



Cliff Barnes, a U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command logistics assistance representative assigned to the 405th Army Field Support Brigade, inspects a damaged rotor blade on a UH-60 Black Hawk in a hangar 26 July 2021 at the Bucharest International Airport, Romania. After a precautionary landing due to a major mechanical problem, Barnes inspected the aircraft with the pilots and mechanics. They looked at all the parts, and Barnes pinpointed what needed to be replaced. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)

Close the Skills Gap with Expeditionary Civilians

Col. Rick L. Tillotson, U.S. Army, Retired

I suppose it is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail.

—Abraham Maslow, *The Psychology of Science*

Abraham Maslow's assertion that when you only have a hammer you treat everything like a nail speaks to a cognitive bias associated

with an overreliance on using a preferred tool for multiple purposes. In the Army, commanders are assigned missions related to an array of purposes, so they do not have the luxury of treating everything as if it were the proverbial “nail.” The concern is commanders can fall prey to this cognitive bias trap through unintentionally limiting the available resources at their disposal, which can lead to seeking to adapt the mission to the available “tools” rather than adapting the tools to the mission.

When units conduct mission analysis, they define the specific problem to be solved and develop a shared vision of the requirements to achieve the desired end state. The analysis includes reviewing available assets and identifying resource shortfalls. Available personnel assets are assessed through the lens of the mission variable “troops and support available.” To avoid the cognitive bias trap, when units conduct mission analysis for deployment missions, they should consider expeditionary civilian augmentation as a sourcing solution for covering identified skill capability gaps in their formations. Skill gaps result from available soldiers either not having a required skill set or the skill set is fully consumed by other missions.

History demonstrates that commanders can benefit by utilizing expeditionary civilians, a vital component of the Department of Defense’s (DOD) Total Force. Civilians offer a vast amount of experience and possess special skill sets to augment unit formations. Unfortunately, when I deployed to Iraq in 2007 as a primary staff member assigned to the 1st Armored Division, the staff was unaware of the Army’s Expeditionary Civilian Program. In hindsight, the division would have benefitted from enhancing the staff’s capabilities by utilizing expeditionary civilians during the deployment. The purpose of this article is to raise awareness and inform commanders of the benefits they can accrue through utilization of expeditionary civilians during deployments. The article informs about the Army’s Expeditionary Civilian Program, offers examples of how expeditionary civilians have and can be employed, and provides criteria for designating emergency-essential (E-E) expeditionary civilian positions.

What Expeditionary Civilians Bring to the Fight

Expeditionary civilians represent a force multiplier by enhancing a unit’s capability and capacity and

increasing the commander’s range of options.¹ In her information paper titled “DoD Expeditionary Civilians (DoD-EC)” and prepared for the 2018 Joint Staff Portable Castle Expeditionary Civilian Capability Table Top Exercise, Dianne Hibbs, a renowned expert on the DOD’s Expeditionary Civilian Program, describes the utility of the DOD civilian workforce and the diversity of mission sets for which commanders can employ expeditionary civilians:

The DoD civilian workforce is a key element of the Total Force and an essential enabler of defense mission capabilities that can enhance the readiness, capability, capacity, and lethality of our military forces. DoD expeditionary civilians provide a subset of the civilian workforce that is prepared and available for rapid response into expeditionary environments that support contingencies, emergencies, and combat operations; security cooperation, stability, transition, and reconstruction operations; and humanitarian missions, disaster relief, and restoration of order in civil disorders.²

The DOD defines expeditionary civilians as DoD civilians who provide essential capabilities at their assigned station, to include situations in which other civilians have evacuated, or while deployed away from their assigned station resulting from their E-E or noncombat-essential (NCE) designations, and who are prepared, trained, cleared, equipped, and ready to deploy in support of combat operations by the military, contingency operations, emergency operations, humanitarian missions, disaster relief, restoration of order, drug interdiction, and/or stability operations of the DoD.³

Commanders have relied on civilians for as long as contingencies have existed. As far back as the Revolutionary War, Gen.

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Kyle Battles, a U.S. Army Joint Munitions Command quality assurance specialist (ammunition surveillance), checks the humidity indicator on a Patriot surface-to-air missile system in Żagań, Poland, 18 April 2022. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)

George Washington used civilians to transport supplies for the Continental Army.⁴ Expeditionary civilian support has evolved beyond just providing support during contingencies and now includes civilians serving in a variety of functional areas. Examples include expeditionary civilians serving as administrators, performing weapons maintenance, providing contracting services, supplying medical services, performing an assortment of intelligence functions, serving as linguists, executing comptroller and budget functions, providing

every facet of logistics support, providing communications and information technology support, and performing legal services.

Expeditionary Civilian Contributions in Afghanistan and Iraq

The DOD deployed more than fifty thousand expeditionary civilians between 2001 and April 2018.⁵ These expeditionary civilians enhanced the capability of military forces operating in Afghanistan and Iraq while also decreasing the burden placed on uniformed personnel who would have otherwise been tasked to fill individual augmentation positions to perform the validated duties. Two examples where expeditionary civilians made an impact during these conflicts include expeditionary civilian augmentation of the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) and participation in Iraq's provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs). Expeditionary civilians provided an enduring presence in

CSTC-A, and they proved their mettle by rapidly deploying to perform critical duties in the newly formed Iraq reconstruction teams.

As part of the Resolute Support Mission, CSTC-A served as the center of gravity for security assistance for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.⁶ With the goal to stabilize Afghanistan, CSTC-A's mission included reforming the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police. This included aiding Afghan security institutions in establishing a resource management capability.⁷ CSTC-A was also responsible for allocating substantial resources for infrastructure improvements associated with the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police. In total, expeditionary civilians filled 18 percent of the 833 CSTC-A positions.⁸

Expeditionary civilians supplied material augmentation in the resource management arena, a function of fundamental importance to CSTC-A given the magnitude of its funding. “From FY2002 through June 20, 2021, the United States appropriated or otherwise made available approximately \$144.98 billion toward the reconstruction of Afghanistan.”⁹ This is an extraordinary amount of money to plan, program, and execute, and expeditionary civilian augmentation helped facilitate that process. Expeditionary civilians accounted for 48/105 resource management positions in CSTC-A, representing 46 percent of the resource management workforce. This included filling the position of director of resource management who led the entire CSTC-A resource management effort.¹⁰

In 2007, DOD expeditionary civilians proved their value by serving as a stopgap sourcing solution, filling critical positions in newly established Iraq embedded provincial reconstruction teams (ePRTs).¹¹ DOD expeditionary civilians answered the call by volunteering to immediately deploy to assist surging military forces in setting the conditions to seize the initiative and quell the violence enveloping Iraq at the time. Since the deployment of U.S. forces into Iraq in 2003, the coalition’s operational environment evolved from neutralizing Saddam Hussein’s followers to entanglement in a conflict between Sunni and Shi’ite militias that was further complicated by radical foreign jihadists seeking to achieve their separate extremist agendas. By 2007, the increasing violence threatened to divide the entire country, resulting in the deployment of additional U.S. forces, which began the 2007-2008 Iraqi Surge Campaign.¹²

With the goal of assisting the increased military forces, in January 2007, President George W. Bush announced that the United States would double the number of provincial reconstruction teams in Iraq as part of the “New Way Forward.”¹³ PRTs were civilian-military organizations designed to aid Iraq’s provincial governments by helping them more effectively govern their respective populations. The new surge PRTs were called ePRTs because the plan was to embed the PRTs with brigade-sized units to assist subprovincial and local governments.¹⁴

The State Department plan entailed sourcing the ePRTs with contract personnel, but funding availability hampered recruitment of the civilian contractors, which delayed fully staffing the ePRTs until the summer of

2008.¹⁵ This timing was highly problematic because the units the ePRTs were assigned to support were scheduled to redeploy in August 2008. To avoid squandering the opportunity to exploit the conditions created by the surge forces, the DOD covered the ePRT specialist shortfalls by deploying DOD expeditionary civilians, ensuring the ePRTs were properly staffed and functional. Their contributions complimented the efforts of the surge brigades, resulting in a decline in violence in Iraq.

A Missed Opportunity

During the surge of U.S. forces, the 1st Armored Division deployed to Iraq from October 2007 to December 2008, serving as Multinational Division-North (MND-N). The division enjoyed success during the deployment, but augmenting the division staff with expeditionary civilians would have improved the division’s ability to accomplish its multifaceted mission that included achieving four enduring effects: (1) retain a secure environment in MND-N, (2) transition Iraqi security forces’ capability across MND-N, (3) enhance provincial government control in MND-N, and (4) set conditions for a stable economic environment in MND-N.¹⁶

Though there was a kinetic component to each of the four sought-after enduring effects, considerable effort was focused on improving Iraq’s governance and establishing conditions to create a stable, self-sustaining economic environment that promoted economic development, job opportunities, and foreign investment. The nonconventional aspects of the mission exposed skill gaps within the division staff that would have been mitigated through targeted expeditionary civilian augmentation.

An example where expeditionary civilian augmentation would have added value was the management and execution of the Commander’s Emergency Response Program (CERP). The money provided through the CERP enabled commanders to fund and execute small-scale projects intended to provide urgent humanitarian relief and to facilitate urgent reconstruction within their areas of responsibility.¹⁷ CERP money provided the division a much-needed nonkinetic form of ammunition, but the division staff lacked the necessary expertise to fully optimize its use, as was the case with other units that employed CERP during their deployments.



Mark Bossen, one of two information technology specialists on the Defense Logistics Agency's rapid deployment Red Team, runs diagnostics on communications equipment during the early stages of humanitarian relief efforts following Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico. The team was deployed there for five weeks in October and November 2018. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)

In its report, *Military Operations: Actions Needed to Improve Oversight and Interagency Coordination for the Commander's Emergency Response Program in Afghanistan*, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that units faced significant challenges adequately managing and overseeing CERP projects.¹⁸ The GAO reported there were inadequate numbers of management and oversight personnel for the program and key duties such as "visiting sites to monitor project status and contractor performance were either not performed or inconsistently performed."¹⁹ Units serving in Iraq experienced the same deficiencies in their management of CERP projects. For example, the 25th Infantry Division, 1st Armored Division's predecessor division, sampled CERP projects at the conclusion of its deployment and found that "49% of the completed projects were fully functional, 10% were partially functional, 20% were non-functional, and there was no information on 21% of the completed projects."²⁰

The deficiencies identified in the management of the CERP not only resulted in inadequately leveraging a powerful program but also degraded the credibility of coalition forces. "For example, during one of Maj. Gen. Mark Hertling's [MND-N commander] battlefield circulations, a provincial governor told him that coalition forces had spent over \$400 million in his province with nothing to show for it."²¹ The 1st Armored Division expended a substantial amount of CERP money during its fifteen-month deployment, and expeditionary civilian augmentation would have improved the execution and effectiveness of the program in addition to mitigating shortfalls resulting from the division's skill gap in this arena.

Programmatic Improvements

As a result of the challenges the DOD experienced managing the tens of thousands of expeditionary civilians who deployed to serve in Iraq and Afghanistan,



Marc Bourdeau, an Army Expeditionary Civilian Workforce (AECW) employee with the 405th Army Field Support Brigade, conducts a basic issue item inventory on an M113 Armored Personnel Carrier at the Coleman Army Prepositioned Stocks-2 worksite in Mannheim, Germany, 18 July 2023. Bourdeau is a quality assurance specialist with Army Field Support Battalion-Mannheim while on AECW status, but his regular job is located at Tobyhanna Army Depot, Pennsylvania. (Photo by Kevin Grimm, U.S. Army)

the DOD recognized the need to create and institutionalize a formal procedure for identifying, sourcing, and deploying expeditionary civilians. In 2017, the DOD published “Directive-Type Memorandum (DTM)-17-004—Department of Defense Expeditionary Civilian Workforce.” The DTM is based on the premise that civilians are an important component of DOD’s Total Force, and that DOD must rely on a mix of capable military members and DOD civilians to meet global national security missions.²² To achieve this end, the DTM established procedures to include expeditionary civilians in the DOD global force management allocation process, a process that aligns force apportionment, assignment, and allocation in support of the *National Defense Strategy*.²³

The DTM instituted a system to provide greater predictability for projected combatant command (CCMD) expeditionary civilian requirements, replacing the previous practice of seeking volunteers via an ad hoc process. The DTM defined a “demand signal”

that represents a set of CCMD expeditionary civilian requirements determined by current and projected requirements.²⁴ The demand signal is used to establish the “force pool,” which defines the allocation, by number and type of civilian requirements, that each force provider (DOD components) must be prepared to source.²⁵ The DTM’s policies assign responsibility to DOD components to be prepared to deploy a ready pool of expeditionary civilians as delineated in the civilian force pool to meet the deployment requirements of the CCMDs.²⁶ This added a measure of predictability and accountability to the utilization of expeditionary civilians, thereby making them a reliable asset for deployed commanders.

In November 2022, the DOD exercised the DTM’s tasking authority when it established the Security Assistance Group-Ukraine, a joint headquarters based in Germany dedicated to coordinating security assistance to Ukraine.²⁷ The DOD ordered each of the uniformed services to provide individual augmentees



Paul Leykamm, a U.S. Army Joint Munitions Command quality assurance specialist (ammunition surveillance), provides training 18 July 2022 on ammunition quality assurance procedures to include inspection processes to soldiers assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division in Żagań, Poland. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)

to fill its ranks, which included tasking the Army to source over thirty expeditionary civilian positions. The Army's augmentation of Security Assistance Group-Ukraine with expeditionary civilians has contributed to the successful provision of billions of dollars' worth of military assistance to Ukraine's armed forces.²⁸

In concert with the DOD, the Army has also strengthened its management of the Army's Expeditionary Civilian Program. The Army created the Army Expeditionary Civilian Workforce (AECW) Directorate, established a world-class expeditionary civilian training and deployment platform, and is improving and simplifying its policy guidance.²⁹

The AECW Directorate, under the deputy chief of staff (G-1), is responsible for the readiness, training, mobilization, and reintegration of Department of the Army expeditionary civilians who deploy in support of military forces conducting joint or Army-centric

operations. The directorate also trains, mobilizes, and reintegrates non-Army DOD expeditionary civilians, which includes expeditionary civilians assigned to the other military services and fourth estate agencies.³⁰

The Army's expeditionary civilian training and deployment platform is located at Camp Atterbury, Indiana. In addition to deploying and redeploying thousands of expeditionary civilians worldwide, the AECW Directorate's cadre assigned to Camp Atterbury provide standardized training and validate medical preparedness for deployment.

In May 2024, the Army published a completely revised Army Regulation 690-11, *Department of the Army Expeditionary Civilians*.³¹ The new regulation improves the organization and flow of the policy information, updates the policy guidance to align it with current operating procedures, and improves understanding of the Army's Expeditionary Civilian Program to increase the program's value to commands.

Expanded Use of Expeditionary Civilians

To better meet the needs of commanders, the AECW Directorate expanded the use of expeditionary civilians. In addition to deploying to perform the traditional expeditionary support functions, Army expeditionary civilians can now deploy to support security assistance, security cooperation, and set the theater operations. Expeditionary civilians can also deploy to support large-scale exercises to enable theater Army commands to practice integrating them into their staffs

approximately seven thousand regionally allocated soldiers that participate in back-to-back nine-month Atlantic Resolve rotations.³³

With thousands of soldiers continuously deployed to eastern Europe, and the preponderance of the forces operating in Poland, it necessitated establishing an enduring base operations (BASOPS) support capacity to support the rotational forces. In 2019, Headquarters, Department of the Army, established Area Support Group (ASG) Poland to provide a systemic solution for providing BASOPS support for the

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The expanded role of expeditionary civilians increases commanders' range of options for employing their subject-matter expertise. Commands are increasingly leveraging expeditionary civilians as they become more familiar with the program. There are currently hundreds of expeditionary civilians deployed in over thirty deployment locations, spanning twenty countries. Though there remains a significant expeditionary civilian presence in the U.S. Central Command area of operation, the main effort has shifted to the European theater.

Russia's annexation of Crimea and support to separatist factions in eastern Ukraine in 2014 led to the establishment of Operation Atlantic Resolve. Russia's actions followed in the wake of the inactivation of V Corps Headquarters and the 170th and 172nd Infantry Brigades. With the return of the last twenty-two M-1 Abrams main battle tanks in March 2013, and the military strength of United States Army Europe (USAREUR) reduced to thirty thousand soldiers, USAREUR was no longer equipped to adequately respond to Russia's violation of Ukrainian sovereignty.³² As a result, USAREUR-AF (USAREUR consolidated with United States Army Africa on 20 November 2020) relies on the deployment of

soldiers rotating in and out of Poland.³⁴ ASG Poland's mission included centralizing BASOPS support, improving quality of life support functions, and enhancing operational readiness for the regionally allocated forces operating throughout Poland.

To assist in creating the operational framework and setting the foundation of the new ASG, the 21st Theater Sustainment Command (TSC), ASG Poland's higher headquarters, petitioned support from the AECW Directorate to deploy an expeditionary civilian from Installation Management Command (IMCOM). The AECW Directorate acquired the services of Michael Amarosa, the deputy to the commander of United States Army Garrison Hawaii with almost two decades of Installation Management Command experience, who volunteered to deploy to Poland to assist in establishing the ASG's headquarters and operating policies.

As the 21st TSC civilian deputy to the commanding general at the time, I had the opportunity to work closely with Amarosa during his deployment and see firsthand the benefits of utilizing expeditionary civilians. His findings and recommendations proved invaluable and helped accelerate the ASG's transition to full operational capability. Due to the command's positive experience working with the AECW Directorate, the 21st TSC began utilizing expeditionary civilians at each



Gaspar Jarquin, a deployed quality assurance specialist/contracting officer representative, performs a final inspection during his deployment with the 405th Army Field Support Brigade at its Army Prepositioned Stocks site in Mannheim, Germany, in February 2024. (Photo by Brenda Reta, AECW Directorate operations specialist)

of its three ASGs to perform a myriad of support roles and strengthen their capacity to provide BASOPS support to the rotational forces. Fortunately, the command gained experience utilizing expeditionary civilians prior to Russia's next big move in Ukraine.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 represented a substantial escalation of the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The United States responded to Russia's unbridled aggression by deploying thousands of additional soldiers to Europe to bolster its North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies and deter further Russian aggression. The presence of

additional U.S. forces operating along NATO's entire eastern flank increased the BASOPS requirements supplied by both ASG Poland and ASG Black Sea. Expeditionary civilians again answered the call by deploying to Romania, Greece, and Poland to assist the ASGs in providing support to the surging forces.

Given the ASGs are civilian-centric organizations, they lacked the ability to quickly flex to the extent required to meet the increased demands of their expanded missions. Augmenting their formations with expeditionary civilians provided the additional capacity to enable them to provide the increased BASOPS support, where they would have otherwise struggled to meet the increased demand. Expeditionary civilians served in explosive safety positions; logistics management positions; a variety of administrative positions; and in morale, welfare, and recreation positions.

In addition to the increased BASOPS support requirements in eastern Europe, Russia's invasion caused the logistical support requirements across the entire theater to increase exponentially, significantly impacting the 21st TSC, commanded by Maj. Gen. James Smith. The

21st TSC executes mission command of operational sustainment across the European theater; conducts reception, staging, onward movement, and integration; and executes theater opening, distribution, and sustainment support for both U.S. European Command and NATO operations.³⁵ While conducting massive reception, staging, onward movement, and integration operations, performing amplified sustainment support, and coordinating history-making equipment draws from the European Army prepositioned stocks to equip arriving U.S. forces, the command simultaneously supported rapid, successive presidential drawdown missions valued in the billions of dollars.

Between 25 February 2022, the day after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and 21 April 2022, President Joseph Biden authorized seven presidential drawdowns of equipment and ammunition worth over \$3.3 billion.³⁶

This assistance took the form of direct transfers of equipment and ammunition from the DOD to the Ukrainian military. To transfer the drawdown equipment and ammunition to Ukraine required locating and retrieving the items, accounting for the items, ensuring the items were fully mission capable, reconfiguring the items where required, preparing the items for transportation, transporting the items to the Ukraine border, staging the items, performing any required last-minute maintenance, and facilitating the transportation handoff to the Ukraine Armed Forces (UAF). This was an enormous undertaking given the magnitude of the drawdowns and pace at which the president ordered the drawdowns. To provide a perspective of the scale of the drawdowns, the following provides just a sample of the equipment and ammunition included in the two drawdowns ordered on 13 April 2022 and 21 April 2022:

- ninety M777 155mm howitzers,
- seventy-two tactical vehicles to tow the M777 howitzers,
- two hundred M113 armored personnel carriers,
- ten AN/TPQ-36 fire finder radar systems,
- two AN/MPQ-64 sentinel aerial surveillance radars,
- 184,000 artillery rounds,
- three hundred switchblade tactical unmanned aircraft systems,
- 121 phoenix ghost tactical unmanned aircraft systems,
- five hundred Javelin missiles and thousands of other antiarmor systems,
- one hundred armored high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles,
- eleven Mi-17 helicopters, and
- thirty thousand sets of body armor and helmets.³⁷

The drawdowns have continued, and as of 23 January 2024, amount to close to \$30 billion since Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022.³⁸

As the 21st TSC flexed to supply support to the thousands of additional soldiers deployed to Europe in addition to actioning the drawdowns, most of its assigned military and civilian personnel worked seven days a week. As the increased operations tempo continued unabated, the popular phrase for personnel serving on a permanent change of station tour to Germany was, "I am deployed to Germany." Again, expeditionary

civilians answered the call and deployed to provide much-needed relief and assistance.

The director of the AECW Directorate, Yanir Hill, was closely monitoring the substantial increase in the logistics support requirements in USAREUR-AF and began seeking authorization for the AECW Directorate to deploy expeditionary civilians to serve at the 21st TSC headquarters based in Kaiserslautern, Germany. As a result of her efforts, the deputy chief of staff (G-1) granted an exception to policy to allow Army expeditionary civilians to deploy to Germany if their deployed duties were directly related to USAREUR-AF's mission support to the war in Ukraine. This represented a paradigm-shift because up to this point, expeditionary civilians deployed to Europe served in forward operating bases providing support to deployed rotational forces. Authorizing the deployment of expeditionary civilians to serve in a headquarters based in Germany (which was directly impacted by forward operations) signified a profound expansion of the use of expeditionary civilians.

Within a few weeks, expeditionary civilians began arriving to augment the 21st TSC G-1, G-2, G-3, G-6, safety office, and the distribution management center, which oversees supply management, movement control, and transportation operations. In addition, U.S. Army Medical Materiel Center, Europe (USAMMC-E) received expeditionary civilians to serve as warehouse workers due to the substantial increase in workload at its medical warehouse in Germany. By using expeditionary civilians, USAMMC-E avoided spending millions of dollars to contract the warehouse services.³⁹ The presence of the expeditionary civilians was significant for the command, and Smith was extremely appreciative of their efforts in assisting the 21st TSC in successfully executing the command's historic mission.

Leveraging E-E Employees

Commands with civilian authorizations on a table of distribution and allowances (TDA) can also designate an internal cadre of expeditionary civilians that they can deploy or, if the command is forward stationed overseas, retain their services following an evacuation of noncombatants.

The DOD's definition of expeditionary civilians includes two types of expeditionary civilian positions:

emergency-essential (E-E) and noncombat-essential (NCE).⁴⁰ Civilians that occupy an E-E position can deploy worldwide to support all the scenarios applicable to an expeditionary civilian, to include deploying to and serving in a combat zone. The difference between E-E and NCE employees is NCE employees cannot deploy to a combat zone.

E-E employees provide commands more options for utilizing their services, so when deciding which civilian TDA positions to designate as an expeditionary civilian position, the better option is to designate the positions as E-E to provide the command maximum flexibility for employment of the civilian employee occupying the position. 10 U.S.C. § 1580(a), “Emergency Essential Employees” provides the criteria for designating an E-E position:

The Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of the military department concerned may designate as an emergency essential employee any employee of the Department of Defense, whether permanent or temporary, the duties of whose position meet all of the following criteria:

(1) It is the duty of the employee to provide immediate and continuing support for combat operations or to support maintenance and repair of combat essential systems of the armed forces.

(2) It is necessary for the employee to perform that duty in a combat zone after the evacuation of nonessential personnel, including any dependents of members of the armed forces, from the zone in connection with a war, a national emergency declared by Congress or the President, or the commencement of combat operations of the armed forces in the zone.

(3) It is impracticable to convert the employee’s position to a position authorized to be filled by a member of the armed forces because of a necessity for that duty to be performed without interruption.⁴¹

By applying the screening criteria provided in 10 U.S.C. § 1580(a), commands decide which civilian positions on their TDAs to designate as E-E. There is no limit to the number of positions that commands can appoint as E-E, but they need to be judicious and

ensure the identified positions meet all three criteria included in the U.S. Code.

As articulated throughout this article, expeditionary civilians, in particular E-E employees, provide commanders capability through providing expertise and closing skill gaps in their military formations. Commanders can deploy their internally assigned E-E employees with entire units, as part of smaller formations, or even as individuals, depending on the need. An excellent example of the effective use of E-E positions is how U.S. Army Materiel Command deploys its logistics assistance representatives (LARs).

LARs are Department of Army civilians who possess highly specialized skills that consult units to improve their equipment readiness. Their knowledge spans the entire gamut of equipment readiness and includes providing technical assistance for maintenance, training, supply, and safety for every piece of combat equipment the Army has in its inventory.⁴² To fully use these highly competent and technical experts, all Army Materiel Command LAR positions are designated as E-E. As E-E employees, LARs accept their availability to deploy worldwide to perform functions critical to accomplishing operational missions as a condition of employment.

As discussed earlier, the U.S. response to Russia’s February 2022 full-scale invasion in Ukraine was significant. The response included issuing arriving Army units thousands of pieces of equipment from Europe-based Army prepositioned stocks sites for their internal use, but the prepositioned stocks were also used to source much of the equipment ordered in the presidential drawdowns. The unit at the forefront of this herculean effort was the 405th Army Field Support Brigade (AFSB), commanded by Col. Brad Bane.

To execute its mission, the 405th AFSB adroitly orchestrated the use of its own internally assigned LARs in addition to LARs assigned to U.S. Army Communications-Electronics Command (CECOM), U.S. Army Tank-Automotive and Armaments Command (TACOM), U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command (AMCOM), and the Joint Munitions Command (JMC). The following provides examples of how the 405th AFSB employed the expertise of the deployed LARs at its disposal:

- CECOM LARs helped order and outfit communications equipment in tracked platforms provided to Ukraine. CECOM LARs also helped maintain

and repair counterfire radars used by the UAF in combat operations.

- TACOM LARs helped order and prepare the M777 howitzers issued to Ukraine and helped guide the UAF through tele-maintenance and hands-on training.
- AMCOM LARs helped prepare the M142 High-Mobility Artillery Rocket System weapons systems for issue to the UAF and helped guide the UAF through tele-maintenance and hands-on training.
- JMC LARs advised on the establishment of expeditionary ammunition supply points to store ammunition for the UAF.

Following the 405th AFSB's unprecedented success in supporting both U.S. forces and the UAF, Bane stated, "The 405th AFSB was a tailor fit organization to support the non-standard logistical theater setting during the onset of hostilities in Ukraine. The Army Material Command LARs assisted immensely in not only preparing and configuring Army preposition stocks but also in the forward issuance and tele-maintenance of major end items provided to the Ukrainian Armed Forces."⁴³

The impact LARs made and continue to make arguably makes them a strategic asset to the Army, and they provide an excellent example of how to maximize the use of E-E employees.

Conclusion

The Army has made tremendous progress in improving the usefulness of its expeditionary civilian program to commanders by dedicating the AECW

Directorate to manage the program, establishing the world-class expeditionary civilian training and deployment platform at Camp Atterbury, updating and simplifying policy guidance, and expanding how commanders can utilize deployed expeditionary civilians. Knowledge of the program is increasing, but as was the case with 1st Armored Division in 2007, some units are still unaware of the program and the benefits that can be accrued by utilizing expeditionary civilians during deployed operations.

The intent of this article is to make commanders and their staffs aware that expeditionary civilians are an avenue for closing the skill gaps in their deployed formations. An interesting corollary to Maslow's take on the "hammer and nail" is Robert Kagan's declaration, "When you don't have a hammer, you don't want anything to look like a nail."⁴⁴ By exploiting the capabilities inherent in the civilian workforce, commanders do not have to concern themselves with hammers and nails but can instead focus their attention on optimizing their personnel resources to meet their deployed mission requirements.

During a speech at the Army's expeditionary civilian training and deployment platform at Camp Atterbury, Lt. Gen. Douglas Stitt, U.S. Army deputy chief of staff for personnel, remarked, "Expeditionary civilians have volunteered to go wherever they are most needed. The work attracts extraordinary individuals—people who are willing to make sacrifices for a higher purpose."⁴⁵

It is highly recommended that commanders make use of these "extraordinary individuals" to close their skill gaps. ■

NOTES

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