Naval Air Station Pensacola
Historical Radiological Assessment

September 2015

Introduction

The Department of the Navy is preparing a **Historical Radiological Assessment**[1] (HRA) for Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola, Florida. The HRA will document current and past radiological operations, particularly those that may have adversely affected the installation. This will be accomplished by evaluating information gathered from extensive archival research, interviews, and site visits. The HRA will determine if **radiological investigations** are needed to further assess any area for contamination. The final HRA report will be prepared in accordance with Department of Navy and Federal guidelines and is expected to be completed by December 2016.

The scope of this HRA includes NAS Pensacola and its outlying properties of:

- Bronson Field (Blue Angel Recreational Park)
- NAS Saufley
- Corry Station

Overview of Base History

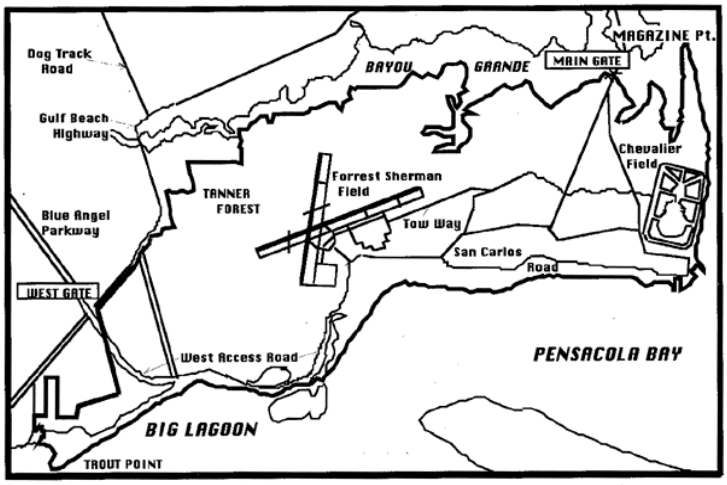
NAS Pensacola, part of the Pensacola Naval Complex, occupies approximately 5,589 acres on a peninsula about five miles southwest of Pensacola, Florida. This peninsula is bounded on the north by Bayou Grande and on the east and south by Pensacola Bay. The main industrial operations conducted at NAS Pensacola are located on the older, eastern end of the peninsula. The western end accommodates the Forrest Sherman Field and undeveloped wooded land.

[1] Words in **bold text** are defined on Page 3.

The mission of NAS Pensacola is to provide facilities, service, and support for the operation and maintenance of naval weapons and aircraft to operating forces of the U.S. Navy as designated by the Chief of Naval Operations. Some of the tasks required to accomplish this mission include operation of fuel storage facilities, aircraft maintenance, maintenance and operation of engine repair facilities, and weapon systems support.

The history of the Pensacola Naval Complex can be traced back four centuries during the colonization period of North America. Construction of the current military base began in 1914 for training the Navy's pilots. Today, the Pensacola Naval Complex provides support to 125 tenant commands (94 DoD and 31 other) with a combined workforce of 23,000 military and civilian personnel.

In 1914, the Navy's first permanent air station was established on the site of the old Pensacola Naval Shipyard. An aviation radio laboratory, the first to conduct experiments with airborne radios,



was established in 1916. In 1922, the town of Woosley was razed to make room for an aircraft landing field called Station Field. Expansion projects in preparation for another war crisis began in mid-1930s. The naval air station was enlarged to 180 acres to accommodate the aircraft squadron and was renamed Chevalier Field.

Beginning in 1934, auxiliary fields were added to Chevalier Field including: Corry Field in 1934; Saufley Field in 1940; Ellyson Field in 1941; Bronson Field (initially named Tarkiln Field) in 1942; and Whiting Field in 1943. Chevalier Field and its auxiliary fields were grouped together in 1942 to form a command known as the Naval Air Training Center Pensacola, Florida, with the headquarters located at NAS Pensacola (renamed from Chevalier Field).

In 1939, the Navy established an aviation medicine research and training unit at NAS Pensacola, and in 1970 the research department was designated as the Naval Aerospace Medical Research Laboratory (NAMRL). The new medical center combined the training and research facilities of the Naval Aerospace Medical Institute and the Research Laboratory with the clinical facilities of the naval hospital. In August 1971, the Naval Education Training Command was established with headquarters at NAS Pensacola for surface, sub-surface, and aviation training.

More about the Historical Radiological Assessment (HRA)

This HRA will examine and document the extent of current and former activities involving the management, use, and disposal of **radioactive materials** at NAS Pensacola. The HRA will:

- Document information about radiological operations, investigations, and surveys discovered during searches of historical records and interviews;
- Identify potential, likely, or known sources of radioactive materials, and the areas where these materials might have been used.
- Classify sites as "**radiologically impacted**" where radioactive materials were known to have been or were potentially used, stored, or disposed (all other sites are, by definition, "non-impacted" by radiological operations);
- Assess the likelihood of any potential residual radioactive material to migrate to other areas or the environment; and,
- Identify sites that need further action, and recommend actions that will work toward site closure.

The HRA will consolidate all of this information in one reference document.

What is Happening with the HRA Now?

Currently the HRA is well under way! The HRA Assessment Team has already reviewed over 200,000 records and drawings, has made several site visits, and is planning more. The assessment team will soon be interviewing people who respond to our request for information. That request will be widely advertised through different avenues, including local newspapers to reach as many potential interviewees as possible.

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Definitions

Historical Radiological Assessment (HRA) – a detailed investigation to collect historical radiological information and data for a particular site and its surroundings where radioactive materials were used, stored or disposed.

Radioactive material – a substance that contains or emits radiation. Radioactive materials and radiation occur in nature. These materials are used by the military and private industries and are present in common household items. Common items that contain radioactive materials are smoke detectors, **radioluminescent devices** including dials, ships' deck markers, and gauges, lead paint analyzers, static eliminators, non-electrically powered exit signs, and biological and chemical agent detectors.

Radiological investigation – a systematic examination of an area to determine if radioactive materials are present and, if so, at what levels.

Radiologically impacted site – a radiologically impacted site is one that has a potential for radioactive contamination based on historical information or is known to contain radioactive contamination. Areas immediately adjacent to the primary impacted site may be included in this designation. Radiologically impacted sites include: areas where radioactive materials were used or stored; areas where known spills, discharges, or other unusual occurrences involving radioactive materials have occurred, or may have occurred, that could have resulted in the release or spread of contamination; and sites where radioactive materials might have been disposed of or buried.

Radioluminescent device – an item containing radioluminescent paint that allows the device to be seen in the dark. These devices were commonly used by the Navy and possibly contained radium-226, strontium-90, tritium, or promethium-147. Historically, timepieces, dials, and gauges were coated with paints containing radium so they would glow in the dark.