



Nerve agent liquid in containers successfully neutralized

Next step is destroying any residual chemical agent

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BLUE GRASS ARMY DEPOT (Ky.) -- The Operation *Swift Solution* team here has successfully completed the first phase of eliminating three deteriorating steel containers holding a mixture of the nerve agent GB and its breakdown products that have accumulated over time. All of the liquid nerve agent mixture previously stored in the containers has been drained and neutralized. The wastewater product of the neutralization process, known as hydrolysate, is currently being stored in industrial transportation containers. It will be trucked along with other secondary and legacy wastes associated with the containers to a permitted, commercial facility in Texas, a plan endorsed by community citizens groups.

"This is an important milestone for our team," said Lt. Col. David L. Musgrave, commander of Blue Grass Chemical Activity, the depot organization responsible for the chemical weapons stockpile. "There is still more work to do in cleaning the containers and processing the secondary wastes for shipment, but I'm pleased that we've safely achieved the objective to this point."

After one of the containers leaked in August 2007, and the two others showed signs of corrosion, the Army's Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives, or ACWA, program brought a proposed solution to the Blue Grass community nearly a year ago last January. The plan involved utilizing a team from the Army's Edgewood Chemical Biological Center at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. and a transportable chemical neutralization system known as the Chemical Agent Transfer System, or CHATS. Since that time, Army teams in Kentucky and Maryland worked closely to develop and coordinate plans with the Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection to ensure the operation would be performed safely and in a manner protective of human health and the environment. With the appropriate environmental permits in place, neutralization operations started on Nov. 12.

"This was our goal," said Kevin J. Flamm, ACWA program manager. "Removing this potential hazard to the work force allows us to focus on the big picture, which is building the plant to destroy the entire chemical weapons stockpile."

After a break for the upcoming holidays, the second phase of the operation will begin, which involves removing and neutralizing any sludge, rust, or other solids that may have formed over time inside the containers. The containers will then be decontaminated and sampled to confirm that no chemical agent contamination remains. Before they are sent to a recycling facility, they will be cut in half and prepared for shipment. The third and last phase of the mission involves processing the legacy and secondary wastes generated during the management and destruction of the containers for off-site shipment. Finally, the operational facilities will be shut down and the temporary structures and equipment will be shipped back to Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

Additional information on Operation *Swift Solution* is available at www.pmacwa.army.mil/ky/swift_solution.htm.

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Program Manager Assembled
Chemical Weapons Alternatives

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Contact the U.S. Army Element, Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives
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