

NCO participation “critical” to Army’s modernization efforts

By Master Sgt. Maggie Nelson

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A Stryker vehicle commander interacts in real time with a Soldier avatar that is participating remotely from a collective trainer. The U.S. Army Research Laboratory, University of Southern California Institute for Creative Technologies, Combined Arms Center-Training and Program Executive Office for Simulation, Training and Instrumentation are developing the Synthetic Training Environment, which will link augmented reality with live training. (Photo Credit: U.S. Army)

The U.S. Army senior leadership is restructuring the way it acquires major pieces of equipment and modernizing the way the acquisition community is structured. On Monday, Feb. 5, 2018, NCO Journal interviewed Undersecretary of the Army Ryan D. McCarthy and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel A. Dailey regarding modernization and the role of NCO in the modernization process.

“The noncommissioned officer will play a critical role in Army modernization,” Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel A. Dailey said.



Spc. Garrett Rushing (left), an Alton, Ill. native and a fire support specialist, with the 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division and Sergeant Major of the Army Daniel A. Dailey (right) practice a simulated call for fire in Swietosow, Poland during Dailey's visit to deployed Soldiers Dec. 16, 2017. The Sergeant Major of the Army serves as the example for enlisted Soldiers from the most junior private to the most senior command sergeant major, and is visiting deployed locations to demonstrate his commitment to the force. (Photo Credit: U.S. Army photo by Spc. Hubert Delany)

The Army's modernization efforts are to maintain U.S. military dominance over and counter threats from its near-peer adversaries. "Our adversaries have increased their capabilities to counter current technologies during the U.S. military's 17-year engagement in counterinsurgency operations, and counter-terrorism efforts," Undersecretary of the Army Ryan D. McCarthy said.

The six priorities are long-range precision fires, next-generation combat vehicles, future vertical lift, network communications, air and missile defense, and Soldier lethality, which span "all fundamentals of shoot, move, communicate, sustain and protect," McCarthy said.

"The NCO's participation, advice, and counsel in this process will be critical," McCarthy said. "As we start to move the money, prototype weapons systems, and experiment with them, it's going to be the noncommissioned officers who are going to tell us if they're going to work."

McCarthy also said that the Army will rely on the technical expertise of its NCOs because they will also be involved in extensions of synthetic training environments. This unique method of training offers Soldiers the ability to train in endless numbers of repetitions at a very low overall cost. "These changes will allow our Soldiers to practice the basic soldiering fundamentals, increasing their lethality," he said.



The Undersecretary of the Army Ryan D. McCarthy and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel A. Dailey conduct a phone interview from the Pentagon with the NCO Journal located at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., Feb. 5, 2018. During the interview they discussed Army modernization and its impact on noncommissioned officers. (U.S. Army photo courtesy of Sgt. Maj. Daniel A. Dailey official Twitter page)

"Undersecretary McCarthy talked about the requirements process. The requirements are so critical to get right as we modernize, because we have to be able to clearly articulate what we need to be able to deter or defeat our potential adversaries in the future," Dailey said. "In most cases, the end-users of those materialistic solutions are our noncommissioned officers and Soldiers."

McCarthy and Dailey acknowledge that change is not easy, but in order to face the challenges of the future, "we all have to embrace it," said Dailey.

The Army's fleet of tanks and fighting vehicles are largely over 40 years old and nearing the end of their life expectancy. In order to maintain overmatch and dominance in future operating environments, the Army relies on leaders across all formations to ensure success in training and on future battlefields.

"As an NCO corps, an officer corps, a civilian corps; we have to look beyond our current capabilities, take the blinders off the U.S. Army, and realize, that we may or may not still own the competitive advantage in everything. By doing so, we identify the potential weaknesses we may have," Dailey said.

McCarthy agreed with the difficulty of evolving and modernizing an organization when "you're on top," while trying "to prevent complacency, but in reality, our near-peer competitors are catching up," he said.

Listen to the podcast interview with Undersecretary of the Army Ryan D. McCarthy and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel A. Dailey in its entirety at <http://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/NCO-Journal/NCO-Journal-Podcasts/>.