**Title:** Capability Set 13: New on-the-move network backbone

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The continued fielding of Warfighter Information Network-Tactical Increment 2, the backbone of the Army’s new network capability set, enables commanders to take advantage of the improved situational awareness provided by a mobile adhoc network that reaches down to the company level for the first time.

“As I think about how we fought in 2005 and being able to look to 2012, it is tremendously forward in terms of how we can communicate with every Soldier,” said COL Sam Whitehurst, commander of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, one of two units currently being fielded with these advanced technologies.

 “[In the past] I had to go through fixed locations to talk to other units on the battlefield. Now I can be on the move as a brigade commander and I can talk to every single company in my area.”

Capability Set 13 is the first fully-integrated package of radios, satellite systems, software applications, Smartphone-like devices and other network components that provide connectivity from the stationary command post to the commander on-the-move to the dismounted Soldier.

WIN-T Increment 2 is the tactical communications network backbone that binds the capability set together.

“A major advantage in fielding disparate systems as an integrated package, as the Army is doing with CS 13, is that it provides a synchronized and integrated set of new capabilities to the units at one time, so the commanders will be able to take full advantage of the network,” said COL Ed Swanson, project manager for WIN-T. “These capabilities provide comprehensive, real-time information, faster than ever before across the full range of military operations.”

The Army received the go-ahead to continue with limited production and fielding of WIN-T Increment 2 as a result of a Defense Acquisition Board review conducted in late September. The Army remains on schedule in its fielding timeline for WIN-T Increment 2 as part of CS 13, which began in October with two BCTs from the 10th Mountain Division, and will continue with follow-on CS 14 development to add additional capability to the force.

At the same time that it fields to CS 13 units, the Army will continue to work with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the test community to aggressively address items identified during the Initial Operational Test & Evaluation for WIN-T Increment 2, which was held in May as part of the Army’s Network Integration Evaluation 12.2.

Going forward the Army will leverage NIE events for future WIN-T Increment 2 testing focused on specific areas to continuously improve the system.

WIN-T Increment 1, formerly known as the “Joint Network Node - Network,” began fielding in 2004 and provides Soldiers with high-speed, high-capacity voice, data and video communications down to battalion level units, at-the-quick-halt.

WIN-T Increment 2 provides Soldiers with a single, integrated and on-the-move network down to the company level. It further increases capability by introducing self-forming, self-healing network

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Their combat forces, they can now mandate command and control “Much like operational command and control,” LTC Collins said. “We’ve made revolutionary progress with WIN-T Increment 2’s NetOps,” LTC Collins said. “Much like operational commanders command and control their combat forces, they can now plan and manage the network, implement information assurance protective postures, all from a remote location.”

The WIN-T Increment 2 NET finishes with a crew drill training exercise that provides Soldiers with the practical experience of working as a team using realistic operational scenarios to bring up the Increment 2 network. As part of the crew drills, Soldiers must conduct at-the-halt and on-the-move missions validating their understanding of the NET concepts and techniques.

“The Soldiers taking part in the NET are enthusiastic and the leadership is very supportive to make sure that this is a first-class training exercise for those units,” LTC Collins said. “WIN-T Increment 2 serves as a cornerstone for the success of the capability set fielding series, so this training exercise is very critical.”

Following training completion the equipment will be configured for operational use, new equipment fielding will be completed and then the unit will begin a series of events designed to prepare them for potential deployment. While it is early in the fielding and training process, 10th Mountain Division leaders said they can see the operational value of the increased mobility and situational awareness delivered by WIN-T Increment 2 and CS 13.

For example, a commander on-the-move will now be able to quickly receive and act on information about an enemy’s whereabouts, said COL Walter E. Piatt, deputy commanding general for support of 10th Mountain Division.

“Before messages would come down from a battalion [executive officer] to another fixed facility and by the time it would get passed to me I may have already hit an ambush,” said Piatt. “Now that intelligence can be shared quicker. Now we know where we are, where reported enemy sightings are, so we can take the initiative and attack the attackers that were waiting in ambush for us. It’s getting the information when you need it.”

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10th Mountain - 10th Mountain Division
BCT - Brigade Combat Team
CS – Capability Set
DAB - Defense Acquisition Board
IOT&E - Initial Operational Test and Evaluation
NetOps - Network Operations
NIE - Network Integration Evaluation
OEF - Operation Enduring Freedom
OIF - Operation Iraqi Freedom
PEO C3T - Program Executive Office for Command, Control and Communications - Tactical
SIPR – Secure Internet Protocol Router
WIN-T - Warfighter Information Network-Tactical
WSMR - White Sands Missile Range