

CSM William J. Gainey  
Command Sergeant Major  
U.S. Army Armor Center



## Mounted Soldier Modernization — Building the Future Combat Soldier

*As the U.S. Army transforms, one thing is for certain — soldiers and soldiering remain our primary focus. The U.S. Army Armor Center is committed to the American soldier. Soldiers are our most important assets. An American soldier, on the ground, is the most visible symbol of American determination and will. Committing America's Army makes a strong statement that adversaries cannot misinterpret. The Army makes the most significant investment it can make to the nation's security by properly training, equipping, and supporting its soldiers.*

*The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command System Manager (TSM)-Soldier is charged with responsibility for managing the Soldier Enhancement Program (SEP) for the Army. Focused on "the Soldier is the weapon," TSM-Soldier has user management responsibility and represents all soldiers in the field. The SEP's goal is to improve the lethality, survivability, command and control, mobility, and sustainability for all soldiers. This high-performing organization will keep Fort Knox on the cutting edge of the future combat soldier programs. I asked Assistant TRADOC System Manager-Soldier to update the Armored Force on recent progress in individual soldier development.*

Advancements in technology will change 21st century warfare. Soldiers — America's ultimate weapon — will continue to close with and destroy the enemy, but emerging technologies will yield new combat capabilities. In

fact, technological advances promise to enhance the combat crewman's fighting capabilities, to include lethality and dispersion, volume and precision of fire, integrative technology, mass and effects, and invisibility, and delectability.

U.S. interests abroad seem to shift and expand, but never diminish. A vast array of regional threats and challenges to U.S. interests are ever present. The U.S. Army must be capable of anticipating and responding to future challenges. Future battlefields will be characterized by systems of increasing lethality and technological capabilities, such as direct-fire weapons, laser and radio frequency weapons, electronic and information warfare, low observable technologies, and weapons of mass destruction.

Today's Army is fully prepared to serve the Nation and stands ready to fulfill all missions required in the current operational environment. However, the changing nature of that operational environment and the potential for dramatic advances through new technologies present the need and opportunity to transform the U.S. Army and its mounted soldiers into an even more responsive and effective force. Balancing risk with the necessity of readiness, new operational requirements, homeland security, and Army Transformation ensures that soldier modernization will remain an overriding imperative for the future.

Key to the Army's Transformation efforts will be our ability to modernize the mounted soldier. Harnessing the power of advanced technologies, especially information technology to achieve

situational dominance and decision-making momentum will create a new construct for the application of force. Mounted Warrior modernization along with the evolution of Future Combat Systems and the Unit of Action will provide the Army a force that is dominant at every point on the spectrum of conflict.

The Mounted Warrior Soldier System (MWSS) will leverage the best of capabilities that are evolving in other Warrior Programs, such as Land Warrior and Air Warrior, eventually maturing to an Objective Force Soldier System capability. Technological advancements will allow the fighting vehicle crewmen to close with the enemy by means of fire and maneuver to destroy, capture, or to repel his assault while the combat support and combat service support vehicle crewmen are better connected to the situation and better prepared to maximize the capabilities of their vehicles and their support function.

The MWSS will be developed and fielded in three blocks using a modernization strategy that conforms to the Army Transformation plan. Designated block improvements will transition the mounted crewmen from Current Forces (2002-2005) to a Stryker Variant (2005-2008), and ultimately to Objective Force (2008 and beyond). Evolutionary development of each block provides an operationally usable increment of capability. Each successive block incorporates newer and better technologies as they become available.

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MWSS components will consist of lightweight, modular, mission tailorable, integrated equipment, and command, control, communications, and computers (C4) devices, worn, carried, or used by crewmen when conducting tactical operations with their assigned combat vehicles. Overall design of the MWSS will achieve optimum synergy of components to decrease mission time; increase crewman mission performance, to include dismounted activities; improve comfort and endurance; enhance man-machine interface; and improve safety. Increased organizational effectiveness and improved combat vehicle lethality will be achieved through enhanced man-machine interface.

America's 21st century Army must be powerful, versatile, and able to respond worldwide with overwhelming, technologically superior force that renders any potential adversary impotent while minimizing the cost in soldiers' lives. Standing still would jeopardize our position as the world's best Army. Only by enhancing current equipment with advanced technology and providing high-quality soldiers with state-of-the-art weapons systems can the Army build a full spectrum force capable of fulfilling America's security needs well into the next century.

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*As you can see from this article, the future will deliver some very exciting systems. The technology that is at our fingertips will change the way soldiers will think, act, and fight. With this all said, I want everyone to remember that even with all of this technology, the individual "SOLDIER" will always be our greatest combat multiplier.*

*I hope all of you had a wonderful holiday season and remember, "PRIDE IS CONTAGIOUS," so get out and infect other soldiers.*

I am very interested in receiving concerns, comments, and suggestions from soldiers out in the field. Please send all questions and comments to the following email address:

*CSM@knox.army.mil*