

2007 Distinguished Members of the Chemical Corps

By Ms. Christy Lindberg

Four names were added to the list of outstanding individuals serving the U.S. Army Chemical Corps. The award of the *Distinguished Member of the Chemical Corps* title means that these individuals have not only served a lifetime of service in the Corps but also support the Chief of Chemical in implementing his vision of what the Corps is and where it is going in the future. The following individuals were inducted into the 2007 Distinguished Members of the Corps (DMC).



Major General John C. Doesburg (Retired)

Major General John C. Doesburg had a long, illustrious military career. Born into an Army family in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on 15 March 1947, he traveled extensively as a child and attended schools in Pennsylvania, Texas, Oklahoma, and Germany before graduating from high school in Little Rock, Arkansas. After receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry from the University of Oklahoma, Second Lieutenant Doesburg entered the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). He later received his Master of Military Arts and Science degree from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and graduated from the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

Throughout his 34 years of service, Major General Doesburg represented the Chemical Corps around the world in a number of command and staff positions. His most recent positions included Commanding General for the U.S. Army Research, Development, and Engineering Command and the U.S. Army Soldier and Biological Chemical Command, both at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. Some of Major General Doesburg's other positions included Joint Program Manager, Biological Defense, Falls Church, Virginia; Chief, Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Defense Division, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans, Department of the Army; and Director, Joint Program Office for Biological Defense, Washington, D.C.



Brigadier General Patricia L. Nilo (Retired)

Brigadier General Patricia L. Nilo was born in Medford, Massachusetts. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in biology from Boston State College, a Master of Arts degree in education administration from Boston State College, and a Master of Military Arts and Science degree from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. Brigadier General Nilo entered the military in 1974 with a direct commission to first lieutenant in the Women's Army Corps. Detailed to the Ordnance Corps in a chemical specialty, she rebranched to the Chemical Corps in 1977. Brigadier General Nilo held numerous command and staff positions in

her 30-year military career, including upper-level, nuclear-, biological-, and chemical-related staff assignments at the Pentagon. In 1999, she became the first female Commandant of the U.S. Army Chemical School. When commenting about her position as commandant, she once said: "I am very humbled by the fact [that] I was given the opportunity to do this. It is an awesome responsibility. There is nothing better than training, and there is nothing better than training young soldiers . . . to be the future leaders of the Corps." Having been commissioned as the Chemical Corps' first female general officer, Brigadier General Nilo was a strong advocate of the important roles women play. During a speech to members of an ROTC class, she conveyed that women in today's ROTC programs can go on to achieve the positions she did not have the opportunity to achieve. She closed her speech by saying, "Every person in this room brings something very special to the table while ensuring the security of this country." Brigadier General Nilo completed her military career as the Director of the Weapons Elimination Directorate, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

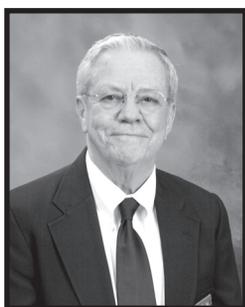


Command Sergeant Major James E. Van Patten (Retired)

Command Sergeant Major James E. Van Patten was born on 11 September 1957 in Los Angeles, California. Command Sergeant Major Van Patten received an Associate in Arts degree from Pikes Peak Community College and was a distinguished graduate in his military training. He has continued his education through correspondence courses, logging in more than 1,200 hours to date. Command Sergeant Major Van Patten retired in 2004 with more than 30 years of service to the U.S. Army and the Chemical Corps—service which included many leadership and staff assignments. In retirement, he continues to serve his country as the Acting Chief, Planning Integration Division and Plans, Analysis, and Integration Office, Grafenwoehr, Germany. Command Sergeant Major Van Patten's awards include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, and Army Achievement Medal with four oak-leaf clusters.

As the Chemical Corps Regimental Command Sergeant Major, Command Sergeant Major Van Patten made his presence known to virtually every installation where Chemical Soldiers served. He instituted the Rite of Passage ceremony—a program still in use today—where new Chemical Soldiers are inducted into the Corps. Additionally, he was instrumental in preparing for and moving the Chemical School from Fort McClellan, Alabama, to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and in developing and publishing the Chemical Soldier Professional Development Guide.

During his extensive military career, Command Sergeant Major Van Patten coached, mentored, and trained thousands of Dragon Soldiers. And he continues to do so today!



Sergeant Major Penn Wilson (Retired)

Sergeant Major Penn Wilson was born on 25 August 1938 in Greenfield, Massachusetts. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in management and a Master of Business Administration degree in finance from Jacksonville State University, Jacksonville, Alabama. He is also a graduate of the U.S. Army Management Staff College. In retirement, Sergeant Major Wilson works as the editor of the Jacksonville State University *Economic Update* and as a consultant for the Center of Economic Development at the College of Commerce and Business Administration, Jacksonville State University. He is also the treasurer for the McClellan Chapter of the U.S. Army Chemical Corps Regimental Association.

Sergeant Major Wilson began his career with the Chemical Corps as a staff sergeant after completing the Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course (ANCOC) in 1964. In 1967 and 1968, he served in the Chemical Section, 1st Infantry Division, where he helped develop operations with the XM2 personnel detector manpack (the “people sniffer”) and its conversion to an airborne detector. Sergeant Major Wilson accumulated more than 100 combat air missions in Vietnam, using the manpack to locate enemy personnel and then dropping riot control agent ortho-chlorobenzylidene malononitrile (CS) to deny them free movement and use of terrain. For this valorous service, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Upon returning to the United States, Sergeant Major Wilson was heavily involved in the disestablishment of the Organization and Doctrine Directorate; Combat Developments Command; Chemical, Biological, and Radiological Agency (CDCCBRA) and its merger into the Chemical School at Fort McClellan. He also worked on the consolidation of the Chemical Corps with the Ordnance Corps and its subsequent relocation to Aberdeen Proving Ground. Following his military retirement, Sergeant Major Wilson, as a Department of the Army civilian, established the Chemical School Allied Liaison and Protocol Office after chemical functions were separated from the Ordnance Corps and returned to corps status. He also reestablished the chemical force development function at Fort Leonard Wood, ensuring the effective oversight of the development process for the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center table of organization and equipment and basis of issue items. Today, he remains active in issues related to the Chemical Corps, the Army, and the Nation.

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