STURGIS MH1-A Decommissioning and Disposal Project for the Army Deactivated Nuclear Power Plant Program, VA & TX

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS **BUILDING STRONG®**

FACT SHEET as of February 1, 2015

AUTHORIZATION: Atomic Energy Act of 1954 and Army Regulation 50-7

TYPE OF PROJECT: Army Deactivated Nuclear Power Plant Program

PROJECT PHASE: Decommissioning Studies/Planning/Implementation

CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST: Senators **Kaine** and **Warner (VA)** and **Cornyn** and **Cruz (TX)** and Representatives **Scott (VA-03)**, **Culberson (TX-07)**, **Vela (TX-34)** and **Weber (TX-14)** and Texas State Representatives **Faircloth (District 23)** and **Bonnen (District 25)**

BACKGROUND: In March 1963, the World War II Liberty Ship Charles H. Cugle was selected from the Mobil Reserve Fleet for conversion to a mobile power source containing a high power pressurized water nuclear reactor designated the MH-1A. The propulsion plant was removed from the vessel, and the midsection was replaced with a new midsection containing the power plant, a 350-ton steel containment "spheroid," and a concrete collision barrier. The vessel, which essentially became a barge, was renamed STURGIS.

The STURGIS operated at Fort Belvoir, Virginia for about one year and was then transferred to Gatun Lake in the Panama Canal Zone where it was used to generate electricity for military and civilian use.

In the 1970s, the Department of Army recommended that the deactivated reactors be placed into a safe storage mode that would allow the shorter-lived radionuclides to decay. It was expected that delaying decommissioning would reduce radioactive waste volumes and worker exposures. After final shutdown in 1976, the STURGIS was towed to Fort Belvoir to deactivate the reactor for safe storage. At that time, the Department of Army prepared an Environmental Assessment that indicated that deactivation would not create significant adverse local, regional, or national impacts on the environment. The principal activities involved in deactivating the reactor of the STURGIS were: 1) removal of the nuclear fuel which was returned to the Department of Energy; 2) disposal of radioactive wastes/components; and 3) isolation of the remaining radioactive materials from the public by appropriate physical barriers.

The reactor was de-fueled, decontaminated, and sealed before being towed to the James River Reserve Fleet at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia, where it has been for more than 35 years. During this time the STURGIS has been monitored and received periodic dry dock maintenance. The MH1-A nuclear reactor has been in long-term safe storage.

STATUS: Following a thorough environmental assessment with a 30-day public comment period, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers awarded a $34.66 million contract to CB&I Federal Services for the decommissioning, dismantling and disposal of the STURGIS barge in March 2014. In 2015, the

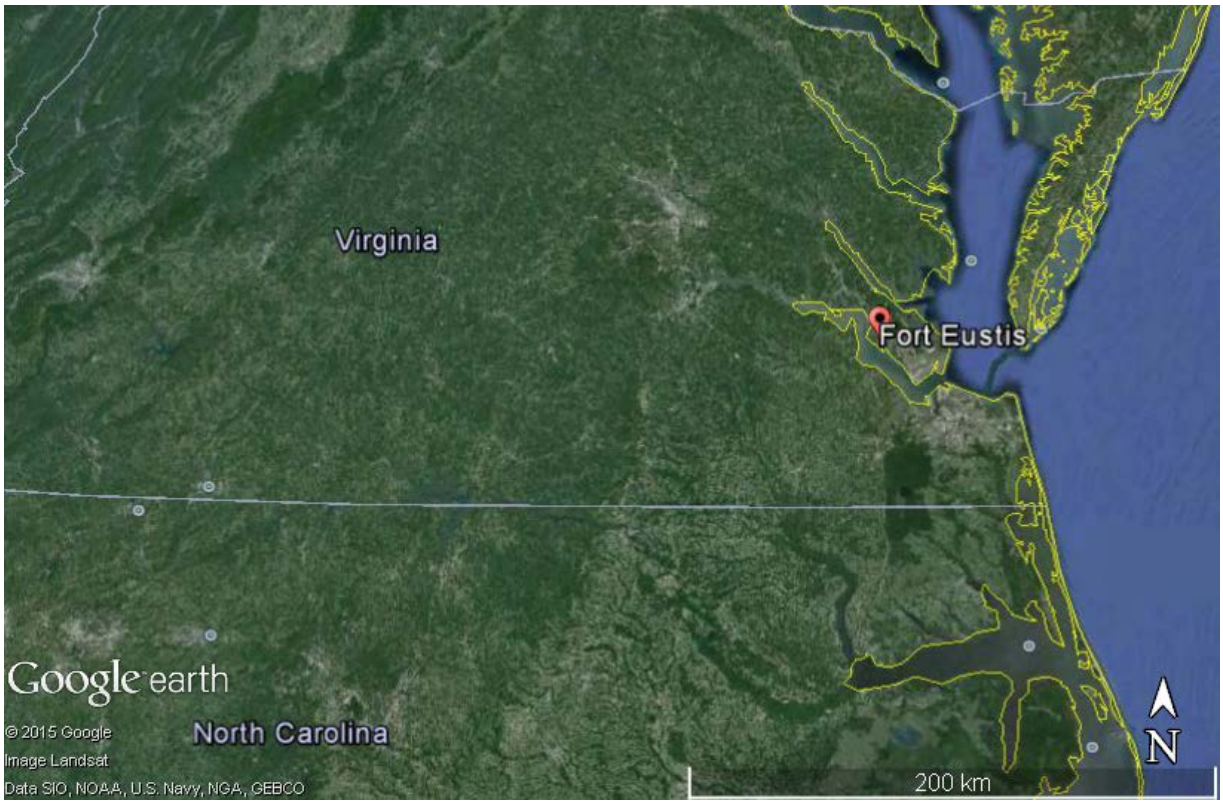
STURGIS will be relocated from Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia to Galveston, Texas for decommissioning and dismantling.

SCHEDULE:

Fiscal Year (FY) FY14 Scheduled Work: Decommissioning Planning; Decommissioning Implementation to begin
FY15 Scheduled Work: Decommissioning Implementation continues
FY16 Scheduled Work: Decommissioning Implementation continues
FY17 Scheduled Work: Decommissioning to be completed; dismantlement to be completed

COMPLETION: With optimum funding the STURGIS Decommissioning and Disposal can be completed in FY17.

For more information regarding the STURGIS MH1-A Decommissioning and Disposal Project for the Army Deactivated Nuclear Power Plant Program, please contact Hans Honerlah, CENAB-EN-H, (410) 962-9184, e-mail hans.b.honerlah@usace.army.mil. Also see this project's related web page at: http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/Missions/Environmental/Sturgis.aspx.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