



News Release

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Small team delivers big results on the battlefield

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JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – The Materiel Enterprise is a vast and complex operation, meant to harness the Army’s intellectual and industrial might, then deliver the best equipment to Soldiers when and where they need it.

A small team of acquisition, logistics and technology experts here is making good on the promise of the Materiel Enterprise to troops on the battlefield. The 402nd Army Field Support Brigade’s Acquisition, Logistics and Technology Directorate’s mission is to integrate and synchronize acquisition and technology support with accountability and sustainment in the brigade area of responsibility.

ALT-D is also responsible for synchronizing technology insertion accountability during retrograde operations to prevent equipment loss or destruction. In other words, ALT-D is a special staff section that monitors current and planned equipment fielding and rapid-equipping activities and advises the brigade commander on these activities.

The team has three essential tasks: assist synchronization of equipment fielding between program executive officers and program managers, warfighters, and AFSB sustainment and accountability requirements; integrate, collect, analyze, and provide feedback to the Warfighter; and, synchronize technology insertion and accountability during retrograde operations.

With only four people until recently, the ALT-D has successfully facilitated more than 85 fieldings consisting of more than 300,000 items.

Key to the process is being aware of what's coming and what support is needed to make the fielding successful.

When required, they also coordinate lodging and transportation for personnel who arrive with the new equipment. Most importantly, they facilitate accountability actions for the equipment; bringing the Materiel Enterprise full circle.

“We are the single face in theater for the warfighter to communicate requirements for sustainment and accountability for newly fielded items,” said Lt. Col. Steven Van Riper, ALT-D Director. “For the commander, we bring integration of new fielding with existing sustainment and accountability processes we have in place.”

The MRAP Egress Trainer or MET is a recently fielded solution to a need identified by the Army. ALT-D worked with Army Central Command and Program Executive Office for Simulation, Training and Instrumentation to field 14 METs and five HMMWV Egress Trainers. ALT-D provided logistical support and assistance to the field service representatives for movement of the systems to their designated locations. The 402nd also provides life support for the FSRs and conducts property accountability actions by placing these systems on the theater property book.

“The 402nd's greatest role is the contribution and use of our resources for all the things the program manager needs to field equipment to the warfighter,” said Maj. O'Neill Williams, ALT-D's science adviser. “We contribute to the development of a fielding plan.”

When the Army identifies a need, science advisors and science-and-technology assistance teams can take the needs and articulate them into an Operational Needs Statement or a Joint Urgent Operational Needs Statement.

“Once validated and approved as a need, RDECOM [Research, Development and Engineering Command] canvasses for a technology solution,” Williams said. “It used to take up to five years for a product to be produced, but now can be as little as 90 days.”

“We should have visibility [on new fieldings] about 120 days out,” said Maj. Camilla Wood, ALT-D assistant director. Wood said the team then begins working on what “we need to do to ensure everyone has visibility on what's coming.”

Joshua Sherrod, ALT-D support operations officer is responsible for making sure newly fielded items are on the property book while working with Multi-National Corps-Iraq to make sure the distribution of newly fielded items is correct.

“Once the initial fielding plan is done, I step in and work whatever problems come up,” Sherrod said. “I can coordinate with the right people to utilize 402nd assets.”

“ALT-D marries the Materiel Enterprise piece with the acquisition and technology pieces,” said Daniel Hernandez, ALT-D deputy. “We really are a force-multiplier.”

The ALT-D team demonstrated its flexibility and responsiveness Sept. 19 when they “took a tour of a Stryker” parked at one of the dining facilities at Joint Base Balad. Williams noticed that the Soldiers had made a modification in the form of side-mounted illumination. The Soldiers returning to their vehicle talked to the ALT-D team and explained the whys and hows of the modification. That brief meeting resulted in a request for information being submitted to RDECOM within 48 hours.

“At the end of the day, you know you’re making a difference,” said Williams. “I talk to the Soldiers about their specific needs, their vehicles – what’s good, what needs to be better and I push that up to make their lives better and safer.”

“The mission we do on a daily basis impacts Soldiers on the ground and they can see the results,” said Wood. “People are impacted by the decisions we make – it’s about the warfighter and what they need and making sure they are protected.”

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