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PRESS RELEASE

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Army Announces 2011 Fort Ord Prescribed Burn Cancelled

PRESIDIO OF MONTEREY, Calif. –The Army has been preparing two areas for prescribed burns in 2011 by cutting fuel breaks. During site preparation, two types of large artillery projectiles were encountered on the surface, an unexpected event since these types of projectiles are generally found buried several feet into the ground. The presence of these items on the ground surface makes the areas unsafe to burn. The items encountered require a much greater safety setback distance than had been anticipated. The distance required exceeds our capabilities to conduct a safe prescribed burn. Because of this, the vegetation must be cut to allow the safe removal of unexploded ordnance remaining in these areas.

Once the surface unexploded ordnance has been removed from the areas and the vegetation grows back sufficiently to carry a fire, the areas will be burned to ensure successful recovery of the rare, fire-dependant chaparral habitat.

Previously, prescribed burns have been conducted successfully and safely in many areas of Fort Ord to clear vegetation allowing safe access to locate and remove unexploded ordnance. The type of ordnance in the area determines safety setback distances which are then used to establish the width of the fuel break, as well as the height that helicopters igniting the fires must fly during burn operations.

Because of the specific circumstances associated with these large artillery projectiles found on the surface, this year's burn cancellation is an exception to the Army's program to clear the vegetation with prescribed burns. The Army is planning to resume the prescribed burn program in 2012 to support the ongoing unexploded ordnance cleanup program. For additional information call (831) 242-7383 or 1-800-852-9699 or visit the cleanup web site at www.FortOrdCleanup.com.

For media requests, call the Presidio of Monterey Public Affairs Office at 831-242-5555.

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