



# 48th Chemical Brigade Off-Site

*By Major Andrew “Jack” Morgan*

The 48th Chemical Brigade conducted an off-site event for all company, battalion, and brigade command teams and operations and training officers (S-3s) 16–19 February 2010. The event, which was hosted by the 83d Chemical Battalion, was held at Fort Polk, Louisiana. Attendees participated in classes designed to standardize procedures, with a focus on motor pool operations, short-range battles, transformation, engaged leadership, and platoon hazardous response. Each evening, the leaders enjoyed dinner and camaraderie through various social gatherings on Fort Polk or in the surrounding community. Throughout the week, Colonel Eric W. Brigham, commander of the 48th, and Command Sergeant Major Edwin D. Moten, command sergeant major of the 48th, related their leadership experiences and personal and professional antecedents and formed the foundation for the standardization of procedures.

On the first day, the brigade leaders were presented with an overview of the off-site event and a risk assessment for the week. First Lieutenant Heather Morgan conducted a tour of the 83d Chemical Battalion Headquarters, focusing on the rich history and tradition of the last 60 years.


The second day began with a brigade run along the streets of Fort Polk. Following the run, Colonel Brigham and Command Sergeant Major Moten addressed the assembled leaders, describing what they should expect for the rest of the week. Participants then gathered at the 83d Motor Pool for the motor pool operations class, which covered Standard Army Maintenance System box capabilities and limitations, tool room operations, hazmat operations, and leader involvement in preventive maintenance checks and services operations. That afternoon, the class proceeded to the 88th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, where they received an overview of direct support maintenance operations, including a description of the equipment, capabilities, and functions available from support activities at Fort Polk. Topics covered included shop operations and familiarization, supply support activity, and support operations. Next, the leaders completed classes on Chemical Corps assets and capabilities,

the National Technical Nuclear Forensics Program, and requirements building. They also received an update on chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) support to the U.S. Army Special Operations Command. The evening entertainment consisted of a no-host social at a local restaurant in Leesville, Louisiana.

On the third day of the event, participants gathered at the Fort Polk airfield, boarded UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, and took a 15-minute flight to the Digital Multipurpose Battle Area Complex—an urban warfare training facility also located at Fort Polk. Once the party reassembled in an orientation tent, personnel from the 7th Chemical Company, 83d Chemical Battalion, discussed and, later, conducted a series of range exercises involving reflexive fire, stress fire, and live room-clearing. The purpose was to demonstrate a method of incorporating short-range battle techniques into current training plans and training strategies that are focused on mission-essential task lists. These exercises were designed to share best practices for improving Soldiers’ competence levels with weapons. At each demonstration range, a senior leader led an interactive discussion in which the experienced participants compared and contrasted advanced rifle marksmanship techniques. The range exercises culminated in a live demonstration of 7th Chemical Company Soldiers clearing nine rooms involving shoot/no-shoot scenarios. Brigade leaders watched the live room-clearing from the range safety officer catwalk above. Next, they moved to the after-action review theater, where the 1/59th Chemical Company, 22d Chemical Battalion, demonstrated the hazardous response platoon tactics, techniques, and procedures developed by the 22d. Then, the participants engaged in a facilitated, professional discussion about the hazardous response platoon and dismounted reconnaissance sets, kits, and outfits. Following the capability exercise, the leaders moved inside, where they completed a series of classes focusing on transformation and engaged leadership. Afterward, they boarded the Black Hawks and flew back to the airfield. The final event of the day consisted of social gatherings at various local dining establishments, where the Soldiers shared, learned, and created new friendships.

As most of the participants returned home, the assembled battalion and brigade S-3s formed a working group to study the required capabilities, mission-essential task list crosswalk, and force structure for U.S. Army combat support companies. The end result was a draft combat support model that includes mounted and dismounted reconnaissance, heavy and light decontamination, and patient decontamination capabilities. The proposed mission-essential task list crosswalk and force structure have been staffed through each battalion to ensure that leaders at all levels have the opportunity to provide input. An overview was presented to Brigadier General Leslie C. Smith (former

Chief of Chemical and commandant of the U.S. Army CBRN School) and many other senior CBRN leaders.

The overall objectives of the 48th Chemical Brigade off-site event were to establish standards for a wide range of areas, showcase capabilities available at Fort Polk, and build esprit de corps across the brigade. The resounding success of the off-site event will point the way ahead for every guidon in the brigade formation. Rounds Away! 

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