

The Army Command and General Staff College's New Solution to an Old Planning Problem

The Army Command and General Staff College has developed the P934 Course to provide students with the doctrinal knowledge and tools needed to meet sustainment planning requirements for the Command and General Staff Officers' Course and beyond.

■ By Maj. Michael E. Ludwick and Michael E. Weaver

In the March–April 2011 issue of *Army Sustainment*, Maj. Gen. James L. Hodge stated, “Sustaining the future force in an era of persistent conflict, under conditions of uncertainty and complexity, requires an adaptive and versatile sustainment framework that is capable of maintaining the force’s freedom of action.”

This statement, which described Hodge’s vision of the Army’s Functional Concept for Sustainment, reflects the Army’s current sustainment challenge. This challenge requires logistics, adjutant general, and medical service officers attending Intermediate Level Education (ILE) to excel with agility and versatility in a highly complex, ill-defined environment.

How does the Army teach sustainment officers attending ILE to develop a concept of sustainment that allows the commander freedom of action yet builds capacity to respond to changes within the operational environment? At the Army’s Command and General Staff Officers’ Course (CGSOC), the Department of Logistics and Resource Operations’ answer to the challenge is a sustainment planning and problem-solving course: P934.

Current Curriculum Structure

In addition to the general sustainment education provided to all

students during the Common Core Course and Advanced Operations Course (AOC), CGSOC provides education for sustainment officers, including those in the Adjutant General Corps, through the Support Operations Officer (SPO) Course. Conducted during the CGSOC elective period immediately following AOC, the SPO Course is an elective that provides branch-specific education that covers sustainment planning fundamentals and the use of various sustainment planning tools.

However, the SPO Course is taught at the end of the academic year. Several students who completed the SPO Course have asked why it is not provided before the start of CGSOC because the course could provide sustainers with a doctrinal foundation for the Common Core Course and AOC.

Bridging the Gap

Current challenges from the field and student comments prompted the Department of Logistics and Resource Operations to develop a program to bridge the knowledge gap.

The initial attempt to bridge the education gap was the Sustainment Planning Tools Seminar, a two-hour briefing that covered sustainment doctrine and planning tools. However, the seminar failed to provide

sufficient information to fill the knowledge gap identified by former students and officers in the field.

As a result, P934 was established to provide the students with a common doctrinal knowledge base and the crucial tools necessary to enhance the planning skills required during CGSOC and meet Hodge’s challenge to sustain all phases of the operation.

P934 Curriculum

P934 is an intense 12-hour curriculum delivered over two days. Subjects covered in the course include modular sustainment concepts, tactical support operations, maintenance operations, supply and field services, medical operations, movement and distribution management, ammunition and petroleum, oils, and lubricants operations, and automated planning tools.

Day one begins with an overview of Army sustainment, the levels of war, and levels of sustainment. Next, a lesson on the sustainment warfighting functions and their principles leads to the elements of sustainment.

The lesson block on logistics, personnel services, and health service support provides a common understanding of sustainment units and their capabilities on the battlefield. The block also provides an awareness of sustainment units and their com-

mand and support relationships. The first day of the course sets the conditions for the capstone exercise conducted on day two.

Day two begins with a quick review of concepts from day one, followed by a two-hour block of instruction on the military decision-making process and a sustainment overview that includes the products used in a running estimate. Collectively, lessons from both days provide an understanding of how commodities flow within a theater and set the groundwork for the course's capstone exercise.

The capstone exercise requires students to create a force structure layout within a new theater. The process requires students to analyze and brief functional areas in support of the theater; assess reception, staging, onward movement, and integration; and develop a theater-opening plan complete with a movement plan for brigade-level organizations.

The success of the exercise is measured by the success of the sustainment officers in developing an understanding of sustainment planning, unit capabilities, and requirements and passing that knowledge along to their classmates.

Automated Planning Tools

As stated in Joint Publication 4-0, Joint Logistics, "effective planning enables logisticians to anticipate requirements, and validate, synchronize and integrate them with available resources to minimize duplication of effort, resolve shortfalls, mitigate risk and ensure effective support of CCDR [combatant commander] requirements." A complete understanding of automated planning tools is essential for sustainment officers to achieve these requirements.

P934 introduces the capabilities, limitations, and operation of two automated planning tools: the Operational Logistics (OPLOG) Planner and the Logistics Estimation Workbook (LEW).

The LEW uses current doctrine, authorized force structure, and Com-

bined Arms Support Command planning factors to provide a comprehensive estimate of sustainment requirements based on user-defined criteria. The LEW provides factors for all classes of supply, maintenance, transportation, medical evacuation, and personnel. It also provides fac-

tainment professionals. Given such a complicated responsibility, sustainment planners need all the tools they can get. For sustainment officers attending CGSOC, P934 provides a common doctrinal base and an understanding of automated planning tools to rapidly plan with sufficient



P934 co-developer Lt. Col. Ray Ferguson discusses the benefits of using automated planning tools for sustainment planning during a P934 course.

tors for unique problems such as pack-mule requirements and building a forward operating base.

The LEW is relevant for today's complex operational environment. For example, during the petroleum, oils, and lubricants block of instruction, the LEW can help the staff identify a unit's capacity to store and distribute class IIIB (bulk petroleum, oils, and lubricants) during all phases of the operation. Additionally, the LEW helps identify the number and types of units required for the mission. The LEW also allows the user to tailor organizations by overriding standard inputs. The most recent version of the LEW is located on Army Knowledge Online.

Hodge's challenge to all sustainment professionals to sustain the future force in an uncertain and complex environment requires an innovative approach to educate sus-

detail to provide commanders the operational reach and freedom of action needed to complete the mission.

Maj. Michael E. Ludwick is an instructor for the Department of Logistics and Resource Operations at the Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Northern Colorado and a master's degree from Central Michigan University. He is a graduate of the Army Command and General Staff College.

Michael E. Weaver, a retired Marine, is an assistant professor in the Department of Logistics and Resource Operations at the Army Command and General Staff College. He holds a master's degree in public administration from Webster University and is a graduate of the Marine Corps Advanced Logistics Officers Course and the Army Command and General Staff College.