A MODEST PROPOSAL:

SHATTER THE RETORTS, DEFUSE THE BOMB, AND STABILIZE THE ATOM!

By Colonel Robert D. Walk

The Army is changing! Individual capabilities must be such that Soldiers maximize their value-added contributions to the Army. At a time when Soldiers are required to do more with less, chemical Soldiers are limited by what they are trained and equipped to do—military chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) (pronounced *see-burn*) material detection and response. Unfortunately, there are insufficient chemical positions to cover higher-level staff requirements. Explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) units are in high demand for their skills and cannot provide the needed explosive coverage. Functional area (FA) 52 officers (nuclear, research, and operations personnel) cover some of the shortage, but they do not have the broad background in CBRN operations that chemical officers possess. Additionally, there is a gray area when referring to the terms *all-hazard response* and *chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosives (CBRNE)* (pronounced *see-burn-ee*).

Everywhere you look, you see references to CBRNE operations. While it is true that all Army units perform some CBRNE response operations, there are a few elements with specified responsibilities in this area. This article will discuss the elements of the Army that perform CBRNE response operations and will argue the potential benefits of consolidation of some of these assets into one branch of expertise. The new branch, possibly termed the *CBRNE Corps*, would combine the lineages of all component elements and encompass a wide scope of responsibilities. This article will not discuss the benefits of creating a joint-service branch—that will come later.

The Chemical Corps is the deployable "Big Army" operational-response capability against CBRNE hazards. The EOD units of the Ordnance Corps provide the response capability for weaponized CBRNE. FA 52 personnel provide the knowledge needed to perform the technical aspects of radiological and nuclear responses. The Engineer Corps provides installation fire and emergency services, with the installation environmental office providing installation hazardous material (HAZMAT) response and remediation operations. Finally, the Medical Corps provides expertise on the environmental and occupational effects of low-level hazards and the clinical aspects of CBRNE exposure.

Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA Pam) 600-3 states that "The chemical branch is a combat support branch that is focused primarily on warfighting operations and training in support of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) defense; obscurants and flame employment; biological and chemical arms control verification; smoke and flame munitions technology and management; support of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) force protection programs; consequence management; and CBRN military support to civil authorities. Additional functions include scientific, developmental, and material management activities for these programs. The branch provides the Army with a highly trained corps of CBRN experts to advise commanders and staffs at all levels in the Department of Defense and lead chemical units."[1] Specialized areas of the chemical branch include technical escort units with technical escort Soldiers (additional skill identifier [ASI] L3); armored

chemical-biological (CB) reconnaissance units with reconnaissance Soldiers (ASI L [Fox], L1 [master Fox], and L6 [Stryker]); Army National Guard civil support teams (CSTs) (skill qualification identifier [SQI] R [enlisted] and R1 [officers]); and US Army Reserve domestic-response casualty decontamination (operationally trained) and domestic-response reconnaissance (civilian HAZMAT-trained) units. Organized during World War I to meet the offensive requirements of the Chemical Warfare Service, the chemical branch has expanded over the years to meet the increased threats in CBRN warfare and provide support to missions working to eliminate enemy capabilities.

The EOD Soldiers and units enable the Army to identify, locate, render safe, handle, remove, and dispose of US and foreign unexploded conventional, nuclear, and chemical munitions. Additionally, the EOD units advise and assist law enforcement agencies in the removal and/or neutralization of explosive devices; provide support and protection to the President of the United States, senior American officials, and military and foreign dignitaries; and support intelligence activities through the analyses of foreign munitions. Originally created as a technical element for a combat service support branch during World War II, EOD Soldiers were primarily drawn from unit ordnance ammunition specialists. Unfortunately, most of the Army ammunition expertise was eliminated in the 1990s because of the discontinued nuclear mission and the new requirement to contract conventional ammunition missions. These changes left EOD officers and enlisted personnel as orphans in the predominantly maintenance-focused ordnance branch.

The FA 52 specialty was created during the Cold War when the threat of nuclear warfare was high and the Army had a nuclear mission and a need for nuclear warfare specialists. DA Pam 600-3 states that FA 52 specialists are "within the institutional support career field where trained and experienced officers apply knowledge and expertise in nuclear and related WMDs in developing national and theater strategy, plans and policy; in conducting weapons effects research and analysis, to include consequence of execution and consequence management; in international treaty formulation and verification; and in planning the employment of nuclear weapons to support theater and strategic operations." FA 52 officers, located at higher-level Army staffs, provide technical expertise on nuclear operations. In fact, many of these officers provide expertise due to the scarcity of chemical officers to fill upper-level positions. With the removal of the Army's nuclear mission and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the Army has adjusted the FA 52 mission to include other WMDs.

Proposal

The Army would greatly benefit from the creation of a new branch! The Army CBRNE Corps would replace the current EOD element, Chemical Corps, and FA 52 specialty. Personnel and units from the three elements would be used to create the new branch. Because each element is currently led by superior leaders and is composed of highly trained and proud Soldiers, the disestablishment of the old and creation of the new must be done with courtesy, respect, and care. No one element

Proposed CBRNE Corps Vision

The CBRNE Corps is a combat support branch that is focused on—

- Warfighting operations and training in support of CBRNE defense.
- Smoke, obscurants, and flame employment.
- Chemical, smoke, and flame munitions technology and management.
- Support of WMD force protection, interdiction, and elimination programs.
- The identification, locating, rendering safe, handling, removal, and disposition of US and foreign unexploded conventional, nuclear, and chemical munitions.
- CBR domestic protection programs.

At senior levels, the Corps provides expertise in—

- CBRNE operations, national and theater strategy, plans, and policies.
- CBRNE weapons effects research and analysis.
- International CBRNE treaty formulation and verification.
- The planning and employment of nuclear weapons to support theater and strategic operations.

Additional functions include scientific, developmental, and material management activities for CBRNE programs.

can be allowed to have a disproportionate amount of power; all elements would share in the development of the new branch vision. In the creation of the CBRNE Corps, no base element (chemical, EOD, or FA 52) would be large enough or powerful enough to overpower the others in the creation of the vision and character of the Corps. For example, if the EOD specialty was redesignated as part of the engineer branch, they would be so small in relation to the other engineer branch elements that the EOD leadership would only have a small say in the overall branch vision. This could not happen in the CBRNE Corps consolidation.

The new CBRNE Corps must be created using senior leadership from all three elements and led by a general officer determined to provide Soldiers with specialized CBRNE knowledge. This leadership must create a Corps vision that incorporates the specialized knowledge of each element and provides the Army with integrated CBRNE response capability and doctrine.

Change

Talking about change is one thing; making the change is another. A reorganization of this magnitude requires solid staff work and a careful step-by-step process. On the Army staff, organizational integrators and staff synchronization officers ensure that all changes are properly coordinated and synchronized across the doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leader education, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF) spectrum.

Doctrine

Doctrine will change for the better. One centralized location will enable the commandant to properly coordinate and influence all doctrine supporting CBRNE response operations and ensure that all Army elements speak a common language. To ensure maximum standardization, all types of CBRNE response operations will be given equal consideration. This standardization will likely require changes to and the elimination of current doctrine publications. The CBRNE Corps must be able to work worldwide, and the new training and doctrine must reflect this requirement. We can no longer apply different standards to meet the mission requirements at home and overseas. The requirement to train Soldiers in two standards is too expensive and confusing; one common doctrinal standard must be used that meets both sets of standards. While it may not always be possible to standardize doctrine and training, we owe it to our Soldiers and the Nation to maximize our response commonalties and create the best defense possible.

Organization

The 20th Support Command (CBRNE), which includes Chemical Corps, EOD, and FA 52 personnel, operates as a cohesive organization, providing a one-stop shop for Army CBRNE response. Combining elements into one organization under a major command simplifies the Army's ability to respond to CBRNE threats. The future organization will include an Active Army chemical brigade, two Active Army EOD groups, and an Army Reserve unit–consequence management (ARU-CM). Unit level training will also focus more on coordinated responses to CBRNE hazards at home and overseas.

The immediate impact on Army organizations will be minimal, but as integration occurs, there may be a need for consolidation in EOD and chemical units and an overall reduction in the number of units to create a better force structure. The new force structure will have improved operational capabilities for CBRNE response, to include HAZMAT response and CBRNE interdiction, mitigation, and elimination operations.

Materiel

Ultimately, the Department of Defense (DOD) will benefit from the branch consolidation through a melding of materiel development in all CBRNE areas. Currently, there is little cross fertilization of ideas between the Chemical Corps and EOD. Even within the chemical branch, there is little mating of requirements between the operational side of the Corps and the technical escort units. This is unfortunate and must change. Equipment developed for one CBRNE area may be easily adapted to others. The US Army Chemical School (USACMLS), acting as the combat developer, would ensure that the changes take place. The end result, achieved over time, would amount to a cost savings for DOD.

Training and Personnel

Entry level officers will attend basic officer leader training for CBRNE specialists. This training will prepare officers for transition into EOD units (after qualification training), line battalions, or traditional CBRNE units. The end result will be an expanded capability throughout the Army on such operation aspects as explosive ordnance reconnaissance, HAZMAT, and CBRN response operations. As these officers advance in grade, they can specialize in areas such as CBRNE staff specialists (to replace FA 52 specialists) and gain knowledge across the CBRNE spectrum (as opposed to knowledge focused on nuclear warfare).

Soldiers in the CBRNE Corps must be well trained in specialized areas and to a common standard. Improved specialized training will provide unit commanders with increased support in basic CBRNE hazard detection and avoidance. Entry level Soldiers will be offered a new curriculum that provides a basic level of CBRNE training. (An analysis determination may result in a need to lengthen initial entry training. Lengthening any course is an anathema at the US Army Training and Doctrine Command but is possible if properly supported by an expert analysis.) Additional specialized training will help prepare Soldiers for assignments in their selected career fields. As Soldiers gain knowledge and experience, they may choose to remain as generalists in CBRNE operational response operations or select a specialty with more technical positions. Technical specialties may include escort operations, dismounted reconnaissance operations (including HAZMAT operations), mounted reconnaissance operations, EOD operations, and sensitive-site exploitation.

Facilities

Additional training facilities would be required for the new branch, including areas for operations in explosive detection, rendering safe, and destruction; chemical hazard detection and protection; environmental chemistry and instrumentation; radiation detection and instrumentation; and response (including mass-casualty decontamination, HAZMAT, and contamination control). And it is a given that new specialized training facilties (such as the First Lieutenant Joseph Terry CBRN Responders Training Facility under construction at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri) are required to support future operations.

Conclusion

In this article, we have looked at the possibility of creating a new Army branch out of three disparate elements: the Chemical Corps, the EOD technical specialty, and FA 52 nuclear research and operations. All three elements represent the continuance of Cold War ideas and may not represent the best fit for today's modular Army. Combining the three elements would create a branch more capable of dealing with the modern CBRNE threat.

Reference

[1]DA PAM 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management,* 14 October 2005.

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