



Behind every successful mission are dedicated Soldiers and the tough, capable NCOs who lead them. Sustainment NCOs — the “muddy boots leaders” — ensure our Army stays moving, supplied, and ready to fight. (U.S. Army photo by Ken Scar)

# Sustaining the Fight Through MOS Competency

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## Introduction

**W**inning battles isn't just about advanced weapons or high-tech systems. It's about Soldiers — skilled, disciplined, and mission-ready Soldiers led by tough and capable NCOs. Sustainment NCOs, the “muddy boots leaders,” keep the Army moving, supplied, and ready to fight.

In today's complex battlefield, from large-scale combat to multi-domain operations, our greatest strength is people. Your ability to master your Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) gives the Army an edge. Let's examine why your MOS competency matters and how it turns you into a combat multiplier.

## Why Your MOS Competency Matters

As a junior enlisted Soldier or NCO, you may not always see how your job fits into the bigger picture. But it

does. Whether you're a mechanic, fueler, cook, human resources technician, or supply specialist, your role directly affects readiness and combat effectiveness.

You're not just part of the team. You're essential to mission success.

1. **Readiness:** Units need you to be sharp and trained. A skilled maintainer keeps vehicles rolling, and a well-trained 92Y unit supply specialist gets the right gear into the fight. Your daily tasks directly impact how fast and how far we can go.
2. **Lethality:** Combat units can't fight if they're not fed, fueled, armed, and healthy. Sustainment is combat power. Your MOS keeps Soldiers in the fight.
3. **Adaptability:** Enemies change tactics. Gear

gets more advanced. Operations get more complex. NCOs and Soldiers with deep knowledge of their MOS are the ones who adapt and find solutions quickly.

## Developing the Modern Warfighter

Today's battlefield is fast-paced, data-driven, and dangerous. We need NCOs and Soldiers who can work with high-tech systems, automation, predictive maintenance tools, and more.

For example, the new MOS 42T (Talent Acquisition Specialist) focuses on people, not just equipment. That's because getting the right Soldier with the right skills into the right role is just as important as getting ammo to the front.

We're also building **Multifunctional Logistics NCOs** — senior leaders who can handle multiple sustainment functions at once, from supply to maintenance to transportation. That makes us more flexible and harder to stop.

## Training with Industry (TWI): Learning from the Best

Some NCOs get a rare opportunity to train with companies like FedEx or Amazon. Through the **Training with Industry (TWI)** program, they

learn cutting-edge logistics, tracking systems, and operational strategies. Then, they bring that knowledge to the Army Sustainment University.

These NCOs help modernize our operations. They help us become faster, smarter, and more precise in delivering combat power.

## Project Warrior: Developing Future Leaders

**Project Warrior** selects high-performing NCOs and develops them into trainers and leaders. First, they serve as Observer Coach/Trainers (OC/Ts) at Combat Training Centers. Then, they go on to teach at the Army Sustainment University.

Why does that matter to you? Because those instructors shape the training that prepares you for the next fight. And if you're driven and competent, Project Warrior could be your future.

## Expert Soldier Badge (ESB): Earn It

The **Expert Soldier Badge (ESB)** is a test of all-around warrior skills: shooting, moving, communicating, and surviving. It's open to all MOSs, and it proves you've mastered the fundamentals.

Sustainers aren't just support — we're warriors too. ESB



A U.S. Army Reserve petroleum supply specialist prepares to transport fuel during an exercise at Fort Dix, New Jersey, June 4, 2025. Whether you're a mechanic, fueler, cook, human resources technician, or supply specialist, your role directly affects readiness and combat effectiveness. (U.S. Army Reserve photo by Maj. Elizabeth Ohloff)



is how we show it. Earning the badge shows your peers and leaders that you're serious about being the complete Soldier.

### Get Certified: Build Your Value

Did you know you can get certified in areas like supply chain management or transportation while serving? These certifications boost your Army skills *and* prepare you for a future career.

They also give you an edge when competing for promotions and broadening assignments. Competence pays off in and out of uniform.

### Talent Management: You Matter

The Army is changing how it tracks and develops talent. Systems like the Integrated Personnel Pay System — Army (IPPS-A) help us place the right Soldiers in the right jobs at the right time. The more you grow in your MOS, the more options open up for your career.

If you're good at what you do, the Army will invest in you. That's why training, certifications, and professional development matter. We're watching, and we need leaders like you to step up.



Some NCOs get the rare opportunity to participate in the Training with Industry (TWI) program, where they learn cutting-edge logistics, tracking systems, and operational strategies. Then, they bring that knowledge to the Army Sustainment University. (U.S. Army photo)

### Muddy Boots Leadership

You've probably heard the phrase "muddy boots leadership." It means being out front, setting the example, and never asking your Soldiers to do something you wouldn't do.

The best leaders aren't afraid to get dirty. They know their job, know their people, and execute the mission. They lead from the front, in the mud, in the motor pool, and in the fight.

### Conclusion: Win Through Competence

This Army needs specialists who can operate under pressure, adapt to any fight, and stay sharp. Your MOS is more than just a job — it's part of the Army's warfighting machine.

We don't need generalists. We need experts. Competence wins battles. The better you are at your craft, the stronger your team, your unit, and your Army.

So, learn it. Master it. Own it. Because when the next fight comes, the Army will win not just with weapons but with well-trained, highly skilled Soldiers and NCOs who lead from the front. ■

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**Command Sergeant Major Marco A. Torres** assumed responsibility as the command sergeant major of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Support Command on June 24, 2022. During his long career, he has served as senior maintenance supervisor, recruiter, platoon sergeant, material management supervisor, first sergeant, battalion command sergeant major, and brigade command sergeant major. Torres earned a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration and a dual Master of Arts degree in human resource management and leadership and management from Webster University.

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