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NEWSPAPER ARTICLE "REMOVAL OF HERBICIDE ORANGE STALLED" NCBC GULFPORT  
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# Removal of Herbicide Orange stalled

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The removal of more than 850,000 gallons of deadly Herbicide Orange from Gulfport has been stalled for 10 days as the Air Force awaits the arrival of the vehicle for the defoliant's destruction.

A delay in the arrival of the Dutch incinerator ship Vulcanus, which had been scheduled to arrive at the State Port at Gulfport Tuesday, forced the postponement, the Air Force said Thursday.

Additional time was necessary, the Air Force said, for the ship to be modified to carry and burn the cargo in the Pacific Ocean.

The Vulcanus has been on commercial duty in the Gulf of Mexico, destroying

wastes from Shell Oil Co.

Pumps must be readied and its tanks relined before the ship can accept the poisonous weed-killer. The Vulcanus is now expected at Gulfport on May 21.

Efforts to pump the 15,000 55-gallon drums of the defoliant from the Gulfport Seabee Base aboard railroad tank cars bound for the port will begin May 18.

Previously, the Air Force confirmed that the ship was due at Gulfport on May 11, one day later than scheduled, because the vessel had not yet been contracted for the burning.

Negotiations are continuing for leasing the ship, to burn not only Gulfport's supply of the herbicide but another 1.5 million gallons

stored at Johnston Island in the Pacific, officials said Friday, but no final agreement had been reached.

The expected cost for the incineration venture has now climbed to \$4 million from the original \$3 million estimated price tag.

The recent delay would be used to provide further training for de-drumming and pumping the herbicide aboard the tank cars, said Col. Stanley A. Morrow, project manager.

"This will allow us to further define our procedures and insure that any potential problems are fully worked out before we go into operation," Morrow said.

More than 100 airmen and officers will be involved in the removal tasks. When those tasks

are completed and the ship readied, railroad cars will be moved to the port during the early daylight.

The Air Force timetable now sets June 4 as the date expected for the Vulcanus to leave the Coast for its mid-Pacific destination.

A permit was issued last month by the Environmental Protection Agency for the oceanic destruction after years of attempts to find other disposal methods.

Herbicide Orange, once called Agent Orange, has been stored at Gulfport while the Air Force has tried to get rid of it since 1970 when the military stopped using the herbicide in Vietnam after an abnormally-high number of Vietnamese babies were born with birth defects.

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