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NEWSPAPER ARTICLE "AIR FORCE TO BEGIN SOIL PROCESSING AT FORMER
HERBICIDE ORANGE SITE" NCBC GULFPORT MS
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SEABEE COURIER

Large-scale testing set for July**Air Force to begin soil processing at former herbicide orange site**

HQ AFESC, TYNDALL AFB, Fla. — The Air Force will begin activities in July for large-scale testing of technology to remove dioxin contamination at a former herbicide orange storage site on the Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC), Gulfport, Miss.

The \$5.4 million research project will be run by the Air Force Engineering and Services Center (AFESC) Laboratory at Tyndall AFB, Panama City, Fla. Though still listed and funded as strictly a research and development effort, the project could actually result in total reclamation of the site because of the large volume of soil necessary for scientific validation of the treatment process. AFESC scientists estimate processing some 9000 tons of contaminated soil at NCBC.

Completion of the project is

expected by the end of this year, depending on administrative processing and approval of the permit application, filed with the Environmental Protection Agency in January.

Laboratory officials say it will take approximately six weeks for the primary civilian contractor, Ensco Corp., of Franklin, Tenn., to set up their equipment on the site. Ensco will then conduct a test run and submit soil samples for verification prior to full-scale processing operations. Analysis, monitored by AFESC scientists, will be conducted in a special laboratory facility on the site, and will be verified by additional samples sent to another independent laboratory.

Once certification is complete, and acknowledged by the EPA as effective in returning the soil to safe condi-

tion, officials say it should take about 90 days to complete the project. Scientists say the on-site lab will speed-up the process since they'll be able to analyze the soil as it's being treated and immediately put it back on the site.

The large-scale test follows small-scale technology demonstrations conducted by the AFESC Laboratory at the site last summer. The thermal treatment process to be used at NCBC has also been the subject of sanctioned testing by the EPA.

The Air Force stored herbicide orange (a defoliant used in Vietnam) at the Navy base in the 70's. Nearly one million gallons of the dioxin-contaminated liquid were safely incinerated aboard the incineration ship Vulcanus in 1977. However, small spills, most measuring less than six inches in diameter, occurred

from leaking during storage and while moving the drums and pumping the chemical into large tanks for transportation to the ship.

The Air Force has continuously monitored and sampled the area, as well as nearby Turkey Creek, in addition to their research and development efforts. Sampling still has revealed no

health threat to nearby communities or wildlife.

The AFESC Laboratory is responsible for the Air Force Environmental Quality Research and Development Program, developing methods and techniques to detect and abate the impact of pollutants which have or may result from the deployment of Air Force systems.

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