

GASES ON OKINAWA WILL BE REMOVED

Army to Transport Lethal
Chemicals to Oregon

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By WILLIAM BEECHER

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 2—The Army announced plans today for the removal of all lethal chemicals - warfare munitions from Okinawa to a storage site in Oregon.

Secretary of the Army Stanley R. Resor said the first of five shipments would begin either this month or next. The withdrawal will be completed by next spring, he said. Included will be two types of nerve gas, GB and VX, and a mustard gas known as HD.

The decision to remove all lethal gas weapons from Okinawa was announced by Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird last July after news reports of an accident with GB nerve gas that required brief hospitalization of 33 Army employees. Until that incident, it was not generally known that the United States stored lethal gases in Okinawa.

In today's announcement, Mr. Resor said the deadly agents—believed to be in the form of bombs, artillery shells and aerosol drums—would be moved by sea to the Navy ammunition depot at Bangor, Wash., and thence by rail to Umatilla Army depot near Hermiston, Ore.

The announcement came a week after President Nixon reaffirmed the nation's long-standing promise not to be the first to use lethal chemical agents or incapacitating chemicals. The President also renounced the use of bacteriological weapons.

An Army spokesman was unable to say whether the United States stores any of its only incapacitating agent—BZ—on Okinawa. The agent causes temporary hallucinations and disorientation.

The spokesman did say that tear gas and herbicides—if they are stored on Okinawa—would not be included in these withdrawals. Both of these non-lethal agents are used extensively in Vietnam and were specifically excluded from President Nixon's first-use ban last week.

As required by law, no actual movement of the materials will begin until safety procedures have been reviewed and approved by the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare.

Both GB and VX can cause death of inhaled or absorbed through the skin. They cause cramps, vomiting, coma, convulsions and asphyxia.

HD mustard gas cause skin blisters, blindness, retching, pneumonia or death by asphyxiation.