

From the FA Commandant's desk

Farewell, but not Goodbye

As Cynthia and I depart Fort Sill and my time serving as the FA Commandant comes to an end, I want to take the opportunity to thank every Redleg for your dedication to our branch and for the phenomenal leadership of our Fires formations that you execute on behalf of our Soldiers and Civilians, and their Families every day. Visiting you in the field, watching you put steel on target, and witnessing your seamless integration with Maneuver has been simply awe inspiring, just to be a part of this amazing branch. Every graduation, ceremony, and awards presentation that I have attended has stiffened my spine a little more, each time – I am proud to be a Field Artilleryman and proud to be on the same team as all of you.

It has been a tremendous ride and I have truly loved this opportunity to serve you. Over the past two years, we have put a lot of focus into strengthening the relationship between the institution and the operational force – Active and ARNG. We strived to enhance this relationship through visits, ongoing engagements, and live and virtual fora to share ideas and integrate your feedback. Incorporating warfighter input into what we are doing in the schoolhouse is how I believe we can best support the Chief of Staff of the Army's #1 priority of Readiness.

The most challenging thing we've had to face has been overcoming the shortfall in training competency in the operational force. As a result of all the years that the Army was focused on counterinsurgency, we've grown a generation of Field Artillerymen who, through no fault of their own, have not had the repetitions under their belts to be as knowledgeable and rehearsed as they must be, by the time they become field grade officers, warrant officers and senior non-commissioned officers. Instead of career paths focused on large-scale combat operations, including tough, demanding decisive action training environment rotations at our combat training centers, our junior leaders grew up in COIN environments, where they were asked to tackle missions outside their core competencies.

We've had to rebuild our skill sets in helping Maneuver commanders build battlefield architectures

that include fire support and air coordination measures that permissively integrate the proactive fires necessary to fight and win in high intensity combat. I am pleased that our FA Captains Career Course, Warrant Officer



Advanced Course and NCO Advanced and Senior Leaders Courses have put us back on track toward rebuilding those core competencies. We've also had to help rebuild our Maneuver teammates' skill sets in integrating fire support with Maneuver plans. We've had to meet higher expectations of Maneuver commanders, while shaping those same expectations. I believe our Maneuver BCT Pre-command Course has helped us do both of those things and I'm grateful to the FORSCOM CG for his emphasis and to my predecessor, BG Bill Turner for steering our branch in that direction.

I also deeply appreciate the efforts of our Army National Guard teammates in marching to the objective with us – in lock-step. MG Luke Reiner, Wyoming TAG and senior ARNG Field Artilleryman has been a phenomenal leader and partner, in ensuring seamless improvement across the Total Force. The further development of the Sustainable Readiness Model for the ARNG and the habitual associations our ARNG FA brigades have with both Active and ARNG divisions continue to pay measurable readiness dividends.

A little more than halfway through my tenure, Army leadership directed the establishment of eight cross-functional teams, to help get after some of our

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most pressing acquisition and capabilities development needs. I was asked to lead the CFT for long-range precision fires. As a branch, we have identified gaps in range, lethality and volume of fire, at echelon, with some of our peer and near-peer adversaries. These are gaps we must close to achieve full force readiness to effectively fight with fires. I have recently transitioned leadership of the LRPF CFT to COL John Rafferty who will continue to lead our targeted modernization efforts, in support of the imminent activation of Army Futures Command. His connection and nesting with the Fires Center of Excellence and Force Modernization proponent will remain critical to delivering capabilities that guarantee sustained overmatch in surface-to-surface fires against any potential adversary, for decades to come.

Over the long-term, we've laid out a strategy that will continue to move the ball down the field in improving our training proficiencies, equipping our warfighters and integrating with Maneuver. I can think of no finer leader to continue our momentum than BG

Steve Smith – who takes the reins in June as the 53rd FA Commandant. Steve is a seasoned warfighter who brings with him a laser focus and strategic view of the force. His renowned care for Soldiers and singular ability to serve as an inspiring role model to our young officers and Soldiers training here at the school, give me confidence and a renewed sense of optimism that our branch will be in great hands, moving forward. I know you will support him as you have me over the past two years.

Thank you for the privilege of serving you and endeavoring to make our branch – the Field Artillery – the very best our Nation deserves. I wish each of you success and Godspeed.

King of Battle!

BG Stephen J. Maranian

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Army headquarters locations selected for eight modernization CFTs

(Inside Defense, May 18, Courtney McBride)
<https://insidedefense.com/daily-news/army-headquarters-locations-selected-eight-modernization-cfts>

Army Secretary Mark Esper has made a stationing decision for the eight cross-functional teams pursuing the service's six modernization priorities.

The secretary on May 15 informed the directors of the CFTs of the headquarters locations, to which the teams will relocate this summer. Site selection included consideration of the needs of the individual CFT, and in many cases involved co-locating the team with a partner organization such as a research, development and engineering center or a schoolhouse.

Each team is projected to have a headquarters staff of approximately 32 soldiers and civilians and to include science and technology, funding, program management and testing personnel.

The Long Range Precision Fires CFT, led by Col. John Rafferty, will be headquartered at Ft. Sill, OK. The first director of the LRPF CFT, Brig. Gen. Stephen Maranian, has been tapped as deputy commanding general of the 2nd Infantry Division (Combined), Eighth Army, in South Korea.

The Next Generation Combat Vehicle CFT, headed by Brig. Gen. Dave Lesperance, will be based at Detroit Arsenal, MI, facilitating collaboration with the Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center.

Lesperance's designated successor is Brig. Gen. Richard Coffman, currently the deputy commanding general (maneuver) of the 1st Infantry Division at Ft. Riley, KS.

The Future Vertical Lift CFT, led by Brig. Gen.

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