



News Release



**Joint release by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,
Honolulu District and the Environmental Protection Agency**

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Clean Up of PCBs at Tanapag Village Complete, Site Restoration Work to Begin Shortly

(HONOLULU, June 5, 2003) – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Honolulu District, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9, announced today that the clean up of PCB contaminated soils in and around Tanapag Village, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has been successfully completed.

The project has been a complex and long-term effort to rid Tanapag of PCBs, said Wendell Awada, Project Manager and Deputy Chief of Programs and Project Management Division for the Corps' Honolulu District.

“It has taken over 12 years and the expenditure of more than \$20 million and the processing of over 40,000 tons of soil in order to clean the contaminated soil, but it was worth the effort. The peace of mind of the citizens of Tanapag is priceless,” said Awada.

“This could not have been accomplished without the hard work of our contractor, the Environmental Chemical Corporation (ECC), our on-site team, the people of Tanapag, the government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency,” according to Awada.

Over the past few years, PCB contaminated soils identified in and around Tanapag Village were excavated and brought to the Lower Base Cemetery area for treatment. Each excavated area was backfilled with clean material after being sampled by the Corps and confirmed by EPA that the remaining soil contained PCB levels of 1 part per million (ppm) or less.

All of the stockpiled PCB contaminated soils have now been successfully treated using an indirect thermal desorption unit. Once the treatment was completed, the indirect thermal desorption unit was shut down, decontaminated, dismantled and prepared for off-island shipment.

Some contaminated soils, which were inaccessible because of the unit's location, were also excavated and sampled to ensure levels of 1 ppm or less of PCBs. The remaining soil has been bagged and will be shipped off-island for disposal on the mainland U.S. The last of the filter cake will also be shipped for off-island disposal along with the untreated contaminated soil.

Now that the treatment unit has been removed from the concrete pad, final work on the concrete pad has begun. The pad will be sampled. Any contaminated material found will be bagged and shipped for disposal on the mainland U.S. ECC is planning to clear the site of all contaminated material and depart by mid-June. Remnants of the pad and other debris will be disposed of by a follow-on restoration contract.

“Because of the perseverance of the Army Corps in the cleanup of PCBs at Tanapag, the community is now assured of a cleaner and safer environment,” said Keith Takata, the U.S. EPA’s Superfund division director for the Pacific Southwest Region. “We recognize and thank the people of Tanapag and Saipan for their patience and cooperation throughout this entire project.”

GPPC Inc., a local contractor, has been hired to conduct the restoration work in the Lower Base Cemetery areas. Restoration of these areas will begin in June and take approximately four months to complete.

The restoration work will involve removing any left over debris, grading the treated soils on site, applying topsoil and planting grass. The site will be monitored and maintained for two months to ensure grass growth and site stability before turning the site back over to Marianas Public Lands Authority (MPLA). Work is expected to be completed by Sept. 2003.

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