

# 71ST CHEMICAL COMPANY ARC RECEIVES RECERTIFICATION

*By Private First Class Marcus Fichtl*

Soldiers of the 71st Chemical Company, 8th Military Police Brigade, 8th Theater Sustainment Command, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, performed sensitive-site exploitation during a week-long reevaluation of the Active Response Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (ARC) platoon at Ford Island, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam on 15 July 2010. Members of the 93d Civil Support Team—a Hawaii National Guard unit—served as observers.

The ARC platoon—the newest addition to the 71st and the first platoon of its kind in the Pacific Theater—is a first-responder unit that identifies chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) spills and hazards. The reevaluation exercise was designed to test the ability of the ARC platoon to react to various CBRN situations; it also served as a “stress test” for the entire unit.

The exercise was conducted under Title 32<sup>1</sup> conditions, whereby the state activated the 93d Civil Support Team and requested the support of the 71st Chemical Company in identifying hazards. The reevaluation mission of the 71st Chemical Company involved traveling to the exercise site to identify and mitigate any chemical, biological, or radiological issues encountered in three different scenarios. In addition, with the help of a CBRN unmanned vehicle, the platoon designated entry points to hazard sites and safe zones for a decontamination line. According to the commander of the 71st, “We . . . [perform] identification of the hazard through piecing together clues from a hazard site and processing the samples. Cleanup and other tasks are then designated to the state or post.”

The ARC platoon relied on training to accomplish their mission. The focus of the training was on the use of Level A<sup>2</sup> decontamination suits and hazardous detection devices, the identification of hazmat, and the establishment of a decontamination line. According to the platoon sergeant, “We had a lot of new troops that weren’t up to speed with procedures, but we overcame it with a lot of good, precise training.” The commander of the 71st added, “We had some trouble, initially, with setting up the decontamination line; but with every rehearsal, we greatly improved our time and beat our . . . goal today.”

As the day wore on, the ARC platoon accomplished all objectives and the ARC status was recertified. The recertification and the ability of the 71st to be anywhere in the Pacific Theater at a moment’s notice reaffirms the 71st’s standing as a theater-wide security asset. And additional training is already scheduled for the future. 

#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup>“Title 32” refers to U.S. Code (USC), Title 32, *National Guard*.

<sup>2</sup>Occupational Safety and Health Administration Level A personal protective equipment includes a positive-pressure, full-facepiece, self-contained breathing apparatus or positive-pressure, supplied-air respirator with escape self-contained breathing apparatus; totally encapsulating chemical-protective suit; coveralls; long underwear; outer, chemical-resistant gloves; inner, chemical-resistant gloves; chemical-resistant boots with steel toe and shank; hard hat; and disposable protective suit, gloves, and boots.

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*Private First Class Fichtl is a public affairs specialist with the Public Affairs Office, 8th Military Police Brigade. He is a senior economics student at the University of Colorado at Boulder.*



**A Soldier tests an unknown sample.**



**A robot searches an area for contaminants.**