



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL MATERIALS AGENCY

September 29, 2005
Release #05-08

For More Information Contact:
ABCDF Public Affairs (410) 436-5253
CMA Public Affairs (410) 436-4555

HALFWAY POINT REACHED IN CLEANING EMPTIED MUSTARD AGENT CONTAINERS

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. -Officials at the Aberdeen Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (ABCDF) announced today that workers at the facility reached the halfway point in safely cleaning and decontaminating the containers that once stored mustard agent at the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground.

The Ton Container Cleanout process is the second phase of operations at ABCDF. The first phase, destroying the stored agent, was completed last March when the last batch of the drained mustard agent stockpile was neutralized. This made APG the first of the Army's eight chemical demilitarization facilities in the continental United States to remove the threat of its chemical stockpile to the community.

The facility is located in a building within a building that uses an air ventilation system equipped with a carbon filtration system that monitors and filters potentially contaminated air. Containers are moved by conveyors through an 11-step process that includes punching holes in the containers, cutting the containers in half, upending the container halves for a hot water high-pressure wash inside and out, followed by steam cleaning and drying the halves.

The containers are carefully monitored using sensors to verify that decontamination is complete. Containers that are not fully decontaminated are run through the cleaning process again. The containers are then shipped off site for disposal as a non-hazardous waste.

"The system uses water heated just below the boiling point and various automated machines to dismantle and clean the containers to a very stringent standard, making the design and operation truly state-of-the-art," said the Army's Chemical Materials Agency Site Project Manager Joseph Lovrich.

Maryland's mustard agent stockpile had been stored at APG for 63 years. Historically, the Aberdeen chemical agent stockpile stored five percent of the nation's chemical weapons stockpile. More information about storage and disposal operations at ABCDF is available at the U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency's Web site at www.cma.army.mil.



For more information,
contact the
Edgewood Chemical
Stockpile Outreach Office

Woodbridge Station
1011-B Woodbridge Center Way
Edgewood, MD 21040

(410) 676-6800 or
www.cma.army.mil

The U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency is responsible for safely storing and eliminating the United States' aging chemical weapons and agent stockpiles and for the safe elimination of recovered chemical materiel.

###