

CBRN Soldiers Welcome CROWS Training

By Ms. Kerstin Lopez

Soldiers of the M93A1 Fox Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) System reconnaissance team, 84th Chemical Battalion, were the first Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, Soldiers to receive the specialized XM153 Common, Remotely Operated Weapons Station (CROWS) training, which was conducted 9–13 August 2010.

The CROWS is designed to improve Soldier safety in combat situations by replacing the exposed Soldier at the turret of the Fox with a remote-controlled weapon system. According to Mr. Jack Linthicum, CROWS instructor, four types of weapons can be mounted to the outside of the station—the MK19 grenade launcher, M240B machine gun, M249 squad automatic weapon, and M2 machine gun. Soldiers use a control grip and monitor to engage targets while remaining within the safety of the vehicle.

The CROWS became available in 2008, and training for new instructors and operators has been conducted ever since. According to Mr. Linthicum, most Fox vehicles are now equipped with the CROWS; so it was only a matter of time before CBRN Soldiers at Fort Leonard Wood were afforded the opportunity to train with the system.

CROWS training consists of 60 hours of instruction, concluding with hands-on range time. Students become familiar with the system and its capabilities and fire 100 rounds to gain confidence and achieve operator certification.

According to Linthicum, the CROWS is extremely important because it keeps gunners under armor so that they are not exposed to sniper fire or elements of an improvised explosive device—in short, it keeps them safer. 

Ms. Lopez is a former member of the Fort Leonard Wood Guidon staff.