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## NACE President Addresses Army Summit

By Gretchen Jacobson



Neil G. Thompson

NACE International—the world's largest technical society for corrosion professionals—is working with the Department of Defense (DoD) on several fronts, providing education and training, conferences, and publication of this online magazine to improve corrosion control efforts and protect military assets and infrastructure across all Services.

NACE participated in this year's U.S. Army Corrosion Summit in Clearwater Beach, FL, Feb. 14-16. The meeting focused on the Army's corrosion concerns and projects. The conference featured a talk by Neil G. Thompson of CC Technologies, who served as NACE President until March. Thompson presented an overview of NACE and described the many current and future initiatives that are helping to protect people, assets, and the environment from the effects of corrosion.

Titled "NACE's Role in the Corrosion Community," Thompson's presentation covered the many challenges encountered by industry in its efforts to control corrosion, and the DoD's challenges in particular. He pointed out that the aging military systems pose a unique challenge in that often there is no immediate promise of replacement. He cited the need for corrosion maintenance and control programs that can carry the various systems well into the 21st century, which will require inter-service cooperation to develop an optimum approach that involves inspection, monitoring, and maintenance.

Although Thompson detailed many challenges, he emphasized that the toughest challenge is that "corrosion is not the core business of any industry sector (including military) but is critical to long-term operations." This results in corrosion often being overlooked until it is too late.

Thompson discussed the huge economic impact of corrosion—\$276 billion annually in the United States alone, according to the 2002 Cost of Corrosion Study funded by the U.S. Federal Highway Administration, sponsored by NACE, and conducted by CC Technologies. Of this amount, \$10 to \$20 billion in direct costs is attributed to corrosion in the military. He described the many preventive strategies that can be used to significantly reduce these costs, from improvements in education and training to advanced design practices for better corrosion management. Thompson concluded that lifecycle costing is the best, if not the only way to evaluate each system in detail and analyze the various maintenance or replacement options throughout a system's lifetime.

Thompson added that NACE's most important benefit to military and other corrosion professionals is its role as a forum for technology. The society's technical activities and standards, public affairs awareness and government relations efforts, conferences, publications, and education and certification programs are all designed to disseminate needed information to the corrosion community. He also described the new member benefits that went into effect on January 1, which include the NACE membership magazine *Materials Performance* (MP) and *MP Online*; free downloads of NACE standards, reports, and conference papers; and free access to an interactive database of electronic books.

The DoD and NACE have been strategic partners in the fight against corrosion of military systems for the past several years, a collaboration that evolved following a Congressional mandate in 2003 to establish a long-term corrosion plan and improve coordination within and among the services. That mandate led to the establishment of the Corrosion Policy and Oversight Office in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, which funds corrosion-related projects with potentially high return-on-investment, which benefit more than one military branch.

To access Thompson's presentation, [click here](#). For more information about NACE International member benefits, visit [www.nace.org](http://www.nace.org).