(Graphic provided by PEO EIS)

INNOVATING THE FUTURE

| The evolution and impact of MilTech.

by Melissa S. Westcott and Jacqueline M. Hames

In the dynamic realm of defense operations, DOD continually seeks to enhance its technological prowess and operational efficiency. At the forefront of this endeavor is Military Technical Solutions (MilTech), a program that provides collaboration and information-sharing information technology (IT) products and services. MilTech—part of U.S. Army Program Executive Office for Enterprise Information Systems' (PEO EIS) Enterprise Services portfolio—is multifaceted, aiming to support the Army acquisition community with integrated, collaborative solutions. MilTech's offerings help increase the efficiency and operational performance of the Army Acquisition Workforce through a collaborative consortium that provides an intricate web of services.

BRIDGING ORGANIZATIONAL AND ENTERPRISE IT DIVIDE

MilTech is a mission-funded and cost-reimbursable non-acquisition category program that provides solutions connecting the acquisition community and closing the gap between organizational and enterprise IT. MilTech assesses shortfalls in what the Army enterprise currently provides, and what the acquisition community needs, anticipating and responding to shifts in requirements and shaping the MilTech portfolio of offerings accordingly. Foremost among MilTech's activities is aiding the acquisition community in using Army enterprise offerings such as Army 365 (A365) more efficiently.

MilTech offers key capabilities and support essential to fostering collaboration and enhancing information sharing. MilTech's Team C4ISR [Command, Control, Communications, Computers Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance] Acquisition Network (TCAN) delivers customer-centric services that cater to specific needs, including application development, cloud migration and hosting within the Cloud Army (cARMY) environment. MilTech's portfolio of solutions includes business intelligence, information and document management, personnel accountability, program and project management, and workplace collaboration offerings. MilTech employs the MilTech Solutions Consortium model as its delivery mechanism for this set of core capabilities and solutions that adapt to meet customer demand.

THE COALITION OF THE WILLING

Since its inception in 1998, the MilTech Consortium, dubbed the "coalition of the willing," has been a catalyst for collective innovation and fiscal efficiency within the Army acquisition community. The consortium provides a framework for member organizations to co-invest in solutions, share expertise and pool resources. It has enabled informed decision-making and application sharing, which not only fosters a united front within the Army, but also leads to substantial cost avoidance.

In a landscape where technological nimbleness and fiscal judiciousness are priorities, MilTech has positioned itself as a leader in delivering efficient and effective IT support services. This model both alleviates financial pressures on individual entities and cultivates opportunities for technological growth and innovation.

"MilTech is a value add for my organization," said Chris Harris, chief information officer (CIO) for PEO Combat Support and Combat Service Support (CS&CSS). "As the CIO for PEO CS&CSS, I find their support system to be an integral part of my overall IT program. Their subject matter expertise and

SECURE SUITE

MilTech developed and delivers the milSuite platform, which reaches over 2.3 million users across DOD, facilitating communication and collaboration across organizations. Featured in the Fall 2023 edition of Army AL&T, the article "Enabling Network Convergence" highlights this social business tool. MilSuite is made up of a suite of secure, online tools and applications specifically designed to enhance collaboraton and information sharing. Its mission is to bridge the gap among users from all DOD branches, to foster learning, education and training, and to serve as a conduit for innovative ideas and concepts that drive positive change.

LOCATION INFORMATION

One primary example of how MilTech is responding to the Army's changing needs is the Manpower Information Retrieval and Reporting System (MIRARS). MilTech developed MIRARS in response to a critical situation that took place on an Army installation, which highlighted a lack of tools available to account for personnel quickly and accurately. MIRARS stands out as a mobile-ready personnel accountability tool that grants organizations comprehensive oversight of their workforce's current locations and enables instant communication through a notification feature.

Data is ubiquitous but challenging to wrangle.

consortium member meetings help keep me informed of cutting-edge technologies, and the CIO In the Know [consortium member] forums give me the strategic edge I need to lead change across the formations in my organization."

ARMY 365 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

MilTech is undergoing a strategic transformation, shifting from traditional on-premises services to embracing the cloud through A365 SharePoint Online software-as-a-service (SaaS) offerings. This evolution will allow MilTech to offer the consortium a suite of A365 development and solution implementation services. While the U.S Army Network Enterprise Technology Command (NETCOM) manages A365, MilTech helps consortium member organizations use A365 more efficiently. Applying the consortium model to A365 adoption drives innovation and allows for collective requirements gathering and sharing of ideas.

As part of this change, MilTech is maximizing efficiencies through the A365 Solution and Services Center. MilTech's A365 Solution and Services Center delivers dedicated Power Platform solution development support, provides a portal for information sharing related to all things A365, facilitates targeted user forums, manages a common solutions app store, delivers training and reference materials and courses, and creates related marketing and graphics products, among other offerings.

MilTech's current portfolio contains over 40 Power Apps and Power Automate solutions developed by MilTech SharePoint developers who are part of the MilTech core team or dedicated to specific customer organizations. The solutions are tailored to meet the diverse needs of the assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition,

logistics and technology (ASA(ALT)) and the program executive officers. MilTech's agile approach to software development is comprehensive, involving SharePoint developers, site collection administrators, content managers and project managers. Together, they collaboratively define requirements and design, develop and deploy solutions, ensuring a seamless, end-to-end, agile software development life cycle. MilTech manages a shared

applications library to encourage sharing and reuse of solutions.

DRIVING DATA-CENTRIC INNOVATION

Data is ubiquitous but challenging to wrangle. By using Power BI Premium licensing and cARMY Azure services, MilTech can integrate various data sources across different functional areas, such as Manpower, the General Fund Enterprise

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WILLING MEMBERS

The MilTech Consortium stands as the bedrock of this cost-sharing framework, offering bundled services tailored to the multifaceted requirements of the Army acquisition community. These services span from A365 SharePoint Online and Power Platform services to value-added services, including Consortium Support Representatives (CSRs), training, marketing and help desk support.

The Consortium's membership includes 10 distinguished organizations:

- The Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology.

- U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command (DEVCOM) Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Cyber, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C5ISR) Center.

- Headquarters Department of the Army G-8-Force Development.

- Joint Program Executive Office Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defense.

- Program Executive Office Command, Control, Communications-Tactical.

- Program Executive Office Combat Support and Combat Service Support.

- Program Executive Office Enterprise Information Systems.

- Program Executive Office Intelligence, Electronic Warfare and Sensors.

- Program Executive Office Missiles and Space.

- U.S. Army Rapid Capabilities and Critical Technologies Office.

Business System, the Defense Travel System, Foreign Military Sales, the Defense Security Assistance Management System and Global Combat Support System – Army, to provide ASA(ALT) organizations the ability to create a common operating picture for their commanders and business leaders.

MilTech acquired a Power BI Premium subscription and makes that resource available to consortium member organizations. MilTech helps them define their Power BI approach and manages Power BI Premium workspace requests. Power BI Premium Capacity Services provide enterprise-grade business intelligence capabilities that elevate the analytical prowess of organizations. This service allows organizations to publish and manage curated data sets, dashboards and reports, offering unrestricted access to A365 users with the appropriate consumer permissions. Premium features of this service include a dedicated and customizable processing capacity, advanced artificial intelligence (AI) tools, and the ability to refresh data with increased frequency. These enhancements help organizations fully exploit their data assets, fostering more informed decision-making and yielding strategic insights.

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Power Platform Premium Capacity Services offer an environment for crafting, expanding and securing a wide array of applications, web pages and workflows. MilTech uses Microsoft Dataverse, a cloud-based secure and scalable environment for data storage and management, for robust relational database management. Additionally, MilTech uses Power Pages for creating customizable web pages and offering enhanced application programming interface support and access to Microsoft's premium connectors to further empower organizations to push the boundaries of innovation and efficiency in application development.

Power Platform Premium Capacity and Power BI Premium Capacity are not just tools; they are the building blocks of a more agile defense community, enabling users to craft applications and analyze vast datasets with speed and precision. As

MilTech looks to the future, these offerings are intricately woven into a broader vision that anticipates and adapts to the evolving needs of the Army.

"MilTech's Consortium Support Representative (CSR) model has been fantastic from a CIO perspective because it allows me to integrate a member of the MilTech team within my mission," said Carl Bridges, CIO for PEO Command, Control and Communications - Tactical. "This way, they can expose solutions to me in real-time while taking gaps back to MilTech for solutioning."

MilTech provides a group of IT professionals with experience ranging from tactical information systems operating in a disconnected environment to major enterprise systems providing business functionality to thousands of users. For example, while we resource major programs to support the Army's Fires mission, MilTech designed and delivered the IT solution that provides weather data that the Fires community requires.

"MilTech's range of experience enables them to flex when needed to address unknown requirements. Having this expertise on hand is invaluable," Bridges said.

WHERE MILTECH IS HEADED
MilTech is charting new territory in the defense IT domain with its proactive embrace of AI and machine learning (ML) capabilities, in line with emerging Army policies and governance structures. The organization's strategy is rooted in the DOD and Army AI governance frameworks, ensuring integration and use of AI-driven innovations.

MilTech's strategic integration of AI and ML technologies is not simply about keeping pace with technological progress; it represents the program's commitment to steering the course of innovation. By harnessing the power of AI to enhance processes and proactively address the needs of the defense community, MilTech is crafting an IT infrastructure that promises greater efficiency, intuitiveness and alignment with the critical missions of the defense sector. This forward-thinking approach shapes an IT ecosystem that is fully equipped to meet the evolving challenges of the Army acquisition community.

CONCLUSION
MilTech is maximizing the Army's investment in SaaS offerings by providing the support and expertise necessary to help U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center organizations successfully incorporate A365 offerings to meet their mission requirements
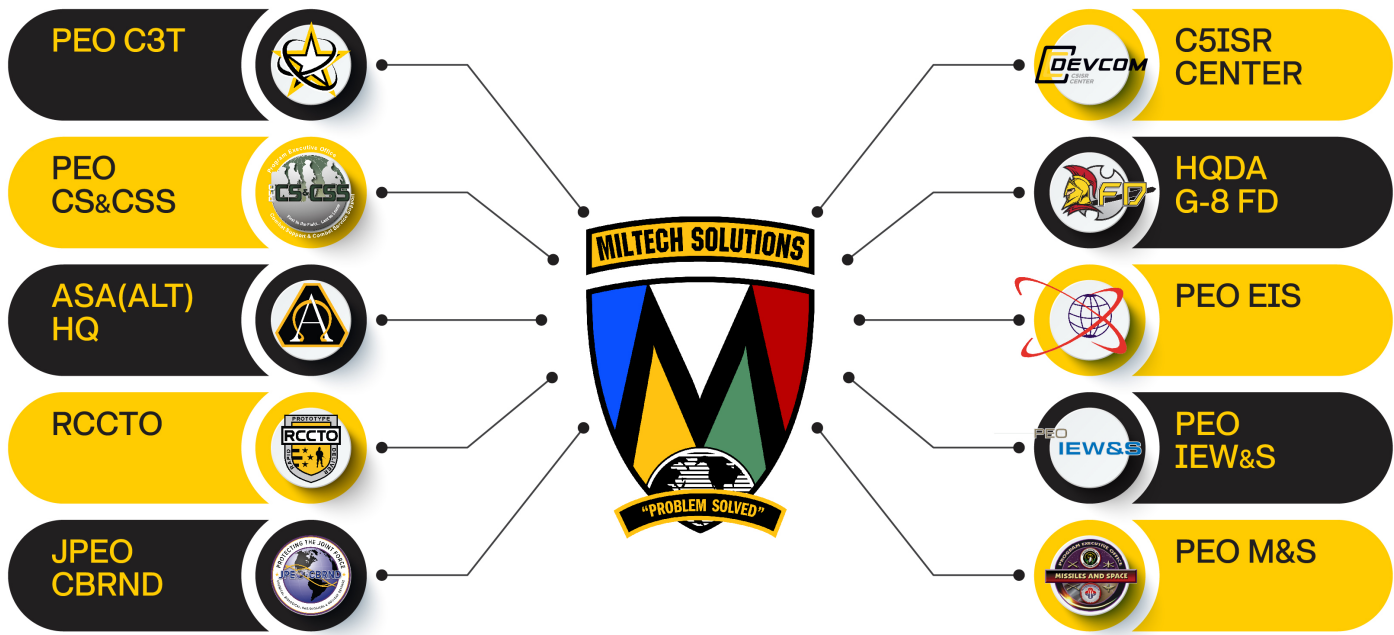
(Graphic by PEO EIS)

and day-to-day business needs. MilTech is not only enhancing the technological capabilities of the consortium, but ensuring that members are equipped with the knowledge and skills to leverage these tools to their fullest potential. Together, these services embody MilTech's dedication to enabling a culture of innovation and continuous improvement, ensuring the consortium's members have access to the resources and support needed to thrive in a collaborative and technologically advanced environment.

As MilTech Solutions embarks on this journey, it does so with the assurance that its offerings will not only meet the current demands of the DOD IT landscape but will actively shape its future. The evolving A365 support services and the integration of AI and ML into MilTech's offerings are a testament to the program's dedication to innovation and its commitment to providing the Army community with the tools it needs to succeed in an increasingly complex and technologically driven world.

MilTech continues to welcome new PEOs into the consortium. With the inclusion of new members come new ideas and focus areas. MilTech is growing its portfolio of offerings in response to customer demand and Army priorities.

For more information, go to the Project Office MilTech Solutions page on milWiki at **https://www.milsuite.mil/wiki/Project_Office_MilTech_Solutions**.

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