



Sergeant Major of the Army Visits PEO Soldier

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FORT BELVOIR, Va. — Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III visited Program Executive Office Soldier at Fort Belvoir, Va., last week to see what the future may hold for Soldiers, and their weapons and gear.

Program Executive Office, or PEO, Soldier was stood up about 10 years ago to speed the development and distribution of new technologies. This has allowed the Army to succeed on the battlefield in the face of new and evolving threats. Its mission today is to develop, acquire, field and sustain affordable and integrated state-of-the-art equipment to improve Soldier dominance in Army operations today and in the future. Much of the technology Chandler saw illustrated how the Army dominates the battlefield through improved lethality, mobility and survivability in all weather and visibility conditions.

“The professionalism of our Soldiers is a major reason for our Army’s success over the past 12 years, but technology also plays a big role,” Chandler said. “The PEO Soldier team is aggressively pursuing ways to lighten the load and provide leap-ahead technology solutions for our Soldier’s needs in the field. This agency is responsible for nearly everything a Soldier wears or carries. It’s dedicated to increasing Soldier mobility, survivability, and comfort through the products that come out of its office.”

During the visit, Chandler received briefings and hands-on demonstrations on all current programs and products from a team of Soldiers, Department of the Army civilians and contractors. Master Sgt. Benjamin Owens shared information about some of these, including protective garments, tactical vest, parachutes, cold-weather gear, and camouflage uniforms. He noted that PEO Soldier incorporates Soldier feedback and ideas into continuous improvements.

“For example, we currently have 37 sets of the female Improved Outer Tactical Vest fielded in Afghanistan to gather feedback,” Owens said. “We’ve been receiving positive responses from those Soldiers and listening to their comments. They like this new IOTV’s sizing and maneuverability.”

Once the Improved Outer Tactical Vest, known as the IOTV, testing and feedback phase is complete, Owens said any necessary changes can be made before it goes into wider distribution. Chandler noted Soldiers are seeing these types of incremental changes on the battlefield that are “providing capabilities we haven’t seen before.”

Another example of PEO Soldier’s current efforts to support Soldiers and seek their feedback is the redesigned Army Physical Fitness Uniform. Soldiers at several posts around the country were asked to use the

five-piece prototype and are now performing their normal routine with the new uniform. At the end of the trial, they will give their feedback.

Nett Warrior was also reviewed by Chandler. The system provides unprecedented situational awareness to dismounted leaders, allowing for faster and more accurate decisions in a tactical fight. With its capabilities, leaders are able to avoid fratricide, and are more effective and more lethal in the execution of their combat missions.

“With this technology, we don’t need a concentration of Soldiers, but we can mass them much more quickly when they are needed,” Chandler said.

Many of the advancements of PEO Soldier, including some presented to Chandler, are the direct result of Soldier suggestions. The Soldier Enhancement Program, or SEP, allows individuals to submit ideas to

PEO Soldier to help the Army field tactical-environment equipment that Soldiers wear, carry or consume.

Recent SEP examples of new technology development are expeditionary and lightweight power solutions for use in austere environments, and the M110 7.62mm Semi-Automatic Sniper System. Soldiers can submit their SEP ideas through the PEO Soldier website at <https://www.peosoldier.army.mil/feedback/sep.asp>.

“As some of our funding sources becomes smaller over the next few years, the suggestions we get from Soldiers through SEP inputs is one way we can find more effective, efficient and economical ways give Soldiers the equipment they need to succeed,” said Brig. Gen. Paul A. Ostrowski, Program Executive Officer Soldier.

Chandler echoed that sentiment.

“Our Soldiers deserve the best, and PEO Soldier is working to make that happen.” ■



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