

UK Defence CBRN Training Enhanced by Argon Simulators

The latest CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear) simulation training technology, manufactured in the UK by [Argon Electronics](#), has been rolled out by the Ministry of Defence at its CBRN centre of excellence in [Winterbourne Gunner](#), near Salisbury. The Argon simulation equipment is playing an important role in improving the quality and consistency of training for personnel from all three branches of the armed services.

The Defence Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Centre (DCBRNC) in Winterbourne Gunner is a joint unit, established to deliver world class CBRN training and technical assistance to support the UK defence mission. The Centre designs and conducts courses of instruction to qualify personnel from all three Services for operational, training and staff CBRN defence appointments.

As part of its goal of continuous improvement, the Centre recently identified the need to invest in the latest CBRN simulation systems. After an appropriate tendering process, the decision was made to work with Argon as a specialised manufacturer of advanced instruments and software, with comprehensive support services and the ability to meet short lead-times.

The Argon equipment includes the company's latest [CAMSIM](#) and LCAD hand held instruments, the MCAD simulator and the sophisticated [PlumeSIM](#) wide area CBRN field exercise and desktop training system.

Used in conjunction with Argon's programmable electronic simulation sources, these instruments are capable of simulating a wide range of threats from nerve, blister, blood and choking agents, with measurements for contamination, decontamination, persistency and false positives. In each case, the exact functionality, look and feel of real life in-service equipment is replicated, making it easy for trainees to transfer their knowledge from the training Centre to the field of operations.

Officer Commanding the DCBRN School, Squadron Leader Balfour, explains, "The new simulation equipment is easy for our instructors to set up and for the trainees to use, allowing us to simulate a wide range of realistic scenarios. These can be created to match the needs of each training course, the capabilities of trainees and the prevailing conditions on the ground; for example, we can simulate the presence of a vapour cloud, with varying levels of intensity that match the actual weather conditions encountered during training."

"One of the important benefits of using simulation equipment of this type is its ability to provide empirical evidence that can be used to validate drills and improve the feedback to individual trainees. Every action taken by the trainee is recorded by the instruments, allowing instructors to display detailed error reports after each exercise, with the collective data from multiple exercises potentially being used to help us enhance the quality of our training still further."

This process can be extended through the use of the PlumeSIM software, which enables an instructor to manage multiple electronic simulators and instruments remotely in real time. PlumeSIM is designed for classroom and field training, and creates a fully configurable virtual plume over a user-defined area. A range of parameters, such as the type of threat, release or delivery of single or multiple sources, plus different and changing environmental conditions, can easily be established, with the software recording student and vehicle positions and time against simulated exposure to contaminants while in the virtual plume. This then allows decontamination training to be carried out, with a full record of each trainee's actions being captured for subsequent analysis.

Squadron Leader Balfour adds, "The DCBRNC is recognised as a centre for excellence by both UK and overseas armed forces, and regularly runs training courses attended by our allies from around the world. As such, it's vital that we deliver the highest possible standards of training, so that personnel can return to their units with the knowledge and skills to deal with current mission specific threats and to meet the changing needs of contingency operations.

The employment of advanced simulation equipment such as that supplied by Argon is an essential factor in our ability to fulfil this need, both now and in the future."

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Argon Electronics

Argon Electronics was established in 1987 and has since become a world leader in the development and manufacture of hazardous material detector simulators, most notably in the fields of military Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) defence. Our simulators have applications from civil response to unconventional terrorism and accidental release, and international treaty verification, with a growing presence in the nuclear energy generation and education markets.

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