

The Army Reserve Expeditionary Railway Center

BY COLONEL DAVID T. POLLARD, USAR

To meet its Title 10 requirement to support the geographic combatant commands in using rail service as a combat multiplier, the Army Reserve has created the Expeditionary Railway Center.

In 2010, the Chief of Transportation, Brigadier General Edward F. Dorman III, identified a requirement gap in the Army's Title 10 responsibility to support the geographic combatant commands (COCOMs) in effectively employing rail as a strategic multiplier throughout full-spectrum operations (FSO). The gap was significant because a functional analysis identified effective rail planning, assessment, analysis, and advisement as a geographic COCOM requirement.

Force Design Update

Host-nation support will undoubtedly become a larger function of the geostrategic environment of the 21st century. Since infrastructure and theater transportation are inextricably connected to the broader geostrategic environment, the current Chief of Transportation, Colonel (P) Stephen E. Farnen, has focused on modernizing Army rail capabilities that can exploit host-nation resources within the transportation spectrum.

This effort has led to a force design update (FDU) that will provide the rail capabilities required for the contemporary operational environment. This FDU for the existing Army rail structure is essential since it has been more than 22 years since the last Army rail FDU. The FDU's result is the Army Reserve (USAR) Expeditionary Railway Center (ERC), which will be an enduring Army rail capability for FSO. This FDU was approved by the Army Training and Doctrine Command's Army Capabilities Integration Center.

This new rail force structure will augment any COCOM's efforts in planning and advising on the use of host-nation railroads to expand and expedite distribution within its area of responsibility. This new design will provide full-spectrum capability in all phases of an operation. In a period of diminishing military transportation assets, we must look at doing more with less, and using host-nation railroads is one way of rising to this challenge.

Expeditionary Railway Center Mission

The mission of the ERC will contrast significantly with the mission of the 757th Transportation Battalion (Railway). The ERC will—

- ❑ Provide rail network capability and infrastructure assessments.
- ❑ Perform rail mode feasibility studies and provide advice on the employment of rail capabilities.
- ❑ Perform and track railway rolling stock capability assessments, and provide an Engineer officer to facilitate railroad capability assessments and rebuild efforts.
- ❑ Coordinate rail and bridge safety assessments.
- ❑ Perform and assist with rail planning in support of military strategic and operational requirements.
- ❑ Perform functions as the primary advisers on railway operations, including collaborating with host-nation railway officials to improve the national railroad business model and support nation building.
- ❑ Coordinate use and deconfliction of host-nation or contracted rail assets.
- ❑ Perform contracting officer's representative duties to oversee contracts and provide quality assurance.
- ❑ Provide command, control, and supervision for subordinate railway personnel.

The ERC is designed for the contemporary Army rail planning and COCOM assistance mission. The ERC can provide the expertise needed to aid in restoring and developing railway systems in foreign nations in support of national security. It also can directly improve the present and future global security environment.

The nature of the global security environment is increasingly complex. With it is the need to understand globalization that is driven by rapid technological advances, interdependent economies, and empowerment of individuals. In this environment, we must recognize the need to operate continuously within the human terrain, where peace and stability are only sustained by providing safety and security.

At the high and low ends of full-spectrum operations, we must recognize the ERC's capabilities as the means of providing enduring security for the local population and the host nation. The ERC can simultaneously contribute to military deployment and distribution velocity, employment of a local population, and regional economic development.



The railroad at the Hairatan Gate Border Crossing not only provides residents in northern Afghanistan a chance for economic stability but also gives troops a means of getting cargo and equipment back home during the future drawdown. (Photo by SFC Peter Mayes, 101st Airborne Division PAO)

The ERC will contribute to the Defense Distribution Process Owner's (DDPO's) alternatives for sustaining the velocity of deployment, distribution, and redeployment. Understanding that conditions of anti-access or area denial to theaters of operations are turbulent, the DDPO must not depend on a single host nation for a theater-sustaining line of communication (LOC). For example, today the Northern Distribution Network has multiple LOC options from origin to destination, and it provides an alternative to the Pakistan ground LOC for movement of military and other cargo into and out of Afghanistan.

Army Rail Transformation

It has been evident since early in Operation Iraqi Freedom that the existing Army rail capability must be transformed to provide relevant support for the contemporary conflict. In Iraq, the Army missed the opportunity to maintain an Army rail planning and assessment capability at interagency and various military headquarters levels, along with an assessment, advisory, and training assistance presence with the Iraqi Republican Railroad. Coalition distribution and the nation of Iraq could have benefited significantly from this investment. Dave DeCarme, who served as the Department of State (DOS) transportation attaché in Baghdad, Iraq, from 2008 to 2009, made the following observation:

As part of civil/military coordination and cooperation efforts in developing host-nation capacities,

the U.S. Army rail transformation, working with U.S., coalition, and host-nation civilian elements, has the potential for improving rail system operations which in turn can be a significant contributor to broader economic development.

First, the ERC offers a capability to see and plan for rail LOCs, such as the Northern Distribution Network, early in the geographic COCOM's planning effort. Next, the ERC team can conduct peacetime military engagements for country rail system restoration and development. Finally, the ERC responsively deploys to contribute to stability operations or combat operations in the execution of a theater distribution plan and host-nation rail system strategic development.

This capability is designed not only as a deterrent to persistent conflict but also as a response for persistent containment. The safety and security of an indigenous population is a compelling and powerful force against insurgency and radical political or religious groups.

How Railway Use Affects the Host Nation

Historically, a developing country's stability and economic growth can be tied to a national railroad system that is regionally connected. Any use of a host-nation railroad system for sustaining theater deployment, distribution, and redeployment should be accomplished with the intent of developing the nation's economic engine and employing as much of the local population as possible. In so doing, we improve individual security

as well as national and regional stability. The strategic objective is to deescalate hostilities as quickly as possible and return to peace and stability operations. Then the challenge is to continue to create conditions that discourage a reescalation of hostilities.

The USAR ERC, if fully resourced, can facilitate sustained international trade. It is at its best when employed along with a joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational team. Understandably, the USAR ERC contribution to this team provides the greatest expeditionary capability that can be mobilized for deployment. Under many conditions, the same responsiveness is not likely with Government civilian employees, nor is it prudent to assume that private sector contractors will be readily available.

Benefits of the ERC to the Army

Early and continuous Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC) Transportation Engineering Agency analysis, coupled with ERC rail expertise drawn from civilian-acquired skills and integrated in COCOM planning efforts, can contribute to a multimodal theater distribution program (TDP). Deliberate incorporation of the rail mode into theater engagement and TDPs provides a means of countering inaccessibility and area-denial conditions.

This is not only smart business within the human dimension of contemporary operations, but it also adds to military equipment life-cycle savings and management of theater military personnel caps (military truck drivers and maintainers). An ERC will help contribute to global security, which contributes to economic stability in the United States and potentially better bottom-line earnings for our U.S. partner rail companies.

The ERC operates with less than 200 Soldiers, making this capability a tremendous bargain at the relative cost of less than 2 truck companies. The bottom line is that, in terms of the Army force structure, it is good business to have the ERC capability resourced and available.

The Fiscal Year 2013 Command Plan Guidance, which was published on 4 January 2011 by the Headquarters, Department of the Army, provides the following key structure guidance:

The Army's goal is to build a versatile mix of tailorable and networked organizations, operating on a rotational cycle, to provide a sustained flow of trained and ready forces for full spectrum operations and to hedge against unexpected contingencies, at a sustainable tempo for our All-Volunteer Force. The Army continues to experience tremendous change. We remain at war and are balancing the operating and generating forces across the program while addressing the challenge to balance requirements with affordability.

With these qualities in mind, the Army rail FDU is

best sustained in the Army Reserve for affordability and access to civilian-acquired skills through partnership with the private railway industry.

Chief of Army Reserve Lieutenant General Jack C. Stultz stated his vision: "An enduring operational force, the Army Reserve remains the premier force provider of America's Citizen-Soldiers for planned and emerging missions at home and abroad. Enhanced by civilian skills that serve as a force multiplier, we deliver vital military capabilities essential to the total force."

**EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIP
OF THE ARMED FORCES
OFFERS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY
FOR THE ARMY RESERVE
TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE
RAIL EXPERTISE OFFERED
BY U.S. RAILROAD
EMPLOYEES.**

The USAR ERC provides a great return on investment for the United States. The Army Reserve will generate a sustained flow of trained and ready Army rail forces for FSO on a rotational cycle with five railway planning and advisory teams, and it will do this at well below the cost for the Active component to maintain the structure. The ERC is a low-density capability with a critical contribution to the Army's versatile mix of modular organizations. The Army Reserve is ideally suited to provide the ERC for expeditionary military operations and international engagement activities, such as nation building and security cooperation.

Employer Partnership Initiative

Sustaining this critical expeditionary and international engagement capability can be accomplished in part through effective stationing of the ERC planning and advisory teams in cities where we find Class 1 railroad headquarters or their interchange points. We will continue to capitalize on the benefits of the employer partnership of the Armed Forces, an initiative begun by Lieutenant General Stultz. This partnership is a win-win situation for servicemembers, employers, and the Nation. Today, several U.S. railroads are employer partners.

Our railroads are a fine example of the potential for access to civilian-acquired skills. Employer partnership of the Armed Forces offers a great opportunity for the Army Reserve to take advantage of the rail expertise offered by U.S. railroad employees. Many of these

railroads actively seek to hire employees with military experience who are a good fit for the 24-hours-a-day, 365-days-a-year culture of the railroad industry. Military experience translates to management opportunities with U.S. railroads.

Army Railway Planning and Advisory Team

The Army will benefit by capitalizing on the skill-rich characteristics of Army Reserve warrior citizens. However, the Army Reserve must not run the ERC without SDDC, the Army's "Global Surface Transportation Experts." The SDDC mission is to "provide expeditionary and sustained end-to-end deployment and distribution to meet the Nation's objectives." The SDDC vision is for its employees to be the "recognized and trusted leaders in delivering innovative end-to-end deployment and distribution excellence across the full range of military operations." Rail is a significant component and enabler of the SDDC mission and vision. SDDC plays an important role in Army rail transformation for FSO.

SDDC and the Army Reserve, in support of the U.S. Central Command and the International Security Assistance Force, have had an Army railway planning and advisory team deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan, since October 2011. The team brings with it strong civilian-acquired management and operations experience from CSX, the Sierra Northern Railroad Company, and the Terminal Railroad Company.

In Afghanistan, this team is contributing to the following main objectives:

- Acquire strong visibility on the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's (GIROA's) initiatives to start effective operations on the new Mazar-Hairatan Railway, which contributes to middle- to high-spectrum military operations through the improved velocity of military cargo movement into and out of Afghanistan.
- Work with the International Security Assistance Force, the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the U.S. Federal Railroad Administration, and the GIROA to develop a rail strategy for Afghanistan, focusing on sustained regional stability and economic development with a return to peacetime military engagement.

The team, working closely with the GIROA's Ministry of Mines, will strategically link GIROA's national rail system to coal and iron ore deposits. This is a strategy with potential for sustained revenue streams and regional economic development.

SDDC is also working with the U.S. Africa Command to conduct peacetime military engagements between Army Reserve Soldiers and representatives of the Uganda Peoples Defence Force (UPDF). In Uganda, the U.S. Army rail team will assess and provide advice on the UPDF unit's mission, force structure,

typical operations, maintenance tasks, exercise participation, and training programs at Lugazi University. The team will discuss ways to assist the UPDF in developing a concept of operations for a Ugandan railroad battalion, along with all of the training, curriculum, and tactics, techniques, and procedures that may be required. This effort will continue with a visit by UPDF officers to the United States in 2012 as part of continuing to develop the military-to-military engagement.

The engagements in Afghanistan and Uganda can be a springboard to overcoming the capabilities gap discerned by Brigadier General Dorman in 2010. The gap can be closed if the Army acts with foresight to use the talent and synergy of the USAR ERC along with SDDC, the Transportation Engineering Agency, and the employer partnership of the Armed Forces initiative. If integrated and used in a concerted and continuing way to answer the rail advisory requirements of geographic COCOMs, the gap remains closed. Rail support to Afghanistan and Uganda can be the beginning of a wider policy that promises significant benefits at an affordable cost.

The Army should fully resource the ERC FDU. SDDC and the Army Reserve should continue to assist geographic COCOMs in fielding Army railway planning and advisory teams until the ERC can be activated. The Office of the Chief of Transportation and the Sustainment Center of Excellence should continue to collect and analyze current rail team efforts and develop future doctrine and organization for the ERC. Finally, when the ERC activates, it should be with a stationing plan that facilitates close employer partnership with the U.S. rail industry.

COLONEL DAVID T. POLLARD, USAR, IS THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF G-3/7 FOR THE MILITARY SURFACE DEPLOYMENT AND DISTRIBUTION COMMAND AT SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, ILLINOIS. HE HOLDS A B.S. DEGREE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN AND A MASTER'S DEGREE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA. HE IS A GRADUATE OF THE TRANSPORTATION OFFICER BASIC AND ADVANCED COURSES, THE LOGISTICS EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT COURSE, THE ARMY COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLLEGE, AND THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SENIOR SERVICE COLLEGE.

THE AUTHOR THANKS THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE WITH THIS ARTICLE: DR. KENT BECK, ROBERT KORPANTY, COLONEL LARRY MCCOLPIN, DAVID DORFMAN, MAJOR TIMOTHY CHRISTENSEN, MAJOR SCOTT MEYER, JAMES POWELL, COLONEL WALTER WEAVER, AND COLONEL ROBERT PELLETIER.