

Strategic Broadening: An Opportunity for Logisticians

The Chief of Staff of the Army Strategic Studies Group needs logisticians to provide a balanced view of both Army strategic capabilities and challenges.

■ By Lt. Gen. Raymond V. Mason and Col. Richard C. Staats

In 2011, Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) Gen. Raymond T. Odierno authorized the creation of the Strategic Studies Group. The CSA saw an Army that had focused on “the close fight” with great success for more than a decade. But he also knew that the Army was entering a new era where long-standing operating assumptions needed to be tested.

For the first time since the 1940s, the Army is going to be a largely continental United States-based force. Budget pressures are significant, and over the next 20 years, the United States’ technological advantages could be uncertain in some critical war-fighting areas.

The CSA is responsible for organizing, equipping, and training the Army, and he needed a group of leaders to look outside the budget cycle and beyond the traditional planning horizon to 2030. Identifying future challenges and outlining solutions is the purpose of the CSA Strategic Studies Group. The first annual Strategic Studies Group was formed in the summer of 2012.

What Is the Strategic Studies Group?

The Strategic Studies Group comprises a cohort of creative leaders and thinkers from all military services and the civilian community. The group is a diverse team of officers and civilians with the ability to think critically on a wide range of multifaceted topics.

Each year, the CSA selects a broad governing theme to guide the Stra-

tegic Studies Group’s research. The Strategic Studies Group informs the CSA of its progress throughout the year and produces a summary briefing and written report of the concepts, research results, and recommendations. These products, while focused on the future, could influence the CSA’s decisions on the Army’s near-term and midterm goals.

Why a Logistician?

This is a superb assignment and broadening opportunity for a logistics officer or civilian. The CSA Strategic Studies Group needs logisticians to provide a balanced view of both Army strategic capabilities and challenges. It provides the chance for the logistician to consider a wide variety of topics and viewpoints related to long-term challenges for the Army. The logistics community has been fortunate to have a logistician in each of the first two CSA Strategic Studies Group cohorts.

The first CSA Strategic Studies Group worked on topics ranging from ensuring tactical communications in joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational environments, to recruiting, training, and retaining the best possible Army personnel in 2030, to strengthening the Army’s strategic-lift options.

How to get involved?

The CSA Strategic Studies Group is a one-year assignment for military fellows and is open to all

service members in the grades of O-3 to O-6. For GS-13 to GS-15 civilians, the assignment can be one to three years. Civilians can apply from both the government and private sector. The assignment is located in Arlington, Va.

For more information, visit <http://csa-strategic-studies-group.hqda.pentagon.mil/>.

Lt. Gen. Raymond V. Mason became the Army G-4 in November 2011. He is a career logistician and has served worldwide at every echelon from platoon to the Department of the Army, including several joint tours. Mason has commanded seven times, including three general officer commands.

Col. Richard C. Staats, USAR, was the senior fellow for the inaugural Chief of Staff of the Army Strategic Studies Group. He is currently assigned to the Joint Staff J-5. He is a career logistician and has served worldwide and commanded five times including battalion and brigade commands.

Editor’s Note: As the Army’s official professional bulletin on sustainment, Army Sustainment provides a forum for the exchange of information and expression of original, creative, and innovative thoughts on sustainment functions. We welcome your commentaries and thoughts on any sustainment-related topic. Submit articles and comments to usarmy.lee.tradoc.mbx.leeasm@mail.mil.