
If the National Training Center is coaching the concept for integrating the PDS and the decontamination site, the Chemical Corps should take the lead in putting this concept into doctrine.

Integrating the PDS with the Decontamination Site in Today's Army

By CPT Jeanie M. White

The proponent for the Patient Decontamination Site (PDS) has not been clearly identified in either FM 3-5, *NBC Decontamination*, or FM 8-10-4, *Medical Platoon Leaders Handbook*. Both field manuals state that a "PDS must operate under the supervision of medical personnel to ensure no further injury is caused to the patient by the decon process." Chemical School-trained personnel are not mentioned. It has been my experience through three rotations at the National Training Center that integrated, collocated decontamination and patient decontamination sites work more efficiently to support the brigade, although it is not currently in our doctrine.

According to FM 3-5, a decontamination site on the battlefield is where either "operational or thorough decon is conducted to reduce NBC contamination levels from equipment and personnel while still in a contamination vapor environment, or to negligible risk levels to restore combat power dependent on METT-T."

There are two techniques to both decon processes: Thorough decon consists of detailed equipment and detailed troop decon, while operational decon consists of vehicle washdown and MOPP gear exchange. A patient decontamination site is where the patient decontamination team decontaminates casualties to

reduce NBC contamination levels to a negligible risk before the patient receives medical treatment.

From my experience as a decontamination platoon leader, when one individual was contaminated, the immediate response was to request decontamination support. All equipment and personnel were transported to the decontamination site whether or not the contaminated elements had casualties. Unless the PDS is collocated, that contaminated casualty would be sent to the nearest ambulance exchange point containing the PDS, which could be kilometers away.

Integrating the two sites would cause less confusion on the locations of both areas and limit the spread of contamination on the battlefield. (The brigade would maintain control of dirty routes.) This would reduce loss of contaminated casualties due to confusion of the PDS location. The decontamination platoon leader maintains command and control (C²). C² controls access from one link-up point over one net for the

collocated sites guiding the contaminated parties into their respective sites. The logistics push package for both sites is collocated in the reconstitution area, which makes resupply more readily available for the next mission. The decontamination platoon is set to facilitate quick turnaround of casualty collection transportation

Integrating the two sites would cause less confusion on the locations of both areas and limit the spread of contamination on the battlefield.

and logistics vehicles that are contaminated. Finally, with the sites collocated, the brigade will receive a more accurate report of actual contamination via an NBC 5 Report (area of actual contamination). This report is sent by the decontamination platoon leader after the mission for both sites is completed. This procedure ensures the brigade avoids the contaminated area.

If the National Training Center is coaching the concept for integrating the PDS and decontamination sites, the Chemical Corps should take the lead in putting this concept into doctrine. The Medical Service Corps or the Chemical Corps must make this concept doctrine and teach it in our Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) schools as a joint effort to clarify "who is responsible for what." If this does not happen, the *operational experience* of successful integration will linger in SOPs forever. Units have benefited greatly from the integrated PDS/decontamination site concept according to executive summaries provided by CPT Chesney (National Training

Center Chemical Company Trainer), whose decontamination platoons were task-organized and postured to conduct effective integrated PDS/decontamination operations. If we are to "train as we fight," the integrated concept must be trained at home station for the brigade combat team to reap the benefits on the battlefield.

At the time this article was written, CPT Jeanine M. White was attending the Chemical Officer Advanced Course at Fort McClellan, Alabama. After graduation, she will report to Fort Carson, Colorado. CPT White graduated from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga in 1994 with a BS in Psychology. Her previous assignments as an officer include; Battalion Chemical Officer for 1/1AV, Brigade Chemical Officer for 4 BDE AV and 1 BCT, 1 ID (MECH), and Decon Platoon Leader/XO for HHC, 1 EN BN at Fort Riley, Kansas. She has attended three rotations to NTC (1 as BN Chemo, 1 as BDE Chemo, and 1 as Decon Plt Ldr) and a BCTP in Germany as BDE Chemo. She is a 1994 graduate of the Chemical Officer Basic Course at Fort McClellan, Alabama.

A new print by Don Stivers

Image size: 16 1/2" x 26"
For purchase information
and order form, see page 34.

BLIND PURSUIT ***SMOKE IN THE SHENANDOAH***

The beginning of May 1862 heralded a low point in Confederate fortunes: Yorktown had been evacuated, as had Williamsburg; Norfolk had to be abandoned; and the Confederacy's first ironclad, the *Virginia*, was scuttled to keep her from Federal hands. One high point, however, had come from their renowned "Stonewall." Thomas J. Jackson had won a victory in the Shenandoah Valley at McDowell, Virginia.

Union General George B. McClellan's Peninsula Campaign was succeeding—in spite of his own cautiousness—and Northern troops were approaching Richmond from the east. Union General Nathaniel P. Banks felt the need to reinforce his army after the Battle of Kernstown. While technically a Confederate defeat, Kernstown drew more Union troops to the Shenandoah Valley, turning McClellan's well-orchestrated advance along two borders of Virginia into a dangerous, uncoordinated, two-pronged shuffle. Then came the Battle of McDowell on May 8, 1862.

In terrain too mountainous to use artillery, the two armies' infantry slugged it out, toe-to-toe. Though Jackson lost more men, the Federals, under General Robert C. Schenck, began a retreat with the brilliant Confederate cavalry commander, Turner Ashby, and his troopers snapping at their heels. By May 10, Jackson's infantry—with the famous "Stonewall Brigade" in the lead—caught up to Schenck. In desperation, the Union troops set fire to the thick woods, cleverly laying down a smoke screen. A member of Jackson's staff recalled that, "Soon the sky was overcast with volumes of smoke, which almost hid the scene, and wrapped every distant object in a veil, impenetrable to the eyes and telescopes of the officers alike." Jackson, always the consummate warrior, admired the subterfuge. He declared this smoke was the most adroit expedient to which a retreating army could resort to embarrass pursuit, and that it possessed all the disadvantages of a night attack.

Don Stivers' most recent print portrays Jackson's pursuit of the Federal army, which was stalled by a unique tactic not usually associated with the American Civil War—a smoke screen.