



# News Release

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## ECBC Technical Director Rick Decker to Retire April 30

*Contributions to Center, CB defense community to be honored during formal ceremony*

**Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. —** The U.S. Army Edgewood Chemical Biological Center (ECBC), the premier national resource for chemical and biological defense, has announced the retirement of Technical Director Richard “Rick” W. Decker II effective April 30.

“As with all good things in life, there is always a time to stand down and, for me, that time is now,” Decker told the Center’s workforce. “Twenty-four years ago, I began my career as a civil servant with the last two plus years as ECBC’s technical director. Words cannot express what a privilege it is to have served in this capacity and witness the great work that is done on a daily basis. As the Center’s leader, I am truly humbled.”

Appointed to his current post in March 2008, Decker has been responsible for more than 1,800 Department of the Army civilians, soldiers and on-site contractors located at Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG), Md.; Pine Bluff Arsenal, Ark.; and Rock Island, Ill. Those employees conduct research, engineering and field operations in support of the Department of Defense and other government agencies, by providing innovative science, technology and engineering solutions for chemical and biological defense.

As technical director, Decker also represented ECBC as a member of the U.S. Army Tank-automotive and Armaments Command Life Cycle Management Command Board of Directors, the Research Development Engineering Command (RDECOM) Board of Directors and the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defense Information Analysis Center Steering Committee.

“As I reflect on my time at ECBC-RDECOM, and in particular my time as technical director, I see an organization that is a national resource supporting all four military services, U.S. government and our international partners,” he said. “I see an organization that believes in its community and shows its commitment to it in so many positive ways.

“I see an organization that stands ready to accept the opportunities and challenges associated with our command, our Army, BRAC 2005 and future threats to our nation,” he added.

A member of the Senior Executive Service that serve in key positions just below top Presidential appointees and are the major link between the appointees and the federal work force, Decker will depart government service after serving in a variety of roles. He

previously held the position of director of engineering at ECBC. In this role, he was responsible for leading an 800-person organization in supporting “cradle-to-grave” execution of acquisition programs in the commodity areas of chemical biological (CB) detection, protection, decontamination and smoke and obscurants, primarily in support of the Joint Program Executive Office for Chemical Biological Defense.

Between June 2002 and February 2005, Decker served as the deputy joint program executive officer for chemical biological defense at Fort Belvoir, Va. From September 2001 through June 2002, he served as the deputy director for engineering at ECBC. Earlier in his career, Decker served as systems manager for many type-classified items including the Joint Service General Purpose Mask, the M40/M42 Army protective mask. During this time, he was the recipient of numerous awards for his performance such as the Vice President Gore Hammer Award from the National Partnership for Re-inventing Government, Army Materiel Command Integrated Product Team of the year, Commander’s Award for Civilian Service and the David Packard Acquisition Award.

Decker holds a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from University of Maryland and a bachelor’s degree in chemistry from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Upon his retirement, Decker, who resides in Kingsville, Md., plans to spend more time with his wife, Dr. Su Willard, and children Dr. Brooke Decker and Jon Decker.

“My decision to retire is based on the need to strike a new balance and, frankly, the simple desire to spend more time with my family and personal interests such as my work with the state of Maryland’s Gunpowder State Park,” Decker said. “I am so very proud to have been a part of ECBC-RDECOM and to have had the pleasure to work in such a tremendous organization.”

Decker’s retirement and contributions to both ECBC and the CB defense community will be recognized during a formal ceremony Friday, April 23 at 10 a.m. The event, which will be held in the Conference Center, Building E-4810 of the Edgewood Area, APG, is open to members of the media.

Members of the media interested in covering this event may contact ECBC Communications Officer Don Kennedy at 410-436-7118 or Communications Specialist Tracy Newman at 410-436-5386.

For more information about ECBC, visit <http://www.ecbc.army.mil/>.

*ECBC is the Army’s principal research and development center for chemical and biological defense technology, engineering and field operations. ECBC has achieved major technological advances for the warfighter and for our national defense, with a long and distinguished history of providing the Armed Forces with quality systems and outstanding customer service. ECBC is a U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command laboratory located at the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. For more information about the Edgewood Chemical Biological Center, please visit our Web site at <http://www.ecbc.army.mil/> or call (410) 436-7718.*