Fort Drum Press Release

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10th Mountain Division Sustainment Brigade hosts Innovative Technology Symposium

FORT DRUM, N.Y. – The 10th Mountain Division Sustainment Brigade hosted the Innovative Technology Symposium on April 15 to discuss how the Army is augmenting warfighting capabilities with emerging technologies.

“The intent of this symposium is essentially for us to bring in some of the new technology to Fort Drum and highlight how we can work with different agency partners to get this into the hands of our Soldiers,” said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Edilma Cruz, 10th Mountain Division Sustainment Bridge strategic mobility officer.

Representatives from U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command (DEVCOM) Army Research Lab and the Civil-Military Innovation Institute briefed attendees on technological developments through the Pathfinder and Accelerating FORCE programs.

“The Pathfinder program’s primary mission is to collect whole problem sets from Soldiers at the tactical level,” said Cody Clevenger, Pathfinder program manager. “And we either pair them with academia – from one of our partner schools we work with – if that level of research is needed to execute a solution, or the other way is with our DIRT labs.”

Clevenger briefed three Design, Innovation, Research and Technology (DIRT) projects funded by the Army Research Lab, including an updated design for the M-80TR anti-personnel landmine used for training.

He said a 2nd Brigade Combat Team Soldier contributed feedback on the assistant gunner bag and the limited options for attaching it to the rucksack. From this, a prototype was developed to improve operational functionality and optimize weight distribution.

“We want to have Soldiers involved throughout the development of a solution,” Clevenger said. “Soldiers love to talk about the problems they have in the field, and we’re trying to give them an avenue where they can do that directly with us.”

The 10th Mountain Division will have their own problem-solving capabilities when the Mountain Innovation Systems Integration Lab becomes operational at Fort Drum by late summer.

Maj. Michael Fitzgerald, 10th Mountain Division (LI) G-3 knowledge management officer, said the innovation lab is a facility where any Soldier can bring creative ideas to solve problems they encounter through training or on deployments, and they will receive engineering support and guidance.

“Soldiers will have access to equipment such as laser cutters and 3D printers, all at no cost to them because the lab is funded and manned by the Civil-Military Innovation Institute,” he said. “Our partnership with CMI2 will allow us to receive engineering support and collaboration with outside agencies for technologies.”

Fitzgerald said an initial focus will be on projects to further the division’s alpine planning efforts.

“But the sky’s the limit on what problems we can solve, and we encourage everyone here to spread the word on what a great opportunity and resource this will be for Soldiers,” he said.

Recently, 10th Mountain Division Soldiers trained on the TRV-150 Tactical Resupply Vehicle and field-tested the drone during the Mountain Peak exercise on post.

The TRV-150 can travel up to 60 miles per hour and can transport up to 150 pounds of cargo, moving in areas that may be inaccessible or too dangerous for vehicles or personnel to conduct resupply missions.

First Lt. Robert Willet, support operations transportation officer with 10th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, provided feedback as one of the TRV-150 operators. He said seven resupply missions were conducted over four days, and they experimented with different payloads to test the drone’s capabilities.

“When used correctly, it’s the fastest method of resupply inside of its radius,” Willet said. “It also had the lowest threat to Soldiers than any other resupply method.”

Willet also noted they experienced high-wind conditions that prevented them from flying one day.

“The TRV-150 is close to getting into Soldiers’ hands, but there is additional experimentation that DEVCOM is making to meet the Army’s intent,” Cruz said.

A Civil-Military Innovation Institute team will further examine the TRV-150 in action when 1st Brigade Combat Team conducts a Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) rotation at Fort Johnson, Louisiana, in May.

“They will be there the whole time collecting data,” said Dennis Day, Army Research Lab’s Accelerating FORCE deputy program manager. ‘And it’s not just system data, but TTPs (tactics, techniques and procedures) and CONOPs (concepts of operations) that go beyond the ones and zeroes.”

Day said experimenting with emerging technologies in realistic training environments helps to identify problems and improves the final product.

“What we can do is provide a capability,” he said. “But if the Soldier is experimenting with it, providing us feedback, then we can enhance it and get the best product to the Soldier as fast as possible.”

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Photo Captions:

02: Maj. Michael Fitzgerald, 10th Mountain Division (LI) G-3 knowledge management officer, discusses the development of a Mountain Innovation Systems Integration Lab at Fort Drum, to encourage Soldiers to problem-solve and produce tangible results through collaboration with industry experts. Representatives from Army DEVCOM and the Civil-Military Innovation Institute met with 10th Mountain Division (LI) Soldiers to discuss emerging technologies during a symposium April 15 at The Peak. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

03: The Innovative Technology Symposium on April 15 ended with a demonstration of the TRV-150, where attendees watched the tactical resupply vehicle deliver multiple payloads onto the Monti Physical Fitness Center soccer fields at Fort Drum. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

05: Representatives from U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command (DEVCOM) Army Research Lab and the Civil-Military Innovation Institute met with 10th Mountain Division (LI) Soldiers to discuss emerging technologies during a symposium April 15 at The Peak. The 10th Mountain Division Sustainment Brigade hosted the first Innovative Technology Symposium, which highlighted the division’s contributions in field-testing a tactical resupply drone and establishing a new innovation lab on post where Soldiers can work with experts to problem-solve and develop real-world solutions. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

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