

FINDING OF

NO DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ACTIONS INDICATED

1. SITE NAME: Alcatraz Island

FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITE PROJECT NUMBER: J09CA730100

LOCATION:

City: Alcatraz Island, 1.5 miles North of San Francisco

County: San Francisco

State: California

2. POINTS OF CONTACT:

Property owners at the time of the site visit:

National Park Service, Golden Gate National Recreation Area

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:

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3. SITE DESCRIPTION:

Alcatraz Island is located in San Francisco Bay in San Francisco County, California. The site occupies a total of 22 acres of what is now the Alcatraz Island National Park, part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Coordinates for the site are N 37° 49' 36" Latitude, W 122° 25' 24" Longitude. Alcatraz Island is in the 8th U.S. Congressional District of California and in Region IX of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

4. SITE HISTORY:

Alcatraz Island was used as a military facility, as well as a prison, during Department of Defense (DOD) occupation of the island. On 6 November 1850, U.S. President Millard Fillmore signed an Executive Order reserving Alcatraz Island "for Public Purpose," preserving Alcatraz Island as permanent government property. In 1853, construction began on Fort Alcatraz; and, by 1859, Alcatraz Island had become the most powerful defense position for the joint U.S. Army-Navy commission along the Pacific Coast. Once construction was completed, the fort was armed with 24-Pounder Howitzers, 8-Inch Columbiads, 10-Inch Mortars, and 15-Inch Rodmans, placed all around the perimeter of

Fort Alcatraz. These defense locations included the North Battery, West Battery, South Battery, and Three-Gun Battery located east of the South Battery. These installations could discharge gunfire at any incoming enemy ships. During its peak, Fort Alcatraz was armed with 111 cannons and housed 430 military personnel. Due to the advancement of modern guns on war ships, Fort Alcatraz became obsolete as a harbor defense. On 27 August 1861, Fort Alcatraz was designated as the Pacific Branch of the U.S. Military Prisons. Once this designation took effect, the fort was slowly converted to a military prison. Detainees of the military prison included Union deserters and Confederate sympathizers, U.S. Army prisoners, Indians, Spanish-American War prisoners, San Francisco Jail inmates (after the 1906 fire), and World War I conscientious objectors. In 1933, Fort Alcatraz was transferred to the U.S. Department of Justice, under the U.S. Federal Bureau of Prisons. In 1934, the Federal Government opened a maximum-security prison on the island. Although not mentioned in the Inventory Project Report (INPR) for the site, the military returned to Alcatraz Island during World War II. Four anti-aircraft batteries were placed on Alcatraz Island from 1942 to 1944, under an agreement with the U.S. Federal Bureau of Prisons. Attorney General Robert Kennedy closed the prison in 1963 due to increased maintenance and operational cost. After closure of the prison, the island was officially turned over to the National Park Service and opened to the public in 1973.

5. SITE INVESTIGATIONS/CURRENT STATUS:

A site visit in August 1999 indicated that the site was in an area known as Alcatraz Island. The site is controlled by the National Park Service and is included within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. It was reported that all ordnance had been removed from the island. No visual evidence of contamination or hazards of DOD origin were reported or identified. The island currently functions as a tourist attraction because of the former use of the island as a prison, with little mention of the island's service as a military fort. Many original structures still exist, although several have had to be demolished due to safety hazards.

On 5 August 2004, a second site visit was conducted to verify current conditions and identify any additional evidence of DOD activity or hazards not previously reported. The site was inspected on foot in an effort to identify hazards of DOD origin. With the aid of National Park Service Ranger, Jayeson Vance, an extensive survey of all remaining DOD structures and property was performed. Ranger Vance confirmed that there has been no ordnance discovered on Alcatraz Island during the National Park Service guardianship of the island. No ordnance or traces of ammunition (with the exception of a small piece of smooth-bore cannon) have been found within the site since the military vacated the island. Although the existing conditions of the former DOD structures on the island vary, all are currently in beneficial use. The former site functions as a tourist attraction, receiving more than 5,000 visitors per day. Historic documents indicate that the last remaining cannons, as well as the anti-aircraft batteries, were removed from the island by 1944.

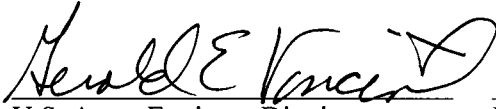
All structures or facilities known to be of DOD origin were in beneficial use. There was no visual evidence of hazardous or toxic waste, waste ordnance, or hazardous building debris as a result of DOD use of the site.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers prepared a Risk Assessment Code (RAC) dated September 1999. It was determined that Alcatraz Island poses no risk to the public. The site was assigned a RAC score of 5, which indicates that no further action is necessary.

6. **NDAI RECOMMENDATION:**

This site is recommended for No Department of Defense Action Indicated (NDAI). During the records research, interviews, and site inspections conducted for this site, there were no hazards or potential environmental liabilities identified from the past use by the DOD that would pose an immediate risk to the environment or public. No evident hazards were found during the site visit; therefore, no projects are recommended at this site.

7. **NDAI CONCURRENCE:**



U.S. Army Engineer District
Sacramento Corps of Engineers

Department of Toxic Substances Control
State of California

1 Nov 2004
Date

Date