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## **NRC Issues Possession License to U.S. Army for Depleted Uranium at Hawaiian Bases**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission yesterday issued a license to the U.S. Army authorizing the possession of depleted uranium (DU) at two sites in Hawaii. The Army trained with the Davy Crockett weapons system at the two sites in the 1960s. This system included DU “spotting rounds,” used to assist with targeting accuracy.

The license allows the Army to possess up to 275 pounds of DU at Schofield Barracks on Oahu and the Pohakuloa Training Area on the island of Hawaii. It provides for NRC inspections and requires the Army to implement a radiation safety plan and a physical security plan. The Army must also provide an air and plant sampling plan for NRC review within 90 days. The NRC must review sampling results before deciding whether to lift existing restrictions on activities that would disturb the DU. The license does not authorize the Army to use the DU or decommission the sites without additional review and approval by the NRC.

A license allowing the Army to manufacture and distribute the DU spotting rounds, issued by the NRC’s predecessor, the Atomic Energy Commission, expired in 1978. Under the earlier license, the Army distributed the spotting rounds to a number of Army installations for testing, training and deployment. Each round contained about six ounces of DU. The Army told the NRC in November 2006 it had discovered DU fragments at the Schofield Barracks. Following that discovery, the Army reviewed old records and determined the Davy Crockett system was tested at other installations.

The Army has enough DU at these sites that, under the Atomic Energy Act and NRC regulations, it is required to have a possession license. The Army submitted a license application in November 2008. The initial license covers only the DU at the Hawaiian sites. In the future, the Army plans to amend the license to address DU at the other sites. They include Forts Benning and Gordon (Georgia); Forts Campbell and Knox (Kentucky); Fort Carson (Colorado); Fort Hood (Texas); Fort Lewis, currently called Joint Base Lewis-McChord, and the Yakima Training Center (Washington); Fort Bragg (North Carolina); Fort Polk (Louisiana); Fort Sill (Oklahoma); Fort Jackson (South Carolina); Fort Hunter Liggett (California); Fort Greeley (Alaska); Fort Dix (New Jersey); and Fort Riley (Kansas).