

Maneuver Control System (MCS)

The Maneuver Control System (MCS) is the command and control system for Army maneuver elements in battalion through corps echelons. MCS consists of a network of computer workstations that integrate information from subordinate maneuver units with those from other Army Battle Command System (ABCS) battlefield functional areas to create a single, integrated common operational picture. Tactical information products, such as situation maps and reports, allow the display and manipulation of this information. MCS also provides a means to create, coordinate, and disseminate operational plans and orders. MCS's role in communicating battle plans, orders, and enemy and friendly situation reports makes it a central component of the Army's ongoing effort to digitize the battlefield. MCS capabilities are being developed in blocks. The MCS Block III initiated, and the current Block IV increases, the integration between the ABCS components: All Source Analysis System; Forward Area Air Defense C3I System; Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System; Combat Service Support Control System; and Force XXI Battle Command, Brigade and Below. MCS Block V development began in FY03. Block V shifts development away from the Unix-based MCS workstation environment to a Microsoft Windows-based laptop.

The Army conducted the MCS Block III IOT&E in June 1998. DOT&E concluded that MCS Block III was neither operationally effective nor operationally suitable. The Army subsequently restructured the MCS program, did not field the Block III, and designated the Block IV as the version planned for testing in IOT&E to support the full-rate production decision. In 2002, the Army reviewed the operational requirements for all of the ABCS components to better support the Army transformation to the objective force and the Future Combat System. The resulting requirements support the MCS Block IV testing and the planning for development of future MCS versions.

TEST & EVALUATION ACTIVITY

The Army indefinitely postponed the MCS IOT&E, originally scheduled for April/May 2003, due to deployment of the test unit. The Army has not been able to reschedule the IOT&E. The Army and DOT&E are exploring venues to complete an IOT&E for the MCS.

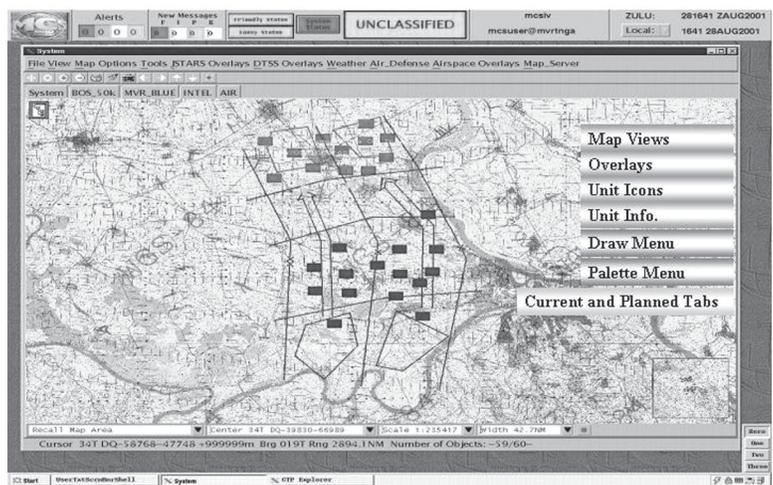
The Joint Requirements Oversight Council approved the revised Operational Requirements Document on December 10, 2002.

The MCS completed a customer test in May 2003 to complete open software discrepancy reports and to provide information on system maturity.

The Army will submit the MCS Test and Evaluation Master Plan for OSD approval when the IOT&E strategy and schedule are defined.

TEST & EVALUATION ASSESSMENT

The Army postponed the MCS IOT&E when the test unit deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom. At the time of the postponement, the MCS did not meet the entrance criteria for the IOT&E. Because of the uncertainty of this schedule and synchronization of ABCS software products, MCS has not been able to execute a more extensive test event to resolve remaining deficiencies. The Program Office has solutions to the high priority deficiencies that will be demonstrated in a coordinated manner as the other ABCS products mature.



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ARMY PROGRAMS

The test unit, 4th Infantry Division, deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom with its full complement of MCS systems and digital tactical operations centers. No information has been made available to DOT&E as to how these systems are performing in support of current operations.

The May 2003 customer test successfully demonstrated correction of several software discrepancy reports. However, due to test limitations, several software discrepancy reports remain open. System maturity continues to improve and the MCS individual workstation functions were stable during the test. However, the network and database functions and procedures that integrate MCS and the Army Battle Command Systems into a digital command and control system remain problematic and fragile.

The Army and DOT&E are working to find acceptable alternative venues, such as warfighter exercises, to accomplish an IOT&E in support of a full-rate production decision as soon as possible.