

Seneca Enclave Stores Army DS2

By Mr. Francis X. Murphy
and Major Donna E. Rutten



In July 2000, the Army published Permanent Order 312-2 establishing the Seneca Enclave at Romulus, New York, under the Soldier and Biological Chemical Command (SBCCOM), effective 1 October 2000. The mission of the enclave is to store, maintain, ship, and dispose of the stocks of DS2 located at the decommissioned Seneca Army Depot Activity (SEDA) that had been operated by the Operations Support Command (OSC). Command oversight of the enclave is assigned to the commander of SBCCOM's Edgewood Chemical Activity (ECA). Reading this, you might ask, "What is a Seneca Enclave?" Rest assured, you wouldn't be the first to ask. Another often asked question is, "What is happening with DS2 these days?" This article answers such questions.

First There Is Seneca

Seneca Lake is one of the still pristine Finger Lakes in rural central New York State. It is the west boundary and namesake to the former SEDA—one of the Army's finest Class V storage depots. That depot's flag was lowered in a decommissioning ceremony on 24 August 2000.

The depot was identified for closure in the 1995 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Act and, in the years that followed, depot employees emptied about 800 ammunition-storage igloos and 40 general-supply warehouses down to almost the last square foot. In early 1999, the OSC's commanding general, Major General Joseph Arbuckle, concluded that there were no good alternatives for storing the Army's DS2 stockpile at SEDA, which could jeopardize his plans to meet the depot's closure deadline. Two circumstances quickly came into play to rescue the closure plan: First, item management of DS2 had been given to SBCCOM when the command was formed in 1996. Second, the BRAC law contained a provision for the Army to retain an enclave for storing hazardous material, if required.

Now There Is an Enclave

The SBCCOM commanding general, Major General John Doesburg, agreed to take on the Seneca Enclave with

provisions for transfer of four table of distribution and allowance spaces, warehousing equipment, and funding, with mission assignment to the ECA. The enclave consists of two 200,000-square-foot warehouses containing the decontaminating agent DS2 end items. In the final reduction of the depot workforce, the ECA gained four experienced, dedicated, and resourceful employees to operate the enclave. Their experience with the commodity and depot operations had proven critical to the successful transition that took place.

Also crucial to the successful standup of the enclave were support agreements established with the residual caretaker staff at the depot (now down to seven employees to oversee continuing depot remediation projects) and with SBCCOM's U.S. Army Garrison, Natick, for base support. Because enclaves come without infrastructure, arrangements were needed for everything from water and sewage, to electricity, to postal and telephone service.

In some of their final actions before closure, SEDA provided fencing for the warehouses and made repairs to roofs and doors. It also made provisions for repairs and improvements to the warehouse sprinkler system. Finally, since all but the enclave's two warehouses were transferred to local county authorities for commercial reuse, SEDA negotiated a no-cost lease of Building 114 to provide administrative work space for the four-person staff as well as for a shipment preparation area.

The DS2 Stockpile

The DS2 stockpile consists of four standard military issue items: the 5-gallon can, the M13 portable decontaminating apparatus, the 14-liter fluid-filled container, and the 11/3-quart can. Three significant mission challenges for the enclave included segregation and consolidation of field return stocks by lot and condition, disposal of unserviceable material, and the expiration of the stockpile's 2-year shelf life.

In fiscal year 2000, with decisions made to transfer responsibilities for the stockpile, SEDA and SBCCOM managers coordinated remedial plans. SEDA began a systematic inspection operation for field returns and coordinated with the Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office to find a contractor interested in using any unserviceable material, thereby avoiding significant disposal costs. Also in the process, rewarehousing plans were developed to consolidate stocks into two warehouses to minimize the size of the enclave. Since the enclave's formation in October 2000, warehousing operations continued towards the objective of achieving 100 percent segregation by lot, stack, and condition. The reutilization effort for unserviceable material was a remarkable success, and similar efforts will be pursued to handle any large-scale disposal requirements.

In response to the reclassification of the stockpile for shelf-life expiration, enclave personnel collaborated with SBCCOM managers and quality engineers to develop an innovative retesting program. Faced with more than 1,600 individual lots requiring tests, criteria for grand lots were developed to reevaluate the chemical serviceability of the stockpile. As of this writing, testing on the 5-gallon pails

has been completed and serviceable lots have been identified. With indeterminate results on the other three configurations, additional sampling was required. At the time of this writing, most of this additional testing has been completed, and updated serviceable lot lists are anticipated for the balance of the stockpile.

The formation of the Seneca Enclave has presented new and unique challenges to the ECA over the past year, but its successful transition to SBCCOM proves consistent with the command's vision of consolidated management of Army chemical commodities from cradle to grave.

Mr. Murphy is the civilian executive assistant of the U.S. Army Edgewood Chemical Activity at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. He is a quality assurance specialist (ammunition surveillance). He has had a number of special weapons assignments in the continental United States and Germany, along with more recent chemical staff assignments with the U.S. Army Soldier and Biological Command. Mr. Murphy holds a bachelor's in mathematics from Niagara University.

Major Rutten is the commander of the U.S. Army Edgewood Chemical Activity at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. Her previous assignments include battalion chemical officer, 1-4 Aviation (Attack); platoon leader and company executive officer, 31st Chemical Company, 4th Infantry Division; special munitions instructor, battery commander, B Battery, 1-31st Field Artillery, Fort Sill, Oklahoma; and environmental program manager, operations officer, Army Environmental Center, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. Major Rutten is a graduate of the Chemical Officers Basic and Advanced Courses, Combined Arms Services and Staff School, and Airborne School. She holds a bachelor's in physical geography from the United States Military Academy and a master's in environmental systems engineering from Clemson University, South Carolina. Her next assignment will be at the Naval Command and Staff College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Author's Note: Since this article was submitted, the Seneca Enclave supervisor was tragically killed while returning from a DS2 inspection at Pine Bluff Arsenal. Mr. George "Mike" Windle was recognized by the SBCCOM commanding general, Major General John Doesburg, for his efforts to successfully transition the DS2 mission and ensure the continued availability of serviceable DS2 stocks to the field by nominating him as one of AMC's top 10 civilians of the year for 2000. Mike will be sorely missed.