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NEWSPAPER ARTICLE "AIR FORCE BEGINS TESTING DIOXIN REMOVAL TECHNOLOGY
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Air force begins testing dioxin removal technology at NCBC

HQ AFESC, Gulfport, Miss. — The Air Force will begin large scale testing of dioxin removal technology this month at the Naval Construction Battalion Center here, a former storage site used in the 70s for the Vietnam-era defoliant herbicide orange.

The first components of the incinerator arrived here this week. Three over-sized flatbed tractor-trailer rigs transported the components from the manufacturer in White Bluff, Tenn., accompanied by six semi-trailers of additional equipment. Set-up and installation will take approximately sixty days.

The \$5.4 million research project, managed by the Air Force Engineering and Services Center (AFESC) Laboratory at Tyndall AFB, Panama City, Fla., is de-

signed to discover an efficient, cost effective method of removing contamination from soil. The project has been sanctioned and closely coordinated with officials from the Environmental Protection Agency.

Activities began last year with technology demonstrations, processing small quantities of soil from the 12-acre site to initially evaluate various methods. The large scale test will involve processing some 9000 tons of soil, using a two-stage incineration method, chosen as the most successful for the type of soil at NCBC. The test will determine whether or not the equipment can handle the large quantities of soil necessary to reclaim contaminated land, returning it to a useful condition.

Scientists from the AFESC facil-

ity, the Air Force's lead laboratory in environmental research and development, estimate completing the test early next year.

During this large scale test, scientists will also conduct another experiment, focused on removing contamination from concrete. A small concrete slab on the site, found to be contaminated, will be used to test an "in-place" method of removing dioxins using a special chemical wash. Pulverized concrete samples will be tested in an on-site laboratory, and then, for safety, run through the soil processing equipment to ensure dioxin removal.

The Air Force has been monitoring the site since the 70s. The contamination is completely contained, and sampling to date has revealed no health threat

to nearby communities or wildlife in the area. The site is not used, and fenced and posted off-limits.

More than 17,000 55 gallon drums, formerly stored at NCBC, were safely incinerated in 1977, aboard an incineration ship at sea. The soil contamination resulted from small spills, most measuring less than six inches in diameter, from leakage of the drums during storage and while pumping the defoliant into large tanks for transportation to the ship.

The AFESC laboratory is responsible for the Air Force's Environmental Quality 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.