

Treated railroad siding (left) shows how weed-free track has been established at Ft. Dix. One spring application of Hyvar X bromacil weed killer was all it needed. Untreated siding (below left) shows how weeds and grass soon overrun and hide this abandoned track on the Army post. This particular siding is no longer in use.

TODAY'S Army is changing. It "wants to join you" say recruiting posters and it's doing just that at Fort Dix Military Reservation in central New Jersey. Here soldiers stick to soldiering and modern vegetation control chemicals are used to tackle many time-consuming tasks once performed by recruits.

No longer are soldiers out cutting weeds, hacking away at brush or mowing grass. That's all done by a professional grounds maintenance crew lead by Joe Haug, head agronomist at the largest military installation in the northeast.

Haug and his land management team are part of the Fort's Division Facilities Army Engineers which is responsible for managing nearly 50 square miles of virtually every type of land—from forest and parks to railroads and residential lawns. Biggest maintenance chore of all on the 31,993-acre base is mowing about 3,000 acres of grass.

"Our mowing costs have been rising steadily over the past few years because of an increase in mowing obstacles," says Haug.

Those obstacles include roughly 5,000 miles of fence, most of which has been installed within the past three years to provide better protection of high security areas such as magazines and motor pool areas. A large number of trees and ornamentals planted in 1969 have also added to the rising cost of mowing.

To help offset the high cost of mowing and to compensate for yearly fluctuations in maintenance help, Haug tried an experimental application of Hyvar X bromacil weed killer in 1970. The soil active herbicide controls a wide variety of weeds and grasses for extended periods of time.

"We treated several fence lines and all 17 miles of railroad track that year," recalls Haug, "and results were very good. The chemical kept ground weed-free for months and saved us a great deal of hand mowing and hand clipping."

That successful test application of Hyvar X led to full-scale use of it and other herbicides in 1971 and, by 1972, all push type hand mowing

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HALT WEED ASSAULT

Ft. Dix Orders Chemicals To Police Army Post



Clean ground under ball park bleachers is treated with Hyvar X. Area is easier to keep clean and tidy when weeds and grass are eliminated. A single treatment lasts a season.



Manicured lawns and ornamentals greet visitors at Ft. Dix, one of the largest military installations in the northeast.

HALT WEED ASSAULT (from page 14)

had been eliminated entirely at Fort Dix.

"Now we're able to maintain vegetation control under fences and around other obstacles such as sign

posts and fire hydrants. So we can use tractor-driven gang mowers exclusively," says Haug. "Without these herbicides we would need at least two more men for mowing

fence lines alone."

Haug relies on two basic chemical recipes to keep weeds in check. Areas near trees or high-value ornamental plantings are treated with a mixture of Simazine weed killer plus a con-

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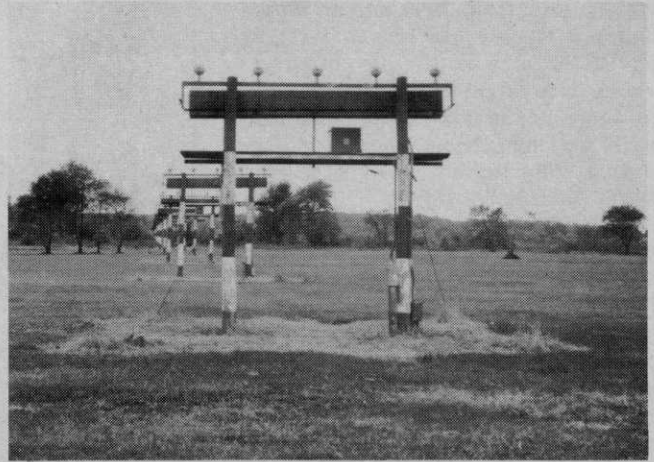
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Guy wires and poles are much easier to see and mow around after treating the area with herbicides. Mower operators need never get near these objects.



Treated airfield approach lights keep weeds from interfering with the safety of the operation. These lights can now be easily seen by approaching aircraft.

HALT WEED ASSAULT (from page 48)

tract herbicide All other areas are sprayed with Hyvar X.

Weed-free rings around trees and shrubs are produced by digging and mulching followed by a treatment of Simazine at the rate of 2½ to 3 pounds per acre. Hyvar X, applied at the rate of 10 pounds per acre, controls weeds and grasses under fences, around air field landing lights and under ball park bleachers.

The same rate of Hyvar X is also applied to control vegetation in transformer stations, on railroad tracks, around buildings and loading docks and along parking lot curbs.

"Because of limited manpower and large areas to be treated, we're spraying on a two year cycle," says Haug. "And, although it's not perfect, and annual treatments are recommended by the manufacturer,

we're getting fairly good control over two growing seasons with one spray application."

Agronomist Haug had hoped to treat every fence line, fire hydrant, pole and sign post on the base once a year. But, last November, he lost 80 percent of his crew with a cut-back in funds for the Modern Volunteer Army (MVA). Until the reduction in MVA funds, Haug had six permanent employees and 39 MVA temporary assistants. Now his crew

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is down to eight permanent workers.

"This reduction in maintenance manpower makes our chemical weed control program even more important," says Haug. "Without it, we just couldn't keep up with all the work."

Much of that work involves maintaining 3,000 acres of growing grass. Besides using soil active chemicals around mowing obstacles, Haug and his crew treat at least half the acreage with 2,4-D once a year. Although this controls broadleaf weeds which helps reduce mowing, the base's two, seven-gang reel mowers are still on the move nearly seven days a week during the spring and summer months.

Some lawns in key areas on the base require mowing twice a week and many of these lawns have steep banks which are hard to mow. But Haug has found a way to reduce this maintenance headache, too. His men spray these areas with a growth retardant chemical, Maintain CF 125. One application keeps grass from growing for about 10 weeks which eliminates about 20 mowings, says Haug.

Most brush problems on the base are solved by cutting and spraying stumps with 2,4,5-T in fuel oil to stop resprouting. But Haug is looking for a way to eliminate both cutting and stump spraying. In recent field trials, Hyvar X applied to the soil at the base of the brush looks promising, reports Haug.

In total, Haug is very pleased with results of his chemical weed control program. "But our big problem is getting the chemicals down at the right time," he says. "Sometimes we spray too late and miss chances to spray some areas."

To solve this problem, Haug is working on a way to stretch the normal application season. His plans call for the following spray schedule in 1973:

March-April — spray 2,4-D to control broadleaf weeds in half the grass acreage.

May-June — spray Hyvar X bromacil weed killer to control all vegetation around mowing obstacles not adjacent to trees or ornamentals.

September-October — spray Simazine plus Ammate X around trees and shrubs; along curbs and sidewalk cracks; and around mowing obstacles near trees and shrubs.

Based on his success over the past two years, Haug believes this new spray schedule will reduce Fort Dix's grounds maintenance costs even more. □

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