
The U.S. Army Materiel Command's Research, Development and Standardization Groups

By

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The first U.S. Army Materiel Command (AMC) Research, Development, and Standardization Group (or Stan Group) came into being at the end of World War II when General Eisenhower and British Field Marshall Montgomery agreed to form an organization to help sustain the level of interoperability achieved between U.S. and British forces during the war. Four other AMC Stan Groups now exist with a sixth being created. The original organization formed in London in 1948 was dedicated to promoting interoperability. Today, four decades later, the Stan Groups' functions have broadened and diversified, but their primary mission—to enhance the security of the United States, the host nation, and NATO or the American-British-Canadian-Australian (ABCA) Armies by increasing bilateral cooperation and promoting rationalization, standardization, and interoperability (RSI)—has neither changed nor diminished in importance.

Through the close cooperation between the English-speaking armies during and immediately after World War II, the early focus of the Stan Groups was on standardization of concepts and doctrine. While achieving the highest degree of interoperability through materiel and non-materiel standardization continues to be one their most important functions, the current mission of the Stan Groups reflects recent themes of improving armaments cooperation, keeping abreast of overseas scientific and technological developments, and promoting cooperative opportunities in all aspects of materiel research, development, production, and acquisition.

Besides the original Stan Group in the United Kingdom, Stan Groups exist in Canada, Australia, Germany, and France—with a potential sixth group in Japan. Although the missions of the Stan Groups are basically similar, each is tailored to meet the local situation. The following discussion provides some insights into the characteristics of each group.

United Kingdom

For over four decades the Stan Group in London (USARDSG-UK) has acted as the U.S. Army point of contact with the British Ministry of Defence on all matters relating to materiel development and standardization. The USARDSG-UK is the largest of the Groups and consists of a military standardization element and an Army research element. As part of its mission, the Group participates regularly in various ABCA Quadripartite working groups established to enhance standardization, interacts with working panels under the auspices of the NATO Army Armaments Group, and funds research efforts in Europe in support of U.S. Army laboratory needs.

The trend in the past two decades toward more international cooperative projects to husband scarce R&D and acquisition resources has resulted in increased opportunities for the Group to perform market surveillance or market investigation among seven European countries in addition to the United Kingdom (i.e., Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden). This effort has led to identifying numerous off-the-shelf, non-developmental items (NDI) with the potential to satisfy U.S. Army requirements, to shorten fielding time, and to reduce costs. Some of the more visible equipment fielded from U.K. NDI are the L119 lightweight 105mm howitzer, an improved 81mm mortar, the MK1 bridge erection set, and a chemical agent monitor.

As the quality and quantity of basic research in critical technologies in Europe has increased over the years, greater U.S. Army access to and interaction with this extended research community has become a dynamic challenge. The Stan Group works to assist AMC gain access to this community. This challenge is being met on a daily basis by USARDSG-UK scientists and other personnel who help keep the U.S. Army on the cutting edge of defense technologies.

Canada

Formed at the end of World War II, like its sister organization in the United Kingdom, the AMC Stan Group in Ottawa (USARDSG-CA) continues to perform its dual missions of representing the U.S. Army in quadripartite (ABCA) and bilateral programs, and performing liaison functions between AMC and the Canadian Government and industry. Cooperation with Canada is a natural consequence of proximity, language similarity, and high quality defense products that can support U.S. Army programs. The USARDSG-CA consists of a Commander and 3 civilians.

The primary framework for U.S.-Canadian cooperation is the 1963 "Memorandum of Understanding in the Field of Cooperative Development." This agreement established the Defense Development Sharing Program (DDSP) whose objective is to maintain a high technology production base in Canada. Canada's special relationship with the United States is reflected in various statutes and regulations which specify that Canadian companies are considered the same as U.S. companies in materiel acquisition and have an equal opportunity to compete for most contracts.

In addition to promoting and supporting DDSP working groups, the USARDSG-CA directs most of its effort at market surveys requested by Headquarters AMC or locally initiated to relate qualified Canadian companies to U.S. Army materiel requirements. Contact with Canadian companies is made through trade association meetings, the Canadian Government (e.g., the Department of External Affairs; the Department of Industry, Science, and Technology, and the Department of National Defence), as well as through less structured networking. Initiation of a scientific and engineering exchange program with Canada is a priority for the USARDSG-CA along with the establishment of a technology base development program that would involve the National Research Council of Canada.

Australia

The USARDSG-AS in Canberra is located at the Australian Department of Defense (Army Office). Under the Basic Standardization Agreement of 1964 between the ABCA Armies, the USARDSG-AS Commander serves as the U.S. Army's senior standardization representative to the Australian and New Zealand armies. Thus, the Stan Group is accredited to both armies.

The primary mission of the USARDSG-AS is to represent and act as a direct link between the U.S. Army and its counterpart R&D and user communities in-country. The Group provides assistance on a variety of international cooperative R&D, production, and acquisition programs, particularly ABCA programs, and also monitors the participation of New Zealand in these programs. Group members participate in Quadripartite (TEAL) conferences, ABCA, and U.S.-Australian exercises, the Technical Cooperation Program, and various other scientific exchanges and industrial visits.

Germany

In recognition of Germany's technological capability to contribute to interoperability and standardization of NATO equipment, the U.S. Army Research, Development and Standardization Group-Germany (USADSG-GE) was established in 1980. It is located in the U.S. embassy in

Bonn and, in addition to the Commander, includes 3 military officers who act as international research and development coordinators. A civilian liaison officer, who is located at the German Federal Office for Military Technology and Procurement, is also part of the Group. The Group interacts with the German Army Staff and the Armaments Division of the Federal Ministry of Defense in Bonn, as well as with the General Army office in Cologne, and with German defense industry.

The USADSG-GE serves as a catalyst in satisfying Army materiel needs by proposing potential cooperative projects and suggesting new data exchanges under a Master Data Exchange Agreement or through the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding. The Group participates actively in the data exchange process and assists in arranging for the exchange of scientific and technical information and related equipment.

The USADSG-GE helps to find candidates for the Foreign Weapons Evaluation (FWE) and NATO Comparative Test programs. [Editor's note. See the preceding article, "International Armaments Cooperation: A Test and Evaluation Perspective," for a discussion of FWE and NCT programs.] German candidates for these testing programs have included the M.A.N truck, NBC contamination marking sets, and 5.56mm and 50 caliber plastic training ammunition. USADSG-GE also provides an on-site representation to the Army Armaments Working Group (AAWG), a standing subgroup of the U.S. German Bilateral Staff Talks. Achievements of the AAWG include the harmonization of materiel requirements for future extended-range artillery munitions, development of a C³ interoperability plan, and establishment of expert working groups in various areas.

Members of the USADSG-GE have made significant contributions to cooperative R&D activities between the United States and its allies in central Europe. The Group continues to contribute to and promote interest and improvement in international cooperation, with a corresponding increase in savings to U.S. Army materiel acquisition efforts. Their goal is to enhance the combat effectiveness of the U.S. and German armies by ensuring that R&D and procurement activities are coordinated as closely as possible and that limited defense resources are used to their maximum advantage.

France

The position of AMC Representative to France was created in 1985 to provide a vital link between AMC and the French research, development, and acquisition community. This one-man office works closely with the Office of Defense Cooperation in the U.S. embassy in Paris, and provides a catalyst for information exchange and education, facilitates joint R&D efforts, and coordinates RSI activities that are mutually beneficial to the United States and France. It also provides an interface between French and U.S. companies and AMC, coordinates efforts for the Nunn cooperative R&D and FWE programs, and promotes U.S.-French armaments cooperation.

Although France maintains its independence from the NATO military structure, it has participated increasingly in international armaments cooperation. Major exchanges with the United States include the U.S. Army's adaptation of the French RITA system for its mobile subscriber equipment and the French Army's adaptation of the Multiple Launch Rocket System. Future areas for cooperation include technology base efforts in electro-mechanical and electro-thermal gun technology, laser research, microelectronic research, ground and air missile R&D, advanced sensor technology, and advanced armor and cannon systems.

Conclusion

The increasing cost of new weapon system developments, the reduction in U.S. and allied defense budgets, and the rapid development of new technologies will continue to require greater international cooperation in armaments R&D in the future. As stated by Deputy Secretary of Defense Atwood at a major symposium in Washington, the goal of the Bush Administration—like the Defense Guidance of the previous administration—continues to be for 10 percent of the U.S. research, development, and acquisition budget to be spent in cooperative R&D by FY 1994 and to increase that amount to 25 percent by FY 2000. With this in mind, the U.S. Army must vigorously pursue joint developments with European and other allied and friendly nations. The AMC Stan Groups are vital players in bringing about such joint developments.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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