



Blue Grass Chemical Agent
Destruction Pilot Plant

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**A Partnership for Safe
Chemical Weapons
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Destruction of Chemical Weapons Stockpile Begins at Blue Grass Army Depot

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RICHMOND, Ky. – Officials confirmed during a public meeting today that successful destruction of the first mustard agent-filled munition occurred June 7 in a facility built to destroy part of the obsolete U.S. chemical weapons stockpile stored at the [Blue Grass Army Depot](#) in Richmond, Kentucky.

“Our team in Kentucky has successfully destroyed the first mustard-agent munitions, marking the start of Static Detonation Chamber operations,” said Program Executive Officer [Michael S. Abaie](#), Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives.

“Our mission relies on the skills of a dedicated workforce, community support and many organizations working together,” Abaie said. “We acknowledge this is the start of a journey that requires us to rely on those who came before and the teamwork that will allow us to continue.”

The chemical weapons stockpile stored at the Blue Grass Army Depot consists of approximately 523 tons of chemical agent and is configured in 155mm projectiles containing H mustard and VX nerve agent, 8-inch projectiles containing GB nerve agent, and M55 rockets containing GB and VX nerve agent.

The [Static Detonation Chamber](#) operations now underway destroy mustard agent projectiles that were found unsuitable for processing in the heavily automated [Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant](#), or BGCAPP, which will destroy chemical weapons containing nerve agent through neutralization followed by supercritical water oxidation, known as SCWO.

“This is a milestone day for everyone associated with the U.S. chemical demilitarization program,” said Army Lt. Col. Rodney D. McCutcheon, [Blue Grass Chemical Activity](#) commander. “These awful weapons have been safely stored for decades, and we’re committed to seeing them destroyed.”

“Starting destruction operations is a major step for us,” said Dr. Candace Coyle, BGCAPP site project manager. “This is only possible due to years of teamwork between our project, the community and multiple local, state and federal agencies.

“We also look forward to starting operations in our main pilot plant later this year,” Coyle said. “Everyone involved is working toward the common goal of eliminating this stockpile safely.”

The [Program Executive Office, Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives](#), known as PEO ACWA, is responsible for destroying the remaining U.S. chemical weapons stockpile in Colorado and Kentucky. The organization oversees the contract for design, construction, operation and closure of the Blue Grass facility with Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass and subcontractors AECOM, Battelle Memorial Institute and GP Strategies.

(more)

Destruction of Chemical Weapons Stockpile Begins at Blue Grass Army Depot (continued)

The stockpile sites in Colorado and Kentucky account for the last 10 percent of what was originally a national stockpile of more than 30,000 tons of chemical weapons. The [U.S. Army Chemical Materials Activity](#) destroyed the initial 90 percent, which was stored at nine sites across the U.S. and on Johnston Atoll in the Pacific. The [Colorado pilot plant](#) began destroying munitions in 2016, and both sites will be complete by December 2023.

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Photo caption: Workers use a crane to lift the first 155mm projectile containing mustard agent to begin the destruction process in the Static Detonation Chamber at the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant June 7, 2019. (Photograph from closed circuit television)