



# Report to **STAKEHOLDERS**

September 2016

Volume 21 No.3



**Communication,  
coordination and  
compromise keys to  
Remedial Project Manager success**

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Report to Stakeholders is a publication of the Air Force Civil Engineer Center, Installation Support Team at Edwards Air Force Base (AFCEC/CZOW). Its purpose is to inform and educate the public, base workers and residents about continuing environmental efforts on base. It currently has a circulation of 4,500, including about 1,300 subscribers.

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Any comments or questions about the contents of the Report to Stakeholders may be directed to: Gary Hatch, 412 TW/PA, 305 E. Popson Ave., Edwards AFB, CA 93524, (661) 277-4127.

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**412th Test Wing Commander**  
Brig. Gen. Carl Schaefer  
**Edwards Remedial Project Manager**  
Paul Schiff

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## WHAT'S ON THE COVER?

### REMEDIAL INVESTIGATION—

At one of the munitions areas managed by Remedial Project Manager Paul Schiff, an unexploded ordnance technician lifts a sand-filled practice bomb to empty the casing. All of the munitions items were excavated from an on-base bombing target from the 1930s.

# Edwards program veteran takes over as Remedial Project Manager



**PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**—In 2007, Paul Schiff (right) invited then Restoration Advisory Board public co-chair Ruby Messersmith (center) to view a low-level aerial magnetic survey of off-base land and meet the helicopter pilot (left). The survey specifically focused on the munitions areas that are still managed by Schiff.

Perseverance, patience and passion are only a few of the qualities necessary to be an effective Remedial Project Manager or RPM. Just ask Paul Schiff, who took over as the RPM for Edwards Air Force Base in May 2016. “The role of an RPM is not without its challenges,” Schiff said. “Managing cleanup of the 482 square miles we call Edwards requires a lot of communication, coordination and compromise.”

As the primary person responsible for overseeing technical issues regarding the base’s environmental cleanup program – which addresses hazardous waste left over from past military activities – Schiff regularly meets with regulators to discuss and refine the Air Force’s approach to clean up contaminated sites across Edwards. Even though the Air Force is the lead agency, base officials signed a Federal Facility Agreement in 1990 to work cooperatively with state and federal regulators on the cleanup process.

For Schiff, the key factors in moving the base’s cleanup program forward will be open communication, negotiation and compromise by all FFA parties. However, he also recognizes that site cleanup is not as simple as it was when the program first started. In fact, the complexity of some of the sites can make negotiations and compromise among the FFA parties quite difficult. Not that Schiff is discouraged he said, having been an Edwards environmental program manager for 19 years – 14 of them in the restoration field.

“Bottom line is that the Air Force and the regulators share the same goal – the protection of human health and the environment,” he said. “As long as we continue to talk through the issues, try to understand each other’s viewpoints, and strive to reach common ground, I have every confidence that we’ll eventually arrive at solutions that work for all parties.”

Schiff should know. In addition to being the Edwards RPM, he continues to manage the day-to-day cleanup operations of two areas that he has overseen since 2004: Main Base and the Military Munitions Response Program. More than a decade of restoration program management experience has taught Schiff the importance of mean-

ingful communication and negotiation to make decisions that all parties can agree on in order to move forward in the cleanup process.

Recently, Schiff completed field efforts for a supplemental Site Inspection and Remedial Investigation of five munitions areas. The Air Force found 11,500 items – including 10 live bombs – and removed 52,000 pounds of munitions debris as part of the characterization of three of the MMRP areas. “The numbers are pretty impressive, considering we only looked at 13 percent of the MMRP areas for characterization purposes,” Schiff said. “These findings were not surprising or unexpected, given that we already had knowledge of significant subsurface material at one of the targets heavily used in the 1930’s and 1940’s.”

At Main Base, Schiff is currently working on a Feasibility Study addendum that will evaluate several cleanup alternatives to address comingled contaminant plumes of solvent and fuel.

“The Air Force has already spent more than \$100 million on the Main Base area alone,” Schiff said. “Through interim removal actions, we were able to reduce concentration levels by a full order of magnitude. In collaboration with the regulators, we’ve done a lot to significantly reduce the plume mass to address contamination concerns in the interim. The time has now come to move toward reaching final remedies for all Edwards sites and ultimately move toward reaching final cleanup standards.”

The success stories Schiff has accumulated during his 14 years in restoration are not the only experiences he has to draw upon in his new role as the Edwards RPM. In fact, this is not Schiff’s first assignment as an RPM for the Air Force. In 2013, Schiff was the interim RPM and restoration branch chief at Edwards for about 7 months. From August 2014 until January 2016, he was the RPM for Nellis AFB, Nevada, managing the cleanup programs for Nellis and Creech AFB, Nevada. Today he handles RPM duties for both Edwards and Los Angeles AFB, California, and supports the RPMs at Nellis AFB and March Air Reserve Base, California.



## Meet Paul Schiff



As an RPM, Schiff also has a more active role as a member of the Edwards’ Restoration Advisory Board, a stakeholder group that meets semiannually to discuss the cleanup program and its progress.

On a more personal note, Schiff served 4 years on a U.S. Navy guided missile cruiser before earning his environmental engineering degree from the University of Montana. He and his wife Melissa have two sons – Brady, age 15, and Brennan, age 12. A Montana native, Schiff grew up enjoying various outdoor activities, including hunting, fishing, golfing, and dirt bike riding – to name a few. Today, he continues to enjoy these activities with his family – in particular, day-long dirt bike adventures through recreational areas, such as the Sequoia or Sierra National Forests.

Schiff’s down-to-earth attitude may be one of the primary reasons he finds projects on the MMRP sites to be the most rewarding. “The MMRP involves something tangible, where I can see potentially explosive materials being removed from the ground,” he said. “There’s a sense of accomplishment that we’re removing something hazardous that poses an imminent threat to human health and the environment.”

That sense of accomplishment keeps Schiff optimistic about the future of the base’s cleanup sites. “We [the Air Force] will continue to do what we do best,” he said, “collaborate with regulators to push the cleanup program forward.”

**BLAST FROM THE PAST**—A 2005 photo shows Schiff proudly standing next to a treatment system he oversaw as a restoration program manager. As of September 2015, the system has worked to remove the rocket fuel ammonium perchlorate from 86 million gallons of groundwater.

# Where to find more INFORMATION



Published data and documents relating to Environmental Management are available for public review at three information repositories. They are updated when new documents are released. Here is a list of our current information repositories:

### Edwards Air Force Base Library

5 W. Yeager Blvd.  
Edwards AFB, California  
(661) 275-2665  
[www.edwardsfss.com/wordpress/library](http://www.edwardsfss.com/wordpress/library)

### Kern County Public Library

**Wanda Kirk Branch**  
3611 Rosamond Blvd.  
Rosamond, California  
(661) 256-3236  
[www.kerncountylibrary.org/rosamond-branch/](http://www.kerncountylibrary.org/rosamond-branch/)

### Los Angeles County Public Library

601 W. Lancaster Blvd.  
Lancaster, California  
(661) 948-5029  
[www.colapublib.org/libs/lancaster/](http://www.colapublib.org/libs/lancaster/)

For questions about documents in the repositories, you may contact Gary Hatch, Public Affairs Media Operations and Plans, at (661) 277-4127 or by e-mail at [412tw.pae@us.af.mil](mailto:412tw.pae@us.af.mil).

For general information about Edwards or other documents of public interest, you may visit our Web page at: [www.edwards.af.mil/About-Us/Environment](http://www.edwards.af.mil/About-Us/Environment) and like our Facebook page—Edwards Air Force Base Environmental Management.

# Restoration Advisory Board Information

The Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) is made up of appointed representatives from communities on and around Edwards Air Force Base, regulators from federal and state agencies and base officials. The board's purpose is to provide a forum for two-way communication between the public and those responsible for environmental cleanup at the base.

The board meets semiannually, rotating meeting locations among communities surrounding the base. The public is welcome to attend. Those who have questions or concerns about cleanup activities at Edwards

may contact any RAB member or Gary Hatch, Public Affairs Media Operations and Plans, at (661) 277-4127.

The RAB also has its own Facebook site: [www.facebook.com/RAB.Edwards](http://www.facebook.com/RAB.Edwards). "Like" us on Facebook today!

## NEXT BOARD MEETING

Nov. 17, 2016  
5:30 p.m.  
North Edwards, California

## RAB Members

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**North Base**  
Vacant—If you work at North Base, you may apply to be a public representative.

**South Base**  
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