



Carrie Poore, a biologist at the U.S. Army Edgewood Chemical Biological Center who serves as an advanced Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives training team leader, trains noncommissioned officers during a June exercise at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

Biologist Arms Soldiers With Training On Biochemical Crises

By Martha C. Koester — NCO Journal

Surrounded by biochemical hazards on a daily basis, Carrie Poore wouldn't want to be anywhere else than training noncommissioned officers and their Soldiers to spot chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear targets and explosives in the field.

A biologist at the U.S. Army Edgewood Chemical Biological Center who serves as an advanced Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives, or CBRNE, training team leader, Poore aims to help Soldiers recognize and defend against chemical and biological threats using computer simulation technology and real world scenarios. Poore is part of a small mobile training team based at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

To help with the training, she also sets up clandestine laboratories in what looks like an ordinary Maryland neighborhood. The scene ends up resembling something out of the AMC network crime drama "Breaking Bad."

Subject matter expert

"Once I started training, I found it's the best job I could ever have," Poore said. "[Soldiers] take everything that you say, and they just eat it up, asking question after

question. You really have to know and understand this training in order to convey it to somebody else, because they ask every possible question in every configuration possible. It's an amazing opportunity."

Poore and her team of subject matter experts focus on training NCOs and their Soldiers on how terrorists would work covertly, what their thought processes would be when making a chemical or biological agent, how they would do it, what kinds of materials they would use, and what the footprint would look like. The training gives NCOs life-saving skills.

"We are out in the field a lot," Poore said of her team, whose next assignment was to train NCOs at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. "We have some amazing opportunities. I have been to Kuwait and Cambodia, and everybody is so appreciative of what we teach them."

"When our forces go out into the field for chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosives missions, the U.S. Army Edgewood Chemical Biological Center goes with them for support," said Joseph L. Corriveau, director of ECBC. "We bring a laboratory to give Soldiers support out in the field for various things they might

come across. Carrie Poore helps to train all military services and service support teams, as well as the FBI on chem bio response.”

Poore’s style of training encourages Soldiers to think outside the box when they come across a potential target in the field because “in order for them to do their jobs really well, they almost have to think like a terrorist.” In Poore’s lab, Soldiers won’t find bacteria growing in a \$4,000 fermenter. It most likely will be seen growing in a bucket because it works just as well.

“We do this on purpose, so they begin thinking of how common items can be repurposed to produce CBRNE effects,” Poore said.



Carrie Poore, a biologist at ECBC, leads training exercises in June at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. Poore wants to help Soldiers recognize and defend against chemical and biological threats. (Photos by Martha C. Koester / NCO Journal)



Carrie Poore, a biologist at ECBC, wants Soldiers to think outside the box during training exercises to help them recognize and defend against chemical and biological threats. Poore often uses simple household items in her training to help Soldiers recognize threats.

Life and death

Though some of the Soldiers they train have no technical background, Poore and her team want to supply them with as much knowledge as possible so that Soldiers can be confident that they can execute their jobs in a safe manner. Training could be the difference between life and death in the field.

“Our lead chemist and training curriculum developer, Mike Cain, had the chance to talk with a group that we’d trained who went overseas and came back,” Poore said. “They said the training they received from us made a significant difference in successfully completing their mission, and that it helped keep them safe. We don’t hear

much feedback, but the fact that Soldiers keep coming back for training speaks volumes.”

Poore said it’s an honor being a part of the Army’s effort to counter threats of weapons of mass destruction. She acknowledged that training for NCOs to recognize potential threats as responders isn’t easy. They have to fully comprehend the threats.

“I had the luxury of taking 9½ years just to learn biology [in college], and we’re asking them to learn about all five CBRNE elements in a short amount of time,” she said. “They do have a lot to understand, a lot to learn. Then, at the same time, what you are working with can kill you. That’s a big deal.” ■



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