



# RECOVERED CHEMICAL MATERIEL DIRECTORATE NEWS RELEASE

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## **U.S. Army destroying recovered chemical warfare at Pine Bluff Arsenal**

The U.S. Army Chemical Materials Activity (CMA) recently returned to Pine Bluff Arsenal (PBA), Ark., for its second mission to destroy recovered chemical warfare materiel (RCWM). Starting early this month, CMA's Recovered Chemical Materiel Directorate (RCMD) is using its transportable Explosive Destruction System, or EDS, to neutralize chemical warfare materiel recovered during environmental remediation efforts at PBA. Collectively, the destruction site is known as the Pine Bluff Explosive Destruction System, or PBEDS for short.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) resumed environmental remediation activities in February 2017, discovering thousands of buried chemical warfare items intended for use during World War II. Historically, burial of chemical weapons was an internationally accepted practice for safe disposal. Periodically, chemical warfare materiel is recovered from formerly used defense sites or active arsenals such as PBA during remediation efforts.

The recovered items include more than 7,100 Chemical Agent Identification Sets (CAIS) K-941 bottles, once used for training soldiers in the safe identification and handling of chemical agent. USACE also recovered four German Traktor Rockets, captured during World War II and sent to PBA for analysis, and one 4.2-inch mortar. Once suspect chemical warfare materiel was recovered at PBA, RCMD deployed assessment technology to determine the explosive capacity and chemical fill of the recovered items for safe storage and handling.

CMA completed several chemical demilitarization operations at PBA over two decades, including destruction of the largest RCWM inventory to date in its first PBEDS campaign from 2006-2010. An innovative alternative to the open detonation of explosively configured munitions, PBEDS provides on-site treatment in a safe, environmentally sound manner. With an impeccable safety and environmental stewardship record, the EDS operates within an environmental enclosure under negative pressure and carbon filters to ensure no agent or vapor is released into the atmosphere.

The EDS uses linear explosive charges to cut open chemical munitions and eliminate their explosive capacity before neutralizing the chemical agent. The system's main component, a sealed, stainless-steel vessel, contains all blast, vapor and fragments from the process. Operators confirm treatment success by sampling residual liquid and air from the vessel prior to reopening the EDS. Technology such as the Advanced Fragment Suppression System greatly reduce waste generated from the operation.

With more than 3,700 items destroyed at 15 locations in the United States since 2001, the EDS is the Army's premier technology to destroy RCWM. CMA's proven experience and expertise with the EDS demonstrates safe and secure elimination operations.

For more information, visit <https://www.cma.army.mil>.

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