

Turning a Negative JRTC Chemical Trend Into a Positive

(A Simple Training Concept for the Chemical Officer Basic Course)

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One of the most significant trends of the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) is the brigade/battalion chemical officer's (ChemO's) and noncommissioned officer's (NCO's) understanding of how and where the intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) (FM 3-14, *Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical [NBC] Vulnerability Analysis*) fits into the military decision-making process (MDMP), coupled with no NBC cell to assist in managing and focusing on the NBC threat. Furthermore, this trend is also compounded by the lack of knowledge and understanding the unit commander, S2, and S3 have of what the ChemO brings to the fight. This negative trend can be reversed to a positive one with a simple training concept that ideally should begin at the Chemical Officer Basic Course (COBC).

This simple training concept will ensure that incoming ChemOs, arriving at their first assignments as staff officers, are prepared to conduct NBC duties. It also will enable them to smoothly integrate their own NBC battle-staff drills and analysis techniques within the tactical operations center (TOC) and its other Battlefield Operating System (BOS) cells. In general, this concept requires that the ChemOs build their NBC cell concept within the first four weeks in preparation for the last two weeks (practical exercise) of COBC.

This concept is based on the assumption that the Chemical Corps at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, strives to build proficient NBC staff officers versus platoon leaders at the COBC. It also assumes that the Chemical Corps will allocate the required funds to build NBC-related tools that the ChemO can take to the NBC cell. However, the lack of funds should not be the obstacle to halt this

simple concept. Many will argue that an officer should not spend personal funds on training tools because the Army should provide him with everything he needs. I would argue that the true professional is willing to invest in his future as opposed to allowing the allocation of funds to halt the progress to "sell NBC" to his projected new assignments.

This concept requires the ChemO to build an NBC-cell portable map board (PMB) and prepare NBC tools (NBC status sheets, pre-cut simplified downwind predictions) during personal time to minimize the impact on the current COBC teaching agenda. The PMB and NBC tools must be completed during the initial weeks where the Chemical Corps strives to instill the required knowledge to become a proficient NBC staff officer. This ensures that each ChemO would have the PMB and NBC tools status sheets in preparation for the practical exercise phase during the last two weeks of COBC.

The PMB and NBC tools will give the ChemO a few advantages when selling NBC to his first unit assignment. These advantages, in order of occurrence, are—

- The officer arrives at the new unit assignment with a custom-tailored PMB and NBC tool kit that he has become accustomed to working within the NBC IPB analysis (FM 3-14) during the practical exercise phase of COBC.
- The PMB introduces, up front, the concept of the NBC cell to the gaining unit with the understanding that it is an essential requirement for the ChemO and NCO to manage NBC-related information and foster NBC situational awareness for the unit commander, key staff (S3, executive officer), and

other BOS cells (engineer, fire support, air defense artillery, etc.).

- This concept ensures that the ChemO is able to conduct a continuous NBC IPB, produce the required NBC data, and make NBC force protection recommendations to present to the unit commander and staff so that feasible NBC guidance can be provided from the commander and staff.

The last two weeks should be dedicated to building and refining the ChemO's NBC analysis technique. This is accomplished by setting up a classroom to replicate a TOC with an S2 cell and an NBC cell with the ChemO's own PMB to complete the cell. The instructor would provide the required material for the ChemO's NBC IPB (operations order, brigade-level Annex J, maps with graphics, etc). The S2 cell will be manned by an actual S2 (preferably a captain) to add to the realism and assist the ChemO in the joint effort to complete the NBC IPB process (FM 3-14). The small-group leader (SGL) will serve as a battalion commander and ask the difficult questions to challenge the ChemO's ability to articulate the NBC environment.

The evaluated ChemO will conduct the NBC IPB and brief the SGL (battalion commander) on four scenarios within a period of two weeks. The scenarios should

be based on one offensive operation, one defensive operation, one military operation other than war (toxic industrial material emphasis), and one joint operation. These four scenarios will ensure that the ChemO receives the opportunity to practice his analysis and presentation skills in four different operational environments. The criteria for feedback should focus on the ability to clearly articulate the friendly and enemy NBC capabilities and enemy NBC threat and make sound recommendations on NBC force protection measures to enable the battalion commander to visualize the NBC threat and give proper guidance (focused only on improving the officer's technique).

In conclusion, the goal of this article is to suggest how to reverse a negative JRTC trend into a positive one by focusing on the new ChemOs graduating from COBC. The creation of custom PMB and NBC tools, while providing feedback to each ChemO during a practical exercise phase, will ensure that all ChemOs arrive at their gaining unit prepared to be integrated as a chemical staff officer and an NBC cell inside the TOC (versus the current battle-captain trend) and conduct effective NBC IPB to give the unit commander, staff, and BOS cells the right data to establish a feasible NBC force protection plan and the correct doctrinal use of NBC assets (S/D platoons, NBCR Fox squads).