FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES (FUDS)
PROJECT FACT SHEET
APRIL 1996
TAG REVIEW DATE: 11 JULY 1996

1. **SITE NAME:** Camp Ibis (Proper)

SITE NUMBER: J09CA028300

LOCATION:
City: Needles
County: San Bernardino
State: California

PROJECT NUMBER: J09CA028301

CATEGORY: OE

INPR RAC: 3

ASR RAC: 1

2. **POC's:**

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3. **SITE DESCRIPTION:**

The former Camp Ibis (proper) is located approximately 20 miles northwest of Needles, California. State Highway 95 passes through the western edge of the campsite. The site consisted of 9,595.87 acres of relatively flat, sandy soil with moderate brush coverage and some slow rolling hills on each side of Piute Wash, which runs the entire length of the camp on the eastern edge.

This is an area of climatological extremes. The summertime in the Needles area is one of unforgiving heat without shade.

Falls are somewhat less oppressive, with temperatures between the middle 70's and middle 80's. In the winter months, night temperatures slightly above freezing are tempered considerably by warming during the daytime, with daytime maximum temperatures from the middle 60's to the upper 70's.

Today, ownership is shared by the Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, State of California and the SF Pacific Properties Incorporated (previously named the Southern Pacific Company). In addition, within these ownerships, there are railroad rights-of-way and mineral rights by Santa Fe Pacific Gold. At this time no "active" ranch leases, mining claims or developments occur on Camp Ibis (proper). Currently, the State of California is in the process of selling their land back to the Department of Interior under the California Desert Protection Act.

4. SITE HISTORY:

In March 1942, the War Department tasked General George S. Patton, Jr., with finding a desert training site that met all the criteria of North Africa. After three days of surveying the area by plane and on foot, General Patton decided that Southern California was to be the site of the Desert Training Center (DTC), later called the California-Arizona Maneuver Area (CAMA). This area encompasses approximately 11 million acres covering three states.

Camp Ibis (proper) was one of ten major camps in this vast training area. The War Department had to transfer property from the Department of Interior and acquire permits from the State of California and the Southern Pacific Company. The War Department also had to acquire a no-area license from the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad Company for the communication right-a-way. After acquiring the aforementioned, construction began on Camp Ibis (proper) in the winter of 1942-43. The camp was finally completed in the spring of 1943.

The purpose of this camp, like the others in the DTC, was to train troops, test newly developed ammunition, weapons systems, vehicles, equipment, supplies and chemical warfare material in a desert environment. The commanders of the DTC wanted to make training as realistic as possible so troops used live ordnance in addition to using practice ammunition.

Camp Ibis was home to various armor divisions which used the M3 Stewart, M3 Grant and M4 Sherman tanks. These early WW II tanks used 37mm, 75mm and 76mm high velocity projectiles for their main guns, respectively. For infantry purposes, the tanks had .30 and .50 caliber machine guns mounted within and on top of

the tank. Also included with these armor units were: Tank Destroyer Units, which used 105mm howitzers; Anti-Aircraft Units, which used 3", 40mm and 90mm projectiles; and Artillery Units, which used 75mm, 105mm and 155mm projectiles. To protect themselves from close hostile forces, these troops were armed with .45 caliber pistols/submachine guns, .30 caliber carbines and rifles and Mark II fragmentation grenades.

Camp Ibis had numerous ranges (23) with only four originating within Camp Ibis (proper). However, their safety zones continued off camp proper. The remaining 19 ranges will be addressed later as potential DERP-FUDS.

In October 1943, DTC's name was changed to the California-Arizona Maneuver Area (CAMA). This change was made to reflect the alterations of size and purpose. Even at the time of the name change, CAMA's mission was already scaling down.

On March 30, 1944, CAMA was declared surplus by the War Department. Camp Ibis, along with the other camps, had to push hard to meet the deadline of that spring. But, after hard work the job was accomplished and Camp Ibis (proper) no longer existed. Today, the land is owned by the Bureau of Land Management, State of California and SF Pacific Properties Incorporated with no ownership or use remaining with the Department of Defense.

Because of the vastness of DTC/CAMA, the entire area was used for maneuvers and target ranges. Some of these maneuver areas and ranges were never mapped. When the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers finally acquired the approximate 11 million acres for surplus disposal, they found the dedudding that occurred before the transfer was not thoroughly or extensively completed. The Corps found ordnance contamination on the camp sites and outside the camps' boundaries. This was also the case with Camp Ibis (proper), so the Corps assumed rights over the public and private lands and conducted surface sweeps. A historical letter by the Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District, dated 21 September 1956, compiled all the known contaminated lands in the DTC/CAMA. Also, an Affidavit from the Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District, dated 13 September 1954, lists other areas of concern.

During May 1964, a military exercise called Desert Strike was conducted in the former DTC/CAMA in areas including the former Camp Ibis (proper). The main purpose of this exercise was to train the major combat organizations in the conduct of joint operations employing tactical nuclear and conventional weapons. *Real nuclear weapons were not used in these exercises, only simulators with no radioactive components.* However, approximately 850 short tons of ordnance and chemical class V

ammunition was used. Unfortunately, the documentation available from Desert Strike does not clarify what ordnance and chemical class V ammunition was used.

5. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Area A: Training Area

Size, Acres: Approximately 7,721
Former Usage: Training/Cantonment Area
Present Usage: Wilderness/Tourist Area
Probable End Usage: Possible Agriculture Development
Ordnance Presence: **Confirmed**
Types: SI Team saw frag from 75mm, 105mm; 60mm/81mm mortar fragments and fin assemblies from 81 mm mortars; projectile and grenade fuzes; M204 grenade fuzes from HE frag grenades and M201 fuzes from either M18, M34 or AN-M8 smoke grenades; a large number of M1 practice mine pieces such as safety forks, pressure bars (spiders), and pieces of fuze bodies; 2.36" M7 practice rocket; small arms cartridge cases (.30, .45 and .50 caliber); and 7.62mm cartridge cases.

Area B: Other Lands

SI Team discovered a burial site of unknown origin or purpose. This could be one of several burial sites scattered throughout the camp. No OE was found.

Size, Acres: Approximately 1,875
Former Usage: Tent quarters, command tents and administrative tents
Present Usage: Tourists/Idle Area
Probable End Usage: Possible Agriculture Development
Ordnance Presence: **Potential**
Types: Ammunition used in DTC

Area C: Additional Acreage

This acreage is not covered under the current INPR. Since, however, this land contained the safety zones for ranges which originated within Camp Ibis (Proper), the TAG recommended that the District amend the current INPR to include Area C in this site.

Size, Acres:	Approximately 3,802
Former Usage:	Small Arms Ranges & Impact Area
Present Usage:	Wilderness Area
Probable End Usage:	Same as present use
Ordnance Presence:	**Confirmed**

Types: shrapnel, projectile frag (nonspecific)

Potential: any ordnance used in Desert Strike since maps show the northern part of this area being included in the contaminated area

6. CURRENT STATUS: ASR completed by Rock Island District in April 1996.

7. STRATEGY:

Area A: EE/CA
Area B: EE/CA
Area C: Recommend District amend current INPR to include this acreage, EE/CA

8. ISSUES AND CONCERNS:

General: **Terrain**: flat sandy soil with numerous wash outs/steep hills and ravines due to water erosion; **Hazard**: gas pipeline and others within site boundary; **Archeological Sites**: within site boundary; **Poisonous** Animals: rattle snakes, black widows and brown recluse spiders; **Access to Site**: Need four wheel drive vehicle; **Emergencies**: Hospital in Needles over 20 miles away. Coordinate with Sheriff's Dept. and other owners prior to site visit.

Area A: Numerous burial sites were discovered within Area A on either side of Piute Wash. Even though no OE items were noticed on the surface of some exposed burial sites, it is possible OE exists below the surface.

Area C: Burial sites discovered should be addressed with *caution* because, as stated in Area A, it is possible OE exists in these sites.

Rock Island conducted many interviews with site-related personnel. Mr. Butch Gates is recommended as a particularly good

source of information concerning Camp Ibis (proper) and the DTC/CAMA.

Chemical-filled ordnance was also used on the troops in maneuvers. Documents talk about tear gas being sprayed from airplanes passing over troops. Rock Island's research found a document talking about Chemical Warfare Units performing tactical training and review of special technical training. This document reports on the use of special equipment and chemical depots and maintenance companies establishing and operating chemical warfare depots and maintenance facilities in the field. The RCWM Team reviewed this ASR and concluded, based on this document, that the CWM was limited to tear gas and *simulated* CWM. Therefore, this site is not considered to be CWM-contaminated.

There are known Federally- and State-listed species occurring in the site area. An on-site inspection by appropriate State and Federal personnel may be necessary to verify the presence, absence or location of listed species, or natural communities. Also within the subject site there are five Historical Sites (CHL-985).

The cost model is not affected by whether or not the land in Area C is included in the total acreage.

9. **SCHEDULE SUMMARY:** EE/CA

10. **FUNDING/BUDGET SUMMARY:** For Official Use Only

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