

# Replacing the Movement Tracking System With a Joint Solution

■ By Lt. Col. Bryan J. Stephens

**T**he Joint Capabilities Release (JCR) is the Army's next generation of mission command and situational awareness software. It is not just for maneuver forces; it also provides logisticians with the capabilities required for the Movement Tracking System (MTS), including support for in-transit cargo identification and tracking requirements.

JCR integrates improved Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below (FBCB2) and Blue Force Tracking (BFT) capabilities into the existing MTS hardware in order to standardize the software used by the Army's ground forces. JCR with its logistics enhancements (JCR-Log) replaces MTS, enabling logisticians to support unified land operations safely and on time.

## Efficiencies and Standardization

With JCR, Army logistics units and the joint forces they support operate on the same network, which gives them visibility of each other. The network merger results in efficiencies in equipment, maintenance, sustainment, network management, and satellite airtime. Although the convergence of mission command and situational awareness were the focus of the merger, logistics platforms also inherit the improved FBCB2 capabilities found in JCR. These capabilities include a more powerful map engine that uses satellite imagery, extensive reporting templates, and a more familiar graphical user interface.

Moving from MTS to JCR software will also cut costs. Having the entire Joint Battle Command-Platform (JBC-P) family of sys-

tems use the same message sets and protocols enables the program manager to eliminate duplicate satellite channel purchases, network management operations, and help desks.

## Fielding JCR-Log

From January to September 2012, a joint team fielded 1,404 JCR systems to the Eighth Army in Korea. This was the first time JCR replaced MTS software on logistics platforms. Since then, the fielding effort has grown, reaching most major installations and Army Reserve and National Guard units.

Since October 2012, Project Manager JBC-P has fielded or upgraded 1,429 JCR systems in Afghanistan of which 360 were upgrades to MTS. JCR will continue to be fielded until JBC-P with logistics supporting functions is ready for deployment (slated for fiscal year 2014). To gain efficiencies in the network, units that have MTS hardware will receive JCR software.

## Training and Fielding Savings

By eliminating MTS software and moving forward with JCR-based systems, the JBC-P field support team has not needed additional resources. The only impact has been learning about a few new software features and the associated hardware. Savings have already been realized by combining separate training events. This single program manager approach has eliminated duplicate fielding and coordination efforts and created significant cost avoidance beginning in fiscal year 2012. Project Manager JBC-P expects similar cost savings to extend through at least fiscal year 2016.

To make the package complete, logistics variants of JCR training tools are now available, including materials for users, supervisors, and system maintainers. Before the MTS stood down, the MTS and BFT training managers collaborated to develop technical manuals and more flexible programs of instruction. They also standardized training for both maneuver and logistics forces.

Deployment of the JCR software is a significant step toward enhancing interoperability among Army logistics and mission command systems. Project Manager JBC-P intends to standardize all platforms to the next generation Blue Force Tracking 2 (BFT2) network used on JCR-equipped platforms. The BFT2 transceiver is more capable than the one employed on logistics platforms today and will provide higher data rates to meet more stringent location reporting requirements. Since it is the same transceiver used by maneuver units, it will add the benefits of a simplified network and a reduced logistics footprint.

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