



Media Advisory



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“Feedback from the Front”: Considering Soldiers’ Needs When Designing Products

DETROIT ARSENAL, WARREN, MI — Six Fort Hood, TX, Soldiers each provided a warfighter’s perspective during a panel session at the U.S. Army Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center (TARDEC), Jan. 15, 2009.

During “Feedback from the Front,” panelists had the opportunity to convey their personal operators’ views of many ground systems platforms, including vehicle and heavy equipment transporters’ modification needs. TARDEC engineers listened to the Soldiers’ views and then asked questions to help gain knowledge about warfighters’ requirements.

“Gaining the warfighters’ perspective is invaluable for TARDEC and the work we do here,” explained TARDEC Director Dr. Grace M. Bochenek. “To be able to listen to their needs, clarify those requirements and then get immediate feedback from these Soldiers helps our engineers immensely.”

TARDEC Joint Light Tactical Vehicle Survivability Lead MAJ Larry Ross moderated the visiting Soldier panel. The Fort Hood Soldier panel members, who all deployed during *Operation Iraqi Freedom*, are:

- LTC Allen Cassell, 15th Sustainment Brigade (SB) support operations officer
- CW4 Edwin Rudser, 15th SB senior ordnance logistics technician
- CW2 Sean Case, 418th Transportation Company maintenance technician
- MSG Marcus Woody, 15th SB Maintenance Branch noncommissioned officer (NCO) in charge
- MSG David Meyer, U.S. Army Garrison Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Directorate of Emergency Services Provost NCO
- SFC Jaime Barrientos, 36th Engineer Brigade construction equipment NCO

“It was decided that [the U.S. Army TACOM Life Cycle Management Command] and TARDEC would co-host a panel of warfighters to share central ideas with the engineers who serve them,” Ross stated. “This is a great opportunity for engineers to learn more about their customer and, thus, provide better service.”



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During the presentation, panelists discussed how vehicle modifications in theater are performed by contractors in a central location. They presented many reasons for this being problematic to the unit's receiving modified vehicles. Specifically, the panelists were concerned with the lost training opportunity for organizational mechanics to install the modification, since they will have to fix the modification if vehicles are damaged in the field. Panelists also suggested modifications be designed for installation with tools available on the battlefield. "If engineers consider the restraints of what Soldiers have available to them when designing a product, the Soldiers can make the modifications necessary in the field," explained TARDEC Military Deputy LTC Andres Contreras.

It is important for Soldiers to be able to perform critical vehicle maintenance while in theater, but, unfortunately, most Soldiers don't have an engineering background. For future purposes, it is hoped that engineers make modifications simpler for the Soldiers who must implement them in the field.

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Note: There are 3 photos available for use with this release. Caption information follows. To download the photo, go to <http://www.tardec.info/pressreleases/>.

TARDEC-PR-0903_WarfighterPanel_001.jpg

Fort Hood Soldiers, from left, Meyer, Case, Cassell, Rudser, Woody and Barrientos, provided a warfighter's perspective for TARDEC engineers and researchers during a panel session here Jan. 15, 2009. The Soldier panel members all deployed during *Operation Iraqi Freedom* and provided invaluable feedback for developers. (U.S. Army TARDEC photo by Liz Carnegie.)

TARDEC-PR-0903_WarfighterPanel_002.jpg

Detroit Arsenal Soldiers, MAJ Larry Ross (standing left) and LTC Andres Contreras (standing right), talk to six Fort Hood Soldiers before their "Feedback from the Front" panel session. Ross moderated the discussion co-hosted by TARDEC and TACOM LCMC. (U.S. Army TARDEC photo by Liz Carnegie.)

TARDEC-PR-0903_WarfighterPanel_003.jpg

LTC Allen Cassell (standing) addresses TARDEC and TACOM LCMC engineers during the recent "Feedback from the Front" panel session. (U.S. Army TARDEC photo by Liz Carnegie.)



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TARDEC is the Nation's laboratory for advanced military ground systems and automotive technology. A leading technology integrator for the U.S. Army Materiel Command's Research Development and Engineering Command (RDECOM), TARDEC is headquartered at the Detroit Arsenal in Warren, MI, located in the heart of the world's automotive capitol. TARDEC is a major element of RDECOM and partner in the TACOM Life Cycle Management Command. As a full life-cycle engineering support provider-of-first-choice for all DOD ground combat and combat support weapons and vehicle systems, TARDEC develops and integrates the right technology solutions to improve Current Force effectiveness and provide superior capabilities for the Future Force. TARDEC's technical staff leads research in ground vehicle survivability; mobility/power and energy; robotics and intelligent systems; maneuver support and sustainment; and vehicle electronics and architecture. TARDEC develops and maintains ground vehicles for all U.S. Armed Forces and numerous federal agencies.

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