The Need for 740As in BCTs

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The Chemical Corps is a highly technical branch integrated across every type of formation in the U.S. Army. Inherently, the Regiment faces challenges with maintaining Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) equipment and operational readiness and integrating CBRN capabilities with maneuver formations and staffs at echelon.

The Chemical Corps exists to protect the force from weapons of mass destruction and CBRN threats. We provide commanders decision space by operationalizing technical information related to all things CBRN. The core functions of the Regiment are to *assess*, *protect*, and *mitigate*. When those core functions are properly executed, the Regiment successfully enables lethality. The Chemical Corps plays a huge role in the protection warfighting function. As the protection warfighting function continues to evolve, CBRN officers will undoubtedly play an integral role in protection integration as they strive to identify existing gaps and recommend viable solutions.

Integrating CBRN formations with maneuver formations is difficult because units conduct culminating training exercises, combat training center rotations, or operational deployments with units from different geographical locations. CBRN units are subordinate in an operational command relationship with maneuver units. While maneuver units have Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) 74A–Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Officers, they typically do not possess the same technical expertise or experience as CBRN warrant officers. The presence of MOS 740A–CBRN Warrant Officers on maneuver staffs would facilitate building stronger relationships between CBRN units and maneuver elements, ensuring that CBRN units are aligned with applicable mission sets.

Brigade combat teams (BCTs) across the Army have been unsuccessful in maintaining CBRN readiness standards as specified in Army guidance and applicable equipment technical manuals. More specifically, BCTs have struggled to maintain adequate CBRN programs. The degradation of CBRN readiness within BCT equipment and training is well documented Army-wide. While some BCTs have fared better than others, it is a systemic issue that must be addressed.

As the 740A population grows and the Army updates existing force designs to support large-scale combat operations, the BCT CBRN elements must also be updated. Adding 740As to a BCT staff would have an immediate impact on CBRN readiness by integrating CBRN defense with other staff sections. The 740A would also be responsible for integrating the entire protection warfighting function with the BCT staff.

Existing readiness trends paired with the existing operational need clearly articulate the need for 740As to be assigned to BCTs. The purpose of this article is to highlight how 740As could add value and improve CBRN readiness within BCTs.

Warfighting Focus

Integrating CBRN formations with maneuver units is the most important part of our job, yet it is one of the most challenging tasks we face. CBRN formations are highly technical, require a lot of sustainment, and address threats with high destructive potentials. Furthermore, CBRN formations are always integrated at a much higher echelon.

An acceptable best practice for CBRN units to overcome the challenges of integration is to task their CBRN warrant officers to serve as liaison officers with the maneuver units they are supporting. An example of this would be a hazard response company tasking a company CBRN warrant officer to serve as a liaison officer on the brigade staff. While the hazard response company would lose a technical expert, the return on investment would be substantial once the warrant officer was fully integrated with the BCT staff. In the operational environment, the warrant officer is an asset to the existing brigade CBRN section. BCTs would then have a technical expert who could help them directly solve relevant problems and ensure that the correct assets are summoned to where they are most needed. Adding a 740A to the BCT staff would allow CBRN units to retain their warrant officer while giving BCTs an increased capability.

The senior CBRN officer within a BCT is typically a pre-command captain. This officer plays a vital role in the operations section of the brigade staff. While captains can effectively plan CBRN operations and assist with integration,

it is not their primary role, and they typically lack longevity in the position as they seek command opportunities. In part, this has hindered CBRN readiness. Data provided from the U.S. Army Forces Command ground readiness evaluation, assessment, and training CBRN after action reviews indicate that almost all BCTs continuously failed these inspections. Findings included, but were not limited to—

- Inadequate maintenance plans.
- Improperly enrolled equipment information into the Global Combat Support System–Army.
- Incomplete service data.
- Late services.
- Nonoperational CBRN equipment.
- Inaccurate evaluation reports.
- Untrained CBRN teams.
- Unexecuted operational decontamination.

740As are force multipliers who possess a high degree of technical and tactical skills. Habitual failures in meeting CBRN readiness requirements pose a significant risk to the mission and force. If the BCT is required to fight on a contaminated battlefield, a lack of serviceable CBRN equipment and training could have strategic implications.

Career Structure

The current 740A career map is horizontal for the first 7 years, with assignment opportunities being limited to company or team positions. The addition of a BCT assignment opportunity for company-grade 740As would be career-enhancing by creating an additional developmental assignment within the BCT that could serve as a bridge between company-level assignments in preparation for assignments to CBRN battalions and division positions as a chief warrant officer three. Working in BCTs would provide critical experience in the employment of CBRN forces during different phases of operations and would better prepare 740As to transition from company-grade to field-grade warrant officers. This experience would be invaluable when advising CBRN chiefs in a division CBRN cell or commanders in CBRN battalions.

Formation Prioritization

In an ideal world or in a "growth" Army, it would make sense to create authorizations for warrant officers in every BCT. Unfortunately, we are currently a "no-growth" Army—meaning that additional funding is needed before such authorizations can take place. Armor brigade combat teams (ABCTs) and Stryker brigade combat teams (SBCTs) would most benefit from 740As. There are currently 11 ABCTs and 6 SBCTs in the Army, resulting in the need for 17 additional 740A billets. Adding 740As to BCTs would enhance CBRN capability in those formations and be a major step forward toward modernizing the Chemical Corps for large-scale combat operations.

As the land component, the Army must be prepared to fight and dominate physical spaces despite CBRN weapon employment. Army BCTs have struggled to maintain a high level of CBRN readiness due to competing requirements, equipment challenges, and training readiness. The CBRN warrant officer cohort is uniquely postured to meet these challenges to enable BCT CBRN readiness and survivability. Due to mission sets and the material required to survive in a CBRN environment, ABCTs and SBCTs are logical starting points at which to integrate 740As. The 17 active-component SBCTs and ABCTs would greatly benefit from the addition of a CBRN warrant officer to the brigade staff.

CBRN noncommissioned and officer roles and utilization are vastly different from those of 740As. 740As within BCTs would be focused on the CBRN material and training readiness of the brigades, advising staffs on CBRN considerations such as integrating technical forces, employing an organic reconnaissance platoon, examining technical planning considerations, maintaining CBRN warning and reporting systems, and integrating organic and higher-level modeling into operations. 740As could also permeate knowledge back into CBRN formations and vice-versa during normal career progression. This bilateral transfer of knowledge would benefit maneuver and CBRN formations and result in more lethal and survivable formations.

Proposed Change

Adding 740As to BCTs could have an immediate impact on CBRN readiness within BCT formations. 740As would be utilized in a technical capacity and could effectively improve CBRN readiness. The CBRN warrant officer is an expert on CBRN equipment, has extensive experience in developing and implementing technical training programs, and can integrate CBRN within other staff sections. The CBRN warrant officer is technically focused and uniquely suited to provide expertise on CBRN system maintenance, training, and integration. The 740A authorization would be an addition to the existing 74A and MOS 74D–CBRN Specialists and would deliver the full complement of expertise our career management field provides to the BCT.

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