

Colonel Paul C. Hastings, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas M. Zubik, and Lieutenant Colonel Eric K. Little, Illinois Army National Guard

Experiences can be lost. That is dangerous and is a fault. They may also harden into dogma, and become a dead letter—that is no less dangerous and is an offense, for it is not the office of experience to conjure up the past, but to build for the future.

— Colonel Hermann Foertsch, *The Art of Modern Warfare*, 1940

THE 33RD INFANTRY Brigade Combat Team (IBCT), Illinois Army National Guard, completed its yearlong “reset” in September 2010 after what can be described as one of the most decentralized, geographically dispersed, nonstandard brigade-level missions in the current U.S. operations. The 33rd IBCT mobilized and deployed to Afghanistan over a four-month period from June to September 2008 as 38 separate force packages in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. To execute this deployment, the brigade reorganized into 44 police mentor teams, six embedded training teams, a counterinsurgency battalion, a force protection battalion, two companies of special purpose security forces, a logistics task force, a training advisory group, and a combined Joint task force headquarters. Almost 3,000 Illinois soldiers deployed.

Complicating matters was the fact that not all units worked for the brigade while deployed. Roughly one-third of the brigade was assigned to International Security Assistance Forces regional commands with the remaining two-thirds working for Major General Richard Formica, commander of the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan. This nonstandard mission set required the brigade to cross-level most of its leadership and the majority of its personnel. Ultimately, this would have a profound effect on the 33rd Brigade’s reset.

Reset and the ARFORGEN Model

The Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) model has proved to be the ideal methodology to ensure the Army can provide a versatile mix of capability and capacity to the combatant commander when needed.

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PHOTO: A U.S. soldier with the Illinois Army National Guard provides security during combat operations in Paktya Province, Afghanistan, 17 April 2009. (U.S. Air Force, SSgt Shawn Weismiller)

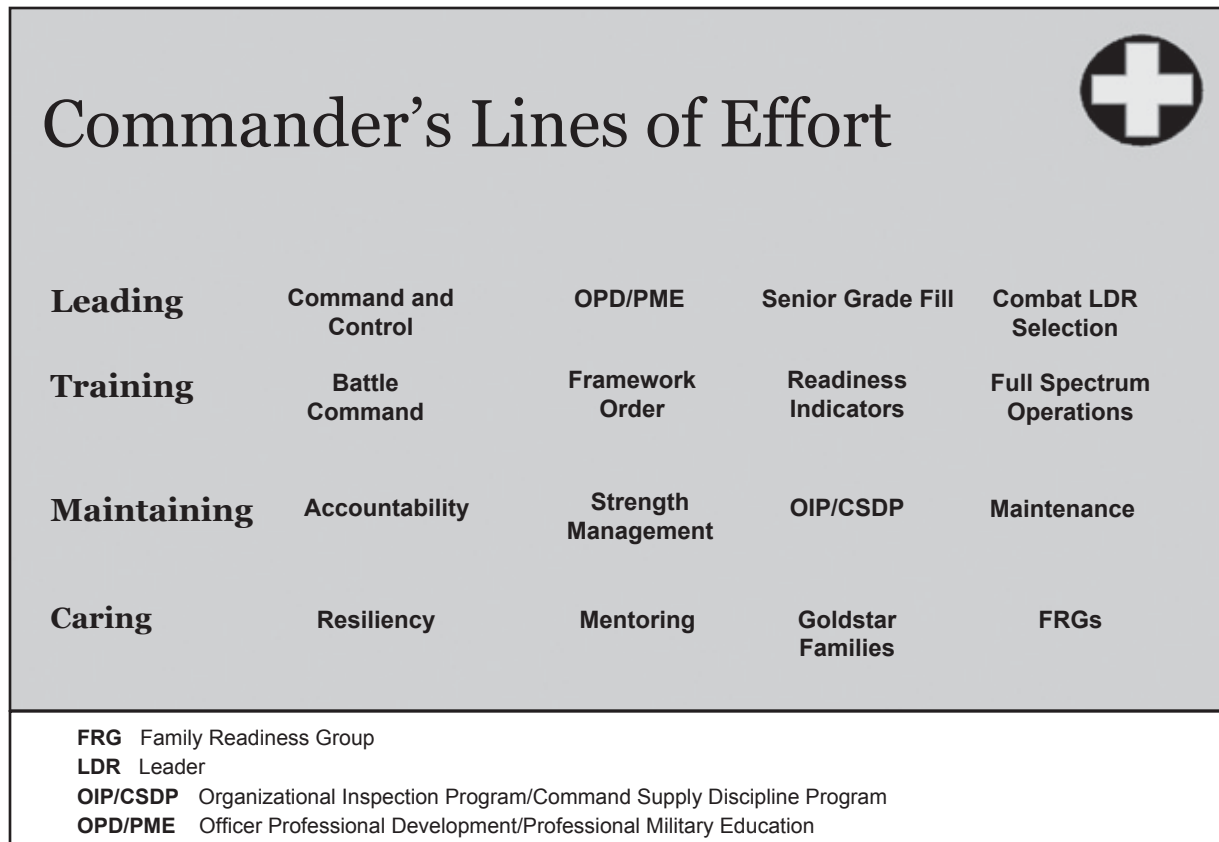


Figure 1. Commander's reset lines of effort

Arguably, reset—the reconstitution period after a deployment—is the most critical period within the ARFORGEN cycle. This is where units put the pieces back together—a daunting task because of the natural inclination to want to take a break after returning stateside. Most certainly, reset does not mean “relax.” Leaders cannot relax because their units will suffer. Soldiers cannot relax because most have returned to work, while simultaneously focusing on their family life. Or worse yet, they are wound too tight to assimilate back home or at work. Clearly, without a proper reset, a unit cannot effectively restore itself. Moreover, because the ARFORGEN timeline is often compressed and unforgiving, letting a year pass by without making substantial gains can be devastating.

Establish a Vision for Reset

Like all operations, reset begins with developing a detailed understanding of the situation and visualizing a desired end state. Our brigade understood the situation; 3,000 of its soldiers were coming off an intense deployment and trying to find balance in

their lives. They were dealing with harsh economic times, readjustment issues, and trying to reconnect at home, at work, and in the Army National Guard. The staggered, decentralized deployment also played havoc with logistics and accountability. Coupled with these obstacles, training and readiness indicators were weak at best. Given these interconnected issues, we had to analyze each area separately, and then synthesize our findings to develop a logical plan to restore the brigade. Our aim was to reestablish the 33rd as a premier IBCT in the Army National Guard, fully prepared to conduct “Training Year 1” of the ARFORGEN cycle. Our first challenge was to develop an orderly and easily understood methodology to accomplish the innumerable tasks that we needed to complete by 1 October 2010—one year after returning home.

Lines of Effort

To articulate our vision for reset, we used the Army's distinct and mutually supporting logical lines of effort: leading, training, maintaining, and caring.

Our lines of effort focused on areas for each level of command to address as they began to put their individual planning processes into motion. Figure 1 reflects in general terms the major themes within each line of effort. Figures 2 and 3 provide specific objectives for each line of effort.

The “leading” line of effort influences all other efforts and actions. From E5 team leader to brigade commander, each must provide requisite energy and focus to ensure units and the soldiers achieve the milestones set before them. The challenge, of course, is that the leaders themselves are mentally and physically spent from their yearlong deployment and are trying to achieve balance in their own lives. Add to the fact that most leaders in the

National Guard are traditional guardsmen who must reestablish their status with their fulltime employers and reconnect with their families while working to reconstitute the brigade.

Upon returning stateside, the 33rd IBCT’s immediate focus was to reestablish its chain of command. We took a hard look at our company commanders and first sergeants, as they are the ones who would set the tone. We looked at all 31 company command teams and determined whether to maintain them in their current positions. While some were ready to move due to a promotion, many needed to remain in position to see their units through the entire reset process. The decision on whether to change these key individuals resided


<h1>Commander’s LOE Key Tasks</h1>			
L E A D I N G	Command and Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All leaders are trained on battle command (FY11) • Leaders integrate battle command and ABCS (FY12) • Identify future best BCT leaders for deployment 	
	OPD/PME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PME (staff rides, officer calls, professional discussions) • 100% leaders engaged in NGAI, NGAUS or PME Org (FY11) • Drills incorporate OPD on COIN, battlemind, MDMP, or FSO 	
	Senior Grade Fill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain 95% fill of all 271 officer and warrant officer positions • Assess no less than 55 officers (FY11) 	
	Combat Leaders Selection Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the next two years commission 75 lieutenants • Conduct an NCO lead educational and selection process 	
T R A I N I N G	Battle Command	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders & staffs achieve proficiency in MDMP (FY11) • Leaders & staffs integrate orders process @ ABCS (FY12) 	
	Framework Order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yearly training order nested within three year training strategy. 	
	Readiness Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve >95% DMOSQ, >95% End Strength • <1% NOVAL, <2% Negative End Strength goals 	
	Full Spectrum Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • METL at all levels nested with BDE METL • Units conduct FSO in a COIN environment 	
ABCS	Army Battle Command System	COIN	Counterinsurgency
DMOSQ	Duty Military Occupational Specialty Qualification	FSO	Full Spectrum Operations
LOE	Lines of effort	MDMP	Military Decision Making Process
METL	Mission Essential Task List	NGAI	National Guard Association of Illinois
NGAUS	National Guard Association of the United States	NOVAL	No Validated Pay
OPD	Officer Professional Development	PME	Professional Military Education

Figure 2. Subtasks and objectives for leading and training lines of effort

with the battalion commanders and the brigade commander.

We also made it our priority to identify, empower, and hold all our front-line leaders accountable. Team, section, and squad leaders are always the first to know when a soldier is wearing thin under the pressure of reintegration. We directly empowered them to look after their soldiers between drills and to ensure that every soldier attended Illinois' reintegration program. While this may seem to be an obvious responsibility, the difficulty for these leaders lies in maintaining connection with geographically dispersed soldiers. As a brigade, we empowered these young leaders through armory visits, conference calls, written letters of encouragement, and clear directives.

The 33rd IBCT's leading went beyond re-establishing our chain of command and holding small-unit leaders accountable for their soldiers. As illustrated in Figures 1 and 2, other key components included implementing an effective officer professional development program and professional military education, filling senior grade vacancies created by personnel attrition, and developing an officer accession program (referred to as the Combat Leader Selection Initiative).

Training Line of Effort

Training does not get a pass during reset. A brigade must accomplish the bulk of it then, especially duty military occupational specialty qualification (DMOSQ) and schools needed for promotion. While still in theater, the 33rd IBCT operations officer, in close collaboration with the Illinois National Guard, secured sufficient funding for schools for hundreds of soldiers to attend. Where possible we sent our soldiers on Title X status, which meant that they reported to the schoolhouse from theater. While this extended their deployment by three to four weeks, it allowed our soldiers to meet mandatory military education requirements, opened up advancement opportunities and, more importantly, ensured there was no significant military related interruption in their reintegration to civilian life over the coming year. This process improved soldier morale and unit readiness and supported Illinois Guard and the IBCT's reintegration plan.

The next step in the "training" line of effort was to use our large number of combat veterans to help train the 500 new soldiers who had joined the IBCT

while we were deployed. To garner enthusiasm for training, the brigade command group went to the subordinate battalions to share our vision for reset and to educate them on General Casey's paradigm shift in training. We needed our veterans to leverage their experience to help develop soldiers for the future fight. We pressed our young captains, lieutenants, and sergeants to "own" their training and to push the envelope. Our purpose was to ensure our junior leaders think along our lines of effort and to demonstrate our respect for their experiences and capabilities.

Once the initial reintegration process was complete, we focused the company commanders and first sergeants on improving unit readiness indicators: strength, DMOSQ, AWOLs, school attendance, and negative end strength, key indicators for any Army National Guard unit. We fostered a mind-set across the brigade that this "report card" would directly affect our next deployment either as a stand-alone IBCT or as a brigade conducting various missions piecemeal. Simply put, we let the company commanders and first sergeants know they could not neglect these readiness indicators.

Another key component to success was junior leader development. We encouraged the battalions to develop flexible, adaptable leaders able to think quickly, understand, and react under the rigors of full spectrum operations. The brigade S3 and his staff studied General Casey's 2009 leader development guidance to master the paradigm shift in training of—

- Mass and compressed time versus complexity and extended time.
- Decentralization.
- Framing ill-defined problems.

A key event incorporating this training was the IBCT senior leader conference where leader development case studies were used involving real situations encountered by 33rd IBCT soldiers during their deployment. We shared these vignettes in small, tailored groups facilitated by combat captains and majors from the brigade.

Another fundamental question the brigade's trainers tackled was, "What separates one brigade from another?" The answer was clear: integrating and maximizing technology at the soldier and small-unit level. If a brigade cannot fully employ new technology such as Army Battle Command Systems (ABCS), Unmanned Aerial Systems (Shadow UAS),



33rd IBCT is the premier Infantry Brigade Combat Team in the ARNG, postured as the best Reserve Component unit for a deployment expeditionary force mission in FY 2013. I anticipate fighting a low-tech insurgent force that uses IEDs, indirect fires, and complex ambushes conducted in small-unit operations. The fight will be in rugged terrain over long distances in small villages among civilians. The IBCT will fight this enemy by developing small-unit leaders capable of convoy and air mobile operations, IED defeat, reacting to indirect fires, counter ambush, and cordon and search. Our commanders will support operations with decentralized planning; coordinated targeting, fires, ISR (intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance); and plans, security, and sustainment operations. Battalions and the IBCT, as land owners, will excel at concurrent planning by integrating ABCS into all aspects of battle command. Integral to success is using our ISR assets to find specific high-value targets that will drive operations. IBCT leaders will be skilled at integrating effective information operations, interfacing with the local populace, and maximizing our efforts with our Joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational partners. At the individual level the foundation for this success is culturally aware, ethical, moral leaders who are cognitively astute to solve ill-defined problems in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment. Equally, they are resilient enough to withstand the rigors of combat operations during this long fight.

Figure 3. 33rd IBCT Commander's Training Vision

communications (WIN-T) and fires (M119A2 Field Artillery System), then its ability to execute full spectrum operations is impossible. Knowing this, we focused our energy on having these systems fully manned and operational within 6 to 12 months of fielding. We conducted new-equipment training for Shadow UAS, WIN-T, and M119A2 Howitzers. We began resource planning for mobile training teams for all of our ABCS, and scheduled participation in two full spectrum battle command exercises. In short, the IBCT's trainers ensured these newly fielded digital systems would be operational and exercised in a collective and multi-echeloned manner, thereby freeing our battalions and companies to train and develop lethal squads and platoons and meeting the commander's vision of stand-alone full spectrum operations during the next deployment.

To ensure all levels of command understood the message, the brigade hosted a leadership conference during which the brigade commander presented his vision statement along with the brigade's three-year training strategy to all the brigade leaders to ensure

they understood the way ahead and accepted it. Figure 3 is the commanders' training vision describing the conditions where and how the brigade will fight during its next deployment. A brigade and battalion S3 conference followed the leadership conference. This created a specific plan for our training vision, ensuring the brigade would be fully digital and all combat function enablers integrated and synchronized. To plan for anything less would defy recent history.

Maintaining Lines of Effort

The most labor-intensive challenge we faced upon redeployment was accountability and maintenance. Both fell squarely within our "maintaining" line of effort. Because the brigade deployed as 38 separate force packages, the doctrinal distribution of personnel and equipment simply did not apply. Literally thousands of pieces of equipment were laterally transferred throughout the brigade to meet mission requirements. In effect, the brigade was completely dismantled, thereby requiring a

significant logistical effort to reconstitute, all while performing framework operations. Additionally, the 33rd IBCT deployed without the benefit of established equipment accountability personnel and structure. This set the stage for a perfect storm of complicated tasks required within the one year reset, if not earlier.

Upon returning stateside and before formal equipment reset could begin, the brigade had to account for all sensitive items by unit. This was a significant task given that many of the items had been listed on the property books of hundreds of small teams spread across Afghanistan and were not merged into correct configurations upon return. This created confusion throughout the brigade. Close coordination with the Illinois National Guard G4, brigade S4, and the property book officers ultimately resolved this situation. The next task was to establish individual and unit equipment accountability. Each mobilized soldier completed a 100 percent post-mobilization inventory of his equipment. We used this inventory to identify shortfalls and normal wear and tear items requiring replacement or exchange. At the completion of the inventory, the brigade requested resupply for each loss, and we funded them through the reset program. Lastly, we took a 100 percent inventory of all forward and rear property immediately upon receipt of all in-bound equipment containers. During the inventory, we discovered that a number of these containers were broken into during passage back to the Port of Karachi, Pakistan, and a large amount of nonmission-essential equipment was stolen. This added yet another level of complexity to the accountability problems. After several months, we merged the forward and rear hand receipts and executed multiple financial-liability investigations of property losses to account for the shortfalls. At the conclusion of all the inventories, accountability was reestablished and formal equipment reset could begin.

A prerequisite to executing any lateral transfers back to the authorized configuration entails ensuring that 100 percent of equipment is nominated and entered into the national reset program. The Illinois Army National Guard operates a local reset operation funded from the National Guard Bureau. This program tracks and ensures we return all equipment to proper maintenance standards. While in theater, the 33rd IBCT dedicated resources in an effort to build a plan in the automated reset management tool.

Accountability must be a highly visible command priority.

Completion of this plan meant the stateside operation had a clear picture of what was coming back and what we would have to reset.

To fully support this process, a number of redeployed soldiers in the brigade returned to active duty in a Title 32 status to help account for, inspect, and submit all equipment into reset. Simultaneously, the 33rd IBCT S4 logistics officer, supported by the state G4, reconfigured the brigade from the 38 force packages and all of the associated rear-detachments into Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) configuration. We needed to complete this quickly to return the equipment to the correct unit to support emerging training plans. The G4 and S4 maintained a constant window into the reset status so that priorities of effort could shift to support training. For example, a simple training event such as range qualification became logistically complex. Before returning to the range, we needed to inspect, repair, and redistribute weapons and optics heavily used during a yearlong fight. Just-in-time support became more than a buzzword; it became the reality of managing equipment to support training. We aimed reset actions to minimize friction and fully support training plans.

Inspections became a vital tool to assess the brigade's progress in realigning to proper MTOE configuration. Success required close coordination, clear instructions, and execution at all levels from each soldier to the commander of the Illinois Army National Guard.

Ultimately, the brigade reestablished accountability, but at a heavy cost in time, energy, and effort. The biggest lesson learned was that every soldier must understand the importance of property accountability throughout deployment. Each soldier must not only carefully track his or her own assigned equipment, but must take ownership in the care and accountability of unit equipment. Accountability must be a highly visible command priority. If a unit has not achieved a high level of command supply discipline before its deployment, it certainly will not have it upon its return.

Caring Line of Effort

Without question, soldier care was the most immediate and pressing challenge for the brigade upon redeployment. Our soldiers had returned to harsh economic times. Some of our men and women lacked necessary coping skills to adjust to life after deployment. Each soldier had different experiences from different parts of Afghanistan. Soldier distress was increasing and manifesting itself in suicide, attempted suicide, spousal abuse, incarceration, and drug and alcohol abuse. The reality was that many of our soldiers were untethered with the wind taking them in many directions and to dangerous altitudes. Without question, the 33rd IBCT had to help restore each soldier's balance through an effective "caring" line of effort.

As with the training line of effort, the caring line of effort began when the brigade was still in theater. The rear detachment, its family readiness groups, and the Illinois Joint Force Headquarters (IL-JFHQ) Casualty Assistance Office teamed together with the state chaplain to lay the foundation for the caring line of effort. They supported the brigade during its most trying times when the brigade incurred casualties. Their actions initiated what would become long-lasting bonds between units, families, communities, other service providers, and the 33rd IBCT.

Additionally, the IL-JFHQ and the 33rd IBCT rear detachment organized, planned, and executed a four-stage reintegration program. The first stage was unit-level welcome home ceremonies performed immediately upon a unit's return to their armory. Although we initially contemplated a large brigade-level welcome-home event, we thought it best to have 32 different ceremonies at hometown armories across Illinois. These ceremonies lasted less than 20 minutes, allowing soldiers to get back home to their loved ones. The second stage of reintegration began at the 30-day mark, and included educational seminars where each soldier and his or her family participated. A wide range of services were offered from traumatic brain injury (TBI) screening, veterans benefits education, marriage and family counseling, financial management seminars, mental health counseling, a job fair, and meetings with college or university representatives. Although the command mandated some seminars such as TBI screening, many

were optional, and soldiers could choose which seminars to attend. Stage 3 was similar to stage 2 but began at the 75-day mark to catch issues that may have emerged after the 30-day program. The final stage was a formal event held at or near each armory. This allowed Illinois elected representatives, the adjutant general and assistant adjutant general, and brigade leaders and their subordinates to personally thank our soldiers, their families, their employers, and the communities for their service.

We also established an aggressive caring program for Gold Star Families and Wounded Warriors. Upon returning stateside, the IBCT command group stayed on Title X status for an additional 30 days to visit all 18 Gold Star Families and to visit our Wounded Warriors across the country. Once the entire brigade had returned home, the Illinois National Guard headquarters conducted a Gold Star Family event at McCormick Place in Chicago. Here, each Gold Star Family was honored with a special commemoration involving national celebrities and special guests.

Throughout reset, battalion and company leaders continued visiting their Gold Star Families and Wounded Warriors, inviting them to unit-level social events. While these efforts helped restore the brigade, many soldiers were not able to bridge the gap and cope. The 33rd IBCT and Illinois State Headquarters developed specific guidance to carry us through the reset to help mitigate potentially catastrophic problems. The guidance included:

- Embed chaplains throughout the brigade—"a chaplain will step foot into every armory at every drill, especially during range training."

- Develop a battalion-level methodology to teach coping skills without being intrusive or disruptive, using the chaplaincy, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and other key resources.

- Develop a linking diagram from soldiers with problems to those that are a positive influence in their lives.

- Mail soldier "help cards" and letters of encouragement to families and friends of soldiers in the brigade. Cards contained hotline numbers to call for help.

- Develop a leader-training program that teaches first-line leaders how to mentor and coach soldiers who are struggling to cope.

Commander's LOE Key Tasks												
M A I N T A I N I N G	Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% positive control of sensitive and high value items • Maintain FLIPL losses to less than 2% 										
	Strength Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 120% End Strength and 95% DMOSQ • GRAP Enlistments + Recruitment > Losses, 15% increase per year-90% FY13 										
	OIP/CSDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational Inspection Program conducted yearly and deficiencies fixed within the following quarter • Command Supply Discipline Program done every three years 										
	Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping OR rates at 95% • All equipment through reset NLT Apr 2011 										
C A R I N G	Resiliency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yearly training for mind and spirit: PTSD, suicide, drug prevention • PT, Leaders-250+ APFT, units - 220 + APFT 										
	Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing delinquent OERs and NCOERs to near zero • Leaders conduct quarterly mentoring of all Soldiers 										
	Gold Star Families and Wounded Warriors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yearly event for fallen Soldier families • Regular communication with all GSF 										
	Family Readiness Groups and Employer Support to the Guard & Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community, Soldier, Family or Employer events quarterly • Fully staffed and trained FRG in place by FY12 										
<table border="0"> <tr> <td>APFT Army Physical Fitness Test</td> <td>FLIPL Financial Liability Investigation of Property Loss</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GSF Gold Star Family</td> <td>GRAP Guard Recruiting Assistance Program</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NCOER Noncommissioned Officer Efficiency Report</td> <td>PTSD Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder</td> </tr> <tr> <td>OR Operational Readiness</td> <td>OER Officer Efficiency Report</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PT Physical Training</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			APFT Army Physical Fitness Test	FLIPL Financial Liability Investigation of Property Loss	GSF Gold Star Family	GRAP Guard Recruiting Assistance Program	NCOER Noncommissioned Officer Efficiency Report	PTSD Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	OR Operational Readiness	OER Officer Efficiency Report	PT Physical Training	
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Figure 4. Subtasks under Maintaining and Caring Lines of Effort

- Partner with Illinois National Guard Headquarters and other brigades in the state to leverage behavioral health support down to the battalions at every drill (especially during range fire). Our state headquarters provided full-time chaplaincy coverage, by zone, throughout the state.

- Achieve 100 percent response of health assessments.

- Train two soldiers per company in “resiliency.”

This guidance augmented our team leader and squad leader involvement with their soldiers. Our ultimate success in soldier care resided in our noncommissioned officer corps and the awareness of leaders at all levels.

Culmination

For the 33rd IBCT, reset culminated with the unveiling of the painting “Forever My Brother,” commemorating the brigade’s Operation Enduring Freedom deployment. The reset of the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team was successful because of the exceptional support of the leadership of the Illinois National Guard and especially the hard work of the brigade’s soldiers, noncommissioned officers, and junior leaders. We were dedicated to seeing the 33rd IBCT fully restored. Our logical framework centered on four main lines of effort—leading, training, maintaining, and caring. We were able to well posture the 33rd IBCT to execute its next mission, whatever and wherever that might be. **MR**