

Dragon's Peak Competition Highlights Chemical Corps Regimental Week

By Master Sergeant Joseph Baker



Twelve Soldiers traveled to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, to compete in Dragon's Peak 2006 during Chemical Corps Regimental Week to vie for the titles of Chemical Soldier and Chemical Noncommissioned Officer of the Year. It took three days, seven events, and more than fifteen tasks before the honors were awarded.

The number of competitors this year was lower than the original estimate due to travel curtailment, but the event still proved to be a huge success. Last year, the competition was held at the Soldiers' home stations, and the winners traveled to Fort Leonard Wood to attend the Green Dragon Ball and receive their awards. This year, the competitors completed all tasks at Fort Leonard Wood. And with the location change, came an added time requirement. There was less time to recover between events and very little time to prepare for the next event.

The competition began at 0500 on 25 June with a standard Army Physical Fitness Test. The competitors were then split into two groups, one for noncommissioned officers and one for junior enlisted Soldiers. The two groups completed a hands-on exercise where they accomplished five tasks. For the noncommissioned officers, the tasks included preparing a chemical downwind message; preparing a nuclear, biological, and chemical report (which predicts fallout area conditions); using an automated net control device; and conducting a protection assessment test on an M40 protective mask. The Soldiers tasks included performing M40 mask maintenance; performing first aid on a bleeding and severed extremity; preparing an intelligence information report; performing preventive-maintenance checks and services on a high-mobility, multipurpose, wheeled vehicle (HMMWV); and disassembling and reassembling an M249 squad automatic weapon.



A Soldier's time is checked during the Army Physical Fitness Test.



A Soldier performs first aid on a bleeding and severed extremity.

Day 1 included a 100-question written test that covered chemical operations, basic Soldier skills, and Army and Chemical Corps history. Day 2 covered navigation operations. With grueling summer heat during the day and almost zero visibility at night, competitors really felt the pressure. On Day 3, competitors appeared before a board of five Chemical sergeants major, where they were asked questions in several different areas (similar to a promotion board).

In the end, two outstanding Dragon Soldiers rose above all others. First-place was awarded to Staff Sergeant Francisco Cardenas, 22d Chemical Battalion, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, and Specialist Joseph Caouette, 83d Chemical Battalion, Fort Polk, Louisiana. The winners were presented the George L. Murray Leadership Award by Command Sergeant Major Patrick Alston, Regimental Command Sergeant Major, and Command Sergeant Major George L. Murray (Retired).

Command Sergeant Major Alston said that the competition, which has become an annual event that coincides with Regimental Week, would only improve with time. “Next year, we would like to see at least one Soldier from each Chemical battalion and company in the Army,” Alston said. “We would also like to increase some of the tasks and make it more demanding.”



Staff Sergeant Francisco Cardenas, Chemical Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, and Specialist Joseph Caouette, Chemical Enlisted Soldier of the Year, receive their awards during the Green Dragon Ball.

Master Sergeant Baker is the Chemical School Operations Noncommissioned Officer. His past assignments include instructor for the Headquarters, Training Command; tactical noncommissioned officer for the Chemical Officer Basic Course; platoon sergeant for Chemical reconnaissance; and division Chemical noncommissioned officer for the 1st Infantry Division. Master Sergeant Baker is the author of Looking Out From Under the Hat.

Sibert Award Winners

The 2006 winners of the Sibert Award are the—

- Active Army: 95th Chemical Company (Heavy), Special Troops Battalion, Fort Richardson, Alaska.
- Reserve Component: 392d Chemical Company (Combat Support), 468th Chemical Battalion, 460th Chemical Brigade, Little Rock, Arkansas.

The companies were presented the awards at the Green Dragon Ball held at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, in June. The Sibert Award provides recognition for excellence in the Chemical Corps and gives recognition to the best chemical company-size unit in the Active Army.

The award is named after Major General William L. Sibert—often referred to as the “Father of the Chemical Corps.” Major General Sibert, who was elected by General John J. Pershing to stand up the Chemical Warfare Service, guided the Corps through many of its earliest challenges.

Units compete for this highly regarded award based on the following:

- Mission.
- Individual and collective training statistics.
 - Common task testing.
 - Weapons qualification.
 - Army physical fitness test scores.
 - Army Training and Evaluation Program (ARTEP) results.
 - External evaluation/Combat Training Center rotations or contingency missions.
- Overall maintenance status and performance-on-command inspections.
- Accident and award safety performance statistics.
- Overall organizational excellence (based on individual and unit awards).
- Participation in educational programs and community or humanitarian activities.
- Battle-focused future training initiatives.