



Unloading M1A1  
Abrams tank from  
C-17 in northern Iraq

# In Defense of Service Component Commands

U.S. Air Force (Rich Puckett)

By BURWELL B. BELL III *and* THOMAS P. GALVIN

**T**he Army is engaged in transformation because it recognizes the need to reorganize to meet new and emerging threats and to equip soldiers with the best technology. Strategic and operational battle planners make the final plan clear and executable down to the individual soldier, particularly when it comes to rules of engagement and tactics, techniques, and procedures. The Army has a robust Title 10 infrastructure designed to ensure that soldiers are fed and armed, their trucks are fueled,

their wounds are treated, and their families are cared for so they can focus on the mission.

Who makes this effort? On the theater level, it is Army Service Component Command (ASCC), an operational and Title 10 support headquarters serving both the commander and the Department of the Army (DA).

## Behind the Scenes

While the media focus on the soldiers walking the ground in Iraq, thousands of other soldiers, civilians, and contractors are deployed along the lines of communication ensuring that supplies, replacements, and parts keep coming. ASCC keeps it all running smoothly behind the scenes.

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The execution of warfighting hides the incredible complexity of the planning process, especially when both military and political considerations force sudden changes. Yet some argue that ASCC headquarters are unnecessary overhead and their functions should be transferred to a joint headquarters. *Iraqi Freedom* proved how essential ASCC is to joint warfighting. Consider the following vignette.

U.S. Army, Europe (USAREUR) deployed V Corps headquarters to serve as the coalition forces land component command (CFLCC) main ground command and control (C<sup>2</sup>) force in the southern front attacking from Kuwait. Although its principal maneuver units came from the continental United States (CONUS) and the United

Kingdom, V Corps deployed with its full array of USAREUR-based enabling forces, including its corps support command, a corps artillery force, and eight corps separate brigades. Some 14,000 of the 16,000 soldiers assigned to the separate brigades deployed

to the southern front, while elements of 69<sup>th</sup> Air Defense Brigade were sent to Turkey and Israel. Meanwhile, in the northern front, USAREUR formed Army Forces Turkey with C<sup>2</sup> elements of 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division (Mechanized), 21<sup>st</sup> Theater Support Command, and 18<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade. Army Forces Turkey conducted a complex theater-opening operation with follow-on orders to facilitate a 700-kilometer approach march for 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division across Turkey to a line of departure into northern Iraq. The necessary lines of communication had been established when the operational concept had to change for political reasons. USAREUR and its Southern European Task Force (SETAF) showed their flexibility in quickly preparing 173<sup>d</sup> Airborne Brigade and USAREUR heavy and medium immediate ready companies (HIRC/MIRC) for an airborne insertion into northern Iraq.

At the same time, other operations and planning efforts were continuing and still needed support: missile defense in Israel and Turkey, *Enduring Freedom* in Afghanistan, Task Force Falcon in Kosovo, Task Force Eagle in Bosnia, the train and equip program in Georgia, and training of Free Iraqi Forces in Hungary. Joint and combined training and exercises were ongoing, although reduced in scope. The Army and Department of Defense pressed on with transforming the force.

Those efforts could not afford to suffer during *Iraqi Freedom*, and they did not.

Collectively, USAREUR and U.S. Army Forces Central Command (ARCENT) projected a versatile and tailored force package capable of conducting full-spectrum operations and providing sustained land dominance to the joint fight on two fronts. They took approved plans, task-organized the ground forces for combat, projected the forces to the theater, and made it possible to change plans midstream when the political situation necessitated rethinking the northern front. They set the conditions for success in Iraq, while USAREUR kept the Title 10 support for the remainder of the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) area of responsibility (AOR) running as normal. Those who propose eliminating the ASCC “layer” from the command structure do not adequately address how the joint headquarters would assume its responsibilities.

ASCC is essential, and its role in enabling the joint fight cannot be replicated in any other headquarters. That will remain true as the global war on terrorism continues and the Army transforms to the Future Force. This essay will show that ASCC is the ideal organization to anticipate commanders’ needs, set conditions for operational success, and project capabilities and tools to get the job done. ASCC may be out of sight and its contributions will rarely make headlines, but *Iraqi Freedom* showed that a combatant commander cannot go to war without it.

### Anticipate, Set Conditions, and Project

Current joint and emerging Army doctrine lays out what a service component command (SCC) is. Their responsibilities were most recently updated in Joint Publication 0-2, Unified Action Armed Forces, dated September 10, 2001, and include recommending ground forces to the joint force commander, conducting joint training, developing programs and budgets, providing joint operation and exercise plans, and accomplishing operational missions as assigned. Joint Publication 3-33, Joint Force Capabilities, went farther and defined ASCC explicitly as having both support and operational responsibilities. It states that its commander is responsible to the combatant commander for recommending how Army forces should be allocated and employed and for exercising administrative control of the Army force, to include logistics. Title 10 responsibilities include requirements to organize, equip, train, and maintain Army forces in the theater and provide support to other services in accordance with executive agent responsibilities. Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*, adds that the ASCC commander is the senior Army leader in a combatant commander’s AOR. ASCC also provides theater-strategic and

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operational-level support to combatant command campaign and major operation planning. The joint doctrine does not require a specific ratio of SCCs to combatant commands, but Field Manual 3-93, *The Army in Theater Operations*, states that ASCCs are dedicated to a specific combatant command, implying that they will always equal or outnumber combatant commands.

The problem is that what doesn't directly answer the question of why not give this task to someone else? The answer is found in how ASCC does its job in practice and how it meets the requirements of the combatant commander. Exploring the how gives the case material to determine how ASCC should be organized and if it could serve more than one commander.

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ASCCs must be highly proactive, action-oriented agencies, far more than described in their doctrinally assigned tasks of "recommending" forces or "providing" capabilities. It is the proactive nature of the modern ASCC that makes its contribution unique in its assigned theater. It anticipates the needs of the commander and sets the conditions for success before Army forces are committed and the assigned Title 10 requirements are put into effect. It also projects the capabilities and tools to accomplish the mission, including joint capabilities and enablers.

*Iraqi Freedom* demonstrated this proactive nature in USAREUR. The relative smoothness of the operation belied the complexity of planning, the extraordinary agility and flexibility of theater-enabling organizations, and the preparations to support deploying forces and their families. It

further showed that transformational activities USAREUR undertook over the past 6 years bore fruit in the Iraqi desert, proving that a proactive ASCC can help meet its combatant commander's needs in the short term while the Department of the Army develops and fields Army-wide solutions for the medium to long term.

**Anticipating Commander Needs**

Anticipating looks good on paper, but the proof is in real-world operational success. While ARCENT focused on U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) requirements once forces arrived in theater in the south, USAREUR was able to focus on deploying forces to the south while preparing, deploying, and sustaining forces as they entered Iraq from the north. Consider the airlanding of the USAREUR HIRC/MIRC, referred to as Task Force 1-63 (Armor), into the northern front in *Iraqi Freedom*. The task force was part of a light-heavy rapid-reaction force that did not exist 3 years earlier but was an identified needed capability from lessons learned in Bosnia and Kosovo. USAREUR took the initiative to build that capability. Thus Task Force 1-63 was standing by when the original plans for the northern front were abandoned.

While most media attention focused on the deployment of 173<sup>d</sup> Airborne Brigade, Task Force 1-63 was a huge success. Its deployment was a worldwide premier—the first airlanding of M1A1 tanks by C-17s into combat, notwithstanding the success of the 24<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Division immediate-ready-force insertion into Somalia. This was important because heavy forces provided the combat punch and the deterring presence that facilitated the seizing and securing of key positions in northern Iraq, including oil fields, before the enemy could build a resistance. While CENTCOM retained operational control of the northern force, USAREUR and EUCOM retained administrative control and all the implications of sustainment and logistics.

Task Force 1-63 was the result of a major initiative to realign the USAREUR-assigned units and support structure to temporarily correct an exposed capability gap. In the mid-1990s, the Army rapid-projection force in the European theater was a single airborne battalion in SETAF. Heavier forces and corps/theater enablers were not on a short string. USAREUR then experienced a steady increase in short-notice contingencies, both potential and realized, that required early-entry combat punch along with certain enabling capabilities, such as engineers for road and runway repair and medics for humanitarian assistance

Mess hall in forward area, *Iraqi Freedom*



U.S. Army (Klaus Baesu)

Contractor instructing  
Soldiers on mine  
detector sensor



55<sup>th</sup> Signal Company (Milton H. Robinson)

commentary

and disaster relief. This gap had to be at least part-way closed immediately and could not wait for Stryker Brigade combat teams to be fielded later in the decade. Therefore, USAREUR established the HIRC/MIRC, a rotation of tank and Bradley companies prepositioned and uploaded, whose Soldiers were on 24-hour deployment notice.

The short-notice requirements for the enablers were solved in a related initiative, force enhancement modules (FEMs). Prepositioned with the HIRC/MIRC at Ramstein Air Force Base, these modules are fly-away packages of engineer, military police, signal, and other enablers on a similar deployment timeline. They allow USAREUR to tailor force packages rapidly to a wide range of short-notice contingencies such as humanitarian assistance, noncombatant evacuation, and disaster relief.

Another initiative recognized that the single airborne battalion in SETAF was insufficient in the 93-country EUCOM AOR (not to mention potential CENTCOM requirements), so a second was established for only \$14 million in new construction and rearrangement of 500 personnel spaces entirely out of hide. Called efficient basing-South, this initiative brought on line a second airborne battalion south of the Alps and provided USAREUR a more robust 173<sup>d</sup> Airborne Brigade. This move has already paid for itself with the deployment of the 173<sup>d</sup> to northern Iraq just months after the second battalion was

activated. These three initiatives—HIRC/MIRC, FEMs, and efficient basing-South—demonstrate the gulf between predicting what might be needed and making it a reality.

The initiatives were feasible because in-theater assigned forces were present and mature planning staffs were available. The harder part was building the support structure to project and sustain them. This was the subject of the initiative to establish the Deployment Processing Center (DPC) at Ramstein, a collaborative joint effort between USAREUR and its sister service component, U.S. Air Forces in Europe. Run by 21<sup>st</sup> Theater Support Command, DPC included warehouses for the prepositioned HIRC/MIRC equipment, maintained with contracted support. The soldier support area furnished housing, dining and unit maintenance facilities, and morale, welfare, and recreation activities. A C-130 mock-up enabled airload training to USAREUR units.

Equally important was the culmination of a cultural and organizational shift in 21<sup>st</sup> Theater Support Command since the Cold War. The former 21<sup>st</sup> Theater Army Area Command was properly focused on receiving forces into the theater and getting them to the fight under the general defense plan. The Deployment Processing Center signified the complete change to power projection from within Germany and Italy to anywhere in the EUCOM or CENTCOM AORs along with

throughput from CONUS. The cost of establishing the center was low but the return was high. In addition to pushing out HIRC/MIRC in *Iraqi Freedom*, it has deployed 56,437 Soldiers, 3,142 pallets, and 5,269 pieces of equipment and supplies through 229 operations and exercises since November 1998.

These initiatives demonstrate the effort needed to provide new capabilities to meet the combatant commander's immediate needs. It takes an organization with a proactive problem-

solving approach and the freedom to operate out of the box. That organization is the modern-day ASCC. Its staff combines the situational awareness of the operating theaters with the institutional know-how to provide solutions to difficult ground force issues.

The expertise ASCC has through its Title 10 responsibilities enables it to turn an idea into action to the last detail. Similarly, that allows it to identify initiatives that may be infeasible or unlikely to achieve the desired effects.

ASCC can also provide a platform for testing and evaluating joint, DA, and outside agency initiatives. An example was *Dragon Impact*, an information operations-based, force-on-force exercise initiated by USAREUR 5<sup>th</sup> Signal Command. It was first held in August 2001 and provided a platform for Army Signal Command to test emerging network-operations concepts and doctrine. These were validated or rejected through a rigorous exercise with a realistic scenario presented by ASCC serving an overseas commander.

Success stories ASCC reports back to both the joint commands and DA allow ideas to be field tested in a controlled operational environment. By serving as the dedicated link between DA and the combatant commander, ASCC makes things happen quickly and proactively.

### Setting Conditions for Success

Little in power projection and Title 10 support is routine. Indeed, as the war on terror requires continued pursuit of stability in regions characterized by anarchy, totalitarian regimes, and religious or tribal fanaticism, the complexity of deployment operations will be anything but predictable. Further, *Iraqi Freedom* has shown that post-combat security and stability operations can be as hazardous as combat.

The ability to get to the fight and sustain it is rarely established smoothly at the last minute. It is facilitated well in advance by establishing an environment that secures stable and friendly allies and guarantees timely access to facilities across the

AOR. This is doubly true in the EUCOM strategic transformation through the development of joint forward operating bases and locations (JFOBs and JFOLs) in new, austere locales. EUCOM will forge the agreements with potential JFOB and JFOL host nations, but the groundwork—construction, manning, and support—will fall on ASCC and its sister Service Component Commands.

Establishing partnerships with friends and allies and securing access to key facilities are two ways ASCC sets the conditions for success. It falls on ASCC to see that power projection and sustainment occur routinely in support of the joint force, which may include Special Operations Forces, coalition partners, government agencies, and nongovernmental organizations.

In a dynamic environment such as the EUCOM AOR, an organization must be proactive to stay abreast of the political and security climate. The region is culturally and economically diverse, and national interests are vested in relatively stable and prosperous Western Europe, in parts of Africa that are rich in vital natural resources, and in Russia and members of the former Soviet Union. USAREUR is a major implementer of the EUCOM theater security cooperation program, which promotes stability, maintains partnerships with allies, establishes partnerships with new allies and friends from Central and Eastern Europe, and allows access to key infrastructure throughout the AOR.

Partnerships are two-way streets, and typically ASCC secures access through conducting theater security cooperation activities such as combined exercises and training events, schools, and mil-to-mil contacts. Theater security cooperation is leadership-intensive, as partnerships tend to be built from the top down. And since most countries in the AOR have land-centric militaries, much of the work falls on the EUCOM land component, USAREUR. In FY02, V Corps was involved in 18 exercises, 150 partnership activities, 40 joint contact team program events, and 8 out-of-sector gunneries/field training exercises while simultaneously supporting Bosnia and Kosovo. Likewise, SETAF was involved in 75 events in 18 countries.

The value of these partnerships is hard to measure. They cannot be made on demand and then ignored. Partnerships require regular attention, particularly because friends will not always agree politically. It is tempting to let the apparent security cooperation failures of *Iraqi Freedom* discolor our view of the value of relationships with friends and allies. Although the United States had the intent and ability to conduct the war unilaterally if necessary, *Iraqi Freedom* would have been more difficult without help.

**the ability to get to the fight and sustain it is facilitated by establishing an environment that secures allies and guarantees access to facilities**



Providing security for  
convoy to Taji, Iraq

1<sup>st</sup> Combat Camera Squadron (Ashley Brokop)

commentary

Some countries that harbored strong political or popular opposition to the global war on terror still gave critical support. For example, Germany provided Bundeswehr augmentation to help with the force protection of facilities. It also facilitated air, barge, rail, and road movement of combatant units from both USAREUR and CONUS, speeding delivery and sustainment to commander, CENTCOM. Belgium and the Netherlands provided access to ports that permitted the deployment of V Corps and its corps separate brigades. Italy facilitated the direct parachute operation of 173<sup>d</sup> Airborne Brigade.

Setting conditions for success in operations is a grass-roots function. The political and senior military leadership establish the formal security-cooperation relationship, but it is turned into a cohesive reality through contacts between junior officers, noncommissioned officers (NCOs), and Soldiers. These contacts demonstrate American values to allied militaries. They include opening the doors of the NCO Academy to foreign

sergeants to build professional NCO corps. The ASCC role is to ensure that these contacts achieve desired goals and improve the theater security-cooperation program as a whole.

ASCC also sets conditions through demonstrating resolve—exercising strategic influence to dissuade and deter potential enemies while reassuring allies and friends. Establishing the aforementioned immediate ready forces may have been perceived as cosmetic, but not after they were drilled routinely in emergency readiness exercises that deployed them from Germany and Italy to the Balkans, Hungary, Morocco, Poland, and Tunisia. Visible demonstration of capability to respond rapidly to crises throughout the AOR is an important instrument of strategic influence, especially in the global war on terror. The best vehicle is a dedicated ASCC operating in concert with the overarching theater strategy of the combatant commander.



U.S. Air Force (Shane A. Cuomo)

Refueling tanks  
outside Samarra, Iraq,  
Operation *Baton Rouge*

### enablers are vital to relieving the burden on tactical com- manders in complex operations

Another means of setting conditions is through ASCC theater enablers, whether assigned in theater or projected from CONUS. If ASCC requires a strong base of situational awareness to accomplish its mission, that is doubly true of the low-density but high-demand theater enablers who often balance competing priorities during simultaneous missions. 21<sup>st</sup> Theater Support Com-

mand has an extensive knowledge base of the infrastructure in theater that permits it to identify and implement creative solutions to such power projection problems as the 700-kilometer line of communication it had to establish under Armed Forces, Turkey. Seventh Army Training Command made it possible to use training areas outside Germany and Italy to exercise power projection more realistically, while 66<sup>th</sup> Military Intelligence Group is a critical enabler, providing strategic intelligence. Enablers are vital to relieving the burden on tactical commanders in complex operations.

*Enduring Freedom* in Afghanistan offers an object lesson. In humanitarian assistance operations early on, 21<sup>st</sup> Theater Support Command purchased and shipped over \$30 million worth of supplies, including 2.2 million meals, 2.3 million pounds of wheat, saddles, blankets, and personal gear, all packed by a combined U.S.-German rigging team—on top of its traditional operational support mission that transited 24,300 soldiers and 9,300 pieces of equipment. It also established a rail line from Ramstein to Afghanistan to transit noncritical supplies, reducing reliance on aircraft, which was possible because years of partnerships between USAREUR and Germany encouraged the host nation to contribute both through government agencies (for example the Bundeswehr, which provided the riggers) and private firms (Deutsche Bahn, which helped coordinate the rail line). This was setting conditions for success at its finest.

### Projecting Capabilities and Tools

The relevance of ASCC is ultimately proven on the battlefield. One of its primary responsibilities delineated in Joint Pub 0-2 is to “accomplish such operational missions as may be assigned.” It must thus be prepared to serve as joint forces land component commander (JFLCC) and project

trained and ready Army forces, both current and transformed, into the joint fight. It must provide C<sup>2</sup> to lead the ground campaign in a major regional conflict, including linkages to joint, multinational, interagency, and other organizations in support of the combatant commander. It must also orchestrate the employment of Army assets such as theater signal, intelligence, civil affairs, and space systems.

The unique ability of Army forces to not only execute strike operations in an expeditionary sense, but also to conduct campaigns over long periods (for example, the stability and security campaign ongoing in Iraq) is at the core of the debate over ASCC requirements and relevance. In achieving expeditionary and campaign qualities,

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the Army has been moving away from employing forces based on their habitual relationships in garrison. When organized and tailored for combat in *Iraqi Freedom*, V Corps headquarters did not deploy with its assigned divisions, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored and 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Divisions in Germany. Instead it was assigned 3<sup>d</sup> Infantry and 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Divisions. As stability operations began, the SETAF headquarters deployed as Joint Task Force (JTF) Liberia aboard USS Iwo Jima to lead a Marine force. No Army forces were assigned, representing a shift in the ASCC training and readiness role. Rather than preparing for a ground campaign, the command's new focus includes preparation of its subordinate headquarters to deploy independently as a JTF CFLCC/JFLCC or Army forces headquarters. Indeed, a USAREUR mission-essential task was recently changed to reflect "trained and ready forces and headquarters."

Trained and ready forces carries a new meaning with the global war on terrorism because the spectrum of missions is ever widening, as USAREUR learned in the Balkans. Finding that combat forces were challenged in performing peacekeeping, Seventh Army Training Command instituted mission rehearsal exercises that gave units on Balkans rotation peacekeeping/peace enforcement training in a realistic scenario. The command also developed a reintegration cycle that permitted forces to hone their combat skills on return and established a deployable operations group that conducted combat-oriented training for units deployed in peacekeeping missions.

Major USAREUR subordinate commands have also focused on becoming lighter and therefore more deployable and relevant for expeditionary operations. For example, in Task Force Hawk the V Corps command post consisted of

58 "expando" vans, requiring oversized aircraft to deploy them to Albania. By 2001, the Corps Strike command post was proven to have equal capability yet was deployable entirely by C-130. In the ground combat phase of *Iraqi Freedom*, V Corps employed the C<sup>2</sup>V, a highly capable yet compact C<sup>2</sup> vehicle that further reduced the need for aircraft to deploy the headquarters.

ASCC also ensures that modernized and transformed forces are integrated into the theater whether they are assigned or deployed from CONUS. The future fielding of Stryker Brigade combat teams includes more than just Title 10 support to provide new or upgraded facilities for them to train and sustain forces and offers opportunities for joint and combined exercises with allies and trains the rest of the force, particularly the joint headquarters, in how to employ them.

These initiatives show the value of ASCC, whose training and support infrastructure provide commanders with forces and headquarters ready to function across the spectrum of joint and combined operations in expeditions or campaigns.

### The Future

Advocates of eliminating ASCC favor consolidating joint force C<sup>2</sup> under joint headquarters in peacetime and in war. They presume that a single joint headquarters could run everything while achieving personnel savings. The complexities of the modern environment speak otherwise. The global war on terror is a continuous conflict against a mobile and adaptable enemy. As Field Manual 3-93 says, "Planning and executing major operations . . . is a formidable task for the global-based, force-projection Army of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." Experience suggests that the ASCC role must remain resident in the Army and not be subsumed on the joint level. However, the way the command conducts business will change.

First, support across combatant command boundaries will become more prevalent in the global effort. *Enduring Freedom* and *Iraqi Freedom* were examples of cooperation, and USAREUR continues to provide Title 10 support to ARCENT forces. Such teamwork will carry on as enemies spread across unified command plan boundaries and large-scale operations require multiple ASCCs. Consolidation may appear attractive because a single joint command would coordinate support. The danger is that the absence of ASCCs would risk the ability to set readiness conditions in the assigned AORs. The campaign plans and manpower necessary for theater security cooperation programs to produce tangible results, as demonstrated by 21<sup>st</sup> Theater Support Command

Field surgical team,  
Afghanistan



U.S. Army (Joseph P. Collins, Jr.)

during *Enduring Freedom*, would be absent. The better solution is to empower ASCCs to work closer together to ensure that unified command plan boundaries do not become exposed seams and the global war on terror is fought effectively as a global effort. This will ensure that ASCCs continue to be out front, anticipating commanders' needs.

Second, joint enablement will become central to the ASCC role. A recent example is USAREUR simultaneously supporting a three-star JTF headquarters in Iraq (CENTCOM AOR) and a two-star JTF headquarters off the coast of Liberia (EUCOM AOR) in the summer of 2003. This showed the power of having JTF-enabled headquarters on the two-star level ready to conduct operations as Army Forces, JFLCC, or JTF, depending on the mission. With USAREUR supporting *Iraqi Freedom*, SETAF was ready to stand up a JTF to plan and conduct operations in west Africa on short notice. Training and equipping SETAF and V Corps headquarters to become joint-enabled was an ASCC function and will become the extension of joint capability to lower echelons. In the same vein, ASCC will lead the effort to extend the Title 10 infrastructure—the establishment of JFOBs and JFOLs—allowing greater flexibility in projecting and sustaining the joint force. Joint enablement will be key to the continued ASCC ability to set the conditions for success.

Third, ASCC will be a major cog in the wheel of transformation. The global war on terror demands a lighter, more rapidly deployable, and more lethal Army structure. At the same time, the foundation of the warfighting structure, the Title 10 support provided by ASCC, must be strengthened because of the increased complexity of getting transformed forces to the fight. Even should transformation planning be consolidated on the joint level, its execution—training, equipping, and fielding—will still be done by the services. It will therefore fall on ASCC to turn the promises of transformation into realities and project them as needed.

The Army Service Component Command may operate in the background, and its contributions may never make the news, but it is now more critical than ever. There will be intense debate as to how it can support one or more combatant commanders, but the focus must remain on the right issue: how best to train, ready, deploy, and sustain warfighting forces while protecting formations and facilities and taking care of dependents. With that as a guidepost, and in partnership with the combatant commanders, the Army will continue to accomplish any mission anywhere with excellence. **JFQ**