



News Release

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ECBC technical experts to operate EDS at Pueblo Pilot Plant *CBARR Business Unit supports demilitarization effort in Colorado*

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – The Program Executive Office for Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives announced on April 18 that it has selected the U.S. Army's Explosive Destruction System (EDS) to support the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) at the Pueblo Chemical Depot, Colo.

"We looked closely at cost, schedule and technical factors," said Program Executive Officer Conrad F. Whyne in an April 18 press release, "and found that the EDS is fully capable of doing the work we need it to do, while offering the best overall value to the taxpayer."

The U.S. Army Edgewood Chemical Biological Center (ECBC) has a special team of operators, technicians and chemists—the Chemical Biological Application and Risk Reduction (CBARR) Business Unit—that are qualified to operate the system, which was designed for the safe destruction of chemical munitions. The Chemical Materials Activity (CMA) owns and developed the EDS, which was chosen by PEO ACWA after a lengthy review of several technologies. An environmental assessment was conducted in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and concluded that EDS operations would not have any significant environmental impact.

The equipment is needed to destroy chemical munitions that cannot be easily processed through the PCAPP. According to PEO ACWA, these munitions may have leaked in the past, are overpacked or are in such a deteriorated physical condition that they are not suitable for automated processing.

"CBARR has supported numerous demilitarization operations across the country with trained and experienced personnel that support ACWA and CMA's call for the elimination of the nation's stockpile of chemical weapons," said Ray Diberardo, CBARR project manager.

The PCAPP was built onsite at the depot to safely destroy the chemical weapons stockpile that has been stored there since the 1950s and contains more than 2,600 tons of mustard agent. Processes such as neutralization followed by biotreatment and explosive destruction technologies like the EDS have been chosen as safe and effective methods used to eliminate the stockpile.

Unlike an open detonation, which uses explosives to destroy chemical agent, the EDS instead seals munitions inside a steel chamber, then uses explosives to access the contents of the munition, expose the chemical agent and destroy the burster.

Chemicals are then added to the chamber to neutralize the munition's fill of chemical agent. The blast, vapor and fragments are all contained inside the stainless steel chamber, where destruction of the chemical agent is confirmed by CBARR operators who provide onsite sampling and analysis of the residual liquid and air inside.

CBARR has operated the transportable EDS at project sites across the country, including Washington, D.C., Delaware, Arkansas, Alabama, Utah and Colorado. A prototype of the EDS was in operational testing in the United Kingdom more than 12 years ago when the call came to deploy to the former Rocky Mountain Arsenal, Colorado. There, on Jan. 28, 2001, the EDS conducted its first mission, safely destroying recovered GB bomblets that were considered unsafe for transport. Since then, the partnership between CMA and ECBC has resulted in many EDS deployments and the safe destruction of nearly 1,800 munitions.

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.

30