

THE NEWS TRIBUNE

Woodbridge, N.J.—Fri., Oct. 5, 1984

9

Earle chief offers toxic assurances

By C. WILLIAM GEORGE

News Tribune staff writer

FREEHOLD — The commanding officer at Earle Naval Weapons Station yesterday assured the Monmouth County Board of Freeholders that any potential problems with toxic wastes at the base will be handled in accordance with appropriate laws.

Navy Capt. Perry Benson was received warmly by the freeholders, who stressed Earle's role as a "good neighbor" to the civilian sector of the county.

But Benson, who took command of Earle on June 15, had harsh words for members of the press, whom he accused of "distorting" the situation at the 10,048-acre ammunition

depot has been in operation since the early 1940s in three Monmouth County municipalities: Colts Neck, Howell Township and Tinton

the federal Environmental Protection Agency proposed Tuesday that Earle be added to the list of sites eligible for cleanup under the Superfund program because of potential contamination of several aquifers by 22 chemical sites there.

Problems promised appropriate action

Earle is thus among the first federally-owned properties to be targeted for Superfund cleanup money.

Benson stressed the word "potential" in discussing the possibility of water pollution at Earle, responding to a question by Freeholder John D'Amico Jr.

"In 1980, a detailed study was made of potential problems at Earle," he said. "It was recommended that three areas be looked at further — garbage dumps for which records are not that complete.

"You can't tell if a paint can had been dumped there whether it had lead in it," Benson said. "Maybe we did something we shouldn't have done. But further tests showed we weren't emitting anything into the watershed."

Contrary to published reports, which he said were "blowing this all out of proportion," the commander said there is "no indication there is a problem."

In fact, Benson said the EPA would not have added Earle to the Superfund list except for the 1980 Department of Defense-financed study.

"The data there that we got was turned in by the state," he said.

"We're not the dirtiest place in town," Benson continued. "I really refuse to admit that. We're no dirtier than anyone else."

In the area of pollution control, Benson said: "We operate in accordance with the same laws as everyone else."

Freeholder Harry Larrison Jr., who has been on the board for nearly two decades, said that he could not "recall one instance where Earle didn't cooperate with the county."

As an example, he cited the Howell Township property rented from the naval base for \$1 a year, which has been used for the county's fire and police academies.

EPA adds 10 Jersey sites in new superfund list

(Continued from Page One)

orize the superfund before the end of the current session.

"If they can't see the need to reauthorize the superfund immediately, I don't know what has to fall on top of them to realize it," she said.

"Our thing is, 'So what? You released the names of the sites. What are you going to do about it?'"

Although the 10 New Jersey sites were on Florio's list, the EPA release included brief descriptions of all of the sites.

The 10 New Jersey sites included:

- The groundwater in Cinnaminson, which is contaminated with chloroform, benzene and other organics. The affected portion of the Raritan aquifer, beneath Grinding Balls Road between Taylor Lane and Union Landing Road, is the source of drinking water for 52,000 people.

- The Ft. Dix landfill in Trenton includes 126 acres contaminated with chloroform, trichloroethane (TCE), methylene chloride and toluene. Domestic wells for 7,300 residents are located within three miles of the landfill.

- Fried Industries in East Brunswick includes 26 acres contaminated with TCE, chloroform and copper. The air in the area contains high levels of organic vapors. The site is located atop an aquifer that serves 33,000 people and there is a "strong potential" of groundwater contamination.

- The radium site in Glen Ridge, contains radioactive material and unacceptable levels of radon gas in a number of residences. The pollution, which includes 9,000 cubic yards of contaminated material, affects about 60 people.

- Jame Fine Chemical in Bound Brook is contaminated with TCE, methylene chloride and chloroform. Ground water at the site also contains chloroform, benzene, toluene and other organic solvents. Approximately 300 residents use groundwater within three miles of the site.

- Lodi Municipal Well in Lodi is contaminated with radium and its decay products. Additional ground water contamination in the area is possible.

- Montclair, West Orange radium sites include 9,000 cubic yards of material contaminated with radium process waste, resulting in high levels of radon in some residential dwellings. About 80 people are affected.

- Naval Weapons Station Earle in Colts Neck includes 22 acres contaminated with ordnance materials, grit and paint, paint scrapings, solvents, ammonium picate, lead bullets from small arms ranges, zinc and titanium. Some surface water contamination has been detected. Groundwater in the area serves 1,900 people within three miles of the site and another 270 are served

by surface water.

- Pomona Oaks residential wells in Galloway Township include 200 domestic wells containing benzene, dichloroethane, methylene chloride and TCE. Approximately 8,000 residents

could be affected.

- Waldick Aerospace Device in Wall Township includes ground water contaminated with cadmium, chromium and TCE. Nearby public private wells serve 28,000.

