U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL MATERIALS AGENCY

WEEKLY UPDATE

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ANNISTON CHEMICAL ACTIVITY

April 28, 2008

Nerve agent VX projectiles

Anniston Chemical Activity (ANCA) and Anniston Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (ANCDF) workers began VX-filled 155mm projectile disposal operations on June 3, 2007. VX 155mm projectiles are 27 inches long, weigh 100 pounds, and contain approximately three quarts of liquid VX. Land mine processing will complete the VX disposal campaign at the ANCDF.

Key Messages

- The Anniston chemical munition stockpile is safely stored and maintained by the employees of the Anniston Chemical Activity (ANCA) under the command of Lt.Col. Phillip M. Trued, Jr.
- Disposal is safer than indefinite storage.
- Since 1990, more than 14,480 tons of chemicals and more than 2,060,400 munitions have been safely incinerated at U.S. Army facilities.
- The U.S. Army *IS* committed to the safety of the community and the environment.

ANNISTON CHEMICAL AGENT DISPOSAL FACILITY AT THE ANNISTON ARMY DEPOT

MODEL D-60

For the few qualified to handle chemical agent-laden waste or munitions, following procedure is the difference between a 'cool job' and a deadly one

FOLLOWING SUIT

BY TODD SOUTH

A steady stream of headlights pierces the early-morning darkness as employees drive in and out of a gate on a long strip of road tucked away from busy highways and city streets.

As the sun rises over a compact industrial complex, its heart enclosed in barbed wire and guarded metal gates, some of those employees prepare, step-by-step, to handle chemical agent-laden waste or munitions.

They will soon don gas masks and air tanks and be sealed in white plastic suits — much like astronauts, they work in a setting where losing focus could kill them.

These workers are the hands that touch deadly toxins being burned at the Anniston Chemical Agent Disposal Facility at the Anniston Army Depot.

But many of the workers who enter this delicate environment say that once they're inside that suit, they're calm.

"You've got to trust your equipment and trust your partner," many entrants said.

The entrants' work starts at home. They make sure to get enough sleep the night before, drink water and eat a decent meal.

Entrants' first stop is at the onsite medical clinic where attendants check their blood pressure, pulse, hydration and weight.

If any of these signs are too far off their baseline readings — established over months or years of measurements — they cannot work in the suit that day.

Once cleared, they lay out their gear, each piece a vital link to what will keep them safe.

At the same time support teams cluster around wide tables in a locker room-like briefing area. A ripping sound and shuffling footsteps fill the room as some tear off strips of chemical-tape to seal up plastic suits while others pore over every inch of the equipment.

For the next few hours, a web-like network of support will watch nearly every move of the entrants.

First on that list is Barry Williams, the support supervisor. A 14-year veteran of chemical munitions work and a Wellborn native, he walks through each step of that day's work with his staff.

Huddled around a table, the room falls silent once the briefing begins. Williams

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Photos By Bill Wilson/The Anniston Star

Buddy Ford suits up as he prepares to handle chemical agent-laden waste or munitions at the Anniston Chemical Agent Disposal Facility.

ONLINE EXTRA! See video, photos at annistonstar.com

The Anniston Star features ANCDF employees

Media coverage highlights DPE, safety efforts

The Anniston Star published an article on March 30, 2008, that featured Westinghouse Anniston employees who make plant entries in the Demilitarization Protective Ensemble (DPE).

Anniston Milestones

- April 28, 2008: More than 46 percent of Anniston's chemical munitions have been safely incinerated.
- June 3, 2007: VX projectile disposal operations have safely demilitarized 128,959 projectiles and 79,613 gallons of VX.
- July 23, 2006 ~ March 8, 2007: All 35,662 VX-filled M55 rockets and 41,056 gallons of VX are safely demilitarized.
- August 9, 2003 ~ March 2, 2006: All 142,428 GB munitions and 96,246 gallons of GB nerve agent safely demilitarized.
- 1997 ~ 2003: Westinghouse Anniston constructs and tests the ANCDF.

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