White Phosphorus bombs, M69 and M47 Incendiary, Magnesium and Thermite bombs from March Army Airfield, CA. Trainers set off the gas bombs, allowing troops to walk through light concentrations of the gases. Following the gas demonstration, they exploded the Pyrotechnic bombs, and demonstrated the methods of combating incendiaries. Chemical personnel displayed the use of FS, HC and WP as smoke screens.

Finally, records indicate that in February 1945, OAAF had 10 of the M1 Detonating Gas Identification Sets, although 6 **2** were loaned out to other units (Block, 1945). It is judged that unused CWM would have been returned to March Army Airfield, CA, after the war; but no records have been produced to confirm this action.

OE Presence Evaluation: OE activities took place during two distinct periods. In the fall of 1942, an Ammunition Storage Building, TILE Magazine and Pyrotechnics Magazine were constructed on the southeast side of the base. Just west of this area, engineers were known to have proposed building a Chemical Warfare Warehouse, Signal Warehouse and Ordnance Warehouse. Also proposed was a Bomb Storage Area and Skeet Range on the east side of the field.

The second period occurred with the change of mission from observation to the training of P-38 fighter pilots. This action demanded a full ordnance facility, and the Bomb Storage Area was constructed on the northwest corner of the field. It appears only the skeet range and the TILE Magazine remained at their original locations. Records indicated gunnery training occurred with .50 caliber ammunition and 20mm cannon. A Firing-In-Butt for the practice firing of guns was established on base. Records indicate bombing missions were performed, but the types of bombs are not known. The pilots probably trained using 100 and 200 pound practice bombs, the most common practice munitions used on

the P-38 aircraft. Documentation proves that P-38 training continued until the end of March 1945, and it most probably continued until the end of the war. Troops are known to have practiced with the M1 Rifle; and at the skeet range they most likely also used the 12 Gauge Skeet Shotgun and .45 caliber pistols.

5. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Area A: Ontario Army Airfield
Size, Acres: Approximately 806
Former Use: Army Airfield
Present Use: Ontario International Airport, Air
Museum And various Aerospace Companies
Probable End Use: Same
Ordnance Presence: None
Types: N/A

Area B: Former Ontario Air National Guard
Training Station-Inactive ANG
(FUDS Project Ineligible)
Size, Acres: 27.41
Former Use: Air National Guard Training (including
Skeet Range and Bomb Storage Areas)
Present Use: Airport Taxiways/Extended-Runway
(covering early bomb storage)
Probable End Use: Same
Ordnance Presence: NA

Area C: California Air National Guard-Active
Status (FUDS Ineligible)
Size, Acres: 11.14
Former Use: Air National Guard Training Station
Fighter and Warning Squad Missions using
the missile maintenance and storage
buildings/warehouses, gas chamber,
chemical warehouse, small arms storage,
and skeet range, and later CANG Tactical
Air Support
Present Use: Air National Guard/Combat Communications
Probable End Use: Same
Ordnance Presence: NA

6. CURRENT STATUS: This ASR was completed by the St. Louis District in August 1995.

7. STRATEGY: NOFA for Area A (FUDS Eligible)
NOFA for Area B (FUDS property eligible-FUDS
project ineligible)
NOFA for Area C (Active U.S. Air Force controlled
site-FUDS ineligible)

8. ISSUES AND CONCERNS: The Huntsville Center Technical Advisory Group (TAG) reviewed and discussed the trip report of 19 May 1998 and agree with its findings. The TAG decided RAC 5 NOFA for this site.

On 19 May 1998, Messrs. Richard Pike and Bill McPherson of the Huntsville Center ASR/INPR Team conducted an ESI, as recommended by the TAG on 5 November 1997. Because of extensive development (construction) of the airport, without finding any OE, there is no evidence existing that suggest OE presence on this site. Based on this information recommend the TAG approve revision of the RAC score from 1 to 5 NOFA (attached). See attached Trip Report.

This ASR was presented to the TAG on 6 June 1996 and determined that not enough information was available in this ASR for the TAG to make an informed decision. It was stated that the ASR/INPR Team would resolve this issue.

Since then this ASR was reviewed by the CEHNC RCWM Team and they have determined that there is no evidence that indicates the CWM once stored at, used for training, and/or transported through this location remains present on the property; there have been no reported incidents or discoveries of CWM at OAAF. It is highly improbable CWM was improperly disposed of at this FUDS. This site should be taken off of the CWM list.

This ASR was given further review and the reviewer presented it to the TAG again on 5 November 1997 with a recommendation of EE/CA for Area A. The TAG again determined that not enough information was available in this ASR for the TAG to make an informed decision pertaining to the possible development of past open, undeveloped small areas of Area A. The TAG tabled this ASR and recommended an ESI to gather more recent information to see if this site can be changed to a NOFA because of land development.

The site team indicates that insignificant, if any, OE could remain. There are no reports of remaining or confirmed OE by airport historical personnel or by the site team; nor did the site team encounter OE debris (in spite of documented P-38 aircraft practice gunnery and bombing). Interviewees familiar

with Ontario's recent improvements, CWM investigation and aerial photo interpretation dismiss the possibility of OE remaining. The disposal area has not shown indications of buried OE.

The pyrotechnics magazine, bomb storage, and chemical warehouse were relocated to the NW sector of OAAF; the skeet range (presently covered by runway) and the TILE magazine remained at their original locations. Some storage facilities may have been only proposed but may not have been constructed, such as the signal and ordnance warehouses. (The chemical warehouse was also proposed, but was built and moved a year later, and the ammunition storage building and pyrotechnics and TILE magazines were definitely built.)

Much of the aerial gunnery and bombing training may have occurred at bases other than OAAF, which also may have served as a supporting storage base. Daggart Army Airfield (a satellite/sub-base of OAAF used as an alternate if Ontario had haze), Muroc Army Airfield, regionally near-by and used for camouflaged airfield attack simulations, and the Pacific Ocean were supplemental areas for P-38 gunnery training and bombing missions. Typical bombs for P-38 aircraft were mostly 100 and 200 lb. practice bombs but no documents were uncovered indicating this type was actually used on these sites.

This site's OE use is well documented indicating various sources of potentially buried and surface UXO. Any UXO found during developments occurring after site closure may not have been reported, and some unpaved ground disturbance areas still remain, as shown in photos. Many of the former building areas, based on aerial photos, are cleared, graded, without structures; while other areas have small pits, ditches, and/or are scarred/disturbed.

Also, since OAAF operated for about five years and the NGTS since, transported OE having odd lots may have been (surface) ditched or buried in order to avoid required storage documentation. The disposal area is adjacent to the OE storage areas, so it has an apparent potential of containing UXO.

Area B is the 27.41 acre portion of the former Ontario Air National Guard Training Station that the INPR FDE determined to be FUDS eligible, but this site was deleted from the lease between the Air Force and the City of Los Angeles on 11 May 1988.

FUDS project eligibility terminated on 17 October 1986, so that makes this parcel ineligible for FUDS cleanup. Land released from DOD after the termination date in 1986 is eligible for active-site Installation Restoration Program cleanup, not FUDS. The CEHNC Office of Counsel has reviewed this issue and agrees.

At least fifty Federally endangered, threatened or candidate species potentially occur within the vicinity of this site. An on-site inspection by appropriate State and Federal personnel may be necessary to verify the presence or location of listed species, or natural communities.

9. SCHEDULE SUMMARY: NOFA

10. FUNDING/BUDGET SUMMARY: For Official Use Only