Baseline Reconfiguration

A number of chemical munitions stored at the U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot are contained in boxes. In order for the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant, known as PCAPP, to process these munitions, the projectiles must undergo a process called baseline reconfiguration.

The Process

This process involves reconfiguring boxed 105mm and 4.2-inch munitions from a ready-to-use configuration to a ready-to-process configuration. Munitions need to be reconfigured before processing through the Projectile/Mortar Disassembly (PMD) system, which as indicated by its name, disassembles the projectile. During reconfiguration, the fiber tubes which contain the munitions are removed from shipping boxes and then the munitions are removed from the fiber tube. Once removed from the fiber tubes, the 105mm projectile is considered reconfigured and ready for destruction.

When the 4.2-inch mortar is removed from the fiber tube, it has specific components removed. These components are the striker nut, ignition cartridge, propellant retaining clip and the propellant wafers. The mortar is then placed in the twin spindle removal machine where the pressure plate, pressure plate nut, cartridge container and rotating disc are removed. It is then placed on a projectile pallet and the round is considered reconfigured.

Fiber tubes have their ends removed in order to access munitions that need to be reconfigured.

Safety

Safety for employees and the environment is a top priority. Munitions that must undergo baseline reconfiguration will be monitored for agent leaks throughout the process. During transport back and forth between the storage igloos and PCAPP, site personnel conduct precise monitoring and observation of the munitions. Rapid Deluge Systems, which can detect the slightest spark, are used during the removal of propellant. If a spark is detected, the munition will be doused with water.

Disposal

After munitions have been reconfigured, the 105mm boxes will be used to contain the cartridge with propellant inside. These components will be shipped off site to an approved treatment, storage and disposal facility. The boxes that contain 4.2-inch mortars are considered dunnage and will be shredded, treated as solid waste and transferred to an approved off-site disposal facility.

Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant

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A Partnership for Safe Chemical Weapons Destruction

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