



From left to right, BG John Doesburg, Joint Program Manager, Biological Defense, Pentagon; COL Richard K. Weiner, DOT, USACMLS; Bruce Jezek, program director, Biological Defense Systems, Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD; BG Ralph Wooten; and SSG Mariann Crow, NCOIC, Bio-Defense Branch, USACMLS, cut the ribbon signifying the opening of the BIDS Bunker. (Photo by SGT Terry J. Goodman)

Bio-Defense Bunker Debuts

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In a ribbon-cutting ceremony 12 April 1996, the Biological Integrated Detection System Bunker at the US Army Chemical School was officially declared open for training.

BG John Doesburg, joint program manager, Biological Defense, Pentagon, joined BG Ralph G. Wooten, post Commanding General and Commandant of USACMLS, in the ceremony.

BIDS is a sheltered, biological detection laboratory mounted on a HMMWV and equipped with air sam-

pling detection and identification equipment. Within 30 to 45 minutes, the two soldiers operating the BIDS can presumptively identify a suspected biological agent.

Currently, the 11th Chemical Company, 84th Chemical Battalion, at Fort McClellan, has the only fully-operational BIDS platoon in the Army.

Being able to field this equipment in less than four years is a great success story for the Armed Forces," said BG Wooten. "During *Operational Desert*

Storm, we didn't have the capabilities to detect biological agents.

"The only way we would have known if biological agents were being used would have been after soldiers started showing symptoms. We needed a system that would protect our soldiers from biological agents."

According to SSG Mariann Crow, noncommissioned officer in charge of the Bio-Defense Branch, USACMLS, BIDS would have been a tremendous asset during the war.

"We had no way to detect biological agents," said Crow, who was the NBC NCOIC for Company B, 197th Infantry Brigade during the war.

"M8 alarms were set up, but they only detect chemical agents. With BIDS, the force will definitely be protected better," she said.

The BIDS Bunker, which covers more than 7,000 square feet and cost \$7 million, is housed on an entire floor of the USACMLS. It contains two component training labs, a data analysis room, a long-distance radio room, and two full-size BIDS simulators.

The 310th Chemical Company, a reserve unit in Gadsden, Alabama, is currently the only BIDS company-size element in the Army.

According to Robin Byrom, BIDS course manager, the company will complete its training here in 1997.

The 310th, a corps-level-or-higher asset, will field 35 BIDS with seven teams per platoon. Each team will consist of four soldiers, the BIDS vehicle, and a support vehicle. Two soldiers will analyze air samples in the detection suite while the other soldiers resupply the team, provide security, and move collected samples to the rear.

The 20th Chemical Detachment, to begin training at USACMLS in July, will be attached to the 84th Chemical Battalion, relieving the 11th's BIDS platoon of its interim mission.

According to CPT Mark A. Lee, commander, 11th Chemical Company, until the 20th is activated 16 September, his BIDS platoon is trained and ready. "We have been involved with BIDS since its developmental phase," said Lee.

BIDS operations have been a mainstay of the unit's mission since October 1994 when BIDS testing began at Dugway Proving Grounds, Utah. The 11th was an integral part in the development of the BIDS system in use today.

In October 1994, during the first user test, the platoon developed doctrinal procedures. One year later at



BG Ralph G. Wooten, Commanding General, Fort McClellan, Alabama, and Commandant of the US Army Chemical School, mans a Biological Integrated Detection System simulator during a tour of the BIDS Bunker April 12. (Photo by SGT Terry J. Goodman)

Dugway, the 32 soldiers who comprise the BIDS platoon refined those procedures and designed the layout of the equipment inside the vehicle.

The 11th also provided feedback on how the technical manuals will be written for operators, assisted in editing doctrinal manuals, and developed platoon standing operating procedures for

use on the battlefield. "They did an outstanding job," said Lee. "These chemical specialists have embraced the challenge of mastering new skills and technologies that will shape future BIDS operations and how it will protect forces on the battlefield."