

## Chief of Chemical



**Brigadier General  
Thomas Spoehr**

Greetings Dragon Soldiers! It is unbelievable how much has happened since my last Army Chemical Review article. I want to hit on some of the high points. First, working with you—our Corps stakeholders—we have developed a revised Chemical Corps Vision (see also the inside back cover):

**A Corps and Army capable now of countering the entire range of CBRN threats and effects to protect our Nation, operating seamlessly with military and civilian partners, while conducting simultaneous operations from civil support to war.**

I ask your support in communicating this Vision to all Chemical Corps Soldiers and those we work with. A vision is a *desirable* and *imaginable* picture of the future that is *feasible* and *focused*. Our Vision was developed with your participation, and I think that it transmits a powerful message on the direction we want our Corps to take. We must now work on the strategies and objectives that must be achieved to complete our Vision.

On 28 June 2007, we will mark the 89th anniversary of the founding of the Chemical Corps. We will celebrate this anniversary 24–27 June during Regimental Week at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Scheduled events include a Warfighter Seminar on 24 June; Colonels', General Officers', and Sergeants' Major Conferences on 25 June; a Regimental Review on 26 June; and the Green Dragon Ball on 27 June. Invitations will be provided soon; meanwhile, please note your calendars and make plans to attend. It will be a great opportunity to exchange warfighting insight. Additionally, the National Defense Industrial Association will conduct the Joint Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Conference during the same week (see the complete agenda on page 11 or at <http://www.wood.army.mil/usacmls/nonflash/conference.html>). I look forward to seeing you in June!

Command Sergeant Major Alston and I continue to visit Dragon Soldiers. In November, we traveled to Kuwait and Iraq where we were fortunate enough to visit many Dragon Soldiers serving there. (There is also a new team in Iraq under the leadership of III Corps, and we hope to visit them soon.) Everywhere we went, we saw Dragon Soldiers fully engaged in supporting the war effort by performing a myriad of diverse tasks: hazardous material response, convoy security, quick-reaction force response, forward operating base protection, force protection, and other missions. What was the common denominator in these Chemical Soldiers? Pride in jobs well done—a fact reaffirmed through their chains of command! We also visited Dugway Proving Ground, Utah, where the new Stryker Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Reconnaissance Vehicle was being tested. Stryker brigades are already receiving these systems; what a huge addition to our capabilities they present! Our Soldiers really love it.

I am really excited about the Joint Warning and Reporting Network and the Joint Effects Model Programs (see page 12). Both battle management tools are on track and firmly on a path to success. They are linked to the Army Battle Command Systems and are being developed cooperatively with these programs. We are working hard at the Chemical School to support these programs with appropriate training and doctrine material and to increase the amount of institutional training time we give them in our core courses.

We are working quickly to move the Joint Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Reconnaissance System, Increment II, to fielding. We completed a very successful limited-objective experiment on this system with Soldiers from Fort Lewis, Washington, and Fort Richardson, Alaska, and gained much insight. This system consists of the most advanced commercial, off-the-shelf detection and protection equipment available; and it is mounted on a trailer towed by a high-mobility, multipurpose wheeled vehicle. The system is designed for use by Infantry brigade combat team reconnaissance platoons, heavy Chemical company decontamination platoons, and a number of other Chemical units.

We are firmly focused on doing two things at the Chemical School:

- Producing tactically and technically trained Dragon Soldiers and leaders.
- Supporting the ongoing war effort.

Let me know if you see an area where we could do better. I encourage you to provide input to me at [ChiefofChemical@wood.army.mil](mailto:ChiefofChemical@wood.army.mil). In the meantime, please continue to take care of your fellow Dragon Soldiers.

*Elementis, Regamus, Proelium!*

# *The Ever-Evolving Chemical Corps*

As I begin this article, I reflect back on my initial experience in this great Army branch—the Chemical Corps. Some 23 years ago, I found myself changing my military occupational specialty for reclassification into a corps commonly known as *NBC*. I found it quite amusing that the acronym *NBC*—nuclear, biological, and chemical—was referred to by my counterparts in the Army as “nobody cares.” I can go a step further to say that during my initial assignment as a Chemical specialist in the 4th Chemical Company in South Korea, my major charge was to spray out bus stops with our handy-dandy M12s or be the laundry and bath expert at Team Spirit.



**Command Sergeant Major  
Patrick Z. Alston**

I was taught that we should integrate *NBC* training into company, battalion, or brigade level standing operating procedures. But as I embarked on the task, I was always hit with the statement: “*NBC*, hmmm . . . Why train on something no one cares about?” As we entered the 1990s, we found ourselves facing an enemy country known to be using *NBC* weapons. This country’s leader—Saddam Hussein—had recently used *NBC* weapons in the war between Iran and Iraq, and Army leaders immediately felt that he would deploy these same weapons on our troops during Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield. It is during this time that the Chemical Corps was considered a high commodity on the battlefield. Somehow the acronym *NBC* had evolved from “nobody cares” to its true meaning of “nuclear, biological, and chemical.”

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During the initial phases of Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield, our military began to rely heavily on *NBC* specialists to ensure the operability of their M17A1 masks, M8 chemical-agent alarms, and all other elements of Chemical equipment. The Chemical specialist became “somebody,” an element needed to ensure mission success in the area of *NBC* threats.

At the conclusion of the first Iraqi war, redeployment efforts were realized. Back on the home front, on our prestigious American soil, the Chemical specialist reverted back into the old groove of “nobody cares” and “who are you?” As years passed, the M17A1 mask became history and the implementation of the M40 protective mask was achieved. The 11 September 2001 attack on our Nation introduced the fear of terrorists invading us on our soil. Shortly after 9/11, anthrax—a nonstandard chemical agent—showed its ugly head as terrorists attacked us through the U.S. Postal Service. These two events reestablished the importance of trained professionals in our Chemical Corps.

Operation Iraqi Freedom and the hunt for the “smoking gun” stash of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) once again brought the Chemical Corps to the forefront of the Army’s mission. However, with the military’s inability to find the weapons, we found ourselves reverting back into the secondary roles to which we had become accustomed.

WMD seems to be the new buzz phrase in Army language. What is the possibility that terrorists will use WMD in the United States to kill and injure American citizens and members of our armed forces? The threat is very genuine! As a society in this 21st Century, we are faced with the reality of terrorism and the likelihood that we could be attacked in one of four forms of WMD: chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN). The acronym *NBC*—and the associated stigma of “nobody cares”—is history. Detecting, identifying, mitigating, and decontaminating against CBRN threats is the future of the ever-evolving Chemical Corps. It is who we are; it is what we do best!