Weaver incineration: government's solution

PART OF 2

INCINERATOR

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In 1985 Congress instructed the Department of Defense to destroy the nation's stockpile of chemical weapons and agents in a manner that would maximize both environmental protection and public safety.

The army's solution: Chemical demilitarization through incineration. According to the Army this is a three-step process:

First the weapons are taken apart by machines that separate the agents and explosives from the munitions' bodies.

Secondly, each weapon is incinerated in one of four specifically designed incinerators. These include the liquid furnace for destroying explosive materials, the metal parts furnace for decontaminating the projectile and bulk container bodies, and the damage incinerator for destroying trash accumulated through operations.

Finally, a pollution abatement system cools and scrubs the exhaust gases of each incinerator and removes particles so the gases can be safely released into the air.

Three types of lethal agents are in the chemical weapons which are designated as: GB, VX, and H.

GB and VX disturb the central nervous system and can sometimes cause death.

GB and VX agents are contained inside several different munitions including rocketers, bombs, mines, and projectiles. GB and VX are also stored in one-ton containers and spray tanks.

The agents are stockpiled at nine sites. The remaining site is Johnston Island in the South Pacific.

Johnston Island, known as JACADS, in addition to being a stockpile site is also the first full-scale disposal facility. The site is not without problems. Costs continue to rise at Johnston Island and there are constant delays of operation.

Because of maintenance problems the Johnston Island facility did not operate at all on 32 of the 105 scheduled processing days.

The greatest source of maintenance problems was during the second campaign when there was an explosion in the deactivation furnace used to destroy explosive material. The system was shut down for sixteen days in order to inspect and repair a two by eight inch hole in the furnace, caused by the explosion.

According to the Army, the explosion did not release chemical agents into the atmosphere, nor did it cause any injuries. The only damage sustained was to the furnace itself.

Other problems developed when the liquid incinerator frequently failed to reach the temperature required to assure complete incineration of the deadly chemicals.

Ross Vincent, a chemical engineer and activist with Sierra Club, an environmental action group in Pueblo, Colorado calls incineration an "obsolete technology" with "unacceptable environmental and public health risks."

Vincent said the Army should abandon its incinerator plans and resort to an alternative form of destruction.

Vincent's suggestion gained credibility when the National Academy of Sciences issued a report examining dozens of alternative technologies for destroying the arsenal.

Two alternatives mentioned in the report are molten metal pyrolysis and neutralization. Ideally, neutralization would produce no gaseous emissions at all.

The idea is simply to neutralize the agents, but the containers must still be disposed of in some way.

The Alpha Xi's help the Wesley Foundation plant a garden. Alpha Xi owes Wesley 125 hours of community service because of a deal struck at Casino Night.

JSU remembers Holocaust victims

Virginia Teague
Staff Writer

"It was worse than slave labor. We were sub-human." This was just one of the remembrances of Benny Lane, the keynote speaker at last week's Holocaust Commemoration.

The ceremony began with prayer and a candle lighting service. Two young girls then read excerpts from "The Terezin Poems," written by people who spent their childhood in the Terezin ghetto.

One of the poems, "The Last Butterfly," tells of a small child watching a yellow butterfly leave the ghetto because it cannot live there.

Lane used that same image to describe his experiences which began in the Minsk ghetto. His family arrived at Minsk in 1941 in a cattle car. They had been awakened in the middle of the night and told they had six hours to get ready to leave. He was 11-years-old. When Land and his family arrived in the ghetto they had to move dead bodies to find a place to sleep.

Over the next four years Lane spent time in a total of 15 camps, was liberated.

"One more day and I would not be here with you tonight." Lane's mother, father and brother were not among the liberated. They were among the dead.

"I am one of the very few (survivors) living in the world." Lane said, "It is very important for people to remember."

The ceremony concluded with members of Temple Beth-El reciting the Kaddish. The Kaddish is usually recited by mourners at public services following the death of close relatives. Last week, it was recited in remembrance of the millions systematically killed during World War II.

JSU instructors take part in Cultural Arts remembrance

Two Jacksonville State history instructors will be actively involved in the upcoming exhibition "Lest We Forget: Voices and Images of World War II." The exhibition opens May 14 at the Center for Cultural Arts in Gadsden and runs through Sept. 30.

JSU history professor Harvey Jackson will serve as a consulting historian and Ted Childress, also of the JSU history department will provide insights into the Homefront.

The exhibit will take up 10,000 square ft of space.

"We're doing this exhibition to honor the World War II generation," said Center executive director Bobby Welch. "It has been 50 years since the war. If not now - when?"

The show will fill the Center's entire second floor. A pre-war and aftermath timeline covering the century's two pivotal