



AICUZ/Encroachment- Related Articles

11 June 2010

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Center of Excellence



CONTENTS

	Page
ARIZONA	
Major changes for Yuma outlined in JSF plan.....	1
CALIFORNIA	
Two Military Fighter Jets Soar With Deafening Roar Over City	3
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	
Gardeners Near Capitol Hill Prepare To Repel A Marine Corps Invasion.....	4
FLORIDA	
Air Force suspends essential training in oil-marred Gulf	6
Gulf Oil Spill Impacts Air Force Training.....	7
GEORGIA	
Robins makes progress on encroachment issue	8
IDAHO	
Treasure Valley citizen group makes noise over loud F-35 jets	10
NORTH CAROLINA	
Cherry Point late night flights starting tonight	12
Supporters Want More F-35s At Cherry Point.....	13
Military Plans Demonstration At Bombing Ranges.....	15
OKLAHOMA	
Bill signed to protect military airspace in state	17
VIRGINIA	
Landing Field Opponents Seek New Timeline from Navy.....	18
WASHINGTON	
Plan To Park Giant Radar Platform In Everett Raises Concerns	20

OTHER –

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

Feinstein Plan To Expedite Renewables In Desert Draws
Broad Criticism22

McDonnell wins with wind.....25

OUTLYING LANDING FIELD – NC & VA

Hagan and Burr agree on OLF.....26

OVERSEAS

Henoko Residents Harbor Hopes And Fears About New
U.S. Air Base..... 27

UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE

Clamming Boat May Have Dredged up Mustard Gas 29

Weapons are Common Catch, Fishermen Say..... 30

Ocean of Hidden Dangers Lurks for Fishermen..... 32

ARIZONA



Major changes for Yuma outlined in JSF plan

by Gunnery Sgt. Bill Lisbon

If the preferred plan for basing the F-35B Joint Strike Fighter at the air station is approved, major changes are in store for Yuma over the next six years.

According to the plan and its anticipated effects on the air station, Yuma should expect a 39 percent increase in personnel, a 15 percent increase in airfield operations and a 17 percent increase in airspace and range use.

Additionally, the new infrastructure required for the Marine Corps' future combat jets to come to Yuma would cost nearly \$1 billion.

Released for public review and comment May 21, the comprehensive survey on the jet's environmental impacts outlines five possible plans for the West Coast basing of the aircraft replacing the Corps' current fleet of combat jets, including all of Yuma's AV-8B Harriers.

The preferred plan would place five operational F-35B squadrons and one operational, test and evaluation squadron here, with another six operational squadrons at the Marine Corps Air Station in Miramar, Calif.

The other alternatives split the 12 West Coast squadrons differently, with as few as two and as many as 10 squadrons based in Yuma. Regardless the plan picked, all Harriers here would be removed by 2016, according to the statement.

With the new planes, an additional 425 military personnel and 38 civilians would be needed. More than 1,200 accompanying family members would be added to the local population. Plus, 66 service members from the United Kingdom, which is also buying JSFs, would be assigned to operate and maintain two of the operational training and evaluation squadron's planes.

The construction projects required for the JSF would primarily occur south of the current Harrier hangars. More than 260 acres would be affected with the preferred plan, with on-base construction totaling \$706 million.

A short-term economic boost is expected during the peak construction phase in 2012 equating to nearly 3,000 jobs and \$119.2 million in labor income.

As many as five hangars would be built, as well as necessary support infrastructure, such as wash racks, aprons and a simulator facility, and other upgrades to runways, roads, utilities and communications.

Most of the alternatives plan for an additional enlisted barracks to be built on the site of the current mess hall, while a new mess hall would be built across the street where the library sits.

The air station also plans to build a new south gate on East County 13th Street, which would alleviate some traffic at the existing gates on Avenue 3E. Meanwhile, the City of Yuma has already begun work to expand Avenue 3E to four lanes north of 32nd Street, said Dave Nash, city spokesman.

On the Barry M. Goldwater Range east of the air station, a new auxiliary airfield would be built about 3 miles southeast of Auxiliary Airfield 2, which can't support the JSF on its landing surface during carrier landing training. The new \$157 million airfield would contain simulated ship landing decks, a control tower and a 3,000-foot area where pilots would train to land on roads.

Use of Auxiliary Airfield 2 would decrease by 93 percent and be used mostly by helicopters.

Noise from the JSF would increase or be heard further away, according to the statement, but "remain consistent with city and county land use guidelines."

Two studies were used to judge the noise effects. At most, approximately 5,600 off-station homes with more than 16,000 residents live within areas affected by jet noise of 65 decibels or higher. However, the study states none of those areas will experience noise above 80 decibels, where the risk of potential hearing loss is possible under long-term exposure.

Despite delays and budget overages within the JSF program, the Marine Corps is marching forward to prepare to reach an initial operating capability of 29 planes by December 2012, according to a statement released by Headquarters Marine Corps on March 18.

Ten of those planes would make up the first operational squadron, Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron 332, which could be based at the air station once the Secretary of the Navy decides on the final basing plans.

Derived from a common design, developed together and using the same sustainment infrastructure worldwide, three F-35 variants will replace at least 13 types of aircraft for 11 nations initially, according to Lockheed Martin.

The Air Force will receive the F-35A variant, which will provide conventional takeoff and landing capabilities. The Navy will receive the F-35C, designed for carrier launches and duty at sea.

However, the production and basing of Navy and Air Force planes is separate and doesn't affect the Marine Corps, said Lt. Col. Geoff Olander, officer in charge of the Joint Strike Fighter site activation here.

Compared to the Marine Corps' current tactical fixed-wing squadrons, the JSF can carry more ordnance with greater range than the F/A-18 Hornet, operate from austere environments like the AV-8B Harrier, and possess electronic warfare technology and capability like the EA-6B Prowler, according to Headquarters Marine Corps.

CALIFORNIA



Two Military Fighter Jets Soar With Deafening Roar Over City

Lisa Fernandez

June 10, 2010

If you were enjoying a Little League baseball game or a night out on the town Wednesday in San Jose, you were likely to be surprised by the deafening roar of two military fighter jets flying low and fast over the city.

Ian Gregor, spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration's Western-Pacific Region, confirmed Thursday that the jets were F-18 Hornets (think "Top Gun" with Tom Cruise). They flew over Silicon Valley between 7:30 and 8 p.m.

Gregor said at one point, the jets were flying at an altitude of 2,000 feet with a 355-knot ground speed, or 408 mph. (One knot equals 1.15 miles) As they flew past Mineta San Jose International Airport, Gregor said, they sped by at 1,300 feet with a ground speed of 280 knots, or 322 mph.

"They made two passes, made a lot of noise, did not land, and then went on their way," said airport spokesman David Vossbrink. "We also got a slug of neighbor complaints and inquiries. We don't know where they came from, what they were doing here, why they were flying low, or where they went."

Gregor also said he did not immediately know which branch of the military the planes belonged to or where they were headed. In the U.S., only the Navy and Marines fly F-18s.

The ear-throbbing roar of the jets jolted some people from their regular evening routine.

One woman e-mailed the Mercury News to say the sound "shook windows, set off car alarms, and scared the heck out of a lot of folks."

Another man wrote: "What are these idiot military jet pilots doing buzzing San Jose neighborhoods? ... The noise is deafening and I'm sure it is a crime."

Actually, if it had been nonmilitary aircraft, flying that low and fast would be a possible violation.

FAA regulations require that civilian planes fly no faster than 250 knots, or 287 mph, when they're below 10,000 feet altitude. The FAA has no authority over what military planes do. Melinda Larson, a spokeswoman for the Naval Air Station Lemoore, southwest of Fresno, said her base had no aircraft scheduled to fly at low levels Wednesday night.

Some officials with knowledge of the military said neither the Navy nor the Marines would ever admit their flight paths publicly.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The Washington Post

Gardeners Near Capitol Hill Prepare To Repel A Marine Corps Invasion

June 7, 2010

Lisa Rein

A mile southeast of the U.S. Capitol, residents are fighting to save a thriving garden of fruit trees, lettuce, sorrel, broccoli and other compost-nourished vegetables and herbs shared by 60 families.

The Virginia Avenue Community Garden was built with sweat equity. Until six years ago, it was a threadbare city park filled with drug dealers, broken playground equipment and a cracked basketball court wedged between the Navy Yard and the Southeast Freeway.

The new residents of south Capitol Hill trucked in compost and soil and, in return, the District provided a watering system to help grow organic food. Private donations paid for street lamps, landscaping and bird feeders. The waiting list for a plot has grown to 50 families.

Now, the garden is under threat from the U.S. Marines, who are considering the four-acre site at Ninth and L streets SE for a barracks. The Marines' living quarters at Eighth and I streets SE, two tall brick dormitories dating to the 1970s, are not considered secure in a post-2001 world, and the rooms are too cramped for their equipment. The park, with some privately owned properties next to it, could be an ideal site.

But the community gardeners, in Capitol Hill style, are mobilizing to save their home.

"It would be a shame to lose this huge green space to militarization," said Michael P. Filippello, a budgeter for the International Monetary Fund, who is leading the outreach. On Friday, he wrote a letter to first lady Michelle Obama, the country's standard-bearer for the local food movement, to ask for her help in saving the garden.

"Given your own policy interests, it would be sadly ironic to lose to federal development one of the community gardens nearest to the White House," Filippello wrote. The gardeners have a Facebook site and a following on blogs.

The Marines say they will relocate the garden nearby if they decide to use the land. But the gardeners say it has taken them years to amend the unforgiving clay soil with nutrients. For Jenni Lancaster, a physical therapist and the garden's membership coordinator, the joy comes from teaching her 6-year-old and 2-year-old how to plant. "They're watching the seeds grow. They're learning where their food comes from," she said.

It's not the only community garden on Capitol Hill, but members said the others are smaller and have long waiting lists.

There's agreement that the Marines, from a historic perch that dates to 1801, have been good neighbors. On summer nights, the parade ground at the base opens to allow public viewing of military marching bands, and the community has some access to athletic fields at Virginia Avenue and L Street. Community meetings that started this spring will continue in September, when the Marines expect to choose a site.

"Our goal is not to take over a neighborhood," said Capt. Lisa Lawrence, a Marine Corps spokeswoman. "Everything is just in the consideration phase now." Other options include building inside the Navy Yard or on the annex property or leasing a former trolley and bus barn outside the Navy Yard -- dubbed the Blue Castle. The park is closest to the base.

"We're looking at every option," Lawrence said. "But we won't be able to please everybody."

In recent weeks, land set aside by the District for a mixed-income development on the site of a razed apartment building for seniors has moved to the bottom of the list, Lawrence said.

D.C. Council member Tommy Wells (D-Ward 6), whose district includes the Navy Yard, said he's fighting to keep the garden alive by urging the Marines to tear down the parking lot next to the annex and rebuild it underground, freeing space for a new barracks. Lawrence said a parking lot under a barracks would probably pose a structural challenge.

"We don't have a strong negotiating position," Wells said. "Who wants to take on the U.S. Marines?"

FLORIDA



Air Force suspends essential training in oil-marred Gulf

By **Barbara Starr**, CNN Pentagon correspondent

June 8, 2010 12:20 p.m. EDT

Washington (CNN) -- The oil disaster has prompted the Air Force to suspend its parachute water survival training in Florida, a spokesman said Tuesday.

The Air Force trains its air crews at the Naval Air Station in Pensacola, according to David Smith, spokesman for the Air Education and Training Command. The program, which trains 55 students for 48 weeks a year, was suspended June 4.

It is considered essential for Air Force personnel who need survival skills in case their aircraft malfunctions or is attacked over water.

Air Force personnel will now be sent to Fairchild Air Force base in Washington state for alternative water survival training, Smith said. But it will not include parachute survival.

It is not clear how long the suspension will last or how many Air Force personnel will be affected.

Daily Report eNewsletter

Wednesday June 09, 2010

Gulf Oil Spill Impacts Air Force Training

Air Education and Training Command has suspended parachute water survival instruction off of Pensacola, Fla., due to the effects of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. David Smith, AETC spokesman, told the *Daily Report* Tuesday that "some tar and oil residue" was found in the bay where this training occurs under the direction of an Air Force detachment at NAS Pensacola. This discovery prompted local government health and safety officials to declare "it appropriate to do training in that water." The training was halted on June 4 until further notice, he said. Student pilots are now being sent in the interim to Fairchild AFB, Wash., to receive some, but not all of this instruction. Smith said 55 new USAF students normally come through NAS Pensacola each week for this training, which takes place 48 weeks per year.

GEORGIA



Robins makes progress on encroachment issue

By MIKE STUCKA

June 8, 2010

Local officials have been struggling to buy homes that are too close to Robins Air Force Base, but some of that effort's obstacles are clearing up.

The encroaching properties could threaten the future of the base, and the U.S. military has said efforts to clear away too-close houses helps "mission growth" at the base.

The challenges in solving the encroachment issue are diverse:

- n Federal money is available but can only be used to reimburse local money used to buy the properties.

- n Lately, Bibb and Houston counties had failed to agree on how much money they would pay for encroachment. Current budget proposals now call for each to contribute \$100,000 a year for five years, or \$1 million total. The worst encroachment problems are in south Bibb County.

- n Bibb and Houston counties are now finalizing an agreement with the Central Georgia Joint Development Authority, which would actually buy the land. Another complication: Houston County isn't yet one of the five members of that authority.

- n At some point, officials need to hammer out ways to share proceeds as well as costs. The land in the noisiest parts closest to the base could be used only as agricultural land. When enough contiguous land is acquired farther away, probably in a decade, it may be able to be used for industrial or heavy commercial developments, said Chip Cherry, president of the Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce.

In the next few months, local officials plan to seek about \$3 million in U.S. Department of Defense funds under the Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative. Robins has already received \$500,000, but it has not been used.

Laura Mathis, director of public administration for the Middle Georgia Regional Commission, is helping coordinate the application for the \$3 million. Everyone is working together, but the process is difficult.

"We're sort of going through a process that Robins has never been through before, and we've never been through before, and there's sort of a steep learning curve," Mathis said.

But the cooperation is critical, said Mary Therese Tebbe, executive director of the 21st Century Partnership, which tries to help the base.

With federal funding, “there is no me-myself-and-I approach anymore,” Tebbe said. “You’d better be going as a region.”

Tebbe said the latest figures from the base show its work force comes from 25 counties.

“I’m happy that we’re working on this together, because it’s just not a Bibb County issue, it’s not just a Houston County issue, it’s a regional issue,” she said.

The Central Georgia Joint Development Authority now owns three houses in the encroachment zone: two on St. Clara Drive and one on Patricia Drive.

Cherry said those homes may be demolished in the next two months. The owners and Rebuilding Macon already stripped out cabinets, bathroom fixtures and other valuables. One home even had part of a roof removed.

The encroachment process only buys properties from willing sellers. Local officials are targeting the two worst zones, where noise levels from airplanes are at least 75 decibels. In those areas, there are 45 people interested in selling properties appraised at a total of \$3.5 million. Another 37 properties have not been appraised, but owners may become more interested to sell as the process moves along and neighbors’ homes are purchased, Cherry said.

Cherry said work force needs are Robins’ biggest challenge, with encroachment being the second toughest challenge.

“The good thing is, everybody’s realized this is an issue that we need to tackle, and it’s not going to go away,” he said. “The complication is if it was easy, somebody would have done it already.”

Properties bought by the joint development authority will have deed restrictions preventing houses or high-rise construction.

Some activities, such as agricultural, industrial or heavy commercial, may be allowed in some of the areas.

Cherry has said those types of uses, unlike housing, typically have a lower density of people and have stronger buildings with fire suppression systems.

A U.S. Department of Defense report issued this year on the Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative report shows Robins is not the only base with problems: “Many installations and ranges were established over 60 years ago in remote, rural areas as the nation prepared for World War II. Over the years, urban and suburban development grew up around military installations and ranges, creating conflicts in the use of land, airspace, sea space and frequency spectrum resources.”

Cherry said some competitors to Robins do not have the same kind of encroachment problems, and no one knows when another round of Base Realignment and Closure reviews, or BRAC, will begin again.

To contact writer Mike Stucka, call 744-4251.

IDAHO



Treasure Valley citizen group makes noise over loud F-35 jets

The dozen or so South Boise residents say they may sue if the fighters are deployed at Boise's Gowen Field.

BY KATHLEEN KRELLER

June 10, 2010

Save Our Valley Now is concerned that noise from the jets will make it impossible to enjoy their homes and yards.

The group claims a reduction in their quality of life from jets taking off and landing at Gowen Field will lead to similar declines in their home values - by as much as 17 to 25 percent in leader Monte Mericle's estimates.

According to Mericle's calculations, more than 2,000 homes between Columbia Village and Meridian will be subjected to unbearable noise.

"This is an urban environment and this is not the place to put them," Mericle said. "They've got a noisy airplane they are trying to embed in urban environments."

JUST HOW NOISY?

To date, the only study on the acoustics and sound levels of the aircraft was done in April 2009 at Edwards Air Force Base in California.

The study, conducted by the joint strike fighter program and military contractor Lockheed Martin, asserts the noise levels are comparable to other modern aircraft like the F-15, F-16 and F-22.

Still, the F-35 is loud. A local expert has said residents can expect noise significantly louder than the 22 F-15s that were housed in Boise last summer.

More precise testing will be conducted next year.

City and federal officials say no one will actually know what the effects will be and how loud the jets will sound in South Boise until the draft environmental impact statement is finished this fall.

Once the draft is released the public will have 45 days to comment. The military plans a series of public meetings.

LAWSUITS IN THE WORKS

Mericle's group of roughly 12 people contends the public hasn't had enough notice the jets could be coming and not enough time to weigh in on an environmental impact study under way by the Air Force. The first public comment period closed last month.

The group wants the environmental assessment to include a look at the impacts of jet noise on schools, mental and emotional health, and financial costs associated with those factors, Mericle said.

They'll likely sue for that addendum, Mericle said. His group plans a class-action suit to get compensation for what he claims will be a "taking" by the federal government: a reduction in his property value and quality of life.

"We respect the concerns of these airport neighbors and will work with them to ensure they are informed about all new developments regarding the Air Force decision," said Ross Borden, an adviser to Boise Mayor Dave Bieter. "Until the final environmental impact statement is available and the Air Force has determined if the F-35 will come to Boise, it is premature to discuss claims regarding the impact of the mission."

To Mericle, there are no circumstances under which an F-35 mission is acceptable in Boise.

"I don't want us to see a military base in the Valley," Mericle said. "I want to see us as a Valley we already have. ... What they are talking about is turning (Gowen Field) into a military base, and it will dominate the Valley."

NORTH CAROLINA



Cherry Point late night flights starting tonight

June 09, 2010 5:29 PM

Sun Journal Staff

CHERRY POINT AIR STATION — Jet aircraft noise can be expected in the vicinity of Cherry Point air station later than usual tonight and on June 14, 15 and 16. Harrier night operations training is scheduled to be conducted as late as midnight on those dates, and began Wednesday night. The training will require low-light conditions that only come later during the summer months, Cherry Point officials said.

Supporters Want More F-35s At Cherry Point

Drew C. Wilson

June 10, 2010

Cherry Point supporters are hoping to convince the Navy to place more Joint Strike Fighters at Cherry Point than the number recommended in an environmental study.

In preparation for next week's public hearings, Allies for Cherry Point's Tomorrow adopted a resolution Monday supporting the placement of at least 11 F-35B squadrons at the air station.

The Navy Draft Environmental Impact Statement released earlier this month favors placing eight squadrons of the 13 squadrons at Cherry Point, with the other five going to Beaufort, S.C.

If that were to happen, it would mean an 8.5 percent increase in air station workforce, nearly \$48 million increase in annual payroll income and an expenditure of nearly \$508 million in construction costs over seven years.

ACT attorney

Jamie Norment, attorney for the Cherry Point lobby group, said that pushing for eight squadrons "seems something worth fighting for." However, he pointed out that with 11 squadrons, the air station work force would increase by 15 percent, produce an \$83 million increase in payroll income and net \$730 million in construction costs over seven years.

"The impact that it has on the community whether it's eight or 11 is significant," Norment said. "I don't know of any other industrial development program in the state that has that much money at stake."

"It would be huge here," said Jim Davis, ACT member and executive director of the Craven County Economic Commission.

ACT's regular board meeting at the Havelock Tourist and Event Center was dominated by

Discussion of next week's public hearings on the basing options dominated Monday's ACT meeting. The hearings are set for 4 to 7 p.m. Tuesday at the Havelock Tourist and Event Center, Wednesday in Emerald Isle and Thursday in Bayboro.

Local officials are urging residents to turn out in force to support the base and the alternatives that would bring the most jets to Cherry Point.

"This is our opportunity to make our position heard," Norment said.

The ACT executive committee had prepared a series of talking points that were passed out to all members to speak at the public hearing.

With the F-35B eventually scheduled to replace the Marine Corps' AV-8B Harriers, F/A-18 Hornets and EA-6B Prowlers, officials believe the basing plan that has the most jets at Cherry Point would mean the area's economic survival.

“We need the numbers of people here to show our support,” Davis said. “The more people we have show up, the more the Navy and Marine Corps will listen to us. “Sometimes the public takes things for granted. We cannot afford to do that.”

Longtime Newport Mayor Daryl Garner said he remembered the area before the base was constructed in 1941.

“No one is more aware of the importance of Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point than I am,” he said. “I grew up 10 miles from here. As the Depression was winding down, life wasn’t as pleasant as it is today.

“Our area has benefited while our nation has benefited from this station. We have an appreciation for Cherry Point and that will continue.”

The Navy’s preferred alternative has eight operational squadrons coming to Cherry Point with two training squadrons and three operational squadrons going to Beaufort, S.C.

However, ACT members did express some concern that both training squadrons would be in Beaufort, S.C., under the Navy’s preferred plan. They said that could put Cherry Point at risk, since the first jets would arrive in South Carolina. If another Base Realignment and Closure Commission process begins before the jets arrive at Cherry Point, the base could be viewed as unneeded.

“Who is going to be vulnerable? It’s the base without the planes,” said Harry Blot, a retired Marine Corps lieutenant general. “Every single airplane on that flight line is going away in the next 10 years. The only thing we’ll have left is the C-130s, and then we’re out of business.”

ACT member Hugh Overholt, a retired Army general, reminded the group that there have been monthly efforts to remind the Navy that Cherry Point has been promised two squadrons of F-18 Super Hornets, and that a hangar is currently under renovation to house them.

“Those airplanes are important to us,” he said. “We want to fight hard to get those airplanes because they mean a lot for viability of Cherry Point and to the economy.”

Garner expressed concerns that North Carolina in general may not be looked upon favorably considering efforts to block an Outlying Landing Field from locating in the state.

“I believe that our position would have been better if we had found one,” Garner said.

For those unable to attend the public hearings, comments either for or against the Navy’s basing alternatives can also be mailed through July 12 to USMC F-35B East Coast Basing EIS, P.O. Box 56488, Jacksonville, FL 32241-6488.

More information is also available online at www.usmcjsfeast.com where electronic comments may be made.



Military Plans Demonstration At Bombing Ranges

June 10, 2010

Sue Book

Officials from Cherry Point plan to demonstrate the uses of its bombing range around Piney Island from noon until 3 p.m. on Saturday.

Those attending the event at Oriental Marina will have an opportunity to view and board a Naval Special Warfare gunboat with the special boat teams that train at the Bombing Target-11 range in Carteret County and see examples of the target boats used and how they are operated.

They can also watch training videos and talk with Marines and sailors about the tactics and techniques required to accomplish their missions in the nation's defense.

Brief presentations are scheduled for 12:30 p.m. and 1:45 p.m. to provide guests with a general understanding of the types and importance of training and activities undertaken at the range. The Marine Corps began work in May to add 10 navigational pilings with warning signs along the perimeter of existing prohibited and restricted areas surrounding the range.

There is also a plan to intermittently expand the BT-11 range as well as the BT-9 range at Brant Island Shoals. Some commercial and recreational fishermen as well as recreational boaters have voiced opposition to the planned expansion, saying it would impact some of the best fishing spots in the Neuse River and Pamlico Sound.

Some Pamlico County fishermen were quoted in an open letter from Pamlico County Chamber of Commerce as saying they thought the pilings and increased enforcement of the restricted areas was in retaliation for their public opposition to expanding the bombing ranges.

They particularly questioned the marking of a small prohibited area around Mulberry Point at the mouth of Turnagain Bay - a U.S. Coast Guard marked channel in use by the public for 40 years - that would be closed to any vessel with a draft of more than three feet.

Carteret County Commissioner Jonathan Robinson, speaking as chairman of Carteret County Marine Fisheries Advisory Board, wrote in February that the board members "support efforts to retain the current restrictions and boundaries of bombing range BT-11" but oppose any expansion.

He said the areas defined for more than 50 years "have served to effectively train military personnel while allowing the public to enjoy access to these rich fishing grounds. We urge military officials to cooperate with our citizens in finding a solution that will allow continued use of the area for both the public and military alike."

Marine Corps officials said the pilings are designed to better inform mariners, recreational and commercial fishermen of the security area's location.

The existing prohibited area is a 1.8-mile radius area centered on a target in Rattan Bay, and the water and land in that area is been closed at all times to the public.

One of the restricted areas is at Newstump Point and the other along the west coast of Piney Island between Marsh Point and North Bay. Each restricted area is a half-mile radius around those points and is open to public navigation at night but not during the day.

Saturday's event is weather dependent. Updates will be on the Cherry Point Facebook site at facebook.com/MCASCherryPoint.

OKLAHOMA



June 9, 2010

Bill signed to protect military airspace in state

By Jeff Mullin, Senior Writer

Enid News and Eagle

ENID — A measure adding protection for Oklahoma’s military and civilian airspace signed into law Tuesday night will help avoid encroachment on Vance Air Force Base’s flight training areas, said Mike Cooper, military liaison for the city of Enid.

On Tuesday Gov. Brad Henry affixed his signature to House Bill 2919. The measure, authored by state Rep. Danny Morgan, D-Prague, the House minority leader, and Rep. T.W. Shannon, R-Lawton, regulates the use of land in proximity to both public airports and military air installations.

The new law, which goes into effect Oct. 1, regulates obstructions near public airports and military air fields.

The “Aircraft Pilot and Passenger Protection Act” also requires notification of the state Aeronautics Commission, as well as the Strategic Military Planning Commission, if anyone proposes construction of a structure greater than 150 feet tall either in close proximity to an air field, or in areas used by military aircraft.

More than 54,000 flights per year originate from Vance Air Force Base, the second busiest air field in the Air Force. Many traverse military routes to zones in which training is conducted, known as military operating areas.

“This bill is another step in further protecting our most important military value asset, which is airspace,” said Cooper, who also serves as chairman of the state Strategic Military Planning Commission.

The requirement any proposal to build structures on land over which civilian or military flights take place assures open lines of communication about the structure’s potential impact on flying operations, Cooper said, but doesn’t ban such structures.

“We don’t really want hard-core restrictions,” Cooper said, “but what we do want is we want everybody communicating when something is being developed out here.”

The bill, Cooper said, “brings everybody on board, the governor, the Legislature and all the bodies that either deal with the military and/or aerospace. We want development, but we can’t do something that negatively impacts the industry we already have, our economic impact from the military.”

VIRGINIA



June 11, 2010

Landing Field Opponents Seek New Timeline from Navy

Kate Wiltout

Three groups who oppose Navy plans for a jet practice landing field in Virginia or North Carolina have banded together to ask the service a simple question: What's next?

Representatives of Virginians Against the Outlying Landing Field, Citizens against OLF Gates/Hertford North Carolina, and Concerned Citizens Against OLF Camden/Currituck North Carolina sent a letter Tuesday to Adm. John C. Harvey Jr., head of the Navy's Fleet Forces Command in Norfolk. It asks Harvey to release a new timeline for the proposed project by July 1.

The field would be used by fighter jets based at Oceana Naval Air Station in Virginia Beach to simulate carrier landings.

The Navy originally intended to finish its draft environmental impact statement on five proposed sites - three in Virginia and two in North Carolina - by March 2009, with a final decision made by July 2010.

But in August, the Navy announced it would broaden its landing field analysis to consider whether its next-generation fighter jet, the F-35 or Joint Strike Fighter, would also use the practice field. Fleet Forces

Command said at the time that the draft probably would be pushed back until spring 2010.

"Spring has now come and gone yet there is still no (draft environmental impact statement) and no updated information on its release schedule has been made available," the letter said.

A spokeswoman for Fleet Forces Command said Thursday that the Navy is still in the midst of its "deliberative process."

"We are committed to being as open as possible and getting the information to the public as soon as it becomes available," said Capt. Cate Mueller, a Navy spokeswoman.

She said she did not know when an updated timeline would be available.

The groups contend that the looming prospect of a practice landing field has made people and businesses hesitant to buy property or make long-term plans in their communities.

"Farmers are hesitant to invest in capital equipment, lenders are reluctant to take a security interest in real property that may be adversely impacted by proximity to an OLF, and real estate prices are depressed by the potential of an OLF in the vicinity," the letter says.

Tony Clark, chairman of the Virginia group, said this is the first time the three organizations have teamed up. They're all frustrated by what they say is a lack of information.

"There are five communities that are being held hostage right now," he said. "All we're asking for is the respect of being kept informed. If they think it's going to be two more years, then tell us it's going to be two more years."

WASHINGTON



Plan To Park Giant Radar Platform In Everett Raises Concerns

June 9, 2010

Debra Smith

EVERETT — The SBX radar platform is 25 stories tall and looks like a gigantic floating golf trophy.

It might be motoring to Everett's waterfront sometime soon.

The U.S. Navy and the Missile Defense Agency are talking about bringing the Sea-Based X-Band Radar to Naval Station Everett for repairs.

If the radar platform came to Everett, its visit would be temporary, said Naval Station Everett spokeswoman Kristin Ching.

“The homeport is not on the table,” she said.

The \$900 million platform is part of a national defense system designed to track incoming ballistic missiles.

Everett and San Diego are the only military ports on the West Coast deep enough to accommodate the mobile radar station for repairs, Ching said.

In 2003, the Department of Defense considered permanently anchoring the SBX at Naval Station Everett.

The idea didn't go over well.

People worried about the potential health hazards associated with operating a powerful radar station in port. They also feared the platform's electromagnetic radiation could disrupt communications for local police, fire, hospitals and airports.

Everett neighbors formed a group called Concerned Citizens Against the SBX. They gathered hundreds of signatures and started a legal fund. Everett's City Council asked the Defense Department to drop Everett from its list of sites.

Pentagon officials decided instead to homeport the SBX in the small Aleutian Island town of Adak, Alaska.

U.S. Rep. Rick Larsen opposed anchoring the SBX in Everett seven years ago. Today he's concerned about how a visit to Everett might affect the Naval Station's core mission and pier space for Navy vessels.

“It's just important as the Navy and Missile Defense Agency are going forward that they listen to the view and concerns of the community,” he said.

Mayor Ray Stephanson doesn't see the advantages of even a temporary visit. “There's not a lot of economic value to the community,” he said. “My understanding is they bring contractors from out of the area.”

Naval Station Everett's spokeswoman said officials are just beginning to discuss the idea now. They still don't have a clear picture of the scope of the work and how long it might take, she said.

If the SBX did come to Everett, it would likely be moored near where the USS Abraham Lincoln ties up now.

Ching said there would be ample public notice and information meetings on the matter.

(KCPQ-TV TACOMA (WA) 09 JUN 10) Broadcast Clip

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ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

Defense Environment Alert

an exclusive biweekly report on defense policies for cleanup, compliance and pollution prevention

06/08/2010

Feinstein Plan To Expedite Renewables In Desert Draws Broad Criticism

A proposal by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) for expediting the approval of large solar and wind power projects in California deserts is prompting criticism from both industry and environmentalists, as well as concerns from the military, underscoring the challenges the state faces in meeting its strict renewable energy standards. The military says the proposed projects may interfere with training operations.

Energy companies and state officials say the plan would set aside too much land for conservation, and federal agencies and environmentalists say the permitting provisions are too lax.

Observers say the bill would establish a milestone in U.S. renewable energy development because it aims to advance dozens of projects on vast public lands for the first time. The average size of the solar power projects being proposed in the California Mojave and Colorado deserts is 5,000 acres, with one spanning 7,000 acres. The bill may also help California power suppliers meet the state's stringent renewable energy standard, which is proposed to rise to 33 percent by the end of 2020. The state is also relying heavily on renewable energy to meet its greenhouse gas (GHG)-reduction mandate under the 2006 global warming solutions law, AB 32.

The legislation, S. 2921, the "California Desert Protection Act of 2010," was the subject of a May 20 hearing by the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee. The bill has drawn interest from a number of agencies and stakeholders, including the Department of Defense, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Department of Agriculture, environmentalists and renewable energy developers.

Sources indicate the bill is months away from moving through the legislative process and likely faces a number of amendments based on concerns raised at the hearing.

Before the committee, DOD raised several issues with the bill, including that it may allow renewable energy development in a manner that interferes with military training and increases pressure on threatened and endangered species by reducing the amount of habitat available and increasing competition for scarce water supplies. DOD's "test and training ranges in this unique part of the country are among the department's most valuable and irreplaceable installations, often described as our 'crown jewels,'" Dorothy Robyn, DOD deputy under secretary for installations and environment, said in written testimony.

DOD is "concerned with the time restrictions included in the bill," referring specifically to provisions that appear to require agencies to speed up environmental impact statements, for

example. DOD must "gather the appropriate information and apply a rigorous and complete environmental analysis," Robyn said. "To ensure that this is a thoughtful and meaningful process, we believe it will take significantly more time than currently provided in the bill."

DOD's concerns come even though Feinstein worked with DOD on the bill prior to its introduction, incorporating provisions that protect military operations, Robyn's testimony says. Further discussion is needed regarding the concerns, and DOD plans to send a letter to the committee detailing its comments after fully reviewing the legislation, her testimony says.

Provisions in the bill that would require BLM-coordinated permitting process are also flagged as troublesome by Robyn. "Although the department's own permitting process would benefit from additional coordination with the permitting process of BLM, it would not be beneficial to limit the authority of the department with regard to permitting on our installations," her written testimony states. "In addition, siting of renewable energy facilities and associated infrastructure on private and state lands has the potential to have a significant impact on our testing, training, and operational missions. It is not clear that the permitting process outlined in the bill adequately addresses the critical interaction of federal agencies with state and local permitting processes."

In particular, BLM officials are concerned that they would be required to complete new permitting agreements and related studies in an unrealistically short period of time. For example, the bill would require the development of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) among federal agencies to establish a "single, multiagency joint process for the review and approval of renewable energy projects," BLM Director Robert Abbey told the committee, according to his written testimony.

BLM officials "oppose the 90-day period for completion of an MOU, which would involve 10 states and numerous and separate authorities for renewable energy, as this short timeframe would not provide the entities involved with sufficient time to develop an effective agreement," he said.

BLM is also concerned that the bill would misguidedly divert money it collects from the solar and wind projects away from the federal treasury. This change "would have significant long-term costs," Abbey said. Under Feinstein's bill, states would now receive 25 percent of this revenue, counties 25 percent and BLM 40 percent, and a solar energy mitigation fund 10 percent.

BLM is also objecting to a proposal in the bill to allow project developers to pay into a federally administered mitigation fund to facilitate the review of projects on non-federal land. "While we share the objective of finding a means whereby projects on non-federal lands can be considered within the same timeframes as those on public lands, we have serious concerns with the establishment of new mandatory funding, supplemented by additional appropriations, and we would like to work with the committee to resolve these concerns," Abbey's testimony states.

In general, the bill "includes substantial workloads within short timeframes which may be overly optimistic; we want to insure that the goals of the legislation can be realistically achieved," he added.

Environmental groups are also raising concerns about several sections in the Feinstein legislation, including measures to speed up permitting. For example, one section "seeks to legislate ambitious and ill-conceived deadlines for BLM review of permit applications, placing a heavy resource burden on the agency, while also jeopardizing the quality of its environmental reviews," said Johanna Wald, a senior attorney with the Natural Resources Defense Council, according to her written testimony to the committee.

"Rather than locking in deadlines for these critically important reviews, we believe that the secretary of the Interior should be required to establish appropriate deadlines and to report to Congress on the effectiveness of those deadlines once established," she stated.

Meanwhile, California officials and renewable energy developers are indicating that the bill's land conservation measures go too far, blocking more than 1 million acres from any kind of development without first having completed scientific surveys and studies of these acres in terms of potential impacts on the environment and military installations.

"We share Sen. Feinstein's goal of preserving our natural resources and beauty for generations to come, however we believe the best way to achieve this is through a science-driven process," said a spokeswoman for Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R), who is spearheading efforts to fast-track permitting for many of the proposed projects in the desert. "That is why we are in the midst of a comprehensive, stakeholder-driven, transparent, science-based process -- the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan -- to identify both the best lands for preservation and for responsible renewables development that everyone can agree on."

Schwarzenegger administration officials "look forward to working with Sen. Feinstein to ensure that the legislation builds on the state's existing process," the spokeswoman added.

Feinstein staff is "closely reviewing the specific suggestions raised" at the May 20 committee hearing "and will continue to monitor the official hearing transcript, which will remain open for the next three weeks," said a Feinstein spokeswoman. "At that point, we will evaluate the best path forward, working in concert with the key stakeholders that have been part of this cooperative legislative process." Declining to comment on the schedule for the bill, the spokeswoman added that "support for the bill is growing, and Sen. Feinstein is committed to seeing it enacted as soon as possible."

The Washington Post

McDonnell wins with wind

By Peter Galuszka

June 11, 2010

Virginia Gov. Robert F. McDonnell finally is doing the right thing with energy policy by joining a coalition of 10 coastal states that will push for wind turbines off the East Coast.

It may sound like a no-brainer, but wind is a much healthier and more popular way to generate needed power as opposed to offshore oil rigs that McDonnell had been pushing to the consternation of several neighboring states.

After vowing to make Virginia "the energy capital of the East Coast," McDonnell had to deal with the flotsam after President Obama first agreed to an oil lease sale off Virginia and then scuttled it following the Gulf of Mexico spill.

Instead of turning the Old Dominion into a mini-Louisiana, Virginia could be the recipient of a federally funding regional office to help with the technology of offshore wind turbines, which, at 300 feet tall, could spin out of sight about 12 miles off the coast.

Other benefits, according to a report by the Virginia Coastal Energy Research Consortium, include making turbines that could draw in \$403 million in investment, spur the creation of up to 11,600 jobs within two decades and generate up to 3,200 megawatts of power.

The report claims that the wind turbines could be located in areas that would not affect commercial fishing, shipping or the Navy or Air Force practice ranges that were big concerns with the offshore oil rig plan.

But this all might be too good to be true, in a sense. Experts say that wind alone won't generate all the power needed as the region and its economy grow and older generating plants wear out. Needed will be a mix of nuclear, coal and other forms of energy.

Dominion Virginia Power is exploring building a third unit at its North Anna nuclear power plant, but it needs huge federal loan guarantees to do so. Coal, of course, is highly problematic since generating plants spew out great amounts of carbon dioxide that contribute to global warming. As the Massey Energy disaster shows at its Upper Big Branch mine in April, coal mining is still highly dangerous, and strip mining using mountaintop removal causes ecological devastation.

But at least McDonnell is putting some of his energy into wind.

OUTLYING LANDING FIELD – NC & VA



Hagan and Burr agree on OLF

Sun Journal Staff

2010-06-07 19:58:01

North Carolina's opposing party senators are on the same page of the Senate Defense Authorization bill with amendments to prevent an OLF in Northeastern North Carolina and support studies on water contamination at Camp Lejeune.

Details of the bill were released Monday by the Senate Armed Services Committee for full Senate consideration. Sen. Kay R. Hagan, D-N.C., and Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C., sit on the committee.

"This amendment restricts funding for an Outlying Landing Field (OLF) in North Carolina and Virginia until the Department of the Navy justifies the cost of its construction in a series of exhaustive studies that are to be submitted to the congressional defense committees," a Burr spokesman said.

The amendment also asks for criteria for basing the F-35C aircraft-carrier version of the Joint Strike Fighter aircraft and a description of the OLF facilities required to support its training.

Hagan said in a release, "The Navy has existing OLFs and military airfields. These facilities must be evaluated before planning any new OLF, which I, along with the citizens of North Carolina, strongly oppose."

The senators' Lejeune amendment requires the Navy to assist the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry to complete its studies crucial to getting to the bottom of water contamination problems at Camp Lejeune. The scientific research agency of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention needs full Navy cooperation to identify all relevant water contamination documents.

The amendment, first included in the Defense Appropriations bill by Hagan last year, also includes a provision to keep the Navy from disposing of water contamination claims before the studies are complete.

OVERSEAS

The World's Window on Japan
The Japan Times
ONLINE

Henoko Residents Harbor Hopes And Fears About New U.S. Air Base

JAPAN TIMES

Reiji Yoshida

June 10, 2010

NAGO, Okinawa Pref. — People in the Henoko district of Nago, Okinawa Prefecture, have mixed feelings about the planned relocation of U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma to their shores.

They worry about noise pollution and the danger of accidents but at the same time keenly feel economic measures are necessary to revive the depopulated area's fortunes.

They meanwhile expect little from new Prime Minister Nato Kan and his Cabinet, which replaced the Yukio Hatoyama administration that stepped down last week, smarting from a failed effort to resolve the base relocation row.

Most people asked Tuesday by The Japan Times to comment on the new administration declined to give their full name, disinclined to publicly comment on the politically sensitive issue out of fear of upsetting their neighbors.

"It's better if the base isn't moved here. But if it's coming anyway, we want the (new government) to offer some economic measures to help the local economy," said a 40-year-old unemployed construction worker.

He said many Henoko residents are construction workers and they hope the base relocation will bring jobs along with it.

"The economy here is very severe. I don't have a job and almost feel I want to start drinking sake during the daytime," he said.

A local mother who identified herself only by her first name, Etsuko, said she opposes the base relocation plan. But if it is inevitable, she wants the new government to give sufficient compensation to each household and prioritize benefits for Henoko residents before reaching out to people in Nago, Tokyo or Washington.

"We are in a dilemma. I have children and I'm worried about their future," she said. "I'm wondering which is better, if the base will come or not. Maybe the demerits outweigh the merits."

Kosuke Asato, 19, said he doesn't want the base moved here because of the terrible noise pollution it would bring. Before moving to Henoko, he lived close to the Futenma air base in Ginowan, from which huge helicopters frequently rattled the densely populated area.

"I'm opposed to the relocation plan. But many other people in Henoko are not necessarily opposed to it," he said.

Asato said Henoko is one of the few places in Okinawa where some local residents are willing to accept a new U.S. base, and he believes the government will follow through on its plan.

"If there is any place in Okinawa that can accept the relocation, I think it would be here," he said. "I don't think the government can start over and choose a new place. It would be too tough."

A 40-year-old woman who was born and grew up in Henoko declined to give her name because her parents don't want her to talk about the base issue in this small divided community.

She said she opposes the relocation, saying the construction would destroy the rich coastal beauty and wouldn't benefit her children and later generations.

Unlike Hatoyama, who hails from a blue-blood political family, Kan was an ordinary citizen before becoming a politician, a reason she thinks he may be an improvement.

But Kan has already agreed with the U.S. government to push for the relocation plan, and changing it would be a very tough mission for any prime minister, she said.

"I feel politicians (in Tokyo) are very very far away from us. Kan may be a little better than Hatoyama, but I don't expect much from him," she said. "If the prime minister changes every year, whoever assumes the office won't be taken seriously by other countries."

UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE



June 8, 2010

Clamming Boat May Have Dredged up Mustard Gas

Did World War I-era mustard gas make the crew of a New Bedford clamming boat sick?

That's what investigators are trying to find out.

The crew of the E.S.S. Pursuit picked up at least ten old military canisters as they were dragging the ocean floor clamming just south of Long Island Sunday.

New Bedford fisherman Kevin O'Sullivan and another crew member handled one of the canisters as they threw them back into the ocean.

It broke open and exposed a fisherman named Costa, causing blistering on his arm and leg.

"He experienced immediate pain," said O'Sullivan, who also had a shortness of breath.

Both men were taken to the hospital, while two more crew members were transported Monday night when the vessel returned to New Bedford.

Now it's quarantined in the harbor.

"There's a 500-foot radius around that ship that no one can go to, except us," said Captain Kevin Morris of the Marine Strike Team.

"My eyes are quite sore; I wash my eyes every few minutes. There's burning on my face, cheeks and hands," said E.S.S. Pursuit captain Kieran Kelly, who has refused to leave the boat during the investigation.

While investigators have narrowed down the chemical agent, they've yet to officially identify it.

As a precaution, the Coast Guard has marked the area south of Long Island where the canisters were dumped.

O'Sullivan told CBS station WBZ-TV in Boston the canisters had the date "1914" or "1918" on it.

Clams that were on board have been removed for testing and never made it to market.

June 9, 2010

Weapons are Common Catch, Fishermen Say

Crew Injury Shows Danger of Dumping

Peter Schworm and Beth Daley

In a bizarre incident that spotlights the vast amount of chemical weapons and munitions debris littering the ocean floor, a crewman aboard a clamming boat remained hospitalized yesterday for exposure to mustard gas after his vessel dredged up World War I-era munitions shells.

Konstantin Burndshov sustained burns and blisters on an arm and leg and was sickened after handling a shell that had been hauled aboard the ESS Pursuit on Sunday in waters off Long Island, New York. The incident probably marks the first civilian exposure to the chemical warfare agent in the United States in decades, said Edward W. Boyer, a medical toxicologist who is leading the team treating Burndshov.

Burndshov, a New Jersey resident, remained hospitalized last night at UMass Memorial Medical Center in Worcester, but is expected to make a full recovery, according to Boyer. Three other crew members suffered milder symptoms and were treated in New Bedford and released.

Crew member Kevin O'Sullivan said Burndshov, who was wearing rubber oil skins and rubber gloves, was injured after throwing a bullet-shaped canister overboard, after the crew discovered it among a catch of clams. He said the canister smelled strange.

"It was just a strong chemical odor that didn't seem right," he said.

For decades, the military used the waters off the United States as a dumping ground for surplus or outdated weapons. With the ocean seemingly bottomless and far from people, it was considered a prudent way to get rid of old bombs and other weapons.

But today, as fishermen chase catches in deeper waters, encounters with the remnants of past wars have become more common, some fishermen say.

Clamming boats are particularly prone to hauling up munitions because their gear stirs up the seabed. Last month, for example, workers sorting clams at a New Bedford plant discovered nearly 200 hand grenades.

The clambers of the ESS Pursuit, which operates out of Atlantic City, were exposed to the mustard gas when canisters appeared on the boat's conveyor belt. The captain, Kieran Kelly, said in a telephone interview from aboard the vessel that one canister had broken open. Burndshov was exposed, and other crew members experienced breathing difficulties and eye irritation.

The boat brought the sick men in to New Bedford, where the vessel was scheduled to unload its catch, about 24 hours later. Dave Little, 32, a commercial fisherman from New Hampshire, helped unload the boat Monday, and joined the crew as it pushed back out to sea, unaware the boat was contaminated.

About five hours later, when the boat was about 20 miles out, the Coast Guard called it back to port. “If they hadn’t turned us around, we’d still be out there,” said Little, who experienced some irritation around his eyes and mouth from the exposure.

The ESS Pursuit remained in isolation yesterday, moored off New Bedford and flanked by Coast Guard vessels as officials developed a decontamination plan. Tests on the boat revealed the presence of blister agents, a group of chemicals that includes mustard gas.

Mustard gas, used infrequently after World War I, was intended to disable enemies because the gas would get on skin and cause large, raised blisters. It was not designed as a killing agent, although it can cause death if inhaled. It is also persistent, remaining in the environment and on surfaces for days.

“That is what is stunning to everyone; it is still potent now,” said Boyer, professor of emergency medicine at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan is leading the effort to figure out what to do with the boat’s catch of thousands of pounds of clams.

Even though a state hazardous materials unit and bomb squad determined that no mustard gas or chemical agents had seeped into the clams, the state has ordered them destroyed. The catch, 168 containers, each containing 80 bushels of clams, must be disposed of.

Coan said the state has never had to dispose of so much shellfish before. A team will meet this week to develop a plan to do this safely and properly, he said. “The Commonwealth has declared that the catch cannot be sold and will not be sold,” Coan said.

Fishermen in New Bedford said they often find discarded munitions at sea, but that they are typically harmless. “It’s pretty routine,” O’Sullivan said. “We throw them overboard as quick as possible.”

Little said old weapons often turn up in the dredge, which digs several inches into the ocean floor. The weapons are shaken violently in the sorting process on board, and Little said he worries some day one will explode.

Massachusetts fishermen and even beachgoers occasionally come across unexploded ordnance on Cape Cod and Island beaches, or near shore areas, because those areas were once used as practice ranges by the military. There are also former dumping grounds off Massachusetts, including a region often called the Foul Area, which had been used to dump radioactive and toxic waste until the 1970s.

“More experienced fishermen know to steer clear of dumping sites where drums of nuclear waste were found, but once in a while people pick up all kinds of crazy things,” said Angela Sanfilippo, president of the Gloucester Fishermen’s Wives Association.

Most of the dumping took place after World War I, World War II, and from 1950 to 1970, said David Foster, an Army spokesman.

In 1972, Congress prohibited the disposal of chemical munitions at sea, and international treaties soon followed suit.

“The bottom line is the sea disposal of chemical and conventional munitions was an acceptable practice up until 1972,” Foster said.



June 11, 2010

Ocean of Hidden Dangers Lurks for Fishermen

Anika Clark

When clammers aboard the ESS Pursuit pulled up a canister of mustard gas this week, it highlighted that fishermen often dredge up much more than seafood.

In 2007, a New Bedford scalloper brought home an ancient tusk and, for a boat that recently came into New Bedford Harbor, the catch of the day was a cache of old hand grenades.

Bill Doherty, a veteran lobsterman out of Hingham, has caught everything from lawn chairs to a walking cane, and reports that a couple of weeks ago, a fellow lobsterman hauled in a bathtub.

"There's all kinds of stuff you'll find," said Todd Bragdon, who sails aboard a New Bedford-based scallop boat and whose crew once dragged up what appeared to be a missile.

By "literally scraping the bottom of the ocean ... you're going to bring up whatever's down there," U.S. Coast Guard spokesman Jeff Hall said, adding that might be a plate or "a bomb from a bygone era."

Rodney Avila discovered as much decades ago while dragging for yellowtail flounder.

"I picked up a bomb one time off of Block Island," he said, recalling how the device turned out to be inactive.

That's not always the case, according to an Army-provided guide on explosives safety, which warns that these munitions "should be considered a serious danger."

Case in point is the Snoopy, a scallop boat that hauled up a large cylinder off North Carolina in 1965 before an explosion killed eight crewmen.

The Department of Defense disposed of approximately 30,000 tons of chemical weapons and munitions in U.S. waters before 1972, said Lt. Col. Jimmie Cummings Jr., a spokesman for the Army.

Although this also occurred after World War I, most underwater chemical weapons disposal happened at the end of World War II as a way to deal with "the enormous stores of captured enemy (e.g., German, Japanese) and surplus Allied (chemical warfare material)," according to the Army.

Other weapons were damaged and leaking, which made them dangerous to military personnel, environmental policy analyst David M. Bearden wrote in a Congressional Research Service report.

"At that time, it was thought that the vastness of ocean waters would absorb chemical agents that may leak from these weapons," Bearden wrote in the report, which says the Army logged 74 disposals of chemical weapons through 1970.

Of those, 32 were off U.S. shores. Congress banned this practice by passing the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972, according to Cummings.

So what exactly lies beneath?

"Munitions that may be encountered include mines, torpedoes, depth charges, artillery shells, bombs and missiles," according to the Army explosives safety guide.

Bearden's report contains a nearly 30-year record of munitions dumps ranging from 4,220 tons of hydrogen cyanide and other toxic material off Pearl Harbor in 1944 to 500-pound cyanogen chloride bombs in the Atlantic Ocean in 1964.

The inventory of destruction also includes sarin rockets, what's listed as four "carloads" of mustard projectiles, "one or two barges" of unspecified toxic munitions, and thousands of containers of lewisite.

Like mustard gas, lewisite — which contains arsenic and smells like geraniums — can leave victims with blistered skin, eye irritation and respiratory or digestive problems, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Lewisite was considered, but ultimately ruled out, as the chemical agent that injured a fisherman this week, according Edward Boyer, chief of the division of medical toxicology at the UMass Memorial Medical Center in Worcester.

The Department of Defense provides archival information about underwater munitions to a variety of federal agencies, and research and safety materials are available to fishermen, Cummings said in an e-mail.

"There (are) places all over the country where they've dumped munitions in the past that are down there and marked," said Hall, who later told The Standard-Times that in the general area off Long Island where the ESS Pursuit was fishing is a marked munitions area.

Jim Meyers, who owns the ESS Pursuit through the New Jersey-based Meyers and Truex, estimated that the boat was fishing at depths of 150 to 200 feet when it pulled up the gas-filled canister. New Bedford Fire Chief Brian Faria said the canister is likely a relic of World War I — a time when mustard gas "was a big item in chemical warfare," according to Joseph Bunnnett, a professor emeritus of chemistry at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Among other posts, Bunnnett served as co-chairman, in 1996, of a NATO research workshop on the chemical problems of old mustard and arsenical munitions.

"In Europe, old chemical weapons are a major problem, still, left over from World War I," he said, describing how they can be found in military supply locations or buried in ditches. And in the United States, there were at least two disposals in the Mississippi River, according to Bearden.

Shortly after the Snoopy tragedy, Jack Pike — a former scalloper who once sailed out of New Bedford — was on a boat that brought up a torpedo off the coast of Virginia.

"Ours was a dud, thank you, Lord," he said, before illustrating the size of the weapon by making a giant circle with his hands. "We got the hell off (the boat). Everybody was petrified."