

OPTIONAL FORM 99 (7-90)

## FAX TRANSMITTAL

# of pages = 5

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APOP-NC (50-6a)

NSN 7540-01-217-7368 5099-101 GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

MEMORANDUM FOR DEPUTY COMMANDING GENERAL/CHIEF OF STAFF

SUBJECT: Chemical Event in Alaska

1. Purpose: To provide information to the Deputy Commanding General/Chief of Staff concerning the discovery of buried chemical warfare training materials at Fort Richardson, Alaska.

2. Discussion.

a. On 1 Oct 93 contractor personnel involved in site cleanup operations, as part of Fort Richardson's ongoing environment restoration program, unearthed what appears to be remnants of chemical warfare (CW) agent training materials and chemical decontaminants. The 176th EOD Detachment, fire department, military police, medical personnel, and subsequently, a member of the AMC Technical Escort Unit (TEU) from Aberdeen PG, MD, responded to the event. The site has been secured.

b. The CW training materials are from 1940's era training aids called Gas Identification Sets (known simply as ID sets). The CW training policy of the times called for use of actual CW agents to promote realism in training. To achieve the desired realism these sets contained active CW compounds in both dilute and full strength forms and, as such, are potentially dangerous if not handled properly.

c. The ID set contents were used in training to promote confidence in protective equipment, and provide practice in CW agent detection, materiel decontamination, and self-aid treatment of skin after agent exposure.

d. The site is located near the intersection of Pole Line Road and Bars Boulevard on Fort Richardson (see area maps at encls 1 and 2). The contractor's excavations have thus far uncovered two steel cylinders (probably ID set containers, called "PIGs"), several empty glass vials with the CW agent marking "HD" (indicating the blister agent Distilled Mustard), and one vial marked "L" for Lewisite (another type of blister agent). Depending upon the actual configuration, each PIG could contain as much as 2.5 liters of chemical agent. No chemical munitions have been found and no chemical agent has been detected. However, most blister agents freeze at temperatures in the mid-fifties (Fahrenheit) and the average ambient temperature at the site has thus far been in the forties. To offset this problem some samples taken at the site have been heated well above freezing and monitored for agent; again no agent was detected.

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e. The advance party member from TEU informed the initial EOD response team that they would require "certified" protective masks and toxic agent protective (TAP) gear to continue recovery operations on-site. Additionally, they would require "certified" Chemical Agent Monitor (CAM) operators. In 1990 HQDA told us that EOD units without an implicit chemical mission in USARPAC and USAREUR would not be required to maintain certified sets of TAP gear. (Certification must normally be accomplished on a quarterly basis and is only done in CONUS, USASCH (less masks), and at Johnston Island.) Inquiries have been made to both DA DCSLOG and DA Safety. JI is leaning forward to supply what ever is required within their capability, but we should not react with a knee-jerk reaction without a plan. The emergency, if there ever was one, is over. Next week TEU will arrive on-site with a portable X-ray machine to try to determine the contents of the PIGs.

f. Future actions involve reviewing the situation to determine the best course of action, development of a plan of action, execution of revised restoration operations, and disposition of recovered materials. No further excavation should be attempted until a thorough reclamation plan has been developed, staffed and approved. The United States Army Chemical Materiel Destruction Agency is the proponent for the recovery of found-on-site chemical items. However, it will ultimately be a contractor's responsibility to excavate the site and USACMDA's responsibility to recover, containerize, and ship or destroy the items found. USACMDA will fulfill their responsibilities using TEU assets. This process is expected to require until next summer (1994) to complete. In the interim the site will be secured and contained pending the restart of cleanup operations. Current plans are to backfill the trenches, raise the actual level of soil with clean fill dirt, and fence and mark the area appropriately.

g. The major issue at this point is: "What should be done with the soil that must now be treated as hazardous waste?" DPW is working this issue, but since explosive ordnance in the soil already recovered can be ruled out, EOD would probably not continue to play a role in the reclamation efforts (not in "certified" TAP gear at any rate).

h. There is still a question as to where the PIGS will be shipped. In the past, similar CW materiel recovered in Alaska have been sent to Johnston Island for storage until destroyed in the JACADS facility. However, due to the current "language" of the law that prohibits sending additional chemical items to JI except for those discovered within the Pacific Theater, there is an opinion that AK may not be considered part of the Theater. That issue is being worked by Army Lawyers.

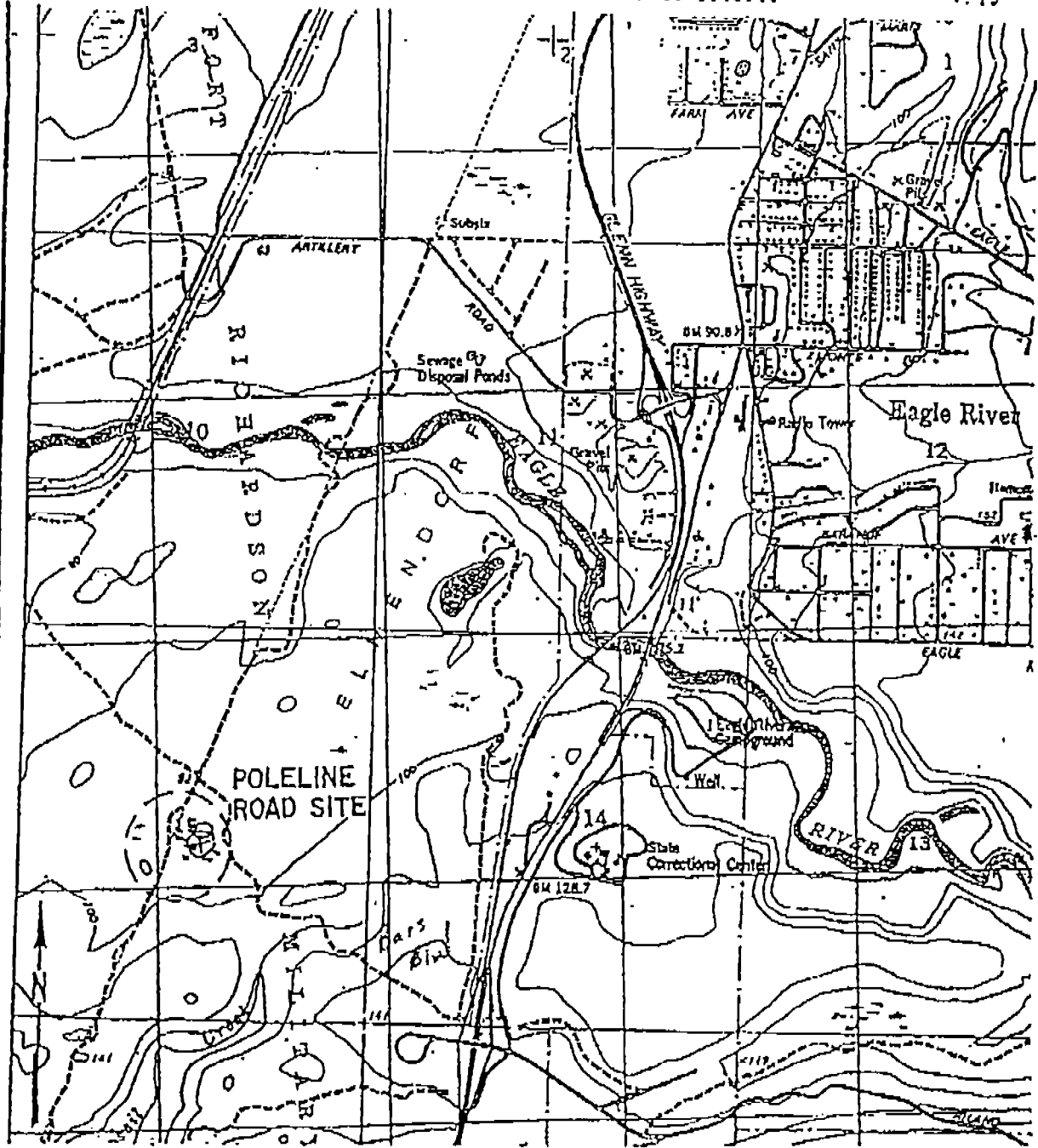
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3. Action Officer. LTC A. H. Woltz, Chief, Nuc-Chem Division,  
ODCSOPS, 438-2661.

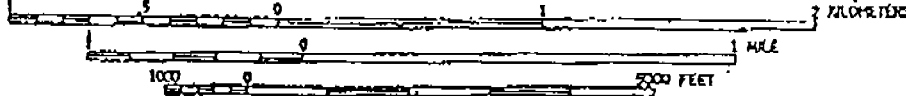
2 Encls

JIMMIE R. LACKEY  
COLONEL, GS  
Deputy Chief of Staff for  
Operations and Plans

Released for coordination: NOV 14 11 20 AM '93 DATE 10/12/93  
 COORDINATION:  
 DCSENG Concur/nonconcur \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
 DCSLOG Concur/nonconcur \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
 DCSPER Concur/nonconcur \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
 PAO Concur/nonconcur \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
 CDR, 6th Inf Div Concur/nonconcur \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_



SCALE 1:25 000



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 METERS  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

Figure 3-2  
MAP OF POLELINE ROAD SITE

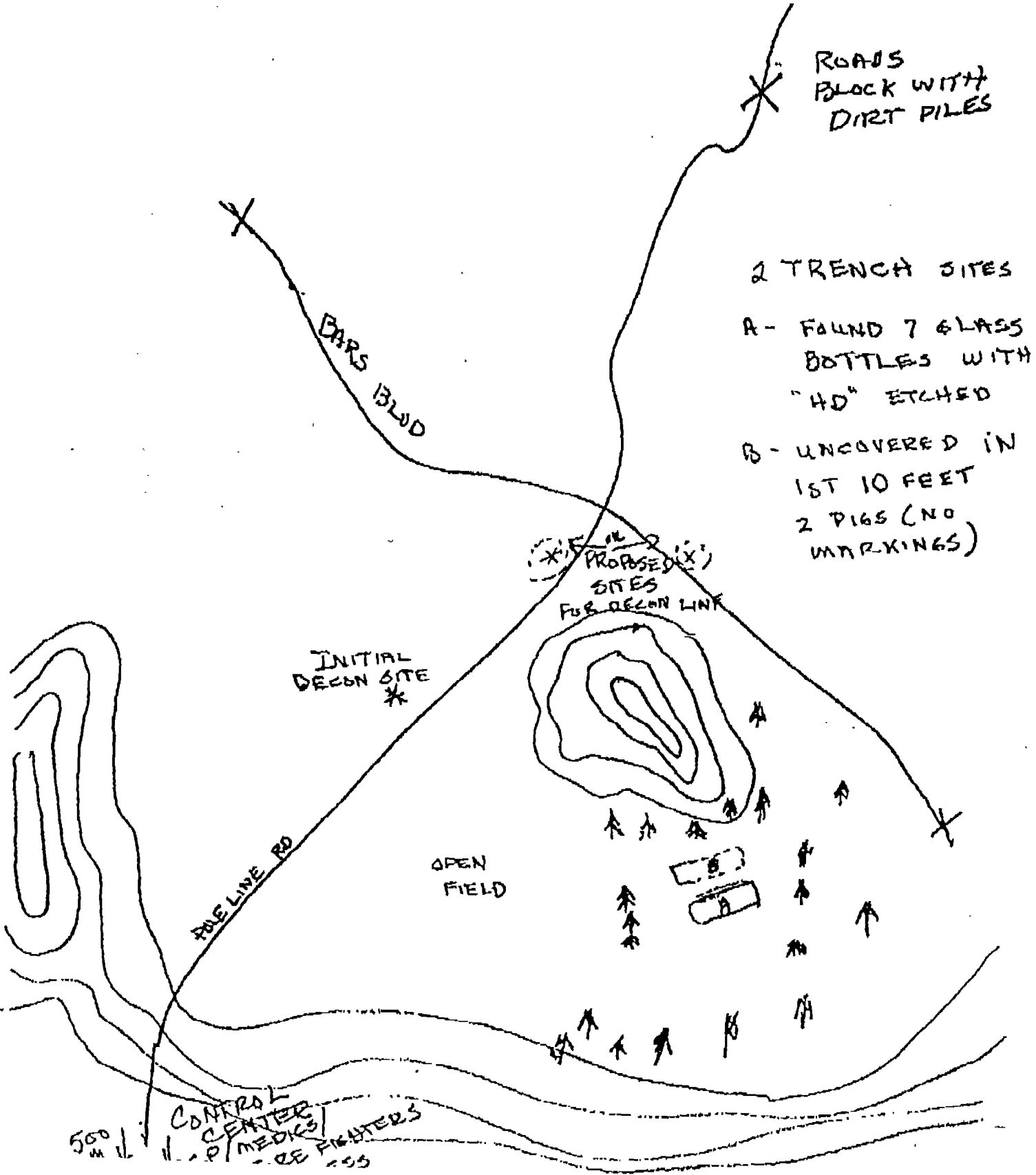
SOURCE: U.S.G.S., 1990

Prepared for:  
U.S. Army Toxic and Hazardous  
Materials Agency

Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland

OCT-7-93 THU 11:27

R. US



ROADS  
BLOCK WITH  
DIRT PILES

- 2 TRENCH SITES
- A - FOUND 7 GLASS BOTTLES WITH "HD" ETCHED
- B - UNCOVERED IN 1ST 10 FEET 2 PIGS (NO MARKINGS)

INITIAL  
DECON SITE \*

PROPOSED  
SITES  
FOR DECON LINE

OPEN  
FIELD

FUEL LINE RD

CARRS  
BLVD

500  
m  
CONTROL  
CENTER  
P/MEDICS  
- DE FIGHTERS