



Soldiers moor a landing craft utility 2000 and a landing craft mechanized to the trident pier.

The 7th Transportation Brigade (Expeditionary)

The Army has established a transportation brigade whose function is to provide port, terminal, and watercraft operations, including logistics over-the-shore.

■ By Maj. Mike Harris and Col. Randy Nelson

Demand for Army watercraft is increasing across the combatant commands (COCOMs). To meet this increased demand, the 7th Sustainment Brigade transformed into the Army's first and only Transportation Brigade Expeditionary (TB[X]) on Jan. 16, 2014.

The 7th Transportation Brigade's

transformation aligns with the guidance of the 38th Army chief of staff's strategic priorities, U.S. Code Title 10, and Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense. These documents spearheaded the brigade's transformation and commitment to provide seamless support to the Army and its joint partners with worldwide ship-

to-shore support.

Another document, the Aug. 30, 2013, Combined Arms Support Command's Army 2020 and Beyond Sustainment White Paper states, "The pivot to the Asia-Pacific region will require different organizational structures, greater integration of the institutional Army with the operating force,

differing vehicles and protection and reinvestment in capabilities ignored over the past 10 years such as joint logistics over-the-shore (JLOTS) and watercraft.”

Background

The 7th TB(X) “Resolute!” has a rich history of operational accomplishments. The brigade, previously flagged as the 7th Transportation Group, 7th Medium Port Brigade, participated in numerous operations and exercises, including World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Operation Just Cause, Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom. This brigade, sometimes known as the Army’s Navy, is the only Active component Army unit that exclusively executes logistics over-the-shore (LOTS) operations.

The brigade hopes to build itself by refocusing on port, terminal, and watercraft operations going forward. The brigade is unique because of its ability to operate common-user seaports, travel coastal and inland waterway main supply routes, and conduct ship-to-shore operations in hostile and austere environments. The brigade is the Army’s voice for LOTS tactics, techniques, and procedures and capabilities in the JLOTS community.

In August 2010, the director of the Army Capabilities Integration Center (ARCIC) validated the Army terminal operations’ functional solutions analysis (FSA). Subsequent analysis included in the doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF) integrated capabilities recommendation (DICR) identified an organizational solution for a structure that provides responsive access to terminal operating forces in support of full-spectrum decisive action operations.

Augmenting the published FSA and DOTMLPF change recommendation, the April 2011 ARCIC

initial capabilities document lists the following initial capabilities gaps:

- Army terminal operations forces lack the ability to meet current and emerging requirements.
- Army forces lack a sufficient combination of speed, range, and payload to rapidly shift combat ready maneuver forces within a theater of operations.
- The future force lacks sufficient surface (waterway and roadway) intratheater lift.
- Army terminal organizations lack sufficient ability to conduct simultaneous maneuver, support, and sustainment operations.
- Army forces lack the ability to rapidly close, employ, support, and sustain joint expeditionary forces.
- Army terminal organizations lack sufficient ability to operate in degraded or austere terminals.
- Army terminal units lack the capability to provide efficient throughput of cargo in degraded or austere ports where external cargo-handling equipment and materials-handling equipment is limited or unavailable.
- Army forces lack sufficient command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, sur-

capabilities document, the following base documents were used to develop the operational and organizational capabilities concept for the new TB(X):

- The ARCIC-approved Army Watercraft Capabilities-Based Assessment (CBA).
- The Training and Doctrine Command ARCIC-approved Army Terminal Operations CBA.
- The Combined Arms Support Command-approved Army expeditionary intermodal operations DICR.

Using these documents, the February 2012 ARCIC organizational design paper outlined the way ahead for the new brigade. According to the document, the Army Watercraft CBA supports a single command for all water terminal and watercraft missions and capabilities.

The Army Watercraft CBA also indicates that future Army watercraft operations must be developed in conjunction with the Army terminal operations concept since tactical port and waterborne main supply routes are directly related. As a result, the TB(X) is the new brigade command and the single Army expeditionary command

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veillance, and reconnaissance capabilities to provide mission command while performing watercraft operations in joint, combined, coalition, or multinational environments.

Based on the gaps identified in the FSA, DICR, and the initial

for watercraft and terminal operations. It is capable of providing mission command and conducting port operations.

Why the TB(X)

Before establishing the TB(X), the watercraft and terminal operations concept of support and

force design employed a sustainment brigade and a transportation theater-opening element as the early-entry force to establish seaport and LOTS operations. This worked, and a deliberate decision was made during the modular force development process not to designate a theater-opening brigade.

The continued requirement for sustainment brigade rotations to Iraq and Afghanistan and the lack of senior watercraft warrant officers on sustainment brigade staffs prevented any sustainment brigade from becoming an expert in port opening and watercraft operations.

The TB(X) is focused on port, terminal, and watercraft operations and is staffed with senior watercraft warrant officers—experts dedicated to early-entry port operations. With the brigade's sole focus on watercraft and terminal operations, its training is not divided among

resources and cyclic rotations to support a broader range of sustainment operations.

The 7th TB(X) executes maritime operations everywhere. It has crews in the U.S. Pacific Command, the U.S. Southern Command, and the U.S. Central Command areas of operations. Shifting from a sustainment brigade has really allowed the brigade to focus and refine its tactics, techniques, and procedures in order to provide the best support to the COCOMs.

The TB(X) headquarters' responsibilities are to rapidly deploy; establish and maintain port operations; establish and coordinate terminal protection operations; conduct waterborne distribution and LOTS operations; conduct joint reception, staging, and onward movement of cargo; establish and coordinate life support services and contract management for terminal operations; conduct container

management; and provide oversight of joint documentation.

The TB(X)'s shallow draft vessels provide early-entry capability in degraded ports or austere environments. This is conducted in a manner that meets COCOM operational priorities, expedites the flow of cargo, creates an accurate common operational picture, and maintains in-transit visibility.

The brigade can conduct many different types of missions. However, its primary strategic mission is to conduct LOTS operations, which include loading and off-loading watercraft in austere environments where ports are unavailable, damaged, or without adequate fixed port facilities. The TB(X) transports the equipment and supplies from the deep water ship across the beach, using its maneuver-enhancing shallow draft platforms, floating causeways, and



A landing craft utility establishes a waterborne main supply route at a degraded port, simulating the delivery of vehicles and humanitarian aid to those affected by an earthquake and tsunami during JLOTS 2014. (Photo by Maj. Mike Harris)



An Army small tug pulls alongside a landing craft utility to assist in a beach landing and cargo delivery despite strong currents, ice flows, and tidal variances during JLOTS 2014 in the Gulf of Alaska. (Photo by Maj. Mike Harris)

tugboats to clear obstructions. This is accomplished by applying one of three mission profiles: bare beach, degraded port, or augmentation of a fixed port.

The TB(X) provides a brigade headquarters capable of conducting mission command for modified table of organization and equipment (MTOE) and table of distribution and allowances (TDA) transportation units. It also provides expertise to conduct this mission at inland waterway, bare beach, degraded, and improved sea terminals in support of COCOM theater-opening operations, the joint task force commander, and relief agencies.

During early-entry operations, the TB(X)'s movement control battalion manages the bulk of the cargo as it flows through sea bases to reach the points of effect. During these operations, the first critical step is to set up efficient methods of cargo flow through the

terminal site. Without movement control teams managing efficient cargo flow, the commander may experience off-load delays caused by bottlenecks of deploying equipment or cargo.

As a mission command headquarters, the TB(X) must create and foster close relationships with expeditionary sustainment commands, theater sustainment commands, the U.S. Transportation Command, the Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command, the single port manager, and the port commanders. Establishing close mission coordination ensures a seamless strategic-to-tactical transition from port opening to distribution operations.

The 7th TB(X) is a direct reporting unit to the XVIII Airborne Corps and maintains a critical link to its strategic partners across the U.S. Transportation Command, the COCOMs, the Army Materiel Command (pre-positioned stocks),

and its total force maritime partners.

Port Opening Synchronization Cell

The sustainment brigade's transformation to the TB(X) centered on dissolving the special troops battalion and replacing the large support operations section with a much leaner port opening synchronization cell (POSC). The POSC provides situational awareness of port and terminal capabilities and operations.

The POSC engages each COCOM, analyzes capabilities versus requirements, and recommends courses of action on contingency plans involving terminal and watercraft operations. The POSC synchronizes its recommendations to the COCOM commanders with joint and unified partners.

The POSC comprises three sections: the training and readiness branch, the materiel readiness branch, and the force modernization branch.



A logistics support vessel slowly approaches the Port of Anchorage through an ice flow after its voyage from Hawaii to participate in JLOTS 2014. (Photo by Maj. Mike Harris)

The training readiness branch monitors the training status of water terminal and watercraft organizations. It makes recommendations on training plans and programs, and it facilitates synchronized training agencies for all Army watercraft and terminal operations units.

The materiel readiness branch monitors the materiel readiness status of water terminal and watercraft organization and equipment. It also makes recommendations on equipment readiness plans and programs for all Army watercraft and terminal operations units.

The force modernization branch provides expertise to key stakeholders on all matters related to

modernization of Army water terminal and watercraft capabilities. It assists key stakeholders in modernizing current capabilities and developing future capabilities across DOTMLPF domains.

The TB(X) continues to build the POSC as it operates. The cell is basically a renamed SPO shop connecting with the external customers. The POSC's keys to success are rooted in developing relationships and communication with the Active and Reserve Army water terminal and watercraft units and Army pre-positioned stocks sites.

The data collected and analyzed through these relationships is essential for situational awareness.

The data analysis must provide the following information:

- The capabilities and statuses of Army water terminal and watercraft units.
- The capabilities of water port complexes.
- The initial requirements for water terminal and watercraft capabilities identified by COCOMs.
- Advice for COCOMs on determining actual requirements in terminal and watercraft operations.
- The available assets and capabilities that match the requirements.

Operational Agility

According to its February 2012 organizational design paper, the TB(X) is



the organic Army capability designed for moving, maneuvering, and supporting sustained land operations. It supports unified land operations by providing operational agility through the delivery and sustainment of operational forces to the point of employment. The COCOM commander can use the capability provided by the TB(X) to gain operational agility.

The use of watercraft expands the warfighters' operational agility and reach, exploits the littoral boundaries to expand access, and mitigates anti-access and area-denial challenges. The TB(X) is a combat enabler that bridges strategic deployment with operational and tactical employment of ground combat forces. It provides land forces with operational agility through tactically synchronized movement of combat-ready, tailored formations dispersed across the depth of the operational environment.

The initial test of the TB(X) concept was very successful when it deployed this past spring to Anchorage, Alaska, to execute a U.S. Northern Command JLOTS operation in support of a defense support to civilian agencies scenario. A 550-person joint task force from the Army, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard participated in the exercise.

The 7th TB(X) is working hard to successfully accomplish its mission and meet the intent of a changing Army. It will remain the Army's expert in watercraft and water terminal operations and act as a voice for LOTS tactics, techniques, and procedures, and capabilities to the JLOTS and maritime communities.

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