

Sea-Air-Space: Looking Ahead to a Modern Marine Corps



Major General Jason Woodworth makes a point during the panel on modernizing the Marine Corps. *Photo credit: Dan Goodrich* Six years into its modernization initiative, the Marine Corps has a head start on some of its sister services. But there's still more to be done, said panelists during the April 8 session "Modernizing the Marine Corps: Building an Agile, Lethal and Resilient Force."

"It's exciting and we need to go faster," summed up Lieutenant General Eric Austin, deputy commandant for combat development and integration and commanding general of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command.

Austin emphasized the Marine campaign of learning and its influence on force design. "How we responsibly modernize the Marine Corps is how we execute force design," he said.

Lieutenant General Benjamin Watson, commanding general, Training and Education Command, said the Corps has traditionally relied on brick-and-mortar training solutions, “but that’s not the world we’re in these days.”

He cited initiatives like Project Triumph’s emphasis on leveraging technology to be more efficient and effective, and Project Tripoli’s emphasis on a live, virtual and constructive training environment.

“We’re increasingly fielding more complicated and sophisticated systems that are tougher and more costly to train on. I think if you look at what we’re seeing in contemporary conflict, it’s not much of a stretch to say we will never fight again with what’s traditionally known as air superiority,” Watson said, citing the need for unmanned systems integration, data and artificial intelligence.



“It’s exciting, and we need to go faster,” said Lieutenant General Eric Austin. *Photo credit: Dan Goodrich*

“One of our mantras is the idea that any Marine using a

precision weapon can kill someone who needs killing at 500 meters. But now that's up to 15, 20 kilometers and beyond" through the use of technology like first-person view drones, he said.

Major General Jason Woodworth, commander, Marine Corps Installations Command, and assistant deputy commandant, Installations and Logistics, discussed the importance of Barracks 2030, noting that modernizing aging structures is one of the commandant's top priorities.

"It's where warrior and family readiness starts. If Marines are good at home, they're better at work," he said.

Brigadier General Robert Brodie, director, Expeditionary Warfare OPNAV N95, said he's seeing good collaboration between the Marine Corps and industry on modernization initiatives. He said in terms of shipbuilding, the most successful companies have great relationships with other industry partners as well.

Brodie and the other panelists said to further facilitate Marine-industry partnerships, members of the Corps need to do a better job of defining exactly what they're looking for from industry – including opportunities for industry to help them understand a problem, define the problem and shape solutions.