

# HOLSTON ARMY AMMUNITION PLANT

## TENNESSEE

### LOCATION

Holston Army Ammunition Plant (HSAAP) is located in Northeast Tennessee and is in Sullivan and Hawkins counties. HSAAP is comprised of two major areas – Area A, located in whole within the city of Kingsport, Sullivan County and Area B, located west of Kingsport, parts of which are in both Sullivan and Hawkins counties. The southern portion of the plant is bordered by the Holston River and Bays Mountain. The west is bordered by the town of Mt. Carmel in Hawkins County, the east by Kingsport in Sullivan County and the north by farmland and Virginia within just a few miles of the facility. A regional airport is located approximately 30 minutes from HSAAP. All four seasons are evident in the northeast part of Tennessee and, being located on the Holston River, is indicative of many foggy mornings. Temperatures fluctuate with the seasons but tend toward the humid side during summers.

### SIZE

**Acres:** 6,117

**Square Footage of Buildings:** 2,398,358 SF

**Plant Replacement Value:** \$591,890,900

### HISTORY

During WWII the U. S. Government needed a highly effective explosive to counter the German U-boats that were able to withstand almost anything except a direct hit from a TNT depth charge. As a leading manufacturer of acetic anhydride, a vital chemical in explosives manufacturing, Tennessee Eastman Corporation became a key contributor to the war effort by producing RDX, a sugar-like explosive. RDX became crucial to the outcome of WWII. England and the U.S. began urgent research for a way to safely make large quantities of RDX, which had more punch than TNT. A new “combination process” was developed, which required acetic anhydride (among other chemicals) instead of nitric acid. In February 1942 fifty employees staffed the Wexler Bend Pilot Plant in Kingsport, TN, working round-the-clock producing RDX high explosives. This process continued throughout the war. In June 1942 the U.S. Government authorized Tennessee Eastman Company to design and operate Holston Ordnance Works (HOW) for the manufacture of Composition B, the most powerful explosive prior to the atom bomb. On April 20, 1943, nine months after construction of HOW began, explosives were being produced. By June 1943, so many U-boats had been sunk with HSAAP explosives that the German Navy could no longer contain Allied supply lines. During 1943, design, construction, and production were occurring simultaneously at HSAAP. Also, changes to the process doubled the capacity to produce explosives and by January 1944, 570 tons of Composition B were being produced. Peak employment levels hit 7,345 in 1945. HOW

was mothballed at the end of WWII and was reactivated for the Korean Conflict. Significant explosives were produced for the Vietnam Conflict as well. The military has used HSAAP explosives in every battle since WWII and continues today in Iraq. In January 1999 HSAAP began operating under a new type contract, a facilities use contract. With the new contract came a new contractor, BAE SYSTEMS Ordnance Systems, Inc, the first change since the plant became operational in 1943. The new contract allows for the commercialization of approved Army land and facilities. The ARMS Program, which allows the government to retain title to its land while providing a means for private contractors to market its industrial sites as commercial entities, has and is greatly impacting the face of Holston. There are currently 10 ARMS tenants located on Holston property with numerous prospects for the future. On August 27, 2003, the Holston Business Development Center (HBDC) officially opened. The HBDC is intended to nurture young firms, helping them to survive and grow during the start-up phase. The project was the result of a partnership among BAE Systems, city of Kingsport, Hawkins County, U.S. Economic Development Administration, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, and the ARMS Program. Frontage along Hwy 11-W is now a prime location for new businesses and is being actively marketed by HSAAP's prime contractor. Beginning June 2004, Holston no longer has a military presence on the installation, but is commanded by LTC Mark Pomeroy who is the Commander of Anniston Munitions Center in Alabama.

**MISSIONS**

Holston Army Ammunition Plant is the sole supplier of RDX and HMX-based explosives to the U. S. military and continually provides the safest and best product to the warfighter. Research and development plays a vital role in the development and production of new and better explosives and products such as NTO and PETN. Holston is currently capable of producing well over 70 products.

**MAJOR UNITS/TENANTS**

No major tenants

**POPULATION**

	<b>Authorized</b>
Military	2
Civilian	22
Contractor	485
Student	0
Other	122
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>631</b>