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RDECOM General Speaks to Picatinny Workforce

By Myra Hess
Editor

Maj. Gen. John C. Doesburg, Commanding General of ARDEC's new higher headquarters, the U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command located at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., paid his first official visit to Picatinny during January.

Doesburg was briefed on selected ARDEC programs, toured the Armament Technology Facility and spoke to the center's workforce.

Following his discussions with Picatinny officials, Doesburg held a town hall meeting where he talked about ARDEC's transition from TACOM to RDECOM.

"Why the Town Hall meeting?" Doesburg asked. "I feel it's important for you to hear what's on my mind, to hear what's important today, how we're going to operate, and I hear what's on your mind. I encourage everyone to ask questions following my remarks."

He explained that the Commanding General of Army Materiel Command, Gen. Paul Kern, established the Research, Development & Engineering Command, as a new major subordinate command within AMC. This new command's mission will be to restructure core in-house capabilities now to fully exploit the enormous potential that resides in research activities around the world. The RDE Command will respond rapidly by integrating, maturing and demonstrating emerging technologies to field the right equipment, in the shortest time, for our soldiers.



“RDECOM has been set up to provide capability to our soldiers,” Doesburg said. “RDECOM has changed focus from Systems to Systems to Systems to Systems Integration, which concentrates on the IPT process centering on lethality, sustainability, and nanotechnology (robotics).

“We need to put technology into the hands of the soldiers faster,” he stressed.

“Because of the conflicts the armed forces are involved in all over the world – Iraq, Israel, Afghanistan – some technology has moved into the hands of our soldiers quickly and that has been awesome,” he said.

He also explained that it’s his job to show that the technology that has reached the soldier in the last six to nine months is not an anomaly; that we can and will get new technology to them faster. The two-star general further explained that currently it takes 12 years to equip a unit and that time span needs to be reduced drastically. “We need funding that allows us to get the state-of-the-art technology to the soldier,” he said.

The general also announced that he has appointed a Deputy Commanding General to oversee RDECOM operations. In October 2003, he appointed Col. Dave Bongi, who is serving as the Commander of the Soldier Systems Center and Deputy Commanding General for Operations, RDECOM, at Natick, Mass.

Then, he further discussed RDECOM’s mission. “We won’t always be future or present focused, but focused eventually more in the middle,” he said. “We’re working with six Stryker Brigades, one Objective Force and three different types of armaments – the Paladin, the Stryker Brigade and the Future Combat System. We will be asked to impact on all three. We are the experts on all of them”

He concluded by telling the ARDEC audience, “You have made a large difference. You have made a big impression on Gen. Kern. Folks at ARDEC have the capability to put technology into the hands of the soldier. How many soldiers are alive today because of ARDEC technology!” he said emphatically.