

# Group urges cleanup of military toxics

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Labeling the military the biggest polluter in the United States, a national toxics organization on Wednesday urged the federal government to launch a major cleanup of 14,401 hazardous-waste hot spots at 1,579 bases or former bases.

The hazardous sites include Moffett Field Naval Air Station, where



Smith

At news conferences in San Jose and 49 other locations across the country, the National Toxic Campaign Fund said it will lobby Congress to authorize as much as \$4 billion this year to begin the effort. The organization is a national coalition of grass-roots environmental groups, individual activists and several foundations.

It will also seek other reforms, including making the military subject to the same state and federal environmental laws as private companies, and notifying people living near military bases of the threats to their drinking water.

## Pentagon's estimate

Ted Smith, executive director of the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition, said the Pentagon itself estimates that at least \$200 billion is needed to clean up contamination from

The organization cited military installations in all 50 states as contaminated, including all the bases in the Bay Area and central coast. Its list includes three bases on the Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund list of the most hazardous in the country: Moffett Field, Hunters Point Naval Shipyard and Mare Island Naval Shipyard.

Pentagon officials had no comment on the report Wednesday, but they did agree to meet with the organization in Washington, D.C. Moffett Field officials have in the past counseled contamination on that base.

Smith acknowledged that the release of the report, much of which is not new, was timed to coincide with the return of U.S. troops from the Persian Gulf "who will be coming back to unsafe bases."

## 19 hot spots

The group said almost every major base has ground contaminated with trichloroethylene, an industrial solvent commonly known as TCE, that the Environmental Protection Agency says causes birth defects and cancer. Smith said TCE is the biggest problem at Moffett Field. There are 19 known hot spots on the base, yet the cleanup is not scheduled to start until 1995.

TCE-contaminated groundwater from Moffett is slowly merging with contamination from three nearby civilian Superfund sites — Fairchild, Intel and Raytheon facilities — to create "one big toxic soup underground," Smith said.