



*Persian Gulf War  
Illnesses Task Force*

**17 Suspect CW/BW Storage Sites  
Identified in 28 February 1991  
CENTCOM Message**

**A Statement for the Record**

**by**

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**to the  
Presidential Advisory Committee on  
Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses**

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Dr. Lashof, Members of the Committee, my next remarks will focus on joint CIA-DoD efforts related to the 17 sites mentioned in a 28 February 1991 CENTCOM cable. The cable indicates these sites were suspected to have possibly contained chemical or biological weapons prior to the ground war. You had asked that we review intelligence related to the sites and to CENTCOM's indication of suspected chemical or biological weapons storage.

Before I begin, I would like to put my remarks into a broader context. We are continuing to search for intelligence that might help the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, as well as others, determine possible causes of Gulf war veterans' illnesses. Our effort includes searching for information on any site that would indicate the presence of chemical or biological weapons. So far, having looked carefully at significant amounts of relevant intelligence reporting, and having analyzed Iraq's deployment of chemical weapons, we assess that Khamisiyah and An Nasiriyah are the only two sites within the Kuwait Theater of Operations at which chemical weapons were stored during Desert Storm. We will continue to assess information on suspected chemical and biological weapons sites, and will inform this Committee, as well as other interested parties, if we find new information changing this assessment.

Now to the list of 17 sites you asked us to evaluate. First, I would note that a search of the Gulfink internet site shows that during the war there were many lists of suspect CW and BW sites:

- Each list was the result of analytical efforts from available information;
- None of the lists was based on definitive information;
- It is unlikely that anyone putting together the lists was certain that chemical weapons would be found at all of the sites. Most often each site was suspected as a potential storage location, and as such was included for targeting purposes.

We are not certain what information ARCENT/CENTCOM considered in formulating this pre-ground war list of suspected chemical and biological storage sites. Before 1990, however, intelligence analysts had identified structures at three of the 17

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locations--Tallil Airfield, An Nasiriyah, and Ash Shuaybah Depot Northwest--that caused them to suspect the presence of CW munitions. During Desert Shield, a combination of features at Rumaylah Facility 1 raised suspicion among Intelligence Community analysts that CW might be there. Information on all four facilities was disseminated widely throughout the military and policy communities. A fifth site on the list, one with which this Committee is very familiar, is the Khamisiyah storage site, including its bunkers and "pit."

In the case of Khamisiyah, the Intelligence Community had information in 1986 indicating that the Khamisiyah facility stored chemical weapons during 1984 and 1985 in support of Iraqi efforts during the Iran-Iraq war. Based in part on subsequent analysis and on reliable information, Khamisiyah was not included on intelligence lists of suspect chemical weapons sites before the war began. However, using new information from early 1991, the Intelligence Community provided warnings to the military in late February and March 1991 before US troops destroyed chemical munitions at the site. These warnings, unfortunately, did not make their way to the troops who performed the destruction.

Intelligence Community analysts identified nothing prior to, or during, Desert Shield/Desert Storm that suggested the presence of CW at the other 12 locations on the ARCENT/CENTCOM list. However, in an effort to help on this question, I can suggest plausible reasons for the inclusion of most of these additional locations on the list. We believe that all the sites were listed based on tenuous information available to CENTCOM, but we have been unable to confirm this by locating the author despite our efforts and those of IAD, Mitre contractors under the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Intelligence Oversight, and even staffers of your Committee. Those officers whom we have contacted in the field tend to believe that the list was made up of multiple assessments of chemical locations, none of which was believed to be highly reliable.

We have recently contacted one of the persons listed on a cable as having handled the request. He indicates that the original request came from ARCENT. CENTCOM determined that the request was important and tasked ARCENT to determine the presence of special munitions at suspect sites in the KTO. This person indicates the list was generated by ARCENT, probably in their operation intelligence planning elements. He indicates that this list had existed prior to the ground war. Our understanding is these planning elements had hundreds of people. Our focus is now in finding personnel in these elements, as well as continuing our search for the associated message traffic.

We have conducted both database searches and systematic analyses in response to your request about the 17 sites. Interestingly, the sites fall into three broad categories:

- Those in purple on this map are all the large Iraqi ground forces depots in the KTO. That fact may have been the primary reason for their inclusion in the cable. Various intelligence reasons--like special bunkers or reporting--connect most of these to chemical or biological storage, but we have been unable to find any information that would make us suspect the Al Jazair site to have had chemical weapons.
- The six sites in red are the primary field storage locations for the three heavy Republican Guard divisions defending Iraq. As can be seen in numerous Gulfink documents on the internet, the Republican Guard forces were assessed to be the most likely units to use chemical weapons based on superior capabilities and Iran-Iraq war precedents. These sites may have been placed on the list due to their association with the Republican Guard. We have found no information to date on these locations to lead us to suspect chemical weapons were stored at them.
- Each of the last set of sites, shown on the map in green, had other possible reasons for being on the list:

- Tallil Airfield had special bunkers,
- Rumaylah I had decon trenches and a Republican Guard association,
- Underground bunkers possibly based on their unique construction,
- Ash Shuaybah East based on heightened security, and
- The ammo area at Shaibah Airfield based on the possibility that chemically armed aircraft during the Iran-Iraq war were deployed from the site.

Let me now make a few comments on each of the sites, following the order in which they appeared in the CENTCOM tasking cable.

#### **Tallil Airfield (30-56N 046-05E)**

The Tallil Airfield was built in the 1970s. It was on Intelligence Community lists as a suspect chemical weapons storage site before the Gulf war. The suspicion that CW munitions might have been at Tallil was based on CW-related activities there in the mid-to-late 1980s, and on the presence of an S-shaped bunker believed at the time to have been associated with CW. Construction of the S-shaped bunkers began at several airfields and munitions storage depots in the early 1980s, and analysts began to suspect an association with CW munitions by the mid-1980s, during the Iran-Iraq war. These analysts knew that the Iraqis were increasingly using CW in that war, and many of the Iraqi bombing missions were flown from Tallil.

#### **Ammo Dump (30-07N 047-10E) and 3 Ammo Bunkers (30-06N 047-13E)**

These two ammunition storage locations were within the Medina Republican Guard (RG) Armored Division's deployment area, just above the northwest "corner" of Kuwait. They were constructed after the division moved into that area in late August 1990. These storage locations may have been placed on the CENTCOM list because of the Iraqi RG association. We know of no equipment, structures or other features that would have suggested the presence of CW in these areas.

Total munitions storage facilities at these locations consisted of 79 large, open revetments, but no bunkers; munitions in 56 of the revetments had been destroyed by air-delivered munitions and artillery fire as of 1 March 1991. Hundreds of vehicle and equipment revetments and small numbers of makeshift personnel bunkers, all associated with Medina Division subunits, were in surrounding areas.

**Ammo Site (30-18N 047-30E)**

This ammunition storage site was within the Hammurabi RG Armored Division's deployment area just north of the Kuwait-Iraq border; it was constructed after the division moved into that area in late August 1990. This storage location may have been placed on the CENTCOM list because of the Iraqi RG association. We know of no equipment, structures or other features there that would have suggested the presence of CW, however.

This site consisted of 32 open storage revetments, 23 of which contained crated munitions; the munitions in one revetment had been destroyed by a bomb as of 1 March 1991. Numerous vehicle and equipment revetments associated with Hammurabi Division subunits were in surrounding areas.

**Ammo Storage Sites (29-45N 046-50E and 29-45N 046-49E);  
127 Trucks (29-46N 046-52E)**

These sites were within the Tawakalna RG Mechanized Infantry Division's deployment area just west of the Kuwait-Iraq border; they were constructed after the division moved into that area in November 1990. These storage locations may have been placed on the CENTCOM list because of because of the Iraqi RG association. We know of no equipment, structures or other features that would have suggested the presence of CW in these areas, however.

The ammunition storage sites consisted of a total of 55 open revetments, 51 of which contained munitions; as of 1 March 1991, munitions in 22 revetments had been

destroyed by air-delivered munitions or Coalition troops on the ground. A total of at least 100 truck revetments were associated with the ammunition storage sites.

### **Rumaylah Ammo Storage Area Southwest (30-26N 047-14E)**

This large munitions storage area, on the west side of the Rumaylah oil fields, 55 km west-southwest of Basrah, was built in the early 1980s. It may have been placed on the CENTCOM list because it was one of the best secured and largest munitions storage areas (2.5 by 5.0 km) in the theater. In addition, Iraqi RG infantry divisions were deployed immediately east and west of the storage area during Desert Shield/Desert Storm, and ARCENT/CENTCOM may have suspected that CW munitions intended for those divisions could be held there. Despite these characteristics, we know of no equipment, structures or other features there that would have suggested the presence of CW.

The facility contained slightly more than 1,000 open storage revetments (about 200 held munitions) and 40 small bunkers; a bermed area just to the north contained several hundred revetments for trucks. As of 1 March 1991, munitions in at least 70 of the 200 revetments had been destroyed by bombs; as of 24 April, virtually all munitions had been destroyed.

### **Rumaylah Ammo Storage Facility 1 (30-26N 047-25E)**

This facility is on the east side of the Rumaylah oil fields, 27 km west of Basrah; it is actually at 30-29N 047-29E. It was built during the Iran-Iraq war. The perimeter berm and other earthworks that comprised the facility were built during the Iran-Iraq War. The facility was almost certainly placed on the ARCENT/CENTCOM list of suspect CW storage sites (and was of concern to the Intelligence Community and the military) for the following reasons:

- It was adjacent to the deployment area of the Adnan RG Infantry Division, and the association with an RG unit increased suspicion about the presence of CW. In

addition, BM-21 multiple rocket launcher (MRL) units were attached to the Adnan Division, and the BM-21 is an ideal tactical system for firing CW munitions.

- Nearby chemical decontamination stations (used for decontamination of equipment after it has been exposed to CW agent) raised suspicion that CW was present. The reason for the presence of these stations remained ambiguous, however, because they may be needed when forces have been attacked with enemy CW as well as when CW munitions are handled during offensive operations.

Although the factors above raised suspicions that CW munitions might be at this facility, we know of no other equipment, structures or other features there that might have helped substantiate those suspicions.

During Desert Shield/Desert Storm, 32 of the 116 revetments at the facility contained crated munitions, and some of the 84 others were used for vehicles. As of 1 March 1991, crated munitions in six of the 32 revetments had been destroyed by bombs; by 27 April, no additional munitions had been destroyed. The facility was in Iraqi-held territory, just north of the demarcation line agreed to at the time of the cease-fire, and apparently was inspected by Coalition troops.

#### **Ash Shuaybah Ammo Storage Depot Northwest (30-29N 047-38E)**

This rail-served munitions depot, 15 km west of Basrah, was built prior to the Iran-Iraq war. It was included on Intelligence Community lists as a suspect chemical weapons storage site before the Gulf war, because an S-shaped bunker and a 12-frame bunker were among its 19 munitions storage bunkers, but no other equipment or features that would have suggested the presence of CW. The site was targeted as a CW site because of the special bunkers. It would have been expected to be on CENTCOM's 28 February list.

The depot also contained 22 revetted storage buildings. By 1 March 1991, the 12-frame bunker had been destroyed, and the S-shaped bunker was severely damaged.

Because this depot was in Iraqi-held territory, 13 km northeast of the cease-fire demarcation line, Coalition troops apparently did not inspect it. UNSCOM did not inspect this site. However, UNSCOM did inspect a large number of S-shaped and 12-frame bunkers elsewhere, and did not find chemical munitions in any of them. In addition, Iraq did not declare any that chemical munitions were stored in such bunkers during the Gulf war, and at three sites with such bunkers--An Nasiriyah, Khamisiyah, and Ukhaydir--where Iraq did declare storage of chemical munitions they were stored in either standard bunkers or in the open. We have no reliable information indicating that Ash Shuaybah had chemical munitions stored there during the war. (U)

#### **Al Jazair Ammo Storage Area (30-32N 046-52E)**

This well-secured munitions storage area, about 90 km west of Basrah, had been established by at least 1987. It may have been considered a suspect CW storage site by CENTCOM because of the proximity of Iraqi RG infantry divisions deployed immediately to the east. No equipment, structures or other features suggested CW was stored there. The storage area contained slightly more than 1,000 open storage revetments, at least 510 of which contained munitions. As of 1 March 1991, munitions in at least 110 revetments had been destroyed by bombs, and by 27 April munitions in 150 additional revetments had been destroyed.

#### **Underground Storage Bunkers (30-16N 047-41E)**

The 48 well-secured, uniquely constructed storage bunkers were built in the early 1980s at this location, 25 km southwest of Basrah, are part of Ash Shuaybah Naval Missile Storage Facility, a support facility for antiship missiles. These bunkers may have been on the CENTCOM list because of their unique construction, but we know of no equipment, structures, or other features there that suggested the presence of CW. This facility is about 3 km on the Iraqi side of the cease-fire demarcation line, and it is unclear whether Coalition troops entered it during the unsettled period just after the cease-fire.

### **Ash Shuaybah Ammo Storage East (30-25N 047-42E)**

This well-secured storage area, 9 km southwest of Basrah, was established prior to 1980 and contains nine bunkers and four revetted storage buildings. We do not know why CENTCOM placed this facility on the list of suspect CW storage sites, and we know of no equipment, structures, or other features that suggested the presence of CW. The facility has not changed since 1980, several years before Iraq had a significant CW capability; therefore, it was unlikely to have been initially constructed for CW munitions. As of 1 March 1991, none of the bunkers or revetted storage buildings had been destroyed. Because this facility was in Iraqi-held territory, 15 km northeast of the cease-fire demarcation line, Coalition troops apparently never visited it.

### **Ammo Site (30-26N 047-37E)**

This ammunition storage site, at Shaibah Airfield, 13 km southwest of Basrah, contained 12 large, open storage revetments. It had been constructed by 1983, and was associated with storage of aircraft munitions. This site may have been added to the ARCENT/CENTCOM list because it was suspected that air-deliverable CW munitions were among those stored there, but CIA analysts know of no equipment, structures or other features that suggested the presence of CW. The site was bombed during Desert Storm, but it appeared that no munitions were destroyed. It was 10 km northeast of the cease-fire demarcation line and apparently was not visited by Coalition troops.

### **Tall Al Lahm Ammunition Storage Depot South (30-46N 046-25E)**

This facility, constructed in late 1990 after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, was immediately south of the main Tall Al Lahm (Khamisiyah) depot and was separated from the main depot by a major canal. This depot (correct coordinates: 30-43N 046-25E) may have been added to the ARCENT/CENTCOM list of possible CW storage sites because they may have suspected an association with RG Special Forces units deployed just south of it. Other considerations may have been its size (about 1,030 open revetments) and proximity to the main Khamisiyah depot, which had extensive,

and comparatively sophisticated, munitions storage facilities. No equipment, structures or other features at Depot South suggested the presence of CW, however.

At least 520 of the 1,030 storage revetments at Depot South held crated munitions. As of 1 March 1991, munitions in 75 revetments had been destroyed, mostly by supporting artillery fire when elements of the US 24th Mechanized Infantry Division attacked the Iraqi RG Special Forces deployed in nearby areas. Virtually all munitions had been destroyed by 20 October 1991.

### **An Nasiriyah (30-56N 046-10E)**

The An Nasiriyah facility was built in the late 1970s. It was on Intelligence Community lists as a suspect chemical weapons storage site before the Gulf war. The suspicion that chemical or biological munitions might have been at An Nasiriyah was based upon the presence there of four 12-frame bunkers associated with BW and an "S-shaped" bunker believed to be associated with CW. These analysts knew that the Iraqis were increasingly using CW in that war and An Nasiriyah was a major depot in the southeast of Iraq where much of the fighting occurred. Confirming this association, on 17 January 1991, during the Gulf war, decon vehicles were present at An Nasiriyah.

In its declaration in May 1991, Iraq declared that over 6,000 mustard rounds were stored at "Khamisiyah (An Nasiriyah)." This caused some of the confusion on Khamisiyah in the early years following the war. In mid-1996, Iraq clarified this declaration indicating that the 6,000 155-mm mustard rounds stored in the open just outside of Khamisiyah had originally been at An Nasiriyah. During a May 1996 inspection of An Nasiriyah, the Iraqis declared that the munitions had originally been stored in a bunker but moved near Khamisiyah based on fear of contamination if the bunkers were bombed. This bunker--Bunker 8--was destroyed by US ground troops but showed no signs of damaged mustard rounds. Inspectors during this and a previous inspection in 1992 found no indications in any of the bunkers that they contained chemical munitions.

### **Tall Al Lahm (30-47N 04628E)**

Known now by the name Khamisiyah, this facility was a large ammunition storage depot in southeastern Iraq, approximately 100 kilometers from the Kuwaiti border. It was under construction in 1976. While not discovered until March 1997, intelligence indicating that a decontamination vehicle normally associated with tactical chemical defense was at the depot in July 1984 provided the earliest potential indication that chemical weapons or chemical warfare activities might have been associated with the Khamisiyah depot at the time. A CIA human-source report obtained in May 1986 indicated that the facility stored chemical weapons during 1984 and 1985 in support of Iraqi efforts during the Iran-Iraq war. Based in part on subsequent analysis and on reliable information, by 1990, Khamisiyah was not included on intelligence lists of suspect chemical weapons sites. Thus, it was not included on lists in preparation for the Gulf war.

New information in early 1991, however, suggested a chemical weapons association with the facility at that time, and provided the basis for warnings to the military in late February and March 1991 before US troops destroyed chemical munitions at the site:

- On 23 February, CIA obtained and passed geographic coordinates and map information to CENTCOM elements pointing to Khamisiyah as a chemical weapons storage site.
- On 26 February, an 18th Airborne Corps log indicated that it was possible that they had hit chemical weapons on Objective Gold (in which Khamisiyah was the largest weapons storage facility), that the Iraqis were fleeing the vicinity, and that US troops should enter the area with detection vehicles leading.
- On 28 February, DIA indicated that it was possible that Iraqis would use 12-frame bunkers for chemical weapons storage, and that Khamisiyah had such a bunker.

The information from these warnings, unfortunately, did not make its way to the troops who performed the destruction. It is unclear whether these warnings formed any part of the reason ARCENT/CENTCOM considered this site to have possibly contained chemical weapons prior to the ground war.

Complete details on intelligence related to this Khamisiyah site can be found in *Khamisiyah: A Historical Perspective on Related Intelligence*, which CIA released on 9 April 1997. A briefing paper--*Highlights of Intelligence and Warnings about Chemical Weapons at Khamisiyah*--was drawn from the historical perspective paper and released by CIA on 21 July 1997.