Army moves closer to fielding EMBM solution

By John Higgins PEO IEW&S Public Affairs

Chief Warrant Officer 3 William Insch, an EW Technician with the Army's Project Manager Electronic Warfare & Cyber (PM EW&C), gathered more than 50 electronic warfare (EW) and electromagnetic spectrum managers (ESM) Soldiers from around the globe for Product Manager Electronic Warfare Integration's (PdM EWI) User Verification Event, or UVE, for their premier platform, the Electronic Warfare Planning and Management Tool (EWMPT). The objective of the UVE was to obtain feedback from the EW/ESM 0perational force.

The EWPMT is a battlespace visualization and analysis application that lets electronic warfare officers and electromagnetic spectrum managers coordinate in a shared overlay style that prioritizes their area of expertise: the electromagnetic spectrum.

"The value of having these senior folks who have done EW their whole career," said Insch, "is that they've deployed at all levels from brigade to Army Command, and that experience makes their critical user feedback vital to ensuring that we're providing the force a product they can actually use."

To ensure a range of input from the force, Insch brought in personnel from school houses, training centers, units already familiar with EWPMT from events like Cyber Blitz, OCONUS representatives, and joint organizations for feedback. Key participants from the training centers included Chief Warrant Officer 3 Nicholas Esser, an Electronic Warfare Instructor from the Warrant Officer Basic Course out of Fort Sill, Okla and Chief Warrant Officer 2 William Flannigan, a Soldier from the National Training Center in California. These two officers will be introducing and designing the ongoing training, respectively.

"Getting the capability drop at the school house is critical," said Esser. "At the school house we have instructors who have been instructors their whole career, they've gone from brigade to division to joint levels and finally to the school house teaching. We're finally getting to a point where it's a home grown branch of people."

While Esser represents a school house perspective on what the EMPWT will need, Flannigan focuses on mobilization and training of larger combat elements.

"One of my major objectives is to get this to the combat training centers and start implementing it through their training and validation," said Flannigan. "Practice like we fight. We do a minimum of ten units per year. It would be really good to get this out there and get more feedback from the soldiers that are deploying with it."

"It's exciting to see we actually have a tool now and we're actually working toward a solution." Flannigan said, and his priority is ensuring more time and training with the EWPMT. "If we all get new gear but we're not using it in training then we're not going to implement it downrange," he said.

Incorporating the EWMPT in the Military Decision Making process was another key point for many of personnel who travelled to the Aberdeen area for UVE. Capt. Sacarra Pusey, an Electronic Warfare Officer with 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division out of Fort Polk, LA, said;

"Cyberblitz was our first time seeing the EWPMT, besides hearing about it during training as a officer

during our school." "They talked about it but we never saw it. During Blitz we had a chance to use the EWMPT Ravenclaw and the CEMBM [Cyber and Electromagnetic Battle Management] tools, collocated throughout the TOC, the BISE [Brigade Intelligence Support Element] the Coo-OPS floor and Floo-OPS floor. Now they've brought us back to continue to assess the equipment, so my NCO's were able to talk to [the engineer] and gives updates, 'can we have the right click capability, can we have the alerts hidden, can we talk through the chat,' and as we went through the steps in the processes a lot of the kinks were taken care of."

Pusey could see the EWMPT being useful in visualizing the role of Electronic Warfare to a combatant commander.

"We are tech savvy, but if I show the colonel what I'm seeing in the EWMPT, that helps explain that message that I'm trying to get across. He'll hear we're 'producing EW effects along this line' in the vicinity of something, but if I show him the coverage map, he will see that piece much more clearly."

Warrant Officer Arquímides Sanchez, an Electronic Warfare Technician with the 2nd Combat Aviation Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, travelled all the way from the Korean peninsula for the UVE, said "The system we are evaluating here is key for new developments in the EW community. We don't have this asset yet, it will be fielded next year and it will allow to be more efficient against these threats in the multi-domain battle space."

Sanchez focused on the EWMPT's, and all military equipment's core purpose, the Soldier. "There's no talk about the Soldier's life and that importance." he said. "This capability provides that. This tool will save lives. If we get it faster."

Col. Kevin Finch, the man responsible for that speed and the Project Manager for EW&C, made it a point to stop by and made sure every last participant would leave with his business card in hand after giving them a brief talk to encourage the flow of the ever important feedback.

"This a great event for EWPMT, the fact that we have Soldiers from across the Army coming and providing this feedback." said Finch. "This is just going to make for a better capability for our Soldiers. Our leadership has made it a point to tell that Soldier touch points and Soldier feedback should be driving our capability development and this is what's happening here. We are getting valuable feedback that can provide the best capability to our Army in the future."

Another EWPMT UVE is scheduled for early April as well as a limited implementation for use at NTC to exercise the networking capabilities with training platforms from TSMO and Army QRCs such as Sabre Fury and XMAX.