



Soldiers conduct sling load training Sept. 26, 2024, at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. Sling load operations are essential for delivering critical supplies and equipment to Soldiers in the field. (U.S. Army photo by Scott T. Sturkol)

# Sustaining Combat Readiness

*By Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmy Sellers*

Army Materiel Command

**T**he U.S. Army Sustainment Enterprise plays a pivotal role in ensuring combat formations are ready and effective. Gen. Randy George, Chief of Staff of the Army, tasked Army Materiel Command (AMC) with maintaining the Joint Strategic Support Area (JSSA) to deliver ready combat formations.

The JSSA is a vital component of the Army's strategy for sustaining combat operations across multiple domains — land, air, sea, space, and cyberspace. According to Army Doctrine Publication 4-0, *Sustainment*, the JSSA is responsible for the infrastructure, processes, and capabilities necessary to support joint forces from the strategic level down to the tactical edge. It ensures the seamless flow of personnel,

equipment, and supplies, enabling sustained operations in complex and contested environments.

## Sustainment NCOs

At the forefront of AMC's efforts to deliver ready combat formations are sustainment NCOs. They are the backbone of the Army's sustainment enterprise, responsible for ensuring that logistical and support functions are executed flawlessly.

Their expertise, leadership, and dedication are critical to driving JSSA's modernization and readiness, where military might is generated, projected, and sustained during the fight.

That means it all starts with our workforce, and two

of the critical components to ensure success for Soldiers and the mission in the JSSA are equipment readiness and quality of life.

As we continue to do more to become better at Warfighting, being brilliant at the basics is essential. It requires a balance of civilian education and credentials in areas related to your MOS, as well as a strong grasp of leadership and combined arms competencies.

## Equipment Readiness

Another fundamental to U.S. Army operational capability is equipment readiness. It's fundamental to its operational capability, encompassing a variety of tasks, from rapid removal of excess (R2E), to getting Soldiers and their families what they need, when they need it, to precision maintenance, and to operating Logistics Readiness Centers (LRC) and Central Issuing Facilities (CIF). Each of these elements is crucial for ensuring that combat formations are equipped and prepared to deploy at a moment's notice.

To streamline property accountability, we are launching a pilot in August that enables us to use electronic devices such as handheld terminals to quickly, efficiently, and accurately conduct inventories, allowing us to accurately account for equipment in Army systems.

Rapidly removing excess equipment is essential for maintaining an efficient and responsive force. It can clog supply chains, consume valuable storage space, and drain resources better allocated elsewhere. We are addressing this challenge by implementing streamlined processes that identify, catalog, and dispose of excess swiftly. This not only frees up space, time, and resources but also ensures only the most relevant and mission-critical equipment is on hand and ready for use.

To get after this, AMC employs a robust logistics information system that provides real-time equipment status and visibility into inventory levels across the Army. The system quickly identifies excess items and

simplifies their removal through various channels, including redistribution to units who need them, sale to allied forces, or disposal through demilitarization. By keeping the inventory lean and focused, we enhance combat formation readiness and agility.

## Maintenance

Preventative maintenance is another cornerstone of equipment readiness. It involves regularly and systematically inspecting and servicing equipment to prevent breakdowns and maintain maintenance levels, ensuring optimal performance. AMC's preventative maintenance programs are proactive, addressing potential issues before they become critical problems.

Our predictive analysis program is supported by a network of maintenance facilities staffed by skilled technicians who perform routine checks and repairs on everything from vehicles and weapons to communication systems and support equipment. By adhering to strict maintenance schedules and using advanced diagnostic tools, we ensure all equipment is in peak condition, reducing downtime and enhancing combat formation reliability.

Logistics Readiness Centers and Central Issuing Facilities are integral to our support infrastructure. These centers efficiently distribute equipment and supplies to units across the Army. They serve as hubs where Soldiers draw the gear and resources they need, ensuring combat formations are always well-equipped and prepared.

LRCs enhance the Army's ability to respond quickly to emerging threats

and operational requirements. CIFs, on the other hand, specialize in issuing individual equipment to Soldiers. This includes personal protective equipment, uniforms, and other essential gear. By centralizing the issuing process, CIFs ensure Soldiers receive standardized, high-quality equipment essential for maintaining uniformity and readiness across the force.



Sgt. Shayln McKenzie, 169th Field Artillery Brigade, conducts preventive maintenance on target acquisition equipment May 25, 2024. Preventative maintenance is a cornerstone of equipment readiness, involving regular inspections and servicing to prevent breakdowns and maintain performance. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Nicholas Ramshaw)





Rehearsal of Concept drills are integral to Army sustainment operations. They focus on planning and coordinating logistics functions. Through continuous improvement and strategic investments, the Army Sustainment Enterprise ensures the JSSA remains a robust foundation for combat capabilities. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Traci Muldoon)

## Quality of Life

While equipment readiness is crucial, Soldier quality of life is equally important. It ensures combat formations' overall readiness. Well-maintained equipment alone is not enough; Soldiers must also have access to safe and comfortable living conditions, healthy food, and other quality-of-life services. These factors contribute significantly to the morale, health, and overall effectiveness of the force.

One of our primary responsibilities in this regard is provisioning and maintaining housing and barracks. Quality housing is essential for Soldiers and their families' well-being.

AMC oversees housing facilities' construction, renovation, and maintenance on military installations. This includes ensuring barracks are safe, clean, and comfortable, with modern amenities and adequate space for Soldiers to live and relax.

By investing in quality housing, AMC provides a supportive environment, allowing Soldiers to focus on their training and mission without worrying about living conditions. To do this, it leads the Army's annual Facility Investment Plan process to prioritize limited funding for critical infrastructure needs.

## Food Program Strategy

AMC also leads the Army's quality of life, which ensures Soldiers have access to healthy meals. This

involves overseeing dining facilities, contracting food services, and managing supply chains that ensure a consistent and high-quality food supply, while exploring future feeding options based on Soldier feedback and industry best practices.

Nutrition is an important aspect of quality of life that directly impacts readiness. Dining facilities on Army installations are designed to provide balanced, nutritious meals that meet Soldiers' dietary needs.

However, AMC's senior leaders recognize that not a lot has changed to modernize the feeding experience over the past few decades and are working hard to revolutionize implementing a campus-style dining experience that offers more choices at times and places convenient to the troops.

Beyond housing and food, AMC provides a range of other support services that enhance quality of life. These include recreational activities, educational opportunities, and family support programs. Offering a holistic support system addressing Soldiers and their families' diverse needs fosters a sense of community and well-being.

All this ties directly to the JSSA delivering ready combat formations. By focusing on both equipment readiness and quality of life, AMC ensures Soldiers are well-equipped, well-maintained, and well-supported.

This emphasis on readiness is essential for maintaining the Army's effectiveness and resilience in the face of evolving threats in complex operational environments.

## Conclusion

Again, the Soldiers at the forefront are the sustainment NCOs who bring a wealth of experience and expertise to their roles, after extensive training and professional development.

Their deep understanding of logistical operations, combined with their ability to lead and motivate teams, makes them indispensable in executing sustainment

missions. They oversee supply chain planning and coordination, maintenance schedules, transportation routes, and other critical functions, ensuring all JSSA elements operate in harmony.

Through continuous improvement, strategic investments, and a commitment to its people's well-being, the Army Sustainment Enterprise ensures the JSSA remains a robust foundation for the Army's combat capabilities. ■

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**Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmy J. Sellers** became the 18th command sergeant major of U.S. Army Materiel Command (AMC) in January 2023. In this role, he advises AMC's commanding general on Soldier welfare, family programs, and NCO professional development. He enlisted in August 1990, completing Basic and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and has held numerous leadership positions across the Army, including as command sergeant major of the U.S. Army Quartermaster School, Fort Gregg-Adams, Virginia, and Commandant of the NCO Leadership Center of Excellence, Fort Bliss, Texas. Sellers is a graduate of all levels of the NCO professional development system and holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's degree in management.

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