

NBC CBRN

Something Old, Something New Something Borrowed, Something Blue . . . and Gold: The Chemical Corps' Conversion From NBC to CBRN

By Major Joseph J. Hauer

Well, we've done it again! We've changed our primary Corps acronym, and it is seemingly close to something it once was. Although the term *chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (NBC)* has been in use since the beginning of the new millennium, it was only on 26 August 2005 that we doctrinally changed from nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) to CBRN. At first glance, it looks as if someone just rearranged the letters, but there is a great deal more to the change.

Historically, the Chemical Corps focused on chemical hazards specifically designed to inflict casualties on enemy personnel and to provide defense countermeasures to combat an enemy's use of chemicals. In 1942, biological warfare was assigned as a function of the Chemical Corps (known then as the Chemical Warfare Service) and, in 1949, radiological warfare was added. For a short period of time in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the term *chemical, biological, and radiological (CEBAR) warfare* was used. But on 10 September 1951, chemical, biological, and radiological (CBR)—an acronym that designated the Corps' three major core functions—became the official term used by the Army and the Chemical Corps. This term also applied to Corps personnel (such as CBR officer and CBR noncommissioned officer [NCO]).

Another early term used by the Corps was *atomic, biological, and chemical (ABC) warfare*. This term only lasted until the advent of the hydrogen bomb, first detonated by the United States on 1 November 1952. In the mid-1970s, the Corps began transitioning to NBC as the term of choice. But interestingly, only Corps NCOs had NBC in their titles—officers were called Chemical officers.

So why has the name changed once again? The term *CBRN* is certainly more encompassing than NBC, covering all hazards, including toxic industrial chemicals and toxic industrial material (not just CBRN materials that have been weaponized). The mission is now more than passive defense; it includes weapons of mass destruction (WMD) elimination and consequence management—full-spectrum CBRN operations. Some would consider 11 September 2001 as the date that triggered the need to change to CBRN, and this is logical in that we began using the term shortly after the events on that fateful day. However, we can go back to several events in the 1990s that were the genesis to this change.

In 1991, the Soviet Union broke up (effectively ending the Cold War era) and the United States concluded a successful liberation of Kuwait. However, at the end of Operation Desert Storm, two key events occurred that altered the environment in which our military operated. Many of us can remember the images of the burning oil wells on our televisions, but few probably recall the 1991 open-air destruction of agent-filled rockets at Khamisiyah, Iraq, that produced a low-level agent cloud. A few years later (in 1995), members of the Aum Shinrikyo cult entered the Tokyo subway system and released the deadly nerve-agent sarin, bringing to the forefront the role the Corps could play in the U.S. homeland security mission. Additionally, we found ourselves operating in Bosnia, where Chemical Soldiers had to deal with locating, identifying, and plotting hazards to protect Soldiers, not from the massive Soviet chemical-agent strikes Dragon Soldiers were trained for, but from the numerous CBRN

and industrial hazards at production and storage sites in the former Yugoslavia. Our doctrine and training were focused on Cold War methodology, but reality had moved our requirements beyond that point. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces were required to clear, secure, and/or mark these production and storage sites which, incidentally, was the birth of modern sensitive-site exploitation (SSE) missions. Stranger than fiction, the Chemical Defense Training Facility (CDTF) at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, piloted an SSE advanced scenario on Bosnia to several Chemical Captain's Career Course (CMC3) and Chemical Advanced NCO Course (ANCOC) classes in 2001 and 2002. The Chemical Corps was on the way to change!

During Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), organization, doctrine, training, and equipment hadn't fully prepared Chemical Corps Soldiers to locate and identify Saddam Hussein's WMD sites or to operate in various environmental hazards. Unfortunately, sometimes the wheels of change don't move as quickly as we would like. Many of you are still asking what the U.S. Army Chemical School is doing to move us into the 21st Century and what impact these changes will have on Chemical Soldiers and leaders.

For a start, Chemical Soldiers have been designated as CBRN Soldiers. Shortly after the official doctrinal term change, the Chemical School's Personnel Proponency Office submitted a military occupational classification and structure proposal to revise—

- Officer duty titles from Chemical and NBC to CBRN. This action was approved in May 2007 (see *blue box*).
- Officer Education System (OES) and NCO Education System (NCOES) course titles from Chemical and NBC to CBRN. This action was effective February 2007.
- Enlisted duty titles from NBC to CBRN. This action was approved in July 2006 (see *blue box*).

Additionally, the Directorate of Training and Training Development (DOT&TD) has initiated a proposal to change the name of the U.S. Army Chemical School to the U.S. Army CBRN School. The proposal was forwarded through the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command to Headquarters, Department of the Army, for approval; but title changes are only the tip of the iceberg. The DOT&TD Doctrine Division is like a duck swimming upstream: calm and collected on the surface, but furiously kicking below. Several publications are currently under revision and should be published this year. Long-awaited revisions include: Field Manual (FM) 9-20, *Technical Escort Battalion Operations* (which will become FM 3-11.20); FM 3-11.21, *Multiservice Tactics, Techniques,*

Notification of Future Change to DA PAM 611-21

Summary of Significant Changes for Officers:

- Retitles Branch 74 to "Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN).
- Revises AOC 74A specifications and standards of grade tables. Retitles the area of concentration (AOC) to "Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN)." Duties, functions, positions, and personnel transferred from AOC 74B and 74C.

—U.S. Army Human Resources Command, Memorandum for Worldwide Distribution, 21 May 2007

Summary of Significant Changes for Enlisted Personnel:

- Retitles CMF 74 from "Chemical" to "Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN). Career progression chart revised.
- Revises MOS 74D specifications and standards of grade tables. Retitles the MOS from "Chemical Operations Specialist" to "Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Specialist."

—U.S. Army Human Resources Command, Memorandum for Worldwide Distribution, 13 July 2006

and Procedures for Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Aspects of Consequence Management; and FM 3-11.34, *Multiservice Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Defense of Theater Fixed Sites, Ports, and Airfields*. The publication of these documents and others will bring us into alignment with joint doctrine, capture recent lessons learned, and provide Soldiers with the most up-to-date guidance for current operations (see *Doctrine Update*, pages 36–37).

Training developers are hard at work developing institutional training to support full-spectrum CBRN operations. This includes a critical task selection board (CTSB) that will determine the CBRN competencies required at each skill level and what will be taught at OES and NCOES courses. Additionally, National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) 472 standard hazardous material (HAZMAT) awareness level training is currently being integrated into our OES and NCOES courses—beginning in advanced individual training and progressing to the HAZMAT operational level in the Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC) and the Basic NCO Course (BNCOC) and the HAZMAT technician level

in ANCO and CMC3. Since August 2006, the CDTF training mission has expanded to include a CBRN SSE exercise in each professional course that trains at Fort Leonard Wood. We have witnessed a colossal program of instruction change for the Civil Support Skills Course (the capstone course for National Guard Bureau WMD-Civil Support Teams). Additionally, the new, state-of-the-art First Lieutenant Terry CBRN Response Training Facility at Fort Leonard Wood will offer enhanced training opportunities and graduate first-class CBRN responders (see *Chemical Corps Dedicates First Lieutenant Terry Training Facility*, page 12).

If I listed all the acronyms for equipment that we are working with the Joint Program Executive Office to deliver to our CBRN forces, it would make your head spin. Items such as the Joint-Service Transportable Decontamination System (JSTDS); Joint Warning and Reporting Network (JWARN); joint-service, general-purpose mask (JSGPM); and Joint-Service Personnel Skin Decontamination System (JSPDS), to name a few. We are working toward a tricorder that acts as a universal global positioning system, hazard detector, and heart monitor; but we're not quite there yet. What we are doing is fielding Stryker brigade combat teams with NBC reconnaissance vehicles (NBCRVs); soon, we should have a full-rate production decision on the NBCRV, which would potentially fill our CBRN reconnaissance platoons in heavy brigade combat teams (replacing the Fox M93A1 NBC Reconnaissance System). Additionally, we are already fielding the third generation of the Biological Integrated Detection System (BIDS) with the Joint Biological Point Detection System (JBPDS). The first-generation model will soon be a museum piece on display at the Chemical Corps Museum.

Since its activation in October 2004, the 20th Support Command (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High-Yield Explosives [CBRNE]) has undergone a growth in mission, manning, and capabilities. It is the Army's one-stop shop for the response, assessment, mitigation, and elimination of CBRNE hazards worldwide. With the conversion of the U.S. Army Technical Escort Unit (TEU) to the 22d Chemical Battalion (Technical Escort) in 2004 and the 110th Chemical Battalion in 2005, the Corps is working to update the technical escort force design to better support WMD elimination and CBRNE response. Also undergoing change is the hazard response decontamination platoon, designed to provide the maneuver commander with a dismounted CBRN assessment capability. And in the era of personnel cuts and big Army reorganization, the Corps continues to maintain a capable CBRN staff capability (from company to combatant command staffs)

and has increased, even if only slightly, our "conventional" capabilities. Additionally, division, corps, and Army headquarters are now authorized integrated CBRNE staffs (comprised of CBRN and explosive ordnance disposal officers and NCOs).

The change from NBC to CBRN was an eventuality, even without the official term change. Necessity forced us to move from traditional NBC warfare to include industrial CBRN materials and radiological dispersion devices, consider homeland defense and military support to civil authorities, and expand our role in combating terrorism and WMD elimination.

I have only highlighted a few of the many items that the Chemical School is working in support of our military and our Nation in the area of CBRN defense. Some items have been a work in progress for several years while others have been implemented rather quickly. But one of the greatest discoveries from OIF is the need to inject lessons learned, particularly in education and training, as soon as possible (an option not always available in the past). As we look to the future, there is no doubt that the Corps will undergo many more changes. But, more importantly, as enemy technologies and capabilities evolve, we can't be reactive. We must anticipate change—preevolve—to be responsive and relevant. Now, is anyone ready for chemical, biological, radiological, and antimatter (CBRA) defense? 🤖🤖

References:

FM 3-11.21, *Multiservice Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Aspects of Consequence Management*, 12 December 2001.

FM 3-11.34, *Multiservice Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Defense of Theater Fixed Sites, Ports, and Airfields*, 29 September 2000.

FM 9-20, *Technical Escort Operations*, 3 November 1997.

NFPA 472, *Standard for Professional Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials Incidents*, 1997.

U.S. Army Human Resources Command, "Notification of Future Change to DA Pam 611-21, E-0704-17, Revision of Enlisted Career Management Field (CMF) 74 (Chemical) and Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) 74D (Chemical Operations Specialist)," memo, 13 July 2006.

U.S. Army Human Resources Command, "Notification of Future Change to DA Pam 611-21, O-0804-06, Revision of Officer Branch 74 (Chemical) and Area of Concentration (AOC) 74A (Chemical, General), Skill Identifier (SI) L3 (Technical Escort) and 5H (Nuclear Target Analyst; Deletion of AOC 74B (Chemical Operations and Training), and AOC 74C (Chemical Munitions and Materiel Management)," memo, 21 May 2007.

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