



# Munitions Debris to be Cleared

## Former Williams Air Force Base, Parcel N Debris Area 1

March 2014  
Schedule update May 2014

The Parcel N Debris Area 1 in the southwest portion of the former Williams Air Force Base has several small disposal pits where munitions debris, explosives, and small amounts of chemical warfare materiel have been found. Under a contract with the Air Force, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will clear the site of these items during the spring of 2014. This activity will include excavation of the former disposal pits and proper disposal of all pit contents.

The 17-acre site along S. Sossaman Road is an undeveloped property owned by the Air Force. The Air Force is clearing the disposal pits to ensure the property is safe for future reuse and redevelopment.



## Site History

The former Williams Air Force Base in Mesa, Arizona served as a flight training school from 1941 to its closure in 1993 under the Base Realignment and Closure Commission. Training activities included the use of weapons and small amounts of chemical agents. These used materials were buried in the disposal pits on base.

Site investigations in 2009 and 2010 revealed a variety of expended munitions debris and small explosives including individual pieces of rocket propellant, flares, and igniters. During a 2011 field investigation, a small, intact, capped bottle containing dried residue and marked with a designation for mustard agent was found. A specialized U.S. Army Corps of Engineers unit was mobilized to neutralize and dispose of the container. Work at the site was halted pending development of a new work plan to address the potential for chemical agents at the site. Historical records suggest the munitions found are related to past training exercises and the mustard agent was likely used during soldier decontamination training.

Air Force and regulatory agency personnel and potential contractors discuss the munitions response action at the Parcel N Debris Area.



## Munitions Response Action

The Air Force and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its contractor HGL, Inc., will clear the site of munitions debris, explosives, and chemical warfare materiel in the spring of 2014. All items found will be inspected by qualified personnel and disposed of appropriately. Given the past findings, the site and response action are being approached with an abundance of caution under the assumption that additional items may be present. When the excavation and disposal work is complete and confirmation soil samples verify there are no remaining contaminants that pose a risk to human health and the environment, the pits will be backfilled with clean soil.

## Safety and Training

Prior to going out in the field and removing any munitions debris, the project team will conduct extensive on-site training for the field crews and local emergency first responders. These training exercise scenarios will cover proper handling of munitions and chemical agents, proper disposal techniques, and potential worst-case scenarios. During some of this training, field crews will wear protective suits and respirators, and police and fire department vehicles and ambulances will be entering and leaving the site, simulating an actual emergency.

When the field work begins, crews will wear typical construction site clothing. Additional protective equipment will be worn as needed.

The Air Force, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, regulatory agencies, first responders, and contracted personnel are coordinating to ensure public safety. Site operations and monitoring are designed so there are no impacts to the surrounding areas during clearance activities.

## Project Schedule/Key Dates

<b>March 3 – 17</b>	Site mobilization, facilities setup, site surveys
<b>March 17 – April 25</b>	On-site field training and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Huntsville) Survey
<b>April 28 – May 2</b>	Department of Army pre-operational survey
<b>May 12 – June 4</b>	Site excavation, collection and disposal, as needed, of munitions or chemical warfare materiel; environmental sampling; and backfill and site restoration
<b>June 5 – 9</b>	Site demobilization

## For More Information

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## Williams Cleanup and Redevelopment

The Air Force has ongoing soil and groundwater cleanup programs at several locations on the former base. The Air Force is committed to cleaning the contamination and protecting human health and the environment at Williams. The environmental cleanup is being done under the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) with oversight from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the State of Arizona.

Approximately 95 percent of the former base has been transferred to the local community for redevelopment. Williams now supports the thriving Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport, Arizona State University Polytechnic Campus, Chandler-Gilbert Community College, and numerous businesses.

