

Chief of Chemical



Colonel Thomas Spoehr

Greetings Dragon Soldiers! During a ceremony at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, on 29 June 2006, I had the honor of assuming the title of 24th Chief of Chemical and Commandant of the U.S. Army Chemical School from Brigadier General Stan Lillie. Brigadier General Lillie served as our Chief for three years; his magnificent leadership and selfless service helped bring about countless improvements to our Corps and its capabilities. He positively impacted thousands of Soldiers during his visits to the field and to training locations at Fort Leonard Wood—home of the Chemical Corps. As a result of his leadership and vision, our Corps is at the forefront of Department of Defense efforts to combat weapons of mass destruction and contributes true capability to the joint force. Brigadier General Lillie has moved on to assume the duties of Director of Integration, Headquarters, Department of the Army, G-8, Washington, D.C. He will be responsible for the synchronization and coordination of equipping the Army's modular force. When you see or encounter Brigadier General Lillie, please thank him and his wife Bonita for their great contributions to the Corps. Brigadier General Lillie remains the senior Chemical Corps officer and has promised to remain engaged and supportive of the Corps mission and vision.

I could not be more honored or excited to serve as your Chief. After being gone for three years, my wife Cynthia and I are delighted to return to Fort Leonard Wood and find numerous improvements (too many to mention!) complete or well underway. The First Lieutenant Joseph Terry CBRN Responders Training Facility, due to be completed in fiscal year 2007, will provide unprecedented incident response training. We have incorporated warrior tasks and battle drills into our training for officers and enlisted personnel and will start training with biological and radiological hazards (in addition to the chemical agents used in the Chemical Decontamination Training Facility).

There is a great leadership team at the Chemical School, and they have managed the transition of commandants without missing a beat. We could not be more fortunate to have these leaders—Soldiers like Command Sergeant Major Patrick Alston, Regimental Command Sergeant Major; Colonel Gary Wallace, Assistant Commandant; Colonel Les Smith, Commander, 3d Chemical Brigade; Command Sergeant Major Stan Kusko, Command Sergeant Major, 3d Chemical Brigade; and a host of others—all focused on training, preparing, and taking care of Dragon Soldiers. I will be relying on their wise advice and counsel.

Command Sergeant Major Alston and I visited Fort Lewis, Washington, in July and had the privilege of attending the I Corps Chemical Conference and Green Dragon Ball and witnessing the change of command for the 23d Chemical Battalion. All the Dragon Soldiers we saw—and we saw a lot—were highly motivated professionals. They made us truly proud! In true Dragon Soldier fashion, all events were executed superbly. Fort Lewis is now a center of excellence for our Corps, with the 23d Chemical Battalion, the 110th Chemical Battalion (Technical Escort), the 10th Civil Support Team, Chemical detachments in the 1st Special Forces Group, reconnaissance platoons in two Stryker brigades, the 476th Chemical Battalion (U.S. Army Reserve), and the 420th Chemical Battalion (Army National Guard) all in close proximity. You could serve an entire Chemical career at Fort Lewis, never do the same job twice, and still have plenty of opportunities available.

We also attended the National Capital Region Green Dragon Ball on 14 July at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. It was a great event and an outstanding opportunity to enjoy camaraderie with other Chemical Soldiers. We were inspired by the remarks provided by Mr. Jean Reed, Special Assistant for Chemical and Biological Defense and Chemical Demilitarization Programs, Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense. Mr. Reed affirmed the important role the Chemical Corps plays in the defense of our great Nation.

The Chemical Corps vision is almost 2 1/2 years old and has stood the test of time well. It remains the guiding light that leads us to move the Corps forward. However, recognizing that the pace of change in our Army has never been greater, I am reviewing our vision to ensure that it remains relevant and descriptive of where we want to take our Corps. Your input is vital. I will be reaching out to all elements of the Corps in this process, but if you have input that you would like to send me directly, I have established an e-mail account <chiefofchemical@wood.army.mil> to receive your input. Feel free to send thoughts on our vision and strategy. Finally, I ask you to look out for fellow members of our Corps—mentor, assist, and coach them.

Elementis, Regamus, Proelium!