
When You Only Have *Two Days*

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The mission of the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) (USACAPOC[A]) is to train, validate, and monitor the readiness of assigned Active Component, Reserve Component, and civil affairs/psychological operations (CA/PSYOP) forces to accomplish assigned missions in support of the warfighting combatant commanders.

About 96 percent of the command's approximately 10,000 soldiers are with the Reserve Component, located in 26 states and the District of Columbia. USACAPOC(A) is headquartered at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and is one of the three major subordinate commands that comprise the U.S. Army Special Operations Command. As Army special operations forces (ARSOF), they maintain high standards of training and physical readiness so that they can deploy anywhere in the world on short notice. This standard of training, which includes proficiency in nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) defense readiness, was tested commandwide when the command's reserve units were mobilized to support the global war on terrorism.

Premobilization Preparations

Like the other Army commands, USACAPOC(A) historians will record and document the monumental effort that reserve units put forth to be fully mission capable and ready to deploy to support combat operations in Southwest Asia. As part of its premobilization and mobilization activities, USACAPOC(A)'s CA/PSYOP units completed weeks of logistical, administrative, and readiness training and tasks so that they could be validated at an Army installation's mobilization station (MS). At the MS, the installation commander is responsible for validating whether the unit is able to accomplish its wartime mission.¹ It is not the intent of the MS commander to provide training time and resources for units to train up on tasks that should have been performed at the home station, since this can slow mobilization processing and cause a unit to be delayed.

Unfortunately, many units arrived at Fort Bragg without having conducted a satisfactory level of premobilization NBC training. Clearly, NBC training had not been planned in their training schedules. For example, several units had not been trained to standard on critical NBC tasks such as administering the Nerve Agent Antidote Kit (NAAK), drinking water from a canteen in mission-oriented protective posture (MOPP) 4, and

reporting an NBC attack over the radio using the NBC reporting standard. General George C. Marshall once said, "We cannot train without planning, and we cannot teach without preparation."²

Additionally, many units had not purchased enough NBC training equipment to support the NBC training goals during the fiscal year; therefore, it can be argued that some units had not treated NBC as another battlefield condition within which to train on their mission-essential task list. "NBC warfare is not a separate, special form of war, but instead a *battlefield condition* [emphasis added] just like rain, snow, darkness, electronic warfare, heat, and so on. Units must train to accomplish their wartime missions under all battlefield conditions. Whenever NBC is separated from other training events, we condition our soldiers to regard operations under NBC conditions as a separate form of warfare."³

Training Concerns

What was clear to the command leadership was that a premobilization NBC training program meeting the requirements for the fiscal year 2003 common task list had to be implemented quickly. The program also had to incorporate additional NBC tasks that, in my judgment, were especially suited to the ARSOF community. The command's NBC training program also had to be developed with these operating constraints in mind:

- Limited time
- Insufficient NBC training supplies
- Outdated NBC lane-training experience

Let me expand on each of these limitations. The units had, at most, two days of NBC training time allotted at the MS. Many units arrived at the MS without their training MOPP/Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology (JSLIST) suits, M291 Personal Decontamination Kits, M295 Equipment Decontamination Kits, M256A1 Trainer Kits, and NAAK Trainer Sets. Several units had not conducted lane training in an NBC environment within the past 24 months. According to

Training Circular (TC) 25-10, *A Leader's Guide to Lane Training*,⁴ lane training is an important part of the training evaluation and unit assessment process. Lane training is "a systematic, battle-focused, performance-oriented training process used to plan, execute, and assess unit training to achieve maximum training results with limited time and resources."⁵ Based on these constraints, the NBC mobilization training was built as a two-day program with the second day devoted to lane training. The plan was to break the units into operational elements/teams and run through an evaluated battle-focused scenario (reacting to a chemical/biological attack). USACAPOC(A) provided the training supplies, decreasing the reliance on the units to provide them.

NBC Training

The training program was staffed by the primary instructors (the command chemical officer and the command NBC noncommissioned officer [NCO]) and a number of 54B-qualified personnel from other subordinate commands and units. In this manner, many NBC NCOs helped to train their own soldiers so that they could, in turn, take the training and deliver it throughout their own command structure, ensuring consistency of content and quality.

Each block of instruction followed the crawl-walk-run approach that is discussed in Field Manual (FM) 7-0, *Training the Force*.⁶ During the *crawl* phase, the instructor taught the program of instruction using a demonstrator. The *walk* phase involved group practice and individual validation on each task. The *run* phase was designed exclusively for the second training day.

Day One: Crawl and Walk

Day One was primarily Skill Level 1 NBC tasks from the fiscal year 2003 Common Task Test (CTT).⁷ Table 1 shows the training sequence.

Day Two: Run

The lane training was organized to incorporate many of the individual NBC tasks (see Table 1). The lane was organized into a five-step process:

Assembly Area: At the beginning of the day, the group was briefed on its mission and then task-organized into tactical teams or detachments that usually consisted of 4 to 12 soldiers each.

Rehearsal: Teams were allowed to practice team drills such as performing mask drills, administering the NAAK, radioing in an NBC 1 report, and identifying alternate team leaders.

Lane Execution: Each team began at a start point in MOPP 0 and moved through two phase lines (PLs) and a release point. At a location determined by the observer-controller (PL 1), the team came under a

Table 1. NBC Training Sequence

1	Maintain your assigned protective mask.
2	React to chemical/biological hazard/attack—mounted and dismounted.
3	Conduct immediate decontamination using M291 and M295 Decontamination Kits.
4	Protect yourself from injury by assuming correct MOPP.
5	Provide JSLIST suit demonstration and instruction.
6	Detect/identify chemical agents using M9 and M8 detector papers.
7	Identify chemical agents using M256 detector paper.
8	Submit NBC 1 report.
9	Protect yourself from contamination while drinking from canteen in MOPP 4.
10	Conduct unmasking procedures with and without an M256A1 Chemical Agent Detector Kit.
11	Administer nerve agent antidote to self, and administer first aid to a nerve agent casualty, and then transport casualty.
12	Use latrine in MOPP 4.

chemical/biological attack; their performance was then evaluated. Part of the exercise at PL 1 included a set of CTT tasks conducted both individually (individual decontamination, for example) and collectively (administering the NAAK to a casualty and transporting the casualty out of the area). Teams were then required to move the chemical/biological agent casualties back to a rally point (PL 2). This was clearly the most physically demanding part of the lane training, since team members had to move simulated casualties across wooded terrain as efficiently and effectively as possible under mental and physical duress.

After-Action Review: Once back at a rally point, the teams conducted additional NBC tasks as part of PL 2. The observer-controller then gave the all-clear signal, signifying the end of the exercise, and had an informal after-action review.⁸

Retraining: Units were advised to conduct retraining based on the lessons learned.

Lessons Learned

A number of valuable lessons in implementing a simple, effective NBC training program were learned. Table 2 on page 34 lists some of the important characteristics to remember. First and foremost, the

program must be developed with the intent to model it down to subordinate units. A “universal” command NBC training program, in terms of content and delivery, will motivate units to acquire and procure appropriate NBC training supplies and possibly share NBC trainers. Additionally, training consistency is beneficial for any organizational inspection program. For example, many of the inspectable areas relating to NBC are linked to whether or not a unit has conducted specific types of training.

Second, it takes a strong coordinated effort among a command’s operations, logistics, and resource managers. These managers must coordinate with the individual unit commanders so that the instructors, equipment, and funding converge at the right time and place. Remember, a mobilization station will not release a unit to deploy unless that unit is 100 percent validated on its mobilization tasks/stations. All USACAPOC(A) active and reserve units were validated and met their ship-out dates due to the concerted efforts of several support functions at the command.

Third, as with other training areas, physical fitness was a contributing factor. Carrying a casualty while in MOPP 4 for an extended period of time across uneven terrain is no small task. During our lane training, soldiers commonly hyperventilated while wearing their protective masks. Soldiers were taught how to combat and mitigate the psychological and physical effects of duress while wearing a protective mask.

Fourth, a reserve unit’s training time is very limited. The NBC battlefield condition must be incorporated into a unit’s training time. After all, if **NoBody Cares**, there will be **Nothing But Corpses**.

Endnotes

¹Army Regulation 600-8-101, *Personnel Processing (In-and-Out and Mobilization Processing)*, 1 March 1997, pp. 6-9.

²FM 7-0, *Training the Force*, October 2002.



Moving a casualty back to a rally point over varied terrain

³Walter Polley, Michael Dlugopolski, and William Hartzell, “40,000 Train in Chemical Environment,” *Army Chemical Review*, January 1988, p. 31.

⁴TC 25-10, *A Leader’s Guide to Lane Training*, August 1996, p. 1-1(d).

⁵Ibid.

⁶FM 7-0, *Training the Force*, October 2002, pp. 5-8.

⁷ArmyStudyGuide.Com, Common Task Test description, September 2002, online at <http://www.armystudyguide.com/resources/CTT_FY03/>.

⁸TC 25-20, *A Leader’s Guide to After-Action Reviews*, pp. 4-7.

Table 2. NBC Lane-Training Characteristics

- Scenarios are mission-oriented (battle-focused).
- Tasks—individual and collective—are performance-demonstrated.
- Lane-training exercise has start point/line of departure, phase lines/testing stations, and after-action review location.
- Soldiers are trained to standard, not time.
- Exercise results help develop and refine unit standard operating procedures.
- Formal and informal after-action assessments are given, recorded, and distributed to relevant personnel and commands.