

Sustaining Our Army Then and Now

BY BRIGADIER GENERAL RICHARD P. MUSTION

In one form or another, the sustainment warfighting function described in Field Manual (FM) 3-0, Operations, has been an essential feature of the Army's operational past since at least World War I. The sustainment concept was institutionalized in March 1942 as part of a massive Army reorganization that accompanied the entry of the United States into World War II. Driven by Chief of Staff of the Army General George C. Marshall, the reorganization aimed to reduce the number of officers and organizations that had immediate access to him. The resulting reorganization restructured the Army into three major commands: the Army Ground Forces (AGF), the Army Air Forces (AAF), and a command initially called the Services of Supply (SOS)—the Army's sustainment command. Everything that did not fit clearly into the AGF or the AAF went to the SOS. Lieutenant General Brehon B. Somervell was selected to command the SOS organization.

Army Service Forces

In March 1943, the War Department staff renamed the SOS the "Army Service Forces" (ASF) because they thought the word "supply" did not accurately reflect the broad range of activities that had been assigned to the command. At the War Department level, the ASF was a consolidation of logistics, personnel, and administrative functions. Under ordinary circumstances, these functions were the responsibility of the War Department G-4 and G-1, who relied on the technical and operational support of the Finance, Judge Advocate General's, and Adjutant General's Departments; the Chaplain Corps; Inspector General; Provost Marshal General; and Chief, Special Services.

Nothing about the ASF organization was simple or uncomplicated. As recorded in the Army's official history of the organization, the ASF was without "direct precedent" and unusual "in the variety of tasks entrusted to it. . . . [I]t was a hodgepodge of agencies with many and varied functions." From the beginning until it was disestablished in 1946, "the ASF struggled constantly to build a common unity of purpose and organization." Lieutenant General Somervell, a career logistician, admitted never liking the part of the reorganization that gave him responsibility for personnel. He gave most of his attention to the monumental task of procurement and supply.

However "hodgepodge" it may have been, the ASF survived the war, fulfilling its massive responsibility of supporting the millions of U.S. Soldiers located all over the globe in multiple theaters of operations. One unifying factor that kept Somervell on task and held the ASF together was the obligation to sustain warfighting commanders and the Soldiers who served them. If unity of purpose was lost to the ASF organization, the ASF gained from efficiencies resulting from the unified effort to sustain our Soldiers at war.

Combat Service Support Group

Following World War II, the Army began establishing combat development agencies as a way for each branch of the Army to integrate new technologies and tactical organizations into the combat Army. Ultimately, all combat development agencies were realigned under a unified Combat Developments Command (CDC) in 1962 as part of an extensive reorganization of the Army. The CDC established two combat development "integrating agencies" modeled after the mission and functions of the AGF and ASF of World War II. One agency integrated the development of combat and combat support functions, and the other, the Combat Service Support Group, acted as integrator for what we today would call the sustainment function.

The combat development agencies of the Adjutant General's, Finance, Judge Advocate General's, and Chaplain branches were joined with the various logistics combat development agencies of the Quartermaster, Ordnance, and Transportation branches to form the Combat Service Support Group, headquartered at Fort Lee, Virginia. Corresponding with the larger Army reorganization, the Army Command and General Staff College adopted the concept of combat service support to identify the varied, yet related, functions that together defined the sustainment mission. In its essence, the Combat Service Support Group represented a reconstitution of the sustainment concept embedded in the ASF of World War II. The CDC managed the Army's total combat development effort until the end of the Vietnam War.

Personnel Issues During the Vietnam War

Following the Vietnam War and the gut-wrenching realization that many of the Army's most serious operational issues were related to the "personnel system,"

senior leaders of the Army began to question the ASF model that had framed the sustainment concept since the beginning of World War II. Early in the Vietnam War, it had taken the wife of an Army battalion commander embroiled in the Battle of Ia Drang Valley to convince senior Pentagon officials that yellow-cab delivery of casualty notification telegrams to Soldiers' next-of-kin was deeply insensitive and destructive of homefront morale. The draft, used to sustain manpower levels in the Vietnam War, had embittered many who objected to conscription on principle and others who believed it forced into service a disproportionate number of poor, working-class, and minority members of U.S. society. Racial problems in society at large had been magnified in the military by the collapsing public support for the war. Drug and alcohol abuse among military personnel was rampant.

Replacement and rotation policies that caused constant personnel turbulence had undermined unit integrity and the commitment of Soldiers to one another and the mission. Perceived failings of command in Vietnam gave rise to the study of military leadership and the historical and ethical foundations of the military profession. Together with the dissolution of the draft, the advent of the all-volunteer Army, and the commitment to more thoroughly integrate women into the force, the personnel lessons of the Vietnam War created a highly charged environment conducive to a full-scale assault on the Army's personnel system.

Army Training and Doctrine Command

Emerging from the many discussions concerning the personnel lessons learned from the Vietnam War were plans to establish a "clearing house" (an administrative center or school complex) that would form the center of gravity for an Army-wide personnel system. The opportunity to establish an agency of this kind came with Operation Steadfast, the 1973 reorganization of the Army that disestablished the Continental Army Command and the Combat Developments Command. From Operation Steadfast came two new commands, the Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) and the Army Forces Command.

TRADOC, as the name implied, became responsible for Army training, doctrine, and combat developments. At the core of the new TRADOC organization were three mid-level "integrating centers" for combat developments: the Combined Arms Center (CAC) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; the Logistics Center (LOGC) at Fort Lee; and the Administration Center (ADMINCEN) at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. CAC and LOGC were essentially re-creations of former Combat Developments Command operating agencies; ADMINCEN was a new organization altogether.

ADMINCEN

Based partly on lessons from the Vietnam experience, planners intended ADMINCEN to become the collection point for all matters related to the Army's personnel system and the human dimension of military operations. It was a kind of doctrinal "think tank" and training ground that directly extended from the mission of the Army G-1 and its associated branches and specialties.

Considerable resistance to ADMINCEN was voiced by members of the Operation Steadfast study group, who balked at the idea of elevating personnel doctrine, training, and combat developments to near-equal status with the combined arms and logistics missions. However, the Continental Army Command commander, General Ralph E. Haines, Jr., directed that ADMINCEN be included in the detailed plan of reorganization. The establishment of ADMINCEN reflected the view of General Haines and other senior military officials that a refashioned personnel system was critical to restoring public confidence in the Army, recovering from the war's assault on Soldier morale and unit cohesion, and building an all-volunteer force.

Chief of Staff of the Army General Creighton W. Abrams, Jr., testifying before the Senate Appropriations Committee in March 1974, called the management of human resources the Army's "single most important function. . . . Unless we run our people programs well, the Army itself will not be well." Likewise, Lieutenant General Bernard W. Rogers, then the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, began to take a hard look at the way the Army managed its people. He said that the Army's personnel system should "provide in the right place at the right time the required number of qualified, motivated people to accomplish the Army's mission, and to provide for their maintenance and care as well as that of their dependents."

ADMINCEN Evolution

As the Army's focal point for personnel and personnel systems, ADMINCEN became the proponent for a new category of military operations called personnel service support (PSS). In July 1973, the ADMINCEN was activated at Fort Benjamin Harrison. The Personnel and Administration Combat Development Activity, ADMINCEN'S combat development activity, assumed responsibility for integrating the doctrine, organization, and equipment developments of the Adjutant General's, Finance, Chaplain, Judge Advocate General's, Medical Service, and Women's Army Corps. The Personnel and Administration Combat Development Activity's integrating mission also included the Defense Information School (for public affairs) and the Army School of Music (for Army bands).

THE SUSTAINMENT WARFIGHTING FUNCTION IS THE RELATED TASKS AND SYSTEMS THAT PROVIDE SUPPORT AND SERVICES TO ENSURE FREEDOM OF ACTION, EXTEND OPERATIONAL REACH, AND PROLONG ENDURANCE. . . . SUSTAINMENT IS THE PROVISION OF THE LOGISTICS, PERSONNEL SERVICES, AND HEALTH SERVICE SUPPORT NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN OPERATIONS UNTIL MISSION ACCOMPLISHMENT. INTERNMENT, RESETTLEMENT, AND DETAINEE OPERATIONS FALL UNDER THE SUSTAINMENT WARFIGHTING FUNCTION AND INCLUDE ELEMENTS OF ALL THREE MAJOR SUBFUNCTIONS.

—FM 3-0, OPERATIONS

The three-center model, which was the basis for TRADOC's organization, constituted a restructuring of the sustainment model that had been in place since the Army reorganized for World War II. Instead of the one-piece model, Operation Steadfast institutionalized a two-piece model—one piece to address logistics functions and another for personnel and administration.

Much like ASF of old, ADMINCEN became a magnet for every developmental mission and program that did not fit clearly into either combat and combat support (CAC's focus) or logistics (LOGC's focus) mission areas. Also like ASF, ADMINCEN struggled from the beginning to build a commonly held vision and understanding of purpose and mission. During the command's 17-year history, it went through no less than 10 major reorganizations, each hoping to build a unity of purpose that had eluded it from the very beginning. In 1980, ADMINCEN reorganized into the Army Soldier Support Center as a result of the mandate to manage and develop programs related to the human dimension of military operations.

Soldier Support Institute

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s brought immediate demands from Congress and the public at large to radically reduce the defense budget and take advantage of the "peace dividend." Those demands essentially called for the demobilization of the Nation's defense structure that had been built to deter Soviet and Communist aggression around the world. The war against Iraq in 1990 and 1991 interrupted the debate but did little to alter the political intent to reduce deficit spending and shift public funds formerly allocated for defense to other areas.

TRADOC's initial response to the reality of post-Cold War military budgets was to "reengineer" its combat development program. A significant piece of the plan called for eliminating the Army Soldier Sup-

port Center by consolidating it with LOGC at Fort Lee. The resulting organization, the Army Combined Arms Support Command (CASCOM), like the Combat Service Support Group before it, assumed responsibility for the combat, doctrine, and training developments of the Army's logistics and personnel and administrative functional areas. The Soldier Support Center was reduced to a "schools" center, the Army Soldier Support Institute, which included the Adjutant General, Finance, and Recruiting and Retention Schools and a Noncommissioned Officer Academy.

CASCOM

The May 1990 CASCOM organization plan went through four phases and took 4 years to complete. Under phase 1 of the plan, people and funds supporting the PSS integrating mission were transferred to CASCOM. The final phase of the project called for the transfer of combat and training development programs of the Ordnance Center and Schools at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, and Redstone Arsenal, Alabama, and the Transportation School at Fort Eustis, Virginia, to Fort Lee to be consolidated with like assets from the Quartermaster School. The Ordnance and Transportation Schools, however, continued to provide classroom instruction at their original locations. The consolidation marked the elevation of LOGC from an integrating center to an agency responsible also for capability and training developments for the logistics community (the Ordnance, Transportation, and Quartermaster Schools).

Since the Soldier Support Institute was in the process of moving from Fort Benjamin Harrison to Fort Jackson, South Carolina, under a Defense Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC) Commission mandate, the combat and training development assets of the Soldier Support Institute were exempted from the move to Fort Lee. The people and programs that would have moved to Fort Lee were already committed to moving to Fort Jackson and the multimillion dollar facilities that were being constructed there to receive them.

Problems With Integration Under CASCOM

Senior leaders of the Army's personnel and finance communities were also concerned that capability and training development support for the Adjutant General and Finance Schools would largely disappear in an organization committed largely to the Army's logistics mission. Many of the Army-wide personnel programs formerly sponsored by the Soldier Support Center began to flounder with the transfer of the PSS integrating mission to CASCOM.

At issue was the family of human resource programs belonging to no particular branch of the Army but closely connected to the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel. The Soldier Support Center in the early 1980s, for instance, sponsored the development and integration of the Army's new manning system and the follow-on regimental system intended to strengthen unit cohesion and the bonds of affiliation that tied Soldiers to particular units and Army branches. Much of the justification for the establishment of the Army Community and Family Support Center in 1984 resulted from the Soldier Support Center's sponsorship of an expanded Army Community Services program and various studies and programs related to the impact of Soldiers' service and sacrifice on Army families.

Under the transfer of the integrating function, statutory responsibility for human resources had been vested with CASCOM, the responsible agent for integrating both logistics and personnel issues across the Army. However, one of the first issues to confront the

commandant of the Adjutant General School in 1994 was whether the Army's Adjutant General's Corps ought to assume responsibility for equal opportunity (EO) and other related human resources programs. Knowing that the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel needed a TRADOC advocate for human resources, the Adjutant General School commandant absorbed the EO mission into the Adjutant General's Corps' doctrine, training, and combat developments program. In taking responsibility for other human resources programs, the Adjutant General's Corps, as the technical proponent for the Army's personnel system, had broadened its mission to include responsibility for "people" programs and other human-dimension programs that were formerly a part of the Soldier Support Center's capabilities development integrating mission.

CSS Doctrine

In 1993, TRADOC published its first attempt at post-Cold War operational doctrine: FM 100-5, Operations. The 1993 version of FM 100-5 listed six critical logistics functions that together constituted combat service support. Of the six, two addressed the former PSS functional area. The chapter titled "Manning the Force" described personnel readiness management, replacement management, and casualty

A Soldier with the 147th Adjutant General Postal Company from Kaiserslautern, Germany, inspects a box that a Soldier is sending home from Iraq.



A Soldier who serves as a debt management and special action noncommissioned officer for the 101st Finance Company, 10th Sustainment Brigade Troops Battalion, files his daily paperwork.



management. The chapter titled “Sustaining Soldiers and their Systems” included health service support, personnel services, financial services, public affairs, and religious and legal support.

For leaders and Soldiers belonging to the personnel and administrative areas of the Army mission, the interchangeable use of the terms “logistics” and “combat service support” validated previous predictions about CASCOM’s narrow focus on logistics. Sustainment functions falling within the combat service support functional area but outside the logistics domain had become afterthoughts.

The Sustainment Warfighting Function

The most recent version of Army operational doctrine, FM 3–0, Operations, resolves previous exclusionary problems caused by definitions by rescinding the terms “combat arms,” “combat support,” and “combat service support,” which described the three functional areas represented in planning and conducting a military operation. In their place, the FM names eight elements of combat power: leadership, information, movement and maneuver, fires, intelligence, command and control, protection, and sustainment. These are believed to be a more accurate reflection of the contemporary, if not the past, operating environment.

Together, the eight elements of combat power point to a new and broader understanding of combined arms operations. Instead of the narrow combination of weapon systems, the new definition applies leadership and information and selected warfighting functions in a “synchronized and simultaneous” fashion to achieve the “full destructive, disruptive, informational, and constructive potential” of combat power.

Sustainment, one of the six warfighting functions, has replaced combat service support as the approved concept used to describe the collective tasks and related logistics, personnel services, and health services systems essential to support the operational Army in the fulfillment of a given mission. From a branch and specialty perspective, sustainment involves the combined functions and capabilities provided by the Adjutant General’s, Chaplain, Finance, Judge Advocate General’s, Medical Service, Ordnance, Quartermaster, and Transportation Corps. Based on recent experience, our new doctrine is a candid admission that successful military operations in the full-spectrum environment of the 21st century require a measured, combined, and focused application of the various elements of combat power. Regardless of size and scope, the sustainment community’s ability to provide commanders at the right time

and place with all the logistics, personnel, and health services support necessary for mission accomplishment is essential to the success of any future operation.

On 9 January 2009, officials at Fort Lee, Virginia, dedicated the new Sustainment Center of Excellence (SCoE). Established as the result of BRAC decisions, the SCoE represents a further consolidation of CASCOM, the Army Logistics University (formerly the Army Logistics Management College), and the Army Quartermaster, Transportation, and Ordnance Schools. As part of the BRAC plan, the students, faculty, and staff of the Ordnance Mechanical Maintenance School at Aberdeen Proving Ground, the Ordnance Munitions and Electronics Maintenance School at Redstone Arsenal, and the Transportation School at Fort Eustis will move to Fort Lee. The new organization represents a complete consolidation of the logistics community’s doctrine, training, and combat development programs.

SCoE is indeed about the future of logistics and the logistics branches, but it is also about the other elements of the sustainment function—the branches and missions that make up the personnel services and health service support functions. Based on our new doctrine, SCoE also represents our best opportunity in years to unify the effort as well as create a common understanding of purpose that bridges the diverse programs and missions that make up the Army’s total sustainment community. Much of our success as a community will depend on ensuring the proper alignment and integration of non-logistics units and personnel that are currently being added to our theater and expeditionary sustainment commands and sustainment brigades. They, too, are critically necessary for freeing commanders for action, extending operational reach, and prolonging the endurance of our Soldiers, who respond to any and all threats that compromise the safety and well-being of the American people.

BRIGADIER GENERAL RICHARD P. MUSTION IS THE ADJUTANT GENERAL OF THE ARMY, ARMY HUMAN RESOURCES COMMAND, AT ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA. HE PREVIOUSLY SERVED AS THE COMMANDER OF THE ARMY SOLDIER SUPPORT INSTITUTE AT FORT JACKSON, SOUTH CAROLINA.