

# What is Capability Set 13 about?

*Q&A with COL Mark Elliott  
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**Q: What is the intent behind fielding network systems as Capability Sets?**

The concept behind capability sets is to remove the burden from the maneuver unit, the commander and the Warfighter of having to do all the integration work down at the unit level. In the past when I was down at different units, we'd get different Programs of Record, different systems that would individually show up at the unit. Although that system came as a whole, it wasn't integrated with other communications and warfighting systems across the board. The concept of the capability set is to do the integration work up front.

We use the Network Integration Evaluations to do the up-front work, which is ensuring that when we introduce some new system into our network, we take it to NIE. We make sure we've worked out the bugs, frequency challenges - we work all that out at NIE. When we take the capability set to the unit, we believe we've reduced, if not totally eliminated, all the potential challenges with integrating the systems into the unit. They get it as a complete set.

**Q: Can you talk about the importance of training on network systems, and how the Army has synchronized the fielding and training for Capability Set 13 to ensure it is done right?**

What we do with the New Equipment Training/New Equipment Fielding for CS 13 is take a look across all of the systems from a mission command perspective, and we integrate those things together so the unit has one training plan that is synchronized throughout.

The NET/NEF process is part of what we're learning through what we do with the 2/1 AD unit at NIE. We're not just testing and evaluating systems - we're also learning how we do the DOT-MLPF. Through the NIE, we look at the training aspect, and how do we integrate that training into units, as well as how leaders are going to utilize it,

and any doctrinal changes that may come about as a result.

Part of our goal, as we field and train network capabilities that will be used by more non-Signal Soldiers, is to make systems more intuitive - if a Soldier looks at it and says, "This is very similar to what I'm using in my everyday life."

The common user will pick up the piece of equipment and it won't be such a departure, and the learning curve is not as steep as you might think it is. That helps that young Soldier, who may not be a communications Soldier, pick up on that a lot better. We believe we've reduced the complexity down, at least as best as we can right now.

**Q: How would you summarize the operational benefits provided by Capability Set 13? How will it make a difference for combat commanders?**

We're pushing more capabilities down to the Soldier level. One of our chief imperatives is we want to network the Soldier. We're doing that with this Capability Set. With the Rifleman Radio and Nett Warrior, now we have position location information on each of our Soldiers. We're taking a concept that was initially used at the platform level, when we could track vehicles around with FBCB2/BFT, and now we're pushing that same concept down to the individual Soldier. For me, that is the number one major enhancement that we're excited about.

If you step up to the next level and how you're trying to do communications on the move, that's what CS 13 and WIN-T Increment 2 gives us.

Commanders are excited about that, because this mobile capability will enhance their capability to command and control beyond fixed Forward Operating Bases.

Whereas before we were a lot more reliant on terrestrial systems, now we can go with satellite communications and cover a much broader area.

CS 13 also includes new management tools that enhance the communications officer's or the warrant officer's ability to track the network at the

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brigade level.

**Q: What are the Army's priorities for Capability Set 14?**

To continue to build on this baseline of Capability Set 13. With NIE 12.2 we established the baseline; now we're going to continue to build on that, to look at the additional capabilities we can add to that.

At NIE 13.1 we are taking a look at how we network our heavy platforms, additional ways that we power our systems, and whether we need a "mid-tier" network bridging capability to go from our lower tier to our upper tier.

We're working through that, and what type of radios to use to do that.

**Q: How do you envision NIEs evolving in the future?**

Just like we have worked to establish this baseline for our Army network, we are going to have to extend this to the Joint community first, and move that on to our coalition partners as well.

Given the environment, if we have to do any conflict resolution or engagements, we're probably not going to do that ourselves – we're going to do that as a joint DoD community, or bring in our coalition partners. It is a logical next step to bring those communications challenges out to NIE, then see how we can resolve them.

We're also starting to work on our aerial tier – getting smarter on how to have better communications between our air and ground platforms. We'll continue to expand the NIE, but our goal is also to make sure it's manageable for the Soldiers providing feedback.

**Q: What else is important for the Signal community to understand about Capability Sets and the NIE?**

If you're the average Signal reader like I was, you probably never heard of what an NIE was. A lot of people are familiar with what we used to call our Force XXI division. This is similar in nature, but we have this BCT that is available for us, a fully operational BCT that can take that

concept to the next level.

So if you haven't heard about NIE, get involved if you are interested in being on the cutting edge of what the Signal community and the broader Army is doing. Get informed, get involved, because this is the way the Army will continue to develop network capabilities in the future.

*COL Mark A. Elliott was commissioned as a Signal Officer through the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa in 1987. Some of his assignments include platoon leader and operations officer in the 8th Signal Battalion, 8th Infantry Division, Bad Kreuznach, Germany; the chief of plans and operations, Joint Communications Support Element (Airborne), MacDill AFB, Tampa, Fla. After graduating from the Army Command and General Staff College, he was assigned as the deputy G6, then G6, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, and later served as the battalion executive officer, 13th Signal Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division. After graduating from the National War College in Washington DC, COL Elliott took command of the 1st Signal Brigade, Yongsan Garrison, Seoul Korea.*

## ACRONYM QuickScan

**2/1 AD** – 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division  
**BCT** – Brigade Combat Team  
**CS** – Capability Set  
**DoD** – Department of Defense  
**DOTMLPF** – Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership, Personnel and Facilities

**FBCB2/BFT** – Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below/Blue Force Tracking  
**NET/NEF** – New Equipment Training/New Equipment Fielding  
**NIE** – Network Integration Evaluation  
**WIN-T** – Warfighter Information Network-Tactical