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NEWSPAPER ARTICLE "NO CONTAMINANTS IN BURNED SEABEE BASE SOIL, TESTS
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No contaminants in burned Seabee base soil, tests show

By **W. ROBERT PADGETT**
STAFF WRITER

■ Dioxin-laced soil burned by the Air Force at the Naval Construction Battalion Center in Gulfport has been declared free of contaminants after laboratory tests, an Air Force spokesman said Monday.

"All of the treated soil to date has passed our criteria," Maj. Terry Stoddart, the Air Force's project manager, said. "As far as I know, they (labs) weren't able to detect anything in the soil."

Each time soil is burned in an on-site hazardous-waste incinerator, a sample is taken and sent to a laboratory. The remainder of the treated soil is stored in large metal tanks.

If the samples contain less than one part per billion of dioxin, which is what the federal government considers safe, the rest of soil is placed back on the site, Stoddart said.

Stoddart added that the air around the excavation site is being monitored

24 hours a day and that air quality meets federal standards.

The Air Force began burning the soil last November and had expected to finish the job by May. So far, the Air Force has burned about 2,050 tons of the 15,000 tons of dirt, Stoddart said.

Stoddart said Monday the burning will take a little longer than the 150 days expected because of mechanical problems with the incinerator.

Stoddart said the incinerator has been shut down three times for more than 24 hours at a time to remove dust from cement in the soil that has gotten caught in one of the furnaces.

The incinerator is made up of two furnaces. The contaminated dirt is first placed in a rotating furnace, then transferred to a second furnace where it is burned at 2,200 degrees Fahrenheit.

Normally, material other than dirt is released from the first furnace. But the turbulence from the first furnace

sometimes pushes the fine dust into the second furnace, Stoddart said.

"We've had to shut (the incinerator) down in order to remove the cement dust from the second furnace," he said.

"We've estimated 150 days of operation, so each day of delay will push the completion date back. But we're not looking at a major delay."

The Seabee base has about 18 acres of dioxin-laced soil. The dioxin leaked into the ground from more than 17,000 barrels of the defoliant Agent Orange which were stored at the base in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Dioxin is an ingredient in Agent Orange, which medical experts have linked to skin disease, birth defects, cancer and other health problems.

More than 18 million gallons of Agent Orange were sprayed in and around combat areas in South Vietnam until the defoliant was banned in 1971.



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**Maj. Terry
Stoddart**

*Info from phone interview
on 1/11/88*