

# REACH



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## GB Agent Stockpile Eliminated Safely Tooele Facility Prepares for VX Disposal Campaign

Tooele Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (TOCDF) workers reached a significant milestone when the last drop of the nation's largest stockpile of GB (Sarin) nerve agent was destroyed.

James Bacon, who oversees the Army's chemical demilitarization program, said, "Utahns can not only be proud of the magnificent job they did hosting the Winter Olympic Games, they should also be proud to know that all the GB-filled munitions stored in their state have been safely eliminated. TOCDF employees have worked safely as one team, dedicated to setting the chemical weapons disposal standard high and significantly reducing the risk to Utah, our nation and the world."

Safety remains the U.S. Army's top priority because continued storage of chemical agent and munitions poses risk to workers, the environment and surrounding communities. GB is an odorless, tasteless liquid that can be vaporized easily, making it much more volatile than other chemical agent. Now that DCD's 6,050 GB agent tons



*The last GB bulk container being unloaded in the Unpack Area of the TOCDF.*

are eliminated, the risk to the surrounding community has been substantially decreased.

"I want to thank all parties involved who made safe destruction of the GB projectile, rocket and bomb campaigns possible," said Col. Christopher Lesniak, project manager for chemical stockpile disposal. "Over the past few years, the facility has destroyed close to a million munitions."

The incinerator at Johnston Atoll safely destroyed the Pacific island's remaining stockpile in November 2000, which included 1,319 tons of GB. With the GB stockpile gone from DCD and Johnston Atoll, nearly 77 percent of the nation's GB stockpile (9,610 tons) has been safely incinerated.

Workers currently are preparing for the campaign that will eliminate VX nerve agent, which is less volatile than GB and presents less risk. The depot's VX stockpile is equal to 30 percent of the nation's total VX stockpile. DCD also houses about 36 percent of the nation's mustard stockpile.

## Winter Olympics Put TOCDF in Media Spotlight

With the 2002 Winter Olympic Games held in Utah this February, chemical demilitarization activities at the Deseret Chemical Depot (DCD) and the Tooele Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (TOCDF) received an expected increase in media attention. Reporters from the German Television



Sacramento and Los Angeles media representatives interview former TOCDF Site Project Manager James Hendricks about operations and milestones.



Tooele community cheers on the Olympic Torch Run as it passes the Tooele Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office.

Network (ZDF) and the Swiss Television Network interviewed Army officials. A production team from the NBC Today Show was present at the November 2001 Utah Citizens Advisory Commission meeting in Tooele. In addition, radio journalists from the British Broadcasting Corporation and from National Public Radio visited the Tooele Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office (ORO) and interviewed DCD and TOCDF officials.

With numerous members of the California National Guard activated for security augmentation duties at DCD, as well as Tooele Army Depot (TEAD) and Dugway Proving Ground, media from Sacramento and Los Angeles organizations visited the ORO just prior to the beginning of the Games.

### TOCDF Milestone: GB Agent Stockpile Eliminated Safely

*"We are relieved that the disposal of GB has been completed, and that the potential hazard the stockpile posed to our communities has passed."*

—**Deborah Kim**, chair of the Utah Citizens' Advisory Commission on Chemical Weapons Demilitarization

*"This is a major step in solving a major problem. We appreciate the efforts of all the employees in making sure the stockpile is destroyed as safely and expediently as possible."*

—**Charlie Roberts**, Tooele City Mayor

*"The State is pleased to see the destruction of the GB nerve agent completed and, as a result, the risk of storing chemical weapons in Utah was reduced. We look forward to the ultimate destruction of the remaining chemical agent stockpile at Deseret Chemical Depot."*

—**Dennis Downs**, director of the Utah Division of Solid and Hazardous Waste, Department of Environmental Quality



# Activities at the Other Stockpile Locations

## Anniston, Alabama

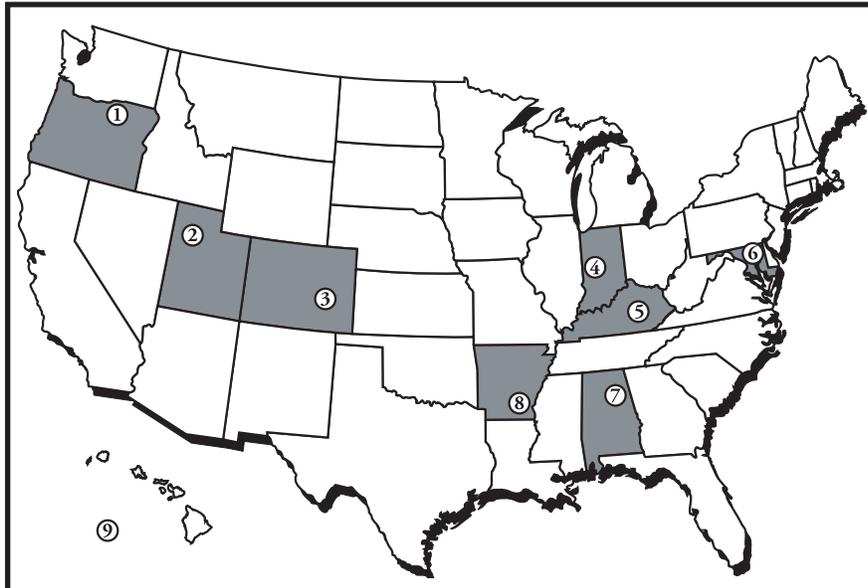
- Systemization, or testing, of the facility's systems and equipment is underway. Agent disposal operations are scheduled to begin later this year.
- Facility workers recently celebrated reaching 2.5 million hours without a lost-time accident.

## Pueblo, Colorado

- The undersecretary of defense is expected to make a technology decision for the Pueblo site later this year.

## Richmond, Kentucky

- A Draft Environmental Impact Statement is poised for release for public comment. The DEIS is an environmental study on impacts the proposed Blue Grass Chemical Weapons Disposal Facility may have on the surrounding environment. A public availability session will be held to provide the public the opportunity to ask questions and comment.



## Johnston Island, Pacific

- The JACADS team continues to proceed with closure activities. Current facility priorities include processing secondary waste in the metal parts furnace, removing excess equipment from the plant and disposing of decontamination solution in the liquid incinerator.

## Pine Bluff, Arkansas

- The Army has completed nearly 80 percent of the Pine Bluff Chemical Agent Disposal Facility.

### Stockpile Locations

1. Hermiston, Ore.
2. Tooele, Utah
3. Pueblo, Colo.
4. Newport, Ind.
5. Richmond, Ky.
6. Edgewood, Md.
7. Anniston, Ala.
8. Pine Bluff, Ark.
9. Johnston Atoll, Pacific

*“The Army actively continues to investigate opportunities to enhance stockpile safety and security for the other communities where chemical weapons are stored.”*

—James Bacon,  
program manager for  
chemical demilitarization

## Umatilla, Oregon

- The Umatilla facility currently is undergoing systemization, with agent operations scheduled to begin in February 2003.

## Aberdeen, Maryland and Newport, Indiana

- The Army is investigating options to dispose of the bulk chemical agent stored at these locations.



## **The National Research Council: Who They Are and What They Do**

Since October 1987, the National Research Council has advised the Army's chemical weapons disposal program. At the request of the Undersecretary of the Army, the Council established the Committee on Review and Evaluation of the Army Chemical Stockpile Disposal Program. This committee routinely evaluates and suggests improvements to the Army's disposal and public outreach programs. This committee is staffed by some of the nation's top scientists, engineers and other experts—all of whom volunteer their time.

Since 1989, this committee has published 23 reports, including the 1994 landmark report, "Recommendations for the Disposal of Chemical Agents and Munitions." In this

report, the committee evaluates and compares incineration to alternative disposal technologies and makes recommendations for the best approach to the stockpile disposal. This report establishes the disposal program's current framework and concludes that incineration is a safe and effective disposal process. The report also advocates the further development of neutralization as a disposal technology.

The National Research Council also has established review committees for the Army's Non-Stockpile Chemical Materiel Disposal Program and the Program Manager for Assembled Chemical Weapons Assessment for alternative technologies.

For more information on the National Research Council, please visit the Council's Web site at:

[www.nationalacademies.org](http://www.nationalacademies.org)

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