

Oklahoma UAS and Launched Effects Symposium: Enabling a machine-speed kill chain

February 2025 | Joseph Truelove, Conference Producer, Defence, SAE Media Group

This January 21-22 the Oklahoma National Guard (OKNG) hosted its second annual [Unmanned Aerial Systems and Launched Effects Symposium](#) in Oklahoma City.



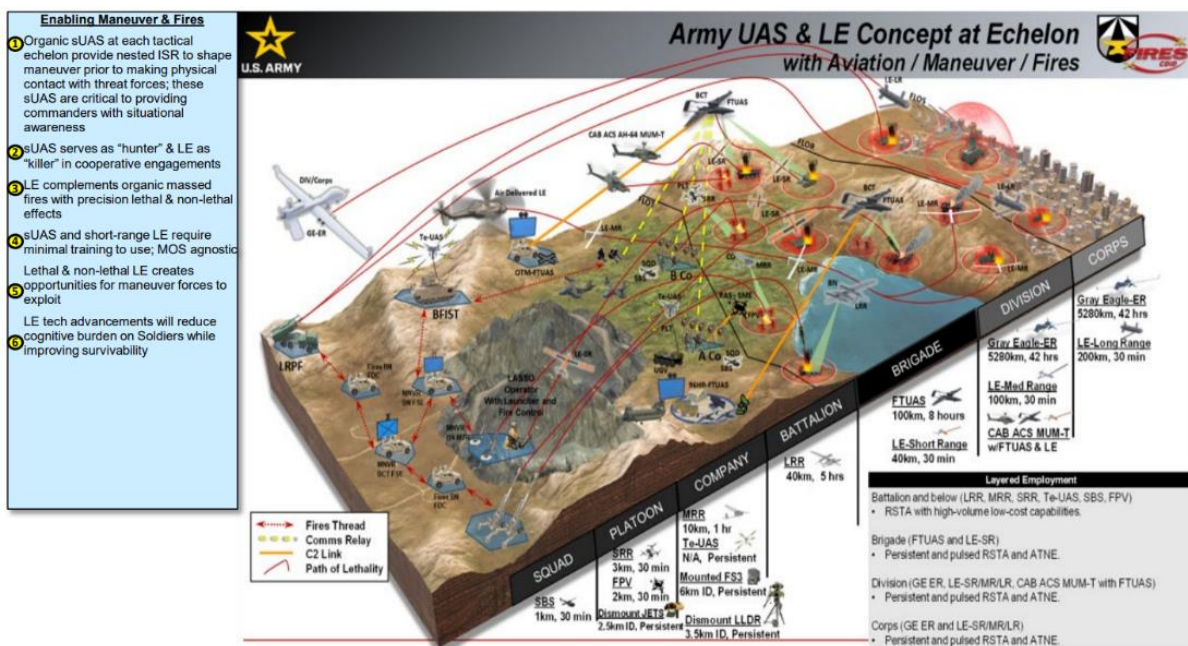
Source: OKHNG Instagram.

The two-day event featured speakers and attendees from military organizations, industry experts, academia and local partners to discuss defense capabilities, challenges, and opportunities in the future of UAS and Launched Effects (LE).

Major Matthew Huff from the U.S. Army's Fires Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate (CDID) outlined the roadmap to "enable a machine-speed kill chain", using launched effects and unmanned aerial systems (LE & UAS) to enable maneuver and fires.

Major Huff, whose [next posting](#) will see him take the role of Air Branch Chief at the Army's Maneuver Capability Development Integration Directorate (MCDID) Robotics Requirements Division, outlined six key points for the Army Futures Command proposed operational concept for LE & UAS at echelon:

1. Organic sUAS at each tactical echelon provide nested intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) to shape maneuver prior to making physical contact with threat forces; these sUAS are critical to providing commanders with situational awareness.
2. sUAS serve as “hunter” & LE as “killer” in cooperative engagements.
3. LE complement organic massed fires with precision lethal and non-lethal effects.
4. sUAS and short-range LE require minimal training to use; MOS agnostic
5. Lethal and non-lethal LE create opportunities for maneuver forces to exploit.
6. LE technology advancements will reduce the cognitive burden on soldiers while improving survivability.



Source: U.S. Army Futures Command

The tone of the symposium was clear: there is a demonstrable need to procure and integrate sUAS and LE’s rapidly. The keynote presentation from Major General Thomas Mancino, Adjutant General for Oklahoma, stressed the importance of the military revolution brought about by the advent of FPV drones in Ukraine and other conflicts across the globe. General Mancino highlighted the cost-effectiveness, versatility, stealth, agility and psychological impact of such drones, noting that the “whirring of an FPV is becoming as iconic as the snap of a bullet.”

Lieutenant Colonel Brent Hill, Deputy Director of the OKNG UAS/LE program, further highlighted the importance of collaboration between the military, academia and private sector partners to ensure the United States maintains a technological edge and achieve the Army's UAS and LE priorities.

"Conflicts around the globe have demonstrated the need for partnerships between the National Guard, Department of Defense, academia and the private sector to ensure U.S. service members gain and maintain an advantage in UAS-based warfare," Hill said.

There was consensus that the current Department of Defense procurement systems are not fit for purpose in the face of the rapidly innovating FPV threat, with several speakers emphasizing the growing need for cheaper and less capable drones. These drones must have adaptable/upgradable software and hardware to meet the challenge of the FPV revolution.

If there was one key takeaway from the conference it was that numbers matter.