

BASE VISIT REPORT

NEWPORT CHEMICAL DEPOT

JUNE 6, 2005

LEAD COMMISSIONER: Commissioner Samuel K. Skinner

COMMISSION STAFF: Mr. George Delgado and Ryan Dean

LIST OF ATTENDEES: see attached

BASE'S PRESENT MISSION:

The Newport Chemical Depot is one of eight Army installations in the U.S. with a chemical agent stockpile. Newport's current stockpile of 1,270 tons of VX, is stored in 200-gallon carbon steel cylinders. There are no chemical munitions at the depot.

The depot houses a chemical agent disposal facility designed solely for the purpose of destroying Newport's inventory of VX nerve agent, which the Army manufactured on site at Newport from 1961 to 1968. The disposal facility utilizes a chemical neutralization process employed at three other Army chemical agent disposal facilities to break down its VX stockpile.

The demolition of the chemical weapons production facility located on Newport Chemical Depot is part of a coordinated campaign by the United States to eliminate its chemical weapons production capabilities. In response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Army made a decision to accelerate the neutralization schedule for the VX stored at the depot. The Army is working in partnership with Indiana state and local government agencies, as well as federal agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to implement this accelerated disposal plan in a way that is safe to local residents and the surrounding environment.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RECOMMENDATION:

Close Newport Chemical Depot, IN.

Library Routing Slip 2004 D-100 Control Materials
Title: Base Visit Report
Institution or Community: Newport Chemical Depot
Source: Commission Generated
Filed Material? Yes No
List / Provider: George Delgado Date Received: _____

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JUSTIFICATION:

There is no additional chemical demilitarization workload slated to go to Newport Chemical Depot. The projected date for completion of existing workload is 2nd quarter of 2008. There is no further use for Newport Chemical Depot.

MAIN FACILITIES REVIEWED :

The entire depot was reviewed, including administrative, support, storage, chemical disposal plant, and surrounding land.

KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

1. Newport Chemical Depot stores VX nerve agent in 1,700 tonne (TC) containers that each hold approximately 200 gallons of the chemical agent. Parsons, the demilitarization contractor, started VX destruction on May 5, 2005. At peak efficiency the contractor expects to destroy the agent contained in 80 containers every month. At this rate and including stoppage for 4 maintenance periods Parsons estimates completion of the agent destruction in 30 months or by October of 2007. Depot managers estimate that the facility could close by November of 2008, dependent on the level of dismantling that will be required. All estimates are subject to change if problems arise as events unfold.
2. The Army planned for a DuPont Co. plant in New Jersey to take the by-product of VX neutralization – a caustic wastewater known as hydrolysate (CVXH) – further treat it, and dispose of it via release into the Delaware River. Due to opposition in New Jersey and Delaware this plan is under review.
3. The validity of cost savings particularly projected savings related to recapitalization costs.
4. The depot will benefit from closure under BRAC as resources will become available for site personnel relocation and training, for the community to continue planning for reuse, and for the environmental cleanup of the installation.
5. State and community environmental concerns from Indiana.
6. The BRAC recommendation was built using FY03 baseline data, personnel and environmental figures have changed since then. Newport Chemical Depot is a Government Owned Contractor Operated (GOCO) facility. Staffing levels provided by the depot as of 6/4/05 are – 3 military, 30 Army civilian, and 15 contract support staff for government employees. The military guard force has been civilianized. Three contractors are operating the facility as follows; Mason & Hanger Corporation/Day Zimmerman, Philadelphia has 329 personnel for base operations, Parsons, Pasadena, CA. has 501 personnel (including sub-contractors) for the destruction of the VX, and the Tennessee Valley Authority, Muscle Shoals, AL has 125 personnel for the destruction of the former VX production facility. Contractor personnel will be released upon completion of the work specified in the contract.

INSTALLATION CONCERNS RAISED

No installation concerns were raised during the visit.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS RAISED:

There was no representation from the community during the site visit with staff or Commissioner.

REQUESTS FOR STAFF AS A RESULT OF VISIT:

1. Obtain a new estimated timeline for completion of the chemical demilitarization mission from the facility.
2. Obtain age demographic information for the civilian employees at the depot.
3. Further examine cost information, particularly the recapitalization cost savings in COBRA for validity.

DCN: 4027

NEWPORT CHEMICAL DEPOT
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