



*The U.S. Army Vessel CW3 Harold A. Clinger, Logistic Support Vessel-2, manned by a 163rd Transportation Detachment crew, conducts the first of eight surface lifts between Kaneohe Bay and Kawaihae Harbor, Hawaii, July 2, 2014, in support of the biennial Rim of the Pacific 2014 exercise. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Mary E. Ferguson)*

# Sustainment Mission Command in a Globally Distributed Environment

■ By Maj. Gen. Edward F. Dorman III





In the vast, noncontiguous Pacific theater, the 8th Theater Sustainment Command (TSC) is responsible for building and sustaining land component and joint force readiness despite the “tyranny of distance.” This globally distributed environment includes multiple theaters of operations full of geopolitical intricacies. Almost 25 percent of the U.S. active duty military force is in the Pacific theater, spread across 16 time zones.

What the 8th TSC does not have is direct mission command relationships with subordinate enabling formations. Through a combination of directed authority, sustainment integration, designated roles and responsibilities, and relationships and influence, the 8th TSC controls a supply pipeline that it does not own.

There may be a misconception that “sustainment mission command” is synonymous with the “single logistics command and control” that the 8th TSC lacks. But how the 8th TSC adheres to the six principles of the mission command philosophy—building cohesive teams through mutual trust, creating a shared understanding, providing a clear

## FEATURES

In the Pacific theater, the 8th Theater Sustainment Command applies the principles of mission command through operational influence rather than through direct control.

commander's intent, exercising disciplined initiative, using mission orders, and accepting prudent risk—proves that sustainment mission command is really no different than any other form of mission command.

### The Value of Influence

Sustainment in the Pacific theater is based on operational art rather than tactical function. The purpose of the mission command warfighting function is to synchronize, integrate, and coordinate the other warfighting functions at precisely the right time and place to meet the objective so that Army forces can seize, retain, and exploit disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to gain the advantage over our adversaries and create conditions for favorable outcomes.

Sustainment mission command in the Pacific begins with a complete understanding of the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) and U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC) commanders' intents for the current operation. The 8th TSC serves as the operational conduit from the tactical level to the strategic level of sustainment. One substantial way this occurs is through the PACOM Joint Logistics Hui. (Hui is a Hawaiian word that means community meeting or assembly.)

As the land component and joint force senior logistics synchronizer in the area of responsibility, I chair the Joint Logistics Hui, which is a meeting with joint sustainment leaders in the Pacific and other key stakeholders to assess requirements. The leaders discuss and agree on priorities, where to accept prudent risk, and how to decentralize execution of programs, policies, operations, activities, and actions.

The Joint Logistics Hui shows how the 8th TSC applies the principles of mission command across all echelons by harnessing its operational influence rather than exerting direct control. A shared understanding of roles, responsibilities, and authorities enables leaders to synchronize, inte-

grate, and coordinate the numerous enabling formations into tailored support and supply distribution.

This, in turn, ensures freedom of action, extended operational reach, and prolonged endurance, which give the warfighting commander the assurance that his requirements are anticipated and understood and will be in the right place, in the right quantity, at the right time to achieve his desired effects.

Furthermore, the Joint Logistics Hui develops teams, both within the TSC and with unified action partners, who will directly inform and influence follow-on joint boards, bureaus, centers, cells, and working groups. For example, the PACOM J-4 will influence the J-3 to issue certain orders.

In this way, centralized planning enables joint complementary decentralized execution while ensuring that mission command remains a commander-centric activity even in a globally distributed environment.

### Relationships Matter

The 8th TSC relies on several specific relationships to synchronize the warfighting functions necessary to deliver sustainment effects as we prepare for rapid transitions to crises and contingencies. We build these relationships through senior-leader engagements, tabletop seminars, and leader development programs—all of which educate the force, allow for greater shared understanding, and provide a logistics common operational picture.

Key sustainment relationships in the Pacific must include allies and partners, the U.S. Agency for International Development, embassy country teams, and other joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational partners in order to overcome mission command challenges.

The commander's intent drives how national partners, such as the U.S. Transportation Command, Defense Logistics Agency, Army Materiel Command, and industry partners, link the modal exterior lines of com-



munication to the operational and tactical interior lines of communication. This requires significant team-building across the services, the joint logistics enterprise, and warfighting headquarters.

Summits and conferences supplement and further assess the overall effectiveness of our systems, processes, and reporting procedures in a globally distributed environment.

For example, the 8th TSC hosted the Pacific Sustainer Sourcing Conference in April 2016 to identify fiscal year 2017 training opportunities for reserve component units. These opportunities will strengthen sustainment options in the area of responsibility, increase readiness, and drive long-range planning for future operations, activities, and actions.

Because practicing on systems and tasks further strengthens relationships, the 8th TSC regularly participates in more than 10 service and joint exercises. The exercises range from training full main command posts to response cells. These events provide opportunities to practice boards, bureaus, centers, cells, and working groups and link training plans and objectives across multiple echelons.

Ultimately, any investment in building relationships facilitates greater integration, coordination, and synchronization, which enhances sustainment mission command.

### Leveraging Authority

As the 8th TSC commander, I serve as both the senior logistics integrator in the Pacific and the USARPAC deputy commanding general for sustainment. These roles bear the responsibility for coordinating priorities, setting policies, building readiness, and ensuring the theater is logistically set. I assess these areas by chairing monthly theater sustainment readiness reviews.

As the general officer champion for USARPAC's posture line of effort, I link the posture functions of the G-5 cell to the sustainment functions of

the G-4 cell. I help ensure timely decision-making, inform priorities, and allow for the effective allocation of resources through mission orders from the G-3 cell.

As the 8th TSC commander, I also chair daily operations and intelligence updates and monthly operations and analysis updates to synchronize land component sustainment. Land component G-4s and the forward-stationed and deployed expeditionary sustainment commands, regional support group, and national partners all plug into these forums.

The joint logistics enterprise and service components understand that the 8th TSC does not own the supply pipeline, but they clearly look to the TSC for guidance and synchronization.

Another successful method of leveraging authority is the new theater enabling command (TEC) technical language in the theater campaign support order. The TEC language guides how the 8th TSC works through the Army forces and corps to build and sustain readiness.

Other than the supporting-to-supported relationship, this TEC language is the only link between the 8th TSC and the tactical sustainment units in the Pacific. While the TEC language is not a command authority, this link does speak to the science of control in terms of influence on training, expertise, coordination, leader development responsibilities, and force modernization.

The 8th TSC's advantage as the operational-level integrator and synchronizer lies in its ability to anticipate requirements, balance capabilities, forecast demands and facilitate long-range planning and training for the expeditionary sustainment commands and regional support group. In this manner, the 8th TSC's systems and tasks enable it to direct the release and transfer of materials, supplies, and munitions across the Pacific.

The 8th TSC may not "own" anything, but it leverages this technical

linkage in several ways:

- By managing classes II (individual equipment), IV (construction and barrier materials), and IX (repair parts).
- By managing class V (ammunition) and retrograde operations with directive authority.
- By managing class VII (major end items) through Army structure processes and second destination transportation funds.
- By establishing the theater concept of support.

The 8th TSC's facilities and equipment help bring these systems and tasks together. By leveraging a combined operations and intelligence center, enabled through U.S. and coalition networks, the TSC's operations process and knowledge management products ensure sustainment is synchronized across the warfighting functions.

The 8th TSC may not own the enabling formations of the Pacific, but its ability to influence them certainly builds teams through mutual trust and shared understanding. The TSC's efforts to synchronize, integrate, and coordinate provide a clear commander's intent yet still allow decentralized leaders to exercise disciplined initiative.

One might argue that lacking "single logistics command and control" limits the science of control in a globally distributed environment, but even if we accept that as true, we can still generate greater opportunities to achieve mission success through a masterful art of command.

---

Maj. Gen. Edward F. Dorman III is the commanding general of the 8th Theater Sustainment Command at Fort Shafter, Hawaii.

*The author thanks Col. Phillip Mead, Maj. Marc Vielledent, and Master Sgt. Matthew Davio for their contributions to this article.*