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NCBC GULFPORT
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NEWSPAPER ARTICLE "ROLL OUT THE BARRELS" NCBC GULFPORT MS
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The Sun's views

Roll out the barrels

There has been too much vacillation over how to get rid of Herbicide Orange, the toxic chemical stored in barrels at the Gulfport Seabee Center.

Months, maybe years, were spent talking about reprocessing the defoliant to remove the poisonous dioxin. That plan finally fell through because it was too difficult to find a place to store the dioxin.

The problem is that the chemical, once used as a defoliant in the Vietnam War, has been sitting in Gulfport for seven years. It hardly needs stating that seven years is a long enough time for barrels to erode and become flimsy.

That's why we hope desperately that the current proposal to ship the chemical to sea in the Dutch ship *Vulcanus* and incinerate it goes through promptly.

According to testimony at a recent hearing in Washington, incineration can be safely accomplished. We'll accept that. We'll accept just about anything that will get the chemical off the Coast.

But more foot-dragging could endanger the project. The *Vulcanus* may be available next month. But that means the Environmental Protection Agency will have to move faster than it usually does with the required paper work.

And if the *Vulcanus*, with its special incinerating equipment, is not obtained for operations in May, the project could drag on for more months.

Some red tape snipping is in order. Seven years is too long. It's high time we got Herbicide Orange off the Coast.