

EnviroNews

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CWM PROJECT UPDATE Empty bomb casings removed from Dunn Field



One of the 21 empty 500-kg bomb casings that have been uncovered at Site #24-A.

In September, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its contractors began work at Site #24-A and are now progressing through the second phase of the CWM removal action at Dunn Field.

As of November 1, 2000, 21 empty 500-kilogram (kg) bomb casings and three empty 250-kg bomb casings have been uncovered at the site and are being sent to an off-site permitted disposal location.

Consistent with the historical records, these bomb casings were empty and inactive before being buried. The bursting charges were removed, and no chemical warfare agent was detected in the surrounding soil.

In October, the CWM team erected a second vapor containment structure (VCS) at Site #24-B, which has been identified as the disposal site where the bomb casings were drained and the contents were neutralized and buried. The team's first task was to use an underground probe, called a geoprobe, to confirm the location and size of the neutralization pit.

With the new VCS in place, work now continues at both sites with the same safety measures in place.

The second VCS is an A-frame, tent-like structure measuring 82 ft. by 100 ft., with a 13-ft. sidewall and a 26-ft. ceiling. Additional trained workers will be employed as needed.

A thorough excavation at Site #1 was completed August 28, 2000. The CWM

team was successful in locating and removing chemical warfare service materials buried in the 1950s, including a box containing 24 empty bottles that would have been used in the production of Chemical Agent Identification Sets (CAIS). The unused bottles were packed in their original box and did not contain any traces of chemical warfare agent. After testing was completed, the bottles were removed to U.S. government archives.

Workers at Site #1 also removed approximately 100,000 small vials containing sodium hydroxide pills, identified as being from the M-9 Chemical Agent Detection Kit. The vials, which were used by soldiers to detect chemicals in vapor form, were removed for safe, off-site disposal.

More than 856 cubic yards of soil were excavated and carefully sifted to locate and remove all disposed materials at Site #1. This volume of soil is equivalent to approximately 172,900 one-gallon pails. No chemical warfare agent was found at Site #1.

More time was spent at the first site than was estimated in the initial CWM schedule. This was due to the volume of items that were removed, and the need to carefully sift more soil than anticipated, combined with the impact of the summer heat on workers inside the VCS. The project is scheduled to continue through May 2001.

Weekly CWM briefings are held in the

UPCOMING RAB MEETING

The RAB includes community members who review proposed plans and actions and provide input on the environmental cleanup activities.

The next RAB meeting is Thursday, January 18th at 6:00 pm

Watch the Commercial Appeal, Tri-State Defender and the Silver Star News for an announcement about the location of the January RAB meeting. □

Memphis Depot Community Outreach Room, Building 144, at the Memphis Depot Business Park, each Wednesday at 10:00 a.m., to update the community on the progress of the CWM removal project. For more information on these briefings, please call the Memphis Depot Community Relations Office at (901) 544-0613. □

A second vapor containment structure (VCS) has been erected on Dunn Field as part of the next phase of the chemical warfare material (CWM) removal action.

