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NEWSPAPER ARTICLE "NAVY BEGINS REMOVING CONTAMINATED SOIL" NCBC  
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# Navy begins removing contaminated soil

## Dioxin cleanup makes way for project

**By PATRICK PETERSON**  
THE SUN HERALD

■ GULFPORT — The U.S. Navy today will begin removing dioxin-contaminated soil along 28th Street so a construction project to widen that road can begin.

Some 500 cubic yards of dirt will be stored in a lined pit at the Naval Construction Battalion Center, said Gordon Crane, environmental program

manager at the center.

"We'll take all the precautions. This way, we're able to remove it and store it rather than hold up the project," Crane said.

Dirt will be removed from the north and south sides of 28th Street at 53rd Avenue, at Canal Road and at a spot about 200 yards east of Canal Road.

The dioxin likely came from Agent Orange that was stored on the base in the 1960s and burned at sea in 1977.

Some of the barrels leaked during handling. The contaminated soil was burned in 1987 and 1988 to destroy the chemical.

Dioxin binds with the soil and probably traveled off the base with soil sediment that washed into ditches. The level of dioxin in the soil is above the present federal minimum. Dioxin at that level only affects people if they eat, breath or come into contact with contaminated soil over a long period of time. Levels in the soil are small and the soil will be moved carefully.

"There will be no exposure to any-

body, so there will be no risk to anybody," Crane said.

The soil will be stored in a pit at the center. The Environmental Protection Agency is re-evaluating the toxicity of dioxin and might rule that the soil poses no health hazard. In some states, dioxin at this level would not be considered a hazard.

"We are designing a fairly elaborate pit," Crane said. "It's going to stay there until the EPA decides what level of dioxin is an action level."

Moving the soil will take up to 10 days and will cost \$150,000.

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State per Lead Bessette.

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