

Army Field Support Brigades (AFSBs) and the U.S. Army Research, Development, and Engineering Command (RDECOM)—Strengthening the Materiel Enterprise

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The Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology-Directorate (AL&T-D) has the unique mission to integrate and synchronize acquisition and technology support with accountability and sustainment in the 402nd AFSB's area of responsibility (AOR) (Iraq, Kuwait, and Qatar) in support of the Materiel Enterprise. Now that the theater is downsizing, the AL&T-D mission has expanded to synchronize technology insertion accountability during retrograde operations to prevent equipment loss or destruction. To accomplish this mission, AL&T-D has built strong partnerships with in-theater program managers (PMs), RDECOM Senior Command Representatives (SCRs), and the other Life Cycle Management Command (LCMC) representatives within the brigade. These partnerships strengthen the Materiel Enterprise and provide synergy among the LCMCs, RDECOM, and the 402nd AFSB.

The AL&T-D mission has expanded to synchronize technology insertion accountability during retrograde operations to prevent equipment loss or destruction. Here, SFC Robert G. Greeley, (right), 2nd Battalion (Bn), 401st AFSB, explains retrograde processes to SMA Kenneth Preston at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. (U.S. Army photo by Luis A. Deya, 401st AFSB.)



Within the 402nd AFSB, AL&T-D personnel work closely with the RDECOM SCR. The RDECOM SCR, who works in the brigade headquarters, is responsible for coordinating with all RDECOM agencies, laboratories, and centers, as well as collecting data on vehicles within theater for the parent agency, the U.S. Army Materiel Systems Analysis Activity. The 402nd AFSB Science Advisor complements the RDECOM SCR by leveraging his/her expertise through direct coordination with supported units on various technological challenges throughout theater. They work together to gather Soldiers' requirements and resolve many unforeseen issues with new technologies supporting the warfighter.

Collaboration Example

One example of RDECOM-AFSB collaboration was the assistance of an Engineer Co. (Stryker), Fort Lewis, WA, to develop a lighting kit that provided better visibility during nighttime route-clearance missions. Once this capability gap was identified, the RDECOM SCR and 402nd AFSB Science Advisor worked quickly to meet these Soldiers' requirement. In conjunction with developing a design, they also submitted a request for information (RFI) to both RDECOM HQ and PM

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Stryker to assist with an Army-funded lighting system. Using the 402nd welding shop, the two men provided the welding team with diagrams and templates to build the new Stryker lighting bracket set. These light brackets were designed to support an existing lighting system used by the Engineer Co. The engineers are using these brackets on a limited basis until PM Stryker develops a lighting kit that addresses the unit's requirements.

Subsequently, during a video teleconference (VTC) with RDECOM HQ, 402nd AFSB's Science Advisor informed the group that the lighting brackets had been created and distributed to the Engineer Co. in *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. Since the 402nd AFSB had previously developed the light bracket prototypes for Stryker vehicles with and without slat armor, Task Force Paladin Liaison Officer-*Operation Enduring Freedom* (OEF), who was also

on the VTC, requested 402nd AFSB's assistance for developing a better Stryker lighting system for units in *OEF*. The following day, the RDECOM SCR e-mailed the engineering drawings and shipped prototype brackets directly to the 401st AFSB (*OEF*) for fabrication and distribution to Task Force Paladin. RDECOM is prepared to produce more light brackets to support the demand from both theaters.

Further Partnerships

This AFSB and RDECOM partnership is further enhanced through the support provided to RDECOM's Science and Technology (S&T) Assistance Team (STAT). The 402nd AFSB has an agreement with RDECOM to support the STAT with life support (housing, use of vehicles, accountability, computers, phones, etc.) and office space. Not only does the brigade administratively support the STAT, the AFSB also supports the team with its mission to assist the warfighter in articulating its requirements to HQDA, RDECOM's labs/centers, and the Assistant Secretary of the Army for AL&T (ASAALT) community.

The brigade assists the team's operations through the brigade's Science Advisor. Together, with the S&T Acquisition Corps Advisor (STACA), they canvas the entire Iraqi theater addressing Soldiers' RFIs, challenges, and improvements from the company, brigade, and division level. This group of highly trained individuals also fields questions and accepts challenges from other services, delivering solutions to the warfighter faster and across all phases of an operation.



SGT Doron Q. Ransom (left) and PFC Barrett L. Listenbee, inspectors with 249th Quartermaster Co., 2nd Bn, 402nd AFSB, inspect and wrap equipment at the Joint Base Balad, Iraq, Redistribution Property Assistance Team yard. (U.S. Army photo by Summer Barkley, 402nd AFSB.)



BLSTs provide the AFSB Science Advisor the reach capability to gather requirements from all combat units on the battlefield through sustainment and maintenance channels. Here, CW4 Darren L. Cook (left), BLST Chief for the 172nd Infantry Brigade (Bde), works with SFC Earl B. Jones, 9th Engineer Bn, 172nd Infantry Bde S4 Noncommissioned Officer-in-Charge, and SGT Julie R. Buchun, 9th Engineer Bn S4 Clerk, to ensure the 172nd's equipment is ready for reset in preparation for future deployment. (U.S. Army photo by Summer Barkley, 402nd AFSB.)

How does a science coterie cover an entire theater to address technology issues? The answer is not as complicated as one may think. The AFSB Science Advisor, STACA, Corps Science Advisor, and STAT cover specific areas on the battlefield, and each has specific responsibilities. On special occasions, each officer has the ability to cover one another's AOR when necessary.

The AFSB Science Advisor has the responsibility to gather requirements through Logistic Support Elements and the Brigade Logistic Support Teams (BLSTs). These logistic elements provide the Science Advisor the reach capability to gather requirements from all combat units on the battlefield through sustainment and maintenance channels. The STAT is embedded in the division HQ, which gives it direct access to divisional units. Its reach goes further than just division; on the STAT, there is a medical advisor who is able to gather requirements from all medical facilities in theater. Lastly, the Corps Science Advisor and STACA work closely together to field requirements and direct those requirements through corps leadership for approval with command emphasis. Although they both reside in corps HQs, they have differing roles.

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Since the Corps Science Advisor (typically residing in the C-3/J-3 Force Management Directorate) can interface directly with the corps commander and corps staff sections, he/she has the "horsepower" to influence the efforts of external supporting agencies, such as the Rapid Equipping Force, U.S. Army Test and Evaluation Command, and S&T agencies (RDECOM HQ and research and development centers). The Corps Science Advisor is also the focal point for all divisional requirements, as the STAT has access to only one division. With all these moving pieces, there needs to be an element to unify the efforts.

The STACA is the unifying agent that provides synergy to all S&T efforts in theater. Since he/she is on the corps staff, the STACA organizes requirements from the STAT, Corps Science Advisor, and the AFSB Science Advisor. This allows for synchronization of effort and reduces redundancy in submitting

Operational Needs Statements, formal RFIs, and other requirements documents.

The coordination, level of commitment to Soldiers, and consistent dialogue between key RDECOM agencies and organizations, STAT, STACA, Science Advisors, PMs, AFSBs, and ASAALT demonstrate how the Materiel Enterprise is leveraged to support the warfighter in the field. From the AFSBs to RDECOM to PMs, these entities have forged an alliance that converts Soldiers' requirements into materiel solutions, thus increasing their survivability, lethality, and mobility on the battlefield.

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