

The New York Times® Reprints

This copy is for your personal, noncommercial use only. You can order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers [here](#) or use the "Reprints" tool that appears next to any article. Visit www.nytreprints.com for samples and additional information. [Order a reprint of this article now.](#)

PRINTER-FRIENDLY FORMAT
SPONSORED BY



July 31, 2010

Old Weapons Off Hawaii Should Stay Put, Army Says

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HONOLULU (AP) — Chemical weapons dumped in deep water five miles south of Pearl Harbor after World War II should remain at the site because moving them could pose more of a threat to people and the environment, the Army says.

Records show that the Army dumped 16,000 bombs at the site after the war; each of the bombs contained 73 pounds of the chemical agent mustard.

J. C. King, the Army's assistant for munitions and chemical matters, said in a statement on Friday that the Army was reviewing a [University of Hawaii](#) study on the weapons that was released earlier in the week.

Margo Edwards, a senior research scientist at the university, said the study showed that the munitions were not a hazard, but that they were deteriorating and should continue to be monitored.

Ms. Edwards's team made 16 dives in submersible vehicles to depths of 2,000 feet over three years, and she said she saw more than 2,000 munitions on the ocean floor.

The spots where the military has dumped chemical weapons off Hawaii are normally too deep to be reached by the public. They are also marked on nautical charts, and ships do not trawl in these areas.

Mr. King said the military's Explosives Safety Board believes that the safest approach to underwater munitions is to leave them in place and educate people about what to do if they find

a shell. However, he said, the board also believes that weapons posing an imminent and substantial danger should be removed.

Mr. King said studies like the one conducted by the University of Hawaii helped the Army better understand the effects munitions might have on the environment and the effects the ocean may have on the weapons.

The Army intends to expand the area studied off Hawaii, if financing is available. The Army also plans to determine, in coordination with the rest of the military, how it should monitor underwater weapons sites over time, Mr. King said.

The military used the ocean as a dumping ground for munitions from 1919 to 1970.