

The Indo-Pacific

Division Sustainment Support Battalion

Division and Garrison Support Responsibility

■ *By Maj. Paula Heap*

Commanders delegate appropriate authority to deputies, subordinate commanders, and staff members based on their capabilities and experience. Delegation allows subordinates to decide and act for their commander in specified areas (Army Doctrine Publication 6-0, Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces). Commanders underwrite risk by empowering others to make decisions and execute missions on their behalf. What happens when commanders are unaware of the degree of risk they are underwriting?

From Combat Sustainment Support Battalion to Division Sustainment Support Battalion

The reflagging of combat sustainment support battalions (CSSBs) to division sustainment support battalions (DSSBs) occurred to provide clear command and support relationships to logisticians and warfighters. This organizational change aligns with the Army's shift from counterinsurgency operations to large-scale combat operations and the shift from a brigade-centric to a division-centric force (Field Manual 4-0, Sustainment Operations). This change resulted in clear command

and support relationships for the 10 former CSSBs in the active component Army. However, on the island of Oahu, the conversion of the 524th CSSB to DSSB was not as clear and brought about unique challenges and opportunities due to its location in the Indo-Pacific.

Customer Support

With the transition from CSSB to DSSB, the scale and scope of the 524th DSSB's logistical support to the 25th Infantry Division (ID) and U.S. Army Hawaii (USARHAW) remain the same, with the 524th DSSB supporting several general

officer (GO)-level commands. As the primary echelon above brigade (EAB) sustainment support battalion on the island of Oahu, the 524th DSSB is responsible for providing tactical-level sustainment support to the 25th ID while simultaneously providing sustainment support to all major tenant units that constitute USARHAW.

Support includes the supply support activity (SSA) via the composite supply company (CSC), maintenance via the support maintenance company (SMC), and transportation via the composite truck company. GO-level supported units (outside the 25th ID) include the 8th Theater Sustainment Command (TSC), the 9th Mission Support Command, the 18th Medical Command, the 94th Army Air and Missile Defense Command, the 311th Signal Command, and U.S. Army Pacific Command. Maintaining support and readiness for both the 25th ID and USARHAW, in addition to the 524th DSSB's internal readiness, is not without risk. Commanders at echelons inside and outside the division are assuming risk, either knowingly or unknowingly, because of a capacity gap and throughput shortfalls due to a DSSB performing the function and supporting the customer workload of essentially two battalions. Although the DSSB's efforts are admirable, and the Soldiers take on the daily challenge, keeping everyone's preparation and maintenance at an acceptable combat readiness level with the number of units the 524th DSSB supports is a nearly impossible task.

The SSA supports 116 non-

divisionally aligned units, and the SMC supports 50 non-divisionally aligned units. Although the brigade combat teams (BCTs) on the island are Category A organizations that have brigade support battalions (BSBs) manned at 95%, the 524th DSSB provides weekly transportation and lift assets to the BCTs for platoon-, company-, and battalion-level training on the island.

Based on fiscal year 2023 external work orders, the SMC requires 180,328 man-hours to complete 4,630 work orders annually to support the non-divisionally aligned units. However, the SMC, per its modified table of organization and equipment, is supposed to complete 117,312 annual man-hours, which creates a 63,016-man-hour deficit. The 524th DSSB delivers daily support to hundreds of customers inside and outside the 25th ID while operating as any other active component Army unit with administrative, maintenance, and individual/collective training requirements.

Training Engagements and Support

Due to its strategic and isolated geographic location, to meet both internal and external training objectives/exercises, the battalion often finds itself dispersed and postured to support multiple sustainment nodes. Although a great training opportunity, whenever this is the case, the logistical support available to USARHAW (and its several GO-level commands on the island) is limited, unfortunately affecting readiness across non-

divisionally aligned units.

With regional engagements and training rotations, the 524th DSSB is consistently involved in yearly training exercises in the Indo-Pacific. These commitments impact the availability of forces and equipment to provide steady-state logistics support to USARHAW. Involvement includes sending support packages to several countries and providing transportation and lift support for moving personnel and equipment to and from the seaports of debarkation and the aerial ports of departure on the island. Additionally, the DSSB provides sustainment task forces to Operation Pathways yearly, provides a bi-annual sustainment task force to Talisman Saber, supports Joint Pacific Multinational Readiness Center (JPMRC) rotations annually, and participates as a JPMRC rotational training unit every other year.

Whereas other active duty DSSBs go to the National Training Center (NTC) or the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), the 524th DSSB's combat training center (CTC) is the JPMRC, which has training areas on Oahu and Hawaii. It is beneficial to conduct training in the jungle environment, unique to the Indo-Pacific theater, but it is not without its challenges. When other DSSBs (and their supported BSBs) execute a CTC rotation, their training center (NTC or JRTC) has a pre-positioned fleet available. Units bring a combination of organic equipment and pull equipment from the pre-positioned fleet. On the island of Oahu, rotational training

units use their organic equipment, and when there are shortfalls in lift, liquid logistics, transportation, or refrigeration assets in the BSBs, those equipment gaps are filled by the 524th DSSB. This is executed either by signing over the property to the BCT, providing equipment and personnel to the BCT, or receiving more movement and life support requests during the rotation.

U.S. European Command Support and Sustainment Impacts to U.S. Indo-Pacific Command

The 524th DSSB has also been called on to serve in the European theater. The battalion has supported the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) for the past five years by sending the battalion's CSC to Poland twice. The CSC performed phenomenally in support of the mission set. However, when the CSC deploys, significant shortfalls occur in the SSA and the fuel and water storage/distribution capability on the island of Oahu. For instance, when the CSC deployed to USEUCOM from 2022-2023 for a nine-month rotation, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) did not have access to that critical equipment for 16 months. Additionally, the cost to train and employ 36 contracted civilians to run the island's SSA during the deployment was \$1.7 million for 12 months.

Regarding liquid logistics, when the CSC deploys in another theater, the 25th ID pulls liquid logistics assets from the BCTs and the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade to equip

the DSSB with fuel and water storage/distribution capability to fulfill annual responsibilities such as sustainment contingency response and JPMRC, impacting the division's overall sustainment capacity and capability to respond to crises. Ultimately, pulling the CSC out of theater to support another theater creates significant risk for commanders to meet training, regional engagement, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and homeland response mission requirements in support of USINDOPACOM.

The Way Ahead

The battalion's workload is impressive, and it consistently does more with less—quite the professional organization with a reliable and results-delivered reputation. The scope of support requirements unique to USARHAW exceeds the capacity of the organic DSSB, and sourced solutions are required to fill the gap.

Proposed solutions include the following:

1. Task organizing additional modular logistics companies under the DSSB to solely support USARHAW.
2. Activating an Army Reserve or National Guard logistics unit already on the island to focus on USARHAW support.
3. Attach an SMC or maintenance support team to the 8th TSC, which is responsible for providing USARHAW support.
4. Task organize a CSSB under

the 25th Division Sustainment Brigade or the 8th TSC that is outfitted to meet daily USARHAW support requirements.

The 524th DSSB is unique because it is the primary active component DSSB responsible for the daily sustainment support of a division and all Army tenant units on the island of Oahu. Despite the complexity and consistency of the mission set, the Hannibal Battalion always finds a way to sustain the 25th ID and USARHAW. To achieve and maintain steady sustainment support to the Indo-Pacific region, the 25th ID, and USARHAW, and for the DSSB to be able to train on all its mission essential task list tasks, the deliberate sourcing of solutions is required.

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