



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY  
WASHINGTON, DC

CORNELIUS KERWIN  
PRESIDENT

## MEMORANDUM

January 23, 2008

TO: Campus Community  
FROM: Neil Kerwin, President  
SUBJECT: Army Corps Update and Resumption of Work

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With the campus in full swing following winter break, I am providing an update of the Army Corps of Engineers operation along Glenbrook Road. The work is significantly behind the Army's original schedule. The Army's current estimate is for the investigation to be completed in the summer. However, our experience with this type of project is that any schedule is tentative, at best. The university is currently assessing how the extended schedule will impact our activities.

Part of the delay was caused by the Army's decision, announced on December 10, to suspend work at 4825 Glenbrook Road. Testing of a munition removed in November revealed that it contained both an explosive as well as a chemical warfare agent. Though the munition was not configured to explode, it went beyond the Army's work plan. After a reassessment of the procedures for the recovery, handling, transportation, and storage of materiel removed from the site, the Army has modified some of its practices at the government owned, interim-holding facility off Dalecarlia Parkway close to Sibley Hospital, where munitions are stored after they are removed from the site. The safety precautions at the dig site were deemed to be sufficient, partly because the university had insisted on additional safety measures when it reviewed plans prior to the start of work. With the additional precautions in place, the Army will resume work on January 24.

I am aware that during the winter break this delay prompted some local news interest and community comment as to the significance of the find; at no time, however, was the university at greater risk. As work resumes at 4825 Glenbrook, the hours of operation again will be Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. I remind the campus of the shelter-in-place procedures that are posted on the [AU Army Corps project Web site \(http://www.american.edu/usace\)](http://www.american.edu/usace) and which should be reviewed by anyone who works, studies, or visits in the affected area of campus. Faculty members who teach in those buildings are being provided with a DVD of the shelter-in-place procedures and building marshals have been notified.

Test pits at 4835 Glenbrook (from eight to 12 feet deep) began on October 11, and 36 of the planned 77 pits have been completed. To date, 12 pits have contained potential experiment station material from World War I, most of which

was broken glass and lab ware, and none of which showed chemical agent (mustard or lewisite). One shell fragment was found but it was deemed harmless. Work is scheduled to continue through May. The work at this site is currently deemed “low probability,” and the Army Corps does not expect to find war materiel of major significance; should that change, however, the Army Corps would need to design new work plans for this site.

All AU communications are posted on the [university Web site](http://www.american.edu/usace) (<http://www.american.edu/usace>) devoted to the Army Corps project; and anyone seeking more information can access the Army Corps’ own site dedicated to the Spring Valley project, (<http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/projects/WashingtonDC/springvalley.htm>), which also can be accessed via the AU site.

We know from prior experience that work delays, reviewing work procedures and moving deadlines have become a regular aspect of this operation. Therefore, the dates mentioned are current projections, which could change again.

Updates will be forthcoming as circumstances warrant.

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