

RADFORD ARMY AMMUNITION PLANT
RADFORD, VIRGINIA
“The Heart of the Ammunition Industrial Base”

Radford Army Ammunition Plant (RFAAP) is a Government-Owned, Contractor-Operated (GOCO) facility located in Montgomery and Pulaski Counties in southwest Virginia. It consists of two separate facilities; the main plant is the Radford manufacturing unit located between the City of Radford and the Town of Blacksburg and consists of 4,080 acres. The New River Storage Unit is located 12 miles from the main plant near the town of Dublin and consists of 2,821 acres. Radford Army Ammunition Plant is located approximately 30 miles from Roanoke, Virginia, where the nearest major airport is located. The main plant is subdivided by the New River into a northwestern portion (in Pulaski County) and southeastern portion (in Montgomery County). The Claytor Lake Dam, located ten miles south of the main plant, governs the rise and fall of the New River. The terrain of the main plant is a sloping alluvial floodplain and terrace deposits border the river on the north and eastern sides. The New River Unit terrain is gently rolling to hilly, with a low ridge along the northwest boundary.

RFAAP was one of the first single-base smokeless powder plants authorized under the National Defense program and served as a planning model for similar plants. Construction began on September 7, 1940 and by April 5, 1941 RFAAP was producing a wide variety of propellants and energetics in support of overseas war efforts in Europe and the Pacific. At the end of World War II, operations at the main plant and the New River Unit were temporarily discontinued. The Nitric Acid area of the plant was reactivated from 1946 to 1949 for the production of ammonium nitrate with propellant production resuming in 1949. The Korean conflict required rehabilitation of large areas of the plant to accommodate military requirements. This construction took place from 1950 to 1958 and included a new area enabling the plant to produce cast propellant charges for rockets and missiles. From 1964 to 1974, the Vietnam War created a need for increased production of various propellants. As the Vietnam effort declined, the need for propellants also declined, resulting in reduced production and fewer employees. Also during this time, planned improvements were made to the plant in concert with military requirements. In 1995, Alliant Techsystems (ATK) took over as the operating contractor and modernization efforts continued to increase production throughout vital areas of the plant. On July 1, 2012 BAE Systems became the operating contractor.

Today, RFAAP is one of six GOCO ammunition plants with an active mission to provide America's Warfighters with superior performing propellants, energetics and munitions in order to enable engagement and destruction of targets with total confidence.