

Blue Grass Fall 2002

Contact Us

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Chemical Stockpile
Outreach Office**
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(859) 626-8944

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(859) 625-6897

COMING SOON...Officials prepare to select a disposal technology for Blue Grass

This summer, the U.S. Army's Program Manager for Chemical Demilitarization released its Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the chemical weapons stockpile at Blue Grass Army Depot. In July, the comment period for this document officially closed.

Currently, Army representatives are incorporating and addressing the comments received during the comment period. The outcome of those revisions will result in a document called a Final Environmental Impact Statement.

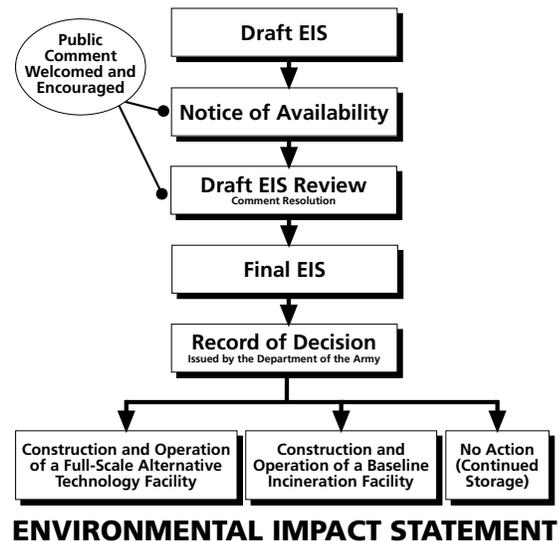
Following the release of that document, a Record of Decision will be issued. The Record of Decision will endorse one of the following outcomes for Blue Grass:

- Construction and operation of a full-scale alternative technology facility;
- Construction and operation of a baseline incineration facility; or
- No action (continued storage).

The winter 2002 REACH newsletter will feature an update regarding the status of the

disposal technology decision. In the meantime, if you have questions regarding the technology selection process, or if you would like to receive additional information, please phone the Blue Grass Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office at (859) 626-8944.

NEPA Environmental Review Process



Blue Grass welcomes new commanders



At right, Col. Martin Jacoby addressed guests who attended his Change of Command Ceremony. Jacoby is the new commander of Blue Grass Army Depot.

At left, Lt. Col. Dennis M. Cantwell accepts the Blue Grass Chemical Activity flag from Major General John C. Doesburg, Commander U.S. Army Soldier and Biological Chemical Command. With acceptance of the flag, Cantwell assumes command of the Activity.



To learn more about chemical weapons disposal, please visit our new Web site at www.pmc.d.army.mil.

Disposal mission progressing nationwide

Aberdeen, Maryland

- On Sept. 6, 2002, the Army celebrated construction completion of its accelerated disposal facility located on Aberdeen Proving Ground. The facility now is undergoing an extensive, six-month testing period to prepare for the March 2003 start of disposal operations.
- Using the accelerated neutralization process, the stockpile will be destroyed by September 2003, nearly two years ahead of the original schedule.

Anniston, Alabama

- The Army is seeking permit modifications that will decrease the disposal schedule by nine months. Modifications include changing the order in which weapons are incinerated and processing two weapon types at the same time. The Alabama Department of Environmental Management is reviewing the permit request.
- Agent disposal operations are expected to begin later this year.

Hermiston, Oregon

- Gov. John Kitzhaber approved the Army's surrogate trial burn plan, enabling the Army to proceed with demonstrating that the facility can incinerate chemicals that are more difficult to process than actual chemical agent.
- Currently, the facility is conducting surrogate trial burns and will begin agent disposal operations next year.

Johnston Island, Pacific

- The Army team continues to proceed with closure activities including processing secondary waste and removing equipment.
- Final closure is scheduled for January 2004, marking official completion of the Army's disposal mission on Johnston Island.

Newport, Indiana

- Construction of the accelerated neutralization facility is approximately 30 percent complete. The Army plans to begin agent disposal operations in July 2003 and destroy the entire stockpile by March 2004—two years ahead of the original schedule.

Pine Bluff, Arkansas

- The Army has completed construction of approximately 90 percent of the Pine Bluff Chemical Agent Disposal Facility, which will employ incineration technology.
- In August, the Army held public meetings to discuss methods for destroying the non-stockpile chemical materiel stored at Pine Bluff Arsenal. Non-stockpile items include binary chemical weapon components and recovered warfare.

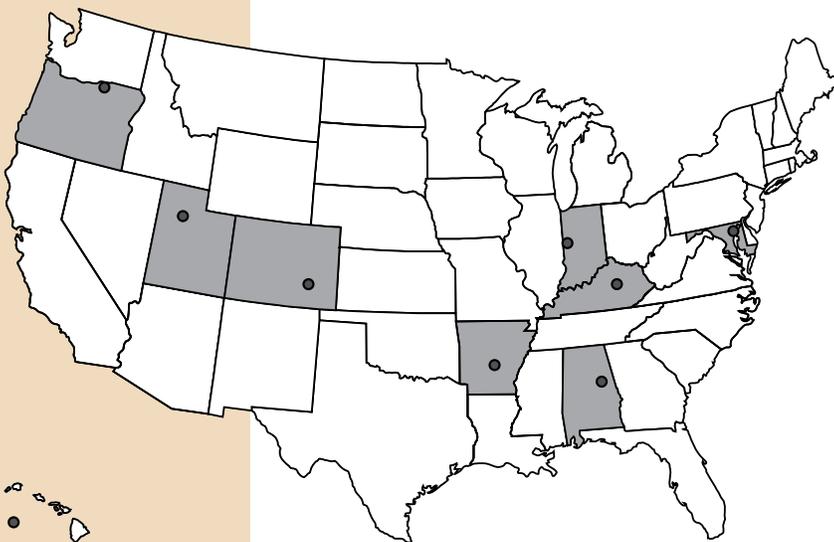
Pueblo, Colorado

- In July, Under Secretary of Defense Pete Aldridge announced that neutralization followed by biodegradation technology, or "neut/bio," will be used to destroy the Pueblo stockpile. The Army subsequently released a request for proposal to identify a contractor to construct and operate the facility.

Tooele, Utah

- The facility is preparing to incinerate VX nerve agent and expects to complete the disposal campaign next year.

For additional updates and current events, please visit our Web site at <http://www.pmc.d.army.mil>.



M55 rockets determined stable for storage

The U.S. Army recently completed comprehensive laboratory testing on M55 rockets and concluded that the rockets can continue to be stored safely until they are destroyed at its state-of-the-art chemical weapons disposal facilities. The extensive testing was conducted to ensure that the aging rockets are stable and unlikely to autoignite.

The Army produced 400,000 M55 rockets in the early to mid-1960s to protect U.S. soldiers from enemy attack. These weapons, which were declared obsolete in 1981, have since been stored safely and are awaiting disposal at Army installations in Alabama, Kentucky, Utah and Oregon. The M55 rockets stored on Johnston Island in the Pacific were destroyed using incineration technology.

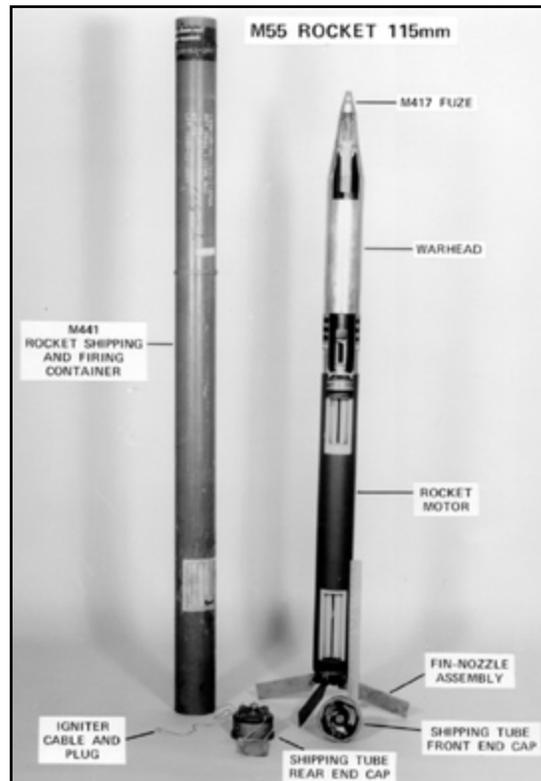
Each rocket weighs nearly 60 pounds, is almost seven feet long and contains approximately 10 pounds of chemical nerve agent (VX or GB). The rockets also contain M28 propellant, which has degraded naturally over time through a series of chemical reactions that generate heat. When the propellant was manufactured, chemical compounds called stabilizers were added to control the rate of this chemical reaction. However, as the stabilizer degrades overtime, the propellant could generate enough heat to autoignite the rocket.

The Army developed detailed computer models and conducted testing on rocket samples to evaluate the likelihood of rocket autoignition. "The evaluations demonstrate that it is very unlikely the aging M55 rockets will autoignite, and they can continue to be stored safely while awaiting disposal," said Col. Christopher Lesniak, Project Manager for the Chemical Stockpile Disposal Project. Furthermore, he explained, the testing demonstrated that uncontaminated rocket propellant is stable for at least 100 years. Agent contamination accelerates deterioration, however, only small portions of the propellant samples showed effects of contamination.

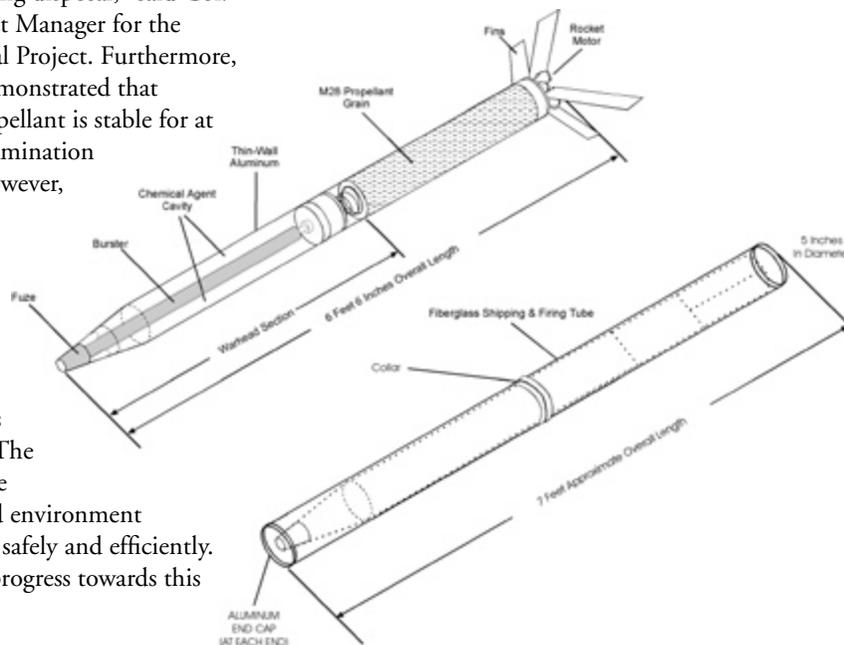
The testing also found that rockets are at risk for autoignition from external events such as lightning or earthquake. "The only way to ensure complete protection of the public and environment is to destroy the rockets safely and efficiently. We are making significant progress towards this goal," said Lesniak.

For more information on M55 rocket storage and disposal, please contact the program's Public Outreach and Information Office at 1-800-488-0648 or visit <http://www.pmc.d.army.mil/>.

Blue Grass stores a portion of our nation's chemical weapons stockpile. M55 rockets are part of the Blue Grass stockpile.



Caption please.



We want to hear from you ...

The Blue Grass Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office serves as a clearinghouse of information about the chemical weapons stockpile stored at Blue Grass Army Depot and the Army's plans for chemical weapons disposal. The outreach office has informational materials that can address your questions or concerns.

If you would like more information about the Blue Grass Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office, please telephone (859) 626-8944 or complete this form and mail it to:

Blue Grass Chemical Stockpile
Outreach Office
370 Highland Park Drive, Suite 2
Richmond, KY 40475

Would you like to be added to our mailing list?

Yes No

Would you like an information packet mailed to you?

Yes No

If you answered yes to either of these questions, please complete the following:

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

E-mail (optional) _____

The outreach office schedules speaking presentations that can be given to large or small community groups, clubs, organizations, etc. If you know of a community group that might be interested, please complete the following:

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

E-mail (optional) _____

