



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Baltimore District

# The Corps'pondent

a newsletter by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the residents of Spring Valley

June/July 2003

## Army completes destruction of chemical munitions

by Gary Schilling  
Lead Project Manager, Spring Valley

On June 10, experts from the U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency successfully completed the destruction of 15 World War I chemical munitions recovered from the investigation and cleanup of the Spring Valley site.

A mobile system, known as the Explosive Destruction System, or EDS, was used to safely treat and neutralize the chemical agent fill in each of the 15 chemical munitions.

With the completion of this activity, all chemical and conventional munitions recovered since the start of the Corps' follow-on investigation in 1999 have now been destroyed.

Although this was the first time the EDS was used at Spring Valley, the EDS has been used to destroy over 95 recovered chemical weapons across the country. The EDS has been transported off the Spring Valley site.

In other project activities, approximately 240 anomalies identified in the area historically known as the Spaulding/Captain Rankin area, have been investigated and field cleared. No intact munitions and only a few scrap fragments of munitions have been found. The Corps is currently assessing the remaining work in this area.

The larger effort to investigate other Spring Valley areas for potentially buried World War I munitions continues.

The latest group of these properties, consisting of 12 properties, has been surveyed using geophysical equipment designed to locate buried metal objects. Ordnance experts to determine if any follow-on work will be needed are evaluating the data from these surveys. This group included properties on Sedgwick Street and in the Spaulding/Captain Rankin area.

The next group of 10-12 properties will likely be surveyed next fiscal year.

Elsewhere, backfilling and restoration operations at the American University intramural fields and the grounds around the university's Child Development Center have been temporarily delayed due to the wet soil conditions. This work is likely to resume soon. All anomalies contaminated soil have been removed from these areas.

To date, soil removal and backfilling have been completed on 19 of the 140 properties containing grids above the arsenic cleanup level of 20 parts per million. Soil removal is ongoing at the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> properties and work to begin soon on the 22<sup>nd</sup> property.

### Public comment period to begin

On July 23, the Corps of Engineers will begin accepting comments on the draft Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis Report. The report covers the investigation of Operable Units 4 and 5, and includes results data, nature and extent of arsenic contamination, a risk evaluation, soil removal goals and a recommendation for the selected alternative.

The report will be placed in the Palisades Library, and CD copies will be available by calling **1-800-434-0988**. A public meeting will be held **Aug. 5**, at 7 p.m., at the Sibley Hospital auditorium.

### Concerns about your health?

In December 2002, the D.C. Department of Health established a medical surveillance system to identify and monitor any arsenic-related illnesses among Spring Valley residents.

Residents who may have concerns regarding exposure to arsenic and the medical surveillance effort are asked to contact Dr. Michael Richardson, Senior Deputy Director, Medical Affairs Office at **202-671-0733**.



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## June 2003 RAB Meeting

The Spring Valley Restoration Advisory Board met June 10 at St. David's Episcopal Church. In addition to most of the board members, approximately a dozen residents attended.

The topics covered were the destruction of the chemical munitions, status of the Corps ordnance investigation activities, a report by D.C. Department of Health on the status of the department's Richard Albright and the election of new board members.

Project manager and RAB Co-Chair Gary Schilling introduced Bill Brankowitz of the Army's Chemical Materials Agency, who gave a presentation on the successful operation of the Explosive Destruction System to destroy the 15 chemical munitions recovered from Spring Valley. No chemical or conventional munitions recovered from the Spring Valley site remain at the site.

Schilling next presented an

update on the work to clear metallic anomalies detected in the Spaulding/Captain Rankin area.

To date, the Corps has excavated 240 anomalies. Several scrap munitions fragments, magnetic rocks and construction debris have been recovered. Soil samples will be taken in the area where the munitions fragments were recovered.

The project partners are currently considering what, if any further digging is warranted at the area.

Schilling also presented a refresher on the criteria used to prioritize residential properties for a geophysical survey, and the timeline for analysis of the data collected from the first group of residential properties surveyed earlier this year.

Next, Jim Sweeney of the D.C. Department of Health provided an update on the status of Richard Albright, a project manager with the department and as

signed to the Spring Valley project.

Sweeney discredited the rumors that Albright had been removed from the Spring Valley project and indicated that Albright remained engaged in document review and was still very active in the cleanup of the Spring Valley site.

The meeting ended with the election of current board members who wished to continue their service on the RAB for another two-year term, and the election of five new members to fill the current vacancies.

Minutes of RAB meetings and presentations are available on the project's web site at [www.nab.usace.army.mil/projects/WashingtonDC/springvalley.htm](http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/projects/WashingtonDC/springvalley.htm).

RAB meetings are held the second Tuesday evening of every month and all meetings are open to the public. Meetings conclude with a general question and answer period. The next RAB meeting will be July 8.

### *The Corps'pondent*

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