



Two Down, One to Go: Pueblo Plant Completes Second of Three Chemical Weapons Destruction Campaigns

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For Immediate Release

U.S. ARMY PUEBLO CHEMICAL DEPOT, Colo. – The Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) team completed the destruction of more than 383,000 mustard agent-filled 105mm projectiles July 20.

The 105mm projectiles are the second of [three munitions destruction campaigns](#) to be destroyed at the Pueblo Chemical Depot (PCD). A “campaign” refers to destruction of a particular type of chemical munition.

PCD originally stored three different kinds of mustard-filled weapons – two types of projectiles, 155mm and 105mm, and 4.2-inch mortar rounds.

The final destruction campaign of 4.2-inch mortar rounds is currently underway.

The 105mm projectiles were destroyed under the supervision of trained operators using advanced robotic [technology](#) to disassemble and drain the munitions. Mustard agent is neutralized and the resulting product, known as hydrolysate, is broken down into salt, water and organics using living microbes in a [biotreatment process](#).

Approximately 54 of the 105mm projectiles were deemed unsuitable for automated processing and will be destroyed later using the [Static Detonation Chamber complex](#).

Chemical weapons destruction operations began in March 2015, when more than 780,000 munitions comprised the original chemical weapons stockpile stored at PCD. As of July 20, approximately 94,000 munitions remain. The destruction of 2,334.6 U.S. tons or 89% of mustard agent has been reported to the [Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons](#) or OPCW, an intergovernmental organization that implements the [Chemical Weapons Convention](#) treaty.

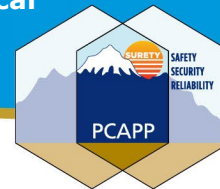
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The U.S. chemical weapons stockpile sites in Colorado and at the Blue Grass Army Depot in Kentucky account for the last 10% of what was originally a national stockpile of more than 30,000 tons of chemical weapons. The [U.S. Army Chemical Materials Activity](#) (then Agency) destroyed the initial 90%, which was stored at seven other sites across the U.S. and on Johnston Atoll in the Pacific. Chemical weapons destruction in Kentucky began in 2019. Both sites are on target to complete destruction of chemical weapons by the Chemical Weapons Convention treaty commitment of Sept. 30, 2023, and before the congressional deadline of Dec. 31, 2023.

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Quotes from project leaders:

"Thanks to the dedication of our committed team, with every munition destroyed at PCAPP we are making the Pueblo community and the nation safer," said **Walton Levi, site project manager, PCAPP**. "We have applied the lessons we learned destroying munitions at this site since 2015, which helped us achieve maximum productivity and complete destruction of these projectiles sooner than we anticipated. This has truly been a commendable team effort from everyone here at the depot."

"Congratulations to everyone working at the Pueblo Chemical Depot to safely reach yet another milestone in this national imperative," said **Michael Abaie, the program executive officer at the Defense Department** program overseeing destruction of the remaining United States' chemical weapons inventory. "Completion of the final mission is on the horizon. Since weapons destruction first started in 2015, more than 89 percent of the mustard agent has been safely destroyed here."

"The safe and efficient completion of the 105mm campaign is a major accomplishment. I am proud of the entire team at the Pueblo Chemical Depot and would like to thank our community for their support of PCAPP in the destruction of these chemical munitions," said **Todd Ailes, project manager, Bechtel Pueblo Team**.

"I'm so proud of our entire team for their hard work and focus in completing destruction of our largest projectile stockpile," said **Kim Jackson, plant manager, Bechtel Pueblo Team**.

"For nearly seven decades, the depot has ensured these weapons remain safe and secure prior to destruction," said **Col. Jason Lacroix, commander, PCD**. "As we get closer to the end of this project, our team will continue to work closely with the Pueblo plant until all agent-filled munitions are eradicated."

Background Information:

The [Bechtel Pueblo Team \(BPT\)](#) is the government's systems contractor selected to design, construct, test, operate and will eventually close the plant.

After the entire stockpile in Colorado has been destroyed, the PCAPP will close. The closure phase will continue three to four years after chemical weapons destruction operations are completed. This phase encompasses disposal of all secondary wastes, decontamination and decommissioning of facilities and equipment, disposition of property, demolition of certain facilities and closure of government contracts and environmental permits in accordance with all laws and regulations. During closure, the safety of the workforce, the public and the environment will remain the project's most important priority.

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Contact Information:

For additional PCAPP information, contact the Pueblo Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office at (719) 546-0400 or pueblooutreach@iem.com. Visit www.peoacwa.army.mil for more information. For information about PCD, contact Michael Brock at (719) 549-4335 or Michael.J.Brock.civ@army.mil

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Photograph and Caption:



A Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant ordnance technician uses a lift assist to transfer a 105mm projectile onto a conveyor belt for its destruction in summer 2021. Conveyors transport munitions into Explosive Containment Rooms, where energetics are removed before chemical agent is drained and neutralized. As of July 20, more than 383,000 of the 105mm projectiles have been destroyed.