

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE (UXO) FOR DEVENS RESIDENTS, EMPLOYEES, AND VISITORS

Devens is located on land once owned by the U.S. Army. For nearly 80 years from World War I until 1996, Devens' 4,400 acres were used for housing, research, education, administration, and military training purposes.

What parts of Devens were used for military training?

The Army used a 130-acre parcel called the Grant Road Housing Area for a firing range (including a firing point) principally for 37-millimeter anti-tank shells between World War I and World War II. A firing point is an area from which Army personnel fired artillery and other weapons at a target for training purposes. A firing range is the area between the firing point and the target. The Army stopped using the firing range in the 1930s. From the 1960s until the base closed in 1996, the area was occupied by approximately 260 homes for military families.

Where was the firing range?

The firing point was located at the northern end of the Grant Road Housing Area. Targets were located in an "impact area" on the northern slope of Oak Hill that is now surrounded by a fence.

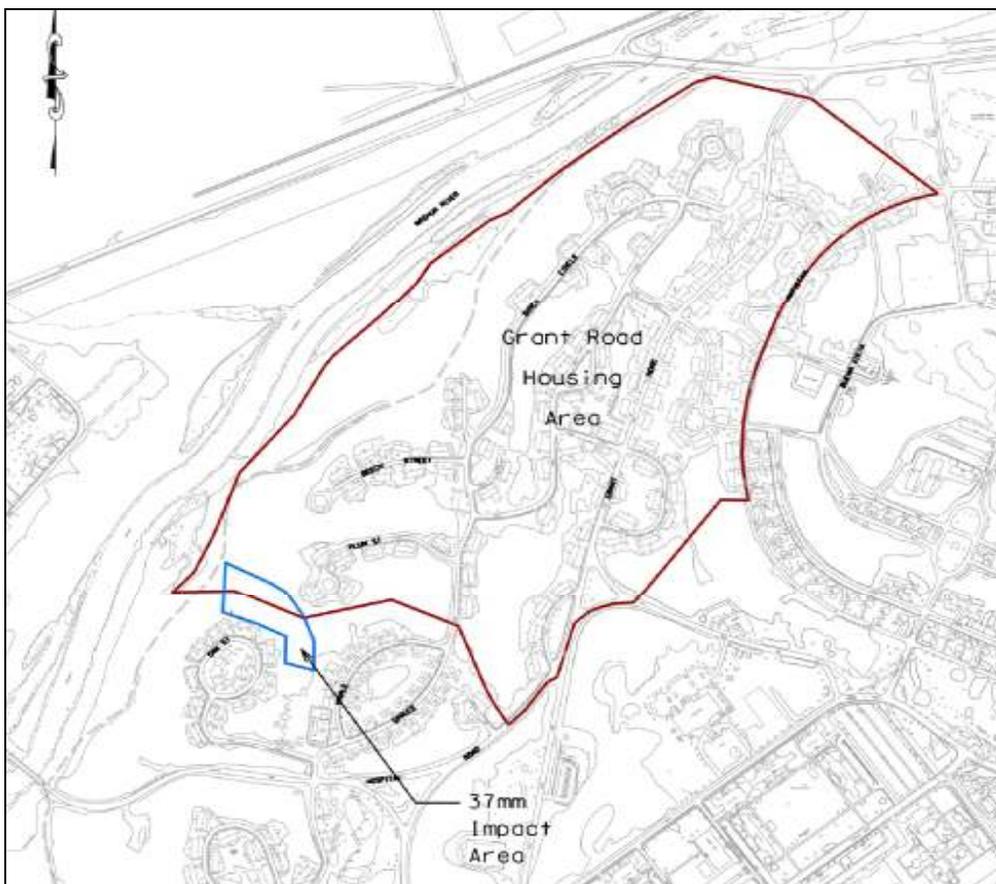


Figure 1. Map of Grant Road Housing Area showing the location of the discontinued 1930's firing range impact area relative to now-demolished 1960's era military housing.

Was UXO found and removed?

In 1994 and 1995 as the base prepared to close, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers identified training areas and ranges and removed significant amounts of unexploded ordnance (UXO) and scrap metal from the side of Oak Hill. At the Grant Road Housing Area, UXO consists mainly of 37-millimeter anti-tank shells and other munitions that did not explode at the time they were initially used during training exercises. Most of the UXO was in two dense groupings on or near the surface of the ground around former target locations in the Impact Area. In 2004, with the availability of more sensitive survey equipment, MassDevelopment conducted a digital geophysical survey of the entire Grant Road Housing Area to a depth of 18 inches. MassDevelopment then hired specialists who removed additional UXO.

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Do I need to be concerned about unexploded shells or other ordnance?

UXO could remain in the housing and impact areas. However, the Army and MassDevelopment have taken all steps recommended by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with the review and comment of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to identify and remove UXO from the housing and impact areas. The Army and EPA, with the review and comment of DEP, concluded that (a) all identified UXO in the top 18 inches of the surface have been removed and (b) the presence of UXO deeper than 18 inches is unlikely given the primary type of UXO found—37-millimeter shells—the angle of penetration, soil conditions, and decades of frost heaves. Since technology cannot guarantee complete detection, the possibility remains of additional finds of UXO that could pose explosive safety hazards.

What does UXO look like and what should I do if I suspect I have found it?

UXO may appear as corroded bullets, shells of various sizes, or grenades. Below are pictures of UXO that might be found in Devens.



Figures 2 and 3. Pictured above is (at left) an intact 37mm anti-tank shell and (at right) a hand grenade. Both are shown with a standard 12-ounce beverage can.

The Department of Defense recommends that everyone—including children, family members, and landscapers—learn the three R's of UXO safety: recognize, retreat, and report.

- **RECOGNIZE** – When you may have encountered UXO.
- **RETREAT** – Do not touch, disturb, or move the UXO. Leave the area.
- **REPORT** – Call Devens Emergency Dispatch Center at (978) 772-7200 and report what you saw and where you saw it.

If you are conducting any activity that requires a building permit, call:

- Devens Enterprise Commission: (978) 772-8831

Awareness Briefings:

The Devens Fire Department conducts awareness briefings for contractors and other construction and utility personnel who intend to conduct ground-intrusive activities (such as digging) in Devens. These briefings instruct personnel on the steps both to recognize UXO and to follow should suspect UXO be encountered. Devens residents are also invited to attend an awareness briefing. To receive an awareness briefing, contact the Devens Fire Department at (978) 772-4600.

Where can I get more information?

For information on UXO and UXO removal, call:

- Devens Fire Department: (978) 772-4600
- MassDevelopment: (978) 784-2900

For additional information on the land use controls and implementation plan as well as the Devens Soil Management Policy and its related regulations, visit the Devens Enterprise Commission website at www.devensec.com or call the Devens Enterprise Commission at (978) 772-8831.