

## Army Newswatch Lead Sheet

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### **Army Uses Micro-Organisms for Soil Remediation**

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#### **LEAD:**

LONG AGO IF YOU WANTED TO GET RID OF SOMETHING YOU DUG A HOLE AND BURIED IT. AFTER WORLD WAR II THAT'S HOW THE ARMY DISPOSED OF HIGH EXPLOSIVES AT THE HAWTHORNE ARMY AMMUNITION DEPOT, IN HAWTHORNE, NEVADA. MORE THAN 40 YEARS LATER CLEAN UP EFFORTS ARE UNDERWAY, AND YOU WON'T BELIEVE HOW THEY'RE DOING IT. ENVIRONMENTAL CORRESPONDENT JAVIER HERNANDEZ REPORTS.

#### **STORY:**

AT THE END OF WWII MANY OF THE U-S MILITARY'S LEFT OVER BOMBS WERE DISARMED HERE AT THE HAWTHORNE ARMY AMMUNITION DEPOT IN HAWTHORNE, NEVADA.

**“Those projectiles were loaded with T-N-T and Yellow-D. As a result we have contamination in the ground.” – Herman Millsap, *Hawthorne Environmental Coordinator***

BACK THEN ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS WERE NON-EXISTENT. TROUGHS, LIKE THIS ONE, CARRIED HIGH EXPLOSIVES OUT TO THE DESERT.

THE ARMY'S SEARCH FOR A QUICK COST EFFECTIVE WAY TO DECON THE AREA LEAD TO AN UNLIKELY SOLUTION. COW MANURE, POTATOES AND HAY ARE MIXED WITH CONTAMINATED DIRT AND LEFT IN MOUNDS.

**“The fresher the manure the better. It's full of microorganisms from the cow. And we feed it with the potato, the starch and sugar from the potato, and it multiplies into billions.”**

AND WHEN THE STARCH IS GONE THOSE BILLIONS OF ORGANISMS BEGIN TO EAT THE EXPLOSIVES, NO BULL.

IN A FEW WEEKS, WITH SOME CAREFUL MONITORING, THE DIRT IS CLEAN. THIS CLEAN DIRT IS USED TO BACK FILL OTHER SITES OR SET ASIDE UNTIL ALL OF THE DIRT IS READY TO FILL THE CURRENT SITE.

**“For this specific area we’re anticipating about 3 or 4 years. And for a total clean up of hawthorn 10 –12 years.”**

TWO OF THE CONTAMINATES HAVE CHARACTERISTICS THAT MAKE KEEPING THAT SCHEDULE IMPORTANT.

**“The R-D-X is more slick and soluble and penetrates quickly into the ground. Yellow-d is a water soluble that we’ve found down to a 20 foot depth here at Hawthorne.”**

NEITHER EXPLOSIVE HAS AFFECTED THE GROUND WATER. BUT WITH SO MUCH GROUND TO COVER, AT HAWTHORNE TIME IS A FACTOR. JAVIER HERNANDEZ, HAWTHORNE, NEVADA.