

## 2005 Marks First-Ever Joint AAC/AMC Conference

Meg Williams

**A** rmy Acquisition Executive Claude M. Bolton Jr. welcomes attendees to the 2005 Acquisition Senior Leaders and Army Materiel Command (AMC) Commanders Conference (SLCC). This year's conference theme was "Together, Spiraling Tomorrow's Technology to Soldiers Today."

(U.S. Army photo by Karen Sas.)

More than 430 senior Army leaders and civilians attended the 2005 SLCC held in Detroit, MI, Aug. 23-25. This was the first joint conference held by the U.S. Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) and AMC. Army Acquisition Executive/Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology Claude M. Bolton Jr. and AMC Commander GEN Benjamin S. Griffin co-hosted 3 busy days of seminars and workshops. Highlights from the conference were remarks by Secretary of the Army (SECARMY) Dr. Francis J. Harvey and a tour of the Ford River Rouge plant.

## SECARMY

Dr. Harvey began by telling the audience he thought it was a great idea that AMC and the AAC came together at this annual meeting. "As you fully integrate acquisition and sustainment you should focus on unburdening the Soldier," Harvey remarked. "Solve problems in development, not in the field."

His speech also covered Army transformation, modular forces and reducing stress on the force. "Active and Reserve Component rebalancing of the modular force will reduce stress on the force by enacting predictable rotation cycles and longer dwell times at home," explained Harvey. The SECARMY also urged those present to reduce Army business costs by applying Lean/Six Sigma practices to improve processes and output quality. "The net result of these improvements is for the warfighter," Harvey said. "Free up resources for the warfighter."

## From the Front Lines

Freeing up resources for warfighters was a sentiment echoed by Army Aviation Task Force Director BG Stephen P. Mundt in his "From the Front Lines" presentation. "How many

GEN Benjamin S. Griffin, AMC Commanding General and co-host for the 2005 SLCC, addresses the audience during his Life Cycle Management Command (LCMC) presentation. He emphasized that the LCMCs are Soldier-focused, which will lead to more reliable systems delivered at reduced cost where and when Soldiers need them most. (U.S. Army photo by Karen Sas.)

program managers (PMs) in here have products that they don't need?" asked Mundt. "Let's see a show of hands. Nobody, right? Folks, we need your help because there's not enough money anymore. If you can't deliver on time, you need to ask yourself if the product is really still needed. That money needs to go somewhere else."

"Our contracting guys know — we're broke and it shows," he continued. "I don't know how we can build swimming pools in Iraq and yet we can't put safe electrical power in buildings. I feel directly responsible. I lost a Soldier in Iraq who was taking a shower, touched a pole and died. I now know more about electricity and circuit breakers than I ever knew. Our contracting officers need to ensure that we get enough money and the money goes to the right place and does the right thing."

## Consider the Second-Order Effects

Mundt asked the acquisition officers to think about ramifications of new equipment, clothing and weapons in terms of the captains and first sergeants on the other end. Mundt listed the successes he's seen in the field: the outer tactical vest and small arms protective insert (SAPI) plates, neck protectors, groin protectors, deltoid and axillary protectors, up-armored Humvees and advanced combat helmets. "My hat's off to all of you here because we see your efforts working on

weekends and nights to get us the right stuff," Mundt said.

Mundt brought nine warfighters to the conference to talk about their experiences with equipment and systems developed by acquisition professionals. These Soldiers talked about the negative and positive aspects of their weapons and systems. "As we talk about more examples, some of you are saying to yourselves, 'I know about that. I'm working on a fix for that,'" Mundt pointed out. "That's not the gist of what we're here to discuss. You're fixing things very, very fast. What we hope is to come to an understanding that as you fix things, you consider the second-, third- and fourth-order effects of the solutions you provide. The more you do in that vein, the fewer problems for the young captains and their first sergeants."

## Add-on Armor (AoA)

"Our Army had less than 500 up-armored Humvees when we went to war," Mundt recalled. "Now, there are nearly 40,000. In less than 3 years, that's a pretty amazing feat." He went on to explain that bolt-on armor protected Soldiers very well, but the additional armor blocked air from getting to the vehicle's engine and alternator causing them to choke. Plus, the drivers and passengers were subjected to extreme heat. Many people then worked to provide solutions to the air conditioning problem.

The up-armored Humvee's door locks and seatbelts are giving Soldiers problems. It's very hard to get into the vehicle from the outside. Also, Soldiers are wearing so much protective gear that it's very difficult to latch the seatbelt, and it's even harder to unlatch it. Mundt said that Soldiers in Humvees who have gone into the dikes of Iraq often drown because they cannot unbuckle their seatbelts and rescuers cannot unfasten the Humvee doors to get to Soldiers trapped inside. "Even if we have to go back and redesign the interior frame of that seat, it is worth it," Mundt explained. "We are going to lose Soldiers who cannot get out if we don't redesign it."

MAJ Vince Stephan, Assistant PM for Heavy Tactical Vehicle Modernization, was Site Manager for AoA installation at Logistics Support Area Anaconda in Iraq. Stephan managed five contracts with five different companies and more than 200 civilian contractors and 50 U.S. Air Force mechanics who were installing AoA kits. These circumstances called for clearly stated objectives and required everyone to pull together and work as one team. "More than 50 percent of our contractors were ex-military so they understood what it was like to be in that type of environment," said Stephan.

The sand and dust were harsh on hand tools and air compressors. Those environmental factors, along with 24/7 usage, contributed to a short life



**BG Stephen P. Mundt, Army Aviation Task Force Director, introduced nine Soldiers who talked about the equipment they used during his "From the Front Lines" presentation at the 2005 SLCC. (U.S. Army photo by Karen Sas.)**

expectancy of many tools. Working with the vehicles themselves sometimes presented problems. AoA is designed to be put on trucks without any welding as bolt-on equipment, but some vehicles are beat up and twisted from damage sustained during accidents or improvised explosive device attacks. Stephan praised the welders who worked tirelessly to cut and weld the armor applied to the damaged vehicles. He also advocated bringing in field service representatives from the truck and armor manufacturers whose expertise sped the process. "Our contractors on the battlefield took it personally and we all benefited from that," Stephan said.

### Advanced Combat Helmet (ACH)

Everyone Mundt has spoken to who has the new ACH likes it, he said. He went on to say that the press has said that the ACH is not all it's cracked up to be. There were some tests that pointed out that injuries would be sustained if Soldiers did not put the helmet on correctly. "People who are

responsible for training and sustaining that piece of equipment need to teach Soldiers how to wear the helmet," Mundt advised. "At the end of the day, what saves lives is to enforce the standards of wearing and using the gear correctly."

### Rapid Aerostat Initial Deployment (RAID)

SGT Chad Baughman described the RAID system he worked with from March 2004 to March 2005 at Camp Victory, Iraq. This system consists of a tethered balloon equipped with a thermal high-speed camera. The camera follows patrols beyond Camp Victory boundaries and conducts searches to compare stretches of land and see if there are any changes from one night to the next. Its photos of crowds around an explosion near a convoy were used to identify individuals involved in the incident. "It's like a superhero," Baughman said, describing the balloon. "Ten feet tall and bulletproof. It's a resilient piece of equipment."

### Better Connectivity Needed

MAJ Kevin Fittz, Unmanned Aerial Vehicle System (UAVS) Action Officer and Deputy Director of Plans and Operations, Aviation Directorate, said Soldiers are taking UAVSs and doing more with them than intended by design. UAVSs were not designed or manned to support ground operations 24/7, but that operations tempo is the



**SGT Chad Baughman worked with the RAID system in Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Karen Sas.)**

A RAID system is received at Bagram Air Field, Iraq, by its military/contractor support team following a reconnaissance mission of the surrounding countryside. (Photo courtesy of Raytheon.)



1LT Chris Dunn completed more than 1,300 patrols in Iraq during his 14 months as a platoon leader. He attributed his survivability to the equipment the acquisition community provided him and his Soldiers. He related an experience where his Humvee windshield took two rounds and his gunner was able to return withering machine gun fire despite his gun shield deflecting numerous bullets. Here, U.S. Army Soldiers from Headquarters Co., 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment, secure a bridge in Iraq, Aug. 12, 2005, from their up-armored Humvees. (U.S. Air Force photo by SSGT Suzanne M. Day, 1st Combat Camera Squadron.)



1LT Chris Dunn was a platoon leader in Iraq who conducted more than 1,300 patrols in a 14-month period. (U.S. Army photo by Karen Sas.)



reality of war. He gave nighttime and daytime examples where Soldiers used UAVs to locate the enemy. The Soldiers who man UAVS equipment need better connectivity to Soldiers who are using the information from the UAVs, Fittz pointed out. And the Army is actively responding to this need with a way to get in and out of the network — a Radio Video Transceiver that leverages the network. “We need to do a better job of writing requirements,” he added. “Those of us in the Army need to get involved with the Air Force (Joint Provider) Capabilities Development Documentation.

There were many leaders who spoke with the gravitas of rank and age at the SLCC. And there was one speaker who offered only the raw experience of the front line itself. Sometimes it’s this kind of story that leaves a more lasting impression. 1LT Chris Dunn spoke about one battle that stood out during the 14 months he spent as a platoon leader in Iraq, where he went on more than 1,300 patrols in Baghdad, Fallujah and An Najaf. Dunn fought in An

Najaf in August 2004 when Moqtada al-Sadr’s militia was fighting from the Imam Ali Mosque near a cemetery. He was traveling in a Humvee when it was hit in the windshield on the driver’s side by two rounds. “They tell us that a windshield will hold three rounds, but we didn’t stick around to find out.” Dunn said. “The windshield saved the driver’s life that day. My gunner was taking bullets across his gun shield left and right and his life was saved countless times.”

Dunn and his men were on their way to rescue a tank that was immobilized. The tank was commanded by a buddy of Dunn’s and was firing rounds next to a building when an insurgent dropped from the building onto the top of the tank. “If you’ve ever been in a tank during a fight, it’s really loud,” Dunn explained. “You can’t hear anything. They didn’t even know he was there.” The tank was engaging targets in the city, and SPC Mark Anthony Zapata popped the hatch to look outside. The insurgent shot him from behind and then reached into the

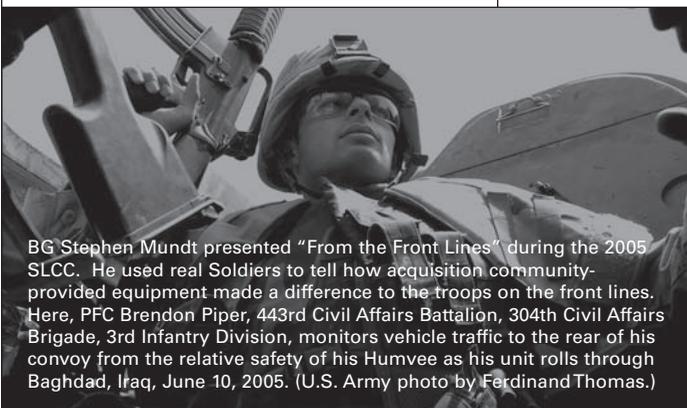
hatch and shot Dunn’s buddy, 2LT James Michael Goins, in the side between the SAPI plates. Both died. Dunn went on to tell those assembled that there’s a definite need for better optics in the Humvee and

tank, more and better crowd control equipment and a better system to protect gunners.

When asked after the presentation if he got to see the first Iraqi election, Dunn blushed and admitted he had slept through that day. “We patrolled heavy for 2 days prior and on election day, we finally got to rest,” Dunn explained. “Other guys told me stories about the long lines. One family brought their 80-year-old mother. They pushed her in a shopping cart for 10 miles to bring her to cast a vote.” And with that image, you realize that in Dunn’s short military career he has seen comrades at the beginning of their lives die for the chance for an old woman to finally choose how her last years are governed. It is too soon to know how the crucible of Iraq will render the Army’s future leaders, but we should seek them out, listen to their experiences and give them the tools they need to continue their work.

To see photos taken at the 2005 event, go to [http://asc.army.mil/events/slc\\_2005\\_pics.cfm](http://asc.army.mil/events/slc_2005_pics.cfm).

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BG Stephen Mundt presented “From the Front Lines” during the 2005 SLCC. He used real Soldiers to tell how acquisition community-provided equipment made a difference to the troops on the front lines. Here, PFC Brendon Piper, 443rd Civil Affairs Battalion, 304th Civil Affairs Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, monitors vehicle traffic to the rear of his convoy from the relative safety of his Humvee as his unit rolls through Baghdad, Iraq, June 10, 2005. (U.S. Army photo by Ferdinand Thomas.)