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NEWSPAPER ARTICLE "GOOD RIDDANCE TO AGENT ORANGE" NCBC GULFPORT MS  
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# Opinion



## Good riddance to Agent Orange

Whatever finally does happen to the 825,000 gallons of Herbicide Orange, now stored at the Seabee Center in Gulfport, must certainly be an improvement over the situation that now exists, and has quietly existed since 1970.

The Air Force, after two years of looking at the problem of what to do with the defoliant, has now proposed burning it at sea in a remote site in the Pacific. The Environmental Protection Agency must eventually make the decision to accept, or reject, the Air Force plan. For 30 days, public and governmental agencies may file statements approving or criticizing the burn-at-sea plan.

It was a happenstance that the defoliant lodged at Gulfport in the first place. The 15,000 55-gallon drums were on their way to Vietnam when the Air Force adopted a ban on its use.

The ban followed an earlier one by the Department of Agriculture after some scientists said one of the chemicals it contained caused birth defects in laboratory animals.

So for four years, the Air Force has been the embarrassed owner of huge quantities of unwanted materials and the Seabee Center has been the not-too-happy repository. The drums, no doubt, are sturdy ones but with the continued passage of time, some deterioration in the containers must be expected, increasing the hazards of an accidental leak.

Alternate methods of disposal have been considered, including its sale and use in a controlled situation where it might be useful and not harmful, incineration on land, deep well disposal, underground burial, fractionation, chloroanalysis and soil biodegradation.

Whatever method is chosen, Gulf Coast residents will breathe somewhat easier when the controversial stuff is taken away. It was only intended to linger here for a brief time before continuing its journey to the war zones.

An expeditious implementation of whatever plan EPA finally approves is urged.