U.S. Army Element, Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives

Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives Program

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
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The Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives program, known as ACWA, is responsible for the safe destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles at the U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot in Colorado and Blue Grass Army Depot in Kentucky. ACWA was originally established by Congress to test and demonstrate alternative technologies to baseline incineration. Today, the program's mission is to oversee the full-scale pilot testing of the selected alternative technologies at both locations.

Background

In 1997, Congress established the program to safely test and demonstrate at least two alternative technologies to the baseline incineration process for the destruction of the nation's stockpile of assembled chemical weapons. Assembled chemical weapons are configured with fuzes, explosives, propellant, chemical agents, shipping and firing tubes and packaging materials.

Congress authorized ACWA to manage the development and pilot-scale testing of these technologies in 1999. A public law signed that year stated that funds would not be allocated for a chemical weapons disposal facility at Blue Grass Army Depot until the Secretary of Defense certified demonstration of six incineration alternatives. After successfully demonstrating three technologies in 1999 and three more in 2000, ACWA determined that four of them were viable for pilot testing.

In 2000, a public law mandated the Department of Defense (DoD) to consider incineration and any demonstrated ACWA technologies for disposal of the Colorado stockpile.

ACWA was assigned responsibility for the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles in Colorado and Kentucky in October 2002. DoD selected destruction technologies for both sites that same year. In July 2002, DoD selected neutralization followed by biotreatment for the Colorado stockpile and selected neutralization followed by supercritical water oxidation for the destruction of the Kentucky stockpile in November 2002. ACWA shifted its focus from assessing chemical weapons disposal technologies to implementing full-scale pilot testing of alternative technologies at these sites. As a result, the program changed its name from Assembled Chemical Weapons Assessment to Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives in June 2003, to better reflect its new program goals.

Public Involvement

ACWA attributes its success in identifying safe and effective alternatives for chemical weapons destruction to its commitment to meaningful stakeholder input and involvement. Public involvement efforts began in 1997 when ACWA program leaders implemented an innovative, open and fully participatory public process called the ACWA Dialogue. The ACWA program continues to work closely with stakeholders by facilitating community forums at each site. These forums provide a venue to exchange information with community members about many different issues regarding chemical weapons destruction in their communities. Through these forums, ACWA is able to share next steps as well as receive feedback from the community on areas of interest.

A Partnership for Safe Chemical Weapons Destruction

www.pmacwa.army.mil

U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot, Colorado

The Pueblo Chemical Depot stores 2,611 tons of mustard agent in projectiles and cartridges. ACWA worked together with the community to select a safe technology, neutralization followed by biotreatment, to destroy the chemical weapons stored at the depot. For more information on this technology, please refer to the fact sheet titled "Neutralization Followed by Biotreatment."

In September 2002, Bechtel Pueblo was selected as the systems contractor to design, construct, systemize, pilot test, operate and close the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant.

The Colorado Chemical Demilitarization Citizens' Advisory Commission represents community interests related to the destruction of the chemical weapons stockpile. It provides a vital link between the Pueblo community and the Department of Defense by providing a forum for exchanging information about chemical weapons destruction.

Blue Grass Army Depot, Kentucky

Blue Grass Army Depot stores 523 tons of nerve and blister agents in rockets and projectiles. ACWA has worked together with the community to select neutralization followed by supercritical water oxidation, known as SCWO, as the technology to destroy the chemical weapons stored there. For more information regarding this technology, please refer to the fact sheet titled "Neutralization Followed by Supercritical Water Oxidation."

In June 2003, Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass was selected as the systems contractor to design, construct, systemize, pilot test, operate and close the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant.

The Chemical Destruction Community Advisory Board is a diverse group of community leaders who organized in 2003 to represent the views and concerns of all sectors of the local community on issues regarding Kentucky's chemical weapons disposal program. Representatives include Citizens' Advisory Commission members; Blue Grass Army Depot commanders; federal, state and local elected officials; citizens' groups and ACWA.

For More Information

Public participation is the cornerstone of ACWA's mission. We encourage you to contact us to learn more about the ACWA program. Please call the Program Manager Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives Communications and Congressional Affairs Office at (410) 436-3398, visit www.pmacwa.army.mil, or write to

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