



U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL  
MATERIALS AGENCY

# NEWS RELEASE

## Umatilla Chemical Depot

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Umatilla depot begins final sarin-filled munitions campaign

**UMATILLA CHEMICAL DEPOT, Hermiston, Ore.** – Workers at the Umatilla Chemical Depot (UMCD) began the final GB (sarin) munitions campaign today when they moved 155mm diameter GB artillery projectiles to the disposal facility at the depot. The Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (UMCDF) plans to begin destroying those munitions no later than Monday, Jan. 29.

The 155mm GB projectiles or “shells” are the last type of sarin-filled munition stored at the depot. Other types of chemical weapons are slated for disposal after this campaign is completed.

Movement of 155mm the projectiles began this afternoon after a little less than a month of “changeover” preparations to modify equipment and procedures that had previously been used to process 8-inch diameter GB artillery projectiles. The last 8-inch sarin-filled artillery shell at Umatilla was destroyed on Jan. 3.

“Team Umatilla has worked safely and very well to get to this point — the beginning of the end of GB agent storage,” said Lt. Col. Donna Rutten, depot commander. “While we still have several years to go until we dispose of all types of chemical munitions stored here, it’s a significant accomplishment to get started on this campaign.”

“We’re pleased to be processing munitions again,” said Don Barclay, Army site project manager for UMCDF. “The changeover went smoothly, safely and a bit ahead of schedule.”

The changeover from processing 8-inch to 155mm projectiles was scheduled to be completed by mid-February. Planning for the changeover began weeks before the last 8-inch projectile was destroyed, which helped ensure hardware and work orders were in place.

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“Most importantly, our workers got the changeover done safely as well as efficiently” said Doug Hamrick, project general manager for the Army’s system contractor, Washington Group International. “As with previous campaigns, we’ll start slowly and increase production gradually as we review our equipment and procedures.”

The disposal facility previously processed more than 91,000 M55 GB rockets; 2,445 GB bombs; and 14,246 8-inch GB projectiles that had been stored at Umatilla. The entire GB disposal campaign should be complete by mid-2007 if there are no significant delays. After that, the facility will prepare for a series of disposal campaigns of VX nerve agent munitions, beginning with M55 VX rockets. After destruction of all VX munitions, the depot will dispose of mustard agent stored in bulk containers.

Each 155mm GB artillery projectile is 27 inches long, weighs about 100 pounds, and holds about 6.5 pounds or two-thirds of a gallon of GB nerve agent.

Since Sept. 8, 2004, when it began destroying chemical munitions, the UMCDF has destroyed more than 108,000 rockets, bombs, ton containers, and 8-inch projectiles. This comprises about 860 tons or 24 percent of the agent tonnage originally stockpiled at Umatilla.

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