

U.S. Responds To CWM Munitions in Panama

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Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland Soldiers from the 48th Chemical Brigade recently applied their expertise when they participated in a mission to destroy eight chemical munitions located on Panama's San Jose Island.

As early as 1978, according to a 2015 report prepared by the assistant secretary of the Army, the Panamanians raised the question of potential hazards and the feasibility of removing any potential chemical munitions on the island. As Panama acceded to the Chemical Warfare Convention in 1998, San Jose Island was looked at for development and the issue of the potential hazards was raised again. The report states that in 2001, a private company surveyed the island and documented the presence of chemical warfare items, some of which were of U.S. origin.



In May 2013, the government of Panama requested assistance from the United States in assessing eight munitions suspected to be filled with chemical agents. The following year the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives Analytical and Remediation Activity of the 20th CBRNE Command, deployed to San Jose Island with U.S. Army South to conduct a detailed assessment of the eight World War II-era chemical munitions declared by the Government of Panama, and verified to be of U.S. origin. The Army conducted a detailed munitions site characterization in June 2014 and completed assessment in January 2016, to determine the potential chemical fill of the munitions and how best to safely dispose of them.

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