

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

MAY 1995

HNC REVISION: 17 JULY 1997

TAG REVIEW DATE: 27 AUGUST 1997

1. **SITE NAME:** Venice Bombing Range

SITE NUMBER: I04FL042600

LOCATION:

CITY: Venice
COUNTY: Sarasota
STATE: Florida

PROJECT NUMBER: I04FL042601

CATEGORY: OE

INPR RAC: 3

ASR RAC: 4

TAG RAC: 4

2. **POC'S:**

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3. SITE DESCRIPTION:

The former Venice Bombing Range consisted of 2,560 acres located nine miles southeast of the town of Venice, Sarasota County, Florida. US Highway 41 forms the northern boundary of the site. Most of the former range is owned by Taylor Ranch Incorporated and is primarily used for agricultural operations such as topsoil production, sod farming, and cattle grazing. Much of the target area is now a large lake created as a result of excavation work. A few, small outlying parcels around the perimeter of the tract have been developed for other purposes.

Terrain in the area is nearly flat with elevations from 5 to 20 feet above sea level. The site sits on a near level plain, which forms the drain divide between several small watersheds. Surface drainage is via streams to the Myakka River, which is located within a mile of the northeastern corner of the site, and southwest into Forked Creek. Forked Creek is a small creek which flows into Lemon Bay. The Myakka River flows southwest. Flooding of the Myakka River would flood the site. There are numerous depressions and the ground is wet and marshy, particularly near streams. Small towns and residential areas are west of the site along the coast between Sarasota and Port Charlotte.

4. SITE HISTORY: In the early part of World War II, the United States leased 2,560 acres of unimproved land for use as a U.S. Army Air Forces aerial practice bombing range named Venice Bombing Range. The Army Air Force utilized the site for training operations associated with the Sarasota Army Air Field, located about 30 miles to the northwest and nearby Venice Army Air Field. Headquarters 3rd Air Force requested construction of the following for the range on 16 April 1942: clearing and grubbing of 19.4 acres, four control points, two bomb spotting towers, one control tower, one bombing target, and 16,594 liner feet of 3 strand barbed wire fence. The War Department, Headquarters of the Army Air Forces in Washington, confirmed funds were available for the above construction. They also stated the range was needed immediately, as it was necessary for training programs already under way. No documentation was found indicating any other construction at the bombing range site other than targets and fencing. The site remained active until early 1946 when its functions were no longer needed by the Army Air Forces.

At the conclusion of World War II, the War Department determined the site was surplus and directed the cancellation of the 2,560 acre leasehold on 29 January 1946. The lease was terminated 30 June 1946 and returned to the then current owner.

5. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

AREA: Entire Site

Size, Acres: 2,560
Former Use: Aerial Practice Bombing Range
Present Use: Topsoil Production, Sod Farming, and
Cattle Grazing
Probable End Use: Topsoil Production, Sod Farming, and
Cattle Grazing
Ordnance Presence: Potential
Type: Bomb, Practice, 100 lb., M38A2

6. **CURRENT STATUS:** The Archives Search Report (ASR) for Venice Bombing Range was completed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District, in May 1995.

7. **STRATEGY:** Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis (EE/CA)

8. **ISSUES AND CONCERNS:** The Huntsville Center Technical Advisory Group recommended an EE/CA for this site. The site survey team inspection revealed no evidence of ordnance and explosives (OE). However, persons interviewed indicated that 100 lb, M38A2 practice bomb debris from 10 bombs, without explosive materials, was unearthed near the center of the bullseye target during topsoil excavation operations about 12 years ago. No other oral or written reports of OE or debris from OE were found. Also, no historical evidence was found indicating what ammunition was used at the range. So, finds were limited to the bullseye area and it is possible that more is present.

Natural Resources: Federally and State threatened species occur within the site area and are listed in ASR Findings, pages 4-5 through 4-6, para 4.5. 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: The ASR did not indicate if historical/ cultural resources were found to be present at the site. 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

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