

# What FM 3-0 Means for Expeditionary Battlefield Sustainment

Multi-Domain Battle will require sustainers to support independent operations over long distances while focusing on survivability and precision.

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**F**ield Manual (FM) 3-0, Operations, describes an operational environment with increased enemy capabilities and lethality and sets expectations for what Soldiers and leaders will encounter on the next battlefield. The manual does not fundamentally change the way the Army fights or the way sustainers provide support on an expeditionary battlefield.

However, FM 3-0 does introduce a vastly different operational environment that requires the sustainment community to change its focus from operating in a static, stability operations-based environment to one in which large-scale combat operations are widely dispersed, fast-paced, chaotic, and highly lethal.

The enemy and nature of operations we will face in our next conflict will look very different from those we have recently conducted in Iraq and Afghanistan. Support in such an environment will rely on three interrelated fundamentals: support to independent operations over long distances, an increased focus on survivability, and precision sustainment.

## Support Over Long Distances

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have lulled the sustainment community into a mistaken assumption that steady-state operations, with their stockpiles of readily available commodities, will continue. Large forward operating bases, mountains of supplies, and uncontested lines of communication will not be characteristics of our next battles.

Our combat formations must be

prepared to operate autonomously and for greater lengths of time without being resupplied by higher echelons. Consequently, they will have to become more comfortable with operating farther away from supply nodes over greatly extended lines of communication, while potentially carrying more supplies, relying on alternate resupply methods, and making hard choices about the priority of supplies.

In anticipation of the next combat engagement, sustainers must apply renewed emphasis on mastering expeditionary skills and field craft that have atrophied across the operational force. Expeditionary skills, such as operating forward arming and refueling points and conducting refuel on the move, are complex sustainment operations that require significant training and rehearsals. Sustainment units must continue to focus on training the fundamentals of Soldiering and sustaining the force on an expeditionary battlefield.

Additionally, we must adapt how we approach combat training center rotations, warfighter exercises, and command post exercise—functional events to rehearse our sustainment operations, both physically and intellectually, to ensure that we are successful in the future. On the institutional side, we must re-examine the programs of instruction at our schools to ensure we have a solid educational foundation that is based on new, realistic scenarios that reflect near-peer enemy threats with increasingly lethal capabilities.

Independent, dispersed operations



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demand an agile sustainment force. That requires the Army's logistics community to reduce the size and signature of the sustainment tail. Our sustainment units will need to rely on highly mobile mission command platforms, disperse into well-concealed base clusters, and leave supplies and materiel on trucks instead of creating sprawling support areas.

The focus on remaining mobile and reducing our logistics signature is paramount to survivability because enemy forces will possess precise indirect fires that can reach well into our brigade support areas as well as the support and consolidation areas of the division and corps. This more lethal enemy, capable of reaching farther than ever before, will require us to change the way we think about and plan sustainment operations.

### **Increased Focus on Survivability**

The operational environment envisioned in FM 3-0 requires sustainment formations to generate security, not consume it. In other words, the requirement for sustainers to defend themselves, which has never gone away, will increase over time.

In recent operations, we have requested additional support from maneuver forces for security, especially for convoys. Maneuver forces have struggled to provide this assistance, and the new operational environment of FM 3-0 will only exacerbate the challenge in the future. As a result, sustainment units must be able to defend themselves and continue to increase their focus on survivability.

One aspect of this requirement demands that sustainment Soldiers and units get back to the fundamentals of individual and crew-served weapons proficiency. However, survivability includes not only active defensive measures but also passive measures such as physical concealment, agility, and electromagnetic concealment.

The sustainment enterprise now faces the challenge of a contested cyberspace domain and a lack of digital superiority. Our enemies can now degrade our digital communications

and capitalize on our indiscriminate electromagnetic spectrum signatures.

We have become reliant on enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems, such as the Global Combat Support System—Army, that require constant internet connectivity to function properly. This ERP characteristic increases the electromagnetic signature of logistics nodes, which creates a vulnerability when facing a near-peer enemy equipped with jamming and locating technology.

Because of the proliferation of technology that can identify the location of logistics nodes by tracking the electromagnetic signature, we can no longer build large stockpiles of supplies on forward operating bases. Further, the large and relatively immobile command posts of expeditionary sustainment commands and sustainment brigades, as well as supply nodes at the brigade support area or division or corps consolidation area, are prime targets for increasingly accurate, long-range precision fires. Sustainment units must be able to rapidly establish, move, and re-establish support areas and small supply nodes across the battlespace.

### **Precision Sustainment**

To achieve survivability, we must rely more on precision logistics than on sheer volume. Precision logistics allows us to sustain combat operations while avoiding detection by an increasingly lethal enemy. Such an approach represents a significant challenge in today's environment.

Maneuver force commanders are often forced to make inductive decisions because they lack timely and accurate predictive information that links proposed courses of action to projected combat readiness. This lack of predictive analytical capability precludes maneuver commanders from realizing the increased agility and logistics responsiveness required to fight, survive, and win within the combat environment that FM 3-0 describes.

New capabilities, such as ERP tools and the big data ERPs produce, will help sustainment units provide

maneuver forces with the predictive analytics that enable the precision sustainment needed to fight over extended distances with minimal resupply. ERP systems allow sustainment planners to conduct the in-depth analysis required to understand what units have on hand and what supplies they will need to ensure the most efficient use of our sustainment capabilities and lift platforms.

Ultimately, the future battlefield will be incredibly complex and more dangerous than the battlefields of recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. To be successful, our sustainment formations must embrace ERPs and big data, but they must also be mindful of the disadvantages these tools present, such as an increased electromagnetic signature.

According to FM 3-0, our next fight will occur in a widely dispersed, fast-paced, chaotic, and highly lethal environment. Consequently, our sustainment community must train to conduct sustainment operations over extended distances, where agility and precision are the keys to survival and victory. Finally, we must continue to focus on the fundamentals of self-defense and master expeditionary logistics to be prepared to sustain the high-intensity, large-scale combat operations that we know we will face.

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