



MRO MILITARY ROUNDTABLE:

Driving Lifecycle Sustainment

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April 16, 2007

Aerospace and defense maintenance/repair/overhaul leaders met April 16 in Atlanta for the third annual AVIATION WEEK MRO Military Roundtable: Driving Lifecycle Sustainment. Leaders examined progress on lifecycle sustainment over the past four years, from establishing metrics and key performance parameters to the role of performance-based logistics contracts in enabling sustainment improvement. The roundtable was sponsored by UGS, leader in lifecycle sustainment and management.

The roundtable was hosted by Charles T. "Tony" Robertson, vice president of maintenance, modifications and upgrades with Boeing Integrated Defense Systems. Past MRO Military roundtables have been hosted by Gen. Speedy Martin, formerly the commander of USAF Materiel Command, and by David Pauling, who recently retired as Assistant Deputy Undersecretary of Defense – materiel readiness and maintenance.

The focus during this session was on moving forward with lifecycle sustainment, focus on the key performance parameters in doing so, and next steps to assure the current course of direction is maintained to allow continuous improvement and assuring expansion to global sustainment on major systems. Participants emphasized lifecycle management to assure the right balance between performance and overall weapon system affordability. This includes looking at overall sustainment as part of design and development to optimize cost. Of continued concern is integration of legacy weapon systems into the sustainment versus repair environment.

SCORECARD: AVIATION WEEK MRO Military Roundtable

Accomplished during past roundtables:

1. Establish performance-based logistics contracting parameters and rationale; review initial PBL performance and issues; set agenda for establishing standard metrics
2. Review draft Key Performance Parameters for Office of Secretary of Defense; refine and integrate into industry metrics (reliability, readiness, lifecycle cost, capability)
3. Push for OSD-level meetings with industry leaders to review critical issues, including sustainment/readiness requirements (held Q1 2007)

Recommendations: 2007 MRO Military Roundtable

Three primary recommendations developed in the April roundtable.

1. Institutionalize MRO Military Roundtables
 - Must include top level leaders from all US service branches
 - Must be held more frequently than once per year
2. Recommend OSD establish an overall champion for lifecycle sustainment
 - Remain in place long enough to see through implementation/improvement
 - Provide authority/budget to enable lifecycle sustainment across all service branches
 - Identify methods to better incorporate legacy weapon systems
3. Expand discussion to collaborate with international allies/partners

The AVIATION WEEK MRO Military Roundtable is a self-governed organization of industry and government leaders committed to identifying critical issues that cross the boundaries of their organizations and making recommendations as to how to move forward in resolving the issues. It takes the concept of "think globally, act locally" into the formation of a community of like-minded professionals to improve the performance of the industry as a whole. Participants in the MRO Military Roundtable represented the OSD, US Air Force, Boeing, Battelle Institute, BlueWater Solutions, Northrop Grumman Technical Services, Lockheed Martin, GE Infrastructure/Aviation, Pratt & Whitney, Sikorsky Aircraft, Smiths Aerospace, Honeywell Aerospace, Bell Helicopter, AugustaWestland Bell, AAI, HEICO, Standard Aero, AeroStrategy, NGRain, and UGS.

In opening the meeting, Tony Robertson said, "This forum represents an opportunity to talk about the best way forward for warfighters." He noted the need to assure a joint approach to sustainment issues to realize the full potential of cost savings and full capability, while also assuring the flexibility and agility needed to meet requirements as they emerge.

Roundtable participants identified several factors adversely affecting sustainment:

- Politicization of the effort; change of leadership at OSD and short-term assignments by critical leaders (e.g. Gen. Bruce Carlson, Gen. James Pillsbury and VADM Venlet – how long in place and ability to fully implement)
- Approaches to sustainment vary by service branch and even among programs within a single service branch
- Different “colors” of money and how to assure full flexibility in capturing monetary savings to invest in further sustainment initiatives

Results of the Roundtable Work Groups

Tables 1A/1B Assure collaboration and jointness with regard to sustainment

Table Leaders: Pete Hennessey, Battelle Institute; and Tony Robertson, Boeing IDS

- A. Sustainment is a global task, not just a depot-level task. There is not currently an individual with the passion and energy to synthesize the sustainment issues across all DoD organizations and codify how to proceed. Today’s weapon systems are not just US or service branch specific systems – they are being modified and maintained, along with industry partners from around the world, at global locations.
- B. The definition of joint is inconsistent. It involves the enterprise of MRO/sustainment and thus Defense Logistics Agency, industry, program leaders from all branches.
- C. Utilizing performance based contracting or outcome based relationships varies as to whether program is legacy or new. There is a need to bring both to a common end-state and establish a time frame for doing so.
- D. Overcoming debate and recognize need to accelerate improvement. The participants believe this requiring ongoing formal dialogue and that someone be held accountable for progress in bringing “joint” approach and implementation.
- E. In the area of metrics, further spread and refinement of common terms, the investment required to achieve metrics. Again, the group identified the issue of who is responsible for achieving this commonality.

Tables 2A/2B: Accelerate Jointness and Sustainment Improvements re: US Air Force and Navy

Table Leaders: Gustavo Urzua, Boeing IDS; and Lou Kratz, Lockheed Martin

- A. Impediments to achieving jointness and agility were identified as the desire for service branches to maintain autonomy, the varied information technology systems currently in use and contracting methodologies not consistent with goals of lifecycle sustainment (availability, readiness, cycle times, cost) and achieving efficiency and affectivity through “joint” relationships.
- B. To “fix” the impediments, the groups called for establishment of forums that are chartered to focus on achieving joint/agile sustainment and given the responsibility and authority to achieve these goals through top-level participation.
- C. Resources needed to better align all weapon systems to these goals include common definition of terms for condition-based maintenance at all levels (in the field, on the ramp, at the depot; the alignment of depot capability across all service branches to meet multiple needs; and the absolute need to fully understand the warfighter’s priorities versus perceived priorities and flow information back through supply chain.
- D. Identify small pool of legacy weapon system programs and fund/lead transfer to sustainment versus “fix it/repair it”.
- E. Most significant barrier to achieving the desired agility/jointness in lifecycle sustainment is “control” and perceived loss of power and control.

- F. Need clear line of sight as to how savings achieved can benefit the warfighter's capability.
- G. Identify and empower a champion with final authority and funding to accelerate transformation to sustainment environment and responsibility for articulating the value to the warfighter and taxpayer in doing so.
- H. Must identify and fully use a process to achieve "voice of the customer" – the service member who is using and maintaining the system in the field.

Table 3: Accelerate Jointness and Sustainment Improvements, US Army

Leader: Steve Carlson, Smiths Aerospace

- A. Establish a DOD maintenance/repair/overhaul Center of Excellence. This center would exemplify commonality, effectiveness of standardization where possible (to include commoditization).
- B. Standardize the information flow. Information available regarding metrics and data should be timely, accurate and include a forecasting component with regard to readiness requirements. This standardization would reflect current goal of availability and readiness versus the goals previously used, e.g. back order hours.
- C. WE must work the international aspect of our operation. This includes the difficulties of ITAR/import and export. This system and process needs to be standardized and referenced as a single guide to eliminate the transactional process used today. The participants request this be specifically addressed with OSD with State Dept.
- D. Establish a common asset pool for inventory purposes. Currently serial numbers vary by program and by government/customer. The group felt best approach would be to use F-35 as model to facilitate this.
- E. Establish readiness metrics for every system and flow down through supply chain. This would aid in controlling cost as 100% readiness is not usually the goal for end-users/warfighters. Difficult to adequately plan and contract for readiness without that metric identified and communicated as operations tempo fluctuates.
- F. With regard to US Army transformation, the participants recommended defining reset maintenance versus new/restored measures; process to redefine delivery and requirements according to much-revised operational tempo requirements.

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