

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Environmental and Remediation Section of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Huntington District (CELRH EC-CE) conducted a Preliminary Assessment (PA) at the former West Virginia Maneuver Area (WVMA) in Tucker, Grant, Pendleton, Preston, and Randolph Counties, WV, under the Defense Environmental Restoration Program – Formerly Used Defense Site (DERP-FUDS) program. The FUDS Management Information System (FUDSMIS) property number is G03WV0013. This PA was conducted under the authority of Executive Order 12580 and the Comprehensive Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), as amended by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA). This PA was also conducted in accordance with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) *Guidance for Performing Preliminary Assessments Under CERCLA* (USEPA, 1991) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) *FUDS Program: Guidance to Performing Preliminary Assessments Under FUDS* (USACE, 2005).

The former WVMA consisted of approximately 2,180,367 acres of land covering portions of Grant, Pendleton, Preston, Randolph and Tucker counties in northeastern West Virginia generally near the Town of Davis. Maneuver rights, secured by the Rents and Claims Board, Fifth Service Command, secured 350,416 acres of public lands (all part of the Monongahela National Forest), 48,557 acres of leased property for inclusion in the Impact Area, and 1,781,394 acres so-called “lesser interests”. According to a warning order notice dated 26 March 1945, these “lesser interests” were covered by “trespass agreements.” The land owners had granted use of these lands to the Army verbally; there are no records that describe the “trespass agreements” or the areas that they covered (USACE, 1991). A letter dated 15 July 1943 from the Secretary of War to the Secretary of Agriculture requested that there is a military necessity for the use of portions of the Monongahela National Forest for Army Maneuver purposes. In a response letter dated 4 August 1943 from the Secretary of Agriculture to the Secretary of War, the Department of Agriculture grants permission for the Army to use all Monongahela National Forest land in Preston, Grant, Randolph, Tucker and Pendleton Counties in West Virginia, covering 341,266 acres.

The former WVMA was the scene of special low-altitude mountain training activities during World War II. Regiments and battalions of larger Infantry Divisions came to the area from maneuvers and installations in other parts of the country to introduce the troops to various aspects of mountain warfare. Based on preliminary reconnaissance of the area within the WVMA, it was found to be similar to that of the Apennines and lower ranges of the Alps in Italy. This allowed the troops to simulate conditions that would possibly be encountered during the invasion of Italy and other mountainous regions in the war-time theater.

Regiment exercises conducted at the WVMA emphasized physical conditioning, topography, map interpretation, bivouac establishment, stream crossing and military problems unique to mountainous areas. Training schedules for infantry division combat teams at the WVMA typically included the following:

- Marches over mountainous terrain including use of Yukon type pack-boards (transporting instruments, radios, light weapons, and other loads), visual signaling, mountain surveying and other regiment exercises.
- Specialized programs including training for engineers (improvised river crossing) and medics (including evacuation medicine, first aid and evacuation).
- Occupation of difficult positions by firing batteries.
- 3-day tactical problem for artillery, winding up with a “Shoot” involving live rounds.
- 2-day battalion combat team problems.
- Cliff-scaling training for limited officials and enlisted men.
- An Impact Area that served as a training facility for field artillery testing.
- Local security in rugged terrain including scouting and patrolling, use of trip wires, sign and countersign, and dropping of all rank in addressing officers.

Based on the findings of this report, the following MMRP projects are proposed:

MRA #1/MRS #1 – Dailey Infiltration Camp

Findings: Based on historical documentation, aerial photography interpretation and a site visit conducted on the property, it is determined that the Dailey Infiltration Camp was once used as a small arms range (and potential grenade range) and obstacle course training facility during the operational period of the WVMA. **Current Use:** The area encompassed in this proposed project is currently a portion of the Monongahela National Forest and is currently not developed.

Estimated Proposed Project Acreage: 200 acres

Conclusions: A site inspection (SI) should be conducted to determine the presence of small arms and other possible MEC located on this property. Site sampling should be conducted to determine the presence of potential munitions constituents (MC) contamination located on this property.

MRA #2/MRS #2 – WVMA Ammunition Depot

Findings: Based on historical mapping, historical documentation, and a site visit it is determined that the WVMA Ammunition Depot served as the main ammunition storage area during the operational period of the WVMA. **Current Use:** The area encompassed in this proposed project is currently a vacant field previously used for growing crops. **Estimated Proposed Project Acreage:** 4 acres

Conclusions: A SI should be conducted to determine the presence of Discarded Military Munitions (DMM) located on this property. Site sampling should be conducted to determine the presence of potential MC contamination located on this property.

MRA #3/MRS #3 – Jenningson Training Area

Findings: Based on the canister find in the Otter Creek Wilderness, historical documentation, and aerial photography interpretation, it is determined that the area around the community of Jenningson, WV was once used as infantry division troop maneuver area used during the

operational period of the WVMA. This site is generally bounded by the Otter Creek Wilderness Area to the west, Mozark Mountain to the north, Chimney Rock/community of Dryfork to the east and the community of Sully to the south. **Current Use:** The area encompassed in this proposed project is currently a combination of Monongahela National forest land and farmland with residences. **Estimated Proposed Project Acreage:** 40,000 acres

Conclusions: A SI should be conducted to determine the presence of possible MEC located on this property. Site sampling should be conducted to determine the presence of potential MC contamination located on this property.

MRA #4/MRS #4 – Fore Knobs/Bear Rocks Firing Ranges

Findings: Based on UXO found in proximity to this site, historical mapping and documentation, interviews and aerial photography interpretation, it is determined that the Fore Knobs/Bear Rocks Firing Ranges was once used as firing points and target locations for 105-mm and 155-mm howitzer rounds used during the operational period of the WVMA. **Current Use:** The area encompassed in this proposed project is currently a combination of Monongahela National forest land, The Nature Conservancy's Bear Rocks Preserve, forested land and farmland with residences. **Estimated Proposed Project Acreage:** 42,000 acres

Conclusions: A SI should be conducted to determine the presence of MEC located on this property. Site sampling should be conducted to determine the presence of potential MC contamination located on this property.

MRA #5/MRS #5 – Bearden Knob Firing Range

Findings: It was determined that the area near Bearden Knob was once used as a 105-mm and 155-mm howitzer round firing point and possible anti-tank firing range used during the operational period of the WVMA. These determinations have been made based on rocket finds near Yellow Creek, a UXO find on Cabin Mountain (105-mm howitzer round), historical mapping, historical documentation, aerial photography, and interviews. **Current Use:** The area encompassed in this proposed project is currently a combination of private property (residences, agricultural land) and Canaan Valley national Wildlife Refuge property. **Estimated Proposed Project Acreage:** 8,000 acres

Conclusions: A SI should be conducted to determine the presence of MEC located on this property. Site sampling should be conducted to determine the presence of potential MC contamination located on this property.

MRA #6/MRS #6 – Brown/Cabin Mountain Firing Ranges

Findings: It was determined that the areas around Beaver and Yellow Creeks were once used as a firing point for a 155-mm howitzer rounds, firing points for 60-mm and 81-mm mortars, and possible rocket or firing range used during the operational period of the WVMA. Brown Mountain was used as target area for the 60-mm and 81-mm mortar rounds fired from Yellow Creek during the operational period of the WVMA. The Cabin Mountain Firing Range was used

as a target location for 105-mm and 155-mm howitzer rounds used during the operational period of the WVMA. These determinations have been made based on historical mapping, historical documentation, aerial photography interpretation, and interviews with personnel familiar with the WVMA. A 105-mm howitzer round was found in 2006 on Cabin Mountain within the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge. **Current Use:** The area encompassed in this proposed project is currently a combination of a preserve owned by Canaan Valley Institute, U.S. Fish and Wildlife's Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge. **Estimated Proposed Project Acreage:** 16,000 acres

Conclusions: A SI should be conducted to determine the presence of MEC located on this property. Site sampling should be conducted to determine the presence of potential MC contamination located on this property.

MRA #7/MRS #7 – Buena Small Arms Firing Range

Findings: Based on historical documentation, aerial photography interpretation and a site visit conducted on the property, it is determined that the Buena Small Arms Firing Range was once used as a small arms range (and possible grenade range) used during the operational period of the WVMA. **Current Use:** The area encompassed in this proposed project is currently a portion of the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge. **Estimated Proposed Project Acreage:** 50 acres

Conclusions: A SI should be conducted to determine the presence of small arms and other possible MEC located on this property. Site sampling should be conducted to determine the presence of potential MC contamination located on this property.