

# News Release

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## Corps uncovers mustard by-products in soil

**Washington, D.C.**--The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, will complete its third week of intrusive work for the current investigation for chemical warfare materials at one property on Glenbrook Road in the Spring Valley neighborhood. For the first time since the work began on March 29, soil samples taken from a depth of five feet contained traces of dithiane, a mustard by-product.

In addition, two unknown cylindrical containers approximately 3" by 13", glass jars, lab spatula, pieces of pipe, portion of a drum band, shards of thick ceramic, and a glass stopper were uncovered. All items were packed and safely transported to the Interim Holding Facility located on federal property. To date, one-hundred thirteen 55-gallon barrels of soil have been excavated from the location that's been expanded to 11' by 15'.

Technicians also removed a large tree root that had been hampering digging efforts. With the removal of the root, digging will go quicker and work at the first location should be completed by April 20. Work will temporarily stop from April 21 to 26 because of security concerns associated with the upcoming NATO conference.

During a 1997 review of the Operation Safe Removal project, the Corps determined that the Glenbrook Road property should be further investigated. Historical documents indicated the possibility of a disposal pit of 5-gallon mustard and/or lewisite containers. In February 1998 the Corps conducted a geophysical survey of the Glenbrook site to identify any soil disturbances or the presence of metallic objects that would require an intrusive investigation. During the survey, 11 anomalies were identified. Two could not be easily explained, and were indicative of possible burial pits for chemical warfare material.

Operation Safe Removal was a three-year investigation from 1993-1995 by the Corps in the Spring Valley area to determine if buried ordnance and explosive waste and hazardous substances still existed at this formerly used defense site known as American University Experiment Station. From 1917 to 1920 military personnel conducted research on and performed small-scale testing of chemical warfare items at the experiment station.

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**Note: The media will not be allowed at the actual site of the digging. Any media wishing interviews or file footage should call the Corps' Spring Valley office at 202-686-3154 or the Baltimore Public Affairs Office at 410-962-2809.**

