

NPL Site Narrative for Otis Air National Guard Base/Camp Edwards

OTIS AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE/CAMP EDWARDS Falmouth, Massachusetts

Conditions at proposal (July 14, 1989): Otis Air National Guard Base (ANGB) and Camp Edwards cover approximately 21,000 acres of what is today known as the Massachusetts Military Reservation (MMR) in Falmouth, Barnstable County, Massachusetts. The area is sparsely populated. Although the occupants and property boundaries have changed a number of times since MMR was established in 1935, the primary mission has always been to provide training and housing to Air Force or Army units.

A review of past and present operations and waste disposal practices identified a number of potentially contaminated areas, including eight covering 3,900 acres on the southern portion of MMR. Six are within Otis ANGB: Former Fire Training Area, Current Fire Training Area, Base Landfill, Nondestructive Testing Laboratory Leach Pit, Fly Ash Disposal Area, and a plume of contaminated ground water from a sewage treatment plant. The two remaining areas, Unit Training Equipment Site (UTES) and Property Disposal Office Storage Yard, are on Camp Edwards, which is currently leased to the Army. The materials associated with the eight areas are fly ash, bottom ash, waste solvents, waste fuels, herbicides, and transformer oil.

While the Nondestructive Testing Laboratory operated (1970-78), waste solvents, emulsifiers, penetrants, and photographic developers were deposited in the sanitary sewer system. Effluent from the sewage treatment plant was discharged into sand beds, where it seeped into ground water. In 1984, the U.S. Geological Survey detected trichloroethane, tetrachloroethylene, and trans-1,2-dichloroethylene in monitoring wells downgradient of the plant. The plume of contaminated ground water extends 2 miles to the south. In 1983 and 1984, the Air Force detected volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in on-site monitoring wells near the Base Landfill and Current Fire Training Area. The Air National Guard and the State have detected VOCs in more than 200 private wells. Water lines were installed in 1986-87 to the affected residences.

EPA has designated the Cape Cod aquifer underlying MMR as a Sole Source Aquifer under the Safe Drinking Water Act. The municipalities of Bourne and Sandwich, as well as the Air Force, have drinking water wells within 3 miles of hazardous substances at the site. To date, they are not contaminated. Irrigation wells are also within 3 miles. The drinking water of 36,000 people is potentially threatened.

Ashumet Pond, less than 1 mile downslope of the Former Fire Training Area, is used for recreational activities. A fresh water wetland is 3,600 feet downstream of the area.

The Air Force is participating in the Installation Restoration Program (IRP), established in 1978. Under this program, the Department of Defense seeks to identify, investigate, and clean up contamination from hazardous materials. The Air Force has investigated Air Force property only. A committee that represents all service branches on MMR is coordinating a second investigation that addresses the entire facility.

Status (November 21, 1989): Approximately 40 "operable units" are in various stages of evaluation, the majority in the remedial investigation phase.

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at [ATSDR - ToxFAQs](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp>) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.