

## Chapter 1

# Theater Overview

An adequate theater sustainment base is essential for success on the AirLand battlefield. An army's ability to marshal, transport, and distribute large quantities of materiel and to maintain assigned personnel and equipment can make the difference between victory and defeat in high- or mid-intensity conflict. In a low-intensity conflict, a more austere sustainment base is adequate, but is still essential for success.

Sustaining large forces in combat has become a significant challenge. World War II, Korea, and Vietnam clearly demonstrate that extensive sustainment bases are required to allow the generation of adequate combat power at the decisive time and place. The complexity of modern weapon systems makes the focus on sustainment bases even more essential.

The difficulty of establishing a theater sustainment base will depend greatly upon the extent and nature of the civil and military infrastructure existing in the theater before hostilities start. In well-developed theaters, such as Central Europe, military forces can begin operations quickly without having to construct the needed sustainment base. In contingency theaters in less-developed regions of the world, the sustainment base must be constructed at the same time as combat and sustainment forces are deploying. In forward-deployed theaters, such as Europe or Korea, wartime host nation support agreements have been negotiated to assist in operating and maintaining the sustainment base. Reception facilities will be most critical during the initial transition to a wartime posture.

### AIRLAND BATTLEFIELD

The AirLand battlefield will be a most demanding environment that will severely test the abilities of the engineer soldier. Such an environment will place great stress on individual ingenuity, initiative, and competence. Engineer leaders and soldiers will be hard pressed to meet the battlefield's many demands. To be successful, engineer leaders must

thoroughly understand the supported commander's intent and concept of operation. They must see their portion of the battlefield and act intuitively based on their understanding of the supported commander's plan. Success will depend upon the leadership, resourcefulness, and competence of the engineer leader. Engineer leaders must be technically proficient in a vast range of construction tasks as they construct or repair the sustainment base.

Interruptions in communications by distance and an ever increasing enemy capability to degrade the use of the electromagnetic spectrum demand that engineer leaders develop the ability to act independently in carrying out the commander's intent. Leaders must develop and practice innovative techniques to convey information and orders. Decentralized execution of tasks must be the practice. Subordinate leaders must act on their own initiative within the parameters of the commander's intent in the absence of communications.

The potential for chemical, biological, or nuclear attack poses a great threat to the sustainment infrastructure. Logistics activities provide lucrative targets with their stockpiles of critical supplies and repair facilities. Tactical employment of nuclear weapons would magnify the destructive character of operations on the AirLand battlefield. Not only would units and facilities be exposed to nuclear fires and their associated hazards, but lines of communication (logistic routes) (LOC) would be blocked by debris miles from ground zero. The electromagnetic pulse (EMP) would make communications more difficult at just the time they are needed. Persistent chemical agents can contaminate facilities, buildings, equipment, and terrain and complicate construction and repair efforts.

The four basic tenets of AirLand Battle doctrine – **initiative, agility, depth, and synchronization** – are basic to operational and tactical success on the battlefield and establish the framework for arranging sustainment. Engineer commanders at echelons above corps are key to ensuring an adequate

sustainment base interconnected with a transportation network. These engineer leaders support the tactical commanders' ability to achieve the tenets of AirLand Battle doctrine by adhering to the following sustainment imperatives: **anticipation, integration, continuity, responsiveness, and improvisation.**

Engineer commanders and staffs must anticipate future events and requirements by understanding the commanders' plans and foreseeing events as operations develop. They must clearly see their portion of the battlefield. Priorities may change as events unfold and logistical infrastructure facilities, command and control facilities, and air/aviation facilities are damaged. While continuing to support current operations, engineer leaders and their staffs must plan for future operations. Engineer leaders must acquire the self-confidence to operate independently and learn to sense what needs to be done and do it without hesitation.

Engineer commanders and staffs must fully **integrate** their plans with those of the sustaining forces they support. Engineer missions will be executed in accordance with theater priorities which may involve joint operations or missions executed in conjunction with host nation forces. Engineer operations must also be fully integrated into any theater deception plans.

Engineer commanders and staffs must plan for continuous operations. Sustainment cannot be interrupted without degrading the combat power of a force. This requires multiple port facilities, airfields, and LOCs. Engineer leaders must ensure the sustainment base provides continuous support to forward elements.

Engineer commanders and staffs must be **responsive** to the needs of the sustainment base commanders. This requires close, continuous coordination and anticipation of sustainment base requirements. It also requires careful planning and decentralized execution.

Engineer commanders and staff must learn to improvise to provide responsive support. They must be innovative and aggressive in seeking solutions to problems. They must be highly trained and flexible in dealing with unforeseen problems. They must

make maximum use of host nation resources to reduce transportation requirements and avoid delays.

### THEATER ARMY ORGANIZATION

The theater is organized into a combat zone and a COMMZ as depicted in Figure 1. The COMMZ begins at the corps rear boundary and extends to include the area needed to provide the sustainment base.

There are two types of support organizations in the COMMZ. These are –

- . **area-oriented organizations** with geographic responsibilities such as Theater Army Area Commands (TAACOM) and area support groups (ASG),
- . **mission-oriented organizations** such as the engineer command (ENCOM), medical command (MEDCOM), or transportation command (TRANSCOM).

The number of TAACOMs and ASGs assigned to a theater depends on the size of the theater in terms of the force in the theater, the workload, and the geographical area.

The theater army is organized to support deployed US Army forces and, if required, other US Services and allied forces. Reception of deploying reinforcing forces is a major theater army mission as well as serving as the sustainment base for forward combat forces. The theater army commander delegates area and rear operations responsibilities to the TAACOM commanders, and they in turn delegate to the ASG commanders. Engineer units in the COMMZ execute engineer missions under the control of the ENCOM, but execute rear combat operations under the operational control of the respective ASG when the rear area situation dictates.

Support to forward-deployed forces normally involves combined operations in which US forces operate with allied military forces in an established theater. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Korea (Combined Forces Command) are examples of US forces forward-deployed in a foreign country under an existing allied command structure. Wartime host nation support is

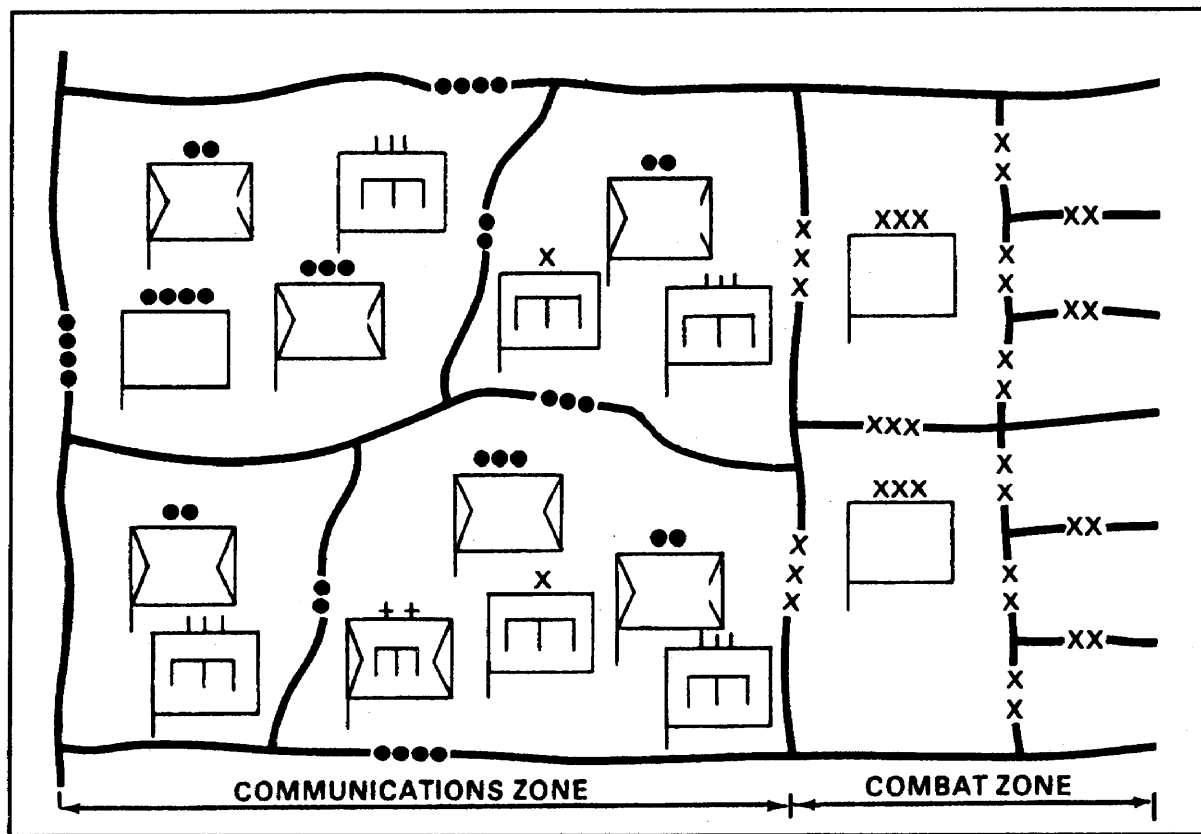


Figure 1. Theater Zones

usually available to support forward-deployed forces, and an existing peacetime sustainment base can be expanded to meet wartime requirements. Engineers in the COMMZ must be prepared, however, to provide support to deployed forces in the COMMZ, the corps rear area and, on order, the forward combat zone.

Support to contingency forces may or may not involve combined operations, but does involve the creation of a sustainment base where none existed. Host nation support usually will not be available, and if present can be expected to be limited. Additionally, the existing infrastructure may not meet the needs of supporting combat service support (CSS) units. A base development plan must be developed to manage the establishment of support facilities— even though they may be temporary. Base development is discussed in Chapter 7.

### THEATER ARMY ENGINEER ORGANIZATION

The central organizational framework for theater operational sustainment is the theater army. The ENCOM commands and controls the theater army engineer force. However, depending on the nature of the contingency and the organization of the theater, field armies, corps, or even divisions may find themselves responsible for planning and conducting operational sustainment functions. In those latter cases, smaller engineer forces may be assigned, and the theater army engineer force may be a brigade or group.

Engineer forces at EAC are responsible for constructing maintaining and rehabilitating the theater sustainment base. This includes support to other services and agencies and allied military forces in joint or combined theaters of operation. The ability of CSS units to perform sustainment

operations as well as movement and sheltering of combat/combat support units while in the rear areas is dependent on adequate, responsive engineer support.

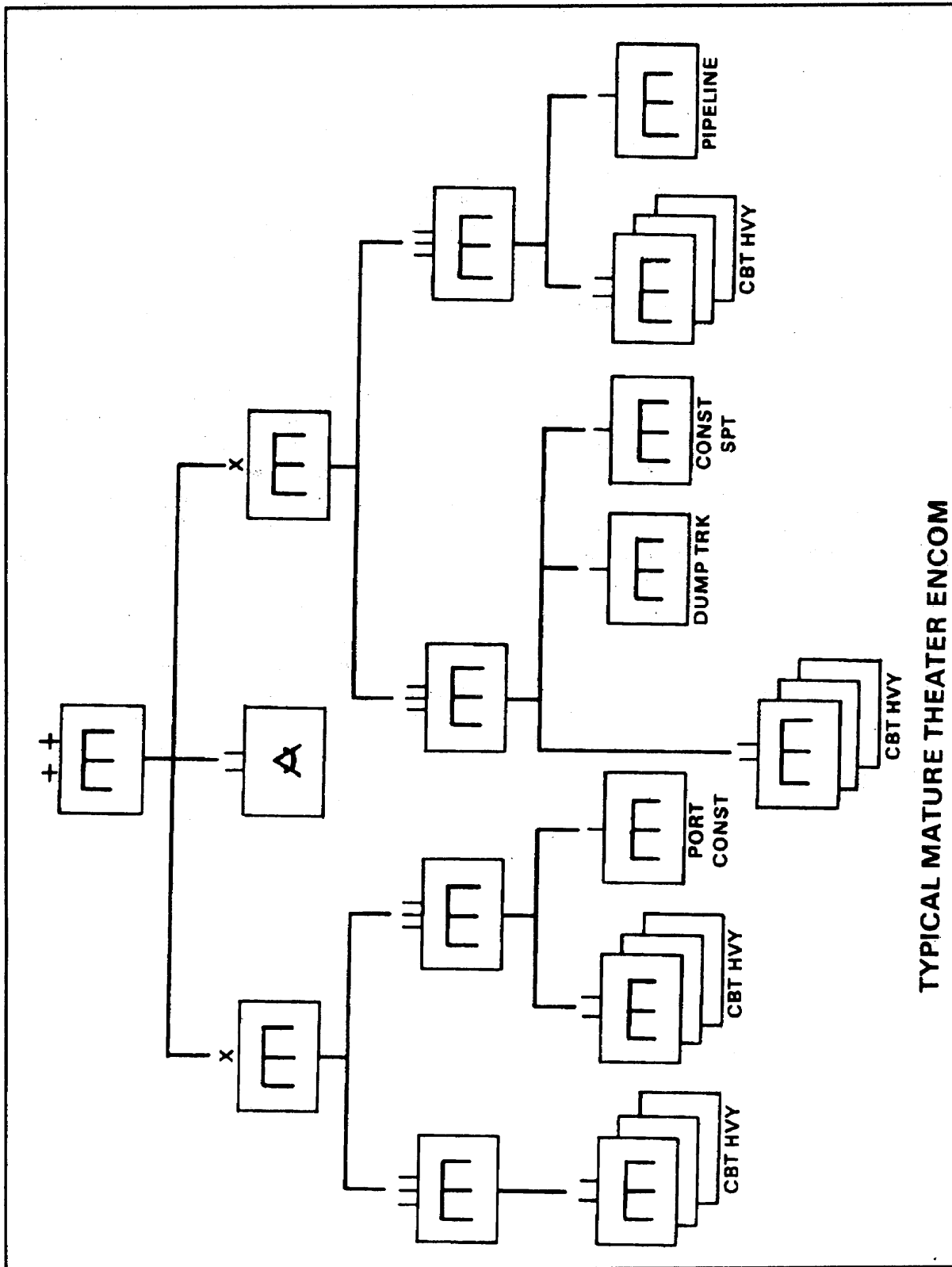
The number and type of EAC engineer units depend upon the size of the sustainment base required, the availability of existing support infrastructure in theater, the availability of host nation support, and the perceived enemy threat to the rear area. The engineer force structure is tailored according to theater requirements. Repair and facilities modification requirements dominate in well developed theaters, while new construction requirements will be more important in less developed theaters.

The ENCOM is normally composed of two or more engineer brigades and at least one topographic battalion. It is a subordinate command of the theater army. The ENCOM plans, coordinates, and manages theater army engineer activities in the COMMZ, and commands and controls EAC engineer units. A typical mature theater ENCOM is shown in the chart on the facing page. Each brigade has two or more engineer groups, and each group has two or more battalions and selected construction support units. The structure of each group and brigade is tailored to support the geographic area and expected missions within their area of operations. Specialized construction and

construction support units are assigned to the theater based on specific workload factors.

Port construction companies are assigned to the ENCOM generally on the basis of one per major port. Pipeline construction support companies are assigned based on the estimated length of tactical pipelines required. Construction support companies are assigned to each brigade as the needs for quarry and bituminous pavement requirements dictate. Dump truck company augmentation is generally one per brigade. Engineer teams, such as quarry, well drilling, concrete paving, and asphalt paving, may also be assigned as dictated by the conditions in the theater. The organizational structure of EAC engineer units is shown in Appendix A.

Engineer support in the COMMZ is provided on a mission basis in accordance with theater priorities. Engineer units at EAC provide topographic support to the theater; troop construction and repair support to all US elements in the COMMZ; contract construction support; and, as required, they provide engineer support in the corps rear area on a task basis. Based on the policies and priorities established by the theater commander, the ENCOM commander determines the relative priority of Army and other service support. Engineer units may also be tasked to provide support to host nation or other allied military forces. The overall theater construction policy is established by the theater commander.



TYPICAL MATURE THEATER ENCOM