



THE MEMPHIS DEPOT TENNESSEE

ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD COVER SHEET

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Looking for hazardous substance contamination

Testing continues at Defense Depot

By TIM SEWELL

Staff Writer

Fieldwork is under way for an environmental study at the Defense Depot Memphis.

The Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study, known as RI/FS, should confirm the presence or absence of hazardous substance contamination at the 64-acre site on Airways just north of Interstate 240.

"This study will look at everything — all past records, all areas. We really don't think they'll find anything. We've always been careful with the substances we know today to be hazardous," said Col. James Johnston, commander of the Defense Depot.

According to Johnston, the study is part of a nationwide effort by the Defense Department to investigate any sites that once served as storage areas for hazardous materials. Eventually, over 8,000 sites will be tested for contamination.

"All the facilities were prioritized by the Environmental Protection Agency," Johnston

said. "Although we didn't have to, we asked to be put at the top of the list. We're comfortable with the testing, and we wanted to get it over with."

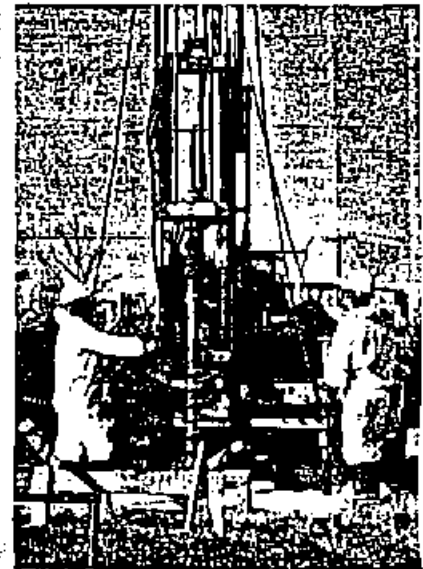
Johnston explained that about 2,000 of the 400,000 types of materials handled at the Defense Depot are considered to be hazardous. These materials include herbicides, pesticides, solvents and cleaning compounds.

"We don't have anything here that you don't have at home. The only difference is that we store a lot of it," Johnston said.

As an example, Johnston cited the chemical acetone. Found in most nail polish removers, acetone is stored at the Defense Depot in 55-gallon drums.

While the environmental study officially started in October, the actual digging of 20 test wells around the perimeter of the Defense Depot began in February.

"There was a lot of preliminary work to be taken care of first. Then we had to hold off because of all the rain," explained George (Continued on Page 3)



Test wells are being dug at the Defense Depot to determine if there is hazardous substance contamination at the site.

Defense Depot — (Continued from Page 1)

Dunn, public affairs officer at the Defense Depot.

Dunn said that the fieldwork will continue for several months and that the results of the study will be made available early next year.

The environmental study is being conducted by members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The Memphis Defense Depot stores supplies and distributes them to all military services in

the southeastern United States, Puerto Rico and Panama. The stored goods include food, clothing, electronic items, petroleum products and construction materials, along with industrial, medical and general supplies.

Opened in 1942, the facility employs over 2,200 people and is the second-largest military activity in the Memphis area.

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