US Army leaders used the 2011 AUSA Winter event to explain forthcoming service modernisation activities, **Scott R Gourley** reports.

I n the aftermath of the 3 February acquisition decision memorandum redirecting the US Army's modernisation pathway (see *Land Warfare International*, Jan-Feb 2011, p6), service leaders used this year's AUSA Winter Symposium and Exposition to outline upcoming modernisation activities surrounding the summer's integrated network baseline evaluation (INBE).

LWI discussed the evolving efforts with Maj Gen Keith Walker, Commanding General of the Brigade Modernization Command (BMC) and Maj Gen John Bartley, Program Executive Officer for Integration (PEO-I).

On 7 February, the Department of the Army re-designated the Army Capabilities Integration Center's Future Force Integration Directorate (FFID) as the BMC, tasked to 'conduct physical integration and evaluations of the network capability packages and other capabilities in order to provide doctrine, organisation, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel and facilities recommendations to the army'.

The 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division (2/1 AD) is at the centre of this effort as the Army Evaluation Task Force (AETF). A press release explained the reason for the FFID organisational change: 'As a command, BMC will have the appropriate authorities to man, train, equip and organise the 2/1 AD in order to conduct integrated army capability evaluations'.

'We still do the physical evaluations of capability solution candidates for the army,' observed Walker. 'But the priority is clearly to the network'.

Pointing to recent comments by Army Chief of Staff Gen George Casey likening the network to the 'Big Five' systems – M1 Abrams MBT, AH-64 Apache attack helicopter, M2/3 Bradley

The 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, is a composite brigade organised specifically for the Army Evaluation Task Force mission. *(Photos: US Army)*

ADJUSTING THE FOCUS

Fighting Vehicle, Multiple Launch Rocket System and Patriot air defence system – fielded in the 1970s and 1980s, Walker noted that the army had 'committed a tremendous amount of resources to our post-[Future Combat Systems] modernisation strategy in the Fort Bliss/White Sands area'.

COMPOSITE BRIGADE

'We have organised 2/1 AD as a "composite" organisation,' Walker explained. 'The reason for that is we know we have to be more flexible, adaptive and faster in our ability to evaluate stuff when it's ready. In order to do that we have to have a unit organised rather broadly'.

The resulting brigade includes: one combined arms battalion configured in a standard 'heavy' organisation with Abrams and Bradleys; one combined arms battalion organised as MRAP-equipped motorised infantry (Afghan-reflective with both MRAP All-Terrain Vehicle and MaxxPro Dash); a reconnaissance squadron containing one 'heavy' troop of Bradleys and MRAPs, one 'light' troop of MRAPs only and one Stryker-equipped troop; an artillery battalion with a 'light' battery equipped with M777 155mm towed →

Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen Peter Chiarelli told delegates at the 2011 AUSA Winter symposium that NCOs and other enlisted soldiers are now relied on to make 'game-changing decisions'.

howitzers and a 'heavy' battery of M109A6 Paladin 155mm self-propelled howitzers. Much of the Stryker troop is equipped with the Enhanced Position Location Reporting System to reflect continuing network objectives that the army wants the unit to explore.

'This unit gives us the opportunity to perform evaluations across the operational spectrum when we apply that this summer,' Walker continued. 'We have about 20 different systems that we will evaluate. Five of them are "formal" evaluations – limited user tests, mostly network pieces. Those will all be in the first month. Then in the last two weeks we are going to stretch the evaluation out.

'The formal limited user test will be over, but we want to work hard on network integration. So we will start to spread and take full advantage of the 183-mile distance from Fort Bliss to the northern end of White Sands.' 2/1 AD's new equipment training for the systems under evaluation will begin in April, with the actual evaluation processes starting in June.

FIVE OBJECTIVES

INBE is the name of the network-focused portion of the upcoming activities, and encompasses five broad objectives. The first is to evaluate the current modification table of organisation and equipment (MTOE) network that is used for heavy brigade combat teams.

'What do we mean by "evaluate"?' Walker offered. 'We mean a broad look at the implications for doctrine, organisation, training, materiel, leader development, personnel and facilities. That's the base – our MTOE. But we know right now if you send a unit to Afghanistan and Iraq

with just their MTOE, they cannot communicate. So we have been buying off-the-shelf equipment for our units, and when they get to theatre we provide it as theatre-provided equipment (TPE). So the second broad objective is to assess the TPE network. We want to take a good look at what pieces of TPE you need, where you need them and how many.'

The third evaluation objective for the coming months is to evaluate the developmental network. 'By developmental network I mean our future network in terms of [Joint Tactical Radio System] radios, the army's efforts in Connecting Soldiers to Digital Applications, and other new stuff,' he said.

'The fourth objective will form the cornerstone of the last two weeks of testing, and will involve integration of 'the whole piece'. 'The real success of this evaluation is not what we achieve this summer,' Walker added. 'It is setting us up for 2012 when all the pieces of the network will be coming together and the numbers will be there.'

The final objective is assessment of network vulnerabilities. According to Walker, the process will include a large role for Army Cyber Command.

AN IDEAL PACKAGE

Reflecting on his responsibilities as PEO-I, Bartley acknowledged that meeting soldier needs occasionally called for sending equipment 'downrange' with somewhat limited testing and putting it into soldiers' hands.

Highlighting the benefits of the upcoming evaluations he noted: 'Ideally, what you field to the soldier is a fully integrated package that all works together. The brigade commander doesn't

have to figure out how to do it. But you may reach a point where you see that it doesn't work together, but it is still of value by itself. And that's the power of having it there with the [2/1 AD] brigade. You basically get to assess it in the run-up to this summer's INBE capstone event to see if it will work together with other elements. If not, we will make a decision whether to pull it in and assess it as a standalone element. And it still may be value-added.

'Right now we have an ONS [operational need statement]. We think this is a solution, it goes forward, and the brigades have to figure it out. Here you have the opportunity to take it through a very deliberate process to assess it before we put it into the hands of a warfighter downrange,' he added.

'This is total package fielding and integration from a brigade perspective that has never been done before. So it is exciting from that perspective in terms of what we will put into the hands of the soldiers downrange, and ideally lift [integration issues] off their shoulders so they don't have to worry about it. They are still going to take it and tweak it as they go forward. But it will come to them in a much better configuration as it goes forward.'

HIGH STAKES

'The stakes are high for this,' Walker acknowledged. 'As [Army Vice Chief of Staff] Gen [Peter] Chiarelli said yesterday [in his speech at AUSA Winter], there has been a whole brigade taken out of the rotation. That brigade faces the whole challenge of standing up a new unit. Then quickly after standing them up we are going to give them another set of equipment right after they have become proficient on their baseline items. And we want them to go ahead and assess that new equipment.

'So there are challenging pieces. But, as Gen Walker said, we are setting the baseline for next year. The "crown jewel" will be next year when you have it all together. But we are laying the foundation here for the procedures and processes by which we assess what equipment we add.' **LWI**