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Of Engineers**
Mobile District

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct Public Open House

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will host a public Open House to present information concerning the study of the former Camp Sibert, a Formerly Used Defense Site located in Etowah and St. Clair Counties, Alabama. The Open House will be held May 27 from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Norton Air National Guard Station, 176 Ira Gray Drive, adjacent to Gadsden Airport. This meeting will give the public an opportunity to learn the details of the study, view displays that explain the study, and learn about ordnance and chemical warfare materiel that was used at the site. During the open house, representatives will be available to explain the project and answer questions.

The 37,035-acre area that would become part of Camp Sibert was selected in the spring of 1942 for use in the development of a Replacement Training Center for the Army Chemical Warfare Service. The RTC moved from Edgewood, Md., to Alabama in the summer of 1942. In the fall of 1942, the Unit Training Center was added as a second command. Units and individual replacements were trained in aspects of both basic military training and in the use of chemical weapons, decontamination procedures, and smoke operations from late 1942 to early 1945. Mustard and possibly other chemical warfare agents were used in the training. This facility provided the opportunity for live agent, large-scale training that had been previously unavailable.

The government terminated the leases for the area on December 13, 1946. After decontamination of various ranges and toxic areas in 1948, the land was declared excess and transferred back to local government ownership. The U.S. Army Technical Escort Unit undertook several cleanup operations during 1947 and 1948, but chemical warfare agents and conventional ordnance may still exist in several locations.

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2-2-2-2 Sibert

Since 1949, most of the property has been privately owned and either farmed or left as woodlands. The former post airfield is now the Gadsden Municipal Airport and the City of Gadsden has expanded into the area of the airport. The barracks area was developed into single-family housing and several industrial facilities are in operation in the former Camp Sibert industrial area. The maneuver and training areas, which comprise the majority of the land area, are used for residences, grazing, forestry, and agriculture.

As part of the FUDS Program, the Corps is investigating the presence and extent of Chemical Warfare Materiel on property within the former Camp Sibert boundaries. The Corps' Mobile District, the Corps' Engineering and Support Center in Huntsville, Ala., and Parsons Corporation, a private contractor, are working together on the investigation known as an Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis, or EE/CA.

The objectives of the studies are to determine the nature and extent of potential ordnance and chemical warfare materiel that may remain at the site; to evaluate potential risks to public health and the human environment; to identify and evaluate potential future actions to alleviate these risks, if necessary; and to develop cost estimates for future actions.

For more information about the FUDS program and the former Camp Sibert, contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District Public Affairs Office at 251-690-2511.

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