



Sustaining America's Hammer:

Building the III Corps Sustainment Team

■ By Brig. Gen. Darren Werner



Paladins from the 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, from Fort Riley, Kan., line up at the Port of Gdansk, Poland, on Sept. 14, 2017, awaiting movement to Eastern Europe in support of Atlantic Resolve. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jacob A. McDonald)

The commander
of the 13th Expeditionary Sustainment Command outlines the unit's role in sustaining III Corps and improving Army readiness.

Fort Hood, Texas, is home to III Corps, “America’s Hammer.” In April, Lt. Gen. Paul E. Funk II, the III Corps commander, hosted a sustainment summit with leaders from the Army Materiel Command, the Army G-4, the Forces Command, the Defense Logistics Agency, and divisions and brigades throughout III Corps.

During the summit, Funk emphasized the corps’ role in the readiness of 75 percent of the Army’s armored force. He discussed unit dispersion over eight installations in six states and the global demands for armored forces. Additionally, he championed the corps’ habitual training relationship with reserve component armored formations.

The operating tempo of III Corps remains high with units in various stages of deployments. The corps’ headquarters and a division headquarters were deployed for most of fiscal year 2018. Meanwhile, another division headquarters prepared to deploy, and several brigade combat teams were in various stages of deployment and redeployment.

Additionally, 13 of the corps’ separate brigades had teams or headquarters deployed, and the subordinate sustainment units were on different deployment cycles than their headquarters were. In addition to leading Combined Joint Task Force–Operation Inherent Resolve, the corps dispatched troops to Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas.

Because of the scale and scope of its mission, III Corps must be unified and vertically, horizontally, and externally synchronized to fight and win in a complex world. The mission Funk has given the 13th Expeditionary Sustainment Command (ESC) is clear: anticipate and deliver requirements to drive III Corps’ preparedness. The ESC’s role is to optimize teamwork within III Corps and the joint logistics enterprise to deliver readiness.

Building a Team

In May, I assumed command of the

13th ESC at Fort Hood. Since then we have adopted a team approach in order to sustain readiness in III Corps. In the July–August 2016 issue of *Army Sustainment*, then Lt. Gen. Gus Perna, who at the time was the Army Deputy Chief of Staff, G-4, wrote, “Optimized Mission Command: Using Authority and Influence.” The point most relevant to the 13th ESC was the importance of influencing outside the organization and building a team of teams focused on priorities set by the corps.

There must be cohesion throughout III Corps extending beyond its divisions and sustainment brigades, to include strategic partners, to ultimately influence the readiness of the corps. A solid command line to create a monolithic sustainment architecture does not exist. The ESC serves as the keystone within the sustainment architecture to prioritize, expedite, and adapt the enterprise to achieve the vision of the corps’ commander.

The 2018 National Defense Strategy significantly altered the focus of the Army by stating that “Interstate strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in U.S. national security.” This paradigm shift is significant for the Army’s largest and only armored corps. The Army was already transitioning its focus from fighting counterinsurgency in mature theaters to fighting near-peer threats in expeditionary environments. These changes increase III Corps’ sustainment challenges.

Building a team capable of sustaining an organization that spans multiple installations across the United States and supports combatant commands globally requires intricate planning and intentional focus on cohesion. As III Corps’ expeditionary sustainment command, the 13th ESC has to develop systems to build and maintain combat power to support multi-domain operations.

Understanding and implementing the six mission command principles strengthens the integration

of teams. (See figure 1.) Supported and supporting commanders generate shared understanding over time and through practice. They also develop trust in the team. Of the six principles, units must focus efforts on building cohesive teams through mutual trust.

As adversaries adapt, upgrade, incorporate hybrid warfare, and learn to operate in a multi-domain battlespace, the Army and its logisticians must prepare to fight unified teams. Team building is at the heart of everything we do, from physical training to rehearsals and exercises to worldwide deployments.

Army organizations operate as part of multiple teams, both internally and externally. Internal teams are more tangible and typically easier to develop. They often have multiple touch points occurring daily. Leaders engage face to face with their troops or subordinate commands and staffs, which results in confident and capable teams. The frequent interaction between the leader and the led creates an environment of trust, and relationships are developed.

The III Corps Commander's Vision

The III Corps commander uses five pillars built on a foundation of teamwork to outline his vision for the corps. (See figure 2 on page 23.) The readiness of III Corps is indicative of the readiness of the Army, and sustainment plays a vital role in ensuring power projection platforms are ready.

III Corps must synchronize priorities as part of a high performing team that encompasses maneuver commanders, sustainment commanders, and sustainment enterprise partners. Each player has to know his individual position and play it well.

Key to the success of a great team is having players who are prepared to back up their teammates when required. Successful teams execute the fundamentals exceptionally well, and each member plays his or her position and trusts the others to do the same.

Relationships Matter

Soldiers often talk about “building the team” but fail to understand how to cultivate teamwork or an effective

team. Being on a team is drilled into Soldiers from the first days of training. We are taught to think bigger than our organization and collectively strive to understand and accomplish the mission. To form the team, we develop relationships through respect, repetition, and reliance.

The same level of team building and cohesiveness is required externally in the contract-enabled, joint, multicomponent and multinational environment. Obtaining interoperability is more challenging. The organizations that comprise teams at higher echelons, such as joint task forces and coalitions, are often separated geographically and have high operating tempos and conflicting calendars. Regardless, these external teams must be capable of coming together without impairing the mission or speed of assembly.

The modularity of formations, not to mention their varied deployment cycles, continues to challenge sustainment organizations with different task organizations and capabilities. Compounding the complexity is the multicomponent nature of sustainment capabilities.

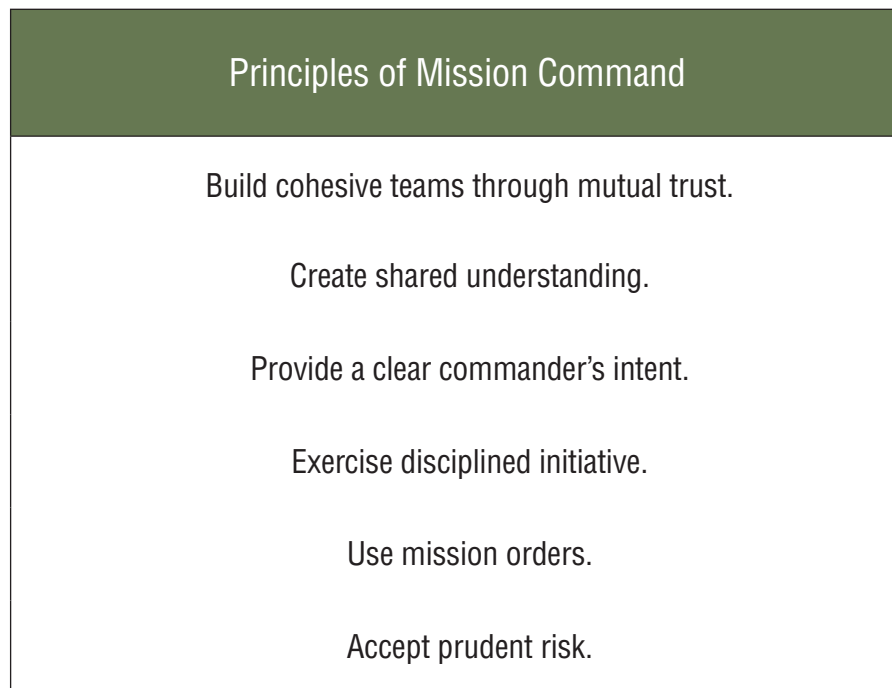
Building relationships from the tactical to the strategic level takes time. Through realistic training, both stateside and abroad, the Army is quickly strengthening relationships that have softened over the past 17 years.

Any sustainment unit deployed to support an operation or exercise has experienced the five stages of team building proposed by Bruce Tuckman: forming, storming, norming, performing, and transforming. Because these units are rapidly aggregated for operations and then return to their parent units, commanders must flatten the learning curve and get beyond the storming stage quickly.

Recent Examples

Army forces around the world are partnered and building relationships with the forces of other nations.

Figure 1. These six principles of mission command are found in Army Doctrine Publication 6-0, Mission Command.



Most notably, American armored brigade combat teams and aviation brigades on heel-to-toe deployments deter potential adversaries alongside European and NATO allies. These rotations are building an interoperable team that could face a near-peer adversary across a multi-domain battlespace.

The Army's ability to work with allies is vital to defending nation-

al interests. Since World War I, we have fought alongside many of our European allies and partners, fostering relationships to ensure the safety and freedom of their sovereign territories. Atlantic Resolve continues to build on the relationships established through the many years of multinational operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

III Corps units and sustainers are

More than 1,000 pieces of equipment from the 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, from Fort Riley, Kan., line the port in Gdansk, Poland, on Sept. 14, 2017, as the unit prepares to move its equipment inland. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jacob A. McDonald)



key players in Atlantic Resolve rotations. The 1st Infantry Division has truck and supply companies forward, the ESC has movement control teams rotating through, and the 49th Movement Control Battalion is deployed to manage all movement operations in Eastern Europe.

Training events are similar to deployments except the aggregation of forces, execution of mission, and redeployment of forces occur in less time. One 13th ESC unit recently participated in the Quartermaster Liquid Logistics Exercise. This exercise brought Army (active and reserve), Navy, and Army Materiel Command assets and Defense Logistics Agency Energy representatives together in one task force to provide fuel testing labs, bulk storage capabilities, and water production.

The United Kingdom even sent an observation team to watch operations before conducting a similar exercise in England. The exercise demonstrated over three weeks that the group could receive, store, and distribute bulk water and fuel from Fort Stewart, Georgia, to Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Florida.

The Way Ahead

At the ESC level, teamwork extends beyond the decentralized command structures necessary to meet the needs of ground force commanders. Teamwork must include multicomponent partners and tie back to strategic enablers supported by the industrial base.

As an organization, the ESC is both the intrinsic team that works to provide continuity to sustainment operations and part of a larger external team that meets the needs of combatant commands. The internal ESC team uses standard and creative training opportunities to develop the staff and the headquarters to be expeditionary and maintain capabilities across a broad range of military operations.

In a team-oriented environment, all stakeholders including commanders, the deputy commanding general

The Phantom Corps Vision

Develop Leaders of Character Focused on These Principles:

Training	Maintaining	Teamwork	Morale	Discipline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Training programs <input type="checkbox"/> Institutions <input type="checkbox"/> Combat readiness <input type="checkbox"/> Mission support <input type="checkbox"/> Combined Arms <input type="checkbox"/> Technical expertise <input type="checkbox"/> Empower leaders <input type="checkbox"/> 8-Step Training Model <input type="checkbox"/> Continuous improvement <input type="checkbox"/> Focused fundamentals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Sustain the mission <input type="checkbox"/> Service Program <input type="checkbox"/> Establish stability <input type="checkbox"/> Preserve continuity <input type="checkbox"/> Resiliency <input type="checkbox"/> Family & community <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive fitness & wellness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Total Force <input type="checkbox"/> Be Good Neighbors <input type="checkbox"/> Schools <p>Ready & Resilient Programs for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Soldiers <input type="checkbox"/> Army Civilians <input type="checkbox"/> Families <input type="checkbox"/> Units <input type="checkbox"/> Communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Catch people doing right <input type="checkbox"/> Mentorship <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsorship <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of life <input type="checkbox"/> Be a source of counsel <input type="checkbox"/> Soldier for Life—Transition Assistance Program <input type="checkbox"/> Dignity and respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Secure yourself first <input type="checkbox"/> Personal responsibility <input type="checkbox"/> Accountability <input type="checkbox"/> High standards <input type="checkbox"/> Use resources wisely <input type="checkbox"/> Share best practices <input type="checkbox"/> Safety

Teamwork is the glue that holds the III Corps vision together.

Figure 2. This chart outlines the III Corps vision and its five pillars.

for support, sustainment brigades, ESC staff, corps staff, Army field support brigades, and other members of the joint logistics enterprise contribute to the success of the corps' readiness. Battle rhythm events must contribute to the organization's situational understanding and drive team decisions to improve readiness.

Although not a new concept, the ESC has reorganized the support operations staff to better sustain the fight. The support operations section will refine its processes and systems in the corps materiel readiness center. The corps materiel readiness center, in coordination with the III Corps G-4, is designed to sustain corps readiness, shape future requirements, centralize sustainment efforts, streamline reporting, synchronize staffs, and foster relationships.

Moving forward, the corps consolidation area will doctrinally drive support operations as the Army adapts

to less rigid lines of communication, moving away from operations dependent on large stockage levels held at depots in order to provide faster and more agile distribution directly to end users.

The challenge for logisticians is how to adapt to the current operational environment while simultaneously transitioning away from counterinsurgency and predicting the requirements and capabilities of the future battlefield. The maneuver commanders will not wait, and should not wait, for sustainment. In order for sustainers to be combat multipliers, they must provide maneuver commanders with solutions. Sustainers will accomplish these solutions through collaborative and synchronized teams.

During the Chief of Staff of the Army's recent visit to Fort Hood, he reinforced that the Army's num-

ber one mission is readiness, that the Army must remain prepared to engage the enemy globally, and that III Corps will be called on as America's Hammer.

The ESC's focus is clear. It will lead the sustainment line of effort to build corps readiness. The ESC must develop teamwork within the corps and throughout the joint logistics enterprise to accomplish this critical task.

Brig. Gen. Darren Werner is the commanding general for the 13th ESC. He has a bachelor's degree in biology from Central Michigan University, a master's degree in human resources management from Webster University, and a master's degree in national and strategic studies from the Naval War College. He is a graduate of the Army Command and General Staff College and the Naval War College.