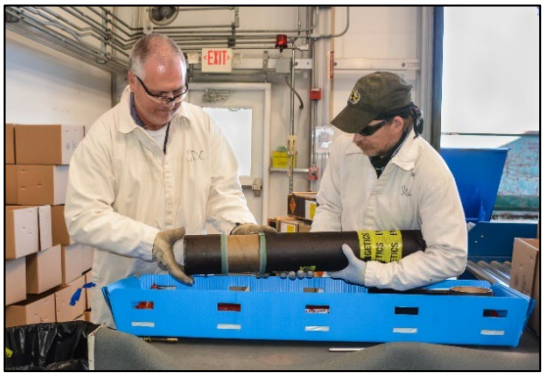
Anniston Field Office

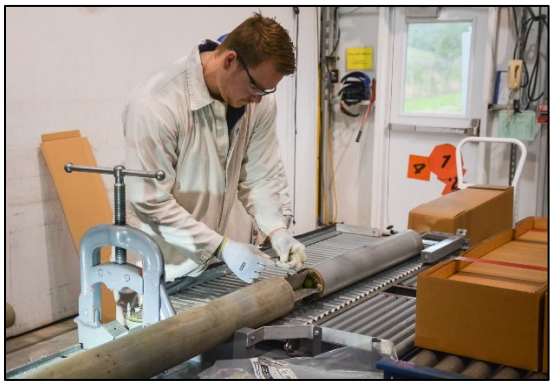
The Anniston Field Office (AFO), located at the Anniston Army Depot, Alabama, is an element of the Program Executive Office, Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives. The AFO provided managerial oversight and technical support for the destruction of chemical agents and munitions in the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile formerly located at the U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot in Colorado and the Blue Grass Army Depot in Kentucky. To meet treaty and public law imperatives, the AFO led engineering development, design evaluation, contracting coordination and system testing efforts to improve the processing systems at the two facilities.

The Anniston Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (ANCDF) completed chemical demilitarization operations in 2011. Following that time, most facilities were dismantled, with the exception of the Static Detonation Chamber (SDC). The SDC was clean-closed for chemical agent, a process which ensures no chemical agent remains anywhere in the system. The Anniston SDC unit currently provides a dedicated, efficient means of disposing of program explosives and energetics, as well as research and investigation into other opportunities to dispose of other non-chemical agent waste.

Support for Colorado and Kentucky Facilities



The former chemical weapons stockpile in Colorado consisted of more than 2,600 U.S. tons of mustard agent in projectiles and mortar rounds. The last munition was destroyed June 22, 2023. Non-contaminated explosive components removed from munitions at the Pueblo plant were shipped to the Anniston SDC for destruction, which concluded in the summer of 2023. The AFO also led engineering development and testing to enhance processing systems for the Pueblo facility. In this photograph, AFO workers are opening a tube containing energetics before placing them into the destruction process.



The former chemical weapons stockpile in Kentucky consisted of more than 500 U.S. tons of mustard and nerve agent in rockets and artillery projectiles. The last munition was destroyed July 7, 2023. The Anniston SDC continues to process non-contaminated motors separated from VX and GB nerve agent-filled rockets during the Blue Grass rocket destruction campaigns. The AFO also led the engineering development of improved processing systems and testing for the Blue Grass facility. Here, an AFO worker binds spring-loaded fins on a rocket motor to prevent them from deploying during processing.

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The expert AFO staff also provided technical evaluation and support for both sites during operations, and will continue to do so through their closure phases.

How Does SDC Technology Work?

The SDC uses thermal destruction technology to process the rocket motors from BGCAPP, removed from the munitions at the facility during the destruction process and delivered to the AFO for final destruction. Those components are placed into feed boxes, conveyed to the top of the SDC vessel and fed into the electrically heated detonation chamber. The high heat (approximately 1,100 degrees Fahrenheit) thermally destroys the components. Gases generated by the process are treated by an off-gas treatment system that includes a thermal oxidizer, scrubbers and a carbon filter system. All waste streams are screened, and the remaining scrap metal is decontaminated for recycling.

The Static Detonation Chamber facility in Anniston, Alabama.

Facility Closure

Similar to the chemical agent destruction facilities, the AFO SDC facility will undergo a closure process when its current mission concludes. No chemical agent was introduced into this destruction process, so decontamination will not be required.