

# U.S. Army Europe and Seventh Army

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## U.S. Army Europe commander encourages Army Signal community to build infrastructure that supports Soldiers, collaboration

By Eric Hortin

[U.S. Army Network Enterprise Technology Command/9th Signal Command \(Army\)](#)

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. – “You have to think big. You have to think together.”



ERIC HORTIN

Gen. Carter Ham, commanding general of U.S. Army Europe and Seventh Army, speaks to a full house at the 2009 LandWarNet Conference in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Aug. 18. Ham spoke to conference attendees about the importance of including the signal mission in Army planning processes and building signal infrastructure that supports collaboration.

That was the first of many messages Gen. Carter Ham, commander of U.S. Army Europe and Seventh Army, delivered at the opening plenary session of the 2009 LandWarNet Conference here. The LWN Conference continues through Aug. 22, and is a joint knowledge symposium headed by the Army's Chief Information Office/G-6 and the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association designed to bring government and industry together to share ideas, best business practices, and future initiatives.

Retired Lt. Gen. John Dubia, AFCEA's executive vice-president, opened the conference by welcoming the attendees, whose numbers are expected to exceed last year's by nearly 20 percent. With a standing-room-only crowd, [Army Chief Information Officer](#) Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Sorenson encouraged those attending to visit with vendors in the showcase area and share ideas and to give them an idea of what the warfighters on the ground need.

“You must continue to figure out how to best support our Soldiers,” Sorenson said.

Ham's message to the assembled Army leadership and industry was based on his experiences in numerous Army and joint assignments. He recalled that one mission, "Operation Burnt Frost," required the collaboration and constant communications between nearly all branches of the armed services and government agencies to shoot down a satellite in a decaying orbit. The success of the mission was squarely the result of the near-real-time communications between all parties. Ham didn't mince words.

"This is how we should operate all of the time!"

Ham emphasized the difference between the Army Signal (mission) of yesteryear and Signal today. Where Signal was once an "afterthought" in the mission planning process, he said, today it is important to have Signal involved from inception to execution. Still, Ham said, the Army Signal community must change in order to be completely successful. He used the Berlin Wall as a metaphor for today's networks.

"The Berlin Wall fell because they failed to appreciate the human drive to connect," he said. "Do we want to build firewalls, or do we want to build a Signal infrastructure that supports collaboration? Firewalls are built due to lack of trust ... we must build trust. Trust is going to be needed to operate the network the way we should."

Ham admitted that trust is one of the biggest challenges and would require a complete cultural shift. Commanders need to understand that they don't need to own the equipment to leverage the capabilities of the network.

Ham also spoke of the stand-up of the [U.S. Cyber Command](#), not allowing adversaries to operate in the "cyber" world uncontested, and defense of the networks. This was another challenge, citing the shift toward use of social networking services while maintaining security on the networks.

"We must balance risk, but realize it will never go to zero."



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