

8th Theater Sustainment Command

Story by Sgt. Maj. Terence Anderson

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CAMP ZAMA, Japan -- The 8th Theater Sustainment Command continued its path toward validation as a fully operational capable command, deploying its forward command post here for a command post exercise, which began, March 9.

The 8th TSC Soldiers arrived at Camp Zama more than a week before the exercise began to set up the FCP in the U.S. Army, Japan / I Corps (forward) / U.S. Army Garrison, Japan operations center. This deployment replicates a real-world scenario, where the 8th TSC would send the FCP forward to an austere or developed location to manage sustainment operations for a humanitarian or combat operation.

"This two-week exercise is a rigorous test of our capabilities," said MG Raymond V. Mason, 8th TSC commanding general. "We deployed our forward command post to Camp Zama for the first time last August, and we've come a long way in operational capability since then. This past years' Yama Sakura exercise prepared us well for this full-up warfighting event. This CPX is a pathway to validate our unit and solidifies our forward and main command post roles and responsibilities."

The 8th TSC is the command responsible for logistics sustainment in the Pacific Theater, providing beans, bullets, maintenance, transport, engineer, personnel, and military police support to warfighters from Alaska to Korea, spanning 9,000 miles. This CPX also exercises the reach back capability provided by the 8th TSC main command post, located at Ft. Shafter, Hawaii.

"The main command post provides Army theater sustainment visibility in the U.S. Pacific Command area of responsibility and reach back support to the forward command post during the CPX," said Col. Cheryl Mann, MCP night shift director. "Additionally, the MCP maintains situational awareness of Army logistical shortfalls within the Pacific Command area."

The U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, Ft. Leavenworth, Kan., sent 14 observer trainers to the FCP, and 12 observer trainers to the MCP. The observer trainers are part of Operations Group Sierra Fox, a team formed to oversee and train theater sustainment commands, expeditionary sustainment commands, and other sustainment and functional brigades.

"We observe how the 8th TSC staff operates, take notes, and through these observations, help the unit develop a way ahead," said Lt. Col. Kevin Casey, chief observer trainer. "One of our mottos is 'no thin skin'. If there is an issue that comes up, our whole goal is to make the unit better."

Also attending the CPX in an observer role was Maj. Gen. Robert Shadley, senior mentor and former U.S. Army Forces Command G-4, assigned to provide sage guidance to Mason and his staff, culled from his 33-year Army career.

“My role here is to offer ideas and suggestions based on my experiences, and tie it all back to doctrine,” Shadley offered. “The unit takes my advice and then does what they see fit.”

The 8th TSC is one of three theater-level sustainment commands in the Army, and has conducted and participated in several theater security cooperation exercises, working to achieve validation status. This CPX is another step towards full operational capability for the 8th TSC.

“We wouldn’t have been able to conduct this exercise without the awesome support of U.S. Army, Japan, and U.S. Army Garrison, Japan,” Mason said. “We’ll work through, validate, and document all our processes and procedures during the next two weeks. I feel confident that this command post exercise will get us to a fully operational capable status as a staff and as a command