

Chief of Chemical



**Brigadier General
Thomas Spoehr**

Dragon Soldiers, another great edition of *Army Chemical Review*! I am proud to report that our Corps is advancing on all fronts.

On 28 June 1918, President Woodrow Wilson ordered the establishment of the Chemical Warfare Service as a separate branch of the National Army. Therefore, 2008 marks the 90th anniversary of the founding of our branch, and this edition of *Army Chemical Review* commemorates that fact. We will celebrate this milestone 22–28 June 2008 here at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri—the home of the Chemical Corps. (See page 4 for a schedule of events.) If you can't be here with us—and I truly hope you'll be able to join us—then I ask you to reflect during that week about the service of our Corps to the Nation and how it has always been the Dragon Soldiers who make our Corps the greatest in the Army.

The theme for this year's Regimental Week is "From Gas Attacks to CBRN Response: 90 Years of the Dragon Soldier." I didn't dream up this theme, but I wish I had. Because, to me, it perfectly captures the idea that our Corps was founded by Soldiers. Despite all odds and despite skepticism and outright hostility at times,

Dragon Soldiers strived and succeeded in training, equipping, and protecting their comrades from the dangers of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons.

Major Charles Heller, in his seminal paper, "Chemical Warfare in World War I: The American Experience, 1917–1918," speaks eloquently of the difficulties faced by Dragon Soldiers in 1918 while training other Soldiers to use the uncomfortable equipment that protected them from mustard and other agents.¹ Although much has changed

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in ninety years, some things stay the same. We must continue training Army forces to survive and win in CBRN environments, despite the discomforts and challenges of operations in those environments. Ninety years later, Dragon Soldiers still employ persuasion, innovation, and persistence to overcome all obstacles. Chemical units and staffs (Active Army and Reserve Component) continue to perform magnificently in all areas: continental United States (CONUS), outside the continental United States (OCONUS), combat zones, and civil support operations. I like to tell folks that the Chemical Corps is the most versatile and experienced Corps in the Army—and I defy anyone to make a valid argument otherwise!

It's hard for me to believe, but it has come time for me to move on to another assignment. In June, I will be reassigned to the Department of the Army G-8. Frankly, I hate to leave this position—and I could not have survived without the help of Regimental Command Sergeant Major Patrick Z. Alston—but the Army will assign another great officer to this command. Our Corps will not lose a beat with the help of our outstanding Assistant Commandant, Colonel Greg Olson; the Chief of Staff, Lieutenant Colonel Doug Straka; and the superb teams at the U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear School (USACBRNS) and 3d Chemical Brigade.

I will continue to serve as a staunch advocate for the Chemical Corps and for the capabilities needed for this Nation to counter the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction. I want to thank you for your service to the Chemical Corps and for your support to the USACBRNS and me. I am in awe of your sacrifices and dedication.

ELEMENTIS, REGAMUS, PROELIUM!

Endnote:

¹Charles E. Heller, "Chemical Warfare in World War I: The American Experience, 1917–1918," Leavenworth Papers No. 10, September 1984, <<http://www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/resources/csi/Heller/HELLER.asp>>, accessed on 8 April 2008.

10th RCSM Signing Out!

For the past four years, I have had the distinct honor and privilege of serving Dragon Soldiers as the 10th Regimental Command Sergeant Major. Time has a way of continuing to move forward in our everyday lives. And as much as I (and maybe others) would love to freeze time in place and enjoy precious moments forever, it is impossible. The time has come for me to pass the banner of leadership, mentorship, and guidance—and the management of our Corps—to the next senior NCO who will lead and guide the Corps to the next level.

I have willingly and with humble gratitude served and supported two chiefs of the U.S. Army Chemical Corps: Brigadier General Thomas W. Spoehr and Brigadier General Stanley H. Lillie (Retired). Since 16 April 2004, time has seemingly transpired quickly and speedily. I have enjoyed every moment, every day, and every second spent at the U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear School (USACBRNS). It has been a pleasure—and it has certainly been a real joy—for me to provide leadership and constant support while serving the Army in this capacity. I have served as the Regimental Command Sergeant Major for more than 21,000 Dragon Soldiers who are spread evenly among the three components of the Army. And as the USACBRNS Command Sergeant Major, I have served more than 800 talented professionals engaged in training through resident and distributed learning programs.

During my time as the Regimental Command Sergeant Major, I have been blessed because so many positive and upward-mobility changes in the Corps have transpired. Our Corps has seen growth through many programs designed to promote the readiness of the enlisted force; the chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) NCO

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development guide has been published; and the five-year shortage issue of sergeants in the Chemical Corps has been resolved. Additionally, for the first time in the history of this Corps, the Warrant Officer Program was established. It has been approved at the Department of the Army level, and implementation will soon follow. The Dragon's Peak competition, which names the Chemical Corps Soldier and NCO of the year, injected pride through the competitive edge—because passion in what one believes in will always be a driving force that compels people to show others how deep the blood flows in their veins.

I am proud to note that during the last four years, the interest of others outside the Chemical Corps has grown significantly. The number of command sergeants major in brigade positions increased from one to seven, and the nominative command sergeants major positions increased from one to three. The 3d Chemical Brigade transformed from three battalions to seven, which has considerably increased our footprint on Fort Leonard Wood.

In my initial article as the 10th Regimental Command Sergeant Major, my desire was to foster effective communication with the units in the field, the Soldiers, and the civilians throughout the CBRN community; support the heritage of the Corps; be a role model to all Soldiers; share the great work we do as CBRN Soldiers and; where possible, improve weaknesses. In short, I unequivocally believe that people and Soldiers are the centerpieces of our formations, that readiness is our mission, and that transformation is an imperative.

I will be remiss if I do not thank everyone who supported me during my tenure as the Regimental Command Sergeant Major—so, THANK YOU! I am tremendously blessed and honored to be selected as the first Chemical Command Sergeant Major to serve at the three-star level (Defense Threat Reduction Agency). I do not take this selection lightly. And I promise to continue representing the Corps with honor, dignity, and pride.

RCSM 10 out!



**Command Sergeant Major
Patrick Z. Alston**