



U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL  
MATERIALS AGENCY

# NEWS RELEASE

## Umatilla Chemical Depot

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### Umatilla depot begins disposal of sarin-filled artillery projectiles

UMATILLA CHEMICAL DEPOT, Hermiston, Ore. - Workers at the Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (UMCDF) started another chemical munitions disposal campaign today by processing the first of 14,246 M426 8-inch diameter GB (sarin)-filled artillery projectiles stored at the depot.

Disposal of artillery projectiles or "shells" began shortly after 8 a.m. this morning after seven weeks of extensive "changeover" preparations to modify equipment and procedures that had previously been used to process M55 GB rockets. The last GB rocket was destroyed on August 9.

"With this campaign, we reach yet another milestone," said Lt. Col. Donna Rutten, depot commander. "Our overall storage and disposal mission continues with the same dedication to safety and vigilance that our workers have displayed in the past."

"The changeover team did a good job, and preparations for projectile disposal went well," said Don Barclay, Army site project manager. "We're glad to be processing munitions again."

Doug Hamrick, project general manager for Army contractor Washington Group International, said the processing rate of the 8-inch M426 projectiles will start slow and gradually increase as operators and equipment are confirmed to be functioning safely and effectively.

"We want to be sure everything is working properly and safely, and that we are environmentally compliant," Hamrick said.

The disposal facility previously processed more than 91,000 M55 GB rockets, plus all 2,445 GB bombs that had been stored at Umatilla. The GB projectiles campaign involves two types of artillery shells—the 8-inch diameter GB projectiles followed by 47,406 155 mm diameter GB projectiles. The entire GB projectile disposal campaign should be complete by mid-2007 if there are no significant delays.

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In addition to getting the plant's equipment ready for the shift from rockets to projectiles, changeover activities included refresher training for operators and munitions handlers. That included processing of simulated projectiles. Unlike rockets, which are punched, drained, and then sheared into pieces for incineration, projectiles must be disassembled during processing, which requires more mechanization.

Each 8-inch GB artillery projectile is 35 inches long, weighs about 200 pounds, and holds about 14.5 pounds of nerve agent. The depot also stores munitions containing VX nerve agent and ton containers containing mustard blister agent, which will eventually be destroyed in that order.

UMCDF passed its second anniversary of operations on September 8. The plant has incinerated about 757 tons of chemical agent. That represents about 20 percent of total Umatilla chemical agent tonnage. UMCDF has destroyed almost 94,000 of the 220,599 munitions originally stored at the depot.

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