



*Master Sgt. Half-Mast McCanick shares some PS Magazine facts.*

## PS Magazine Launches Mobile App

After 65 years in print, the popular preventive maintenance magazine is switching its focus from print to mobile distribution.

■ By Jonathan W. Pierce

The Army has relied on *PS, The Preventive Maintenance Monthly* (known as *PS Magazine*) since 1951 to publish a monthly technical bulletin small enough for Soldiers to carry in their uniform pockets. The magazine delivers concise maintenance information, reports on changes in national stock numbers for repair parts, and sometimes preventive maintenance information that is not yet available in other technical publications.

*PS Magazine* has printed 767 issues

in 65 years. But today, the magazine's readers prefer mobile media over printed publications. That is why *PS Magazine* has created a mobile app to connect with readers.

The app was demonstrated during the Spring Association of the United States Army symposium in Huntsville, Alabama, where readers were able to access PDFs of January 2014 through March 2016 issues through Apple and Android mobile apps. In June, interactive issues from March through June

were added, and issues continue to be added to the app as they are published.

The PDF issues within the app load to digital devices much faster than the PDFs from the magazine's website. Links to URLs and email addresses for points of contact are active, and some articles link to videos.

Information that needs to get to the field fast will be in the app's hot topics within days of its availability. Other resources that contain long-lasting, useful information, such as ground and

aviation guide signals, will be available in app resources.

### Emphasis on Maintenance

During the Army's numerous deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, maintenance was often a task performed by civilian contractors. This freed up mechanics and maintainers to increase unit combat power. Now units are spending more time at their home stations, and maintenance is once again the task of the Soldiers who are trained as mechanics, armorers, and communication repairers.

Mid-grade Soldiers may not have much experience in their maintenance specialties. Their company and battalion commanders may not have held weekly battalion maintenance meetings. The Army is pushing to bring maintenance back as a fundamental task for operators, unit maintainers, senior noncommissioned officers, warrant officers, lieutenants, and commanders.

The goal of unit maintenance and sustainment actions is operational readiness, equipment availability, Soldier safety, and maintenance cost reductions. Company and battalion commanders must wrestle with main-

tenance daily and report on it monthly. Maintenance occurs despite the unit training, formations, taskers from higher headquarters, and the awards, promotions, and disciplinary actions that enhance esprit de corps and unit cohesion. The Army helps maintainers by providing technical manuals (TMs) and bulletins, lubrication orders, modification work orders, and safety of use messages.

However, commanders cannot read all of the TMs for their units' weapons, vehicles, gear, and equipment. For many maintainers, the length of an operator-level TM is daunting. Further exasperating the efforts of Soldiers returning to a maintenance environment are out-of-date technical publications for which print funding is unavailable.

Worse, some publications have incorrect or missing information. Additionally, Army equipment TMs can be complex. Besides electrical, drive train, and engine components of a vehicle chassis, a separate TM may be required for the main weapon system.

### Remaining Relevant

While the magazine is reducing the number of copies it prints, there are no

immediate plans to cease printing the publication.

Anecdotal comments by general officers tell us that *PS Magazine* played an essential role in helping them when they served as platoon leaders and company commanders. Some would read the magazine and then use the information to inspect unit equipment, leaving mechanics to wonder how their leaders knew so much. Others have insisted that operators and maintainers read the magazine not only to help them in their current work but also as a continuing education opportunity.

Experienced maintainers know preventive maintenance cannot be done by memory. Hidden lube points are often overlooked, and there are things that look like lube points but are not supposed to be lubed. There are also drain plugs that should be open sometimes, but not other times. Getting the right tension for tracks on combat vehicles requires specific procedures so that the track is not too loose or too tight.

TMs have more specific information in them than *PS Magazine* could publish in a year. Nevertheless, the magazine is a tool that can help keep your maintenance know-how current, your equipment running, and your passengers and cargo safe. And Soldiers will find *PS* to be an easy read; it is direct, concise, and often humorous.

*PS Magazine* is a tool that belongs in your toolkit. Its information is official and has been approved by equipment proponents. In print or in the mobile app, *PS Magazine* can go with you wherever you go. The mobile app is available in the Apple App Store and through Google Play.

Jonathan W. Pierce is the supervisory editor of *PS Magazine*. He holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Maryland and a master's of fine arts degree in creative writing from Wilkes University. He is a retired Army master sergeant and a graduate of the Defense Information School Basic Journalism Course, Newspaper Editors Course, and Intermediate Photojournalism Course.



The March 2016 issue of *PS Magazine* (back and front covers shown above) was the first interactive issue published in the new mobile app.