



Editor's Note: Congratulations to the winners of the 2009 Chemical Corps Regimental Association (CCRA) Writing Contest! First place was awarded to Major Jared (Jay) Ware for his article entitled "CBRN Hazard Mitigation and Geospatial Data: A Synergistic Approach," second place was awarded to Lieutenant Colonel John D. Shank for his article entitled "Making the Chemical Corps Vision a Reality," and third place was awarded to Major Jason G. Anderson for his article entitled "CBRN Transformation in the IBC: Too Little Too Late?" Colonel Jeffrey P. Lee's article entitled "Reflections on the 'Doughboy' Experience of Chemical Warfare" was awarded honorable mention.

Articles submitted for the contest were judged on a 100-point scale, with up to 40 points awarded for writing clarity, 30 points for relevance to Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Soldiers, 20 points for general accuracy, and 10 points for originality. In addition to the place titles, the winning authors also received monetary awards—\$500 for first place, \$300 for second place, and \$150 for third place.

The first- and third-place articles were previously published in the Summer 2008 issue of *Army Chemical Review* (available online at <http://www.wood.army.mil/chmdsd/Summer08toc.htm>). The second-place and honorable-mention articles are hereby published with only minor edits for clarity and to address security concerns.



Making the Chemical Corps Vision a Reality

By Lieutenant Colonel John D. Shank

I believe that, for the Chemical Corps to be able to realize the commandant's vision (see page 53), the Corps needs to develop a written Chemical Corps vision implementation operation order (OPORD). The Corps vision needs a companion document to help make the vision a reality. This OPOED would lay out the actions needed to achieve the vision, specify the roles and responsibilities of the various partners, and identify key events which would cause us to have to review the vision to make sure that any new, national-level guidance has been incorporated.

Historically, the U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear School (USACBRNS) commandant writes a vision of where he believes the Chemical Corps should go in the future and what capabilities it should provide to the Army. Down through the years, commandants have led the effort to help the Corps achieve that vision by fulfilling their mission and doing their part to protect our Soldiers and the Nation. The commandants have been in the strategic position to be able to look across the Army and see where advancements could be made and maneuver the Corps to capitalize on those opportunities.

The current Chemical Corps vision has gone through a long maturation process but needs a written OPOED that clearly

articulates for everyone, from the commandant on down to the most junior chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) Soldier, how we as a Corps will achieve it. Brigadier General Leslie Smith, the USACBRNS commandant, asked during a video conference in the beginning of December 2009 the open-ended question, "Are we achieving the goals we want to achieve?" If Brigadier General Smith had answered his own question instead of leaving it for the audience to contemplate, I believe he would have said that we have only been partially successful in achieving the vision so far. In discussions with senior leaders of the Chemical Corps, both prior to and after the video conference, Brigadier General Smith has continued asking probing questions to elicit ideas on other ways to help the Corps achieve a higher level of results. I believe that a written OPOED will help make that vision a reality.

Why an OPOED?

Why should the Chemical Corps expend the time, resources, or energy developing an implementation OPOED? After all, the commandant knows what he wants to achieve already and doesn't need another document to tell him what he already knows. While it is true that the commandant has a vision to lead the Corps forward, he also needs the input and expertise from multiple sources to be able to help the Corps achieve his



vision. Brigadier General Smith would be the first to tell you that the vision is something for “us” to achieve, not just “him.” It is also important that everyone in the community of interest that will help us achieve the vision have a clear understanding of not only the end state, but how we plan to get there. A written OPORD educates as well as informs and allows others to see the role they can play in implementing the vision. The following are some of the reasons that the Chemical Corps would benefit from a written CBRN vision implementation OPORD:

- It would demonstrate our ability as a Corps to think strategically, write comprehensively, and articulate our ideas effectively. At its essence, a comprehensive, written OPORD is the U.S. Army’s way of doing business and a characteristic that separates the U.S. military from the militaries of many other nations.
- It would help ensure that our plans are nested with the Army vision and mission. The Army has Title 10, U.S. Code, responsibilities laid out in federal law; and the Chemical Corps plays a key role in helping the Army and the Department of Defense (DOD) fulfill those responsibilities. Our Corps’ plans must conform to and fully support the national-level, combating weapons of mass destruction (CWMD) guidance and other key documents. The *National Security Strategy*, *National Military Strategy*, and *National Military Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (NMS-CWMD)* all discuss the dangers of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and the importance to our country that proactive measures are taken to reduce the threat and position us to be better prepared to respond to a WMD incident throughout the world. The Army has the preponderance of CBRN forces and detection and protection capabilities in the DOD and must remain at the forefront of DOD’s efforts to protect our forces and the Nation.
- The Army Chemical Corps isn’t the only organization with part of the CWMD mission, and our efforts need to be nested with the actions of those other organizations. There are several other DOD and Army organizations that have part of the CWMD mission. Organizations like the Joint Program Executive Office for CWMD, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, U.S. Army Chemical and Nuclear Agency, and Defense Nuclear Weapons School also have part of the CWMD mission and responsibilities, are funded separately, and do not work for the chief of the Chemical Corps.
- The geographic combatant commands (GCCs) and U.S. Strategic Command have developed detailed CWMD OPORDs detailing how they plan to focus their efforts on the eight CWMD mission areas and have found them to be very beneficial. The GCCs found that they were able to identify many aspects of the eight CWMD mission areas that were not being adequately addressed. The GCCs

were also able to educate their subordinate organizations on the eight mission areas and help them begin to think strategically about what they can do in each of those areas. The GCCs continue to go through a spiral development OPORD process that will shed additional light on areas to expand upon in the future.

- Tying our CBRN mission to higher-level documents like *The Army Plan* or the *NMS-CWMD* strengthens our argument for maintaining programs and force structure in both the Regular Army and Reserve Component. Under the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) Model, CBRN units have not received deployment credit like combat arms units have, which makes them susceptible to reductions in force structure. We need to identify and highlight CBRN units’ unique role in CWMD and the support they can provide to tasks like the Army campaign objective of “Train the Army for Full Spectrum Operations.” This will help strengthen the argument for maintaining the Chemical Corps force structure when discussions take place inside the Pentagon about where to take cuts in personnel and units to better support ARFORGEN requirements and the current fight.
- The commandant needs a coalition of the willing (you and me) to implement the vision. He can’t do it by himself. The commandant can provide guidance, direction, and motivation, but it will take many individuals working the CWMD problem set from many different locations to achieve the comprehensive success we all seek and our Nation demands. Many people, including non-Chemical-Branch individuals, have a role in helping implement the Chemical Corps vision. Yes, CBRN Soldiers in companies and battalions have a key role to play, but so do others that you might not immediately think about—like commanders and leaders at all levels (regardless of branch), industry representatives, congressional leaders, contractors, and even military retirees who are still serving in positions that could help support the implementation of the commandant’s vision. A written CBRN vision implementation OPORD would help form that multifaceted coalition by laying out the roles and responsibilities of each suborganization and individual.

The Next Steps: Three Key Aspects of the OPORD

The first key facet of the OPORD that needs to be considered and developed is to determine who we need to influence. As noted previously, many of the people and organizations that will help implement the vision do not work directly for the commandant. The commandant is in a position to develop a relationship with and influence key organizations and persuade them to help advocate CWMD initiatives to the Department of the Army (DA) and DOD. This advocacy by other powerful organizations within the DOD will greatly improve



the Corps' ability to protect and even expand our CWMD programs, budgets, and personnel positions. For example, the Maneuver Center of Excellence at Fort Benning, Georgia, and the Fires Center of Excellence at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, have a lot of influence inside the Pentagon. These organizations could be great advocates for our CWMD programs if we could convince them that our CWMD initiatives were beneficial to their organizations, the Army, and the Nation. This relationship **must** be cultivated. Most of the senior decisionmakers in the Pentagon are combat arms officers and will more easily be persuaded if there is broad support and agreement from multiple Centers of Excellence.

Another group of people that the Corps needs to develop a strong working relationship with is at the combatant command (COCOM) level. The COCOM commanders have a lot of influence inside the Pentagon. One of the ways COCOMs identify their greatest capability gaps and concerns is through their integrated priority list (IPL). Brigadier General Smith's staff should work with the COCOM CBRN officers to identify what the COCOMs see as their greatest CWMD shortfalls. They can then work together to craft a strong statement about these capability gaps and make recommendations to mitigate those gaps. The synergy of this coordinated effort will invariably make the CWMD IPL justification stronger than if the COCOM CBRN officer wrote it by himself. This will improve his ability to get his CWMD issue through the staffing process and help it be identified as one of the COCOM's top priorities. Being one of the top IPL items is one of the keys to receiving action and funding from the DOD. The commandant's staff can share this information and coordinate their efforts with the other COCOM CBRN officers to try to get other COCOMs to identify this issue as one of their top IPL items. Then, when it comes into the Pentagon, there will be even more justification for DA and DOD to address the COCOM commander's concerns and fund initiatives to fill these CWMD capability gaps.

The second key facet that needs to be incorporated into the OPORD is to determine how and when to use our influence. Personnel and budget decisions flow from our national-level priorities as identified in key policy documents. Some of those key documents include the *Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR)*, *Guidance for the Employment of the Force (GEF)*, *FY 12-17 Program Objective Memorandum (POM)* guidance, *The Army Plan (TAP)*, *National Security Strategy (NSS)*, and *NMS-CWMD*. In an OPORD, the Chemical Corps needs to take into consideration the timeline these documents will be on, from their first draft until publication. The Corps should try to have someone work with the staff writers to help craft

strong CWMD themes and messages and influence what comes out in the final version of these documents. For example, just because the Chemical Corps is not the primary author of the *NSS* or *NMS-CWMD* does not mean that it shouldn't develop a relationship with the offices that do write them and offer to provide assistance in writing the documents. Making sure that these national-level documents articulate the imperative for a strong DOD and Army CWMD capability will make it easier for the Corps to achieve the commandant's vision and help the Army fulfill its Title 10 responsibilities.

Part of determining how and when to exert our influence is to assess how effective we are at getting our ideas and language incorporated into those national-level documents. Have we been only minimally, partially, or (hopefully) very effective in our influence? Influence is a continual process, but must be exerted early. It is much easier to influence decisionmakers and get them to agree to insert strong CWMD ideas during the early stages of document development. A deliberate process to assess our effectiveness will help keep us focused and ensure that CWMD initiatives remain a DA and national priority.

The third key facet that needs to be incorporated into the OPORD is for us to identify the decision points (new information or decisions) which would necessitate a review of the Chemical Corps vision and implementation OPORD. In the next year, each of the previously mentioned, higher-level documents (*QDR*, *GEF*, *POM*, *TAP*, *NSS*, and *NMS-CWMD*) will be revised and republished. These documents may shift how the DA looks at the CWMD issue and the guidance it gives. Any major CWMD policy changes or guidance coming out of these documents should necessitate such a review.

Final Thoughts

The U.S. Army Chemical Corps is an integral part of today's Army. We provide a valuable capability to the Army, DOD, and our Nation as we focus on protecting the force and CWMD. The American people are counting on us, and we will not let them down. A written implementation OPORD will help ensure that the Chemical Corps achieves its vision. The only thing left to do now is to begin writing . . . 

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