



## News Release

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### **Syria's chemical weapons destroyed, ECBC volunteers about to return home to Edgewood**

*More than 600 tons of chemical agent safely destroyed on board MV Cape Ray, including mustard agent and sarin precursor.*

**ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md.** – In the international waters of the Mediterranean Sea on Aug. 18, specialists from the U.S. Army Edgewood Chemical Biological Center (ECBC), the Joint Project Manager for Elimination and the Chemical Materials Activity (CMA) celebrate the success of an historic mission: destroying more than 600 tons of Syria's chemical weapon stockpile.

The celebration of the success continued as Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel called Navy Captain Rich Dromerhauser aboard the U.S. ship MV Cape Ray to congratulate the crew on neutralizing the most dangerous chemicals in Syria's declared stockpile. Secretary Hagel said that by ridding the world of these materials, they - as part of an ongoing international effort to eliminate the Syrian chemical weapons arsenal - have helped make an important and enduring contribution to global security.

"I am very proud of the team of civilian employees who volunteered for this mission and who worked so diligently to ensure the safe destruction of these chemical warfare materials," said ECBC Director Joseph Wienand. "The team trained hard, they remained focused on the mission despite the long separation from loved ones back home. They did what no one else could do by using their experience and innovative technology to destroy these Syrian chemical warfare materials while on a ship at sea."

Everything about the mission was unprecedented, from the six-month acquisition of the Field Deployable Hydrolysis System (FDHS) technology to retrofitting the MV Cape Ray in order to install two of the FDHS systems on board. It all began with the collaboration among the members of Team CBRNE (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives), a cluster of Department of Defense organizations located at the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground dedicated to countering weapons of mass destruction (WMD). ECBC spearheaded the design and manufacturing of the FDHS, as well as the chemistry behind the neutralization process and in-the-field experience to execute destruction operations.

"The team and I are deeply honored to have taken a system we conceived, built and installed on a ship and used it to safely and effectively eliminate the principal chemicals in the Syrian stockpile" said Tim Blades, the Director of Operations on board the Cape Ray. "In almost 40 years of leading and performing chemical operations I have never been more proud of a team's performance."

ECBC and the other organizations involved in the mission have demonstrated a model of collaboration necessary to produce and field new technologies for critical missions that move countries toward a world free of WMD. ECBC has executed demilitarization missions for decades using a variety of land-based systems like CMA's Explosive Destruction System (EDS) or the Transportable Detonation Chamber.

"The main advantage during FDHS development was that we didn't have to design the system from scratch. We were able to go with the knowledge and experience we already had, including the field operations expertise with ECBC's Chemical Biological Application and Risk Reduction (CBARR) Business Unit," said Adam Baker, ECBC chemical engineer. "It's great for ECBC to get recognized as one of the premier experts in chemical demilitarization operations."

Now, with the joint mission of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations complete, the crew returns home to Edgewood. This mission takes Team CBRNE one step closer in its efforts to rid the world of WMD.



**Photo Caption: MV Cape Ray is towed by an Italian tugboat to moor the ship as she docks at Medcenter Container Terminal in preparation to receive cargo containing specific chemical agents from MV Ark Futura. The crew of the MV Cape Ray completed the destruction of Syria's chemical weapon stockpile on Aug. 18 in accordance with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) guidelines while operating in international waters. Credit: U.S. Navy Seaman Desmond Parks.**

For more information about ECBC, visit <http://www.ecbc.army.mil/>.

*ECBC is the Army's principal research and development center for chemical and biological defense technology, engineering and field operations. ECBC has achieved major technological advances for the warfighter and for our national defense, with a long and distinguished history of providing the Armed Forces with quality systems and outstanding customer service. ECBC is a U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command laboratory located at the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. For more information about the Edgewood Chemical Biological Center, please visit our website at <http://www.ecbc.army.mil> or call (410) 436-7118.*

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