

UP-WT-History Sites Fairmount plant

# Feds probe for bombs at old WWII site

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WASHINGTON TWP. —

Work has begun to remove old shell casings and possibly whole "Candle Stick," World War II incendiary bombs from a former industrial site in Washington Township and Tewksbury Township.

The ordnance was made by the United Wallpaper Factories company during World War II at their 70-acre Parker Road tract which straddles Washington and Tewksbury townships.

Last month, the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) brought in crews and set up a command post at the site's entrance on Parker Road behind the Fairmount Firehouse.

The EPA will host public information sessions about the clean up at the site, from 2 to 4 and 6 to 8 p.m., today, Thursday, Dec. 6 at town hall on Schooley's Mountain Road.

During World War II, the company was making the incendiary

bombs for the war effort, however when the war ended, the company burned what munitions it had left and may have buried some of the shell casings and possibly live shells, EPA spokesman Rich Cahill said on Tuesday afternoon.

Over the years, long-time residents and farmers as well as hunters occasionally stumbled across one of the bombs that had become uncovered, said Township Administrator Dianne Gallets.

In May, 2000, David Pascale, owner of the 70-acre tract, was unaware of the site's former history when he brought in hydrologists to conduct perk tests to see if the land was suitable for septic systems for a housing development he wanted to construct, according to Gallets.

## Suspicious Mound

While at the site, one of the engineers spotted some unusual mounds. When the backhoe was

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done digging, the engineer asked the operator to excavate one of the mounds. As the dirt was removed, dozens of bombs were unearthed, Gallets said.

The engineer immediately called town hall and Gallets and Washington Township Police visited the site and saw there was little they could do so they called the N.J. State Police bomb squad, Gallets said.

The bomb squad arrived and told the township to call Picatinny

Arsenal. Ordnance experts came out and the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) was involved.

The DEP then called the EPA and they are now at the site attempting to determine exactly what's out there.

In June, EPA officials attended a closed door, Township Committee meeting, when federal officials asked the township not to publicize the issue so curious neighbors and souvenir hunters wouldn't go

to the tract, Gallets said.

EPA officials have been using ground imaging radar in three-foot by three-foot grids to pinpoint areas where munitions might be buried. Cahill said that when the areas are located, tests will be taken and a clean up will ensue.

If unexploded ordnance is found, it will be detonated on site. All contaminated soil found on the site will also be removed, Cahill said.

The EPA, after talking to residents, has determined that the site qualifies as a federal Superfund clean up, Cahill said.

The DEP is involved in an investigation of the nearby Cleveland Industrial site for possible clean up. A company at the site made napalm while other companies over the years used hazardous materials in their operations, Cahill said.

— By **ROBERT FORD**  
Staff Writer