



The Army's Warfighter Information Network-Tactical (WIN-T) Program

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What Is WIN-T?

The WIN-T program is the Army's high-speed, high-capacity tactical communications network to distribute classified and unclassified information through all echelons of Army command by means of voice, data, and real-time video. WIN-T was being developed and fielded in three increments.

WIN-T Increment 1

[WIN-T Increment 1](#) is a stationary network for command posts and units at battalion-level and above. It provides a full range of at-the-halt data, voice, and video communications. The Army began fielding WIN-T Increment 1 in 2004 and completed fielding in 2012.

WIN-T Increment 2

[WIN-T Increment 2](#) is intended to be the Army's initial mobile network providing combat vehicles with on-the-move communications, mission command, and situational awareness. WIN-T Increment 2 is an [Acquisition Category 1C Major Defense Acquisition Program](#) with a total life cycle cost of \$20 billion and a total procurement cost of \$9.1 billion. It was first fielded in October 2012. As of March 2017, WIN-T Increment 2 had been [fielded](#) to 14 Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs), 7 Division Headquarters, and the U.S. Army Signal School and the program remained on track to field two units per year.

WIN-T Increment 3

[WIN-T Increment 3](#) was intended to be the Army's full mobile network designed to provide on-the-move mission command for all Army commanders—from theater to company level. In FY2014, it was [restructured](#) due to cost concerns with selected Increment 3 capabilities to be incorporated into the WIN-T Increment 2 program.

Congressional Research Service

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Selected Program Reports

The following reports capture a range of programmatic issues of concern to the Department of Defense (DOD), the Army, and Congress.

Director, Operational Test and Evaluation (DOT&E) FY2015 Annual Report

DOD's DOT&E's FY2015 assessment of WIN-T noted a number of improvements to program components but also identified shortcomings, such as integrating WIN-T equipment with M-1126 Stryker combat vehicles. There were also concerns with integrating WIN-T into space and power-constrained M-1 Abrams tanks and M-2 Bradley fighting vehicles. Most notably, DOT&E found WIN-T Increment 2 continued to demonstrate cybersecurity vulnerabilities and therefore was not survivable in an adversarial environment.

March 2016 DOD Inspector General (IG) Report on WIN-T Increment 2

DOD's Inspector General found the Army's planned procurement of 3,674 WIN-T Increment 2 systems was not adequately justified because an unapproved force structure was used for procurement planning. In addition, procurement quantities might also be incorrect due to unaffordable and unsustainable mission command systems associated with WIN-T Increment 2. With planned procurement quantities changing significantly five times since 2007, the DOD IG questioned the necessity and validity of the Army's procurement quantity.

Government Accountability Office (GAO) 2017 Assessments of Selected Weapon Programs

GAO notes WIN-T Increment 2 has made progress against performance and reliability standards. However, this was achieved, in part, by lowering operational reliability standards from 90% to 80%, with the Army deeming the previous 90% standard as "excessively high" when compared with predecessors and analogous systems. GAO also noted while WIN-T Increment 2 continues to carry high risk in terms of defensive capabilities against cyberattack, it is making progress in mitigating previously identified deficiencies.

Congressional and Army Concerns and a New Network Strategy

Congress has expressed a range of concerns with the WIN-T program. Senator John McCain, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, noted during a May 25, 2017, hearing, "Most recently, the committee has learned of the failure of the Warfighter Information Network-Tactical, or WIN-T. This program has cost the taxpayer over \$6 billion and has yet to meet the requirements of our warfighters." In contrast, on April 7, 2016, 146 members of the House sent a letter to the acting Secretary of the Army stating they were "troubled by the Army's drastically reduced request for funding of the program in Fiscal Year 2017."

Army leadership has also expressed its concerns. Army Chief of Staff General Mark Milley reportedly noted during the May 25 hearing:

I, the vice chief of staff of the Army and a small group of people, are driving a rigorous, thorough and painful review of the entire communication, electromagnetic capabilities of the U.S. Army—which WIN-T is one part of. ... Frankly, my concern is that these systems may or may not work in the conditions of combat that I envision in the future with this changing character of warfare.

General Milley also reportedly acknowledged the following WIN-T shortcomings:

Line of sight and electromagnetic spectrum [problems]. The inability to operate on the move; the inability to operate in large, dense, complex urban areas and complex terrain. And it is fragile. And it is vulnerable.

On September 27, 2017, the Army [outlined](#) a new network strategy to Congress. The Army proposed to “halt” WIN-T Increment 2 and two other associated programs, generating \$2.3 billion in savings from FY2019 to FY2023. These savings would be reinvested to, among other things, “fix the network’s most pressing interoperability and security concerns”; “adapt and buy better systems”; and “fix the network by improving survivability to electronic warfare, cyber capabilities, and the mobility of command posts.”

Some Members have [reportedly expressed concerns](#) with the Army’s new network strategy. Reportedly, a number of Members suggested they would withhold their support for the new strategy until a “clearly articulated approach that identifies systems to replace those that would be jettisoned” is identified. One Member reportedly characterized the Army’s strategy as “somewhat half-baked and not fully thought through.”

Possible Future Actions

It is possible the Army might revise its new network strategy to address congressional concerns. Another possible action to place emphasis on rectifying network and WIN-T deficiencies could be for the Army to make the network and WIN-T its [number one modernization priority](#). In this regard, it could be argued that having a modernized fleet of combat vehicles, combat units, and headquarters is of little value if there is not a commensurate communications, command and control, and intelligence capability.

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