

**June 10, 2009**

**Witness Testimony from James Barton**

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Beginning in 1985, the US Army Corps of Engineers' response to toxic threats at the former American University Experimental Station has followed a pattern of managing crises as they emerge, then closing out the particular site in question and moving on. Attempts to identify and eliminate still undiscovered threats are hampered by a lack of precise period record keeping, unrestricted residential use of much of the property, and the limits of industry standard geophysics to find them.

This technology relies mainly upon the analysis of magnetic anomaly mapping of buried objects, useless in detecting non-ferrous targets such as liquid filled glass jugs and bulk explosives. Recent efforts to use "ground scarring" identified in early aerial photographs are a step in the right direction, but is of limited value since much of the topography has been physically altered or permanently covered with municipal and residential infrastructure.

It is clear that not all burial pits or areas containing abnormally high levels of toxins have been identified. Their inherently hazardous nature, the process and means by which they were combined, experimented with, bulk produced, and deployed on location, makes it unlikely that all the environmental or health concerns associated with this site could ever be eliminated entirely.

This legacy presents difficult remedial challenges that are compounded by the sites modern day residential land use. Combined, these two elements to make this site unique with regards to other FUDS sites found around the country, and clearly warrant an innovative strategy not currently in use by the US Army Corps of Engineers here or elsewhere in the country. For instance at this point, even if you could locate all the potential threats, removing them merely for the sake of doing so would involve destroying the very land use you are trying to protect.

A more efficient and proactive approach to preserving public safety and guiding future remedial efforts would be to initiate a long term comprehensive non-destructive monitoring program. This program would focus on identifying and tracking trace levels of pollutants with the potential to affect the health and welfare of local residents and the community at large.

The framework for this program should be outlined under an overall site conceptual model that consolidates earlier findings with results from the application of new and emerging methodologies for detecting and tracking the movement of trace amounts of pollutants released into the atmosphere, surface, and ground water runoff.

This program should be fully funded by the US Army Corps of Engineers, and managed under the direct supervision of the District of Columbia.