

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Army's new modernization command is beginning to take shape under freshly selected team leaders tasked to tackle each of the service's top priorities, and acting Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy is ensuring those leaders have the flexibility to get the job done.

The service last month initiated a realignment of its modernization priorities under a new organization, officially announcing the move at the Association of the U.S. Army's annual convention.

*[The Army is creating a modernization command to keep projects on track]*

The new organization will implement cross-functional teams, or CFT, that align with the Army's six modernization priorities: Long-Range Precision Fires, next-generation combat vehicle, Future Vertical Lift, the network, air and missile defense, and soldier lethality.

The CFTs will compress the timeline to modernize and procure new equipment by involving the end user, defining the requirements, integrating, prototyping and validating a concept prior to low-rate initial production.

The leaders of these teams will "understand how our formations operate in combat and include elements from program management, finance, science and technology," McCarthy said at AUSA. Leadership includes:

- Brig. Gen. Steve Maranian leads the Long-Range Precision Fires team.
- Brig. Gen. Dave Lesperance takes charge of the next-gen combat vehicle team.
- Col. Wally Rugen will lead the Future Vertical Lift team.
- Brig. Gen. Randall McIntire is assigned to the air and missile defense team.
- Brig. Gen. C.D. Donahue will lead the soldier lethality team.
- Maj. Gen. Maria Gervais will lead a separate CFT for the Synthetic Training Environment.

Additionally, to get after the network priority, there will be two team leads:

- Maj. Gen. Pete Gallagher will lead the network, command, control, communications and intelligence team.
- Kevin Coggins will lead the precision, navigation and timing team.

Having selected leaders for each of the CFTs, McCarthy hosted them all at the Pentagon during the last week of October and laid out expectations for the service and for how the leaders operate teams, he said during a Nov. 3 interview with Defense News at the Defense Department headquarters.

The CFTs will directly report to the Army vice chief and McCarthy, he added.

Lt. Gen. Edward Cardon, the director of the Army's Office of Business Transformation, was given 120 days from the initiation of the command to form a task force, kick off the command and figure out how the CFTs will fit under the new organizational structure, McCarthy said.

Cardon will be putting together a series of recommendations for the vice chief and the secretary to consider no later than the second quarter of calendar year 2018, according to McCarthy.

While the newly appointed modernization command leadership is expected to return to McCarthy with resource requirements from technical expertise to financial to programmatic to sustainment in roughly a week, the CFTs will be given a great deal of flexibility to decide what each of the teams will look like from size to structure to location, he said.

"I don't want to dictate your task organization, you need to tell me what you need and we will go back and forth about," McCarthy said. "I don't like to limit them or bracket them, but all these leaders recognize that these need to be lean, you need to be very specific of the type of skill set you need to support you because speed is the key criteria in this process."

McCarthy said it's particularly critical to be flexible when it comes to where the teams are located both related to the type of capability being modernized and where the capability is in the life cycle of its development.

"You have to make a determination of where you want to fight the issue, like the set way a commander would in a war zone," McCarthy said. "They have to make the determination about where they need to be and where they need to house their teams."

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And considering where a weapon system is in development, "if you are down here in the requirements phase, well, then maybe I need to be at Fort Benning. If it's being prototyped then I need to spend time with the manufacturer and then I need to get it out into a [National Training Center] rotation," McCarthy said.

"My intent and what we put out to [the CFTs], when we put this concept in play, is that I don't want you sitting in the schoolhouse looking at data," he said. "I want you to get out there and lead and touch it. Work with an industrial partner to really shape the requirement that if you are there physically involved with experimentation, you get the concept right."

And by getting the concept right, it's more likely to get value out of a prototype and end up with "a decent solution" rather than a "catastrophic failure," McCarthy added.

While the organization and implementation plans of the new command are rapidly moving, with the expectation of fully standing it up in the summer of 2018, there are some hurdles still in the way.

As the Army and the rest of the Pentagon continue to fight for predictable funding, Congress hasn't delivered.

The Defense Department is living under a continuing resolution, meaning it is required to operate under last year's funding levels. It is uncertain whether a fiscal 2018 budget will pass by the end of 2017 or if another CR will pass, extending well into the new year.

"It is vital for Congress to pass an '18 budget. Will it inhibit our efforts? Absolutely," McCarthy said. "Is the '19 budget looking promising for the Department of Defense? I think so. We are making a pretty good case across the river with [the Office of Management and Budget] and we still have work to do, but we are going to ask for what we need and we will not be shy about what we need."

If a CR continues, "we would do less, we would be challenged. Another CR is just asking me to do 12 months of work in half or three-fourths of the time, and it changes the behavior," McCarthy said. "It makes you much more risk averse. You can't expand production lines, you can't initiate military construction projects. Our behavior is we dial back our expenditure rates with operations and

maintenance, which is dollars we use for training, so it breeds mediocrity, it makes you want to do less.”

But the hope is the new command can punch through budgetary barricades and rapidly achieve success.

McCarthy said the metrics of success for the command, especially in its early years, will be to see robust experimentation and prototyping.

“I recognize the challenges with that there are lot of moving pieces, but we have to be ambitious and we have to go quickly because you look at near-peer competitors, they are evolving very quickly and they are very judicious and wise with their investments, and we need to keep pace with that so we maintain our margin of advantage.”