

# Army Plans Combined Limited User Tests for Network

Kris Osborn

**T**he Army is preparing an Integrated Network Baseline Evaluation (INBE) exercise for this summer at White Sands Missile Range, NM, to simultaneously conduct several Limited User Tests (LUTs) for key Programs of Record and to assess the capability of a host of technologies to work in tandem in a larger integrated cohesive network, service officials said.

A convoy of future on-the-move platforms, including three Point of Presence vehicles (front), takes part in the Warfighter Information Network-Tactical (WIN-T) Increment 2 Engineering Field Test at Fort Huachuca, AZ, in December 2008. (U.S. Army photo by Richard Mattox, Program Executive Office Command, Control, and Communications-Tactical (PEO C3T).)



“This is a monumental undertaking, and it requires a new level of integration and synchronization,” said COL John Wendel, Project Manager Infantry Brigade Combat Team, part of Program Executive Office (PEO) Integration. “The purpose is to seek efficiencies and synergies. The idea of combining events forces integration, so what we will do is synchronize the technologies into a singular network brigade formation.”

The first four weeks of the exercise, slated for this June with the 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division at Fort Bliss, TX, adjacent to White Sands, will include the concurrent LUTs.

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### An Integrated Network

The last two weeks of the INBE will include an exercise aimed at synchronizing the systems into an integrated combat network. The idea is to facilitate a series of annual evaluations that will serve to expedite the developmental process and better inform the Army’s tactical network acquisition decisions.

“By beginning to conduct exercises that look at an integrated network, the Army intends to lessen the in-field integration burden on our operational units by providing relevant operational environments in which to evaluate new technologies and capabilities that make up capability packages and sets, prior to fielding the new systems to operational units. This will ensure that the important integration work is done upfront,” said Paul Mehney, PEO Integration spokesman.

Having the Army incrementally develop network technologies best suited to serve Soldiers in combat is designed to combine Army Programs of Record with commercial-off-the-shelf solutions

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from industry. The desired result is an affordable, technologically mature tactical network that can move combat-relevant information across the force in real time, using high-bandwidth waveforms such as Soldier Radio Waveform (SRW) and Wideband Networking Waveform (WNW), Wendel said.

“In the past, we have spent years building requirements and products. Now we will conduct these evaluations every year, testing technologies from industry and Programs of Record to gain some economies of scale and make smarter acquisition decisions on a more frequent basis. The important part is

transitioning these objective waveforms to Programs of Record,” Wendel added.

The systems undergoing LUTs are:

- Joint Tactical Radio System (JTRS) Ground Mobile Radio, a multi-channel, vehicle-mounted, software-programmable radio able to transmit voice, video, data, and images using high-bandwidth waveforms such as SRW and WNW.
- JTRS Hand-held Manpack Small Form Fit, a multi-channel, Soldier-mounted, software-programmable radio with the same transmission capabilities as the Ground Mobile Radio.

A Tactical Communications Node vehicle (right) and a generator were among the assets used in the WIN-T Increment 2 Limited User Test at Fort Stewart, GA, in March 2009. (U.S. Army photo by Jason Bock, PEO C3T.)





A Soldier uses Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below to plot the position of friendly forces. (U.S. Army photo courtesy of PEO C3T.)

- Joint Capabilities Release, next-generation software for Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below display screens featuring Army-Marine Corps interoperability and advanced mapping tool kits.
- Mounted Soldier System, a combat vehicle Soldier ensemble that integrates advanced gear such as a helmet-mounted display.
- Spider, a remote munitions delivery system.

In addition to laying the groundwork for subsequent integration into a broader network, the concurrent LUTs will help facilitate logistical and financial efficiencies, said LTC Darby McNulty, Integration Trail Boss, PEO Integration.

“We spend an enormous amount of resources to coordinate single program tests at multiple locations each year, so from a funding and resource management perspective, there’s certainly some efficiencies with combining these LUTs,” McNulty said. “There is an upfront investment required to get us to a baseline network, then you

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save money by combining testing and inserting technologies.”

The LUTs will place the Program of Record technologies into operationally relevant scenarios to collect data, answer questions, and validate requirements for the individual systems, McNulty explained.

“We will build the scenarios so that they are able to validate their requirements and then validate their performance,” he added.

The combined LUTs will be followed by the integration exercise during the INBE, McNulty and Wendel said. “If you integrate upfront and deliver technologies as part of a larger tested

and evaluated network, these network technologies will ultimately work better for the Soldier,” said McNulty. “The entire Army Network Modernization Strategy is predicated upon building a robust Brigade Combat Team [BCT] baseline configuration. The INBE is the first of four major steppingstones on the road to executing a fully integrated BCT Network Evaluation at the end of 2012.”

**KRIS OSBORN** is a Highly Qualified Expert for the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology Office of Strategic Communications. He holds a B.A. in English and political science from Kenyon College and an M.A. in comparative literature from Columbia University.