

LOGISTICS AND SUPPORT

In this section, General Ann Dunwoody, Commanding General, US Army Materiel Command, discusses the renewed focus on the whole life cycle from research and development through in-service support to disposal, asset visibility, ramping up and scaling down as necessary, and investing wisely in logistic facilities. Peter Tatham and David Worrell, of Cranfield University, assert that 'lean thinking' is possible in a volatile environment and back up their view with a case study.

Sustainment Moves to the Next Level: Rethinking Our Life-Cycle Focus

by *General Ann E. Dunwoody*

Ann Dunwoody is Commanding General, US Army Materiel Command. In this article, she describes the US Army's Materiel Enterprise and the renewed focus on the whole life cycle by integrating research and development, acquisition and logistics communities, and by relying on strong relationships, greater transparency and a secure stream of shared, readily accessible and accountable information.

While these are demanding times for our Army with more than 240,000 soldiers executing missions in nearly 80 countries around the world, our path to restore the Army's balance is clear. By embracing an *enterprise approach* and creating four core enterprises – readiness, human capital, services and infrastructure, and materiel – our Army will more closely align our generating forces with our operational forces and will yield a more predictable and sustainable generation of forces, lightening the load for our soldiers and their families and better aligning resources to the Army Force Generation time lines as units prepare for worldwide missions.

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Creating the Materiel Enterprise

Each of the four enterprises plays a key role in making this transformation a reality with each one following a distinct path. For those of us in the critical business of developing,

acquiring and sustaining materiel, our role is to expand collaboration and synchronisation between our research, development, acquisition and logistics communities to better manage and sufficiently resource Army equipment throughout its entire life cycle. Together, the Army Materiel Command (AMC) and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology – ASA(ALT) – formed the Army's *Materiel Enterprise*. Our guiding principles include operating from a common operating picture, timely and accurate access to information, collaborative decision-making, commitment to continuous improvement and process focus. A natural outcome of improved collaboration and communication has been a renewed focus on the life-cycle management model, improving execution of the entire process *from cradle to grave*.

Renewed Focus on the Entire Life Cycle

The Army's ability to quickly develop and provide new, state-of-the-art materiel solutions is unsurpassed in meeting soldiers' requirements and ensuring their safety. Thanks to our innovative and ongoing rapid acquisition and equipping initiatives, we are getting equipment into the hands of soldiers faster than ever. These systems, growing out of necessity during the early years of the Global War on Terrorism, provide high-quality equipment quickly, but when executed within insulated stovepipes are often very inefficient. By better integrating our research and development (R&D), acquisition and logistics communities we will more effectively and efficiently meet immediate needs in the field now and in the future, with efficient distribution and sustainment planned and resourced.

Historically, we have focused much of our time, talent and resources on the first half of the life cycle – the research, development, testing, acquiring, equipping and supplying of essential equipment. While incredibly important, that typically only represents 30% of the programme's budget. We must now renew our focus on the second half of the



General Ann E. Dunwoody, commanding general of the US Army Materiel Command, tours reset operations at AMC's 2nd Battalion, 405th Army Field Support Brigade, in Vilseck, Germany [US Army photo by Jennifer King]

life cycle – the maintenance, distribution, sustainment and disposal of equipment. Applying the same rigour and attention to the back end of the life-cycle process will ensure our systems are more sustainable, cost-effective and efficient throughout their entire life-cycle. This ultimately will ensure the best support to the warfighter.

Asset Visibility is Still a Key

We are facing a dynamic period of time as we reshape one war, increase resourcing to a second war, and strive to reset the remaining forces that are cycling through Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) in preparation for deployment. At the heart of our collaboration within the acquisition and logistics communities is the need to better see and understand what we have, who has it, where it's needed, and its condition. Asset visibility and accountability are critical and have always been daunting challenges for our Army. We still remember the thousands of containers during Desert Storm that lacked appropriate property accountability or were returned unopened because we didn't know what they contained. Fast forward to the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom and it appeared to be déjà vu.

We knew then, as we do today, that we must invest in enabling technologies that provide a 360-degree readiness

perspective on everything we do. Our interactive information systems must provide a common operating picture that provides real-time visibility of all assets with dynamic status updates – not just for individual units but across our force. And that data must feed a more collaborative, rapid decision-making process for appropriate disposition of our equipment. Getting the right equipment to the right place quickly will pay huge dividends in the effort to rebalance our Army, and can only be accomplished with a much greater understanding of our current materiel status, facilitating movement of equipment through reset processes worldwide.

Resetting the Force

The Army has aggressively reset and repaired more than 500,000 pieces of equipment in our industrial base over the last six years, a workload three times more than during Vietnam. In 2009 alone we will reset 180,000 pieces of equipment including more than 400 aircraft, 2700 tracked vehicles and 150,000 weapons. It's clear we must invest wisely in our depots, arsenals, ammunition plants and forward repair facilities to ensure that we can continue to meet future challenges, adequately sustain and improve our equipment, and rebalance our Army. Through the Materiel Enterprise we are developing the strategic investment plans



AMC has workers in Kuwait and Iraq – repairing, rebuilding and resetting Army equipment [US Army]

needed to optimise the resources in our facilities, equipment and workforce so that we always meet the Army's needs. This includes having adequate plans in place to maintain our current workload, to rapidly and efficiently ramp up in times of war, or to scale down when the demand slows.

Disposing of Equipment

Critical to the modernisation and overall resourcing of our Army is making timely, informed decisions on the end-of-life-cycle disposition. We must continue to modernise our force – even in periods of constrained budgets – by both sustaining the current fight and preparing for future conflicts across the spectrum of war. Whether it's leveraging foreign military sales, placing equipment in long-term storage, or modernising enabling systems on the existing platform, we must make those decisions within a more transparent process informed by the enterprise perspective. By better integrating our disparate communities so that we understand what is possible from a scientific and engineering perspective, the conditions

set by programmatic processes, and the capabilities of our sustainment systems, we will be more prepared than we have ever been to make those decisions and ultimately focus limited resources where they provide the greatest effects for our warfighting forces.

The Materiel Enterprise Moving Forward

As our collaborative materiel management systems evolve, we will continue to aggressively rebalance the materiel resourcing of our Army, renewing our focus on sustaining equipment through every phase of the life-cycle process. We will rely on strong relationships, greater transparency, and a secure stream of shared, readily accessible and accountable information through the Materiel Enterprise. We will optimise our nation's industrial base to best meet the needs of our soldiers. Our combined logistical and acquisition systems will be truly collaborative and structured to deliver the most innovative, effective, efficient and sustainable equipment for our warfighters. And with the Materiel Enterprise, we have the blueprint in hand to get us there. ■