

lineage and honors

247th Chemical Detachment

The 247th Chemical Detachment was constituted 6 July 1945 in the Army of the United States as the 247th Chemical Service Platoon. It was activated 28 July 1945 in the Philippine Islands and inactivated over a year later on 17 January 1946 in Japan.

On 19 May 1959, it was redesignated the 247th Chemical Platoon and allotted to the Regular Army, and activated 5 June 1959 at Fort Lewis, Washington. The unit was reor-

ganized and redesignated 21 July 1979 as the 247th Chemical Detachment and activated in Germany. The 247th was deactivated 1 April 1990, and is the first unit in recent Chemical Corps history to be deactivated outright, without creating a replacement structure within another unit.

The last commanding officer of the 247th Chemical Detachment, CPT Uwe W. Stutz, has written a short article on his unit's deactivation (below). — Editor

The 247th Chemical Detachment (Decontamination Team, FB) was deactivated by orders of the Commanding General, 32d Army Air Defense Command, 1 April 1990, marked the end of a decade of hard work, selfless service, and dedication to mission for which we lacked the resources.

The reasons for deactivation are profoundly simple. Organized by TOE 03500FB00 without squad leaders, first sergeant, support personnel and communication assets, the unit was assigned to support a division-size command, covering a contingency area of 56,000 square kilometers. This area of operations encompasses both forward stationed US Corps and the 21st TAACOM. Thus the CG concluded that "the 247th Chemical Detachment provided little actual wartime chemical decontamination capability."

On the other hand, deactivation will save the command 41 personnel slots, \$1.5 million dollars worth of TOE equipment, and \$25,000 dollars annually in mission funds.

As simple and insignificant this fact may seem, let the Corps take heed. The writing is on the wall. In this time of faltering support and shrinking resources, the Army will, for the first time since the Chemical Corps rebirth, deactivate a company level unit outright. This is the situation in the field:

Every maneuver battalion, and many support companies, have their own power-driven decontamination equipment (PDDE).

Soldiers to run detailed decontamination come mostly from the contaminated unit. The chemical unit provides only the PDDE operators and supervision of two stations, a total of 12 personnel. The remaining work, to include all of

the personnel decontamination line, is handled by 21+ personnel from the customer unit.

With PDDE on hand in the maneuver units, the contribution of the chemical unit is marginal at best. Add into the equation the logistical cost of supporting the under-resourced chemical units, and chemical support becomes a liability rather than an asset.

The demise of the Russian juggernaut as the all-purpose threat makes chemical warfare no longer seem as imminent. The pharmaceutical industry of Libya just does not instill the same fear in the hearts of commanders as do the zillions of chemical and nuclear weapons of the Soviet Army.

In the months to come, as the Army changes into a smaller, strategically mobile configuration, the Chemical Corps will have to relook its organization and contribution to the Army mission. Only a Corps that is part of the solution of the lighter force will not be part of the problem of budget cuts and resource restraints.

CPT Uwe W. Stutz started his career as a Reserve Officer in the 307th Chemical Company, 120th ARCOM, on 15 Mar 82. After coming on active duty in April 1983, and attending COBC, he served as decon platoon leader, armor battalion chemical officer, and DISCOM chemical officer in the 1st Cavalry, Fort Hood, Texas. Upon graduation from COAC in January 1987, he was assigned to the 94th ADA Brigade in Germany. He is currently the last commander of the 247th Chemical Detachment, 32d AADCOM. His projected assignment will take him to the AADCOM G3 Training and Evaluation Branch.