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News Release

Release No. 04-11
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For Release: May 20, 2004
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Federal and state officials to begin study of military ordnance at Cape Henlopen State Park

During a media event May 20 at Cape Henlopen State Park, officials with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, and the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), announced the beginning of an unexploded military ordnance study at the former Fort Miles Military Reservation. Today, this former coastal artillery battery is part of the approximately 6,700-acre Cape Henlopen State Park located near Lewes, Del.

This month, technical experts with the private contracting firm URS Corporation of Oak Ridge, Tenn., will begin a comprehensive Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis study of the former Fort Miles Military Reservation. During the study, field data collection, a site characterization, a risk assessment of military ordnance hazards and an evaluation of potential response alternatives will be completed. This information will be provided in a study report. The public will be given an opportunity to review and comment on the study report. The study is expected to be complete in March 2005.

In recent years, visitors to the State Park have found pieces, and in some cases, intact 3.5-inch inert practice rockets, which were used during training missions at this site from 1938 to 1950. Although the practice rockets themselves do not present a danger, a small charge inside an intact rocket motor can contain explosives. For this reason, Corps and park officials warn visitors not to pick up or handle these items. Anyone who might find one of these items is asked to report it to park officials.

During the fieldwork portion of the study, should an intact practice rocket with motor be found, ordnance experts will render the item safe by detonation.

The Fort Miles Military Reservation is one of hundreds of formerly used defense sites nationwide. The Army Corps of Engineers is the federal agency responsible for the inventory, investigation and clean up of these sites.

