The Army Reserve Expeditionary Railway Center

To meet its Title 10 requirement to support the geographic combatant commands in using rail service as a combat multiplier, the Army Reserve has created the Expeditionary Railway Center.

In 2010, the Chief of Transportation, Brigadier General Edward F. Dorman III, identified a requirement gap in the Army’s Title 10 responsibility to support the geographic combatant commands (COCOMs) in effectively employing rail as a strategic multiplier throughout full-spectrum operations (FSO). The gap was significant because a functional analysis identified effective rail planning, assessment, analysis, and advisement as a geographic COCOM requirement.

Forces Design Update

Host-nation support will undoubtedly become a larger function of the geostrategic environment of the 21st century. Since infrastructure and theater transportation are intricately connected to the broader geostrategic environment, the current Chief of Transportation, Colonel (P) Stephen E. Farmen, has focused on modernizing Army rail capabilities that can exploit host-nation resources within the transportation spectrum.

This effort has led to a force design update (FDU) that will provide the rail capabilities required for the contemporary operational environment. This FDU for the existing Army rail structure is essential since it has been more than 22 years since the last Army rail FDU. The FDU’s result is the Army Reserve (USAR) Expeditionary Railway Center (ERC), which will be an enduring Army rail capability for FSO. This FDU was approved by the Army Training and Doctrine Command’s Army Capabilities Integration Center.

The nature of the global security environment is increasing complexity. With it is the need to understand globalization that is driven by rapid technological advances, interdependent economies, and empowerment of individuals. In this environment, we must recognize the need to operate continuously within the human terrain, where peace and stability are only sustained by providing safety and security. At the high and low ends of full-spectrum operations, we must recognize the ERC’s capabilities as the means of providing enduring security for the local population and the host nation. The ERC can simultaneously contribute to military deployment and distribution velocity, employment of a local population, and regional economic development.

Expeditonary Railway Center Mission

The mission of the ERC will contrast significantly with the mission of the 757th Transportation Battalion (Railway). The ERC will—

- Provide rail network capability and infrastructure assessments.
- Perform rail mode feasibility studies and provide advice on the employment of rail capabilities.
- Perform and track railway rolling stock capability assessments, and provide an Engineer officer to facilitate railroad capability assessments and rebuild efforts.
- Coordinate rail and bridge safety assessments.
- Perform and assist with rail planning in support of military strategic and operational requirements.
- Perform functions as the primary advisers on railway operations, including collaborating with host-nation railway officials to improve the national railroad business model and support nation building.
- Coordinate use and declassification of host-nation or contracted rail assets.
- Perform contracting officer’s representative duties to oversee contracts and provide quality assurance.
- Provide command, control, and supervision for subordinate railway personnel.
- Coordinate all rail service in support of theater-sustaining line of communication (LOC) for movement of military and other cargo into and out of Afghanistan.

The ERC will contribute to the Defense Distribution Process Owner’s (DDPO’s) alternatives for sustaining the velocity of deployment, distribution, and redeployment. Understanding that conditions of anti-access or area denial to theaters of operations are turbulent, the DDPO must not depend on a single host nation for a theater-sustaining line of communication (LOC). For example, today the Northern Distribution Network has multiple LOC options from origin to destination, and it provides an alternative to the Pakistan ground LOC for movement of military and other cargo into and out of Afghanistan.

Army Rail Transformation

It has been evident since early in Operation Iraqi Freedom that the existing Army rail capability must be transformed to provide relevant support for the contemporary conflict. In Iraq, the Army missed the opportunity to maintain an Army rail planning and assessment capability at interagency and various military head-quarters levels, along with an assessment, advisory, and training assistance presence with the Iraqi Republican Railroad. Coalition distribution and the nation of Iraq could have benefited significantly from this investment. Dave DeCarme, who served as the Department of State (DOS) transportation attaché in Baghdad, Iraq, from 2008 to 2009, made the following observation:

As part of civil/military coordination and cooperation efforts in developing host-nation capacities, the U.S. Army rail transformation, working with U.S., coalition, and host-nation civilian elements, has the potential for improving rail system operations which in turn can be a significant contributor to broader economic development.

First, the ERC offers a capability to see and plan for rail LOCs, such as the Northern Distribution Network, early in the geographic COCOM’s planning effort.

Next, the ERC team can conduct peacetime military engagements for country rail system restoration and development. Finally, the ERC responsively deploys to contribute to stability operations or combat operations in the execution of a theater distribution plan and host-nation rail system strategic development.

This capability is designed not only as a deterrent to persistent conflict but also as a response for persistent containment. The safety and security of an indigenous population is a compelling and powerful force against insurgency and radical political or religious groups.

How Railway Use Affects the Host Nation

Historically, a developing country’s stability and economic growth can be tied to a national railroad system that is regionally connected. Any use of a host-nation railroad system for sustaining theater deployment, distribution, and redeployment should be accomplished with the intent of developing the nation’s economic engine and employing as much of the local population as possible. In so doing, we improve individual security.
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Force Design Update

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This effort has led to a force design update (FDU) that will provide the rail capabilities required for the contemporary operational environment. This FDU for the existing rail structure is essential since it has been more than 22 years since the last Army rail FDU. The FDU’s result is the Army Reserve (USAR) Expeditionary Railway Center (ERC), which will be an enduring Army rail capability for FSO. This FDU was approved by the Army Training and Doctrine Command’s Army Capabilities Integration Center.

This new rail force structure will augment any COCOM’s efforts in planning and advising on the use of host-nation railroads to expand and expedite distribution within its area of responsibility. This new design will provide full-spectrum capability in all phases of an operation. In a period of diminishing military transportation assets, we must look at doing more with less, and using host-nation railroads is one way of rising to this challenge.

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- Perform contracting officer’s representative duties to oversee contracts and provide quality assurance.
- Provide command, control, and supervision for subordinate railway personnel.

The ERC is designed for the contemporary Army rail planning and requirements mission. The ERC can provide the expertise needed to aid in restoring and developing railway systems in foreign nations in support of national security. It also can directly improve the present and future global security environment.

The nature of the global security environment is increasingly complex. With it is the need to understand globalization that is driven by rapid technological advances, interdependent economies, and empowerment of individuals. In this environment, we must recognize the need to operate continuously within the human terrain, where peace and stability are only sustained by providing safety and security.

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as well as national and regional stability. The strategic
ployed along with a joint, interagency, intergovernmen-
table and return to peace and stability operations. Then
peditionary capability that can be mobilized for deploy-
ing engagement and TDPs provides a means of countering
expertise drawn from civilian-acquired skills and
Engineering Agency analysis, coupled with ERC rail
and Distribution Command (SDDC) Transportation
quarters, Department of the Army, provides the follow-
offered by U.S. railroad employees. Many of these

cost of less than 2 truck companies. The bottom line
ing this capability a tremendous bargain at the relative
business to have the ERC capability resourced and
The USAR ERC, if fully resourced, can facilitate
This is not only smart business within the human di-
ation for FSO.

Rail is a significant com-
and trusted leaders in delivering innovative end-to-end
deployment and distribution to meet the Nation’s objectives.” The

SDDC is also working with the U.S. Africa Com-
In Afghanistan, this team is contributing to the fol-
and out of Afghanistan.

However, the Army Reserve must not run the ERC
and maintainers). An ERC will help contribute to

Early and continuous Military Surface Deployment

The ERC operates with less than 200 Soldiers, mak-

The Fiscal Year 2013 Command Plan Guidance, which

The Army Reserve will gen-

Engagement, and the GIROA to develop a

The ERC contribution is critical to the Army’s

to take advantage of the

The USAR ERC provides a great return on invest-

military rail team efforts and
capabilities of Army rail team planning and advisory

capability resourced and

has had an Army railway planning and advisory

toAnthony公交, ilIinois. He holds a b.s. deGree in

The team brings with it strong civilian-

The Army Reserve will be

to have the ERC capability resourced and

Sustaining this expeditionary and interna-
to answer the rail advisory requirements of geographic

The engagements in Afghanistan and Uganda can

The Army should fully resource the ERC FDU. SDDC

C O L O N E L D A V I D T . P O L L A R D , USAR, IS THE DEPUTY

The team should discuss ways to assist the UPDF in develop-

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Employer Partnership Initiative

Sustaining this critical expeditionary and interna-
to deliver trained and ready forces for 24 hours a day,

Typical operations, maintenance tasks, exercise partici-

The engagements in Afghanistan and Uganda can

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as well as national and regional stability. The strategic
objective is to deescalate hostilities as quickly as pos-
sible and return to peace and stability operations. Then
the challenge is to continue to create conditions that
decourage a reescalation of hostilities.

The U.S. Army is the premier provider of American’s Citizen-Soldiers for
planned and emerging missions at home and abroad. Enhanced by civilian
skills that serve as a force multiplier, we deliver vital
military capabilities essential to the total force.

Chief of Army Reserve Lieutenant General Jack C. Stultz stated his vision: “An enduring operational force, the Army Reserve remains the premier provider of America’s Citizen-Soldiers for planned and emerg-
ning missions at home and abroad. Enhanced by civilian
The Army should fully resource the ERC FDU.

SSCC and the Army Reserve should continue to assist
geographic COCOMs in fielding Army railway plan-
ning and advisory teams until the ERC can be acti-
vated. The Office of the Secretary of the Army and the
Sustainment Center of Excellence should continue to
collaborate and analyze current rail team efforts and
devise future doctrine and organization for the ERC.

SDDC, the Transportation Engineering Agency, and the
employer partnership of the Armed Forces initiative. If
integrated and used in a concerted and continuing way
to answer the rail advisory requirements of geographic
COCOMs, the gap remains closed. Rail support to Af-
ghanistan and Uganda can be the beginning of a wider
policy that promises significant benefits at an afford-
able cost.

The Army should fully resource the ERC FDU.

Employer partnership

SDDC vision is for its employees to be the “recognized
expeditionary and sustained end-to-end deployment
and distribution to meet the Nation’s objectives.”

SDDC contribution to this team provides the greatest ex-
peditionary capability that can be mobilized for deploy-
ment. Under many conditions, the same responsiveness
is not likely with Government civilian employees, nor
is it prudent to assume that private sector contractors
will be readily available.

Employer partnership of the Armed Forces

SDDC is also working with the U.S. Africa Com-
mand and the International Security As-
sistance Force, have had an Army railway planning and
advisory team deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan, since
October 2011. The team brings with it strong civilian-
acquired skills and operations expertise from
CSX, the Sierra Northern Railroad Company, and the
Terminal Railroad Company.

In Afghanistan, this team is contributing to the fol-
lowing main objectives:

• Acquire strong visibility on the Government of the
Islamic Republic of Afghanistan’s (GIRAO’s) initia-
tives to start effective operations on the new Mazar-
Hairstain Railway, which contributes to middle-to-
high-spectrum military operations through the
improved velocity of military cargo movement into
and out of Afghanistan.

• Work with the International Security Assistance
Force, the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. De-
partment of Transportation, the U.S. Federal Rail-
road Administration, and the GIRAO to develop a
rail strategy for Afghanistan, focusing on sustained
regional stability and economic development with a
return to peace time military engagement.

The GIRAO, the Department of Defense, GIRAO’s Minis-
try of Mines, will strategically link GIRAO’s national
rail system to coal and iron ore deposits. This is a strat-
egogy with potential for sustained revenue streams and
regional economic development.

SDDC is also working with the U.S. Africa Com-
mand to conduct peace-time military engagements
between civil authorities, Soldiers and representatives
of the Uganda Peoples Defence Force (UPDF). In Ugan-
da, the U.S. Army rail team will assess and provide
advice on the UPDF unit’s mission, force structure,
typical operations, maintenance tasks, exercise partici-
pation, and training program requirements.

The team will discuss ways to assist the UPDF in develop-
ling a concept of operations for a Ugandan railroad
battalion, along with all of the training, curriculum,
and tactics, techniques, and procedures that may be
required. This effort will continue with a visit by UPDF
officers to the United States in 2012 as part of continu-
ig to develop the military-to-military engagement.

The engagements in Afghanistan and Uganda can be
a springboard to overcoming the capabilities gap
discovered by Brigadier General Dorman in 2010. The
gap can be closed if the Army acts with foresight to use
the talent and synergy of the USAR ERC along with
SDDC, the Transportation Engineering Agency, and the
employer partnership of the Armed Forces initiative.

Employer partnership of the Armed Forces offers a great opportunity
for the Army Reserve to take advantage of the
rail experience offered by U.S. railroad employees.

The USAR ERC provides a great return on invest-
ment for the United States. The Army Reserve will gen-
erate a sustained flow of trained and ready Army rail
forces for FSO on a rotational cycle with five railway
planning and advisory teams, and it will do this at well
below the cost for the Active component to maintain
the structure. The ERC is a low-density capability with
a critical contribution to the Army’s versatile mix of
modular organizations. The Army Reserve is ideally
suited to provide the ERC for expeditionary military
operations and international engagement activities,
such as nation building and security cooperation.

Employer Partnership Initiative

Sustaining this critical expeditionary and interna-
tional engagement capability can be accomplished in
part through effective stationing of the ERC planning
and advisory teams in cities where we find Class 1 rail-
road headquarters or their interchange points. We will
continue to cultivate this employer partnership with
employers and distribution command at Scott Air
Force Base, Illinois. He holds a B.S. degree in
business administration from the University of Wis-
consin and a master’s degree in business administra-
tion from the University of South Alabama. He is a
graduate of the Transportation Officer Basic and
Advanced Courses, the Logistics Executive Develop-
ment Course, the Army Command and General Staff
College, and the University of Texas Senior Service
College.

The author thanks the following individuals for their
assistance with this article: Dr. Kent Beck,
Robert J. Leonard, Colonel Howard Dorfman, Major Timothy Christensen, Major Scott
Meyer, James Powell, Colonel Walter Weaver, and
Colonel Robert Pelletier.

Colonel David T. Pollard, USAR, is the deputy
chief of staff G–3/7 for the Military Surface De-
ployment and Distribution Command at Scott Air
Force Base, Illinois. He holds a B.S. degree in

As the Army Reserve continues to build this
mix of tailorable and modular organizations, operat-
ing on a rotational cycle, to provide a sustained flow of
trained and ready forces for full spectrum opera-
tions and to hedge against unexpected contin-
gencies, at a sustainable tempo for our All-Volunteer
Force. The Army continues to experience tremen-
dous change. We remain at war and are balancing
the operating and generating forces across the
program while addressing the challenge to balance
requirements with affordability.

With these qualities in mind, the Army rail FDU is
best sustained in the Army Reserve for affordability
and coupling with the Army railroad infrastructure
partnership with the private railway industry.

Army Reserve Planning and Advisory Team

The Army will benefit by capitalizing on the skill-
rich characteristics of Army Reserve warrior citizens.
However, the Army Reserve must not run the ERC
without SDDC, the Army’s “Global Surface Trans-
portation Experts.” The SDDC mission is to “provide
expertise, sustain end-to-end deployment and
distribution to meet the Nation’s objectives.”

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Army Sustainment

May–June 2012

Armored Forces

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