



# The Korean Theater of Operations Is the Proving Ground for Sustainers

■ By Brig. Gen. John P. Sullivan and Lt. Col. Benjamin J. Harris

*A Soldier qualifies on the MK-19 grenade launcher on a gunnery range in Korea. Although the Korean Armistice Agreement has been in place for over 62 years, the armistice could transition to a contingency operation at any moment, underscoring the critical requirement to maintain readiness at all times.*





Every day in the Republic of Korea (ROK), the 19th Expeditionary Sustainment Command (ESC), also known as Team 19, synchronizes and executes sustainment operations in support of the Eighth Army and U.S. Forces Korea (USFK). The sustainers of Team 19 are challenged to continuously improve their skills while maintaining an expeditionary mindset.

Although the Korean Armistice Agreement has been in place for over 62 years, recent events demonstrate that the armistice could transition to a contingency operation at any moment, underscoring the critical requirement to maintain “Fight Tonight” readiness at all times.

### **The 19th ESC**

Korea is a rewarding place to serve and a challenging proving ground for warfighter logisticians. It provides ample opportunities for sustainers to hone their crafts while playing an essential part in deterrence on the peninsula. Over the course of their assignments with Team 19, Soldiers exponentially increase their tactical warfighting skills, knowledge base, and leadership abilities while becoming world-class sustainers who are ready to lead Army sustainment into the future.

Headquartered in Daegu, ROK, the 19th ESC is the only theater-committed, forward-deployed ESC in the Army. It provides mission command for sustainment operations in Korea and connects strategic sustainment capability with tactical requirements. It executes joint distribution; reception, staging, onward movement, and integration; and Army executive agent logistics

## FEATURES

The 19th Expeditionary Sustainment Command works closely with its Korean counterparts to develop Soldiers and leaders and execute sustainment operations in support of U.S. Forces Korea and the Eighth Army.

support for USFK.

The 19th ESC commander serves as the senior responsible officer for Area IV, which is the southern hub for sustainment and power projection on the peninsula. The ESC consists of approximately 5,600 assigned personnel spread across the Korean theater of operations.

The 19th ESC has a long and distinguished history in Korea. It was first activated as the 19th General Support Command in Seoul on July 15, 1964. The command's headquarters relocated to Daegu as part of the consolidation of the Eighth Army's Support Command and Depot Command in 1972. Over the next 30 years, the command was redesignated multiple times, changing from a command to a brigade to a Theater Army Area Command until it became the 19th ESC on December 16, 2005.

### Organizations

Today, the 19th ESC has subordinate units spread from Busan in the south to the Joint Security Area in the north. Collectively, the 19th ESC comprises a team of professionals, including Soldiers, Department of the Army civilians, and Korean nationals, who provide sustainment for all U.S. forces in the ROK. During armistice operations, Team 19 is composed of the Materiel Support Command-Korea (MSC-K) and the 94th Military Police (MP) Battalion. During contingencies, this would expand as additional sustainment units deploy to the peninsula.

MSC-K consists of three tactical battalions (the 25th Transportation Battalion, the 6th Ordnance Battalion, and the 498th Combat Support Sustainment Battalion), the Korean Service Corps Battalion, and the theater's maintenance and supply Industrial Base.

### 25th Transportation Battalion

The 25th Transportation Battalion, working closely with ROK counterparts, coordinates and schedules all U.S. military movements on the peninsula. Every day, the 25th Trans-

portation Battalion works with the Korea Railroad Corporation to facilitate rail movements.

During contingency operations, the battalion partners with the ROK Transportation Command at all of the ROK Army's 4-star headquarters, which include the Capital Defense Command, First ROK Army, Third ROK Army, and the 2nd Operational Command.

Over the past two years, the battalion has coordinated more than 17,000 movement requests, 206 unit deployments, five rotational unit deployments, 30 Korean Marine Exchange Program deployments for the III Marine Expeditionary Force, and two Pacific Pathways exercises.

### 6th Ordnance Battalion

The 6th Ordnance Battalion is the only active duty battalion of its type. The battalion's Soldiers store, maintain, and issue all U.S. ammunition and explosives on the peninsula. It works side by side with ROK Army soldiers in ROK ammunition depots and supply points using ROK Army equipment.

It also makes ammunition operations on the peninsula safer by retrograding or demilitarizing obsolete ammunition. Since May 2013, it has retrograded over 54,737 short tons of ammunition and explosives.

Along with the 120th ROK Army Infantry Regiment, the 6th Ordnance Battalion conducted the first ever combined base defense exercise at Camp Carroll and two remains excavation exercises.

### Korean Service Corps Battalion

The Korean Service Corps Battalion, which was established in 1950 to augment U.S. sustainment operations, is the largest U.S. battalion on the peninsula. Today this unique organization is involved in virtually all of the Eighth Army's major missions.

The battalion conducts reception operations at Incheon International Airport, moves major combat systems for the 2nd Infantry Division using its heavy equipment transport-



er company, maintains combat systems in motor pools, and maintains and stores supplies and ammunition at central issue facilities and ammunition depots.

Comprising 17 companies during armistice operations, the battalion can expand to have more than 146 companies and over 21,000 paramilitary Korean nationals during a contingency.

## The Industrial Base

The MSC-K Industrial Base operates in 19 facilities across Camp Carroll. It is co-located with Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Distribution Korea and the Army Field Support Battalion-Northeast Asia, which manages Army pre-positioned stocks stored in the Pacific.

The Industrial Base is organized into directorates and divisions and led by Department of the Army civilians and local national Korean employees. This organization gives the Eighth Army depot-level capabilities that enhance readiness while saving transportation costs and time.

Using Industrial Base facilities significantly reduces the average turnaround time for repairs and increases readiness for critical combat systems.

## 94th MP Battalion

Team 19 also includes the 94th MP Battalion, the only MP battalion on the peninsula and the largest forward deployed MP battalion in the Army. The "Polar Bear" battalion has a diverse mission; every day it has more than 400 MP personnel working across the peninsula to provide law enforcement, criminal investigation, military working dog, close protection, and traffic accident investigation services.

Headquartered at Camp Humphreys, the battalion has companies stationed throughout the peninsula, patrolling from the sea to the Demilitarized Zone. While supporting law and order, they also make time to conduct Polar Bear Tactical Training. This training consists of gunnery qualifications and lanes training that test the Soldiers' ability to perform

their wartime mission and that determine their proficiency as it relates to the units' mission essential task list. One platoon at a time from each company plans and executes collective training to improve tactical and law enforcement skills.

## Partnerships

By working with multiple strategic partners, the 19th ESC integrates and synchronizes strategic sustainment capabilities with operational and tactical requirements throughout the peninsula.

These partners include the Army Materiel Command's 403rd Army Field Support Brigade, the Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command's 837th Transportation Battalion, the Defense Contract Management Agency-Korea, the 411th Contracting Support Brigade, the U.S. Army Medical Materiel Center-Korea, DLA Energy, and DLA Distribution.

Another unique and critical part of the 19th ESC mission is the combined nature of all of its operations in Korea. By closely working with ROK Army counterparts, to include the ROK 2nd Operational Command, First ROK Army, Third ROK Army, the ROK Transportation Command, and the ROK Logistics Command, the 19th ESC builds on the strong alliance between the United States and the ROK to improve effectiveness and efficiency in sustaining units throughout the Korean theater of operations.

In conjunction with its partners, Team 19 manages the southern hub, which is the sustainment and power projection backbone for the peninsula. It works closely with the U.S. Army Garrison Daegu to improve installation capabilities and services that enable the sustainment mission and improve quality of life for Soldiers, civilians, and families that live in the area.

Additionally, the ESC's outreach efforts through community relations programs such as the Korean American Friendship Circle and the USFK Good Neighbor Program, combined

with continued relationships with local governments, help promote partnerships and cultural understanding between Team 19 and the surrounding communities.

Every day, Team 19 warfighters execute sustainment operations in support of USFK and the Eighth Army, improving their skill sets while maintaining readiness. Korea is an assignment of choice; it is a challenging proving ground that provides great opportunities for sustainers to hone their crafts and play an essential part in deterrence on the peninsula.

Team 19 works closely with its ROK counterparts to train its Soldiers and leaders. At the conclusion of an assignment with Team 19, a sustainer is more capable and ready to lead. As it has done for more than 50 years, Team 19 continues to strengthen the alliance while remaining ready to Fight Tonight.

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