



# Nationwide Context and Evaluation Methodology for Farmstead and Ranch Historic Sites and Historic Archaeological Sites on DoD Property

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## Background:

Military acquisition of vast amounts of land for new and expanded training installations during both World War I and World War II naturally included inhabited lands. Most of this habitation was in the form of individual farmsteads and ranches. As a result, installations across the country contain thousands of historical archaeological sites that are the remains of these farmsteads and ranches. The sheer numbers of these farmstead sites make the evaluation process laborious and expensive. A method for grouping like farmsteads in regional associations and creating a standardized approach for making determinations of eligibility will greatly reduce the cost of evaluating them individually. The Cultural Resources Team at USACE ERDC-CERL developed and validated just such a methodology.



Remains of a farmhouse at Fort Riley, Kansas.

## Objective:

This project expands the Farmstead methodology nationwide and included ranching sites. This project tested the application of the Farmstead/ Ranch Methodology at a total of 29 sites located on Fort Riley, KS, Barry M. Goldwater Range (Luke Air Force Base) AZ, Fort McCoy, WI, Piñon Canyon Maneuver Site (Fort Carson) CO and Fort Hunter Liggett, CA.

## Summary of Approach:

The Farmstead/Ranch Evaluation Methodology uses a landscape approach to make Determinations of Eligibility to the NRHP. The data collection component of the methodology includes: accurately mapping the farmstead or ranch as an entire compound, evaluating the farmstead’s place in the cultural landscape of the region, examining the historic documentation of the site, and examining the surface artifact assemblage to determine site age and activity areas. The Farmstead/Ranch Methodology guides the user through the site evaluation. Regional cultural

characteristics determine what a typical farmstead/ranch site is. Atypical sites are set aside for further investigation with the traditional evaluation methodology. The most complete typical sites are determined “eligible” for the NRHP and protected. Poorly preserved typical sites are determined “Not Eligible” for the NRHP and opened for training. The Farmstead/Ranch Eligibility Evaluation Form is a series of Yes/No questions about the site divided into three sections. The first is the Preliminary Questions that are designed to distinguish atypical from typical site types. The next section focuses on the cultural or historical significance of a site and the final section determines the variety of features and the integrity of the site.

## Benefit:

The Farmstead/Ranch Evaluation Methodology is significant in its standardization of the evaluation process across sites, and by providing a verified approach that can, in some cases, eliminate the need for subsurface testing and artifact recovery (and subsequent laboratory and curation requirements). By shortening the process required for NRHP evaluations, CRM staff can assist Range Control in opening additional lands for military use. If applying the Farmstead/Ranch Evaluation Methodology can reduce costs required for evaluation, significant funds will be saved, and training can be accomplished more easily.

## Accomplishments:

Blind field tests produced 75-100% or greater correlation between the Farmstead/Ranch method and traditional methodology at 4 bases (Ft. Bragg, Ft Riley, FHL, PCMS). The sites where the field method didn’t produce good results had dense vegetation and extremely poor visibility. At most locations the field work during winter when the vegetation is down solves the problem. Used successfully for over a decade at Fort Leonard Wood, this methodology has resulted in finalized Determinations of Eligibility with SHPO concurrence.

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