



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL MATERIALS AGENCY

Umatilla Chemical Depot

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 7, 2008
7:30 a.m.

For more information contact:
Bruce Henrickson - Public Affairs Office
Cell (541) 379-8810

Hal McCune – Washington Defense Group
(541) 564-7304 or Cell (541) 571-1779

Umatilla completes VX artillery projectile disposal campaign

UMATILLA CHEMICAL DEPOT, Hermiston, Ore. – The Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (UMCDF) safely completed its 8-inch diameter VX nerve agent artillery projectile disposal campaign. The last of 3,752 VX-filled 8-inch artillery projectiles was destroyed at 8:47 p.m. last night in the disposal plant's Metal Parts Furnace (MPF).

These 8-inch projectiles or "shells" were the last 8-inch VX-filled artillery projectiles in both Oregon's chemical weapons stockpile and the national stockpile.

"This has been a tremendous effort by the entire team to safely complete destruction of all artillery projectiles in Oregon's stockpile," said Mike Strong, the Army's site project manager at Umatilla. "This milestone truly represents the dedication and expertise of the team in remaining focused and committed to safety."

The 8-inch VX projectiles campaign started with the first movement of munitions on July 15, and it was completed ahead of schedule. The UMCDF will now reconfigure or "change over" from projectiles processing to VX land mines processing. It should take about two months to reconfigure portions of the plant to begin processing land mines, which are a different type of munition. Land mines are also the last VX munition in Oregon's stockpile.

"We're pleased to complete another campaign while maintaining our safety and environmental compliance standards," said Doug Hamrick, project general manager for Washington Defense Group of URS Corporation's EG&G Division. Washington Defense Group built and operates the disposal plant for the Army. "Safety and compliance will remain a continued focus during the change over to mines."

The VX land mines disposal campaign is planned to be completed by early 2009 if there are no significant delays. The plant will then change over to process HD mustard blister agent stored in bulk containers, also known as "ton containers." HD mustard will be the third and final type of agent disposal campaign at Umatilla.

The first stockpiled chemical munitions disposal campaign in Oregon began on Sept. 7, 2004, when GB rockets were moved from depot storage to the disposal facility. The first GB rockets were destroyed the next day. Since that time, the following 11 individual munitions disposal campaigns have been successfully and safely completed:

-more-

www.cma.army.mil



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL MATERIALS AGENCY

Umatilla Chemical Depot

- 4 GB (sarin-filled) bulk containers or “ton containers” completed Jan. 5, 2006. (These were Non-stockpile Chemical Materiel Project munitions.)
- 27 GB 500-pound bombs completed May 18, 2006.
- 2,418 GB 750-pound bombs completed June 9, 2006.
- 91,442 GB rockets and warheads completed Aug. 9, 2006.
- 14,246 GB 8-inch diameter artillery projectiles completed Jan. 3, 2007.
- 47,406 GB 155mm diameter artillery projectiles completed July 8, 2007.
- One VX bulk container or “ton container” completed Nov. 26, 2007. (This was a Non-stockpile Chemical Materiel Project munition.)
- 156 VX aircraft-mounted spray tanks completed Dec. 24, 2007.
- 14,519 VX rockets and warheads completed Jan. 23, 2008.
- 32,313 VX 155mm diameter artillery projectiles completed June 28, 2008.
- 3,752 VX 8-inch diameter artillery projectiles completed Aug. 6, 2008.

When the entire Umatilla chemical munitions destruction mission is complete, the disposal plant will be thoroughly cleaned and disassembled according to environmental permits. The Umatilla Chemical Depot is slated for closure per the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) law. Chemical munitions have been stored at the Umatilla depot since the 1960s.

More information about chemical weapons disposal is available at www.cma.army.mil.

###

www.cma.army.mil