

172d Chemical Company Tests New Smoke Generator

By PFC Chris Marcengill

The 172d Chemical Company, from Fort Carson, Colorado, tested the XM56 smoke generators at Fort McClellan, Alabama, this summer.

The XM56 smoke system is a turbine generator mounted on a heavy version (M1097) HMMWV chassis. The XM56 provided static or mobile large-area smoke in the visual or infrared spectrum. The system uses fog oil to provide the visual obscuration and graphite and fog oil to provide the infrared smoke.

Before the test began, second and third platoons went through a week of classroom and hands-on new equipment training. These soldiers were "certified" prior to the start of the test.

The second platoon executed the smoke missions while the third platoon collected data on the performance of the XM56 system. The smoke missions provided concealment of the Long-Range Surveillance Detachment of the 104th Military Intelligence Battalion. The

104th MI is also from Fort Carson.

The first platoon, 172d was the opposing force while the 4th platoon provided support to all of the elements.

The test was successful and the generators were well-liked by the company chain of command. CPT Ted Ruske, commander of the 172d said, "the test provided a good train-up for conducting smoke and fuel resupply operations at Pinion canyon and the upcoming National Training Center rotation."

