



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL MATERIALS AGENCY

Umatilla Chemical Depot

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Umatilla Successfully Destroys First Rocket in Disposal Facility

UMATILLA CHEMICAL DEPOT, HERMISTON, ORE. – Umatilla Chemical Depot (UMCD) successfully destroyed its first GB-filled (sarin) M55 rocket today. The process started mid morning and was completed mid afternoon.

“Today, there is one less rocket at Umatilla that could be harmful to the public,” said Army Site Project Manager Don Barclay this afternoon when addressing community residents at the Umatilla Chemical Disposal Outreach Office.

After removing a rocket from the pallet of 15 that depot chemical handlers moved to the Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (UMCDF) yesterday afternoon, Washington Demilitarization Company (WDC) workers placed it on the rocket-metering machine. WDC has the contract with the Army to build, test, operate and ultimately take down the disposal facility.

The rocket was punched and drained in one of the facility’s Munitions Demilitarization Building’s two Explosive Containment Rooms (ECRs) . At the rocket shear station, processing was temporarily suspended when Control Room operators discovered a feed gate was not opening to allow sheared rocket pieces to drop through a chute into the Deactivation Furnace System (DFS). The DFS is one of the disposal facility’s four furnaces. WDC workers initiated temporary measures to allow shearing and disposal operations to continue.

Following the rocket processing, workers entered the ECR in protective suits to further investigate the problem. They traced it to an emergency stop switch that needed to be reset.

Also today, depot chemical weapons handlers delivered two more containers each with a pallet of 15 rockets to the UMCDF. They are scheduled to deliver another two tomorrow as rocket processing continues.

While addressing citizens at the Outreach Office, Umatilla Chemical Depot Commander Lt. Col. Doc Holliday said, “Today is a significant milestone in the depot’s history. When I

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arrived at the depot a little more than a year ago, I said I wanted to leave it better than I found it.

With your [community] help, cooperation and support, I'll be able to do that.”

Tomorrow's disposal schedule includes processing a rocket in the second ECR and possibly another one on the line used today.

The depot will continue to provide the public with regular updates on disposal operations. A toll-free number, 1-888-866-5928, will be updated daily. The Outreach Office, 190 E. Main Street, Hermiston, Ore., is another source for ongoing information. Operating hours are Mondays – Fridays, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Phone number is 541-564-9339.

For anyone having questions about emergency preparedness, call the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP). In Oregon, call 1-877-367-2737; in Washington, call 1-800-841-7953; on the internet, www.csepp.net.

NOTE

Photos of recent disposal operations will be posted on the following web site: www.csepp.net. Click on the “Current Events” icon.

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