

# DRIVER'S SEAT

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## Creativity — The Soldier's Vision

Creativity — your vision of how to do things better, more efficiently, for optimum effectiveness — enhances our opportunity to improve the Army and its ability to fight and win tomorrow's battles.

Fort Knox's Directorate of Force Development, previously the Directorate of Combat Development, has one overriding mission — to modernize the force as we enter the information age. They also provide combat development interface for the armored force with industry, other government agencies, and allied nations.

One of the key programs managed by the directorate that directly impacts armor soldiers is the Soldier Enhancement Program (SEP). The program is a Congressionally-funded initiative that began in 1989 to increase the combat effectiveness of soldiers. Some of these items are already in use. They include lighter, more comfortable load-bearing equipment, field gear, survivability items, communication equipment, and navigation aids. The intent of the SEP is to quickly field (within 2-3 years) promising developmental and commercial off-the-shelf items. The program bypasses many of the steps in the current acquisition process.

For efficiency, the program is divided into categories and between proponents:

- Dismounted Soldiers: The United States Army Infantry School (USAIS)

- Combat Crews (Ground): A joint effort between The United States Army Armor School (USAARMS), and The United States Army Infantry School (USAIS)
- Combat Crews (Air): The United States Army Aviation School (USAVNS)
- Other Soldiers: Combined Arms Support Command (CASCOM)

These organizations are responsible for the identification, idea generation, documentation, and development of materials needed to eliminate battle-field deficiencies.

SEP is a team effort that begins with the Army's most valuable asset, the individual soldier. The program solicits suggestions from individual soldiers, commanders, and other combat development organizations. These suggestions are evaluated and documented. Those selected are taken through a series of steps which indicate either off-the-shelf procurement or contract development. To meet a crisis or rapid deployment situation, SEP can recommend emergency procurement, surge production, or special modifications of current equipment. Once the item is procured and field tests are conducted, the item is issued to soldiers in the field.

Some programs initiated under SEP are: The ambidextrous shoulder holster (ASH), a shoulder holster, usable by both right- and left-handed soldiers; the thellie suit, a camouflage-pattern suit that suppresses the thermal signature of

the wearer; the mounted crewmen boot, an all-weather, safety combat boot designed specifically for mounted warriors; and the mounted crewman compartmented equipment bag (MCCEB), a water-resistant compartmented bag to store and secure equipment as a supplement to the duffel bag and ALICE rucksack. These ideas weren't developed in a secret laboratory or an Army "think tank." They came from individual soldiers, like yourself looking for a better way to do business.

The Soldier Support Branch of the Directorate of Force Development manages SEP for Fort Knox. If you wish to submit material you can do so either by calling DSN 464-4794 or commercial (502) 624-4794. The E-mail address is AINSWORR@KNOX-EMH1.ARMY.MIL, or write to: Commander, USAARMC, ATTN: ATZK-FDS (SGT Ainsworth), Fort Knox, KY 40121-5000.

Your proposal should contain: the item's description, objective, application, possible commercial source of procurement, whether the proposal will replace an existing item, and if the item is used by a sister service. Finally, include your name, rank, organization, and telephone number. SEP was developed to harvest the wealth of knowledge of the force. Your participation in the program will enhance our ability to improve equipment and increase the survivability of our Army. The program is in place; now all we need is your imagination to make it a success!