

Preparing Captains for Decisive Action

■ By Capt. Timothy J. Owens

As the combat training centers (CTCs) transition to mostly decisive action training environment scenarios, the Logistics Captains Career Course (LOGC3), formerly known as the Combined Logistics Captains Career Course, must also continue to emphasize sustainment planning in a decisive action environment. This will provide graduates of LOGC3 with a greater opportunity for success as they enter key developmental positions in operational units.

This article provides sustainment leaders with an in-progress review of how LOGC3 instructors are setting up junior officers for success by providing training based on CTC lessons learned.

Logistics Leader Development Board

The Logistics Leader Development Board recently approved three training objectives for LOGC3 students:

- Design a concept of support enabling unified land operations at the tactical level.
- Manage logistics operations at the tactical level during unified land operations.
- Command logistics companies in support of combined arms maneuver and small-scale movement.

All three of these objectives address company-grade lessons learned at the CTCs. An analysis of the LOGC3 curriculum shows that the instruction, practical exercises, and unique leadership electives all address key CTC observations of company-grade logistics officers.

JRTC Lessons Learned

Task Force Sustainment at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) has long identified trends and key

lessons learned from rotational units deployed to Fort Polk, Louisiana, for monthlong training exercises.

Recently, units not scheduled to deploy in support of Operation Enduring Freedom have been participating in rotations designed around the decisive action training environment. The Army is using this model to provide a realistic environment to facilitate training objectives using data drawn from operational theaters.

The decisive action training scenario is especially challenging for logistics units because they are required to provide sustainment on the move. Numerous lessons learned have been gleaned from units training at the JRTC. These insights are valuable in shaping home-station training and adjusting the LOGC3 curriculum.

The lessons learned can be broken down into four categories: roles and responsibilities, sustainment rehearsals, brigade support battalion (BSB) support operations (SPO) and S-3 fusion, and synchronized sustainment.

Roles and responsibilities. The first lesson learned is the need to clearly define staff and command roles, responsibilities, and relationships for subordinate or attached units. The following improvements can be made to assist in this effort:

- Officers need to have a better understanding of the military decisionmaking process (MDMP); all too often units conduct an incomplete MDMP with limited guidance.
- Company-grade officers must learn the art of training management.
- The BSB staff must define and understand its roles and responsibilities before this information can be relayed to subordinate and attached units.

Sustainment rehearsals. The second lesson learned topic focuses on sustainment rehearsals and their undeniable value to the supported elements. During sustainment rehearsals, sustainers need to brief not only sustainment elements but also the maneuver and maneuver support elements so that the supported element understands how its plan will be sustained.

It is essential that the warfighter understand the sustainment plan and that the plan use the eight principles of sustainment in its design and function. Rehearsals are critical to comprehending the entire plan and how each section and unit fits into the scheme of maneuver and support.

SPO and S-3 fusion. The sustainment community is unique in that it has battalion and brigade S-4 officers focusing on internal logistics as well as a SPO section focusing on external logistics support. The BSB staff must be synchronized in order to properly support the mission of the warfighter. It also must have an internal discussion about who is responsible for what.

The distinction between future operations and current operations should be delineated, and each section needs to own its piece. All too often the lines between the BSB SPO and S-3 are blurred, causing confusion and inefficiency.

The art of forecasting and the use of staff running estimates needs to be emphasized through all levels of the staff in order to be proactive in sustainment instead of reactive. The company needs to have a knowledge management system in place to capture critical information for the commander to use to make decisions.

The company command post must be fused with battalion operations. The fusion at the BSB SPO and S-3

level will trickle down to the company level and allow the company command post to share the SPO and S-3's logistics common operational picture. This will allow the company to see itself in time and space and better provide sustainment on the move.

Sustainment synchronization. All sustainment functions must be synchronized vertically and horizontally to provide timely and accurate logistics on the battlefield. Sustainment also needs to be synchronized with brigade operations to ensure seamless transitions and support. Sustainment leaders must maintain situational awareness of brigade and battalion operations.

Digital systems can level the playing field by providing all echelons with a common operational picture. However, the BSB and sustainment elements tend to use digital enablers poorly.

Developing a quality synchronization matrix appears to be a lost art. Synchronization between the BSB and the forward support companies (FSCs) needs to occur routinely. This should be a part of the sustainment battle rhythm since the FSCs should be acting as part of a deliberate and synchronized sustainment plan.

Companies also need to make sure troop leading procedures parallel the MDMP; they are just as important to ensuring mission success.

Developing and executing company standard operating procedures (SOPs) are also important. The value of a working SOP is underestimated, and organizations often scramble to conform to a different standard each time they conduct a mission. Having a working SOP mitigates this.

LOGC3's Value

LOGC3 continues to refine and update its program of instruction to adequately address lessons learned by company-grade officers. LOGC3 is divided into two phases: the common core phase and the logistics phase. Officers receive 90 hours of mission command and MDMP fundamentals in the common core phase.

The logistics phase includes 143

hours of decisive action instruction, including a sustainment overview and functional area training (transportation, ammunition, maintenance, supply, field services, and medical logistics). During the logistics phase, students are evaluated through ex-

ercises that apply the fundamentals of sustainment planning and the MDMP.

lessons learned from the Army's CTCs. These lessons and blocks of instruction are posted on the Sustainment Unit One Stop website and are linked to the Forces Command Leader Development Toolbox, providing officers and leaders with key

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There are two capstone exercises during the final weeks of the logistics phase. The logistics exercise is a group event that tests the students' ability to apply the MDMP and come up with solutions to sustainment problems in a decisive action scenario. The final project, the individual concept of support, requires students to work alone to create a synchronization matrix and concept of support for an armored brigade combat team on the offense.

Students also receive 36 hours of digital enabler instruction, which includes training on key sustainment and mission command systems, such as the Battle Command Sustainment Support System, Command Post of the Future, and Global Combat Support System-Army.

In addition to the standard curriculum, LOGC3 provides leader professional development sessions that address the practical application of some topics discussed during the career course. These sessions involve issues ranging from the company commander and first sergeant relationship to training management and how to succeed as a commander during a combat training center rotation.

The LOGC3 curriculum covers the fundamentals that junior logistics officers should know prior to key developmental assignments. The blocks of instruction also adequately address critical company-grade

materials at home station once they graduate from LOGC3.

The cornerstone of LOGC3 instruction will continue to relay the importance of the principles of mission command and the MDMP. Mission command and employing the MDMP are the main elements of success for completing LOGC3 and for survival at the CTCs. Having officers on a battalion or brigade staff who understand how to apply the MDMP is essential. Officers must also learn how to conduct sustainment rehearsals and briefing techniques to effectively relay their message to subordinates, peers, and supervisors alike.

Persistent emphasis on sustainment in a decisive action environment, mission command, and the MDMP will all be critical for future success. LOGC3 instructors will continue to coordinate with the CTCs on observations and with home-station units on complementing instruction with follow-on training.

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