



US Army Corps of Engineers

Fact Sheet

Former Schilling Air Force Base
Gas Instruction Area, Salina, KS
Spring 2012

Gas Instruction Area History

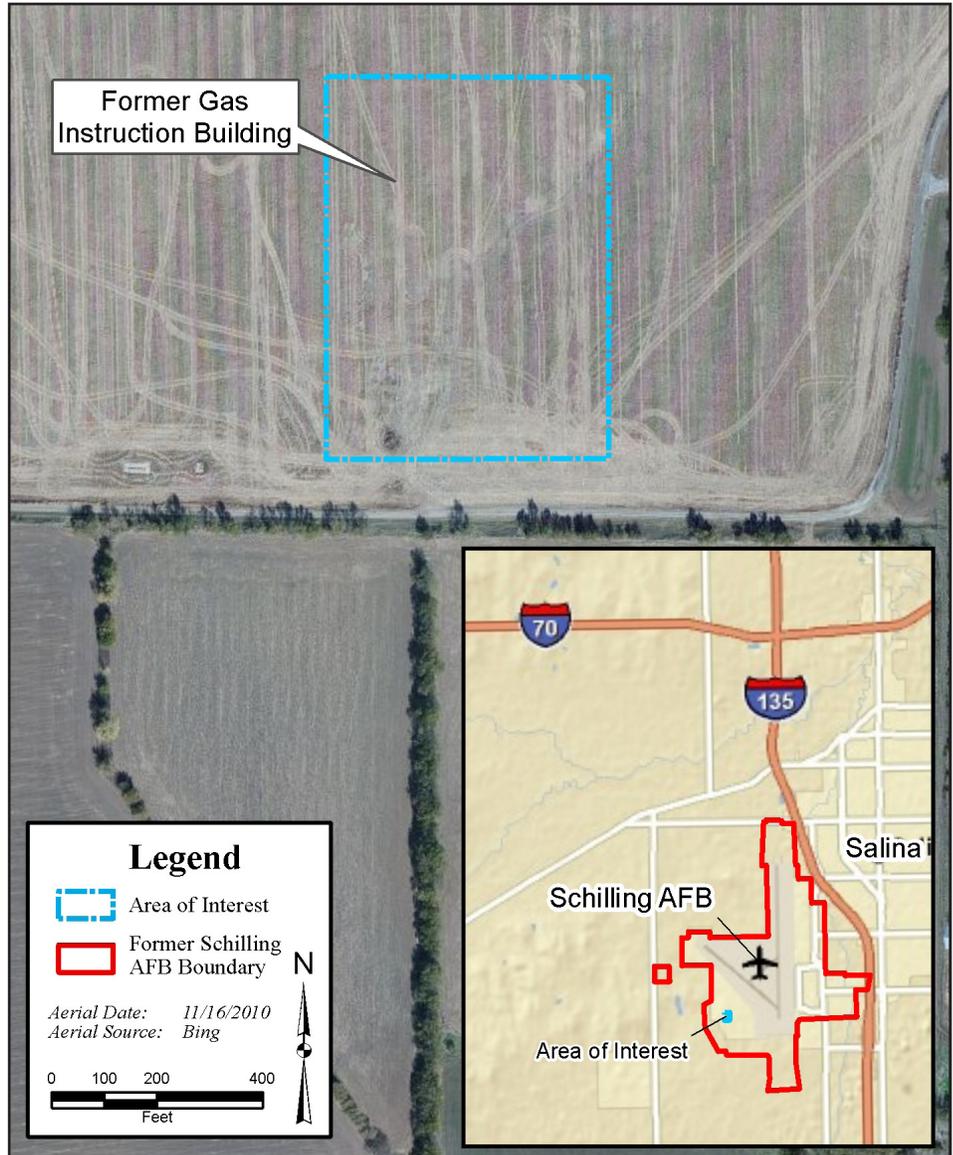
OVERVIEW

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is the Department of Defense organization that is responsible for environmental restoration of properties that were formerly owned by, leased to, or otherwise possessed by the United States and under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Defense. Such properties are known as Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS).

The Gas Instruction Area is a FUDS located in the southwestern portion of the former Schilling Air Force Base (AFB) within the perimeter security fence of the Salina Municipal Airport. The area of interest depicted on the site location figure consists of 8.8 acres and is currently owned by the Salina Airport Authority.

The primary land use of the Gas Instruction Area is farming. Wheat and sorghum are the two primary crops grown at the site. The projected land use of the Gas Instruction Area is not anticipated to change and will likely remain as farmland.

The Gas Instruction Area, which is the focus of USACE's current investigation, is not related to the ongoing groundwater investigation located in the northern portion of the former Schilling AFB.



Projection: North American Datum 1983 UTM Zone 14N

Site Location

SITE HISTORY

Former Schilling AFB

The U.S. Government constructed the Smoky Hill Army Air Base in 1942. It was renamed the Smoky Hill AFB in 1946 and renamed Schilling AFB in 1957. During World War II, Schilling AFB supported the training of pilots for bombing missions. The base was deactivated in 1949, and reactivated in 1951 to support the Korean War. At that

time, Schilling AFB was the second largest base in the Strategic Air Command and carried the mission to fly nuclear strike attacks with the capability of rapid deployment. During its operational existence, Schilling AFB housed numerous special weapons and conventional ordnance igloos, a gas instruction building, skeet ranges, an aircraft target butt, an aircraft burning/training area, and a missile maintenance building. The base was permanently closed in 1967, and the U.S. General Services Administration conveyed the majority of the base to the City of Salina for use as a municipal airport. The remainder of the former Schilling AFB was conveyed to various state and local agencies for educational purposes.

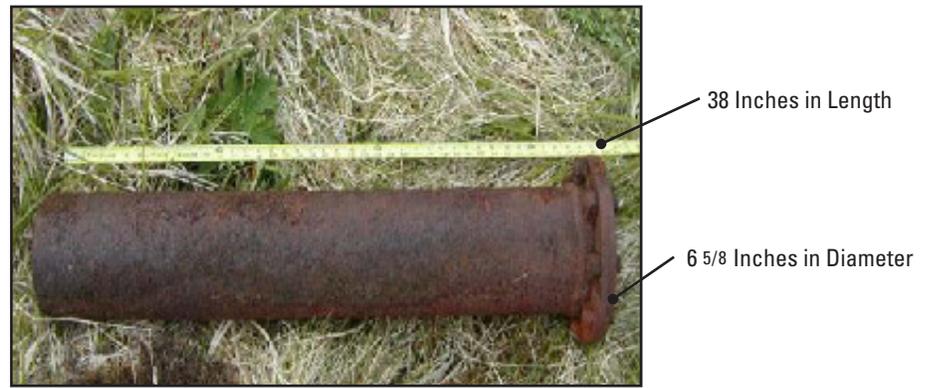
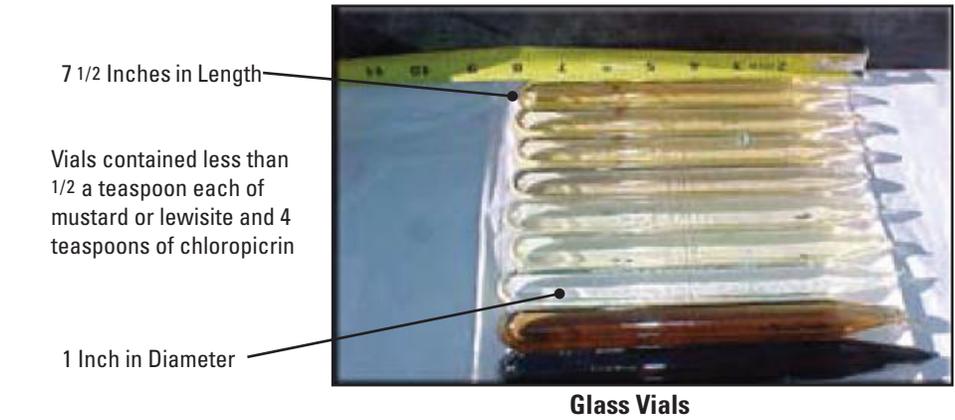
Gas Instruction Area

The Gas Instruction Area was used during the 1940s to train troops for donning gas masks using a tear gas medium. Troops also were trained in the physical properties, such as odor, of chemical agents and were trained how to decontaminate equipment and buildings exposed to chemical agents. Chemical Agent Identification Sets (CAIS), described in more detail below, were shipped to Schilling AFB and are believed to have been used within the Gas Instruction Area.

Past inventory documents indicate that CAIS (identified by number K951/K952 and possibly K941) were present at the Gas Instruction Area. Historical records indicate that an approximate 100-square-yard section of land within the Gas Instruction Area was used for the purpose of decontamination training.

Current USACE Investigations

In December 2010, USACE completed a Site Inspection (SI) at the Gas Instruction Area. The SI included environmental soil sampling and a geophysical survey (to identify underground buried metallic items). Results of the sampling event showed no chemical agent or agent breakdown products in the soil at the Gas Instruction Area. As a result, there are no unacceptable risks to human health and the environment from exposure to chemical agents or its breakdown products. The geophysical survey identified 19 buried metallic items similar to those associated with the disposal or burial of the shipping containers for CAIS.



USACE is currently conducting a Remedial Investigation (RI) at the Gas Instruction Area. During the RI, the underground buried metallic items, detected during the SI, will be safely identified and disposed. Field work associated with investigating the underground buried metallic items is expected to last less than a month and will be conducted during the summer of 2012. The entire RI process is anticipated to take 2 years to complete.

Chemical Agent Identification Sets

CAIS are shipped in steel cylinders 38 inches in length and 6⁵/₈ inches in diameter. Inside the shipping

containers are 1¹/₃-ounce glass vials containing chemical agents for troop training purposes. CAIS kits were used at the time to train troops on the recognition of various chemical agents. The table below provides additional information regarding CAIS possibly used at the Gas Instruction Area.

The 1¹/₃-ounce glass vials contained less than 1/2 a teaspoon each of lewisite or mustard agent or 4 teaspoons of chloropicrin in chloroform. Other vials contained 1¹/₃-ounces of phosgene.

The chemical agents described below are present in CAIS in liquid form.

CAIS	DESCRIPTION	CHEMICAL AGENTS
K951/K952 M1 Detonating Gas Identification Sets	Consisted of a steel cylinder with four sheet metal cans. Each can contained 12 glass vials with 1 ¹ / ₃ ounces of liquid, including dilute mustard, chloropicrin, and lewisite in chloroform. Similar vials also contained phosgene.	These chemical agents, in small quantities, would not cause a potential for exposure to the community.
K941 Toxic Gas Set	Consisted of a steel cylinder with four sheet metal cans. Each can contained 12 glass bottles with 3 ¹ / ₂ ounces of mustard agent.	Mustard agent is a liquid and not a gas. If found, it would be contained on site with no known exposure route for the community.

Lewisite

Lewisite remains a liquid under a wide range of environmental conditions, from below freezing to hot temperatures. The odor of lewisite has been described as being similar to geraniums. In liquid form it is hazardous through direct skin or eye contact.

Mustard Agent

Mustard agent in CAIS would be present in small containers as a low-volatility liquid. The odor of mustard agent has been described as being similar to rotten onions. The smell is dulled after only a few breaths and, as a result, mustard agent is often described as being almost odorless. In liquid form it is hazardous through direct contact to skin.

Chloropicrin

At ambient temperature and pressure, chloropicrin is a colorless, oily liquid. Chloropicrin has a sharp, sweet irritating odor. In liquid form it is hazardous through direct skin or eye contact.

Phosgene

With cooling and pressure, phosgene gas can be converted into a liquid so that it can be shipped and stored. At low concentrations, it has a pleasant odor of newly mown hay or green corn. At high concentrations, the odor may be strong and unpleasant. In liquid form it is hazardous through direct skin or eye contact.

Remedial Investigation and Public Awareness

USACE will be examining buried metal in the former Gas Instruction Area in the summer of 2012. The assessments completed so far indicate a low probability of encountering chemicals associated with CAIS. The procedures for responding to a finding have been designed to be fully protective of the public and site workers.

The findings of the work will be documented in publically available plans. Notices of availability and locations where the public can examine the plans will also be published.



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USACE is planning to issue a supplemental fact sheet for the Gas Instruction Area upon finalizing the RI work plan. The fact sheet will outline the planned activities.

For more information about the Gas Instruction Area, please contact the USACE, Kansas City District Public Affairs Office at:

(816) 389-3486

or by email via:

<http://www.nwk.usace.army.mil/pa/>