

Collaborative power raises blast chamber to new level

It's been a little over a year since CH2M HILL acquired DeMil International and the rights to the Donovan Blast Chamber, a technology used to destroy unexploded ordnance, obsolete munitions and chemical warfare materials.

During the last several months, DeMil has made significant progress in adapting the technology for use in destroying chemical weapons for the United States and other countries.

Historically, the chamber has been used by clients such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Navy to explode conventional mortars and shells. Working for the Army, DeMil, along with Aketon Technologies, an affiliate of IDC, recently completed Phase I testing of the redesigned system, including an advanced air pollution control unit, designed for

use in effectively destroying chemical warfare agents.

"The testing went extraordinarily well," said Mark Morris, DeMil's president. "There are several steps we must take from here for the technology to become certified. We will spend the next several months making modifications to the systems to prepare for Phase II testing next spring."

DeMil, Aketon Technologies, IDC and CH2M HILL, staff attribute the success of Phase I testing to the effective collaboration between the four CH2M HILL companies and the detonation chamber fabrication partner, S&A Construction. Providing expertise in air and water treatment products, Aketon Technologies constructed the air pollution control unit

for the system. Aketon's equipment neutralizes the toxic exhaust produced by the detonation of chemical weapons inside the chamber.

"The U.S. Army expected us to design, fabricate, ship and test the chamber within four months," Morris said. "All of our CH2M HILL partners pulled together to meet the deadline. It's a great story of how we capitalized on the expertise within the company."

"This project is a good example of the company utilizing its many different areas of expertise to get a product out the door," said Rod Gravley, senior scientist and sales and marketing director for Aketon Technologies.

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The Donovan Blast Chamber, used to destroy unexploded ordnance and obsolete munitions, is being modified in a collaborative effort by several CH2M HILL companies to safely explode chemical weapons. The latest advancement in the technology is currently being tested and is expected to be completed by next spring.