

FEATURES

REDDI

Reinvigorating the Army's Deployment Readiness

■ By Jason Trubenbach



Paratroopers with the 2nd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, unpack an M119 Howitzer after an airdrop at Camp Mackall, North Carolina, during Joint Operational Access Exercise 13-03. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jason Hull)



As the 2014 deadline to remove combat forces from Afghanistan approaches, the Army is redefining itself. We are returning to a garrison-based Army with over 90 percent of the force based in the United States. Most of our Soldiers, including current company commanders, platoon sergeants, and even newly promoted majors, have never experienced a steady-state environment.

Our deployments over the past decade have been rotational. We assume that because we have been deploying for more than 11 years, we know how to deploy. The fact is that units have relied on others to do most of the deployment activities for them and have not practiced their own rapid deployment skills during that time.

The Army Power Projection Program (AP3) Rapid Expeditionary Deployment Initiative (REDI) is the catalyst to improve expeditionary deployment readiness and refocus the Army to develop inherent deployment skills to quickly provide forces to meet global combatant commander requirements for the full range of military operations on short notice.

The Assessment

In 2012, the Army validated the assumption that it needs to improve its readiness to deploy quickly. At the direction of the AP3 general officer steering committee, observation teams visited Fort Drum, New York, Fort Benning, Georgia, and Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to assess deployment readiness for the Army's Global Response Force using the XVIII Airborne Corps' Joint Operational Access Exercise as the platform.

Consisting of representatives from across the Army, the observation teams collectively captured 30 issues and insights affecting the deployment process within the domains of doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities, and policy. These were the top four issues:

- The Army needs to delineate deployment roles and missions for the

Forces Command, Army Materiel Command, and Installation Management Command.

- Unit-level deployment tasks have been accomplished not by deploying units but instead by the installations using civilian and contract support.
- Leaders should emphasize the importance of units training on deployment and redeployment tasks.
- The Army should resource deployment readiness exercises, such as emergency deployment readiness exercises (EDREs) and sea emergency deployment readiness exercises (SEDREs) so units can renew and maintain their expeditionary deployment skills.

Taking Action

Through the AP3 community, the Army is taking action by updating Army Regulation (AR) 525-93, Army Deployment and Redeployment. AR 525-93 establishes policy, identifies responsibilities, and synchronizes procedures for all commands and agencies responsible for planning, preparing, and supporting deploying and redeploying Army forces.

The War Plans Division at Headquarters, Department of the Army, (HQDA) G-3/5/7, the proponent of AR 525-93, is leading the revision. The updated AR 525-93 will include the logistics readiness center responsibility changes and new sections on the command deployment discipline program (CDDP), the Unit Movement Officer Deployment Planning Course, and the Army Deployment Readiness Exercise (DRE) program.

The CDDP, found in chapter 4 of the latest draft of AR 525-93, is a tool for making the deployment process easier to navigate, especially for commanders, unit movement officers, and mobility officers. It lays out garrison and installation staff roles, responsibilities, and services provided to support deployments.

It also focuses on updating and aligning deployment roles, responsibilities, command relationships, and authorities for deployment readiness

exercise planning, execution, and support.

HQDA manages the standardized mission-essential task lists that are the official listings of fundamental tasks brigades and higher units are designed to perform. The AP3 community's Force Projection Task Group championed the inclusion of new key deployment tasks for deployable brigades in standardized mission-essential task lists.

The new task group is called "plan actions associated with force projection" and includes the following subtasks: conduct deployment activities, perform home-station rear detachment activities, and conduct redeployment activities. The new force projection task group (Task: 55-9-4801) is mandatory for all deployable brigades.

HQDA G-4 and the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management are working together to use the installation status report to automate installation deployment readiness reporting. This collaboration will capture any deficiencies or gaps identified by the installation that affect its ability to conduct deployment operations. It will allow the Army to make more informed programming and resourcing decisions.

Deployment Exercises

Through REDI, the AP3 community reinvigorated the Army DRE program. In January 2013, the Director of Strategy, Plans, and Policy, HQDA G-3/5/7, issued guidance on the prioritization of level III deployment readiness exercises. HQDA-sponsored EDRE and SEDRE exercises will allow units deploying on short notice to renew and maintain their expeditionary deployment skills in support of contingencies and unforeseen crises.

The level III DRE program will exercise rapid deployment skills of the global response force, a unit with a prepare-to-deploy order for a mission outside of the continental United States, and the U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC) rapid reaction force, each with an EDRE and a heavy battalion task force from the East Coast with a SEDRE.



A paratrooper with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, packs away his parachute after landing on the Luzon Drop Zone during Joint Operational Access Exercise 13-03. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jason Hull)

The Army G-4's centrally funded level III DRE program is an important part of reviving the Army's expeditionary and rapid deployment capabilities. The Program Objective Memorandum for 2015 to 2019 reflects these priorities and includes three EDREs and one SEDRE.

In September 2013, USARPAC conducted the first Army centrally funded level III EDRE since the invasion of Iraq in 2003 for units not based at Fort Bragg. USARPAC executed two separate level III EDREs with the 25th Infantry Division—one EDRE in Hawaii with the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, and division staff and one EDRE in Alaska with the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne).

The level III EDREs tested the units' expeditionary capabilities to support U.S. Pacific Command and U.S. Northern Command requirements. The EDREs provided valuable experience and feedback to USARPAC on its ability to support the chief of staff of the Army's strategic priorities.

The Army staff is also leading an integrated process team in prepara-

tion for a fiscal year 2015 level III SEDRE. The exercise will allow troops to practice deploying a heavy battalion task force in conjunction with a port support activity and a Military Sealift Command vessel to validate unit and vessel capabilities according to approved deployment timelines.

The intent is to partner with the U.S. Transportation Command and the Navy through the turbo activation program, which is used to test the readiness of strategic sealift assets.

The Way Forward

The AP3 community will continue its work to provide updated, integrated, synchronized, and validated policy, processes, regulations, and doctrine.

The Army will use level III EDREs and SEDREs to validate unit readiness to rapidly deploy and will continue to require assessments of force projection capabilities at key installations, depots, and ports to identify gaps in future programming regarding facilities, people, and equipment.

The Army is changing its mindset from advanced notice rotational deployments to a persistent state of

expeditionary deployment readiness. REDI is the mechanism that will ensure the Army is inherently expeditionary and able to project power quickly.

The AP3 community is leading this effort by updating policies and doctrine, conducting deployment readiness exercises, and restoring and modernizing the United States-based force projection infrastructure we have invested in during the past 20-plus years.

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