# QLLEX: Real-World Training in Fuel and Water Supply

BY COLONEL PHILIP C. FOSTER, USAR

The great bulk of the Army's petroleum and water units are in the Army Reserve. QLLEX is an exercise that allows Reserve units to train at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels across the United States.

Delivering bulk petroleum and purifying water may not compare in excitement to jumping out of airplanes or shooting weapons, but over 2,200 Army Reserve logistics Soldiers would disagree. Those Soldiers had the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and provide real-world fuel and water support during the 2011 Quartermaster Liquid Logistics Exercise (QLLEX).

Quartermaster battalions and companies conducted echelons-above-corps bulk petroleum distribution, water purification and distribution, and field services (laundry and shower) support during the first 2 weeks of June 2011. A total of 64 units at 8 locations across the continental United States (CONUS) delivered 3.25 million gallons of petroleum and produced 479,000 gallons of water with the assistance and support of Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Energy, the Army Quartermaster Center and School, and the Army Forces Command (FORSCOM).

## Multifunctional Training

QLLEX started 31 years ago as the Petroleum Oil and Lubricant Exercise (POLEX) and developed into QLLEX in 2004. Although the initial focus was on petroleum, oils, and lubricants (POL), the exercise has evolved to have a much broader focus. QLLEX has become a multiechelon, multicomponent, multifunctional, and multiservice exercise. No other CONUS-based exercise provides such a broad suite of real-world training opportunities for Soldiers.

The 316th Expeditionary Sustainment Command (ESC) sponsored the exercise, and the 475th Quartermaster Group, under the leadership of Colonel Philip Foster and Command Sergeant Major Mark Standinger, served as the exercise headquarters. The 475th Quartermaster Group is headquartered in Farrell, Pennsylvania, and is one of three quartermaster groups in the Army Reserve. When the 49th Quartermaster Group, the Army's only active-duty quartermaster group, is inactivated on 1 October 2012, more than 90 percent of the Army's liquid logistics assets will reside in the Army Reserve.

For QLLEX, the 475th Quartermaster Group located its exercise headquarters at Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia. The other sites involved in the exercise were Fort Dix, New Jersey; Fort Eustis, Virginia; Fort Lee, Virginia; Fort Pickett, Virginia; Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Fort Huachuca, Arizona; and San Pedro, California.

***Brigadier General Peter Lennon, the commander of the 316th Expeditionary Support Command, observes the operation of the expeditionary water packaging system during QLLEX 2011.*** *(Photo by SFC Jo Hoots, 214th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)*

***Soldiers take an in-line fuel sample during QLLEX 2011.***

Brigadier General Peter Lennon, the commander of the 316th ESC, observed:

> QLLEX is an important exercise, not only to the 316th but to the Army Reserve and the Army overall. This is the major exercise in which we train at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels, from connecting the pumps and the hoses all the way up [to] coordinating with our strategic partner agencies. It's the only Reserve exercise that demands this level of wholesale distribution; our support to customers with real-world missions dictates that we choreograph the delivery of hundreds of thousands of gallons of fuel and water transiting the exercise area of operation. It is not just a POL truck company operating from point A to point B. While that's an important component, it's only a piece of QLLEX. What the customer may not see is the strategic coordination necessary for efficient and effective battlefield support.
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> How do we coordinate with our national partners and international partners to get fuel into an austere environment, perhaps a less than benign environment at the outset of a contingency operation? We've got to be proficient and ready as more of the responsibility for fuel and water is likely to fall on the Reserve components, primarily the Army Reserve. The AC structure for fuel and water distribution and production is significantly reducing as a result of force structure adjustments. We must have Soldiers who are trained and ready to respond very quickly.

## DLA Support

DLA Energy Americas provided bulk petroleum and coordinated delivery to customers at the 8 exercise locations across CONUS. DLA Energy Americas conducted pre-inspections on fuel tankers and certified the vehicles to deliver fuel. Without the support of DLA Energy Americas, the exercise would not have been possible. DLA Energy Americas absorbed the risks and turned over "real-world" delivery of fuel to QLLEX units.

"[QLLEX] gives us alternative means to deliver fuel to the warfighter in lieu of using commercial assets," noted Colonel William Keyes, commander of DLA Energy Americas. "QLLEX is moving fuel that will be in aircraft tonight flying to places around the world. As the Army changes force structure and has moved more assets into the Army Reserves, QLLEX has become more important."

## Real-World Training

It is the real-world environment rather than an exercise environment that sets QLLEX apart from many other training events. Units participating in QLLEX completed 88 real-world missions, drove more than 212,000 line-haul miles, and used 1,021 vehicles. Before units can deliver fuel, petroleum labs must test samples. The Army Petroleum Center at Fort Belvoir certified every lab used in QLLEX before allowing testing of fuel. Army preventive medicine specialists had to certify water as potable before allowing it to be used for drinking or cooking.

"Success is being able to deliver the product," Brigadier General Lennon said. "What a lot of people don't realize is that QLLEX is a real-life mission. It is providing real-life fuel in a real-life environment to real-life customers. If we don't deliver the fuel, then that installation ceases to have fuel to execute their missions. Mission failure here is not exercise mission failure. It is real-life mission failure. We have not missed a beat."

The Petroleum and Water Department of the Army Quartermaster Center and School also played a key role in QLLEX. The school's Petroleum Training Facility (PTF) served as a Defense fuel supply point during the


***Soldiers participating in QLLEX 2011 prepare tanks to deliver fuel.*** *(Photo by SFC Jo Hoots, 214th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)*

exercise. Calvin Cropper, the PTF manager, said that the facility issued 100,000 gallons of fuel and received 450,000 gallons.

Jose Hernandez, the PTF officer in charge, said that QLLEX offers an opportunity to train on the inland petroleum distribution mission. "The Army has a responsibility to move fuel forward in any theater of operations," Hernandez said. "The 475th [Quartermaster Group] is replicating that mission."

In addition to normal fuel and water purification operations, the Department of the Army G–4 arranged for demonstration of an expeditionary water packaging system (EWPS). With Soldier support, bulk water drawn from ponds located at the training sites was purified and transported to the EWPS for final testing, processing, and packaging into 28,550 personal bottles.

Units at each location provided their own life support, including cooking, laundry and bath, personnel, and maintenance support. Many non-QLLEX participants also made use of the QLLEX-provided laundry and shower services.

"This is the training platform for full-spectrum operations, all the way from a small humanitarian operation to a [Hurricane] Katrina to a Haiti [earthquake relief mission] all the way up to a major theater of operations," Brigadier General Lennon said. "We are practicing Soldier skills at all levels, whether they are an E–2 or an E–3 producing water, testing water in the lab, or driving water or fuel around the battlefield, all the way up to the majors and lieutenant colonels doing coordination with our agency partners such as DLA."

Major General Raymond Mason, the FORSCOM Deputy Chief of Staff, G–4, at the time (and now Lieutenant General Mason, the Deputy Chief of Staff, G–4, Department of the Army), had the opportunity to observe QLLEX for the first time. He liked what he saw:

> Well, I am very impressed. I will tell you that right off the bat. When I saw the map of the units all over the United States, frankly not only was I surprised, I was very impressed. I had no idea it was that expansive, with units from the west coast to the east coast of the United States. With those type of distances, for the 475th POL Group, a magnificent unit, to be able to command and control that, I think it is outstanding training for the brigade commander himself, the battle staff, and all those battalions that are out there.

"It is a one-of-a-kind exercise," said Lieutenant Colonel Pamela Glotfelty, the support operations officer for the 475th Quartermaster Group. "There is no other exercise out there that gives [these Soldiers] the opportunity to do as much as we do at QLLEX."

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