Acquisition Efforts to Modernize Army Sustainment

■ By Dr. Bruce D. Jette

Brig. Gen. Joel Tyler, the commanding general of the Joint Modernization Command, explains capabilities to Dr. Bruce Jette, the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics and Technology), in Hohenfels, Germany, on April 26, 2018. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Kalie Frantz)

The Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics and Technology) helps provide the Army with combat capabilities and collaborates with stakeholders to execute effective and affordable sustainment strategies.

One of the objectives in the Army Vision is to organize over the coming years to retain overmatch against all potential adversaries. Dr. Mark T. Esper, the Secretary of the Army, and Gen. Mark A. Milley, the Chief of Staff of the Army, stated that the Army must "ensure warfighting formations have sufficient infantry, armor, engineer, artillery, and air defense assets … and robust logistical support must be readily available to units."

To provide those assets and support, the Army must continue to excel at employing and using modern sustainment systems. Proper sustainment allows the Army to get equipment ready faster, keep it viable longer, and be more cost-efficient.

Supporting Soldiers

Sustainment plays a large role in the Army's overall readiness rate. In some cases, asset availability simply means keeping an item in stock. Very little changes once that item is in Soldiers' hands. For example, .50-caliber cartridges have been used by the Army since 1933, and the Army has been ensuring Soldiers' access to them for more than 80 years with only small modifications due to evolving technology.

For more complex assets, sustainment begins before the equipment is purchased and even during design. This end-to-end life cycle management approach involves close partnerships with the program executive offices, program managers (PMs), the Army Materiel Command (AMC), the Army G-4, and other stakeholders.

Early Work Pays Dividends

The earlier the Army plans for the sustainment phase, the better the integration of weapon system and product support package design. This integration should begin early during the technology maturation and risk reduction phase (well before the sustainment phase) and continue through the operational use of the weapon system.

Product support packages include the support functions required to field and maintain the readiness and operational capability of major weapon systems, subsystems, and components, including all functions related to weapon system readiness.

The Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics and Technology) (ASA[ALT]) provides policy, guidance, and supervision to help PMs provide the best, most reliable, sustainable, and affordable combat capability.

ASA(ALT) emphasizes early planning, integrates 12 product support elements with system design, and assesses support alternatives. This analysis includes costs and risks to select the best product support strategy. ASA(ALT) collaborates with expert stakeholders within the Army to execute an effective and affordable strategy once the program reaches the sustainment phase.

Among those stakeholders are the PMs. PMs are responsible for accomplishing program objectives for total life cycle systems management, including sustainment. To do that, the Army must integrate product support package design into the design process, identify enablers for effective and affordable product support, and focus on minimizing operating and support cost in the sustainment phase. ASA(ALT) documents its strategy in the program's life cycle sustainment plan, which the PMs and other Army organizations use to develop and field the product support package.

In the production and deployment phase, the weapon system is fielded and enters sustainment. As part of their life cycle management responsibilities, the PM and product support manager oversee the effectiveness of the life cycle sustainment plan and product support package and the performance of product support integrators and product support providers. ASA(ALT) remains agile and responsive to emerging conditions and continually evaluates its product support policies, guidance, and pro-

cesses to improve the sustainment of weapon systems.

Reviews, Processes, and Tools

Part of this evaluation are institutionalized operational sustainment reviews (OSRs). OSRs focus on evaluating the effectiveness of a program's product support strategy and the package's actual performance and cost during sustainment. We can compare this performance to the baseline established during the planning phase.

OSRs include stakeholders from across the Department of the Army headquarters. If a review reveals issues, ASA(ALT) can identify them for the PMs to resolve. It then conducts a follow-on review to assess the corrective actions taken.

One existing process is condition-based maintenance plus (CBM+). CBM+ leverages sensors and computing power to identify emerging sustainment problems within a platform before a failure occurs. The H-60M Black Hawk helicopter program has used CBM+ to increase aircraft availability and to save approximately 130,000 maintenance man-hours annually.

ASA(ALT) has been working on a transition to a sustainment project in collaboration with the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-4, and AMC to address the challenges the Army has for developing a standardized process for PMs to transition sustainment execution functions to AMC.

ASA(ALT) has learned through ongoing pilots with the Shadow tactical unmanned aircraft system and the joint light tactical vehicle programs that this is a highly complex process. The joint light tactical vehicle program remains on schedule to achieve a successful full-rate production decision even while conducting sustainability testing during the multiservice operational test and evaluation.

In fiscal year 2019, ASA(ALT) expects to have a new tool, the Transition to Sustainment Guidebook. This resource will enable PMs to identify all transition requirements and enablers. It will help them plan a smooth and effective transition to AMC for the performance of sustainment execution functions.

> "The endurance of Army forces is primarily a function of their sustainment. Sustainment determines the depth and duration of Army operations."
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> —Army Doctrine Publication 4-0, Sustainment

When announcing the Army's modernization priorities, Gen. Milley wrote, "The American people expect us to win, and we win on the offense by mastering the fundamentals of shoot, move, communicate and sustain better than any other Army." ASA(ALT) will do everything it can to improve Army sustainment, and with the support of key stakeholders, it is committed to meeting those expectations.

I want to thank all of the organizations in the Army that work together with the PMs to give our Soldiers a decisive advantage in all operations. Through the efficient leveraging of technologies and capabilities, our acquisition professionals in close collaboration with their counterparts develop, acquire, field, and sustain the world's best equipment and services in order to meet current and future Army needs.

A joint light tactical vehicle climbs extreme terrain at the Transportation Demonstration Support Area at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. (Photo courtesy of the Army Operational Test Command)

Dr. Bruce D. Jette is the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology. In this position, he serves as the Army acquisition executive, the senior procurement executive, the science advisor to the Secretary of the Army, and the Army's senior research and development official. Dr. Jette has a bachelor's degree from the U.S. Military Academy and master's and doctorate degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.