

Army Future Force Moves Toward Jointness

Meg Williams

Four Army leaders discussed the “Army Future Force” at the 2003 Association of the United States Army (AUSA) Annual Meeting held in Washington, DC, Oct. 6-8. They were taking U.S. Army Chief of Staff GEN Peter J. Schoomaker’s message and moving it forward, according to LTG (Ret.) Theodore G. Stroup Jr., AUSA Vice President, Education, who introduced panel members. Schoomaker spoke at the conference’s Dwight David Eisenhower Luncheon, pressing the Army to move ahead with its transformation efforts and outlining 15 priorities, including “jointness” as a top Army priority.

All of the “Army Future Force” panel members addressed jointness in their remarks. “Since the vision of transformation was unveiled at this conference in 1999, the guidance has been very clear,” said GEN Kevin P. Byrnes, Commanding General (CG), U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. “We need to capture technologies as they emerge and put them in the hands of our Soldiers now. Our Future Force must contribute to the Joint Forces Command and we must broaden our mix of capabilities to support the Joint Forces Command.”

Byrnes noted five steps that will help lead to the Army Future Force.

- The Army must adopt a culture of innovation.
- Rigorous experimentation is needed to network the battle command.
- Modular formation units of action will be the centerpiece of the Future Force.
- Networked systems must support soldiers.
- Training and leader development is paramount to building the Future Force.

“Our future contract to our soldiers is to get them the tools they need,” Byrnes continued. “The Rapid Fielding Initiative (RFI) has made sure that every soldier deployed has the same kit whether they’re Guard, Reserve or Active Component Soldiers. Program Executive Officer Soldier BG James R. Moran and BG(P) Benjamin Freakley, [CG, U.S. Army Infantry Center] Fort Benning, GA, have done very well in leading the soldier-as-a-system concept forward. We are changing how we pull forward technologies to use in the Current Force.”

Another way the Army brings new technology to soldiers is through the Rapid Equipping Force (REF), which is run by REF Director COL Bruce Jette. “The Army has a good process to have resources applied immediately,” said GEN Paul J. Kern, Commanding General, U.S. Army Materiel Command (AMC). “We will continue to use the REF to solve problems today.”

AMC is pushing forward concepts and technologies such as V-SAT (small aperture commercial C and

Ku-band satellite terminals). V-SAT was not set up until 45 days after the Army arrived in Baghdad. Prior to its arrival logisticians could not communicate with each other. “We must ensure that the network exists, that it is less vulnerable and has a land-based component able to keep up with the force,” Kern emphasized. “There were no requisitions for communications capability for logisticians and all ground lifts were used for food, water, fuel and munitions. Also, no C-130 cargo aircraft were available to us. These are the things we’ve got to fix today — we cannot wait until 2010.”

Moving from a supply-based process to a joint distribution-based process is another concept AMC is pushing. “We are facing a full-spectrum of threat and we need to have the agility to fight with a full spectrum of forces,” Kern remarked. “We must operate jointly to provide communication with our folks and to reduce the number of soldiers in convoys. We need to have an agile central distribution center instead of a linear distribution center.”

As the Army transforms, spiral development will bring in technologies from both inside and outside the Army. LTG Benjamin S. Griffin, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-8, works with the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System, a joint board that looks at common systems among services. To reinforce this cooperation, the “8s” of each Service have been meeting every 2 weeks to lay the groundwork for the Joint Requirements Oversight Council. “Our goal is to cut bureaucracy and get systems approved and fielded quicker,” he said.

One such good news story is the Army’s Stryker Brigade Combat Team. “It took 4 years from concept to IOC (initial operational capability) for the Stryker Brigade,” said Griffin. “And we are upgrading the Strykers with Force XXI

Battle Command Brigade and Below and Blue Force Tracking to improve situational awareness, satellite communications and slat armor for rocket-propelled grenade protection.”

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Another element critical to the Future Force is command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR). “We must fully integrate space and terrestrial communications,” Griffin implored. “The C4ISR technical initia-

tives include Blue Force Tracking, combat identification systems and software blocking.”

LTG John M. Riggs, Director, Objective Force Task Force, explained that DOTML-PF (doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel and facilities) development and fielding is being accelerated and that this is being

driven top-down to the Services. “We’re not just preparing for war,” Riggs said. “We are at war and we must bring technology to the warfront sooner.”

Riggs suggested that, to bring technology to the warfront, the Army must operate in Joint Interagency Multinational teams using common architecture, network, equipment and processes. Title X (the U.S. code that lists the responsibilities to raise an Army) functions will also need to be modified — the civilian workforce will need to assume non-core and nonmilitary-essential missions.

MEG WILLIAMS is a Senior Editor/Writer and provides contract support to the Acquisition Support Center through BRTRC’s Technology Marketing Group. She has a B.A. from the University of Michigan and an M.S. in marketing communications from Johns Hopkins University.

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innovative technologies produced by small entrepreneurial companies that, in the past, hesitated to do business with a government agency. This will widen the Army reach into other innovative and rapidly evolving commercial world segments. The expectation is that this could open up unforeseen technological opportunities to support the needs of future soldiers.

DR. JOHN A. PARMENTOLA is the Director for Research and Laboratory Management for the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Research and Technology, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (ASAALT). He has a B.S. in physics from the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn and a Ph.D. in physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

DR. ROBERT S. ROHDE is the Deputy Director for Laboratory Management for the Director for Research and

Technology, ASAALT. He has a B.S. in physics from Loyola University in Chicago and an M.S. and Ph.D. in physics from the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago.