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NEWSPAPER ARTICLE "MILITARY ACTS TO CONTAIN NORMAL SOIL EROSION" NCBC
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At Herbicide Orange site

Military acts to contain normal soil erosion

The U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy, acting on recent Air Force monitoring results, today announced actions to contain normal soil erosion at the former Herbicide Orange storage site at the Naval Construction Battalion Center in Gulfport.

A 15-acre site of the NCBC had been used from 1968-1977 for storage of about 840,000 gallons of the herbicide, prior to its incineration at sea in the Western Pacific.

Officials said test results show that very low levels (parts per billion) of the herbicide's contaminant, TCDD, commonly known as dioxin, have been detected in drainage ditch sediment in and near the former storage site.

In an extensive environmental monitoring report, the USAF Occupational and Environmental Health Laboratory (OEHL), also confirmed "barely detectable" levels (parts per trillion) in some specimens of aquatic life.

"These specimens," officials said, "are believed to have entered the drainage ditch during seasonal high water levels, and then returned to a nearby canal that carries municipal surface drainage. The TCDD found in the aquatic life taken from the canal is well below the Food and Drug Administration's suggested maximum per-

missible level of 100 parts per trillion."

They said to stem any further erosion, they plan physical containment of soil particles within the site.

TCDD is not water soluble, and, the Navy said, appears to move only as part of soil sediment. A barrier farther down the drainage ditch is also being considered to prevent migration of any aquatic life up the ditch.

The Navy said sampling will continue to ensure that contamination is controlled. "Follow-on research will be undertaken to explore methods to return the storage area to full and beneficial use," the Navy report said. "The U.S. Air Force will provide financing and the U.S. Navy will perform design and construction. Design is already underway with completion expected soon. Construction should begin early next year."

Air Force and contractual laboratories have been conducting environmental surveys of the soil, plants, and aquatic systems in and around the Herbicide Orange storage area since 1970. The most recent (December 3, 1979) results, as obtained by lengthy "state of the art" analyses at the Mass Spectrometry Laboratory of the University of Nebraska, prompted the containment

recommendations.

Spokesmen said state officials are cooperating in the ongoing effort to insure there will be no threat to public health.