


Aberdeen Proving Ground

Aberdeen Proving Ground	
Part of US Army	
Aberdeen, Maryland	
	
Aberdeen Proving Ground Historical Marker on US 40	
Site information	
Owner	US Army
Site history	
Built	1917
In use	1917 to Present
Garrison information	
Current commander	Colonel Charles Gibson (Acting)
Past commanders	Major General Robert S. Ferrell
Garrison	Colonel Gregory R. McClinton

Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) (sometimes erroneously called Aberdeen Proving *Grounds*) is a United States Army facility located in Aberdeen, Maryland, (in Harford County). Part of the facility is a census-designated place (CDP), which had a population of 3,116 at the 2000 census.

History

APG is the U.S. Army's oldest active proving ground, established on October 20, 1917, six months after the U.S. entered World War I. Its location allowed design and testing of ordnance materiel to take place near contemporary industrial and shipping centers. The proving ground was created as a successor to the Sandy Hook Proving Ground, which was too small for some of the larger weapons being tested. At the peak of World War II, APG had billeting space for 2,348 officers and 24,189 enlisted personnel.

The Edgewood area of Aberdeen Proving Ground is approximately 13,000 acres and includes Gunpowder Neck, Pooles Island, Carroll Island, and Graces Quarters. The Edgewood area was used for the development and testing of chemical agent munitions. From 1917 to the present, the Edgewood area conducted chemical research programs, manufactured chemical agents, and tested, stored, and disposed of toxic materials. There are 38,600 people living within three miles of the site. On-site residences house military personnel and military dependents.

Main article: Edgewood Arsenal experiments

From 1955 to 1975, the U.S. Army Chemical Corps conducted classified medical studies at Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland. The purpose was to evaluate the impact of low-dose chemical warfare agents on military personnel and to test protective clothing and pharmaceuticals. About 7,000 soldiers took part in these experiments that involved exposures to more than 250 different chemicals, according to the Department of Defense (DoD). Some of the volunteers exhibited symptoms at the time of exposure to these agents but long-term follow-up was not planned as part of the DoD studies.

The agents tested included chemical warfare agents and other related agents:

- Anticholinesterase nerve agents (Agent VX, sarin and common organophosphorus (OP), and carbamate pesticides)
- Mustard agent
- Nerve agent antidotes atropine and scopolamine
- Nerve agent reactivators (ex., the common OP antidote 2-PAM chloride)
- Psychoactive agents (LSD, PCP, cannabinoids, and Agent BZ)
- Irritants and riot control agents
- Alcohol and caffeine

During the week of July 14, 1969, personnel from Naval Applied Science Laboratory in conjunction with personnel from Limited War Laboratory conducted a defoliation test along the shoreline of Poole's Island, Aberdeen Proving Ground using Agent Orange and Agent Orange Plus foam.

The Gunpowder Meetinghouse and Presbury Meetinghouse are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Other component locations within Aberdeen Proving Ground

See also: Edgewood Chemical Biological Center

Other parts of APG not attached to the main installation include the Churchville Test Area in Harford County, and the Carroll Island and Graces Quarters in Baltimore County, Maryland. The Churchville Test Area is a test track with hills that provide steep natural grades and tight turns to stress engines, drivetrains, and suspensions for army vehicles, including M1 Abrams tanks, Bradley Fighting Vehicles, and Humvees.

The eastern half Carroll Island was used as a testing location for open air static testing of chemical weapons since the 1950s. During tests of chemical agents and other compounds at Carroll Island, Maryland, from July 1, 1964 to December 31, 1971 nearly 6-1/2 tons of chemicals were disseminated on the test area including 4,600 pounds of irritants, 655 pounds of anticholinesterase compounds such as the nerve gasses Sarin and VX, and 263 pounds of incapacitants such as LSD. Simulant agents, incendiaries, decontaminating compounds, signaling and screening smokes, mustard, and herbicides were also released as well as riot control gasses. The test sites consisted of spray grids, a wind tunnel, test grids, and small buildings.

Edgewood Chemical Activity is a chemical-weapons depot located at APG. Elimination of the chemicals held here was put on an accelerated schedule after the September 11, 2001, attacks, and all chemical weapons were destroyed by February 2006.

The U.S. Army Ordnance Corps Museum previously located at APG, was moved to Fort Lee, Virginia as a result of the 2005 Base Relocation and Closure (BRAC) Act.

Geography

APG is located at 39°28'24"N 76°8'27"W ^[1] and occupies a land area of 293 square kilometres (113 sq mi). Its northernmost point is near the mouth of the Susquehanna River, where the river enters the Chesapeake Bay, while on the south, it is bordered by the Gunpowder River. The installation lies on two peninsulas separated by the Bush River. The northeastern is known as the *Aberdeen Area* and the southwestern is called the *Edgewood Area* (formerly the *Edgewood Arsenal*).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the CDP has a total area of 12.0 square miles (31.1 km²), of that, 11.4 square miles (29.5 km²) of it is land and 0.6 square miles (1.6 km²) of it (5.09%) is water.

Demographics

As of the census of 2000, there were 3,116 people, 805 households, and 763 families residing in the CDP. The population density was 274.1 people per square mile (105.8/km²). There were 902 housing units at an average density of 79.3/sq mi (30.6/km²). The racial makeup of the CDP was 50.5% White, 34.6% African American, 0.6% Native American, 3.1% Asian, 1.3% Pacific Islander, 5.7% from other races, and 4.2% from two or more races; 11.2% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race.

There were 805 households out of which 78.0% have children under the age of 18 living with them, 84.1% were married couples living together, 8.0% had a female householder with no husband present, and 5.2% were non-families; 4.3% of all households were made up of individuals and none had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 3.52 and the average family size was 3.63.

In the CDP the population was spread out with 40.1% under the age of 18, 10.3% from 18 to 24, 44.9% from 25 to 44, 4.4% from 45 to 64, and 0.2% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 25 years. For every 100 females there were 113.9 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 117.6 males.

The median income for a household in the CDP was \$38,875, and the median income for a family was \$40,306. Males had a median income of \$26,943 versus \$26,194 for females. The per capita income for the CDP was \$12,808. About 4.2% of families and 5.6% of the population were below the poverty line, including 6.4% of those under age 18 and none of those age 65 or over.

Under the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) program, as announced in 2005, the APG is projected to lose the Ordnance School and associated R&D facilities with 3862 military and 290 civilian jobs moving to Fort Lee, Virginia. APG will gain 451 military and 5,661 civilian jobs from Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. There is a net loss of 3,411 military jobs under BRAC and a net gain of 5,371 civilian jobs.

Enhanced-use lease

In 2005, APG executed an Enhanced use lease (EUL) partnership with Opus East, L.L.C. (a subsidiary of Opus Corporation), a commercial real-estate development company. The EUL allows APG to ground lease "temporarily underutilized" land of the installation to a selected real estate developer. APG uses the proceeds from the ground lease for facility improvements and maintenance on the installation (i.e., new buildings, infrastructure improvements, deferred maintenance, road upgrades on post, etc.). In June 2009, Opus East assigned its EUL development rights to St. John Properties, Inc. ^[2], a Baltimore-based commercial real estate development firm.

Under the EUL, St. John Properties has entered into a long-term ground lease of federally owned property for the development of commercial office space and research-and-development (R&D) space. The EUL development will provide new, high-quality buildings and facilities for the military/civilian tenants and their supporting government contractors who are relocating to APG because of the 2005 round of the BRAC process. The development of the EUL, known as The GATE Office and Technology Park ^[3] or "The GATE" project, comprises 416 acres (1.68 km²), 11 land bays, and up to 3,000,000 square feet (300,000 m²) of development potential both inside and outside the secure perimeter of APG. St. John Properties is building new speculative office and R&D buildings for lease to both

defense contractors and military/federal agencies.

In addition to office and R&D buildings, St. John Properties is developing an office and retail component just outside APG's security gate. The GATE is being developed to meet anti-terrorism and force-protection standards, and will include sustainable-design elements to achieve LEED Silver Certification. The GATE is strategically located to allow private military contractors (PMCs) doing work for various military commands on APG to be closer to their client. The first building at The GATE was delivered in 2008 to CACI, an information-technology security PMC. In October 2010, L-3 Communications took occupancy of a 75,000 square feet (7,000 m²) building at The GATE, as did Raytheon Company, another 75,000 square feet (7,000 m²) building. In 2010, St. John Properties delivered three additional speculative buildings for lease. Complete development of The GATE project is expected to span five to 10 years.

Contamination

The Edgewood area of the Aberdeen Proving Ground site was proposed to the Environmental Protection Agency's National Priorities List of the most serious uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites requiring long term remedial action on April 10, 1985. The site was formally added to the National Priorities list on February 21, 1990.

The Edgewood area has large areas of land and water and numerous buildings that are contaminated or suspected of contamination. Virtually all the land areas of the site contain contaminated or potentially contaminated sites and potentially buried ordnance. Substances disposed of in the area include significant quantities of napalm, white phosphorus, and chemical agents. On-site surface waters include rivers, streams, and wetlands.

On-site ground water sampling has identified various metals, pesticides, phosphorus, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and chemical warfare agent degradation products. On-site soil contamination sampling has identified various VOCs, metals, PCBs, pesticides, and unexploded ordnance in surface and subsurface soil. On-site surface water sampling has identified various metals, pesticides, phosphorus, and VOCs. People who accidentally ingest or come in direct contact with contaminated ground water, surface water, soil, or sediments may be at risk.

Edgewood area standby water supply wells in the Canal Creek area previously served approximately 3,000 people. The wells have been abandoned. The Long Bar Harbor well field of the County Department of Public Works and the well field used by the Joppatowne Sanitary Subdistrict serve 35,000 people within three miles of the site. On-site groundwater sampling has identified perchlorate, various metals, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and chemical warfare agent degradation products. On-site soil contamination sampling has identified various VOCs, metals, and unexploded ordnance in surface and subsurface soil. On-site surface water sampling has identified various metals, pesticides, phosphorus, and VOCs. People who accidentally ingest or come in direct contact with contaminated groundwater, surface water, soil, or sediments may be at risk. The area is a designated habitat for bald eagles.

Controversies

A scandal at the APG surfaced in 1996. The U.S. Army brought charges against twelve commissioned and non-commissioned male officers for sexual assault of female trainees under their command.^[4]

References

- [1] http://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Aberdeen_Proving_Ground¶ms=39_28_24_N_76_8_27_W_type:landmark_region:US-MD
- [2] <http://www.sjpi.com>
- [3] <http://www.thegateapg.com>
- [4] <http://edition.cnn.com/US/9612/06/aberdeen.arraign/index.html>

Further reading

- Oliveros, James P. and Don A. Vroblesky. (1989). *Hydrogeology of the Canal Creek area, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland* [Water-Resources Investigations Report 89-4021]. Towson, Md.: U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey.
- Olsen, Lisa D. and Tracey A. Spencer (2000). *Assessment of volatile organic compounds in surface water at West Branch Canal Creek, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, 1999* [Open-File Report 00-203]. Baltimore, Md.: U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey.
- United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services. (1997). *Army sexual harassment incidents at Aberdeen Proving Ground and sexual harassment policies within the Department of Defense: hearing before the Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, One Hundred Fifth Congress, first session, February 4, 1997*. Washington, D.C. Government Printing Office.
- informations about *Decommissioning aberdeen* (<http://worldwidescience.org/topicpages/e/e3640+decommissioning+aberdeen.html>) (worldwidescience.org (<http://worldwidescience.org>))

External links

- US Army Aberdeen Proving Ground (<http://www.apg.army.mil/>), official website
 - History (<http://www.apg.army.mil/apghome/sites/about/history.cfm>), US Army Aberdeen Proving Ground website
 - The GATE at Aberdeen Proving Ground (http://www.sjpi.com/property/detail/gate_at_aberdeen_proving_ground), Official Website
 - Aberdeen Proving Ground (<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/aberdeen.htm>), Global Security
 - Edgewood Chemical Activity (<http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/facility/edgewood.htm>), Global Security
 - U.S. Army Ordnance Museum (<http://www.goordnance.apg.army.mil/sitefiles/OrdnanceMuseum.htm>)
 - U.S. Army Ordnance Foundation (<http://www.ordmusfound.org/overview.html>)
 - The short film *Big Picture: This is Aberdeen* (<https://archive.org/details/gov.archives.arc.2569519>) is available for free download at the Internet Archive [*more*]
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