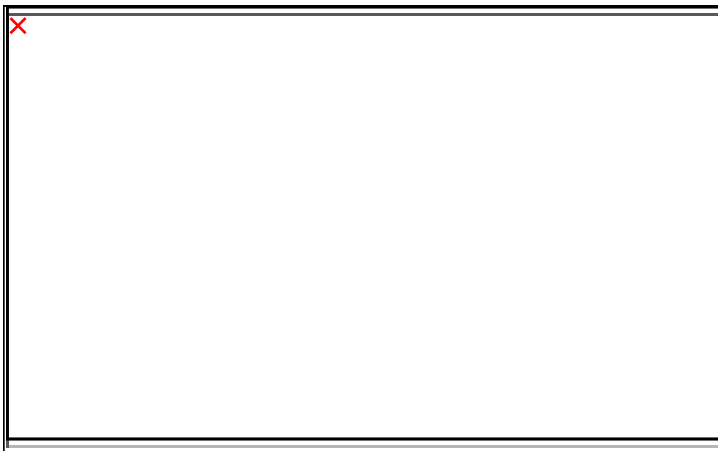


Army Leaders Meet to Discuss Future of Operational Energy

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by Lt. Col. Mark McCann, U.S. Army War College Public Affairs



Leaders from across the Army gathered at the U.S. Army War College's Center for Strategic Leadership, Carlisle Barracks, Pa., for the Army Energy Operational Roundtable from Nov. 21-22. Photo by Megan Clugh

CARLISLE BARRACKS, Pa. – Nov. 24, 2011 – The Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy and Environment and the Army G-4 sponsored an “Army

Operational Energy Roundtable” at the U.S. Army War College recently to address the Army’s challenges in ensuring a sustainable energy future.

During the two-day event, hosted by the War College's Center for Strategic Leadership, senior Army leaders discussed issues such as making operational energy a part of everyday Army culture, and using it to increase mission effectiveness, reduce Soldier vulnerabilities, and increase overall capability.

In operational theaters right now, almost 40 percent of fuel consumption occurs on bases with generators being the largest consumer. Almost 80 percent of logistics movement in theater is for “liquid” supplies – fuel and water.

“Understanding where and how we use energy can have a dramatic impact on energy consumption and, if anything, can have a positive impact on the fight,” said Hon. Katherine Hammack, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy and Environment in her opening comments to the participants. “We need to think about energy conservation as a way to enhance mission effectiveness.”

Defined as, “energy required for training, moving, and sustaining military forces and weapons platforms for military operations and the energy used by tactical power systems, generators and weapons

platforms,” operational energy is about building capability.

“Operational energy is about reducing consumption because future military strategy will require us to look at a smaller logistical footprint,” said the Army’s G-4, Lt. Gen. Raymond Mason. “Reducing operational energy means fewer resource requirements, providing more flexibility to commanders.”

The common thread running through the conference was the need to make operational energy and energy conservation a greater part of mainstream Army culture, especially among junior Soldiers and leaders.

“It is a significant challenge for the Army to make energy a consideration in all that we do,” said Mr. Richard Kidd, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Energy and Sustainability, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy, and Environment. “We need to add momentum to the process of institutionalizing this positive change across the Army.”

One area of culture where operational energy will play an important role is development of future capabilities. Making capabilities more energy efficient has the potential to reduce operational vulnerabilities and increase Soldier effectiveness.

"We must shape the definition of operational energy that reflects concerns specific to the Army," said Col. Tim Hill, Director, Operational Energy and Contingency Basing for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy and Environment. "The Army has unique considerations as a force, and if we look at operational energy, we will bring capability to the force."

A major emphasis is on the Soldier, for example if batteries are lighter and more efficient, Soldiers will need to carry fewer, thereby decreasing weight load and increasing individual Soldier capability.

Operational energy will have an impact on Soldiers because it, “reduces the weight they [Soldiers] carry, makes living conditions in field environments better and reduces risk,” said Kidd.

According to Hill, “Operational energy improves soldier capability by building more capability *into* the Soldier.”

Operational energy also addresses consumption of resources – food, water, fuel – by Soldiers in operational theaters. Leaders and Soldiers need to start thinking about energy conservation in terms of mission effectiveness.

"The U.S. is a large consumer of resources, and our reliance on them increases our vulnerability," said Dr. Kent Butts, one of several subject matter experts from the Center for Strategic Leadership who facilitated discussion during the event. "One of the threats to national security is regional

instability, and in the future this will be a constraint on our ability to access vital resources."

"Provision of water and fuel is a requirement, we don't just fall in on these resources in theater," said Hammack. "We have a responsibility to value fuel, but we don't want the thought of fuel consumption to restrict the mission. We need to prioritize fuel efficiency to enhance the mission."

"Policy makers need to think about this so Soldiers don't have to," Hammack said.

The conference leaders concluded with a commitment to infuse change and make operational energy into a force multiplier.

"We need to develop metrics that provide incentives to performance that changes behavior in a positive way -- metrics that make sense and will bring this in line with mission priorities," said Hill.

"If we do operational energy right, it will save lives and improve Soldier quality of life," said Dr. Vic Ramdass, director of the Army G-4 Operational Energy Office.