



New Soldiers Are Put to the Test

Members of the sampling team approach a location where suspected chemical munitions were reported.

By Sergeant First Class J.B. Jaso III

Severe rain didn't stop the Soldiers of Company A, 22d Chemical Battalion (Technical Escort), 48th Chemical Brigade, 20th Support Command, from carrying out a 9 June 2010 exercise in which they responded to a report of suspected leaking chemical munitions at the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

According to First Lieutenant Maritzabel Mustafaa, chemical response team leader, the exercise was developed to train newly assigned Soldiers to "sustain proficiency and provide a team that is trained and capable of safely assessing, packaging, sampling, and processing chemical warfare munitions." She continued to stress the importance of the training, stating, "It is important for a [chemical response team] to know how to recover munitions, as it is a primary core task; and we can be called upon to assist in the remediation of chemical warfare materials discovered either by chance or during deliberate real estate recovery/restoration operations."

For example, in March 2010, the team was called upon to assist the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High-Yield Explosives Analytical and Remediation Activity with remediation efforts involving the recovery of chemical warfare munitions in the Washington, D.C., area. These efforts eliminated civilian exposure to chemical and explosive hazards.

Since that time, though, new Soldiers have arrived and positions within the team have changed. The latest training was essential in making the new members of the team aware of established procedures.

The training consisted of two days of classroom and hands-on instruction and culminated in an exercise that tested what the Soldiers had learned. Although the weather was unfavorable, the conditions added a new level of difficulty, which forced the team to think about how to mitigate a leaking round without spreading contamination. The team leader concluded by stating, "The team surpassed my expectations on the way they conducted the mission, and we look forward to more challenging exercises." 

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