SUSTAINING & MAINTAINING

THE ARMY'S MODERNIZATION EFFORTS

■ ***By Lt. Gen. Christopher O. Mohan***

In 2018, the Army established Army Futures Command and identified signature modernization priorities to ensure U.S. dominance on the battlefield in the future. We quickly recognized that sustainers needed to embed alongside cross-functional teams (CFTs) and the research and development community to ensure maintenance and sustainment equities were considered early in the process. In the ensuing six years, we also realized the importance of looking at modernization holistically, not just sustainment of the system itself, but the training and infrastructure required to field, project, operate, and maintain them. The Army requires modernized training ranges, ports, airfields, motor pools, and storage facilities for Soldiers to integrate, train on, and operate new systems effectively.

None of this is new. These are foundational, common-sense responsibilities for the Army sustainment enterprise (ASE) supporting Army modernization. But we cannot, and will not, stop there. The Army is in a period of continuous transformation, iteratively adapting and evolving how we fight, equip, organize, and train to outpace adversaries at the speed of war, and Army transformation will not happen without the ASE. In a recently published three-part series in *Military Review* describing the phases of continuous transformation, Gen. James E. Rainey, Army Futures Command Commanding General, notes that the Army needs the ASE "to ensure we get concepts and requirements right, help divest old capabilities, and support fielding and sustainment of new ones."

During a period of unprecedented technological change, the Army is grappling with how to challenge the status quo and speed processes to be more flexible and agile. The sustainment community is making major strides in the use of technology,

artificial intelligence (AI), and data analytics. Army Materiel Command (AMC) continues to partner with the Contested Logistics CFT as they develop next-generation sustainment capabilities and systems focused on autonomous distribution, predictive maintenance, advanced power, and demand reduction. Sustainers are demonstrating innovative solutions to complex problems with systems like the AMC Predictive Analytics Suite, processes like organic industrial base (OIB) forward repair and tele-maintenance, and initiatives like the OIB Modernization Implementation Plan. But we are still behind our civilian counterparts, and we are only scratching the surface of what is in the realm of the possible.

I challenge the ASE, as we consider our role in support of Army modernization, to be the innovators. Be change agents. If technology exists that allows us to be more efficient and equally, or even more, effective, then adopt it. If a process can be automated that will allow leaders to make more informed decisions faster, then change the process. Actively seek opportunities to leverage AI, and double down on data analytics so we can do things faster and better. This is not about technology replacing humans: it is about getting to a point where humans can conduct better analysis and make better-informed decisions.

Army modernization will be driven by technology and data, and sustainers must be data literate. We must be able to understand and analyze data sets to provide predictive and precision sustainment at the point and time of need.

Transformation is essential for the Army to counter emerging threats and to operate effectively in diverse, contested environments. Modernization is about ensuring the Army can fight and win our nation's wars in an era of great power competition. Our adversaries are rapidly advancing their technologies, and we must do the same to maintain our competitive edge. Our sustainment capabilities have always been a strategic advantage on the battlefield. We must ensure that advantage remains.

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