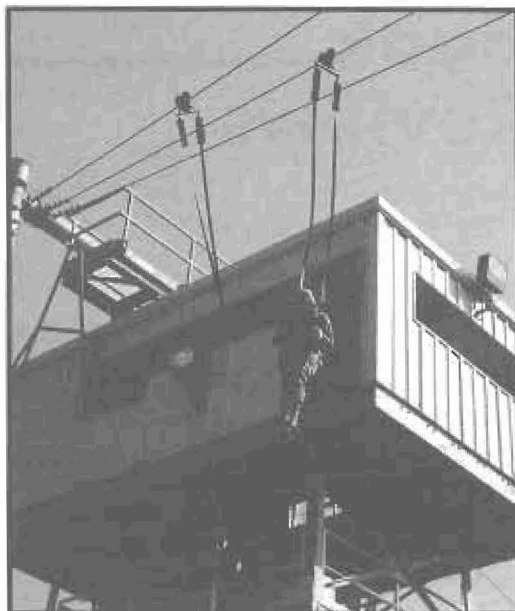


Stand by!!!

By SGM Ronald G. Loeder

"STAND BY!" That was the command that echoed across the air as the 82d Airborne Division and Fort Bragg prepared to greet the Regimental Command Sergeant Major of the Chemical Corps, CSM James E. Van Patten.



CSM Van Patten exiting 34-foot tower.

On 16 and 17 February, CSM Van Patten visited the 83d Chemical Battalion's 101st Chemical Company and the 82d Airborne Division's 21st Chemical Company. He also addressed the enlisted soldiers of Fort Bragg and attended an 82d Airborne Division Joint Readiness Training Exercise.

After leading the 21st Chemical Company on a brisk 4-mile run, CSM Van Patten attended a demonstration at the division's advanced airborne school that highlighted all aspects of an airborne operation. MSG Baldwin of the division chemical section presented the briefing, which included prejump training, marshalling area control officer (MACO) briefings, rigging procedures, and jumpmaster pre-inspection (JMPI) procedures.

Upon completion of the demonstration, CSM Van Patten donned his ballistic helmet and parachute harness. MSG Mack, Division Chemical Operations Sergeant, performed a Jumpmaster's final inspection of CSM Van Patten's equipment and gave his personal seal of approval. Then, looking up and swallowing hard, CSM Van Patten began his

climb to the top of the 34-foot airborne tower. With his eyes on the horizon and his hand over the end of the reserve parachute, the command sergeant major executed his best exit posture out of the tower. Elated by the thrill of his first jump, the command sergeant major continued his visit with a better understanding of the airborne chemical soldier's perspective.

Impressed with the overall professionalism and candor of the soldiers of the 21st Chemical Company, CSM Van Patten presented his personnel coins to four of them. As he departed, the command sergeant major expressed his sincere appreciation for the past two-day's activities and the professional manner in which the chemical troopers of Fort Bragg execute their duties.



CSM Van Patten listens to briefing at 82d Airborne Division Advanced Airborne School.

**Keep your feet and knees together.
Airborne!**