



Operational Design for Expeditionary Corps Support

■ By Brig. Gen. John “Jack” Haley

Soldiers from the 8th Theater Sustainment Command, 593rd Expeditionary Command, 9th Mission Support Command, Army Sustainment Command, and 196th Infantry Brigade conduct intelligence exercise Perspicuous Provider April 18 through 22, 2016, at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. (Photo by Staff Sgt. John Garver)



Expeditionary sustainment commands (ESCs) are incredibly flexible, scalable, and tailorable organizations. They enable freedom of action in support of unified land operations by providing expeditionary mission command for theater opening, sustainment, distribution, and reception, staging, and onward movement (RSO) operations. The ESCs do all of this while maintaining mission command of subordinate units.

As a deployable headquarters, an ESC can work in a variety of roles: for a theater sustainment command as a forward command post, for an Army corps as the sustainment command, as a joint task force (JTF) headquarters, or as a land component command. The goal of the ESC is to extend forces' operational reach, endurance, and freedom of action.

Alignment of the ESC

In the active component, ESCs are aligned with Army corps. The 3rd ESC is aligned with the 18th Airborne Corps at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; the 13th ESC is aligned with III Corps at Fort Hood, Texas; the 19th ESC is aligned with the Eighth Army in Korea; and the 593rd ESC is aligned with I Corps at Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM), Washington.

Much like the sustainment brigades' recent alignment with divisions, the

ESC's alignment is powerful in its own right because it establishes a strong relationship between the ESC and the operational maneuver commander. This enables synchronized sustainment and better horizontal combat power integration across the corps.

The 593rd ESC headquarters is assigned to the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) and is under the operational control of U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC) and I Corps. However, many of the 593rd ESC's subordinate units are globally available to meet Forces Command (FORSCOM) and Army requirements. On any given day, the 593rd ESC has Soldiers deployed in support of worldwide missions outside the PACOM area of responsibility.

The dispersion of operations across the Pacific area of responsibility and FORSCOM creates a unique and challenging environment as it balances preparing subordinate units to deploy with maintaining the readiness of the ESC headquarters to accomplish its expeditionary sustainment mission.

Command Post Capabilities

To accomplish its mission, the 593rd ESC has developed a flexible, scalable, and tailorable operational design. At its root, the ESC is a deployable command post. The 593rd ESC's focus is on sustaining units

FEATURES

The commander of the 593rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command describes the operational design that enables it to provide expeditionary support for I Corps' widely dispersed units.

deployed in an assigned area of operations (AO). The AO can be adjusted by the geographic combatant commander; the 593rd ESC is able to adapt to these changes by maintaining three deployable command posts and one static home-station element.

The deployable command posts are the humanitarian assistance survey team (HAST), the early-entry command post (EECP), and the main command post (MCP). The home-station command post is the sustainment operations center (SOC). All of the ESC's command posts are modular and can either operate independently or network with each other.

HAST. The ESC can act as the JTF headquarters for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. The HAST is a small, rapidly deployable mission command node that is designed for early-entry situational assessment and initial operational planning. It was originally designed to support humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations or defense support to civil authorities. However, the HAST can also function as a tactical command post for the ESC.

EECP. The EECP plans, prepares, and assesses sustainment, distribution, theater opening, and RSO operations. It also provides mission command to facilitate continuity for follow-on activities and forces. The EECP is relocatable and can be reassigned to another location as a jump tactical operations center once the MCP assumes mission command at the initial EECP location. This capability increases the 593rd ESC's operational reach.

MCP. The MCP is a fully manned mission command node capable of providing prolonged endurance in support of any operation. It is an operational-level sustainment headquarters responsible for synchronizing sustainment in support of a corps, joint forces land component command, or JTF.

SOC. The 593rd ESC's SOC synchronizes I Corps and JBLM sus-

tainment operations in support of the installation logistics support plan and the senior mission commander's priorities. The center coordinates and synchronizes sustainment requirements, operations, and sustainment stakeholders. The center is also responsible for these key tasks:

- Optimizing and supporting I Corps' sustained readiness processes.
- Providing a logistics common operational picture for I Corps.
- Conducting key sustainment leader engagements.
- Maintaining and improving the sustainment battle rhythm.
- Providing reach back capability for deployed command posts.

The SOC's goal is to provide an operational command center to build sustained readiness for I Corps. I Corps not only consists of units at JBLM but also the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii, U.S. Army Forces Japan, and U.S. Army Forces Alaska.

Communications Shortfalls

The primary shortfall of the ESC's operational design is its lack of communications equipment. This equipment is the backbone of the ESC's mission command nodes. By doctrine, an ESC is supported by an expeditionary signal battalion (ESB). An ESB is typically a corps or theater asset that supports all theater units without organic signal assets. While the ESB is fully capable of providing the necessary communications network for an ESC, it may not be readily available to meet immediate requirements.

To mitigate this risk, the 593rd ESC procured program manager-managed communication equipment through the Rapid Fielding Initiative to meet the immediate signal requirements. This equipment included a broadband global area network (BGAN) antenna and a secure internet protocol router network/non-secure internet protocol router access point (SNAP) ground satellite terminal.

BGAN. The BGAN is an expedi-

tionary satellite communications system designed to provide small units the size of a HAST or tactical operations center with satellite communications capabilities. The ESC has successfully used the BGAN antenna in the past, but the model it owned is no longer authorized for use on the Defense Information Systems Agency's (DISA's) International Maritime Satellite Network.

The Program Executive Office for Command, Control, and Communications-Tactical (PEO C3T) is developing communications solutions that include BGAN devices. PEO C3T's intent is to extend the Department of Defense communications networks by reclaiming and redistributing the Global Rapid Response Information Package until Transportable Tactical Command Communications (T2C2) systems are phased into the force. The T2C2 systems are designed to be operated by any Soldier, thereby expanding expeditionary communications capabilities.

SNAP. The SNAP terminal is a commercial-off-the-shelf product that was procured for Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Armywide, SNAP terminals are being reset and reallocated to ESBs and corps in order to provide added capability until the T2C2 equipment is fielded. The SNAP and T2C2 equipment is managed by PEO C3T and is supported by the Communications-Electronics Command.

The 593rd ESC is not authorized satellite communications capabilities, such as the SNAP or its replacement the T2C2. However, as part of its communications mitigation plan, the ESC purchased one reset SNAP terminal plus optional attachments to make it a tri-band, tactical network solution capable of operating with current DISA networks and architecture.

In units authorized a SNAP terminal, it is normally operated and maintained by a satellite communication systems operator-maintainer and a

nodal network systems operator-maintainer. Since the ESC does not have these specialties, it is using information technology specialists and signal support systems specialists as equipment operators.

None of the equipment mentioned in the ESC communications shortfalls mitigation plan is authorized. However, the equipment does offer possible solutions to communications issues within ESCs if changes are made to modified tables of organization and equipment and personnel. These changes would ensure the personnel, equipment, and training necessary for the ESC's expeditionary communications requirement were met. The Combined Arms Support Command recognizes the expeditionary communications requirement and is actively seeking possible solutions.

Expeditionary Training

The 593rd ESC is in the unique position of supporting both USARPAC and FORSCOM. This provides the ESC with tremendous opportunities to train expeditionary mission command. The 593rd ESC designed an aggressive phased training plan focused on sustaining readiness. The training plan is built on an ability to operate in a variety of environments that enhance the sustainment of bilateral and multilateral interoperability.

For fiscal year 2016, the emphasis of the training plan, "Operation Ripken," is to remain ready as an expeditionary command headquarters that is regionally engaged, globally responsive, and capable of deploying to any environment.

In the first quarter of fiscal year 2016, the ESC deployed the EECF to Japan in support of exercise Yama Sakura 69 to validate its expeditionary capability as the forward headquarters for theater sustainment in support of I Corps. The ESC also provided a bilateral rear-area operations coordination center responsible for the I Corps and Middle Army

Joint Security Area and focused on integration in a joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational setting.

During the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2016, the ESC will deploy its EECF to Southeast Asia in support of an annual joint, combined exercise. During the exercise, the 593rd will practice providing mission command, distribution, and sustainment for I Corps.

While PACOM, USARPAC, and I Corps provide multiple training opportunities across the theater, the ESC is also taking advantage of FORSCOM's warfighter exercises. Taken together, these exercises provide the multiple repetitions needed to maintain expeditionary mission command proficiency.

The 593rd ESC's phased training plan validates its ability to execute expeditionary sustainment in complex environments to support I Corps across the range of unified land operations.

The 593rd ESC is organized to provide rapidly deployable and expeditionary sustainment mission command for a theater sustainment command, corps, Army force, joint forces land component command, or JTF. Although challenged with a lack of organic communications equipment, the ESC has emplaced alternatives that can meet immediate requirements.

The ESC's robust training program leverages geographic combatant command, Army service component command, and Army command opportunities and prepares the 593rd ESC to truly "put the E in ESC!"

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