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## Regimental Command Sergeant Major

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This is my first article for the *Army Chemical Review* as your ninth Regimental Command Sergeant Major (RCSM). To begin, I would like to share a little of my background with you. First, I am a soldier, an NCO with more than 25 years of active duty service. I am honored to be your RCSM and happy to be here at the Chemical School. I did not accomplish all this on my own. I have been blessed with great role models and leaders—my fellow soldiers, officers, NCOs, and civilians.

I joined the Minnesota National Guard in 1969 and completed Basic and Advanced Infantry Training at Fort Lewis, Washington. I completed my tour of duty with the National Guard in 1975, and in 1978, I reenlisted and became an active-duty military police (MP).

I attended one-station unit training (OSUT) at Fort McClellan, Alabama, and afterwards was assigned to the 55th MP Company in Korea. My roommate was the Brigade Soldier of the Year, and he was the first of many role models I would encounter. He taught me about the Soldier of the Month Boards and correspondence courses. I heeded his advice and, after two years, won a few boards, scored high on my skill qualification test, graduated from the Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC), and was an E4 (P). I thought becoming a PLDC graduate was a great achievement, but I refocused my priorities when I saw others receiving awards. I decided then to never take a nonchalant approach to any military school or to my military career again.

At Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, I served as a game warden and an MP desk sergeant. I gained some experience as a supply sergeant and competed for the Post NCO of the Year Board, but lost. I also completed some college courses and finished several correspondence courses.

In 1982, I changed my MOS to chemical. I went to the transition course and was the Distinguished Honor Graduate; that was the pivotal point in my career. Upon graduation, I was assigned to the 82d Engineer Battalion in Germany. I continued taking correspondence courses, was promoted to E6, and became the 7th Engineer Brigade NCO of the Quarter.

In 1985, I returned to Korea and spent 12 months with the 4th Chemical Company, 2d Infantry Division. I was the smoke platoon sergeant. I took 23 (54E) soldiers and turned them into a platoon of highly motivated smoke soldiers. Later, I made the E7 promotion list and became the 2d Infantry Division and the 8th U.S. Army NCO of the Quarter.



**CSM Peter Hiltner**

As a sergeant first class, I continued taking correspondence courses, finished my bachelor's degree, and graduated as the honor graduate from both the Technical Escort Course and the Advanced NCO Course. I was an instructor at the Technical Escort Course for about two years and served at the EOD School. I completed another tour in Germany in the Inspector General's Office at VII Corps and deployed to Desert Storm. When I returned, I moved to Fort Rucker, Alabama, assigned to the 46th Engineer Battalion (Combat)(Heavy).

In 1993, I attended the first sergeant's course and became the first sergeant for the Chemical NCO Academy at Fort McClellan. In 1996, I moved to the 11th Chemical Company, which was tasked to provide decontamination support to the 1996 Olympic games in Atlanta, Georgia. In 1997, I returned to Korea as first sergeant for the 4th Chemical Company.

In 1998, I attended the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy. Upon graduation in 1999, I was assigned as the CSM for the 82d Chemical Battalion. In 2000, I returned to Korea as the CSM of the 23d Chemical Battalion; in 2001, I became the brigade sergeant major of the 23d Area Support Group, Camp Humphreys, Korea. And now I am your RCSM.

As you can see, my story is not all that unusual. As I stated before, I did not make it on my own; I had the support and guidance of many. I looked good because the soldiers around me were good. Likewise, I was never satisfied with just passing scores or with just meeting the standard. I wanted to be all that I could be and give the Army my best.

Does this sound like something you want to do? If it is, then my advice to you, regardless of where you are in your military career, is the following:

- Enroll in correspondence and college courses. You will gain knowledge and obtain promotion points.
- Commit yourself to the Army. It is not a job; we are not in it for the money. Give the Army 110 percent every day.
- Become the next Soldier of the Quarter; get involved in something positive.
- Try to earn membership in the Audie Murphy or Sergeant Morales Club.
- Graduate from every class you attend, and with honors, if possible.

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to a CBRN incident. Finally, the Emergency Assessment and Detection Course deals with the fundamental concepts important to National Guard civil support team members who support the Incident Command System.

Our best defense against CBRN warfare remains our ability to prepare for and protect ourselves against the toxic effects of these weapons. By defeating the effects of CBRN weapons, we in effect make them obsolete. Our combat development folks are making great strides in our ability to defeat the effects of CBRN agents. Developments in the area of decontamination are particularly noteworthy. A two-step approach has been used to define requirements for future decontamination systems, the first of which was a decontamination performance demonstration (DPD) held in July 2001. The DPD was a market survey in which companies from the world over were invited to the Chemical School to showcase their decontamination technologies. The equipment was operated by our chemical soldiers, which fostered a direct two-way exchange of ideas between the customer (you) and the industry professionals. A great deal was accomplished during the DPD, and our combat developers took the lessons learned from the soldiers and industry and went back to work defining the key performance parameters (KPPs) for future decontamination systems.

These KPPs were the yardstick by which performance of prototype systems chosen to participate in the April 2002 decontamination limited objective experiment (LOE) were measured against. During the LOE, we experimented with promising equipment to see if it not only fixed our historical problem areas but further enhanced capability while reducing workload and logistical support requirements. Several pieces of equipment were identified that possess the ability to greatly improve our capability with little or no modification. These systems represent real-time solutions that are available for acquisition now. We are taking everything we learned throughout this two-step approach and writing the requirements for the next generation of decontamination systems. This approach underpins requirements definition, thereby ensuring we take maximum advantage of state-of-the-art technology available. We are focusing our effort on getting the systems developed and proven out through testing to get enhanced capability into your hands as soon as possible.

Additionally, there has been a tremendous amount of effort to provide the most efficient and versatile chemical force structure to combat commanders of the future. Work in support of Total Army Analysis 11 changes will potentially restructure chemical units to be capable of executing a wider variety of tasks from homeland security to major contingency operations.

Our nation is counting on us, the Chemical Corps and our partners in CBRN Defense, to protect our forces and our homeland from the deleterious effects of CBRN assaults. We must maintain our fierce resolve to support our combat commanders with the best-trained soldiers and leaders, the best doctrine, the best equipment, and our finest intellectual effort for the challenges of tomorrow. You're doing tremendous things Dragon Soldiers! Drive on.

### **ELEMENTIS REGAMUS PROELIUM!**

Dragon Soldiers . . . Rule the Battle

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When you become an NCO, "take care of your soldiers." This means that you are responsible for someone besides yourself. You will learn when to say yes and when to say no. Respect your soldiers and listen to what they have to say. Your soldiers are a reflection of you. Without them, you cannot succeed. Just as important, take care of your family. Find the balance.

As your RCSM, I want to continue to improve the communication with the units in the field and the soldiers and civilians throughout the chemical community, support the heritage of the Corps, be a role model to all, share the great work we do as chemical soldiers, and improve identified weaknesses, where possible. I intend to share DA's vision of people, readiness, and transformation with everyone:

- People/soldiers, not equipment, are the centerpieces of our formation. We will take care of soldiers, civilians, and leaders. I always keep in mind that we have been trusted with our nation's greatest asset—its sons and daughters.
- Readiness is our mission. The Army has a non-negotiable contract with the American people to fight and win our nation's wars. We must maintain near-term training and readiness to ensure that we are prepared at all times to carry out our obligations. This is our daily mission; we will continue to work hard and improve our readiness. As NCOs and leaders, we are the standard bearers for readiness.
- Transformation is an imperative. Army Transformation represents the strategic transition we will have to undergo to shed our Cold-War designs to prepare ourselves for the crises and wars of the twenty-first century.

In closing, this is a very critical time for our country. We will encounter many challenges that we will conquer by working together. This includes everyone.