

Depot plans commemoration for World War II blast victims



Two Soldiers stand on the site where an igloo once stood just days after it was destroyed by an explosion on March 21, 1944.

A commemoration observing the 64th anniversary of the accidental explosion of conventional munitions at the Umatilla Chemical Depot during World War II is planned for Wednesday, March 19.

Six workers died in that conventional munitions accident. It still stands as the only fatal munitions handling accident in the history of the depot since it opened in 1941 on the eve of World War II.

"We want to honor and thank those World War II workers and family members for their service and sacrifice," said Lt. Col. Bob Stein, depot commander. "Memorial markers at the 1944 accident site and on the depot parade ground still serve as reminders to our current workers to continue to safely handle munitions."

On March 21, 1944, the storage igloo B-1014 and 264 500-pound conventional bombs were completely destroyed in an explosion. Killed in the accident were Kenneth LeRoy Fraser, foreman; Lance Stultz, lift truck operator; William Sanders, munitions handler; Harry Dwight Sever, munitions handler; Hiram Cook, truck driver; and Alice Wolgamott, junior laborer. Two crew members working on a nearby railroad pier survived — Glenn P. Long, foreman, and Cecil Pennington, foreman. An Army investigation was unable to determine the specific cause of the accident.

UMCDF Highlights

- It has been 614 days, or more than 2.7 million work hours, since a lost-time accident occurred at the UMCDF (July 7, 2006).

Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility Processing (March 6 - 12, 2008)

Total number of VX-filled rockets destroyed this period	
Total VX-filled rockets destroyed to date	14,519
Percentage of VX rockets destroyed to date	100
Total number of VX-filled spray tanks destroyed this period	
Total VX-filled spray tanks destroyed	156
Percentage of VX-filled spray tanks destroyed	100
Pounds of VX agent destroyed this period	11,307
Pounds of total VX agent destroyed to date	363,641
Total munitions destroyed to date since start of operations (Sept. 7, 2004) including non-stockpile GB and VX ton containers	170,219
Nominal tons of chemical agent destroyed to date (stockpile only)	1,192.37
Percentage of total agent tons destroyed	32.08

UMCD/UMCDF Milestones

- **Jan. 23, 2008:** Completed VX rocket campaign.
- **Dec. 24, 2007:** Completed VX spray tank campaign.
- **Nov. 26, 2007:** Processed the non-stockpile VX ton container.
- **Nov. 23, 2007:** Destroyed the first VX spray tanks in the MPF.
- **Nov. 19, 2007:** First VX spray tank transported from depot storage to disposal plant.
- **Nov. 9, 2007:** First VX chemical agent destroyed in the Liquid Incinerator (LIC).
- **Oct. 29, 2007:** Processed the first VX M55 rockets in the Deactivation Furnace System (DFS).
- **Oct. 26, 2007:** First VX M55 rockets transported from depot storage to disposal plant.
- **July 8, 2007:** Completed GB munitions campaign.

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