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Rapid Equipping Force Moves Under TRADOC

FORT BELVOIR, Va. (Feb. 4, 2015) -- The Army's Rapid Equipping Force, or REF, created in 2002 to more quickly meet the materiel needs of commanders operating in Afghanistan, was officially transferred, Jan. 30, to the Army Training and Doctrine Command, also known as TRADOC.

Lt. Gen. Kevin W. Mangum, deputy commanding general of TRADOC, presided over the REF patch ceremony at Fort Belvoir, signaling the organization's transition from Headquarters Department of the Army to TRADOC. REF Soldiers and civilian employees now officially report to TRADOC.

"The Army leadership's decision to maintain the REF and assign it to TRADOC is an important one," Mangum said. "It signals a clear recognition of the awesome capability and amazing potential inherent in this small, but powerful, organization."

The REF identifies and equips emerging technologies to provide the Army flexibility and addresses urgent materiel gaps for the more than 140,000 Soldiers deployed to 150 nations worldwide. The move to TRADOC better positions the organization to identify nonstandard technologies that may be appropriate for wider fielding.

"What you have proven to be able to do, you will continue to do," Mangum said. "The opportunity we all have now is to look at the solutions you develop, and more readily determine whether or not we field them to the larger Army."

The ceremony comes exactly one year after former Undersecretary Joseph W. Westphal named the REF as an enduring Army capability. This transition is more than eight months ahead of schedule.

"In the past year, we've executed many milestones that allowed this transition to happen, and I am extremely proud of the results," said Col. Steven Sliwa, REF director. "We've expanded partnerships and become a more transparent organization. Most importantly, throughout all of the hard work that allowed this transition to happen, the REF continued to support warfighters in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in the Horn of Africa, in Korea and other places around the globe."

The REF will remain on Fort Belvoir, co-located with the Program Executive Office

Soldier, or PEO, to allow for continued close coordination.

"The REF has provided unprecedented capability to our Soldiers and Army units, a capability that has provided overmatch over our adversaries and saved Soldier's lives," said Brig. Gen. Brian P. Cummings, commander of PEO Soldier. PEO Soldier provides REF its project manager, milestone decision authority, and acquisition oversight.

Today, REF also maintains two forward operating centers, one at Bagram Airfield and one in Kuwait, where operations personnel collect requirements and issue nonstandard equipment to Soldiers.

For additional information about the Rapid Equipping Force, call REF Strategic Communications Officer, Kara Ewell at 703-704-9433.

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About the Army's Rapid Equipping Force

The Rapid Equipping Force, headquartered at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, harnesses current and emerging technologies to provide immediate solutions to the urgent challenges of U.S. Army forces deployed globally. Please visit us at www.army.ref.mil or visit our social media pages, Twitter: @USArmyREF, Facebook: Rapid Equipping Force, for more information.