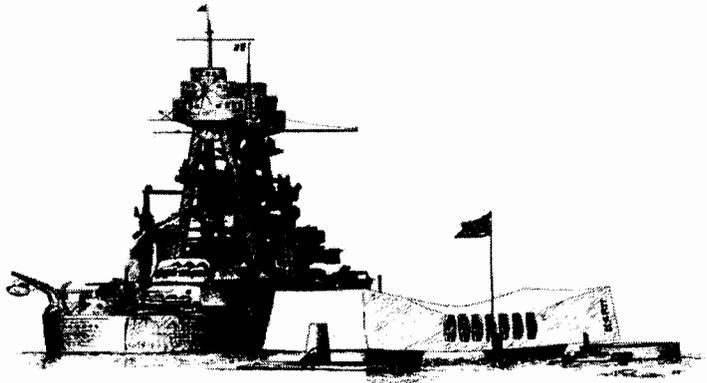


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**POC: Lt. Barbara Mertz**

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## **Navy responds to military housing concerns**

PEARL HARBOR, HAWAII – Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Hawaii (NAVFAC Hawaii) is currently administering a \$50 million design-build replacement-housing contract for junior enlisted homes at Marine Corps Base Hawaii (MCBH). Metcalf Construction Company Inc. was awarded the contract in October 2002, and began building 212 housing units at MCBH. Their initial completion date for this new housing was May 2005. The current estimated completion date is now estimated at September 2006.

Recently charges have been leveled at the Navy that we are not responding adequately to the detection of the chemical chlordane in the soil at the construction area.

The charges that have been made are simply untrue, and we deny them. The safety and well being of our military members and their families is the first concern to the Navy, and we would never knowingly expose them to any unsafe health risk.

During construction of 212 new family homes at Marine Corps Base Kaneohe by Metcalf Construction, chlordane was detected in the soil. Chlordane is a material that was legally used for years around housing foundations to prevent termites, until the EPA banned it in 1988. It is no longer used on government property. However, due to its common use years ago, it can be found in small amounts in the soil around older houses across the country.

The Navy has conducted an extensive study to determine if the amount of chlordane in the soil at the MCBH Replacement Housing Project is safe for human health and the environment. The study's results show that the overwhelming majority of the soil is safe to use. One small area between two housing foundations contains higher levels of chlordane that requires remediation action.

The Navy Environmental Health Center (NEHC) from Portsmouth, VA., was asked to perform a human health risk assessment for the project site, and provide recommendations for the handling of this soil. They determined that the chlordane in the soil would not pose a threat to human health or the environment.

A plan to safely handle the soil was prepared based on recommendations from Navy public health experts. The approved remediation plan is to bury the higher-level impacted soil, cover it with clean topsoil, and then cover that with hard surface asphalt. This will act as a permanent barrier and keep people from being exposed to the soil. The rest of the soil has been approved for use in area landscaping.

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