

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!

Regimental Command Sergeant Major

The Chemical Corps: Combating Terrorism Today to Ensure Freedom Tomorrow is a relevant statement used to describe the Dragon Soldiers who continue to meet the transformational challenges of the Corps and the needs of the Army. This Nation is built and structured on the foundations of liberty, peace, and the American dream. Dragon Soldiers are just as critical to the Nation and our victory in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) as they are to the joint warfighting campaign.

As a Corps, we must ensure that our Nation is well equipped with the means to detect, mitigate, and decontaminate all forms of agents (standard and nonstandard). In trying to simplify the divergent views on the phenomenon of terrorism, a simple definition emerges: “violence or threatened violence intended to produce fear or change.” That fear or change may be prompted by the political or social factors behind individual terrorist acts. In the GWOT campaign, I must emphasize that it is not the job of the Chemical Corps to determine why this evil is present in society today—our job is to focus on defeating terrorist activities as they relate to chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats.

The terrorists of today could attack our Nation with nonstandard chemical agents. These agents could evolve from something as small as household cleaning material or as large as an agent in pure form. Brigadier General Lillie’s vision of transforming Chemical Soldiers from conventional Soldiers to “warrior scientists” is helping the Corps get on board with the ever-increasing wave of the Objective Force Warrior concept, designed to enhance warfighter lethality and survivability and prepare forces for defense operations of the future.



**Command Sergeant Major
Patrick Z. Alston**

In trying to simplify the divergent views on the phenomenon of terrorism, a simple definition emerges: “violence or threatened violence intended to produce fear or change.”

Let’s take a moment to reflect on what the Corps has been called to do in the past. In the early 80s, the Department of the Army concluded that it was necessary to have a Corps that could respond to nuclear, biological, and chemical agents and was compelled to reestablish the Chemical Corps Regiment. However, during that time, the Corps remained underutilized. During the 90s, the Chemical Corps was called upon during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and the relevance of the Corps was soon realized. After the threat of chemical and biological agents emerged, the Corps prepared to deal with the threat of conventional agents.

Our mind-set quickly changed when preparation efforts shifted due to the train incident in which a terrorist group launched a coordinated attack using sarin (GB) nerve gas against commuters on a Tokyo subway system. The highly publicized attack killed 12 people and injured more than 5,000. At that time, the leaders of the Chemical Corps understood that they could be called upon to engage terrorist acts with weapons of mass destruction. The Corps needed to transform from a force dealing with conventional warfare to a force supporting homeland security and defense operations. This new focus became more relevant after the events of 11 September 2001. Although agents were not used in the attack, the question remains: What if they had been used? As Chemical units remain relevant regarding traditional and nontraditional threats, we must ensure that this focus remains intact during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. The “smoking gun” remains to remind us of the need for a transformation from Soldier to warrior scientist.

To “ensure freedom tomorrow,” all Dragon Soldiers must take the opportunity to prepare and educate themselves by remaining focused on learning about the new equipment being fielded and the doctrine being developed. Dragon Soldiers must remain competent, equipped, organized, and trained to combat new threats today to ensure freedom tomorrow.