

Last Chemical Weapon Destroyed at Blue Grass Army Depot

BLUE GRASS ARMY DEPOT, Ky. – The last chemical weapon stored at the Blue Grass Army Depot (BGAD) was destroyed July 7, said Dr. Candace Coyle, Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP) site project manager. The munition was an M55 rocket containing GB nerve agent. “Destruction of the GB rockets not only marks the elimination of all chemical weapons at the Blue Grass Army Depot, but the destruction of all chemical weapons in the U.S. stockpile,” said Coyle. “It is a historic moment not only for us in Kentucky, but the United States and across the world. With this last munition, the Chemical Weapons Convention mandate to eliminate all declared chemical weaponsstockpiles is now globally achieved.”

Plant workers destroyed more than 101,000 rockets and projectiles throughout five munition destruction campaigns. A campaign refers to destruction of a particular type of chemical weapon. Destruction operations began in Kentucky June 2019, with more than 523 U.S. tons of chemical agent destroyed. Throughout chemical weapons destruction operations, the BGCAPP team worked closely with BGAD and Blue Grass Chemical Activity (BGCA) partners to destroy the chemical weapons. Workers from BGCA supported delivery of the last chemical weapons from storage to the plant July 3. The M55 rockets containing GB nerve agent represented more than 50% of the original chemical weapons stockpile safely stored at BGAD. Five different kinds of chemical agent-filled weapons were originally stored at the depot: 155mm projectiles containing mustard agent, 155mm projectiles containing VX nerve agent, 8-inch projectiles containing GB nerve agent, M55 rockets containing VX nerve agent and M55 rockets containing GB nerve agent.

The accomplishment has been reported to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, an intergovernmental organization that implements the Chemical Weapons Convention treaty. The Program Executive Office, Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives (PEO ACWA) was responsible for eliminating the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile by the treaty commitment date of Sept. 30, 2023.

Reactions:
 “Our constant theme throughout every munitions campaign at Blue Grass has been to safely destroy the weapons,” said Ron Hink, Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass (BPBG) project

manager. “Our team has safely completed every campaign, successfully completing our mission of destroying every chemical weapon stored in Kentucky.” “I am so proud of the entire Blue Grass Army Depot team to include the depot, BGCA, PEO ACWA and BGCAPP,” said Col. Brett Ayvazian, BGAD commander. “Team BGAD has collaborated for decades to store, safeguard and ultimately destroy the last of the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile. What a great team accomplishment for Kentucky, the Army and the world to have finally eradicated these weapons. I am thankful to have played a part in this team effort and am excited for what is ahead for BGAD and Madison County in the future.”

“All of the past and present members of the Blue Grass Chemical Activity that have supported the safe and secure storage of these chemical munitions, celebrate this historic accomplishment with all of our partners,” said Lt. Col. Tyler McKee, BGCA commander.

“Having advocated on behalf of the community’s interest for almost 40 years, it is thrilling to witness the completion of this monumental effort,” said Craig Williams, Kentucky Chemical Demilitarization Citizens’ Advisory Commission and Chemical Destruction Community Advisory Board co-chair. “Kudos to everyone involved in what can only be seen as a model of government, contractor and citizen cooperation to accomplish such an important objective.”

Background:
 Under the observation of trained operators, automated equipment disassembled the majority of the chemical weapons stored at BGAD. The chemical agent was drained from the munitions and neutralized by mixing it with water and caustic to produce hydrolysate. After the agent was confirmed destroyed, the hydrolysate was pumped into holding tanks. The hydrolysate is being safely shipped via tanker trucks and further processed at Veolia Environmental Services in Texas. As part of the VX and GB rocket destruction campaigns, the drained rocket warheads were containerized and placed in temporary storage at BGAD. Marked as agent-contaminated secondary waste, they are being destroyed in Static Detonation Chamber (SDC) units located at BGCAPP. The drained warheads that remain in storage are considered surety material, because they may contain residual chemical agent. The Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program will continue until the surety mission is complete. The non-contaminated rocket

USNA Graduate, Adam McCowan, Shares His First Salute with Grandfather, Edward McCowan



Adam McCowan earned his Oceanography degree and his Commission as a United States Naval Officer from the United States Naval Academy on May 26, 2023.

He came home to render his first salute to his grandfather, Edward McCowan on Memorial Day. Edward McCowan was in the 24th Infantry of the United States Army.

The first salute lives on as a tradition to honor the enlisted service member who has had the most impact on the newly commissioned officer. Many choose a family member who has influenced their lives. Adam has grown up listening to stories of his grandfather’s time in the military and wanted to share this time-honored tradition with him.

While the exact origin of the first salute is unknown, the tradition of the first salute is generally believed to stem from the British military practices in Colonial America. It was customary for new officers to be assigned a knowledgeable advisor from the enlisted ranks. It was the responsibility of the enlisted member to help quickly get the new officer up to speed with the military practices, customs, and history so the officer could be an effective leader. In gratitude for the valuable assistance the enlisted service member had given he was rewarded with a portion of the newly commissioned officer’s pay, which at the time amounted to \$1 a month.

motors are being shipped to Anniston, Alabama, to be destroyed in an SDC. SDC units were also used to destroy the entire mustard munition stockpile at BGAD, as well as rockets that had leaked in the past and were placed in overpack containers and other M55 rockets found unsuitable for processing in the main plant. The SDC units use thermal destruction technology to process the munitions and munition components.

PEO ACWA was responsible for destroying the remaining U.S. chemical weapons stockpile in Colorado and Kentucky. The last chemical weapon stored at the U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot was destroyed June 22, 2023. PEO ACWA oversees the contract for design,

construction, systemization, operation and closure of BGCAPP with BPBG and teaming partners Amentum, Battelle Memorial Institute and GP Strategies.

In June 2019, the BGCAPP team began destroying more than 15,000 155mm projectiles containing mustard agent using an SDC. The mustard agent destruction campaign was completed in September 2021. The other four campaigns were completed in the main plant. From January through May 2020, nearly 4,000 8-inch projectiles containing GB nerve agent were destroyed. From January through May 2021, nearly 13,000 155mm projectiles containing VX nerve agent were destroyed. From July 2021 through April 2022,

See ‘WEAPON’ Page 14

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LEGALS

Notice is hereby given that Nola Turner has been appointed Administratrix of the estate of Billy Turner by the Jackson

County District Court. All persons having claims against the estate of Billy Turner are requested to present same, verified according to law, to said Administratrix within six months from 7.10.2023. All persons indebted to said estate are notified to pay said indebtedness to the Administratrix. Attorney: Case #: 23.P.00104

Notice is hereby given that Wanda Faye

Baldwin has been appointed Executrix of the estate of Harold Baldwin by the Jackson County District Court. All persons having claims against the estate of Harold Baldwin are requested to present same, verified according to law, to said Executrix within six months from 7.10.2023. All persons indebted to said estate are notified to pay said indebtedness to the Executrix. Attorney: V. Katie Gilliam

Case #: 23. P.00096

Notice is hereby given that Darren Q Hollett and Marc E. Hollett has been appointed Co-Executors of the estate of Daisy Hollett by the Jackson County District Court. All persons having claims against the estate of Daisy Hollett are requested to present same, verified by law, to said Co-Executors. All persons indebted to said estate are notified to pay said indebtedness to the

Co-Executors. Attorney: Joshua Murray Case #: 23.P.094

Notice is hereby given that Deborah Shepherd has been appointed Executrix of the estate of Julie (aka Julie) Halcomb by the Jackson County District Court. All persons having claims against the estate

of Julie (aka Julie) Halcomb are requested to present same, verified according to law, to said Executrix within six months from 7.10.2023. All persons indebted to said estate are notified to pay said indebtedness to the Executrix. Attorney: Joshua Murray Case #: 23.P.072

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