

Where are They Now? Some Pre-FUDS Properties Remain a Mystery

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Vidal, California We know that clearance of WWII munitions in the United States began as early as 1946, but there remains the question of what became of some properties slated for these pre-FUDS operations. One such location is the Spillane Property in Vidal, CA, encountered in a search of early UXO sites at the National Archives II in College Park, MD.

In a letter found there by researchers to the South Pacific Division Engineer, dated 6 June 1947, 1st. Lt. CR Joseph Sainato of the Bomb & Shell Disposal Team reported the completion of the clearance of 120 acres in a week-long operation. It stated that the land was inspected for land mines and "other dangerous objects" by two-man teams using three detectors at a total cost of \$762.

Screening resulted in the discovery of four, fused M1 practice, anti-tank mines filled with black powder and red phosphorus. The mines were disposed of "by placing a large charge of Composition C-3 on them." The letter concluded that the property was now, "free from explosives for the purpose of grazing and cultivation."

Besides the shockingly low cost of the remediation, it is also interesting to note that the property map referenced in the letter, which can be downloaded using the link below, is missing from the file. The mystery remains as to what became of the property and if it actually made it onto the FUDS list or if it was just considered "clear" and crossed off the list of potential hazardous sites.

Below are photos of the clearance operation.



Assembling the Mine Detectors



Operating the Detectors



Mines Located on the Spillane Property