



# THE MEMPHIS DEPOT TENNESSEE

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## ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD COVER SHEET

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U.S. Army Corps  
of Engineers®  
Huntsville Center

## CHEMICAL WARFARE MATERIEL REMOVAL ACTION

Former Defense Distribution Depot Memphis, Tennessee

March 2000

# Working Toward a Safer Tomorrow

## CLEANUP OF CHEMICAL WARFARE MATERIEL

### The Site

The former Defense Distribution Depot Memphis, Tennessee, covers 642 acres of land in Memphis, Shelby County, Tenn. Throughout its 55 years of operation, the site was used as a warehousing and supply distribution point for military services and some civilian agencies.

The Depot began operations in 1942 during which time the Chemical Warfare Section was activated. At that time it functioned as a storage and distribution site specifically for the Army's Engineer, Chemical and Quartermaster Corps.

### Chemical Warfare Materiel

In 1946, a single incident occurred involving bomb casings filled with the blistering agent, Mustard. The World War II German chemical bomb casings were being shipped by railroad from the port at Mobile, Ala., to storage facilities at Pine Bluff Arsenal, Ark. Some bombs were found to be leaking the Mustard chemical agent while the railcars were traveling

through Memphis on the Missouri Pacific Railroad. Three railcars carrying the bomb casings were moved to the Depot where the bomb casings could be handled properly.

Twenty-nine bomb casings were decontaminated at Dunn Field by being drained into a pit containing bleach and then burned. The bomb casings were then destroyed and burned in a separate pit.

In addition, the Depot operated as a supply point for the Chemical Corps. It stored Chemical Agent Identification Sets (CAIS), kits of glass vials that contain dilute solutions of chemical warfare agents. The sets were used to train soldiers to identify the odors of chemical agents. Depot records indicate some of the sets were buried (the proper disposal method at the time) at Dunn Field.

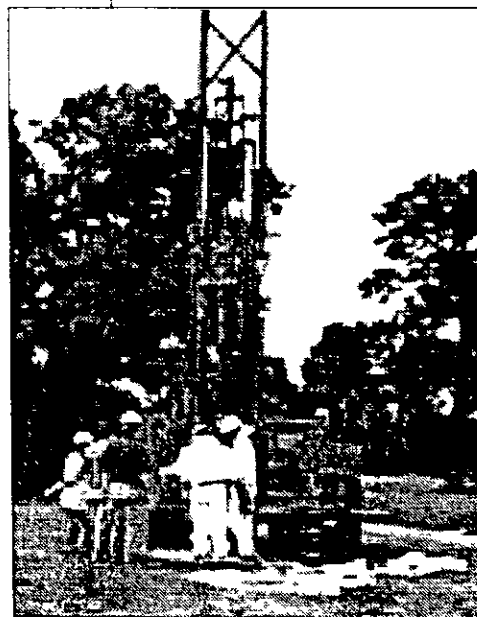
### Site Study

The Corps of Engineers performed an engineering evaluation/cost analysis to confirm

the location and extent of the buried chemical warfare materiel. The evaluation included field work, well installation, soil sampling and the use of sophisticated detection devices (similar to metal detectors).

The evaluation, conducted by Parsons Engineering Science, Inc., recommended that three suspected chemical warfare materiel disposal locations be excavated and any materiel found removed. The recommendation for excavations at these three locations was based on the Chemical Warfare Materiel Archives

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Well installation at DDMT

Search Report information and the geophysical results that indicate these areas are most likely to contain chemical warfare materiel. Removal actions ensure that the public will not be exposed to chemical warfare materiel in the future.

The state of Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation and the Environmental Protection Agency Region IV also concurred with the recommended removal action.

A copy of the engineering evaluation/cost analysis study was made available for public comment from June 1999 through August 1999. Responses to all comments received are included as an appendix in the action memorandum for this removal action. The action memorandum will be signed and available to the public before the removal action begins. These documents are available at all four of the Depot's information repositories.

## Site Safety

The excavation and removal work at Dunn Field will be conducted by the Corps' con-

tractor, UXB International, with support from the Army's Technical Escort Unit (TEU) and the Army's Edgewood Chemical and Biological Center (ECBC). The excavation and removal work is scheduled to begin in April 2000 and will be conducted according to strict Department of Defense and Department of the Army guidelines and requirements concerning chemical warfare materiel.

The Site Safety Submission document (reviewed through the appropriate Department of Defense, Department of the Army, and other regulatory channels) details the safety guidelines and requirements for the site. The document includes a work plan and a site safety plan that explains equipment, personnel, air monitoring, emergency response and contingency, storage, transportation, and public involvement requirements. The finalized document will also be available at the Depot's four repositories.

## Summary

The Defense Logistics Agency, the Memphis Depot

Caretaker Division and the Corps of Engineers take seriously their obligation to cleanup any chemical warfare materiel that may have been left behind at the Depot from past practices. The circumstances surrounding chemical warfare materiel at the Depot are well-documented and limited and isolated to Dunn Field.

The procedures and precautions used by the Corps of Engineers, its contractors and other support agencies for chemical warfare materiel projects ensure the protection of public health and the environment.

Chemical warfare materiel has been successfully and safely recovered from various sites across the country: a suburb of Washington, D.C., in 1993, 1999 and 2000; the Mississippi State Fairgrounds in Jackson, Miss., in 1995; the former Raritan Arsenal in Edison, N.J., in 1996; and the former Fort Ord, Calif., in 1997.

## For More Information

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