



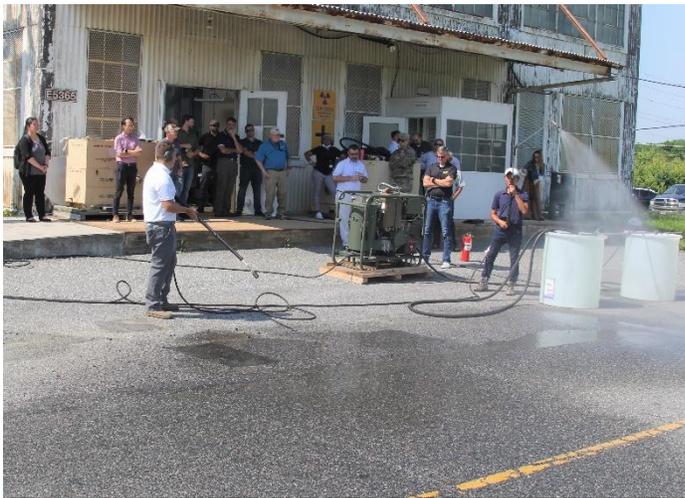
The U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command (DEVCOM) leads in the discovery, development and delivery of technology-based capabilities to enable Soldiers to win our nation's wars and come home safely. DEVCOM is a major subordinate command of the U.S. Army Futures Command. The DEVCOM Chemical Biological Center is the Army's principal research and development center for chemical and biological defense technology, engineering and field operations. The DEVCOM Chemical Biological Center is headquartered at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

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## Experts Explore Potential Upgrades to Fielded Decon System

By Richard Arndt



Kyle Hopkins, Maintenance Assistance and Instruction Team lead, and Tuan Nguyen, decontamination systems engineer, demonstrate the Joint Service Transportable Decontaminating System Small Scale M26 to DEVCOM CBC scientists, engineers and technicians to kick off an effort to modernize the system.

**Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD --** Innovation isn't always about creating something completely new. Sometimes it's about making a good thing better, such as when Army Futures Command recently asked the Combat Capabilities Development Command Chemical Biological Center to study the Joint Service Transportable Decontaminating System Small Scale M26.

The M26 has been a workhorse in the Army's field decontamination capabilities set since its introduction approximately 15 years ago. The system uses pressurized fresh or salt water for decontaminating chemical warfare agents on people and equipment. At 550 pounds, the system fits in a standard truck bed and can be set up by two people in less than 15 minutes.

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"The M26 has been in the inventory for quite some time, and will remain in the inventory for the foreseeable future," said Humberto Galarraga, chief of the Center's Chemical Biological Detection, Decontamination and Protection Engineering Division. "As such, this capability must be supported, modernized, and ready to go when needed."

The first step in modernizing the M26 is understanding the system's current configuration and capabilities. To that end, a team of scientists, engineers and technicians from across the Center came together June 1 for a familiarization demonstration and technical discussion on the system. Joe Grodecki, chief of the Center's Sustainment Engineering Division at Rock Island Arsenal, Illinois, is leading the team.



“We wanted to bring everyone together here at APG for a refresher experience with the system, and to start a conversation about how we move forward,” Grodecki said. “It’s been a while since some of us have seen an M26, so the opportunity to see it in operation and ask questions is a great starting point.”

The demonstration included a safety brief, review of system components, preventive maintenance checks and services, setup, operations, and tear-down.

With 3,894 M26 systems in the Army inventory, the equipment is well-known to the Soldiers who use it. Understanding how those Soldiers manage and maintain the systems in their units is critical to any potential upgrades. Mike Cress and Dave Glynn, DEVCOM CBC liaison officers to the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, attended the demonstration and technical discussion to better understand the maintenance and operation of the equipment. This information will help them interact with Soldiers at Fort Leonard Wood and gather critical information about how Soldiers maintain and operate the equipment in the field.



David Glynn and Mike Cress, DEVCOM CBC liaison officers to the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, examine the amount of pressure generated by the M26 decontamination system.



Tuan Nguyen, decontamination systems engineer, explains common maintenance issues on the M26 decontamination system.

“We need to be able to talk to Soldiers in the field about equipment maintenance,” Glynn said. “We need to understand how maintenance and management of these systems is performed at the unit level in order to see if we can make it easier or less manpower-intensive for Soldiers to perform that critical maintenance.”

Cress agreed, emphasizing that ease of maintenance is directly linked to equipment reliability. “We need to identify what the



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**Mike Cress, DEVCOM CBC liaison officer to the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, talks with the M26 upgrade team during the technical discussion as fellow liaison officer David Glynn listens during the familiarization demonstration.**

failure modes are,” he said. “The easier it is for Soldiers to perform maintenance the more likely the equipment will work as it’s designed when it’s needed.”

The team also plans to examine how Soldiers are currently using the M26, as well as what features of the device are used most and least often.

“We want to leverage technology to solve user problems,” Cress said. “How has the way Soldiers and units operate changed? How will it change in the future? How are they using the equipment? What

we’ve done here is assemble a team to develop an upgraded capability that we can put in Soldiers’ hands and gather feedback.”

Technology advances have also paved the way for potential improvement, according to Galarraga. In addition to potentially making the system lighter and more transportable, the emergence of new decontaminants may require an updated delivery system.

“The Center performs these types of improvement programs from time to time,” Galarraga said. “This is an opportunity to perform a capability improvement with a direct impact on warfighter survivability. An improved M26 will increase operational availability, combat readiness and greatly enhance Warfighters safety.”



**Kyle Hopkins, Maintenance Assistance and Instruction Team lead, connects spraying apparatus to the M26 decontamination system during the familiarization demonstration.**

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