

# USACBRNS Change of Command

By Ms. Emily Athens



The U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear School (USACBRNS), Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, hailed Colonel Vance “Phil” Visser as he assumed command during a ceremony held on 10 August 2010.

Colonel Visser, who joins the community with his wife, Sherri, and their six children, previously served as the deputy director of the CJ3 (Future Plans and Operations), Multinational Forces–Iraq, and the deputy director of the J33 (Current Operations), U.S. Forces–Iraq. He replaced Brigadier General Leslie Smith, who departed on 23 June to take command of the 20th Support Command (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High-Yield Explosives), Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

“I cannot think of a more qualified officer to follow in General Smith’s very large footsteps. As an expert in the CBRN [chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear] field, Phil brings the right combination of knowledge, leadership, and experience to this very important position,” said the reviewing officer for the ceremony, Major General David Quantock, commander of the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence, Fort Leonard Wood.

With a diverse audience of key community leaders, distinguished guests, officers, noncommissioned officers, families, friends, and Soldiers of the USACBRNS, Colonel Visser accepted and passed the unit colors as a tangible symbol of his assumption of responsibility.

Major General Quantock welcomed Colonel Visser to the USACBRNS team, dubbing him as a warrior, professional, and 21st-century leader. “I am confident under the leadership of Phil and Colonel Brett Van Camp [assistant commandant of USACBRNS] that the CBRN School will continue to build on the important mission of the school and defend our Nation at home and abroad,” he said.

Upon accepting his new role as commander, Visser thanked his family, friends, and the many civilian and military dignitaries in attendance, while promising to uphold the esteemed reputation of the USACBRNS. “It is a special privilege to join the team here at Fort Leonard Wood and to serve with you as commandant of the USACBRNS. I look forward to partnering with our fellow commandants in service here as we train Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines for their respective roles in today’s joint operational environment—more specifically, as we ready the joint forces to address the myriad of CBRN threats and challenges of the future,” Colonel Visser said. “I’m excited to be here and ready to go to work, so let’s get busy.”

The ceremony concluded with Visser honoring those Soldiers who are serving in harm’s way and the 399th Army Band playing the Chemical Corps and Army songs.



Colonel Visser speaks at the change-of-command ceremony.

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