

## 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) and the adjacent Oak/Maple Housing areas (32 acres) 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.

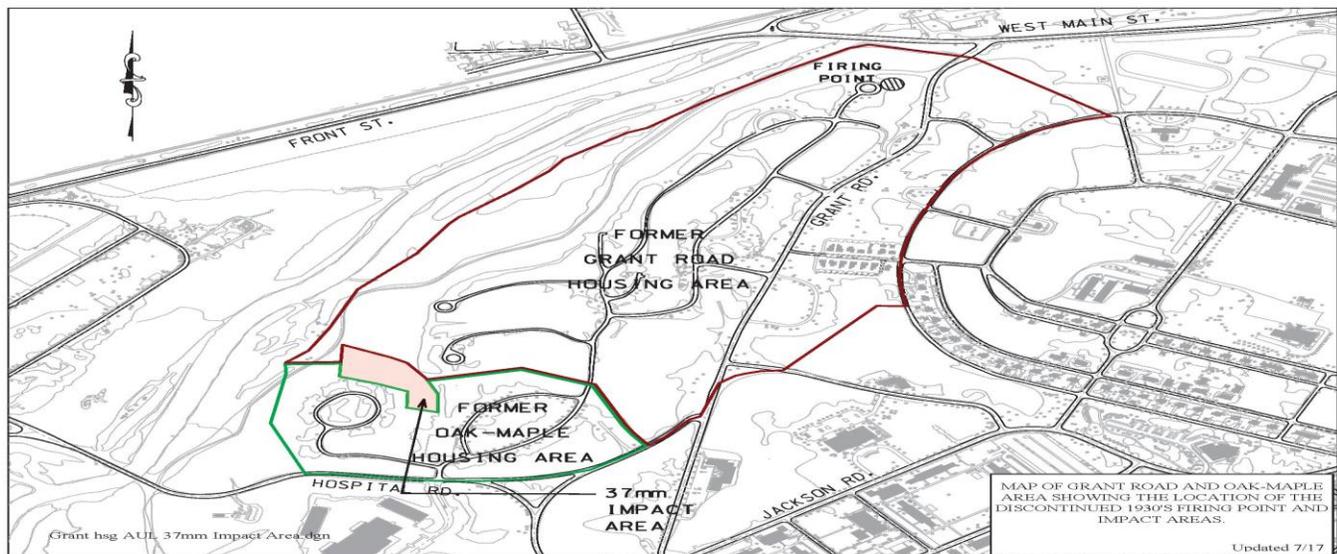


Figure 1. Map of Grant Road and Oak/Maple Housing Areas showing the location of the discontinued 1930's firing range impact area relative to now-demolished 1960's era military housing.

### Was UXO found and removed?

In 1995 and 1996, as the base prepared to close, Army performed a munitions response investigation and subsequent removal action at portions of the Grant and Oak Housing Areas. Significant amounts of unexploded ordnance (UXO) and UXO scrap were found on the Oak Housing Area hillside (i.e. 37-mm Impact Area), located to the southwest of the Grant HA. In 2004 and 2005, the Army conducted a Preliminary Assessment/Site Inspection (PA/SI) and Supplemental Site Investigation (SSI) within the Grant HA and 37-mm Impact Area to assess whether military activities resulted in the release of munitions-related chemicals to soil and groundwater. Although no chemicals potentially related to UXO (i.e. munitions constituents) were detected, the 2008 PA/SI/SSI Report recommended that response alternatives involving land-use controls (LUCs) be considered for the 37-mm Impact Area and portions of the Grant HA to reduce explosive safety hazards and that a Munitions and Explosives of Concern (MEC) investigation be performed at the former Oak and Maple HAs to characterize potential MEC safety hazards and determine if additional removals and/or LUCs are warranted within these areas.

In 2006, to address concerns regarding potential remnant UXO within the 37-mm Impact Area and Grant HA, Mass Development issued results of a digital and analog ("mag, flag, and dig") geophysical survey and removal action conducted throughout the entire Grant Housing Area (HA) (former 37-mm artillery range) and northern portions of Oak and Maple HAs (located within the 37-mm firing fan/impact area). In total, an additional 31 UXO items and 17 other ordnance items were located and removed.

In 2010/2011, per recommendations detailed in the 2008 PA/SI/SSI Report, a MEC investigation was conducted at the former Oak and Maple HAs. Similar to the geophysical techniques utilized in 2006, a combination of digital and analog

methods were deployed to evaluate a portion (14 of 37 acres) of the former Oak and Maple HA property thought to have the greatest likelihood of MEC discovery . Although munitions debris (MD) was found scattered across several areas **within** both HAs, of the 3,647 anomalies investigated only 1 MEC item was found. The investigation concluded that the probability of encountering MEC within the previously developed former Oak and Maple HAs is considered to be low. In 2016, an additional 10 (100' X 100') grids and 13 concrete building slab footprints within the former Oak HA were surveyed using an analog, hand-held instrument. No MEC was recovered during this investigation.

### **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](http://www.devensec.com) or call the Devens Enterprise Commission at (978) 772-8831.