

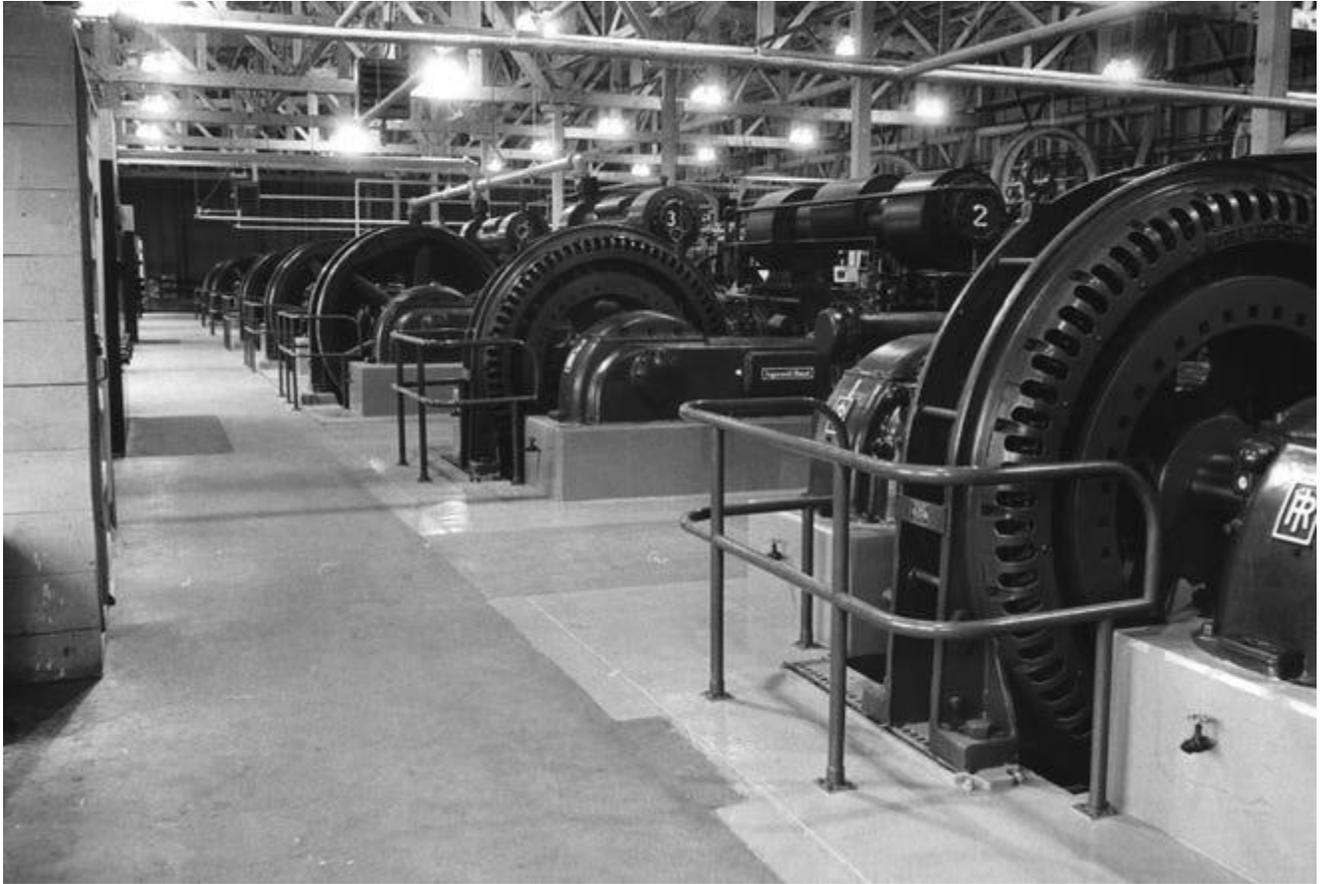
# View historical photos of the former Badger Ammunition plant near Baraboo



[Lou Saldivar](#)



In 1965, the defense department announced plans to reopen the Badger Ordnance plant near Baraboo, employing 950 people when the plant reaches full production. The promise of jobs brought many applicants to the gates. The Baraboo plant was one of two U.S. plants capable of producing gunpowder for the M-16 rifle widely used by American troops in Vietnam.  
Fred L. Tonne / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



A 1965 view inside the Badger Army Ammunition Plant showing banks of large air compressors used to pipe pressured air to the buildings.

Fred L. Tonne / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



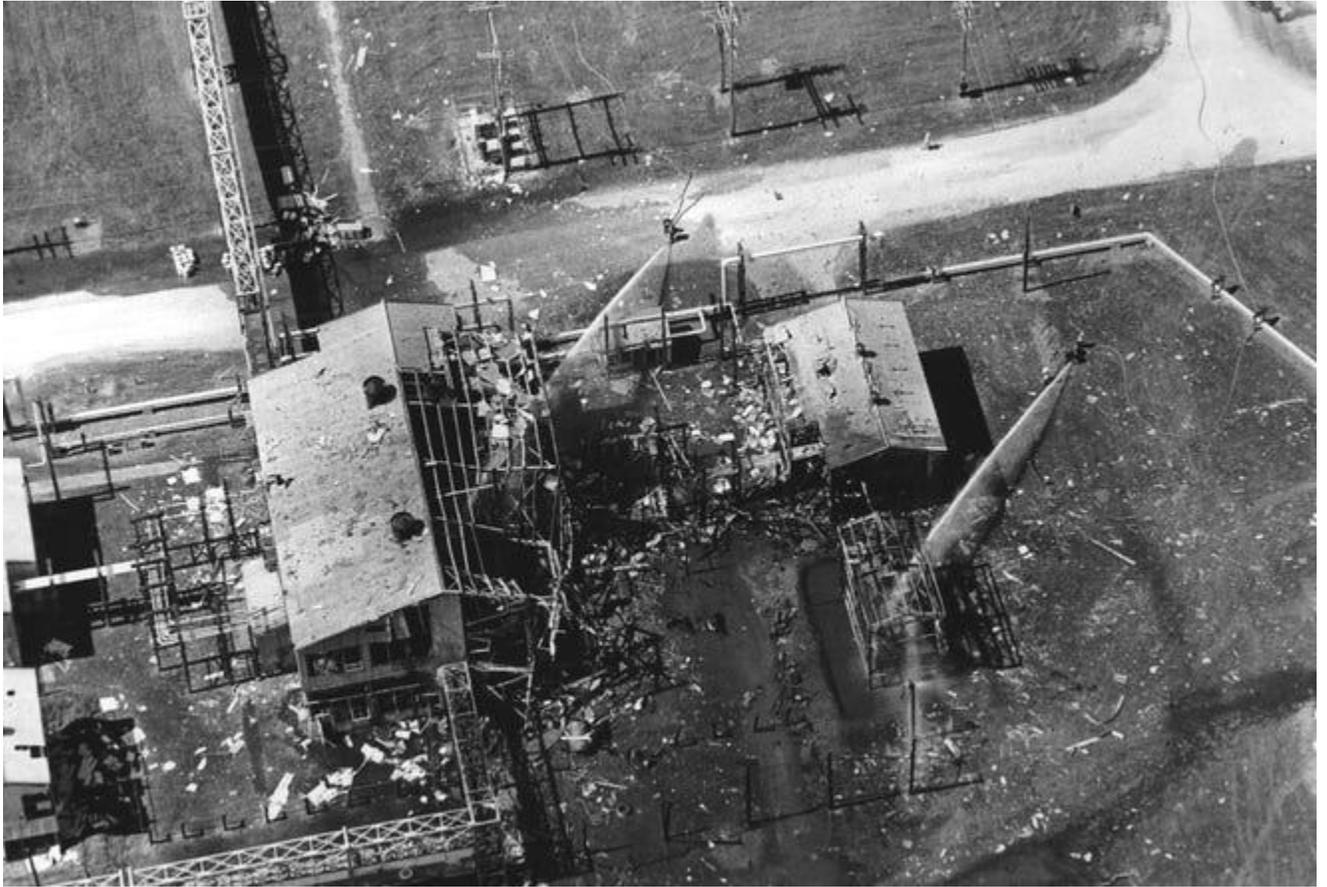
A 1965 photo shows rows of manufacturing or mixing buildings are almost hidden by wooden framed, sand filled barricades at Badger Ordnance Works near Baraboo. The safety barricades direct the explosive force of a blast upward to save near-by buildings.

Fred L. Tonne / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



A 1965 photo shows evacuation chutes at the Badger Ordnance Works. The chutes allow for rapid escape in case of emergency.

Fred L. Tonne / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



Firemen direct water onto the ruins of the Badger Army Ammunition Plant near Baraboo after an explosion in September, 1966.

James Conklin / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



Firemen direct water onto the ruins of the Badger Army Ammunition Plant near Baraboo after an explosion in September, 1966. The explosion destroyed two buildings used to manufacture ball powder. Eleven people were hurt.

Clarence P. Schmidt / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



The Badger Army Ammunition Plant on Highway 12 between Baraboo and Sauk City can be seen in the distance of this 1967 photograph. Plant management was preparing to lay off 850 employees.

Allan Y. Scott / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



A 1990 photo shows the abandoned Badger Army Ammunition Plant near Baraboo. The sulfuric acid manufacturing plant is on the right.

Allan Y. Scott / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



The Badger Army Ammunition Plant sits on 7,000-acres on a large plain south of Baraboo. This 1990 view is from the building where grains of propellant were packed into cans and boxes for shipment.

Allan Y. Scott / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



A 1990 photo shows long rows of abandoned Badger Ammunition buildings that once made cannon propellant. The escape chutes, designed to expedite workers in an emergency, are still attached to the buildings.

Allan Y. Scott / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



A 1990 photo of Ken Lin shows him on his property. Lin's well, which is close to the southern border of the Badger Army Ammunition Plant, contained large amounts of carbon tetrachloride and chloroform from chemical wastes at the plant.

William Lizdas / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



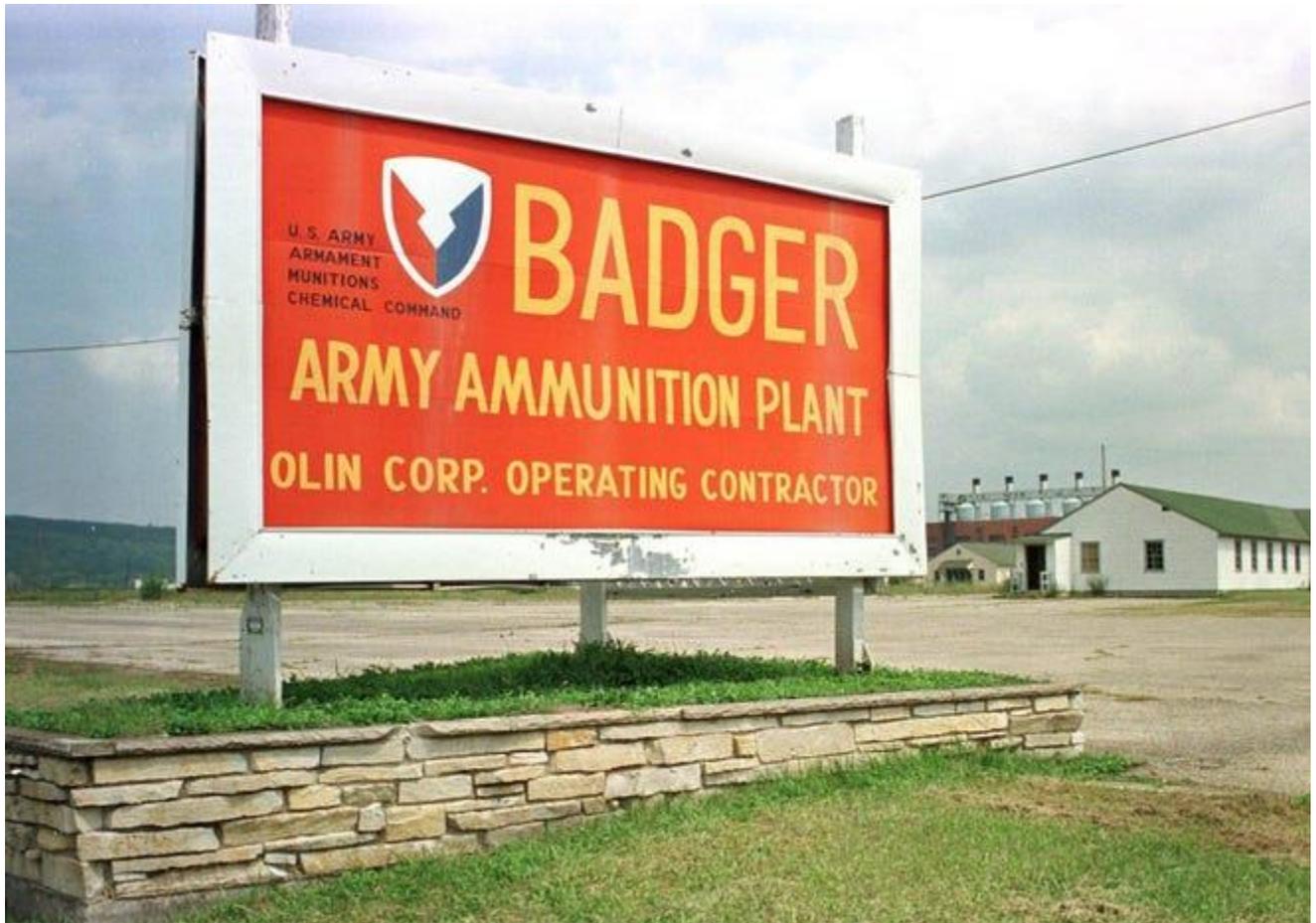
About 3,000 acres on the property of the former Badger Ammunition plant were used for cropland and grazing when this photo was taken in 1998.

Joe Koshollek / Special To Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



A 1998 photo shows Badger Ammunition buildings with their safety chutes overgrown by plants. Various interest groups and governmental agencies proposed future uses for the land once the buildings were removed and contamination remediation was complete.

Joe Koshollek / Special To Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



A sign outside the main gate for the Badger Ammunition plant in Baraboo, photographed in 1998.

Joe Koshollek / Special To Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



A 1998 photo shows the former Badger Ammunition grounds along Highway 12 between Baraboo and Sauk City.

Joe Koshollek / Special To Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



A 1998 photo shows the inside of a former Badger Ammunition mix house used to manufacture ball powder for small arms.

Joe Koshollek / Special To Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



Work crews remove asbestos from pipes around the former Badger Ammunition plant in 1998.  
Joe Koshollek / Special To Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



Cattle graze on former Badger Ammunition property near Baraboo in 1998.

Joe Koshollek / Special To Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



Cars and trucks along highway 12 pass the Badger Ammunition plant near Baraboo in 1998.  
Joe Koshollek / Special To Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



Environmental clean up at the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant near Baraboo was still underway at the time of this photo in November 2001.

Michael Sears / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



Environmental clean up at the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant near Baraboo was still underway at the time of this photo in November 2001.

Michael Sears / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



A sign marks an Oleum landfill on the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant in 2001. Oleum was used in the manufacture of explosives. The U.S. Army was dismantling the former ammunition site before turning it over the Wisconsin DNR, the Ho Chunk Nation and others.  
Joe Koshollek / Special To Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



A view from Devils Lake South Bluff shows the former Badger Army Ammunition plant being dismantled in 2010.

Joe Koshollek / Special To Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



Buildings at the former Badger Army Ammunition plant await dismantling in 2010.

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Buildings at the former Badger Army Ammunition plant await dismantling in 2010.

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A work crew dismantles a ball powder building at the former Badger Army Ammunition plant near Baraboo.

Joe Koshollek / Special To Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



The U.S. Army's contract representative Joan Kenney drives past buildings that had their asbestos sides taken off during dismantling of the former Badger Army Ammunition plant near Baraboo.

Joe Koshollek / Special To Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



A road block warns visitors of the dismantling work underway at the former Badger Army Ammunition plant in Baraboo in 2010.

Joe Koshollek / Special To Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



A water tower lays in front of a former Badger Army Ammunition plant building being dismantling by the U.S. Army near Baraboo in 2010.

Joe Koshollek / Special To Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



Devils Lake Park superintendent Steve Schmelzer drives around the former Badger ammunition plant in 2012. Schmelzer will also oversee the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area replacing the former plant site.

Joe Koshollek / Special To Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



An observation bunker sits on the gun range of the former Badger ammunition plant near Baraboo in 2012.

Joe Koshollek / Special To Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



A sign photographed in 2012 on the former Badger Ammunition plant gun range illustrates the level of security enforced on the Department of Defense base in earlier years. Once remediated, land become the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area.

Joe Koshollek / Special To Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



This is one of three cemeteries on the former Badger Ammunition plant site. Some of the graves date back to the 1800s.

Joe Koshollek / Special To Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



Devils Lake Park superintendent Steve Schmelzer locks the gate to Pioneer Cemetery on the base of the former Badger Ammunition plant. It's one of three Cemeteries on the property.

Joe Koshollek / Special To Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



Devils Lake Park superintendent Steve Schmelzer looks out over the former Badger ammunition plant located next to Devils Lake State Park. Schmelzer will also oversee the new Sauk Prairie Recreation Area.

Joe Koshollek / Special To Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



An old sign found on the former Badger ammunition plant site warns trespassers about entering the Department of Defense grounds. Today, with the buildings gone, the land will be turned into the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area.

Joe Koshollek / Special To Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



Badger History Group president and archivist Verlyn Mueller lays out a Badger Army Ammunition Plant photo in 2012. Mueller worked at the plant for 26 years.  
Joe Koshollek / Special To Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



U.S. Army land that once contained hundreds of buildings and thousands of workers has now returned to a grassland leaving only cement slabs where buildings once stood. The site was photographed in October, 2012.

Joe Koshollek / Special To Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



The state Natural Resources Board reviewed plans for management of the Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area in 2015, after a sprawling manufacturing complex that produced ammunition for the U.S. Army on the site until 1975 was demolished and turned over to Department of Natural Resources and other parties.

Provided By Wisconsin Department Of Natural Resources



The state Natural Resources Board reviewed plans for management of the Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area in 2015, after a sprawling manufacturing complex that produced ammunition for the U.S. Army on the site until 1975 was demolished and turned over to Department of Natural Resources and other parties. This view looks north across the former plant site towards Devil's Lake State Park.

Provided By Wisconsin Department Of Natural Resources



Dan Bussey (left) helps Dennis Kindschi plant an apple tree on May 30, 2017, on land owned by the U.S. Department of Agriculture on the site of the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant in Baraboo, Wis. Kindschi's parents farmed the land before it was forcibly purchased during the World War II mobilization. About 80 farmers had their land condemned and later purchased by the government to construct a massive plant used to make ammunition propellants. In 1997, the U.S. Army declared the plant was no longer needed. Since then, the land has been acquired by some government agencies and the Ho-Chunk Nation.

Mark Hoffman / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



Volunteer Muffy Barrett selects apple tree graftings and root stock for planting on May 30, 2017. The trees were planted on land owned by the U.S. Department of Agriculture on the site of the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant in Baraboo, Wis. The trees will be transplanted after a few years. About 80 farmers had their land condemned and later purchased by the government to construct a massive plant used to make ammunition propellants. In 1997, the U.S. Army declared the plant was no longer needed. Since then, the land has been acquired by some government agencies and the Ho-Chunk Nation.

Mark Hoffman / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



Badger Army Ammunition Plant Museum curator and archivist Verlyn Mueller works on a new display in the recently reopened museum at the entrance of the former plant near Baraboo.  
Meg Jones / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



Among the artifacts now on display in the recently reopened Badger Army Ammunition Plant Museum is a sign with the names of men who served in the plant's fire department including Elroy Hirsch, a future NFL Hall of Famer and UW-Madison athletic director.

Meg Jones / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



Names of some of the farmers forced to sell their land in 1942 to the federal government are preserved on a marker on land now owned by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The marker sits on the site of the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant in Baraboo, Wis. About 80 farmers had their land condemned and later purchased by the government to construct a massive plant used to make ammunition propellants. In 1997, the U.S. Army declared the plant was no longer needed. Since then, the land has been acquired by some government agencies and the Ho-Chunk Nation.

Mark Hoffman / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



Signs on the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant state the land is owned by the Ho-Chunk Nation. The signage was photographed on January 16, 2025, near Baraboo, Wisconsin. The plant leaves behind a legacy of contaminated groundwater affecting area residents. The 7,275 acre plant was built in 1942 to produce smokeless gunpowder for World War II and the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Mark Hoffman / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



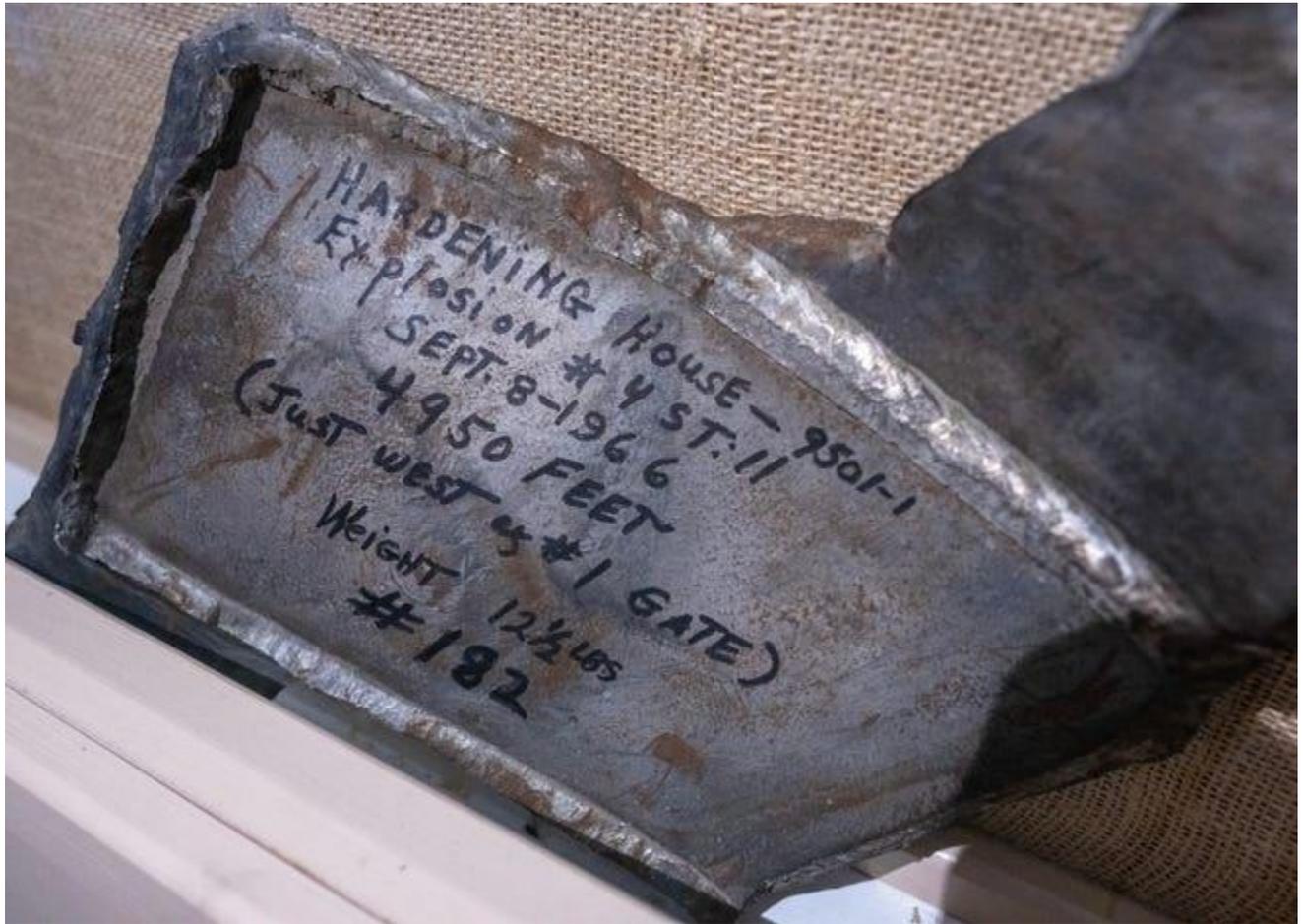
A Badger Army Ammunition museum photo shows the former main gate to the plant near Baraboo, Wisconsin. The plant leaves behind a legacy of contaminated groundwater affecting area residents. The 7,275 acre plant was built in 1942 to produce smokeless gunpowder for World War II and the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Mark Hoffman / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



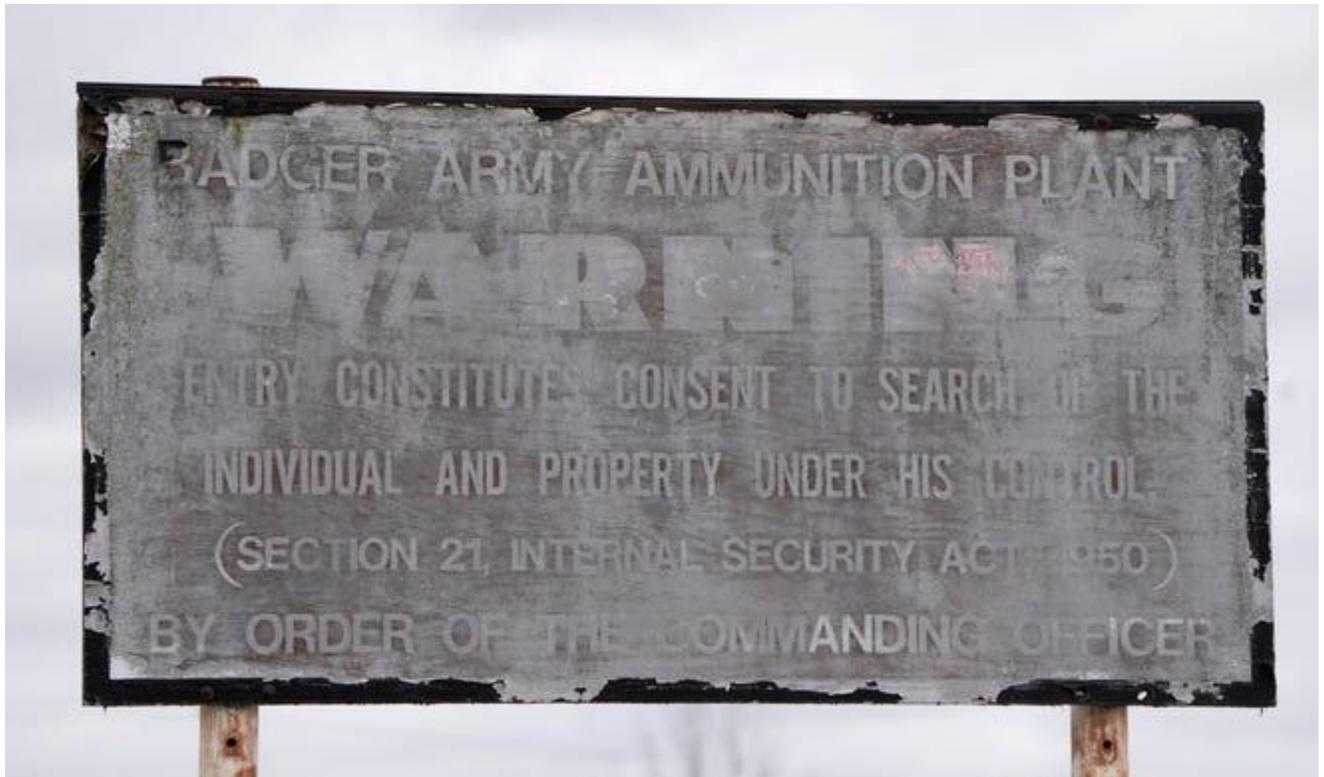
Museum of Badger Army Ammunition president and archivist Verlyn Mueller is shown with a photo taken during a shift change in the World War II era. Mueller was photographed on January 16, 2025, at the museum on the grounds of the former plant near Baraboo, Wisconsin. The plant leaves behind a legacy of contaminated groundwater affecting area residents. The 7,275 acre plant was built in 1942 to produce smokeless gunpowder for World War II and the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Mark Hoffman / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



A 12.5 pound piece of metal once belonged to a building that exploded in 1966. The piece traveled nearly a mile. It was photographed on January 16, 2025, at the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant Museum near Baraboo, Wisconsin. The plant leaves behind a legacy of contaminated groundwater affecting area residents. The 7,275 acre plant was built in 1942 to produce smokeless gunpowder for World War II and the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Mark Hoffman / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



An old sign is photographed near the former main gate to the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant Museum on January 16, 2025 near Baraboo, Wisconsin. The plant leaves behind a legacy of contaminated groundwater affecting area residents. The 7,275 acre plant was built in 1942 to produce smokeless gunpowder for World War II and the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Mark Hoffman / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



People gather for a meeting of the Badger Army Ammunition Plant Restoration Advisory Board on January 16, 2025, in Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin. The group provides input for cleanup efforts at the nearby former Badger Army Ammunition Plant in Baraboo, Wisconsin. The plant leaves behind a legacy of contaminated groundwater affecting area residents. The 7,275 acre plant was built in 1942 to produce smokeless gunpowder for World War II and the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Mark Hoffman / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



SpecPro Services' Badger Army Ammunition Plant project manager Joel Janssen speaks on, January 16, 2025, during a meeting of the Badger Army Ammunition Plant Restoration Advisory Board in Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin. The group provides input for cleanup efforts at the nearby former Badger Army Ammunition Plant in Baraboo, Wisconsin. The plant leaves behind a legacy of contaminated groundwater affecting area residents. The 7,275 acre plant was built in 1942 to produce smokeless gunpowder for World War II and the Korean and Vietnam wars.

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Audience members read handouts during a meeting of the Badger Army Ammunition Plant Restoration Advisory Board on January 16, 2025, in Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin. The group provides input for cleanup efforts at the nearby former Badger Army Ammunition Plant in Baraboo, Wisconsin. The plant leaves behind a legacy of contaminated groundwater affecting area residents. The 7,275 acre plant was built in 1942 to produce smokeless gunpowder for World War II and the Korean and Vietnam wars.

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Mike Gleason speaks to another Badger Army Ammunition Plant Restoration Advisory Board member on January 16, 2025, during a meeting of the in Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin. The group provides input for cleanup efforts at the nearby former Badger Army Ammunition Plant in Baraboo, Wisconsin. The plant leaves behind a legacy of contaminated groundwater affecting area residents. The 7,275 acre plant was built in 1942 to produce smokeless gunpowder for World War II and the Korean and Vietnam wars.  
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