

Pueblo Plant Team Completes Colorado Chemical Weapons Stockpile Destruction

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For Immediate Release

U.S. ARMY PUEBLO CHEMICAL DEPOT, Colo. – A stockpile of obsolete chemical weapons stored at the U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot (PCD) since the 1950s has been safely eliminated.

The final round of the stockpile was safely destroyed June 22, said Walton Levi, site project manager, Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant.

Plant workers destroyed more than 780,000 mustard agent-filled projectiles and mortar rounds through [three munitions destruction campaigns](#). A campaign refers to destruction of a particular type of chemical weapon. Destruction operations in Colorado began in March 2015, with more than 2,613 U.S. tons of chemical agent destroyed. One other chemical weapons stockpile site remains in Kentucky and is expected to finish destruction operations later this year.

The Colorado depot originally stored three kinds of mustard agent-filled weapons: 155mm and 105mm projectiles and 4.2-inch mortar rounds. Three different technologies were used to destroy the stockpile. The projectiles and a portion of the 4.2-inch mortar rounds [were destroyed](#) in the main plant under the supervision of trained operators using automated technology. The mustard agent was neutralized and the resulting product, known as [hydrolysate](#), was broken down into salt, water and organics using living microbes in a [biotreatment process](#).

Projectiles deemed unsuitable for automated processing and the remaining mortar rounds were destroyed by [Static Detonation Chambers](#). Earlier, 951 problematic munitions were destroyed using an [Explosive Destruction System](#) between 2015 and 2018.

The accomplishment has been reported to the [Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons](#), an intergovernmental organization that implements the [Chemical Weapons Convention](#) treaty. The [Program Executive Office, Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives](#) is responsible for eliminating the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile by the treaty commitment date of Sept. 30, 2023.

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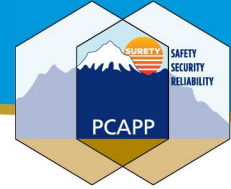
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Now that the entire stockpile in Colorado has been destroyed, PCAPP will close. The closure phase, which will continue for three to four years, encompasses the disposal of all secondary wastes, decontamination and decommissioning of facilities and equipment, disposition of property, demolition of certain facilities, and closure of government contracts and environmental permits in accordance with laws and regulations. During closure, the safety of the workforce, public and environment will remain the project's top priority. PCD is on the Base Realignment and Closure list and is being transferred to a local reuse authority, [PuebloPlex](#).

The U.S. chemical weapons stockpile sites in Colorado and at the Blue Grass Army Depot in Kentucky accounted for the last 10% of what was originally a national stockpile of more than 30,000 tons of chemical weapons. The [U.S. Army Chemical Materials Activity](#) (then designated an Agency) destroyed the initial 90%, which was stored at seven other sites across the U.S. and on Johnston Atoll in the Pacific. Chemical weapons destruction in Kentucky began in 2019 and is on target to meet the treaty commitment date.

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Quotes:

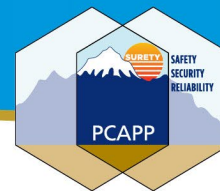
Dr. William LaPlante, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment

"With this milestone, the United States reinforces its commitment to achieving a world free of chemical weapons. We have a national security imperative as well as a moral responsibility to reduce and eventually eliminate the threat posed by these weapons of mass destruction. As the Department continues working toward this shared goal, this accomplishment shows the United States is leading by example and is committed to the highest standards of transparency and public safety."

HON Deborah Rosenblum, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Defense Programs

"I want to recognize and applaud the successful efforts of the leadership and workforce here in Colorado on achieving this extraordinary milestone. The safety of the workforce, public, and environment has always been priority number one for this program and the Department. This achievement demonstrates our credibility in the eyes of the international communities and has helped move the U.S government one step closer to closing this particular chapter of U.S. military history."

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Mr. Kingston Reif, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Threat Reduction and Arms Control

"This amazing accomplishment of safely completing destruction of one of the last two remaining stockpiles has been no small feat. I can't emphasize enough the importance of meeting our treaty commitment. Completing destruction of the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile in Colorado strengthens the viability of the Chemical Weapons Convention and reinforces the norm against chemical weapons possession and use. Additionally, resources for completing this decades-long mission can now begin to be redirected to other Department priorities, after closure of these chemical weapons destruction facilities."

Michael Abaie, Program Executive Officer, Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives

"This achievement is a giant step toward the United States' commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention treaty – the safe and environmentally compliant elimination of weapons of mass destruction. What this remarkable Pueblo team has done is known to every one of the 193 States-Parties that make up the membership of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague. I congratulate everyone who worked to make this happen."

Walton Levi, Site Project Manager, PCAPP

"We achieved this thanks to the professionalism, commitment and dedication of our workforce, which has made the local communities, Pueblo, the State of Colorado, and the nation safer. We have fulfilled Colorado's commitment to the nation and the international community. This was truly a commendable team effort by all at the depot, starting with groundbreaking, facility construction and on through systemization to munitions destruction."

Todd Ailes, Project Manager, Bechtel Pueblo Team

"The Bechtel Pueblo Team is honored to be a partner with our community, state, Pueblo Chemical Depot, and Department of Defense to design, fabricate and safely operate the innovative PCAPP facility to accomplish this feat. I am extremely proud of the dedication of our workforce and teaming partners to ensure the U.S. commitment to the world was met in an environmentally safe and sound manner."

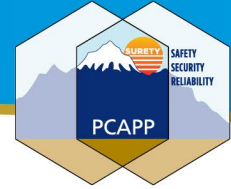
Michael Costas, General Manager, Bechtel Defense & Space

"Bechtel is proud to have played a significant role in eliminating chemical weapons from the stockpile in Colorado. We understand the international implication and the U.S. commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention. Not once did we waiver in our mission to build and operate a safe plant for the workforce, community, and environment."

Kim Jackson, Plant Manager, Bechtel Pueblo Team

"I saw first-hand, the innovative thinking, exceptional teamwork and outstanding work ethic from our employees who overcame any issues that were encountered during chemical weapons destruction. It is a testament to them that we are in a position to showcase to the world, Colorado's eradication of the munitions stockpile."

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Sheila Johnson, PCD Commander's Representative

"I would like to thank everyone who made this achievement possible. What our employees have accomplished is nothing short of amazing. I commend all who have carried out this critical mission of protecting the community and the environment throughout the safe and secure storage of the chemical weapons stockpile. Now that this mission is over, we look forward to the next phase of closure."

Irene Kornelly, Chair, Colorado Chemical Demilitarization Citizens' Advisory Commission

"The destruction of all the chemical weapons stored for so many years at the Pueblo Chemical Depot is an incredible achievement. This could not have been done without the excellent Pueblo workforce committed to doing their job and doing it well. The support of the Pueblo community, the State of Colorado and the Department of Defense has shown the world what can happen when we all work together. We have made the world a safer place!"

Background Information:

The [Bechtel Pueblo Team \(BPT\)](#) is the systems contractor selected to design, construct, test, operate and close the Pueblo plant. BPT consists of Bechtel National, Inc., Amentum, Battelle and GP Strategies.

The PCAPP project has employed thousands of individuals since the early 2000s, distributing \$2.58 billion in payroll and spending more than \$530 million with Colorado companies.

Contact Information:

For additional PCAPP information, contact the Pueblo Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office at (719) 546-0400 or pueblooutreach@iem.com. Visit www.peoacwa.army.mil for more information. For information about PCD, contact Michael Brock at (719) 549-4335 or michael.j.brock.civ@army.mil.

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Photograph and Caption:



A Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant ordnance technician uses a lift assist to transfer a 4.2-inch mortar round onto a conveyor for its destruction in spring 2023. Conveyors transported munitions into Explosive Containment Rooms, where energetics were removed before chemical agent was drained and neutralized.