



U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL
MATERIALS AGENCY

PRESS RELEASE

Umatilla Chemical Depot

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One Third of the Nation's Chemical Agent Now Safely Destroyed

U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency Reinforces its Position as the World Leader
in Programs to Eliminate Chemical Weapons

EDGEWOOD, Md. – The U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency (CMA) today announced it has safely destroyed 33.34 percent of the nation's stored chemical agent. CMA continues working toward fulfilling its mission to enhance national security while meeting the destruction provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) treaty signed by the United States in 1997.

At the Army's Umatilla Chemical Depot near Hermiston, Ore., chemical agent disposal operations started at the Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility in September. To date, the facility has destroyed 2,300 GB sarin-filled M55 rockets during its initial step-by-step ramp up to full disposal operations. The depot stores about 12 percent of the original U.S. chemical weapons stockpile.

"The dedicated workers at all our disposal facilities are making great strides to eliminate these weapons and make our nation safer in the process," said Michael A. Parker, CMA director. "We remain focused on our mission and will use our expertise, experience and resolve to continue this work until the last of this materiel is safely destroyed."

CMA protects and safely stores the United States' aging chemical weapons, while employing technologies to safely and effectively destroy the nation's chemical stockpile as well as recover, treat and ultimately eliminate other chemical warfare materiel. Thus far, the Army has destroyed more than 42 percent of the nation's chemical weapons munitions, and 10,503 tons of chemical agent – representing one third of the total stockpile.

(more)

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All the chemical weapons on Johnston Island in the Pacific were the first to be eliminated by the Army. Currently, chemical weapons are being destroyed in Tooele, Utah; Anniston, Ala.; Aberdeen, Md.; and Umatilla. Operations to destroy chemical weapons are anticipated to begin within the next year in Pine Bluff, Ark., and Newport, Ind.

The U.S. Army Non-Stockpile Chemical Materiel Program (NSCMP), another arm of CMA, has also made substantial progress in destroying chemical materiel considered separate from the chemical stockpile. This materiel includes former production facilities and recovered chemical warfare materiel.

NSCMP reached a key milestone in 2003 by destroying more than 80 percent of the nation's original chemical weapons production capabilities 16-months ahead of schedule. In November, NSCMP completed a major phase in its ongoing demolition of a former production facility at Pine Bluff Arsenal, one of the two still remaining (the other is at Newport Chemical Depot). Both will be demolished by the April 2007 deadline established under the CWC.

To learn more about the CMA's programs and activities, visit the agency's web site at <http://www.cma.army.mil>.

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The U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency is responsible for safely storing and eliminating the United States' aging chemical weapons and agent stockpiles and for the safe elimination of recovered chemical materiel.

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