

Personnel Decontamination

LIEUTENANT ROBERT C. NEUMANN

Even after his company succeeds in coming out of a chemically contaminated environment, an infantry company commander will have to face up to and solve a rather large problem. He will have to see that he and his men and all their personal equipment are properly decontaminated.

In all probability, that commander will have to depend on his own eight-man decontamination team to do the job; the division's NBC defense company undoubtedly will be quite busy decontaminating vehicles and other large pieces of equipment.

Here is one way in which a company's decontamination team can handle this problem:

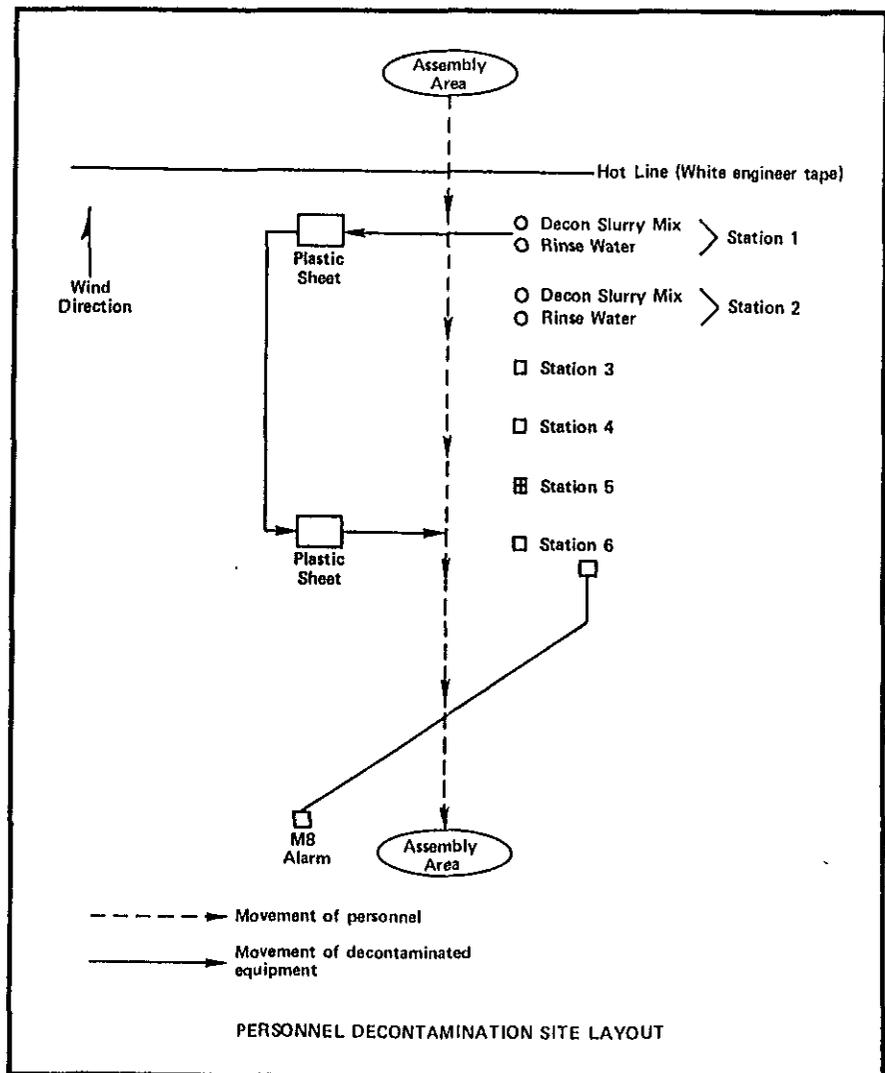
First, the team finds an uncontaminated area at least 50 x 50 meters that has good drainage. Under the direction of its senior noncommissioned officer, the team sets up a series of six stations on that site as shown in the accompanying diagram. One member of the team stays at each station to help the soldiers as they pass through and to make sure they perform each step completely and thoroughly. The soldiers themselves also help each other as necessary at each station using the "buddy" system.

At the first station, the soldiers wash their weapons, helmets, load-bearing equipment, and protective mask carriers, scrubbing each item with a brush for at least one minute. Each piece is then rinsed and placed on a plastic sheet. A member of the

decontamination team inspects the items and, if they have been properly decontaminated, takes them to Station 6.

Still wearing their protective masks (as they will until they reach Station

5), the soldiers move to Station 2 where they decontaminate their protective masks, hoods, gloves, and overboots; at Station 3, the team member cuts the laces off the soldiers' footcovers, removes them,



and places them in a plastic trash bag; and at Station 4, the team member cuts the soldiers' overshirts up the backs and removes them, and then pulls off the soldiers' overtrousers. He places these items, too, in a plastic trash bag.

At Station 5, which is manned by a medical aid man in addition to the team member, the soldiers' uniforms, boots, protective masks, and protective hoods are dusted. If there are no contaminated spots, the soldiers remove their masks and move to Station 6. If there are any contaminated spots, those are first neutralized by the team member. The aid man is

present to take care of any casualties and should have an adequate supply of antidotes to counter the various CW agents the company may have encountered.

Finally, at Station 6, the soldiers are issued fresh ICDE sets and other personal equipment.

A hasty PDS operation of this kind allows a company commander to decrease his unit's MOPP level, to conduct an ICDE exchange, and, therefore, to increase his unit's survivability. The equipment required is not excessive and can be obtained through the supply system. It can be used by any unit and can be adapted

to fit any situation. (A more detailed description of the operation of such a site is available from the Chemical Staff Officer, Headquarters 2d Brigade, 8th Infantry Division, APO New York 09034.)



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The Company XO

CAPTAIN HAROLD E. RAUGH, JR.

In an infantry company, the success or failure of many training and administrative activities can often be traced directly to the only officer in the company who does not wear "green tabs" — the executive officer. Not only is he the second-in-command of the company, he is also its primary logistical and administrative officer. In effect, he is the "staff" for the company commander.

Generally speaking, the executive officer is the senior and the most experienced lieutenant in the company, and as a result of his longevity he usually has a good deal of institutional memory. He is, therefore, able to provide valuable guidance and assistance to both his commander and his platoon leaders.

The executive officer is also in charge of the company's headquar-

ters section, and this usually gives him such additional duties as supply officer, communications officer, weight control officer, unit fund officer, NBC officer, motor officer, and the like. This means that he must be an effective and efficient manager of all of the resources available to the unit, which include time, manpower, supplies, vehicles, and money. In this way he can best help his company commander produce a cohesive, disciplined team of combat-ready infantrymen.

RELY ON NCOs

But he cannot do everything alone. If he is smart, he will often rely on the good judgment, assistance, and experience of the senior noncommissioned officer in the company — the

first sergeant. For example, he should coordinate closely with the first sergeant on all administrative matters so that he does not infringe on or interfere with the first sergeant's duties. One area of interest that both should be concerned with is a vigorous incentive and awards program. Closely supervising and monitoring this program is an excellent way for the executive officer to ensure that all deserving soldiers in the unit are properly rewarded for outstanding duty performances.

The executive officer also needs to work closely with his commander, the platoon leaders, and the training noncommissioned officer on the support that must come from outside sources — the use of training areas, for instance, and ammunition supply, additional transportation support, and meals. Once the company's