TASK FORCE Lifeliners

October 2011 101st Sustainment Brigade

SPECIAL EDITION:

SPO discusses lessons learned

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The Role of Police Intelligence Operations in the Sustainment Brigade

by MAJ Sean J. Gallagher
Brigade S2 Officer
& CPT Jim D. Cheshier
Brigade Circulation Control Officer

US Army Sustainment Brigade's are assigned one military police officer and one military police Non-Commissioned Officer to serve as a battlefield circulation control cell. This task is outdated given the modern, asymmetric battlefield and the fact that it does not naturally link to most military police (MP) units as they serve as police trainers or detention facility operators. Yet, there are unique threats faced by Sustainment units with regards to theft, pilferage, and corruption in the conduct of full spectrum operations that the MP's can use their law enforcement skills to attack. To combat these threats, the 101st Sustainment Brigade (TF Lifeliner) developed an anti-corruption effort to combat corruption targeting our logistics chain by employing police intelligence operations. Police intelligence operations are conducted by law enforcement, security, and intelligence organizations to collect, analyze, fuse, and report intelligence regarding threat and/or criminal groups for evaluation, assessment, targeting, and interdiction[1]. TF Lifeliner employed a holistic approach that combined offensive and defensive police intelligence operations while integrating joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational enablers. These operations blend multi-discipline intelligence tools for collection and analysis with law enforcement techniques. The end state of these operations is to increase the percentage of commodities delivered to Forward Operating Bases (FOBs), reduce leakage of funds lost through HNT contracts, deny the enemy a source of sustainment, and promote the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) governance and economical development.

The nucleus of the anti-corruption team was the assigned MPs and a MPRI hired Law Enforcement Professional (LEP). The Brigade S2 section augmented the law enforcement personnel by bringing the full weight of the national intelligence enterprise to bear against the threats with all source intelligence analysis. The anti-corruption team used a combination of offensive and defensive operations to great success in identifying people, places, and methods targeting our supply chain. Defensive anti-corruption operations are designed to find and fix existing corruption points in the logistics supply chain. Our host nation truck driver interview program is an example of defensive operations. Offensive anti-corruption operations are employed to prevent corruption points from emerging in the supply chain. Contract vendor assessments are

1 Definition found in FM 3-19.13, Chapter 1, section 1-39.

TF Lifeliner Soldiers from the 530th CSSB conduct HNT interviews at Camp Deh Dadi II, Balkh Province in March 2011.

good examples of offensive anti-corruption operations.

The anti-corruption team focused on interviewing HNT drivers while they wait on Bagram Airfield. Due to previous experience in Afghanistan, the Brigade Commander realized that no one outside of the Sustainment Brigade spent more time traveling the roads except for the Afghans themselves. This recognition of an untapped information source led to the creation of the Host Nation Truck Driver Interview program. The purpose is to identify patterns and trends of illegal/corrupt activity along MSRs and ASRs against contract host nation trucks and disseminate to other enablers for action and to support contracting decisions. This effort employed defensive anti-corruption operations using the MPs within the 101st Sustainment Brigade along with the LEP to mentor sustainment Soldiers in gathering information. The program is a voluntary, non-coercive means of gathering information from the Afghan truck drivers we employ to deliver our commodities. Very similar to a Field Interview conducted during police intelligence operations, the HNT Interviews are more standardized to address reoccurring specific information requirements based on the various environments found throughout Regional Command North, East and Capital. Using a focused effort between the Brigade Law Enforcement Professional, Military Intelligence, and Military Police Operations sections; Soldiers from the subordinate Combat Sustainment Support Battalions (CSSBs) were trained on how to conduct the HNT Interviews and gather this vital information from the truck drivers. Once the information was gathered it was analyzed and turned into intelligence products to be disseminated to various battle space owners, stakeholders, and the intelligence enterprise. Reporting was entered into the Combined Information Data Network Enterprise (CIDNE) database for interested stakeholders to pull; and an HCT debriefed the interviewers to push the information gathered to Human Intelligence (HUMINT) consumers. These efforts resulted in filling a key intelligence gap that BCTs and Division ACEs have difficulty gaining visibility on due to lack of assets and collection priorities.

An offensive anti-corruption operation employed was the biometric identification and pat-down search of local national employees working at our logistic support clusters on Bagram Airfield. A large volume of intelligence reporting indicated that US Government property was being stolen or pilfered from stocks on Bagram for sale on the black market bazaars in Bagram and Kabul. The anti-corruption team made use of a common MP function not typically used while deployed with a sustainment brigade: Area Security, to disrupt potential criminal threats to our logistics support clusters. The 101st Sustainment Brigade sought to minimize internal threats to its ability to support the war fighters. An effective measure to minimize the threat would be to conduct highly visible random searches of the possible offenders themselves in order to discourage any further criminal or corrupt behavior. These searches would be conducted in conjunction with biometric identification of the individuals using the Hand Held Interagency Identity Detection Equipment (HIIDE). The intent was to reduce and eventually eliminate the amount of criminal and corrupt activity within our area of influence. The anti-corruption team is using these random anti-terrorism measures as an offensive tool to discourage criminal activity through unpredictable searches. The anti-corruption team is attempting to develop a program which incorporates biometric identification into the National Afghan Trucking payment process by linking the driver to the truck he drives and the load he carries. This will place the responsibility of delivering one hundred percent of

TF Lifeliner Soldiers from the 17th CSSB conduct HNT interviews at the Tanker Truck Offload Facility at Bagram Airfield in February 2011.

TF Lifeliner MP and 142nd CSSB Soldiers collect biometric data from local nationals working at the Bagram SSA in August 2011.

the received cargo to its final destination on the truck driver himself and the company that employs the driver.

TF Lifeliner's anti-corruption team conducted an offensive operation to assess the risk posed by potential contractors to a $25 million regional trucking contract in northern Afghanistan. The team developed and validated a pioneering technique for assessing risk to our own regional trucking contract initiative. The team used non-coercive, direct questioning of potential vendors, tactical document and media exploitation, and biometric enabled intelligence to screen all potential vendors for risk to corruption, criminal or insurgent influence; and risk to business failure. The team conducted these operations at four different locations in RC-North over a ten week period. The Brigade S2 and analysts from the battle space analyzed the information gathered to gain a full understanding of the potential vendors' connections to various corrupt, criminal, and insurgent networks. These efforts revealed that nearly 1/3 of all potential vendors possessed significant ties to corrupt, criminal, or insurgent actors and were subsequently eliminated from consideration. These proactive steps engaged the entire NATO intelligence enterprise to bring a greater amount of scrutiny to potential vendors. This police intelligence operation by TF Lifeliner anti-corruption team drastically reduced the risk of funneling US Government contract funds to known corrupt, criminal, or insurgent networks.

TF Lifeliner's anti-corruption team collaborated with numerous joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational enablers. Intelligence products published by the anti-corruption team contributed to CJTF-1's targeting efforts, Task Force 2010 operational and strategic targeting, and the German command in RC-North's understanding of the connection between corruption and governance efforts in northern Afghanistan. TF Lifeliner used its attendance at numerous joint, interagency meetings to raise awareness of the risk posed by theft and pilferage on FOBs. Bagram Airfield serves as a major logistics hub for the Afghan Theater of Operation; thus it is also the major source of criminal and corrupt activity according to a large volume of intelligence reporting. Through our efforts, the Entry Control Points now check outbound cargo to mitigate the possibility of stolen equipment leaving. There have been several instances where items were found to be leaving without authorization, most notably thirty Harris radio sets in a 20-foot container. Finally, we worked in tandem with our Support Operations section to identify vulnerability points in the fuel distribution network. This has resulted in identifying out of date or non-existent measurement tools, archaic fuel accountability system, and inefficient contract terms.

The TF Lifeliner LEP mentors 17th CSSB Soldiers during interviews with HNT Drivers at Bagram in May 2011. The LEP allowed TF Lifeliner to increase interview capabilities throughout the brigade footprint.

The anti-corruption team has made significant contributions to commands across the TF Lifeliner AOR and echelons above the brigade. Over the course of ten months, the effort has yielded several lead-in targets to criminal patronage networks for CJTF-1 and Task Force 2010 to action. TF Lifeliner anti-corruption operations have identified numerous locations, enemy criminal and corruption techniques, and personalities that conduct corrupt or illegal activities targeting logistics. These efforts supported two Task Force 2010 operations to recover US Government property from the black markets in Bagram and Kabul. The team's efforts have identified loop holes in contracts that prime contractors exploit for gain or advantage. The brigade took distinct actions to counter these loop holes. The anti-corruption team served as a sensor and collaborated closely with the 313th Joint Movement Control Battalion (JMCB), the Contracting Officer Representative for the multi-billion dollar Host nation Truck contract. This resulted in rapid feedback to the JMCB holding contractors to a greater degree of accountability.

TF Lifeliner will hand off their anti-corruption efforts to the 10th Sustainment Brigade to continue. The impacts of the anti-corruption team's efforts are immeasurable in financial terms. What we do know is that the anti-corruption team ensures the enemy faces unpredictable theft prevention mechanisms, drivers are providing information to coalition forces, tighter contracting mechanisms are in place and there is as increased level of scrutiny for potential contract vendors. We are denying the enemy a source of revenue and sustainment. Bottom line is that the enemy is working harder and under more pressure to perform corrupt and criminal activities to sustain their lifestyle and the insurgency.

101st Sustainment Brigade Initiatives Save an Estimated $272.6 Million During 2011

by LTC Keith Poynor
Brigade Deputy Commander

Introduction:

The Congressional Commission on Wartime Contracting, established by Public Law in 2008, was charged with assessing contingency contracting for security, logistics, and reconstruction; examining the extent of waste, fraud, and abuse; and providing recommendations to Congress on ways to improve the policies, structures, and resources for managing contracts and contractors. Their final report, published in August 2011 focused on contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan from FY 2002 to mid-FY 2011. Spending is expected to exceed $206 billion by the end of FY 2011 and of that, the Commission estimates that between $31-60 billion has been lost to waste and fraud. Top issues cited included poor planning and oversight by the US Government, poor performance by the contractors, and in some cases, blatant corruption. Of particular interest to the logistics community, the report revealed that two-thirds of the money spent to date on contingency contract support was for services, and at the top of the list of services is $46.5 billion for logistics support.

In reality, Operational Contracting Support (OCS) has become a norm for logistics support on the battlefield. Most if not all the Support Operations commodities within the 101st Sustainment Brigade "Task Force Lifeliner" oversee or are reliant upon some type of contract that supports their daily operations. Examples include line-haul trucking via the multi-billion dollar Host Nation Trucking contract, container management and Supply Support Activity operations under the multi-billion dollar LOGCAP contract, maintenance support for our vehicles, force protection for our FOBs and COBs, facilities management, and support for food and water to the dining facilities across the Theater. Task Force Lifeliner implemented many initiatives during their OEF 10-11 deployment that directly improved contract oversight and contractor performance, mitigated the risk of fraud, waste, and abuse, and ultimately saved the American tax payer an estimated $272.6 million in 2011 and an estimated $341.7 million in cost avoidance projected to the end of 2014. The following is a summary of Task Force Lifeliner initiatives.

Contract Oversight:

The Task Force Lifeliner Operational Contracting Support (OCS) Cell planned and approached each contracted effort as a well planned and synchronized operation, just like a military operation order, to ensure timely and effective support to the operation. OCS provided guidance to and feedback from, contractors, just as Commanders give orders to their subordinates and expect feedback (such as Monthly Surveillance Reports) and performance standards enforced.

Task Force Lifeliner's OCS provided Contract management within Regional Commands East, North and Capital. They were responsible for establishing, redesigning, and implementing new contract tracking matrices for two Combat Sustainment Support Battalions (CSSBs) and one Special Troops Battalion (STB), thereby standardizing and improving the SBDE's management of operational contract procedures. These new contract tracking tools were instrumental to the Brigade's and Battalions' more than 120 Contract Officer Representatives (CORs) overseeing 140 RCC contracts valued in excess of a $150 million, and for the $1.6 billion in LOGCAP Support Services within our area of responsibility.

The OCS Cell managed the contract audit process to ensure all CORs provided quality contract performance assessments in a timely manner, meeting compliance with Central Contracting Command, the Senior Contracting Official-Afghanistan (SCO-A) and Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) policies. The 101st SBDE conducted 12 internal COR Audit Boards and 24 Working Groups throughout the brigades footprint and shared these findings and data to other Sustainment activities within the CJOA-A. These meetings were conducted monthly to provide contract performance assessment data to the chain of command and commodity managers that ensured the government was receiving the best service for contract support received in support of the war. The boards not only provided oversight to each contract it also provided insight to non-vendor payments, non-compliance to the statement of work and cost savings for future contract solutions.

These procedures and lessons learned were shared with other commands within Afghanistan to assist in their contract management processes that supported many combat units and coalition forces. This COR audit board format received very high accolades and represented the pinnacle of excellence as per Regional

Commands East, North, Capital and the Senior Contracting Officer- Afghanistan (SCO-A). These contract audit boards represented the command's support to contracting solutions as a best practice and was recommended as a standard to be implemented throughout the CJOA-A. The BDE's efforts leveraged contract solution ethos as a combat multiplier and played a vital role in logistics and distribution to synchronize sustainment efforts across the CJOA-A.

LOGCAP Initiatives:

Task Force Lifeliner worked with LOGCAP and the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) to re-write the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) checklists used to evaluate LOGCAP contractor performance. Container Management, Supply Support Activity, and Consolidated Receiving and Shipping Point (CRSP) operations checklists were all expanded to include detailed performance metrics and standards based on Army Regulations. Task Force Lifeliner then replaced junior CORs with more senior NCOs and officers and retrained them to use the new COR checklists. As a result, Task Force Lifeliner achieved much more effective contractor oversight with discrepancies quickly addressed by the contractor.

During the deployment, Task Force Lifeliner teamed with ARCENT Lean Six Sigma to train forty-one Soldiers as Green Belts. Many of the projects these Soldiers completed as part of their Green Belt certification directly impacted performance within the distribution network. In combination with the improved contractor performance triggered by improved COR oversight and the COR Audit Board process, these projects improved efficiency, reduced backlog and avoided an estimated $82.5 million in container detention and truck demurrage charges thru 2014.

Combating Corruption and Fraud:

After reviewing hundreds of combat support and reconstruction contracts over the past year, Task Force 2010 concluded in August '11 that as much as $360 million wound up in the hands of the Taliban, criminals, and power brokers with ties to both. More than half the losses came from the Host Nation Trucking (HNT) contract. From the beginning of their OEF XI deployment, Task Force Lifeliner worked very closely with Task Force 2010, with positive results.

Anti-Corruption Cell: Task Force Lifeliner developed a line of effort to combat corruption by identifying and targeting vulnerable points in the logistics chain. The line of effort blended multi-discipline intelligence tools for collection and analysis with law enforcement techniques. The Brigade S2 in conjunction with the Brigade Military Police Officer and a Law Enforcement Professional (LEP) served as the proponents for this effort, which focused on interviewing HNT drivers while they waited on Bagram Airfield. The purpose was to identify patterns and trends of illegal/corrupt activity along MSR's and ASR's against contract host nation trucks, disseminate to other enablers, and to support contracting decisions. The end state was to increase percentage of commodities delivered to FOBs, reduce leakage of funds lost through HNT contracts, deny the enemy a source of sustainment, and promote Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) governance and economical development.

Over the course of ten months, the effort yielded several leads (or ties) to criminal patronage networks for Combined Joint Task Force-1 and Task Force 2010 to take action against. The effort also improved contract oversight, raised awareness of physical security at key logistics nodes, and curtailed fuel distribution vulnerabilities. Task Force Lifeliner anti-corruption operations identified numerous locations, enemy criminal and corruption techniques, and personalities that conduct corrupt or illegal activities targeting logistics. Their efforts supported two Task Force 2010 operations to recover US Government property from the black markets in Bagram and Kabul. Their efforts identified loopholes in contracts that prime contractors exploit for gain or advantage. Task Force Lifeliner took two distinct actions to counter these loopholes. First, they served as a sensor and collaborated closely with the 313th Joint Movement Control Battalion (JMCB), the Contracting Officer Representative for the multi-billion dollar Host Nation Truck contract. Their efforts provided rapid feedback to the JMCB to hold the contractors to a greater degree of accountability. Second, they developed and validated a pioneering technique for assessing risk to their own regional trucking contract initiative.

Task Force Lifeliner, in conjunction with local commanders, brought the full weight of the intelligence community to bear when reviewing each vendor and their ties to corrupt, criminal or insurgent actors. These efforts revealed that nearly 1/3 of all potential vendors possessed significant ties to corrupt, criminal, or insurgent actors and were subsequently eliminated from consideration.

Task Force Lifeliner used its attendance at numerous joint, interagency meetings to raise awareness of the risk posed by theft and pilferage on Forward Operating Bases. Bagram Airfield serves as the major logistics hub for the Afghan Theater of Operation; thus it is also the major source of criminal and corrupt activity. Through Task Force Lifeliners' efforts, the Entry Control Points now check outbound cargo to mitigate

the possibility of stolen equipment leaving. There have been several instances where items were found to be leaving without authorization, most notably thirty Harris radio sets in a 20-foot container. Finally, Task Force Lifeliner worked in tandem with their Support Operations section to identify vulnerable points in the fuel distribution network. This resulted in identifying out of date or non-existent measurement tools, an archaic fuel accountability system, and inefficient contract terms.

Task Force Lifeliner will hand off these anti-corruption efforts to the 10th Sustainment Brigade to continue. The effects of anti-corruption efforts were immeasurable in monetary terms. They presented the enemy with unpredictable theft prevention mechanisms, drivers providing information to coalition forces, tight contracting mechanisms, and an increased level of scrutiny for potential contract vendors. These efforts denied the enemy a source of revenue and sustainment. Bottom line is that the enemy must now work harder and under more pressure to perform corrupt and criminal activities to sustain their lifestyle and the insurgency.

Financial Management Efforts:

In November '10 the Special Troops Battalion's Financial Management Company began to work on debts owed to the U.S. government for more than 140 Contractors that delivered services and products to the U.S. military in Afghanistan over the last three years. The 101st Financial Management Company (FMCO) intensified that effort in April '11, cutting the list of debts to sixteen and recouping over $10 Million in debts owed by contractors. The second area of focus for the 101st FMCO was the reorganization of the commercial vendor service section. This critical task was a decentralized process up until May '11 and was finally converted over to a centralized structure, providing many efficiencies and reducing overpayments or duplicate payments to contractors throughout the Area of Responsibility (AOR). Contractors had for many years taken advantage of a situation that allowed them to supply an invoice to a FM Detachment at a Forward Operating Base (FOB) and then take the same invoice with a receiving report (DD 250) to a different FM Detachment to get paid once more on a different FOB. The centralization of the payment process at Bagram Airfield eliminated this flaw in the process and has additionally assisted the mission by insuring no payment was made due to local pressure to satisfy a contractor that supplies a critical service to the FOB the FM Detachment is located. The centralization removed the payment capability of nine FOBs and the ability of many contractors to exploit opportunities to gain multiple payments for the same service or product.

Electronic Fund Transfer payments were emphasized and required for 99% of the contract payments over the last year. Cash payments were only authorized in areas where critical requirements could only be provided by vendors with no bank accounts due to security concerns. The EFT payments provided a traceable audit trail for the company and auditors to analyze payments with the capacity to track trends and additionally find efficiencies in the services provided by the contractors working for forces in theater. This record of payments provided a benchmark of costs and limited vendors by giving historical data to work from on future contracts. Additionally, it demanded a bank account that could be suspended through the EFT Assistance Center that works in conjunction with the FMCO's in theater to provide liasion with local banks in Afghanistan. This service has been used multiple times since April '11 to convince many contractors to pay back the debts owed to the US Government.

All payments made by the 101st FMCO were vetted through the Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC). OFAC insures contractor payments are not made to companies or individuals on a list of suspected or proven entities supporting terrorist activities. No payment is allowed processing until they are cleared by this office.

Additional Cost Saving Initiatives:

Postal Operations:

By scrutinizing contractor invoices the Special Troops Battalion's 90th Human Resources Company CORs found that the contractors charged the government for delivery to several locations in the Kabul area that were not part of their postal contract. Rock Island investigated and the contractor was required to pay back almost $600,000 to the Government. A modification is currently being written to formally add these additional routes into the contract, and the COR is closely monitoring and tracking all current "truckloads" for future billing.

Additionally, the 90th HR Company, in conjunction with the DCMA, trained and certified CORs at each location to monitor and document contractor performance. Their focus ensured that the contractors completed all tasks outlined in their Performance Work Statement (PWS). Corrective Action Requests (CARs) were submitted at locations where the contractor failed to perform all tasks per the PWS, and the Government will withhold future payments for failure to perform.

Mobile Container Assessment Teams (MCATs):

1st Theater Sustainment Command (TSC) provided

two MCATs to support Task Force Lifeliner from Jan 11 – Jun 11. The MCAT's primary responsibility was to conduct 100% inventory of containers inside their geographic locations (GEOLOCs) and provide additional, on-the-spot training at selected FOBs. During their time on ground the MCAT inventoried twelve FOBs, consisting of over 150 GEOLOCS. They inventoried 31,034 containers, creating visibility of 7,403 containers in the Integrated Booking System-Container Management Module (IBS-CMM) and identified over 1,089 carrier owned containers with a price tag of over $2.9 million. Due to their direct efforts, the inventory percentage of the estimated 90,000 containers in Afghanistan's inventory rose from 40% to 67% and the monthly detention charges decreased from an estimated $4 million to less than $1 million dollars, with a cost savings of over $18 million dollars during their six month tenure.

Mobile Retrograde Teams (MRTs):

From November 2010 to May 2011 the United States Air Force provided Task Force Lifeliner a four man MRT, responsible for inventorying the contents of frustrated and abandoned containers around the CJOA-A. This allowed battle-space owners to re-allocate useable cargo and free up containers that were accumulating detention. In May 2011, the USAF tasker ended and Task Force Lifeliner took Soldiers from within their ranks to create two organic MRTs of five Soldiers each. Their joint efforts enabled 456 containers to be cleared out, with over 413,000 items returned to the supply system, and a cost savings of over $183 million dollars, and counting.

RIC GEO and DISTRO:

Task Force Lifeliner, while working with the RIC GEO, JSC-A, SPO Distribution, CJ-7 Engineers in the Regional Command, the Engineer Brigade, and the Brigade Support Battalion at Sharana, was able to divert excess Class IV away from Sharana to fill critical shortages across RC-East and RC-North. Through their initiatives, RIC GEO was able to divert 846 containers of critical Class IV. On average, it cost $19,075 to ship a container from the U.S. to Afghanistan. Costs varied depending on whether the container was shipped through the Pakistan GLOC, which was dramatically cheaper, or through the Northern Distribution Network (NDN). Class IV consists of lumber and other building materials that are primarily brought through the NDN which can range from $15,834 per 20' container, to $31,437 for 40' container. By locating and diverting the Class IV containers already in theater, Task Force Lifeliner was able to eliminate re-ordering and associated shipping costs - a procedure that previously was not being executed. Overall, Class IV diversions created estimated savings to the government of $16,137,450.

Air Drop: Task Force Lifeliner worked diligently through the 2007–2009 and the 2010–2011 OEF Rotations to transition from utilizing standard parachute systems to the low cost equivalents. With the enormous amounts of parachutes used each month and the challenges associated with executing reliable retrograde of air items, the Army has wasted millions of dollars in airdrop equipment throughout Operation Enduring Freedom. The Army is learning and growing with every new rotation and has become more focused on cutting costs. Task Force Lifeliner's Airdrop Officer submitted an Operational Needs Statement during the 2007-2009 OEF rotation, which led to the increased production of low cost parachute systems. With the increase of low cost parachutes, the Army has been able to eliminate the need for standard parachutes and the costly process of retrograde or field loss. Over the 2010-2011 rotation, Task Force Lifeliner dropped almost 10,000 low cost parachutes and containers. The difference from utilizing the low cost systems, as opposed to traditional air items, is approximately $13.5 million dollars in cost avoidance.

Class III:

Task Force Lifeliner's Petroleum and Water Branch improved the method of fuel delivery in Regional Commands East, North, and Capital by establishing two direct delivery hubs with three additional direct delivery hubs planned in the near future. Direct delivery is advantageous for several reasons. It reduces the risk of fuel pilferage by taking Bagram and the Host Nation Trucking contract out of the distribution equation. As fuel is further distributed from the direct delivery sites to the smaller COPs, the fuel is not paid for until receipts are confirmed at end-user destination. As a result of this initiative, fuel deliveries occur quicker, arrive on a more predictable schedule, are far less subject to pilferage, and saved the Government $17.6 million dollars in transportation costs compared to routing the fuel through Bagram.

Conclusion

The experience of Task Force Lifeliner during its yearlong deployment to Afghanistan demonstrated a reliance on logistics support contracts, their complexity, their difficulty to oversee, and the absolute dependency on a trained and competent Operational Contracting Support Cell and Contracting Officer Representatives. The pending force reductions will require us to transition many more logistics functions currently performed by the military to civilian contractors. To successfully mitigate the risks outlined in the Congressional report, this transition will require additional trained and competent Soldiers to provide effective oversight for the expanded contracting footprint.

During their deployment Task Force Lifeliner endured a significant degree of turnover within the RCC and LOGCAP teams. These teams came from both the Active and Reserve components representing Army, Navy and Air Force services, to include DoD Civilians. They came with varying degrees of training and experience ranging from some previous experience to no previous experience. This made it difficult to keep the continuity of contracts and knowledge without having to re-train and brief the status of each contract every time there was a transfer of authority (TOA).

With the many challenges and risks experienced by Task Force Lifeliner, as well as those noted by the Congressional Commission on Wartime Contracting, Task Force 2010, and others, we must continue to assign the most competent Soldiers to the key billets of operational contracting support and anti-corruption initiatives. We must continue to provide Law Enforcement Professionals to the Sustainment Brigade, given that the brigade oversees or is impacted by the largest and most expensive contracts in theater. We must also continue to look for ways to improve or cancel underperforming contracts.

Building Afghan Logistics Relationships

by CPT Stephen Kildow
Training Mentor Team Senior Advisor

203rd CLK Commander, COL Mohammad, 201st CLK XO, MAJ Nazamadine, and 101st TMT Senior Advisor, CPT Stephen Kildow, discuss drivers training as they tour the 203rd CLK motorpool at FOB Lightning Afghanistan.

As the US led coalition in Afghanistan seeks to draw down troop levels in Afghanistan over the next few years, Afghan Army Logisticians will need to increasingly rely on each other to solve complex logistical problems inherent in this austere environment as they continue the fight against groups that pose a threat to their security. In any organization, sharing best practices, experiences, and building relationships is essential to ensure growth and future success. Afghan National Army (ANA) leaders understand this but are often unable to share their experiences and build relationships due to limited communication infrastructure and extreme terrain separating many of the units. Mentors from the 101st Special Troops Battalion "Sustainers" and Forward Supply Depot (FSD) mentors assigned to National Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) recently provided an opportunity for two Afghan Logistics units to sit together and discuss past challenges, how they overcame those challenges, and future initiatives that will help the Afghan Logistics System operate independently.

The 201st Corps Logistics Kandak (CLK) headquartered at Gamberi Garrison has been established for over two years and has independently executed over 40 Combat Logistical Patrols over the last 11 months. Conversely, the 203rd CLK at Gardez was just fielded less than two months ago and is currently executing an intensive training regimen in order to prepare for future combat missions. Similarly, the 1st FSD at Gardez has been operational for over two years while the 6th FSD at Gamberi has only been operational for only six months. The aforementioned dynamic created a perfect opportunity for mentors and Afghan Leaders to learn from each other at FOB Lighting, home of the 203rd CLK and 1st FSD.

The visit began with a tour of the 203rd CLK facilities by the Kandak Commander, COL Dor Mohammad. While walking through the newly formed motorpool, COL Mohammad explained that his unit had plenty of equipment but would not be able to conduct missions until his Soldiers completed training required to operate the equipment. The 201st CLK XO, MAJ Nazamadine, took this opportunity to provide some advice on how mentors trained large groups of Soldiers within the 201st CLK and then identified competent NCOs from those groups to serve as Master Trainers for future classes with mentors only observing. This technique has led to 90% of training in the 201st CLK being completely planned, resourced, and conducted by ANA NCOs. As the group toured the newly acquired maintenance bay, COL Mohammed proudly displayed the tool room and parts rooms that he hoped would be filled with parts in the near future allowing his mechanics to complete repairs on non-mission capable vehicles. MAJ Nazamadine took this opportunity to describe the excellent relationship his maintenance company has with A-TEMP, a civilian contracted company that conducts depot level maintenance at several sites across Afghanistan. Nazamadine explained how his ANA mechanics and A-TEMP mechanics, many being Afghan Nationals, work side by side learning from and helping each other. Next was a visit to the FSD where COL Abdul Basir Baloch, Commander of the 6th FSD, and LTC Jen Mohammad, Executive Officer of the 6th FSD, discussed challenges they faced when standing up their depot. Areas of discussion ranged from seemingly trivial things like getting office furniture and automation equipment to more complex issues

involving the organization of the depot, property accountability, and receiving trained officers and NCOs to run operations in the depot. When asked about the importance of the visit, LTC Jen Mohammed replied, "I think it is so good for our units to share information and learn from each other. I would like to do these visits more often in the future." After lunch, the 203rd CLK staff sat down with the 201st CLK Logistics Officer, CPT Khan Zaman, to review report formats that the 201st brought with them to provide to their 203rd counterparts. For a unit just standing up, these report formats were invaluable and as one 203rd CLK officer stated, the amount of information provided "was unexpected but greatly appreciated."

Over the next few months, both units will transition to a Regional Logistics Support Command, a change that will require them to support not only their respective Corps units but also the Afghan Air Force, Afghan Police, and Afghan Commando units. More meetings like these in the future, which focus on making both units more productive and effective, will reap tremendous benefits as the Afghan Logistics community continues to mature in an effort to provide continuous support to their Afghan brethren.

COL Abdul Basir Baloch, Commander of the 1st FSD at FOB Thunder, explains to the 201st CLK and 6th FSD leadership how his depot operates to support the ANA, ANP, and ABP in his region.

203rd CLK Commander, COL Mohammad, answers a question from MAJ Hussein Shah, 201st CLK SPO, regarding the ability of 203rd CLK to request and receive parts and supplies.

Commander's Emergency Response Program and Tactical Logistics

by MAJ John B. Stringer
530th CSSB Executive Officer

The Mission

The Integration of Money as a Weapons System while conducting tactical logistics at the operational level can greatly enhance the mission of a logistical battalion while in combat. Although it is not common to see logistics brigades and battalions executing this type of mission, if utilized properly it can be invaluable to the success of a unit's mission. During a recent deployment to Afghanistan, the 101st Sustainment Brigade (SBDE) and its subordinate battalion the 530th CSSB successfully used the Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP) to improve relations with the local population surrounding the logistical hub at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Dehdadi II Afghanistan located in Balkh province in Regional Command North (RC-N).

Although logistics units are authorized to conduct CERP operations, typically only battle space owners get authorization for CERP funds. US commanders conducting CERP operations must coordinate with their regional Resource Management Office to insure that there is funding available and familiarize themselves with the process for receiving funds. The RC-N Deputy Commander, the regional approval authority, authorized 101st SBDE and its subordinate units to establish a CERP program to offset the negative effects of the logistics footprint in the area. The purpose of this article is not to make the reader an expert on CERP operations but to provide some insight to some of the systems used and convey the lessons learned during our recent deployment to Afghanistan.

The Primary mission of the 530th CSSB was to provide tactical sustainment to units within RC North, provide BOSI for Dehdadi II, located in the Dehdadi district, and partner with the 5th Kandak in support of the German Operational Mentor Liaison Team (OMLT) at Camp Shaheen. The battalion's CERP efforts were primarily focused in the Dehdadi District comprised of 95 villages with a population of 186,000 with residual impacts to the Mazar-e-Sharif area. The previous battalion had initiated CERP operations in the Dehdadi district three months prior to the unit's arrival and had coordinated closely with the 5th Kandak to establish relations in the local community.

Upon assuming the mission in February 2011 we initially made use of our predecessor's close ties with the 5th Kandak, but we transitioned to coordinating through local leaders and Government officials to insure we put a Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) face on every project and to insure local government officials were involved with every aspect of the planning and execution of the projects. As we continued to initiate multiple projects throughout the year, the local government officials took on the responsibility of securing the land agreements, coordinating with the ministry of health, ministry of education, ministry of transportation as well as the provincial governor's office. The local leaders in the community became critical to the successful coordination and execution of every project. Though the initial use of the 5th Kandak as a way establish contacts with the community was beneficial, the purpose of our CERP program was to strengthen the local Government and our relations with the community.

ABOVE LTC Elliott, the Leadership of the 5th Kandak and local leaders conduct our first sight assessment of the Dehdadi Hospital shortly after the battalion assumed mission. RIGHT Transformers that were replaced to support the new power generation plan at the Dehdadi District Hospital.

Keys to Success

One of the keys to any successful CERP program is the selection of the team. Personnel on the CERP team must be outgoing, willing to embrace the local customs and believe in the mission. Relationships are everything in Afghanistan culture! The CERP team should at least consist of an OIC, whose sole purpose is CERP, an NCOIC, four personnel to act as Project managers, Project Purchasing Officers, and Paying Agents and at least two interpreters reporting to the executive officer. These members should be more mature or senior, preferably E6 or above, with at least one female member. The team members must all complete the Purchasing officer and Pay Agent training to give each the capability to act as either the Project Purchasing Officer or the project Manager. The ability to multi task provides flexibility for your team considering every project must have a project officer to solicit bids, contract goods and services, monitor project progress and close out contracts. Each project must also have a paying agent to disburse funds to the vendor. The interpreters are critical to the success of your CERP team and should be of high caliber. When communicating through an interpreter, it is important to understand that the interpreter's words are your words, even if he or she is mistranslating you. Insure your interpreter understands that if your chosen words do not translate well or the interpreter does not know the correct translation, he or she should inform you to allow the opportunity to reformulate what you are trying to convey.

BELOW: The 530th CSSB CERP team poses for a picture in front of the battalion headquarters. CENTER COL Peterman conducts interviews with local and National Afghan media. RIGHT The Commanders personal security detail that supported CERP operations throughout the deployment secures the team during a site assessment at one of the well projects.

Security

Another key component of successful CERP operations is the integration of the Personal Security Detail (PSD) into the CERP team's every day operation. Because CERP operations by nature require the team members to spend a large part of their time out in the community exposed to risk, a security plan and a trained security team are necessary for every mission. The 530th CSSB had the unique opportunity to assemble and train a PSD for the battalion commander prior to the deployment. The 49th Group Commander our home station commander approved the funding to send our team to the Gryphon Group Personal Security Team training school in Melbourne Florida. The PSD underwent defensive and offensive drivers training, convoy live fires, off road drivers training, procedures for moving a principle from point to point, and personal security officer duties.

The Commanders Emergency Response Program became one of the primary missions for the 530th CSSB PSD. A requirement as simple as a site visit to inspect the progress of a project requires personnel to plan, rehearse, and execute the plan. In an effort to reduce risk, every mission was deliberately planned with a Concept of Operation brief (CONOP) and rehearsals. The openings and closing of each project took significant planning and coordination due to the large crowds which required a very thorough security plan. As a rule, openings were joint endeavors with coordination being made with local government officials for additional support from the Afghan National Police. If resources are not available to train personnel prior to deploying, units conducting CERP operations should ensure that efforts are made prior to missions to train personnel security operations.

LEFT: SGT Nowlin a member of the 530th CSSB Personal Security Detail scans his sector as the 530th CSSB CERP team program manager CPT Pinckney conducts an assessment on a Mosque washroom that the battalion renovated. RIGHT: CPT Pinckney and the PSD arrive at Shaeed Bulki High School to prepare for the opening.

Purpose

Once the team is established, the next step is identifying the effects you are targeting. In this case the commander's purpose in conducting CERP operations in the Dehdadi district was to offset the negative Counterinsurgency (COIN) impacts of having a major log base next to the city of Dehdadi and Mazar-e-Sharif. After the establishment of Camp Dehdadi II in March of 2010, the Dehdadi and Mazar-e-Sharif area picked up significant traffic from SEMI trucks transporting containers of Class I, II, III, IV, V, and Class VII to the FOB as well as a large amount of traffic from service trucks such as trash removal, water delivery, and septic tank services. The addition of the Theatre Consolidated Shipping Point (TCSP) and the establishment of the Northern Distribution Network (NDN) increased the amount of the traffic significantly in the Dehdadi and Mazar-e-Sharif area.

The goal of the 530th CSSB CERP team was broad in nature but straight forward. The mandate that the brigade and battalion commander gave our team was to do as much good in the surrounding community as possible to offset the negative impacts of having a major logistics hub and increased traffic in close proximity to the city of Dehdadi. The projects in the community were critical to counteracting the negative impact of the land use agreement (LUA) that actually established Dehdadi II, the degrading of roads due to increased traffic from the TCSP, NDN, and the inconvenience of a new city of over 2000 Soldiers and civilians springing up in a wheat field right outside of the Afghan city.

ABOVE: A Map of the Dehdadi District.

The Process

The standard process for executing CERP operations begins with identifying the project. The battalion used a relatively simple process for identifying projects. The battalion commander and the CERP team attended the monthly Shura at the District Sub Governor's compound which was attended by village elders from 95 villages in the local area. The CERP team explained the type of projects authorized by regulation and a request sheet was handed out to the elders in attendance. At the next month's Shura the elders returned with a list of projects that needed to be completed in their area and the Sub District Governor prioritized the projects before we added them to our list of potential projects. These projects were discussed in depth at the Shura and reasonable expectations were laid out in a public forum. As a rule we tried to keep the projects within the brigade commander's $ 500,000 approval limit.

A key aspect to remember when conducting CERP operations is to avoid making promises that you cannot keep. Setting reasonable expectations and explaining some of the approval processes you have to go through before a project can be approved, insures the people understand that you cannot guarantee approval. The best method is to tell them you will address the need for the requested project with your higher headquarters and will work with the local government to get the project done. Unfulfilled promises will almost always produce a negative effect on COIN whereas a completed project will have positive COIN effects in the community and lend credibility to your team.

ABOVE The 530th CSSB Commander LTC Austin Elliott shakes hands with the Dehdadi District Sub Governor Walli Shaw at his compound after the monthly Shura in Dehdadi. The Dehdadi District village Elders, 530th PST, and 101st SBDE PAO can be seen in the background. RIGHT LTC Elliott and the 530th CERP team listen to the Sub District Governor's concerns and requests.

Project Prioritization

After creating a list of potential authorized projects the battalion commander decided what decided to focus on the repairing or the renovating of infrastructure, specifically roads, bridges, schools, the Dehdadi Hospital, and installing wells in areas that did not have adequate water. The reason we specifically focused on renovating or repairing infrastructure rather than building new infrastructure was sustainability and alleviating the lengthy process of procuring land for new construction. Once the decision was made on the focus for CERP operations, we racked and stacked the projects based on the District Sub Governor's priorities. The goal was to select projects ranging from the $10,000 to $500,000 and to have at least 10 projects underway at any given time. We combined quick victories like installing shallow wells, with larger, longer term projects like renovating schools. The wells served as a way to make a quick impact in the community giving the team credibility, thereby convincing local government officials to put the necessary effort into making the required coordination's for larger projects.

LEFT: Female members of the 530th CSSB pose for a picture with Afghan women after the monthly Shura. The women meet in a separate room to discuss the needs and concerns of the female citizens of Dehdadi. RIGHT: LTC Elliott discusses projects that are ongoing in the community with the district Sub Governor, Walli Shaw.

Project Execution & Wells

The second step in the CERP process is project development and validation. This step entails the assigning of a project manager responsible for coordinating and executing the remaining steps of the CERP project such as project approval, execution, and closure. In the case of installing wells in the Dehdadi district, SSG Dockery, our project officer, found that wells, although relatively inexpensive in nature, took careful preparation due to a required hydrolysis study and right of entry memorandum. This coordination served two purposes, to insure there was water on the site and that the well would be accessible by all residents of the village. The design of the well was very specific in the statement of work to insure the contractor installed a well that would not go dry after a short period of use and that the contractor would stand behind his work for at least two years.

Any positive impact from drilling a well could be lost if the well has a significant negative impact on the water table. When drilling a well in an arid environment, it is important to obtain a hydrolysis study to insure the aquifer can support the well with no impact to existing wells in the area. We also implemented a policy of using only local companies who were experienced at finding water and were familiar with the specifications for drilling a sustainable well in the area.

LEFT: Members of the CERP team look on as the Lead Village Elder inspects a recently installed shallow well. RIGHT: Local leader Haji Mustafa samples a glass of water from another 530th CSSB well project.

Schools

Due to the large impact for a relatively small amount of money, our primary CERP focus was school renovations. The cost of the school projects ranged from $70,000 to $275,000. Nearly all the schools in the Dehdadi district were in poor condition. In some cases the roofs leaked, doors and windows were broken, perimeter walls were crumbling, and the children did not have desks or school supplies. Based on lessons learned from previous units and through trial and error, we developed a standard package of school supplies for the students and the teachers. School renovation became a very methodical and repetitive process. All schools were stripped down to the bare walls, and in most cases a roof was installed with steel beams instead of the small wooden logs that are common construction in Afghanistan. We also included a new perimeter wall for each school, which is standard in Afghanistan, and each school received quality desks, chairs, school supplies and book bags for every student. In some cases we included new libraries, science labs and athletic fields. The standardization of school renovation projects made the planning, coordination, solicitation of bids, statement of work, and execution of the projects more efficient. The CERP team and local Afghan leadership became very adept at executing a school refurbishment from start to finish.

LEFT: The school is stripped down to the bare structure and new doors and windows are installed. The surface of the school is stripped and prepared for a coat of paint. RIGHT: The school is complete with new paint throughout.

Dehdadi District Hospital

The Dehdadi Hospital renovation was our most complicated project. In one of our earliest shura's, the sub district governor identified this project as the Dehdadi district's number one priority. The 101st SBDE medical operations officer had conducted a site survey of the Dehdadi hospital just prior to our arrival and completed a detailed assessment of the hospital's issues, which we used for the very complex task of writing the statement of work for the hospital project. The team coordinated with the RC-N United States Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) personnel to complete a statement of work that addressed all of the hospital's deficiencies. Part way through the process we discovered the hospital was on the Ministry of Health's (Mohr) list of facilities to be rebuilt, but because of funding issues it remained on the list for an extended period of time with no projected start date or funding. So, we took the additional step of coordinating with Mohr to insure there was no plan to rebuild the hospital in the near future, because we did not want to jeopardize any existing plans.

We used a similar approach for the Hospital that we used with the schools. We planned a complete renovation of the facility to include a new waiting room, perimeter wall, X-RAY room, and new equipment with a two-year warranty. The original equipment was in disrepair or completely inoperative due to numerous power surges resulting from an insufficient power supply to the building. Sustainability is the key to purchasing any type of equipment or machinery for CERP projects in Afghanistan, because the local government must be capable of maintaining the equipment long after project completion. We purchased equipment locally, to ensure repair technicians and repair parts would be available within Afghanistan or the region, so the hospital would be sustainable for the Afghans. Purchasing sustainable new equipment for the Hospital meant also addressing the power problems in the building. The solution that we worked with the USACE engineer was to add a series of transformers that would increase and regulate the power supply to the hospital extending the life of the equipment.

The Dehdadi district Hospital was a keystone project and impacted 185,000 people in the surrounding area. The positive impact on relations between the local populous and ISAF forces was significant for the amount of money that was committed to the project.

TOP: COL Peterman and LTC Elliott along with the contractor receive a tour of the Dehdadi Hospital from the hospital administrator. BOTTOM: 101st SBDE and 530th CSSB conduct the ground breaking ceremony with the Dehdadi Leadership and the contractor who will renovate the Hospital.

Closing the Project

We developed a standard program for opening and closing projects that included a ceremony for every major project we completed in the Dehdadi district. A standard invitation list was followed for each event which included local government leaders as well local and national Afghan media. The intent of the openings and closings was to spread the word about the good things the Afghan Government was accomplishing in partnership with coalition forces, and to highlight the exceptional security situation in the Dehdadi district. After each closing ceremony a traditional Afghan meal was served to the Afghan dignitaries, media, and selected personnel involved with the project. We used CERP funds to cover expenses for the closing making sure we conducted every event to standard and obtained maximum IO effect. The 101st SBDE IO officer and PAO staff assisted in this process by synchronizing our CERP efforts with the brigade's IO campaign plan.

TOP: COL Michael Peterman and the lead village Elder cut the ribbon for the Shaeed Bulki High School Opening. BOTTOM: COL Michael Peterman, CSM David Thompson of the 101st SBDE and the leadership of the 530th CSSB listen as the interpreters translate the various speeches of government officials and the local leadership.

Summary

The Commander's Emergency Response Program was an important asset to the battalion during its recent deployment to Afghanistan. Although non-battle space owners do not typically execute CERP, in the case of the 101st SBDE and the 530th CSSB, it was an invaluable tool that greatly enhanced the unit's mission. The battalion established links with the community that allowed the commander to address the concerns of the local leaders, benefitting the community as well as the unit's mission. As the BOS-I for the logistics base, Camp Dehdadi II, these established relationships allowed us to address issues with service contractors that were based out of the Dehdadi district such as trash pickup and septic services. It also helped us gather useful information about the security situation in the area. The efforts of the 530th CSSB CERP team gave the battalion the situational awareness within the community to identify issues and quickly resolve the problem. The impact to the community as part of a greater concerted effort by RC-North was far reaching and helped establish a partnership between the units operating in RC-North and the people of Afghanistan.

Aerial Logistics in Afghanistan

by CPT Jason Lim
Brigade Air Movements Officer

The war in Afghanistan has been a long and daunting mission for the last 10 years of our history. In that time, the military has accomplished a great deal in improving the conditions in which we fight and how the troops are supported. Supporting troops in the fight requires precision planning, coordination, and intelligent decision-making. The 101st Sustainment Brigade has done a tremendous job in implementing various new plans to strengthen logistical lines of communication throughout Regional Commands (RCs) East, North, and Capital in the Combined Joint Operating Area-Afghanistan (CJOA-A). Although there has been much success throughout the year, there are always concerns and room for improvement. One of the key logistical components to succeeding in Afghanistan is the air mission. There are many factors as to why aerial logistics is so important in this theater. As we take a look at lessons learned, we will observe and critique the successes and the way ahead for the future of air operations in Afghanistan.

One of the major "roadblocks" for ground logistics in the Afghan theater is the highly complex and unforgiving terrain. There are many locations that our transportation support companies cannot support due to the inability to maneuver through the terrain. This is why air operations are so important. Locations that we cannot directly deliver to are supported by air drops on strategically marked drop zones. Aerial delivery packages are deployed by either C-130s or Short Take-Off and Landing (STOL) aircraft. Strides continue to be made as new technologies are implemented. This year, we introduced and tested the all-new Joint Precision Air Drop System (JPADS), which is a computer guided package that has the ability to fly and land within 50 meters of its intended target. As this technological breakthrough progresses, eager logisticians can expect to see rapid improvement in air drop operations.

Another method to avoid the terrain is the use of rotary assets. One of the most important takeaways of the year is that "ring routes" are highly inefficient and do not maximize the utilization of the aircraft on hand. Ring routes waste an incredible amount of blade time due to the fact that the birds fly to all scheduled locations; even the locations that do not have any requirements. Rotary missions must be requirement driven. Grey-tail missions are planned in accordance with prioritized requirements. The same needs to be done for rotary wing mission planning. That way we are not wasting precious time and assets. The accessibility to rotary wing aircraft is an invaluable asset for logistical planning and execution. The birds can expeditiously fly in and out of hostile locations, reduce time in distance, and quickly provide elements with support if needed for expedient delivery of high priority cargo. However, the effectiveness of the aircraft depends on the type of platform utilized. Currently, the 101st Sustainment Brigade has one S-61 contracted rotary aircraft. The S-61 is an effective aircraft for transporting passengers. But on the other hand, it is a poor platform for delivering cargo due to the fact that there is only one side entrance available. This increasingly lengthens loading and downloading times; which reduces blade time for daily operations. Not only is there one access-way, when deliveries are made to smaller FOBs and COPs, the cargo must be loaded / downloaded while the blades are still turning in order to avoid mechanical failures. Operational flight time is reduced and safety is an issue. Prior to the augmentation of the S-61, the brigade had ownership of two Mi-8s. Though the Mi-8s are not configured to transport passengers, they are very capable of delivering cargo. The rear hatch comes down revealing access to the entire cavity of the bird. Maximum load capacity is six Tri-walls which can be uploaded and downloaded with minimal difficulty. The S-61 is a capable asset. However, there is concern that the requirements will overwhelm capability once the holiday mail season begins in November.

Putting aside the disadvantages and complexities of the S-61, the brigade took a look outside of the box and put in motion a plan to fully maximize the asset. Developing and executing a passenger shuttle service further enhances customer service and the brigade's relationship with supported units. When it comes to servicing passengers, the S-61 is a highly efficient platform. On June 10, 2011, the 101st Sustainment Brigade officially inaugurated and initiated the launch of the highly anticipated "Rhino Air" shuttle service to support personnel operating in the Kabul Base Cluster (KBC). Its popularity has skyrocketed in just a few short months and continues to improve and develop on a daily basis. Why is this service so popular? What is driving the requirement? The capital city Kabul is a lively urban center that is a high traffic area. The Forward Logistical Element (FLE) runs a "Rhino Bus" ground service to shuttle personnel

throughout the KBC. However, with the traffic and possibility of attack while en route, people are leery of taking such risks. The success of Rhino Air has supported all U.S. military services, Coalition Forces, Special Operations Forces, contractors and DoD civilians. Currently, over 3,000 passengers have been serviced by "Rhino Air."

Earlier, there was mention of a holiday mail rush. From the months of November through January, the volume of mail that comes into theater increases dramatically. In years past, the goal was to just keep the backlog numbers at a reasonable statistic. This year, the 101st Sustainment Brigade took a different approach. All logistical assets were exhausted in order to keep the mail flow at a constant. Mail would be cleared off the flight line and more would show up the next day. Assets were limited, however coordination and flawless execution kept the momentum forward. The mail was sorted and placed on 463L Pallets, Tri-walls, and also flew as loose cargo. C-130s pushed up to six 463L Pallets per turn, rotary assets pushed five to six Tri-walls per turn, and STOL aircraft pushed an average of 1,500 lbs of loose mail per leg. Theater Express also served as a very useful option. Theater Express, also known as "tender," is a program that provides monetary contracts to companies like DHL, Evergreen, and others to push palletized cargo to programmed destinations. CJTF-1 has also been of great help providing assistance with their Direct Support-Apportioned C-130 better known as "The Growler." When the airfield began to overflow with mail packages, coalition partners from the Royal Air Force offered a helping hand to fly the cargo. With the assets available, the anticipated rush of holiday mail was successfully avoided. The mild winter was also a contributing factor to much of the success.

The winter seasons in the past few years have been mild, but do not ever discount the fact that Afghanistan could get hit by a brutal winter. Heavy snowfall, rain, and ice become dangerous factors for logistical operations. Snow and freezing conditions will become detrimental for all STOL, rotary wing, and even grey-tail operations. Air fields will shut down and create difficulties for distribution across the CJOA-A. STOL aircraft do not have the necessary de-icing agents to fly in any type of inclement weather. Also, nine times out of ten, if the STOL stay grounded, so does the rotary aircraft. The process of logistical planning does not change around inclement weather. The planning factors change. Instead of 10 Days of Supply (DOS), a FOB (Forward Operating Base)/COP (Combat Outpost) may be supplied with 25 DOS. In order to mitigate the weather factors and alleviate the requirement for emergency resupplies, always plan for the worst. Efficient prior planning reduces logistical shortfalls. The air movement section works closely with the S-2 to monitor the weather for windows of opportunity to distribute cargo. Any time the skies open up, aircraft immediately turn blades to take advantage of the opportunity. The success of the winter campaign was largely due to anticipation and quick action on the issues prior to occurrence.

Though inclement weather and extreme terrain is an obstacle that we do not have any control over, there are many improvements throughout the theater that can exponentially increase the output of cargo being moved. One factor that immediately comes to mind is the airfields that are supported. For example, Salerno Airfield is one of the major hubs in RC-East that is frequently supported. The major issue at FOB Salerno is that the airfield comprises of packed dirt, clay and loose gravel. During the winter months and rain season, the airfield is susceptible to shut down due to heavy rains, accumulated snow, and ice. The ground becomes saturated with so much moisture that it is deemed unsafe to land aircraft. This greatly hinders any air mission scheduled to support the task forces at Salerno and others alike. Improving these airfields will directly impact the success of future logistical operations and reduce cancellations. FOB Salerno is especially important because ground transportation is hardly an option to get over the mountain and through the KG Pass. There is much reliance on air capability to distribute cargo to the Khowst Bowl region in the winter months.

There are rumors that the C-130 may be replaced with the C27-J throughout theater. The bottom line is that the C27-J is hardly comparable to the C-130. As mentioned earlier, the C-130 is capable of carrying up to six 463L pallets and the C27-J is capable of carrying a maximum of three 463L pallets. That is a reduction of half the capability. After other factors are configured into the load plan, that may further reduce the load capability. Size and weight of cargo is an important consideration for load planning. The bulk of critical cargo moved this year was CL V ammunition. The average is four

"One of the key logistical components to succeeding in Afghanistan is the air mission."

out of six pallet spaces utilized for CL V pallets due to the weight restrictions. The "Lifeliners" distributed over 10 million pounds of cargo via air platforms throughout the Afghan theater of operations during OEF X-XI. Over 60% of that cargo was distributed by utilizing grey-tail assets. If C-130s pushed 6 million pounds of cargo, using the planning factors for a C27-J, the total would come out to approximately 3 million pounds. With the volume of cargo required to move by air, switching to a smaller platform will create major issues for aerial logistics in Afghanistan.

Even with all of the assets currently available to distribute cargo throughout theater, there is always room for improvement. The opportune air system was developed and implemented in order to maximize all of the aircraft and reduce the number of empty pallet spaces. Through proper coordination and communication with the appropriate personnel, the utilization rates will increase and the argument for more aircraft to come in theater can be justified. The backhaul of cargo can be very effective when units are talking to each other. Ground convoys never come back empty. Why should aircraft return empty?

In conclusion, there is still much work to be done and improvements to be made. The war in Afghanistan will continuously morph as units come and go. The 101st Sustainment Brigade has made giant leaps forward and planted seeds for the future. The Lifeliners will be back again one day. Not to sound cliché, but we may one day get to see the fruits of our labor.

Airdrop, Sustainment or Operational?

by CW3 Josh Hughes
Aerial Delivery Technician

Afghanistan is a very complex theater with poor infrastructure, mountainous terrain, extreme variants in weather, and roads caked with improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and land mines. To deploy a convoy, anywhere in Afghanistan, is a tremendous risk to the lives of our Soldiers. Unfortunately, we cannot maintain all of our forces on a single base, where they might be secure and easily resupplied. Our Soldiers are scattered throughout Afghanistan, with all of the previously mentioned hazards between them and their desperately needed supplies. To some, it may seem impossible to resupply these Soldiers but to those familiar with Airdrop Operations, it is a daily task.

Situation

A Task Force (TF) is on a dismounted patrol in the Konar Valley (Afghanistan) when they are ambushed by insurgents and forced to expend 90% of their on-hand ammunition. The TF is now in need of an emergency resupply of ammunition. The TF Commander makes a call to his supporting brigade and requests a resupply of ammunition, via airdrop, to the location of the troops in contact (TIC). The Supporting Brigade contacts the 101st Sustainment Brigade and relays the request. Within eight hours or less, the Sustainment Brigade has coordinated through several agencies and completed an Airdrop Resupply to the TF Patrol.

Historically, Airdrop was only used to resupply Soldiers that found themselves without their required supplies and no way of acquiring them through ground transportation or air land operations. This type of mission is referred to as an Operational Resupply Mission based off the circumstances of the requirement.

Operational requirements use to be the only requirements in which resupply by airdrop was feasible, as it was once very common to lose approximately 10% of all commodities delivered via airdrop. For this reason, airdrop was quite undesirable unless the need was an emergency. Over several years, the Army has procured a variety of parachute systems to better support the Tactical Soldiers, regardless of their situation. Today, we are able to drop durable and non-durable items from high and low altitudes with precision and commodity survivability.

The Army utilizes C-17s and C-130s (Air Force Aircraft) to drop Container Delivery Systems (CDS). These containers can be filled with any type of commodity weighing between 501 pounds and 2,200 pounds. A variety of parachute systems are used to deliver these containers and all provide a unique affect. The High Velocity (HV) parachute system allows the Army to drop durable items (MREs and Water) from higher altitudes with precision, but because of the high rate of decent (80' per second) they can only be used on such durable items. When dropping non-durable items (fuel and ammunition), the Army can choose to use the Low Velocity (LV) parachute system, which is not as precise as the HV Systems due to a slower decent (30' per second). The slower decent allows the bundles to drift further away from the intended point of impact (PI), but provides a much higher survivability rate. Then there are times in which there is a need for both precision and survivability and for these circumstances the Army can chose the Firefly 2K Joint Precision Airdrop System (JPADS). The 2K JPADS are designed to hold a suspended weight between 501 pounds and 2,200 pounds. The JPADS can be dropped from 20,000'

Mean Sea Level (MSL) and 10 miles away from their intended point of impact (PI) and land within 100 meters of the PI. The JPADS, like the LV Systems, drop at approximately 30′ per second, providing a high probability of commodity survival.

Occasionally, there are units in need of resupply directly into their Forward Operating Base (FOB) due to the threat level of their surroundings and the inability to leave their sanctuary to set up and secure a drop zone. For situations such as this, the Army would choose to utilize the Low Cost Low Altitude (LCLA) resupply method. Units conduct LCLA drops out of CASA 212s (small fixed wing aircraft, contract aircraft & crew). This method allows the Army to drop small bundles weighing between 150 and 500 pounds of any commodity from 150′ above ground level (AGL). LCLA is a very precise method and utilizes a parachute system that allows for a survivability rate similar to that of the LV System. This system is also commonly used for units that are on dismounted patrols and in need of resupply in small, precise amounts.

All of these parachute systems play a special role in today's fight against terrorism. There are many Task Forces throughout Afghanistan that desire or require monthly airdrop resupply operations to their Soldiers. When dropping to locations routinely, it is considered a sustainment operation. Sustainment operations make up more than 90% of all airdrop missions for Afghanistan. Between November 2010 and September 2011, the 101st Sustainment Brigade has supported the delivery of over 16 million pounds of commodities, to Soldiers throughout Afghanistan. When combined with the airdrop missions of the southern sustainment brigade, Special Operations Forces, and Qatar support, there has been more than 50 million pounds of supplies delivered, via airdrop, throughout Afghanistan during the same time. This is a tremendous dissimilarity to the historical use of airdrop capabilities. We are now delivering a large amount of supplies to Soldiers throughout a Theater of Operation and maintaining a loss rate of less than 1%. With this capability at hand, the Army is able to minimize the number of truck convoys and Soldiers on the road. In doing so, the Army has reduced the loss of lives and equipment.

Airdrop for sustainment versus operational alone has proven to be a viable concept for resupplying the Army. As we continue to fight the War on Terrorism, the need continues to grow for more innovative ways to supply our Soldiers and ensure their safety. Airdrop has been this innovative support for the Soldiers in Afghanistan and will continue to be so for many years to come.

The Future of Airdrop

As the Army continues to sustain the fight, there are requirements to continue improvements on the current Airdrop Systems. As the Army is interested in protecting its Soldiers, the Air Forces is equally interested in protecting its flight crews and airframes. The project managers at the Natick Massachusetts (Soldier Training and Development Center) are working on a low cost system that will provide the Army and Air Force with the ability to keep their personnel safe and deliver the requested supplies, with precision and survivability. What I consider the system of the future, is the Improved Container Delivery System (ICDS). This system will allow the extraction of CDS Bundles, from 20 thousand feet MSL, under a 15′ Drogue Parachute (stabilizing Parachute). The 15′ Drogue Parachutes will stabilize the load and drop it very quickly to its intended target. At approximately 1,000′ AGL, a release will allow for the deployment of a larger, low velocity parachute. The low velocity parachute will slow the descent and land the bundle safely and on target. In addition to this system, Natick Labs is also working on a similar system for the larger and heavier Type V Platforms. This innovative system will allow for the survivability and precision of JPADS at a fraction of the price.

Challenges With Container Management

by SSG Nicholas Trujillo
Container Management NCO

Introduction

A recent article published in Army Times on 29 August, reported that the Government paid $30 million in carrier-owned container detention charges in 2010. To address this problem early in their deployment Task Force Lifeliner, in partnership with ARCENT's Lean Six Sigma team, completed process improvement projects at the Bagram Entry Control Point and Container Receiving and Shipping Point which reduced backlog to zero and saved the Government $13.7 million in container detention and truck demurrage during 2011. However, there are still many significant challenges with container management in Afghanistan. Unless these problems are addressed we will continue to struggle with carrier-owned container accountability and detention costs which in most cases could be avoided.

The major problems include the lack of an overall container management training program or SOP in theater; ineffective Deployment Distribution Support Teams (DDSTs) charged with training container management; Integrated Booking System-Container Management Module (IBS-CMM) best practices and lessons learned not captured and disseminated throughout the theater; a lack of oversight and discipline for the management of many GEOLOCs; and the lack of a clear and enforced policy for buying out carrier-owned containers that have accrued excessive detention costs.

Container Management Training

Container Management Training in Afghanistan is largely ineffective and does not reach the complete audience charged with performing the task. USFOR-A addressed this issue in a FRAGO (USFOR-A FRAGO 10-375, dtd. 02 NOV 10), but the bi-monthly training that was required was only geared towards the Container Control Elements (Base Operations) and the Mobile Container Assessment Teams (MCATs). The training did not target the Container Control Officers (CCOs) charged with managing the GEOLOCs on the ground. The level of training that was conducted in these sessions must be given to every CCO.

The only current training being conducted is an IBS-CMM overview from the DDSTs, which usually is covered in about 45 minutes. This training is very informal and only covers IBS-CMM. This quick synopsis of IBS-CMM usually leaves the CCOs asking questions, and once they leave, they have to continually reach back for more information to do their job. In most cases, this requires the DDST to then conduct one-on-one training with the CCOs at a later date.

The issues with container management training in Theater have been captured before. In fact, there are several completed Lean Six Sigma projects that address the issue, to include projects from ARCENT, 595th TTSB, 840th DDSB, and one currently being completed on Container Management Competency by the 101st Sustainment Brigade.

DDSTs Untrained and Overmatched

SDDC is an integral part to the success of container management, increased accuracy of container inventories and the fight against container detention charges. SDDC has subordinate Deployment Distribution Support Teams (DDST) at key hubs where major movements take place. These DDSTs are primarily responsible for assistance in the export of cargo and secondly, the training of container management personnel throughout the CJOA-A.

The problem is the DDSTs are usually two or three lower enlisted Soldiers who have no idea what container management is, and are by no means subject matter experts. Most of them have no experience in containers, transportation or management, yet we continue to throw them to the wolves by pushing them out to these locations and expecting them to tell contractors and field grade officers that they are not performing properly. This is not the DDSTs fault, as they usually do not even know what they are coming to Afghanistan to do. To directly quote one DDST Soldier:

"They did not go over IBS-CMM at all. They told us nothing of what we were going to do and when we asked, they would tell us that they weren't so sure. The only training I got for IBS was in May 2011 for two days and then June 2011 for three days, but that wasn't enough for someone who hasn't done this job. No one went over in-gate, out-gate, or create. In the States our instructor went over it, and he was a great instructor, but no one sat down with us and gave us examples and taught us the importance of creating, notifying carriers, or detention. I felt so clueless by the time I got to my FOB. We should have been told who was doing what and trained with Soldiers that had a lot of experience, so they can train us correctly, for success when we got to our respective FOB. Our relief trained us but they were trained wrong so they

trained us all wrong as well. Looking back when I first had to train a civilian on IBS-CMM, I did a horrible job because I had a horrible trainer. I have learned as time went by, and I had to do everything from the bottom up, but now I am good at what I do. I still learn every day. If I had to grade this I would give it an F."

There is no complete container management training program for them to learn or even for them to teach, and nobody in SDDC can provide a down and dirty SOP on how container management is to be performed. We will never fix the issues if we continue under-manning and under-training the Soldiers that are supposed to assist and train everyone in Afghanistan.

Additionally, there appears to be no formal feedback mechanism for the DDST's quality assurance inspections of the CCOs. The inspections often highlight problems with container accountability in a CCO's assigned geographic location (GEOLOC), but the feedback normally goes no farther than the CCO. Because the reports go no farther, there is no awareness or oversight by the CCO's higher headquarters to ensure deficiencies noted by the DDST are corrected.

IBS-CMM Lessons not Disseminated

Many carrier-owned containers are improperly managed and reported inside of IBS-CMM. This is due to the complexity of the processing procedures and steps in which you must properly conduct, in order, to stop detention and change an import container into an export container, without losing it or accruing additional detention.

For example, an import container must be vessel discharged, in-gated and emptied, prior to movement to the Empty Container Collection Point (ECCP) and carrier notification in IBS-CMM. At this point, detention has stopped. When that container is loaded on a carrier truck and reported as picked up in IBS-CMM, the import life-cycle ends. Conversely, when the container is identified for export movement, it must still have the "import life-cycle" completed in IBS-CMM, prior to being moved to another GEOLOC for export processing. Once the container has been reported as picked up, the container cannot be re-ingated to the next GEOLOC until after 2359Z of the current day (system date/time). When the container is re-ingated, it will then show as a carrier container, without detention.

While the example above may seem a bit lengthy, it is important to understand that when one of the aforementioned steps is missed it either causes excess detention fees or misplacement of the container in IBS-CMM. This process is currently a lesson learned, and not in any SDDC doctrine.

GEOLOC Mismanagement

The biggest issue with detention across Afghanistan is the lack of inventories. We allow carrier-owned containers into country and then lose track of them. We send them to every location, no matter how remote, and then wonder why we cannot find them. There are roughly 650 U.S., Coalition and Afghan military operating locations inside of Afghanistan and just over 500 GEOLOCs at less than 100 operating locations throughout Afghanistan. We must enforce 100% of accountability across the CJOA-A.

Carrier-owned containers are only authorized to be transported to specific locations throughout Afghanistan, as per the rates established in the current USC contract. It is imperative to not allow these containers out of those locations, as they are the only places that the carrier will pick them up. Instead of doing this, we pay HNT to move these to other locations. Every time we allow this to occur we doom ourselves to thousands of dollars of additional transportation and detention fees. Once the container is onward moved in this fashion, the transportation costs of getting back to the location where a carrier will pick it up far out-weigh the cost of purchasing that container. The containers must be emptied and immediately returned to the ECCP, and the carrier.

Afghanistan must be mapped by GEOLOC meaning every FOB with more than one GEOLOC must have a map. There are too many changes for someone that is here for four, six, nine, or twelve months to keep up with. The boundaries of the GEOLOCs are only known by the current person that owns the yards, once they leave the boundaries change. When the boundaries change, the containers do not move, but are lost, while sitting in the same place that they have been.

If the Mayor Cell took control of container management, as stated in the CENTCOM LOI for Container Management, this would not be an issue. The Mayor Cells are charged with this task, but very few actually do it and there is no repercussion.

Continuity is seriously lacking in the system. This can be achieved by hiring civilian contractors to oversee the management of containers at each operating base. This was implemented and succeeded in Iraq. In addition to continuity, this will provide a sole point of contact for each location to assist in the enforcement of inventories, decrease of carrier containers/detention, and redistribution of lost/abandoned cargo. They will be a part of the Mayor Cell/BOS-I which will enable them to affect everyone on the operating base.

UNKN Afghan

Unknown Afghanistan (UNKN Afghan) is an administrative GEOLOC managed by the Country Container Authority (CCA) for Afghanistan, at JSC-A. Its primary purpose is to capture visibility of lost containers whose last known location was somewhere in Afghanistan. However, moving a container into UNKN Afghan does not stop them from accruing detention charges, but rather, diverts the accruing detention charges away from other GEOLOCs, so that these charges do not count against their stats. This practice may improve the stats for one GEOLOC, but it doesn't address the core problem of a lost container still drawing detention.

As of 05 SEP '11 there are 14,975 containers in the UNKN Afghan GEOLOC. Of these, 868 are labeled as carrier-owned containers; of which 552 are currently accruing detention in IBS-CMM to the amount of $185,546 per month, with the total accrued detention to date listed as $2,038,018. Of the remaining 316 carrier-owned containers, these may or may not be accruing detention based on several scenarios that could have played out prior to the containers being moved into UNKN Afghan.

To address the problem each container must be individually researched. First, we need to stop the accrual of detention in UNKN Afghan. This can be done two ways: either find the container and update IBS-CMM appropriately, or purchase the container.

Finding the container and properly updating/fixing the IBS-CMM data is the preferred method. This can be done in other systems/trackers that are available to SDDC, AIDPMO and GCM. We have to scrub the SDDC Export Asset Tracker (SEAT), PAT, iSDDC, and ask the carrier if the container has been returned to them. The problem with asking the carrier is that their records are just as flawed as ours, as they rely on the sub-of-the-sub-contractor to report data, as we do. This research could fix some of the detention issues in UNKN Afghan, and to the purchasing of these containers.

However, the carrier owned containers in UNKN Afghanistan account for less than 6% of the total. There are over 14,000 containers that are being reported as lost and do not have detention; we cannot overlook the issue with these. One of the biggest culprits is Organizational containers that have returned to the states, and have not been exported. This is due to the lack of visibility and disregard for the proper reporting process of containers leaving via airlift, from the CJOA-A. When cargo leaves via ground, SDDC has functions built into IBS-CMM to ensure that any user can report a container as "Picked up by Carrier", and

that process is completed daily. They have done this for Air movement as well, but you have to have special rights (Strategic lift) to complete this. This function would have to be completed by the aerial port, when they load the cargo on the plane. The problem is that air cargo is only tracked by TCN, not container number. If we want accurate and complete accountability in the system of record, then the movement of all transiting containers via air must be entered into IBS-CMM. Thanks to the help of the 313th MCB, several locations are trying to accomplish this by way-pointing outbound cargo via air. This is a great attempt, but does not fix the issue, as the way-pointed containers must still be exported. In order to do this, we must have AFCENT train personnel on IBS-CMM, grant them Strategic Lift user access, and import/export and waypoint all in-transit cargo through their terminals. With over 20% of the containers in UNKN Afghanistan being Quad and Tri-cons, then this would be a great feat.

We have to act smartly about this, and put forces to work. Stateside inventories are conducted in ACAMS, and they should update IBS-CMM, but they do not. This means that someone in the states should be scrubbing ACAMS updates and ensuring that those containers are removed or archived in IBS-CMM. We proved that this would work with over 120 Quad and Tri-cons in August, 2011. The containers were not at the last known IBS-CMM location, so instead of asking to have them moved into UNKN Afghanistan (current procedure) we asked the CCA to work with AIDPMO to conduct the research. This single request resulted in 122 containers to be properly exported and not transferred into UNKN Afghanistan, a huge win.

No Clear Policy for Container Buyouts

ARCENT Lean Six Sigma research and analysis conducted in May-Jun 2011 revealed the most cost-efficient time to purchase a carrier container is at 91 days past free time – the time established by the contract where we only pay the detention cost of 90 days plus the cost of the container. For example, for a 20ft dry container, purchasing the container at day 91 saves a minimum of $2,215, which is 2/3 the cost of a brand new 20ft container, and saves $4,295 for a 40ft dry container, roughly 3/4 of the purchase price.

Rather than buy out these containers at the optimum time, the containers have been allowed to continue to accrue detention before they are eventually bought out at the higher price, or even worse, handed back over to the contractor after having paid the extensive detention fees.

These concepts must be embraced and formalized into a clear buyout policy which is then enforced. Otherwise, we will continue to throw away tax payer money.

Improper Use

Currently, containers are used for everything, to include showers, latrines, guard shacks, quarters, walls, bridges, and the list goes on. These facilities have been constructed over the last decade and continue to be constructed, on and off of the FOB. The idea seems to be that the cheapest and most expedient way to make anything is by using a container. Commanders and acquisition personnel, at all levels, must understand that this is not an acceptable answer. These containers are cut, painted, grinded and utterly destroyed beyond recognition and repair, with no recourse or consequences to the offenders. We must take all possible actions to identify these containers, as these are the ones that we have or will be purchasing. The problem is evident as we drive around and is driven home by the MCATs finding and reports, yet nothing happens.

Conclusion

One initiative that proved to be highly effective during OEF XI was the Mobile Container Assessment Teams (MCATs) fielded by 1st TSC. The MCAT's primary responsibility was to clean up GEOLOCs by conducting 100% inventories and additional, on-the-spot training for CCOs at selected FOBs. Task Force Lifeliner employed two MCAT teams from Jan 11-Jun 11 who inventoried 31,034 containers, creating visibility of 7,403 in IBS-CMM and identified over 1,089 carrier-owned containers with a price tag of over $2.9 million. Their efforts were directly attributed to the inventory percentage of the estimated over 90,000 containers in Afghanistan's inventory rising from 40% to 67% and the detention decreasing from an estimated $4 million to less than $1 million dollars, with a cost savings of over $18 million dollars during their 6 month tenure. We should continue to field MCAT teams to assist with container management.

We have made significant gains in container management over the past year. However, unless these problems are addressed, we will continue to lose containers, struggle with accurate container inventories, and incur unnecessary detention charges.

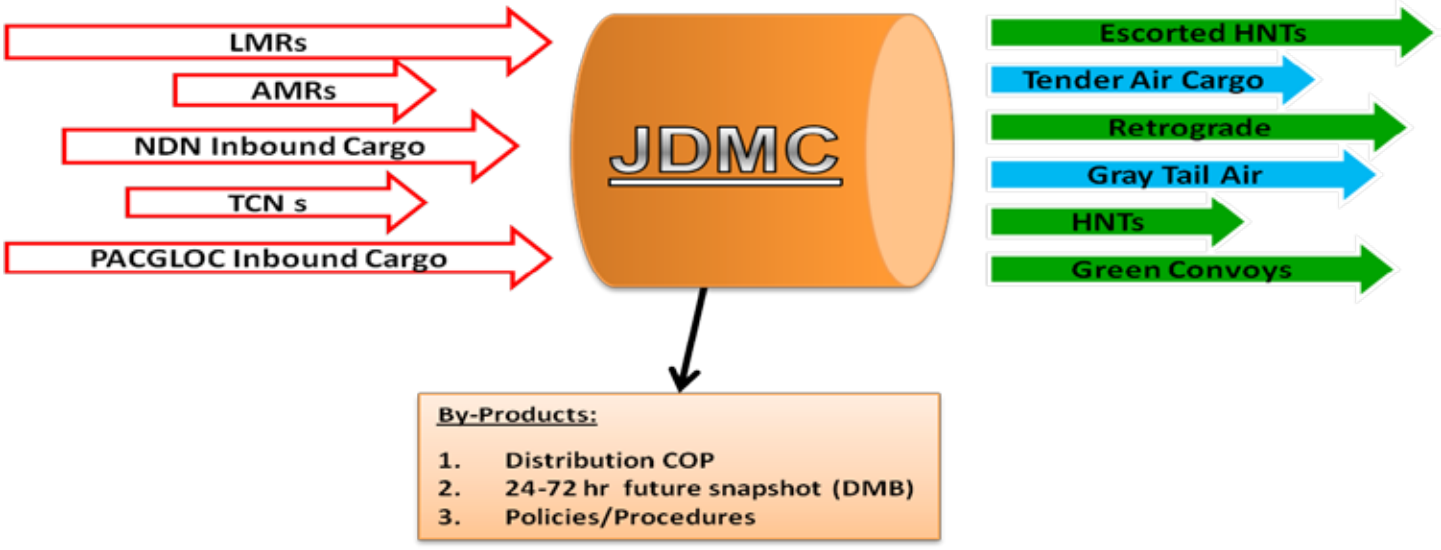
Joint Distribution Management Center:
Concept and Applicability in Current Military Operations

by CPT Kendall C. Wells
Transportation Officer

Distribution Management is an Army initiative that was introduced in 2003, and has been mentioned numerous times in current logistical literature of its importance during present wartime operations. It has also been widely socialized that the distribution management concept will support the Army logistically in its force sustainment strategy of the future. While the principles behind this notion, and the operational support required by today's military forces prove this consideration, the processes within current doctrine are skewed from the reality of execution on the battlefield. Who owns distribution management at the operational level? This is the question most logisticians would ask, and rightfully so when you begin to consider the number of separate entities who typically own a piece of this role. Sustainment Brigades (SBDE), Movement Control Battalions (MCB), Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC), Joint Transportation Office (JTO), Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) and Expeditionary Aerial Port Squadrons (EAPS) all hold a primary portion of the distribution management process, and each have their own specific chain of command. However, I believe the more important question to ask is: How can distribution management be accomplished within the intent set by our senior Army leaders? Not selecting one specific organization to hold the reins to the entire process, but creating an environment which welcomes each individual entity and process owner, and allows ease of communication and synchronization of efforts. The concept of the Joint Distribution Management Center (JDMC) answers this question and provides a solid backbone to the muscle of our military offensives: support and sustainment operations.

JDMC Mission and Purpose

The task to orchestrate distribution operations is not simple, but the JDMC provides the environment necessary to plan, coordinate, and synchronize continuous joint distribution operations throughout an area of operations, and ensure the timely and accurate distribution and redistribution of equipment and supplies to battle space owners. It accomplishes this by obtaining buy-in from the individual distribution process owners, each of the organizations who own a "piece" of the overall distribution "pie", and providing key personnel with distribution tasking authority to operate within a single building: the JDMC. Through this commitment and partnering in joint distribution, the JDMC becomes the nucleus for the initiation of distribution requirements, allows immediate cross-coordination with applicable agencies, permits the identification and assigning of transportation assets, and promotes the obtaining and maintaining of in-transit visibility from origin to destination. Whether it be a ground or air movement request, or theater inbound cargo, the JMDC acts has server, breaking down and processing each requirement, matching it up against distribution priorities, and assigning it to a scheduled mode of transportation.



But the JDMC concept is more than just a building. It is about applying efficiencies and effectiveness into the distribution doctrinal principles Capacity, Velocity, Control and Visibility which are otherwise not possible. And by doing so proves that the whole IS greater than the sum of its parts.

Capacity

As any young child who's tried to make a water balloon can tell you, there's only so much water a balloon can hold before it busts. The same concept applies to distribution operations. If the flow of cargo into a General Support (GS) or Direct Support (DS) hub is at a pace more rapid than it can process, it's only a matter of time until the hub becomes overwhelmed and can no longer in-gate vehicles and supplies. Therefore it is pivotal to understand the needs and priorities of forward positioned forces, specifically how it relates to the capacity they are able to handle, when managing the types and amount of supplies dispatched to a specific location. The JDMC provides this capability, and allows decisions to be made to adjust existing distribution plans and schedules in order to maintain optimal system capacity. With the integration of Support Battalion liaisons, it can also provide the immediate feedback which shapes and molds future distribution operations. The allocation of distribution resources, and prioritization of those resources, provides leaders with the opportunity to maximize short-term and long-term capacity of distribution capabilities.

Velocity

Tied in very close to capacity is the principle of velocity. The velocity by which equipment and supplies flow within the distribution network is the key to optimizing infrastructure, minimizing stockpiling, maximizing throughput and maintaining a seamless pipeline of support to the forward battlefronts. The coordination of transportation mode management, and the synchronization of distribution efforts that the JDMC provides, cater to the centralized management of velocity and ensures the distribution system is not overloaded or stressed beyond its limits. Failure to accurately gauge and/or manage distribution velocity can have serious implications, including pilferage, exponential government costs, and increased security risks.

Control

In a theater of operations where multiple organizations, with multiple policies and procedures, maintain command over multiple processes, it can be difficult to know exactly who controls what process, or portion of a process. Many times these organizations operate in multiple locations, with each location possessing different systematic practices. With the JDMC pulling all process owners into one location, and agreeing to operate as a whole system rather than separate and divergent entities, it allows the use of centralized policy and allocation to manage and control changes within the system. In return this offers a much more stable foundation to ensure logistical merit: providing the right resource at the right place and time.

Visibility

In our current military offensive against insurgencies, in-transit visibility (ITV) has become increasingly important. Commercial ITV systems have been multiplying at a high rate to meet the command and control demands of every distribution organization. However, each unit modifies their ITV system of choice to reflect their interests and concerns as it relates to their mission. Apart from each other these systems only capture a small portion of the….. With representatives from all distribution stakeholders in a single location, the JDMC offers timely and accurate information on the location, movement, status and identity of distribution units coming into, moving throughout and exiting the theater. This allows for more complete information to be directed toward distribution decisions, and provides an understandable common operating picture for all distribution organizations.

When considering the numerous organizations who own a portion of operational distribution management at the GS hub, it is evident that an enormous amount of coordination is required to accurately manage the capacity, velocity, control and visibility of the distribution system. Across all modes of transportation and all commodities of supply, there is no doubt a complex and elaborate network of processes and procedures exists. As identified in this article, the Joint Distribution Management Center simplifies the convoluted processes, creates coordinating efficiencies and provides a jointly managed logistical common operating picture from which decisive distribution decisions can be made. This concept meets the intent of Army Distribution Management, and answers the question of how it can be accomplished. While there is no doubt that distribution management will support the Army logistically in its force sustainment strategy of the future, the strength of distribution multi-organizational relationships will no doubt determine its health and efficiency.

Class I Distribution within Afghanistan

by CW2 Daniel Barker
Class I Officer

Afghanistan is home to the most hostile terrain and weather the U.S Army has ever fought in. 19,000 ft peaks, poor roads barely fit for horseback distribution, and a determined enemy make this a tough place to distribute CLI, yet in mid March 2011, soldiers at COP Connelly are enjoying fresh strawberries and ice cream.

Afghanistan is about distribution more than any previous conflict the U.S has ever been involved in. It is a landlocked country with plains in the north and southwest. The Hindu Kush Mountains occupy much of the north and east. The nearest sea port is Karachi Pakistan (400 miles away) making mass re-supply by sea difficult. CL I containers from the United States dock in Pakistan at the Port of Karachi. Upon arrival, they await transportation for up to 30-45 days, causing prime vendor items in the Supreme Warehouses within Afghanistan to become not in stock (NIS) due to priority list of containers. Normally CLI floats around the second to fifth position on the priority list. It is a ten day drive by Host Nation Trucking (HNT) to the Torkham gate and another few days travel to the Supreme Warehouse in Kabul.

Supreme Food Service is the Subsistence Prime Vendor (SPV) for Afghanistan. The SPV has been charged with delivering CLI throughout Afghanistan by either ground, rotary wing, or fixed wing assets. Supreme delivers Class I to 157 locations throughout RC East, North, and Capital. A unit places an order into Subsistence Total Ordering and Receipting Electronic System (STORES), a web-based program that provides users with the functionality necessary to accomplish ordering and receipting of food items. Once the SPV receives the requests, the orders are picked from the warehouse, checked for quality control/ assurance, and then loaded onto HNTs; that are subcontracted by Supreme to deliver to the locations within Afghanistan. The normal transit time is 7-10 days from the day the order is received in STORES to the customers entry control point (ECP).

The 101st SB manages the Bagram Airfield (BAF) Class I yard. The BAF Class I yard supports 40 locations on a monthly basis and can push Class I to any location within Afghanistan by ground or aerial resupply. Conventional Force Class I Airdrop requests are pushed down from the Brigade Support Battalions (BSB), to the SB Aerial Delivery section in the Support Operations, to the CLI section to be processed through the BAF Class I yard for the Marines in RC West. The CLI Yard also services the Combined Joint Special Operations Force-Afghanistan (CJSOTF-A) with CLI for their airdrops and ground transportation deliveries to their Village Stability Platforms (VSP) throughout Afghanistan.

There are challenges with CL I deliveries throughout Northeastern Afghanistan. Besides the Taliban and Insurgents, this region of Afghanistan is very mountainous. The harsh terrain and winter makes it difficult for ground distribution and several locations have to depend on either aerial deliveries or rotary wing assets to deliver CLI to war-fighters that are stationed on mountain tops. Supreme requests air status on the hour for each location that they fly deliveries to on that particular day. Indirect and small arms fire affect rotary wing deliveries. If Supreme receives a RED or BLACK air status, this shipment is placed on hold until confirmation is AMBER or GREEN; sometimes taking up to 24-48 hours for confirmation from the Task Force. With that being said, a unit's days of supply on hand can be affected by the lack of re-supply.

The Salang Tunnel is another concern during the winter. The Salang is located in the Parwan province, a link between northern and southern Afghanistan, crossing the Hindukush mountain range. The Salang Tunnel is the only pass going in a north-south direction to remain in use throughout the year. It reaches an altitude of about 11,200 feet and is 1.6 miles long. In 2010, it was noted that about 16,000 vehicles pass the tunnel daily. In early 2011, the snow began to fall and the Salang tunnel was closed for a few days and then when it reopened, it would only allow north to south or south to north traffic per day. As this result, 40' CLI containers were not allowed through the tunnel cause double the amount of trucks having to pass through the Salang. Increasing additional storage requirements and having a contingency plan in place- alternate method of delivery, will guarantee units within Regional Command- North are supported effectively with mission essential supplies.

"In mid March 2011, soldiers at COP Connelly are enjoying fresh strawberries and ice cream."

Despite all of these challenges throughout Afghanistan, the SB has put together a logistical team that gets the job done as quickly and efficiently as possible with the resources provided. The Movement Control Battalion (MCB), Support Operations commodity managers, Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF), Army Material Command (AMC), the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), and BSBs work together to ensure the war-fighters have all Classes of supply in the right place at the right time. SB commodity managers coordinate with our partners, subordinates, and customers, anticipate the requirements, validate those requirements, and follow up after the distribution is complete. This effort requires the entire team to from our Strategic Partners down to the drivers, and materiel handlers to synchronize this extremely complex distribution system this effort ensures that "Nothing fails due to Logistics." The priority of effort is to sustain the momentum of combat operations.

Movement of Cash in Afghanistan

by CPT Ralph E. Scheider IV
Finance Management Officer

The use of money in Afghanistan ranges from a source of morale for Soldiers to a payment for building a road. Getting currency in theater is not as easy as going to an ATM and withdrawing it. It has to be hand carried from Germany all the way to the Soldier. The Financial Management Company in RC-E/N/C passes through its vaults over $469M in US Dollars and Afghani. This article will discuss how money gets to the Soldier and why currency has to be retrograded out of Afghanistan.

Cash within theater is driven by two factors; demand and the cash holding authority (maximum cash allowed on hand) of the Disbursing Officer (DO) in theater. The daily operation of the disbursing office is handled by the Deputy Disbursing Officer (DDO). When US Dollars are needed the DDO will request money from the Theater Financial Management Center (TFMC) who will then order it from Germany. Once the US Currency is ordered the FM Co will have a team of 5-12 Soldiers fly to the TFMC in Kuwait and pick up the money and bring it back. This costs about $5600 round trip from Bagram to Kuwait and up to a week of travel time. If the DDO is in need of local currency, Afghani, they will order it from the local Afghan Bank, currently Afghanistan International Bank (AIB), instead of the TFMC, which is brought onto post by the bank. When US Dollars or Afghani are needed at the FM Det level the Disbursing Agent (DA) will request the money from the DDO. The FM Det will then send a team of three Soldiers to the FM CO to pick up the money needed. Travel time can be up to a week. Once the DA receives the currency they fund the Financial Management Support Teams (FMST), Class B agent, Field Ordering Officer/Paying Agent (FOO/PA) teams, and Project Payment Officer/Paying Agent (PPO/PA) teams.

The FMST is a group of three FM Soldiers that travel to locations that do not have full time FM support. These teams are responsible for providing Financial Management (FM) support to fill Soldiers needs. FMST teams are used at the request of the battlespace owners, usually BASEOPS. BASEOPS will coordinate travel and life support with the FM Det FMST to come to that location to provide FM support to the Soldiers. These teams move based on a hub and spoke method, basically the FMST is located forward and subsequently supports outlying locations from there. FMSTs cycle rotational schedule can be from a 14 day cycle to 180 day cycle depending on the needs of the battlespace owners. A Class B agent is an appointed NCO which provides cash to Soldiers, is used to augment a FMST cycle if the location is too remote. The use of FOO/PA teams and PPO/PA teams are used to purchase goods off the local economy and to pay vendors for services. These teams normally deal in local currency to make payments.

Movement of physical currency out of theater begins when a DA is approaching their cash holding authority or needs to exchange large denominations for smaller denominations. The DA will send a three person team to the FM Co to turn in the US currency or exchange it for smaller bills. After this is done, the DDO returns the dollars back to the TFMC with a team from the FM Co. This happens about 4-9 times a year at a cost of $5600 per trip. The source of retrograding cash out of theater is a result of deposits made by AAFES and Post Office. These deposits can reach upwards of $1.5M, normally in large denomination and are not reused by the FM Co. These denominations come from the local bank ATMs and AIB branch on post. AIB on post provides accounts for Other Country Nationals (OCN) and Local Nationals (LN) who are paid by Other Government Agencies, Contractors and Subcontractors on posts in Afghanistan. AIB has distributed $48M between the Kandahar, New Kabul Compound (NKC) and Bagram Airfield locations. This increases the cash on hand and increases the frequency at which dollars need to be retrograded costing the US Government $5K-$7K per retrograde.

Improving fuel distribution efficiency and effectiveness in Regional Command Capital

Balancing consumption, capacity, and distribution velocity

MAJ Jeremiah O'Connor
Forward Logistics Element Officer

In November 2010 the 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion (CSSB) under the 101st Sustainment Brigade assumed responsibility for providing sustainment support to Regional Command Capital (RC-C) in Afghanistan. The battalion placed a Forward Logistics Element (FLE) at Camp Phoenix to facilitate this mission. After assuming this mission it was rapidly discovered that the fuel distribution process for the eight bases in RC-C was at its best inefficient and at its worst disruptive to combat operations. Camp Phoenix, the logistics hub for the Kabul Base Cluster (KBC) had neither the capacity nor throughput to serve as the fuel distribution hub for the cluster. The camp was also un-prepared to support increased fuel consumption requirements in the first winter following the surge. In fact all the bases in the KBC were below the CENTCOM recommended capacities. This necessitated distribution to each of the bases with Host Nation (jingle) Trucks (HNT) loaded with bulk fuel in Bagram. This delivery path also required the upload and download of roughly 200 Trucks per month at Bagram stressing an already choked node.

The capacity of the bases in Kabul demanded Just in Time Logistics which is not the preferred solution for bulk commodity distribution and not supportable by unescorted HNTs. It is well known that Afghan HNTs by contract have seven days to deliver fuel. It also takes on average three days from the contracting of the empty truck to get it onto Bagram, uploaded and ready for departure. These carriers also have a less than perfect record for successfully completing missions. Mission success is defined by delivery of the fuel to the destination within seven days of upload with 90% of the fuel. It was not uncommon for these trucks to download less than the required quantity of fuel due to pilferage, arrive late, or not show at all. The last challenge was visibility of fuel in the distribution pipeline. While some trucks would deliver in less than seven days it was impossible to predict when they would actually arrive. The velocity of fuel distribution from Bagram coupled with uncertain delivery times and quantities required brute force distribution methods to achieve the necessary logistics effects.

The first method to increase distribution velocity was military escort of HNTs. While this method reduced fuel delivery time and eliminated pilferage it used up critical convoy security crews and other resources to deliver a bulk commodity. It also impacted service levels to the logistics hubs in Regional Command East (RC-E) but delaying planned movement or bumping scheduled cargo and increased Soldier exposure on the battlefield.

The second method of compensation was to re-mission un-escorted HNTs bound for one destination to go to another that was at a critical fuel stockage level. Unfortunately the delivery timeline requirement for fuel truck starts over as soon as they are re-missioned, reducing overall throughput. It also places the losing base at risk of dropping into critical status because the replacement fuel for the re-missioned truck is more than a week away. Few bases in Kabul have the capacity to serve as donor bases. Much like taking out a loan, the added days a driver has to deliver the fuel is the interest. This interest reduces net buying power or in the case of fuel overall distribution volume.

The third method of compensation was to order more fuel than needed thus forcing trucks to wait at each base until enough fuel was consumed to allow a complete download. This method is expensive due to demurrage charges for not downloading a truck as soon as it arrives. These constraints put significant pressures on the Bagram fuel distribution node; significantly reducing their flexibility in daily prioritization of trucks to bring on the base and causing fuel priorities for RC-C to come in frequent conflict with RC-E.

The fourth method of compensation was to use military fuel tankers to delivery fuel. This course of action eliminates delivery time and volume uncertainty but uses a tremendous amount of military personnel resources and exposes crews to unacceptable risk. This course of action is acceptable under only the most extreme circumstances and only for short haul missions. Having the capability to distribute fuel in this fashion also allows leaders to delay using the other four non-standard techniques due to its ability to all but eliminate the risk of running out of fuel. As a case in point, if an HNT fuel truck is expected to arrive at a base tomorrow and the base runs out in 48 hours, there is no need for an emergency military escorted

fuel delivery from Bagram due to the ability to push military tankers from Phoenix with no notice. If the truck arrives on schedule, the non-standard delivery method is not needed; if the HNT is a no show, then the assets are readily available to conduct the emergency push.

While these methods addressed recurrent risk they do not have the capability of mitigating disruptive risk, which is an extended period of no deliveries that could be caused by an HNT driver strike, closure of the Pakistan ground lines of communication, Ramadan, environmental or political related hazards. Increasing capacity in close proximity to the supported bases is the only way to effectively mitigate the risk of a long term disruption.

With force reduction pressures and increased fiscal scrutiny it was imperative that the brute force logistics methods common to Phase I operations be replaced or balanced with logistics efficiency while accomplishing the same logistics effects. To accomplish the needed change, I leveraged lessons learned while completing masters of military logistics program at North Dakota State University the year prior.

To improve the existing system, increasing capacity, leveraging the Defense Logistics Agency-Energy (DLA-E) strategic reserve in Kabul, and increasing the throughput capacity were necessary. To accomplish these changes the FLE had to determine all of the stakeholders generate a sense of urgency and make the initiative advantageous enough to each partner generating the needed momentum. The following paragraphs provide a short analysis of each of the key players and the components of the change initiative that provided them incentives for allocating the needed resources.

The first critical organization was DLA-E. Their Standard Operating Procedure is to deliver to sites with more than one million gallons of capacity of which Phoenix was considerably below. This requirement is driven by customer service limitations and also by the long lead times for distribution from sources outside of theater. DLA-E orders fuel for the next 30 – 60 days as opposed to sites in Kabul that are ordering fuel for next week. While the responsiveness of their distribution network is mitigated by the presence of the strategic reserve in Kabul, DLA-E still had significant concerns about the supportability of including a low volume site in their network and getting into the tactical fuel distribution system in general. The 82nd Sustainment Brigade formally requested DLA-E direct delivery to Kabul but they asked for too much in the form of delivery to multiple sites in Kabul. They also did not have a concrete plan in place for expanding capacity at any of the sites to mitigate DLA-E's concerns about its ability to effectively support the site. The biggest challenge for them was the lack of an organic presence in RC-C to shepherd needed change through the process. When the 101st SB re-engaged DLA-E on direct delivery, they mitigated DLA's concerns by seeking direct delivery for only one site in Kabul along with a legitimate capacity expansion plan. These two critical elements facilitated the rapid approval of this request resulting in immediate realization of 50 percent of the total long term benefits. Half of all Kabul fuel consumption occurs at Camp Phoenix so direct delivery reduced the throughput requirement at Bagram by 100 trucks per month, just in time for the winter season. While the direct delivery request was in staffing, the FLE received a sequence of phone calls and site visits where DLA communicated their two biggest concerns. Does Camp Phoenix have a legitimate expansion in place and will the camp have the throughput capacity to receive all the trucks sent there? This introduces the second key stakeholder, Task Force Rushmore, the Installation Management Command equivalent for RC-C.

TF Rushmore owned the Garrison Facilities Utilization Board (GFUB) where projects for the Kabul Base Cluster were approved and forwarded to the Joint Facilities Utilization Board (JFUB) for ultimate approval and funding. On this board were the key stakeholders and enablers from their staff including the Engineers, Force Protection Officer, Camp Phoenix Garrison Commander (GC), and Contracting Officer. In preparation for the GFUB the FLE conducted a series of meetings with these stakeholders to identify their concerns and mitigate them early.

Convincing the Camp Phoenix GC to allocate more of the most valuable resource in Kabul (space) to logistics functions was a significant challenge. The demand for space was one of the root causes of storage problem throughout the KBC. Initially a course of action was explored to transition the existing fuel storage footprint from a space inefficient 20K bag footprint to a less modular 210K bag footprint. Unfortunately this type of project would reduce the near term capacity at the very time a capacity increase was needed due to the winter season. The only other option was to reduce the overall footprint of the FLE making the expansion a zero sum game in terms of space for Camp Phoenix. The previous unit left approximately half a football field worth of retrograde material from the Supply Support Activity (SSA) in the proposed location for the expansion. By rapidly moving this material off the base we were able

to convince the Phoenix GC that we were sincere about the project. We also re-evaluated our tactical vehicle needs and right sized our fleet reducing the overall space requirement and provided a few of these vehicles (with 101SB approval) to the IMCOM to strengthen the FLE's relationship with them. The second concern the GC had was the impact on force protection and force protection manning requirements. These concerns along with the throughput requirement drove the design for the ingate chute that would accomplish a host of objectives. The existing fuel gate and chute could only accommodate one vehicle at a time and required a squad of Soldiers to go outside the base to inspect the vehicles prior to bringing them in the chute. This exposed the Soldiers to threats from three dimensions and increased the number of personnel required to safely perform the task. A single, back in download point also severely limited the number of vehicles that could upload or download in a single day. As we transitioned the first few low consumption bases in Kabul to Phoenix distribution, uploads and downloads began to compete resulting in the turning away of DLA-E downloads. The chute needed to reduce Soldier exposure, improve the protection of the base perimeter, increase throughput, and not use significant space. Designing a compartment or dry lock of sorts allows the security team to bring a truck into a secure area before starting the inspection while at the same time protects the rest of the base. The length of the chute facilitates the download or upload of two vehicles simultaneously reducing the download time in half. Both vehicle positions have upload and download capability to increase the flexibility of truck processing. As TF Rushmore transitioned to TF Yankee the ingate chute became one of the highest priorities for the IMCOM due to the force protection enhancements nested within it and culminated in the FLE's Contracting Officer Representative, SGT Wright, briefing the General Officer responsible for the KBC. Once the chute is complete, Camp Phoenix will have the throughput capability and capacity to easily support the entire KBC.

One of the unexpected efficiencies associated with DLA-E distribution was the superior trucks contracted by DLA. These trucks were better equipped than HNTs ordered from Bagram and had two download nozzles. This facilitated a reduction in download time by half causing an immediate reduction in force protection requirements and increase in throughput capacity. Another unexpected benefit was the significant reduction of delivery time in the city. When the FLE orders an HNT to pick up fuel at Bagram it routinely takes 7-10 days for that truck to arrive at Bagram, upload fuel and deliver to the site in the city. When distributing fuel from Phoenix to one of the KBC sites we found that the order to delivery time was cut in half, even though carriers had seven days to deliver. This significantly reduced the time needed to affect the current stockage level at any site and significantly reduced recurrent risk.

These enhancements set the conditions for the key stakeholders in Kabul to dedicate staff and other resources to push to project through the GFUB and JFUB process rapidly. This significantly mitigated DLA-E's reservations about delivering fuel to such a small site.

With the increased capacity there is now enough capacity to transition the 20K bag footprint to a 210K footprint. This transition will provide 500K gallons of fuel in the same footprint that formerly held 240K gallons. This transition necessitates a short term reduction in capacity of 80K gallons but the additional 210 on ground more than compensates for it. Camp Phoenix will also have the flexibility to recover the space from the initial expansion in the future as the capacity of the original footprint will be dramatically increased.

The end result of this project reduces distribution timelines from ten to four days, reduces the throughput requirement at Bagram by 200 trucks per month, reduces force protection personnel required for downloads at Camp Phoenix by half, more than doubles Kabul's fuel capacity, reduces delivery cost by approximately a third by reducing double handling, and all but eliminates the need for the non-standard delivery techniques that consume so many resources. This project dramatically reduces Kabul's exposure to recurrent and disruptive fuel risk and facilitates more responsive support by Task Force Lifeliner to other Regional Commands through increased asset availability.

Fiscally Responsible Transportation Assets within Afghanistan

by MAJ Matthew Reynolds
Distribution Chief

Within Afghanistan, there are countless issues that require the usage of a vast amount of transportation resources. The problem can never be defined in a single problem statement, nor can it be described in a way that the average person outside of Afghanistan can understand. The purpose of this article is to try to give readers an understanding of a few of the issues, and to recommend the way ahead for leaders that are in the front coordinating for these precious resources.

Host Nation Trucking

Host Nation Trucking has been a multi-faceted solution to some of the vast transportation problems within Afghanistan. On average, there are over 5,000 trucks moving in and around Afghanistan that are owned by 8 carriers that provide this service to customers requiring movement of cargo. The contracts that have been awarded for this contract are worth millions of dollars with numerous policies in place to try to handle cargo that does not arrive on time, trucks that do not arrive in a timely manner for customers, and discrepancies within the cargo that is transported from consignor to consignee. However, the fact of the matter is that these transportation resources can prove to be semi-reliable within a combat environment that expects cargo to arrive in accordance with U.S. standards. Afghanistan is a very complex environment to live and work in, with corruption occurring throughout almost every level of the operation. The problem is that the corruption is often hard to prove, and in the end, customers still do not receive their transportation assets all of the time. While there are several echelons of command that are constantly working through these very complex issues, the transference of complete responsibility must be handed over entirely to Afghanistan in order to really address the issues that drive transportation. As a United States government, we cannot continue to sink valuable resources into a black hole that does not produce adequate results.

The majority of the other ground movements that occur in Afghanistan happen with U.S. owned military assets. Units at every echelon of command work very hard to deliver the cargo to the right place at the right time. The importance of what these logisticians do cannot be minimized as they put their lives at risk every day to ensure that the War-fighters receive their necessary commodities on a daily basis. Everything from Food to Water to Fuel to Ammo, these brave souls fight through every day to accomplish their mission, and to assist others in completing their missions.

Air Movement

Air movement can be a tricky solution to an overall complex problem with moving cargo on a 3-dimensional battlefield. The hard work that goes in to sustaining air movement operations is a very cumbersome task, but the Air Force, Army, Marines, and Navy from the United States work very well with

"Placing Afghanistan in charge and holding them responsible is vital towards moving U.S. forces out of Afghanistan, and all of us must work together in order to force change."

their Coalition NATO partners to ensure that cargo is moved out efficiently and effectively. We are currently moving millions of pounds of cargo daily through the air. However, there can consistently be waste and abuse associated with all of these air assets, and money is spent in a way that could probably have been avoided. One particular case of this is in contracted 747 assets. Recently, a contracted 747 was commissioned to come to Bagram, Afghanistan in order to clear out retrograde cargo that was in need of repair. This cargo can be repaired in a CONUS depot, and then delivered back into the Theater in order to provide continued sustainment to the War-fighters. Part of the issue with this contracted 747, however, is that cargo had not been previously identified in order to provide a justification for a transportation resource. The most troubling piece of this 747, was that the proper analysis did not seem to take place that could justify this aircraft. The overall issue with this, is that more dollars are spent trying to force an aircraft into theater. The story behind the story is that this aircraft was commissioned to tackle a perceived problem, but the solutions and processes to fix the problems were not in place prior to the aircraft arriving.

The real lesson learned with this is that transportation requirements should never drive customer requirements. And if they do, it should not be at an additional cost to the government in the form of a contracted asset, but rather, should be attempted to be complete by assets we already own. It is the responsibility of leaders at every level to ensure that we are not misusing the tax payers' money. In a war that has already exceeded $1 trillion, every dollar counts towards fiscal responsibility.

Way Ahead

The way ahead is also a very complex problem that senior leaders, diplomats, and politicians must determine. At every level, the constant question is, "What is the cost?" While we have assisted Afghanistan in coming miles over the past 10 years, the real question is, where have we helped them go to? Have we really gotten $1 trillion worth of accomplishments out of fighting the war in Afghanistan? Where do we go from here? The most important aspect of understanding the transportation problems in Afghanistan is to understand who we are putting at risk. At the risk of American lives, we are attempting to transform a country that may or may not want to be transformed. If we already understand the corruption and political aspects of Afghanistan, then we must apply those lessons learned. Dollars that are placed against transportation resources must be properly accounted for. If we are going to assist with building a nation, we must teach them the values that we live by, as well as give them an understanding of responsibility. And if we are going to transfer responsibility over to the Afghanistan nation, we must do so in a way in which the Afghanistan government is addressing the problems and taking responsibility for it. The United States cannot indefinitely solve the problems of a war-torn nation, but we can assist that nation in declaring independence from terrorism, corruption, and illegal activities that contribute to world-wide terror.

In closing, the United States and its NATO Coalition partners have worked together to provide transportation resources within Afghanistan. Building the relationships with our Coalition partners has proved to be invaluable, and the political implications of our deepened relationships will be felt for years to come. Placing Afghanistan in charge and holding them responsible is vital towards moving U.S. forces out of Afghanistan, and all of us must work together in order to force change. We owe it to the American taxpayer to be fiscally responsible in the way we deal with transportation resources. As we continue to learn these lessons, we will learn how to be a better Expeditionary force that quickly moves in, re-vitalizes control, and then quickly moves out. The United States cannot take responsibility for other people's actions, but we can assist and advise on how to better govern a war-torn country. By doing this, we also will be able to focus more on issues that we have within our own nation. We owe it to the sons and daughters that fight for our nation to ensure we are not inappropriately placing their lives at risk. We also owe it to the American taxpayers to be responsible with the hard earned money that they pay towards the taxes that support our great war-fighting efforts.

Retrograde in Afghanistan

by CW2 Thomas Mann
RIC GEO Officer

After 10 years of War, retrograde of reparable CLIX and excess CLII in Afghanistan has and will continue to be a constant struggle. The lack of Command Supply Discipline coupled with the treacherous terrain we are fighting in makes retrograde a challenge. Retrograde is being treated as a unit movement of equipment back to CONUS. It is anything but! Retrograde of materiel is a critical enabler of service force generation. Service equipment needs to be returned to the equipment force pool to be appropriately redistributed to equip units according to service priorities and to ensure operational and training readiness. Below will explain all the moving pieces that need to be factored in concerning retrograde.

The retrograde process really begins when the unit places an order for the items needed. The 101st SB manages the Manager Review File (MRF) for 10 Supply Support Activities (SSA) that provide support to 13 Brigade Combat Teams throughout Regional Command (RC) East, North and Capital. Every day we process on average $25-30 million worth of transactions. Are Unit Commanders reviewing each of these orders before they are placed at the SSA? Are RECONS being conducted by the units on a monthly basis? The short answer to both of these question is No. If these two easy steps were conducted on a routine basis the majority of retrograde would never be generated in the first place.

The majority of excess serviceable retrograde coming out of the SSA never touches a customer's hands. This is cargo ordered by a unit that has already re-deployed, who either failed to close out their DoDAAC properly or canceled the request after it was released for shipment. The establishment of Theater Provided Equipment (TPE) DoDAACs would fix this problem, but units are only authorized to use these DoDAACs for equipment that will be used in theater. You would think office supplies would fall into this category but they don't. So unit A orders paper with their home station DoDAAC but then has to cancel it before they leave theater. The paper is already in the pipeline so when it is received at the SSA it kicks out excess creating retrograde that will leave theater. Unit B probably still has a requirement for paper but hasn't placed it on order yet and the paper is already in a container awaiting shipment to Kuwait. The sole use of TPE DoDAACs in theater would create a situation where all cargo would go to a unit first and if they don't have a requirement for it they can turn it in to the SSA to retrograde.

Repairable/Recoverable item management continues to be a friction point in Afghanistan. With the phased implementation of Exchange Pricing (EP) in 2008 many new business rules and processes were introduced to Army logisticians particularly in the supply and maintenance arenas. This new process took the ability for the Sustainment Brigade to be able to close open issues as we were able to under the Overage Reparable Item List (ORIL) system. Under the EP system all units have the ability to pull their recoverable reports using the tools in Logistics Information warehouse (LIW) and Integrated Logistics Analysis Program (ILAP). The issue is, units in theater believe because they are not EP players they have no responsibility to turn in recoverable items. This is not the case. AR 710-2 clearly states the guidelines for turning in repairable items. These tools are given to the units so we can clearly identify how much retrograde is due to be turned in so assists will be available to move them.

We move retrograde out of Afghanistan by two modes, air and ground. Air is the preferred method for moving CLIX reparables to either Kuwait or directly back to CONUS. This process consist of the SSA building 463L pallets to standard, scheduling appointments and then moving them to the nearest Aerial Port for onward movement. Over the past 11 months we have averaged more than 500 Short Tons (ST) of retrograde per month via air, but we still have air assets leaving theater empty. With the amount of retrograde

still on the battle field we should be averaging at a minimum of 1,000 ST a month. SSAs cannot produce more retrograde, it is up to the units to get this cargo turned into the SSA so they can prepare it to be retrograded. Ground distribution is where the real friction is. Over the last 11 months we have averaged 1,350 ST of retrograde a month by ground. All ground retrograde is processed through Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC). This is a lengthy and frustrating process. Once paperwork is correct and submitted to the ministry, it takes anywhere from thirty to forty-five days for an approval. In the meantime, the retrograde continues to pile up as the SSAs try their best to accommodate the backlog. The SSAs in theater just do not have the space to hold retrograde containers as they continue to run normal operations. The best business practice would be when SDDC drops off a container for the SSA to process, they pick up retrograde container at the same time. This would eliminate the SSA from holding retrograde containers for up to forty-five days

In closing retrograde is an individual, unit and most importantly a Command responsibility. There are many factors that make retrograding cargo out of Afghanistan a challenge. The reliability of National Afghan Trucking (NAT) poor roads coupled with bad weather just to name a few. With the drawdown getting closer it is imperative that everyone is on the same page when it comes to retrograding cargo out of the theater of operation.

Logistics Reporting Tool

by CPT Michael S. Wilson Jr.
SPO Battle Captain

The Army has always attempted to be at the cutting edge of technology and its effective use. Soldiers are not always receptive of these changes nor are they forgiving of products that do not meet the test of battlefield use. The Logistics Reporting Tool (LRT) was an update to one such system that failed to meet the Soldier's expectations and is still fighting for the recognition that it deserves. The LRT was first introduced in August 2009 after extensive research and input from Logisticians to improve performance, user interface, and overall capabilities from the Legacy version of 2004 and the Ease of Use version from 2008.

The Logistics Reporting Tool is a piece of software that operates off of the Battle Command Sustainment Support System (BCS3). The BCS3 has several functions to include in-transit and supply-point asset visibility, equipment maintenance status, and unit logistics status that are utilized from forward operating units to corps headquarters including Active, Reserve, and Guard components in order to provide the Soldier with a common operating picture (COP). The platform on which the LRT operates has been systematically placed throughout the Army and communicates in real time with Logistics Support Agency and Standard Army Management Information Systems like Standard Army Retail Supply System, Standard Army Maintenance System - Enhanced, Standard Army Ammunition System-Modernization; therefore, it has the greatest probability of streamlining reporting procedures and optimizing logistic accuracies. So why did it fail at first? The original software was considered too difficult to use and did not provide a full spectrum of reporting tools causing units to continue to rely on their original reporting procedures. For most units, this consisted of manually populated reports that were customized to each unit's preferences and then typically reconfigured for each higher echelon's individual report formats. At the time, it was more efficient to manually input data than to utilize BCS3's limited fields and input the remaining data in individual formats due to the necessity for each user to filter through every other user's data to get to the specific data needed within BCS3.

After BCS3's original fielding in 2004 there were hardware updates to improve functionality, but no software updates to address issues put forth by forward operating logisticians until 2008. These four years gave Soldiers a bitter taste towards the BCS3's abilities as a logistical tool on today's battlefields. In December 2008, the Ease of Use version began fielding with many improvements to include pulling data from LOGSA instead of regional databases to improve STAMIS data feeds, a wizard for filters and operational views, user defined task organization tool, and a logistics reporting tool that integrates data from different echelons. These improvements were critical in the BCS3's road to redemption, but still did not meet the modern logistician's needs. The Logistics Reporting Tool version, that began fielding in August 2009, was virtually the same as the Ease of Use version, but with a few critical updates that make it the incredible tool it is today. One key update was that the data created by lower units auto populated higher echelon units within the originating unit's task organization. This would allow a higher headquarters to not only see overall supply statuses within their organization, but also see each individual unit's logistical status increasing decision makers' operational visibility. Reporting options were also improved with the

ability to generate munitions reports (MUREP), bulk petroleum reports (REPOL), and bulk water reports that were not available in previous versions as well as expanding the capabilities for CLI, IIIP, V, VI, IX, and X. The third major update was the ability to aggregate reports using the task organization tool. A user could utilize unit identification codes from multiple units on a FOB that are not within the same task organization to create a report for a forward operating base as a whole. These three updates allowed leaders to see what is truly on the battlefield, effectively reducing the occurrence of redundant logistical convoys, duplicate orders, and hoarding of supplies in one location where it is not needed. Having stated these benefits, it is only true if the Soldier uses the LRT.

According to Army Regulation 25-1, Army Knowledge Management (AKM) is the Army's strategy to transform itself into a net-centric, knowledge-based force and an integral part of the Army's transformation to achieve the Future Force. AKM will deliver improved information access and sharing while providing infrastructure capabilities across the Army so that war fighters and business stewards can act quickly and decisively. AKM connects people, knowledge, and technologies. Having stated some of the major capabilities of the LRT; is the system a data management tool, or a knowledge management tool that commanders on the battlefield can use to make real time decisions and execute them. It is a data management tool with the beginnings of and high potential for a knowledge management tool. The Logistics Reporting Tool provides these capabilities, but it is only a first step in a process to get this asset to a fully functional AKM system. Currently, the LRT is pulling from systems that are already in existence with wide spread use. In order to meet the Army's intent for an AKM, all the systems must first come to one central system and then the ability to use those individual systems must be phased out. People in general are hesitant towards change and the Army is no different. As long as a Logistician is able to maintain their status quo they see no need to move to another system. This leads to the discussion of does a new technology need to conform to leaders or do leaders need to conform to new technology. Here, as in everything else, there must be a balance between the two. An individual cannot expect improvement or forward movement if they are unwilling to change, but new technology cannot be so alien that leaders cannot see the benefits of its use. Here begins the discussion of what is the way ahead and what does the Army need to do in order to be more receptive to technological changes.

Army leaders have mixed feelings on the LRT and BCS3, as previously discussed. The Boeing subsidiary, Tapestry Solutions, Inc, is the current manager for these systems and has made vast improvements from the original system that failed. Tapestry Solutions is more receptive to what logisticians want and continue to plan improvements to make the LRT what is needed on the battlefield to include improved logistical command and control capabilities. Having said this, Army leaders are not holding their end of the 'bargain' by giving the LRT neither the proper chance it needs or keeping their expectations within a realistic realm. Even with the technology of today it is not reasonable to expect an automated system that will know when every round is expended, every MRE consumed, or every gallon of fuel distributed; at least, not without an enormous price tag. Even now, we have the capability to track every container shipped within an area of operation through RFID tags yet they are not always utilized, there isn't enough to be used for every moving container, and certain locations resist allowing interrogator towers, which track said tags, at their entry control points. This does not mean that the core system cannot be fine tuned to ensure a smoother reception of auxiliary systems/sensors that will track said consumptions. Fine tuning cannot occur if the system is not being used and it won't be used if commanders don't enforce it. Nothing can be gained if nothing is done.

The Logistics Reporting Tool has a long way to go in order to be the AKM needed. Many of the reports and tracking capabilities are somewhat new and will require continual updates not to mention any new requirements that are asked for by commanders. This brings up two points: standardized channel for feedback and automatic updates/patches similar to a computer operating system. Since the LRT is a web based application, neither of these points should be that challenging and the LRT already has the capability to be on NIPR, SIPR, and CENTRIX operating systems. The current method of feedback is through the Incident Reporting Module, a web based system, ran by C4ISR Support Operations Center. This web site is better known as 'Remedy'. Here any user with AKO access can obtain an account to file a trouble ticket for issues, concerns, and/or recommendations. This process is not limited to the LRT, but pertains to every software used by the Army. These tickets are forwarded to the PMs (Project Manager) for consolidation and review. These individuals then pass their major concerns and requests for updates to the TCM (TRADOC Capabilities Manager). The TCM decides quarterly what upgrades or patches to fund. Currently, this is completely outside of the LRT system, but is easily accessed and used. Just like the LRT itself, if the users do not use the feedback system it will not work.

This leaves three main areas of interest of real time data, cost effectiveness, and command and control. Currently, the closest we can come to real time data

is the time difference between when the action occurs and the Soldier inputs it into the system. At the lowest level, this is no different from their current requirements with excel spreadsheets. The big difference is that every level above that is automatically populated and available. This can be improved upon as seen in some SSAs that have hand held scanners to populate reports of receipt and distribution. This same method can be applied to almost all classes of supply as well as distribution capabilities. Why can't fuel meters electronically store the amount of fuel received or dispersed, major weapons systems accumulate rounds fired and periodically report to a central hub, or any piece of equipment store its maintenance history and alert you when services are needed. The main constraint on this is the cost to develop, produce, and maintain such systems versus the assumed gain of time saved. Many individuals falsely believe that the LRT and BCS3 cost in excess of eleven thousand dollars each when in actuality that cost is in reference to the computer it is installed on. The minimum requirement for the BCS3 is a Dell 6300 or 6400 series laptop, which runs for under one thousand dollars. This is irrelevant to the LRT because the LRT software is owned by the government and can be downloaded from the BCS3 Local Access Portal then installed on any other computer with web access. The aforementioned cost is in reference to peripheral sensors capable of feeding into the LRT, which is beyond the prevue of this report. The LRT as it stands is already a cost effective software as it saves hours of labor from each level inputting data or creating custom excel documents with complex formulas and formatting. Finally, how does the LRT assist in command and control?

Command and Control (C2), as defined by the DOD Dictionary of Military Terms, is the exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned and attached forces in the accomplishment of the mission. Command and control functions are performed through an arrangement of personnel, equipment, communications, facilities, and procedures employed by a commander in planning, directing, coordinating, and controlling forces and operations in the accomplishment of the mission. The Logistics Reporting Tool is an excellent asset to assist any commander with this function. At the bare minimum, the LRT provides the same information as any other LOGSTAT through Microsoft excel, powerpoint, or word that is currently used by commanders to make decisions or plan operations. The LRT additionally provides immediate updates from forward units, automatic consolidation of all units within the task organization, and reduces the amount of human error to one point, the original input. This may not sound like much, but consider the amount of people who touch information before it reaches the commander and how many times that data can be corrupted. If the data is incorrect there is only one person that needs to be contacted and the LRT records who changed information each time it is updated. This places the LRT leagues ahead of any current report structure and with feedback from units on the battlefield it will only improve.

The Army has pushed for Soldiers and Logisticians to utilize the Logistics Reporting Tool more frequently over the current methods of reporting. The failure of previous versions as well as each individual unit's desire to maintain their customized reports have considerably reduced the reception of the LRT. The Army has installed the LRT training modules into the institutional training all Army Logisticians now receive in order to increase the receptiveness of future leaders, but this does not solve the issue of current leaders. The Army has continued to push for current use in both Iraq and Afghanistan and headway has been made in both. Once the LRT has been properly instructed and utilized, leaders see the benefits of increased visibility, automated reports, and the ability to maintain some customization. This was demonstrated in an article titled '1st Infantry Division Recognizes Benefits of Logistics Reporting Tool' from Army Sustainment, a bimonthly publication prepared at the Army Logistics University and published by the Army Combined Arms Support Command, where the 1st Infantry Division utilized the LRT in Iraq. The article demonstrates the struggles of convincing the logisticians to use the software, but also the benefits once accepted and utilized. In Afghanistan, all of the regional commands with the exception of two are utilizing the LRT to some degree and further implementation is planned. Many leaders have embraced the LRT and with its successful utilization in theater follow on units will learn to embrace it as well. What is needed is the continued enforcement of its use, training prior to deployment, and utilization of BCS3 Field Support Teams for in theater training and assistance.

The system still has flaws and as we are in an ever evolving battlefield the BCS3 and LRT will need to evolve with it. The equipment must be as portable and flexible as the Soldier that uses it. The LRT is web based, allowing the software to be loaded on any computer, but the computer is still tethered by power and the network by signal restrictions. As our network capabilities grow in magnitude and portability so will our COP. The Logistics Reporting Tool has the potential to meet the Soldier's requirements and ensure an accurate and real time COP of every logistical asset maintained from the United States all the way across the world.

A Closer Look Into Ammunition Clean Sweep

by CPT Marjorie Samples
Munitions Management Officer

Ammunition Clean Sweep (ACS) is a ground-breaking operation in RC-East spearheaded by the 101st Sustainment Brigade (SBDE). The goal of ACS is to help battlespace owners identify explosive hazards and ammunition issues at their forward locations and push forward expedition teams and resources to help them correct their problems.

Initially, the 101st SBDE put together a Site Assistance Visit Team (SAVT) consisting of a member from the 101st Class V section, a Logistics Ammunition Representative (LAR) and a Quality Assurance Specialist Ammunition Surveillance (QASAS). The intent of this team was to circulate the battlefield in order to inspect the serviceability of munitions and provide technical assistance for explosive safety practices. The reports that came back from the teams were disturbing.

The amount of unserviceable munitions found in the hands of Soldiers was concerning. The forward sites were storing their combat loads unsafely and living every day surrounded by numerous hazards. As the 101st SAVT traveled the battlespace it was evident that Soldiers and Leaders wanted to be in compliance but were limited by lack of man power, resources and technical expertise.

The SAVT identified an abundance of unserviceable ammunition that was allocated for combat use. It was evident that units did not have sufficient space to properly store munitions and the lack of space was a contributing factor to the explosive hazards.

The SAVT was just one team with limited manpower and resources to address the findings throughout the battlespace. The 101st SBDE combined forces with the QASAS/ LAR to find a way to address the issues found that had been overlooked during the last 10 years of combat operations.

"Due to lack of assets and space, every single ammo storage site within our battlespace is out of compliance with the explosive safety standards established by DOD and DA policies," said Col Peterman, Michael 101st SBDE Commander.

The Lifeliners lobbied to United States Forces – Afghanistan (USFOR-A), U.S. Army Technical Center for Explosives Safety (USATCES), Joint Sustainment Command – Afghanistan (JSC-A), Combined Joint Task Force – 1 (CJTF-1), United States Army Central (USARCENT), Joint Munitions Command (JMC) and United States Army Material Command (AMC) to combine efforts and support the Ammunition Clean Sweep efforts. Over the years, agencies involved with explosives safety traveled into the battlespace assessing the hazards, identifying deficiencies and directing the battlespace owners (BSOs) to correct their storage and accountability issues. At no time were the BSOs provided the resources or technical expertise to correct these problems. Ammunition Clean Sweep was the first attempt to stop handing out report cards and give the BSOs the support necessary to make the changes.

The 101st SBDE's goal and focus were to educate the ammo managers on how to improve their Ammunition Explosive (AE) storage sites and identify unserviceable and legacy munitions for retrograde. The overall

intent was to help mitigate and significantly reduce the existing hazards around the battle field.

June 2011 was a pivotal point for the 101st SBDE ammo safety efforts. Synchronizing the different agencies and partnerships, the Lifeliners took lead over the planning, coordination and overseeing the Ammunition Clean Sweep mission. The alliance between each organization and efforts to pull together the teams, funding and resources proved to be a challenge but not impossible. "It required a lot support from our chain of command. Here in Afghanistan it's like the wild-wild west. It seemed like every level of command and organization had their own plan. It took several months pitching our course of action to get everyone on board and all the agencies to support. Overall the support has been very good from all the agencies involved," said CW3 Mark Jackson, 101st SBDE Senior Ammunition Technician.

To support these efforts, the 101st SBDE provided 15 Soldiers from across the command, who trained for 30 days with the 592nd Ordnance Company and QASAS at the Bagram Ammunition Supply Point (ASP) to prepare for the mission. They worked with each Brigade Support Battalion (BSB) to allocate the resources, transportation and life support needed. By late July, 101st SBDE assembled five teams and began deploying the each battlespace as early as August. Presently, the teams are physically located in the Brigade Combat Team (BCT) areas inventorying, identifying, teaching and assisting these sites with their clean up to support the removal of legacy munitions and unserviceable munitions from the battlefield.

The value of this effort is of greatest benefit to the BCTs within the 101st SBDE Area of Operations as the teams assist with sorting through their unserviceable ammunition and preparing it for retrograde. Units will be working with their BSB's to retrograde the unserviceable munitions to their servicing Ammunition Support Activity (ASA) and the 101st SBDE will be working with the ASA's to pull back the retrograde back to the Bagram ASP and ultimately out of theater. Preparing the unserviceable munitions for retrograde is half the battle. Often these sites are operated by Soldiers who do not have the technical knowledge, time or manpower to do this all on their own. Their mission is to supply the munitions necessary to keep Soldiers in the fight. The Ammunition Clean Sweep operations is directly contributing to the combat readiness of munitions serviceability and safety of the Soldiers living near and relying on these munitions.

Ammunition Operations Practices, Challenges & Impact on Combat Theater Operations

By CPT Marjorie Samples
Munitions Management Officer

In any combat theater "you can live months without mail, weeks without food, days without water, but you may not live another second without ammo" – Unknown.

This article is intended to give leaders some awareness of the significant changes affecting combat ammunition operations. My intent is to provide a summary that focuses on two segments of the many sides of ammunition operations, management practices and stockage objective procedures. In this paper, I am sharing my observations on current management practices impacting combat theater operations within the 101st Sustainment Brigade Area of Responsibility (AOR).

There are many Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) in the US Army that are considered perishable and critical for service members to maintain proficiency in. In a combat theater, operating forces heavily rely on the logistician's ability to supply them with the ammunition they need to stay alive and in the fight. In any combat theater, operating forces focus on maintaining the momentum during lethal operations while the ammunition managers focus on rapidly resupplying them what they need. If it were as simple as supplying the demand of the operating forces with the munitions they need, the mission for this commodity, Class V, would be as easily manageable as any other commodity. However, the unpredictability of their consumptions and trends along with the intricacies of its overall management make the ammunition MOS a critical specialty that cannot afford neglect.

In the early stages of combat operations, the focus is to build combat power. Typically the management and accountability of ammunition is not strict. On the contrary, building power in the ammunition arena signifies streamlining sufficient munitions into the battlefield to support lethal operations. As a theater develops, management and accountability practices also mature. This is the point where it is crucial for managers to understand the different management levels and how decisions impact operations at each level.

Managers at the Expeditionary Sustainment Command (ESC) and Theater Support Command (TSC) level should have years of quality experience under their belt developed at the lower levels before being placed in a critical decision making position within these organizations. Their previous experience in this field will make a big difference in helping them make solid informed decisions. Instead, the latest trend of management shows that individuals, military and civilian, with limited ammunition backgrounds are being placed in ESC/TSC positions.

With the lack of understanding and knowledge, these managers have gotten in the habit of managing the battlefield from their desk utilizing the bubble chart and colors approach. This mind frame and approach has limited logisticians in the battlefield and interfered with efforts to improve on suppository logistics as well as on time logistics. Suppository logistics is defined as the movement to replenish a commodity as it's consumed or expended in the battlefield before it is requested for replenishment; anticipating that if it's consumed or expended, it will be needed again regardless of when.

It has been observed that managers at the ESC level are removed from the realities of the battlefield and make un-informed decisions derived from reports that do not capture real time data. Without making time to travel the battle space to understand the intricacies and challenges of distribution and terrain within each region, their decisions are made out of blind ignorance. You cannot conduct logistics solely through bubble charts and spreadsheets.

A management tool in the ammunition arena is a web-based program called Total Ammunition Management Information System (TAMIS). This program was initially developed to manage Training ammunition. As of October 2009, this program was enhanced and implemented as a tool to manage ammunition within all combat theaters. This revamped system has revolutionized the way these managers analyze data coming from the battlefield. At some point, ARCENT and DA G4 decided that the only way they authorize allocation and movement of munitions into theater is by having the operating forces submit expenditure reports that justifies their need for replenishment of munitions. This baffling concept for operating forces to justify their need for munitions needed in the battlefield is micro-managed through TAMIS.

The process is for the operating forces to submit a DA Form 5692 (Ammunition Consumption Certificate) and DA Form 4949 (Administrative Adjustment Report) capturing the date the munitions were expended, the type of munitions expended along with the quantity expended, submit these forms to their servicing sustainment brigade level who in turn enters

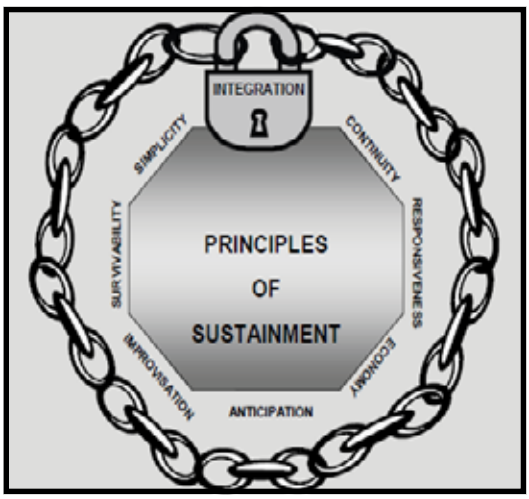
the data on these forms into TAMIS. The data entered into TAMIS is the data that 1st TSC, Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan (JSC-A), Army Central Command (ARCENT) and DA G4 use to determine and authorize whether or not to push munitions forward as well as what the stockage objective for each combat theater should be. A stockage objective is an authorized amount of Class V stocks required to support the basic, combat and sustainment loads for each combat theater. The stockage objective is ultimately approved by ARCENT.

Once a stockage objective has been approved, it is managed and monitored by all levels through the Combined Ballistic Report (CBR). The CBR is a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet fed by the Standard Army Ammunition System- Modernized (SAAS-MOD) STAMIS that captures the daily On Hand (OH) status of each Ammunition Supply Point (ASP) and Ammunition Transfer and Holding Point (ATHP) within theater.

The CBR is where these managers hone their tunnel vision skills and manage solely on Black, Amber, Red and Green status disregarding real time lethal operations. If the CBR status shows a "Green Status" and a request is submitted in anticipation of future lethal operations or high expenditure rates (that have not hit TAMIS yet), then the operating forces are simply denied of the munitions they need because according to the data in the CBR, there is plenty of munitions OH. To them, TAMIS and CBR data is regarded as real time data.

What these organizations lack to accept and understand is the reality of how two major factors affect combat operations in the ammo arena. The first factor is that expenditures are not submitted the minute the trigger is pulled, therefore justifying the need of munitions through TAMIS does not portray an accurate picture of what truly has been expended and needs replenishment in a timely manner. The second factor is the challenges distribution faces transporting critical commodities throughout rigorous terrain, infrastructure, and weather. Consequently, impacting the time it takes for munitions to get from the main hub down to the foxhole.

According to Field Manual (FM) 4-0 for Sustainment, there are principles to sustainment that logisticians are highly encouraged to adhere to. The principles of sustainment are essential to maintaining combat power, enabling strategic and operational reach, and providing Army forces with endurance. The principles are integration, anticipation, responsiveness, simplicity, economy, survivability, continuity, and improvisation. Three of these principles are severely neglected by these managers; Anticipation, Responsiveness and Continuity.



- **ANTICIPATION:** The ability to foresee events and requirements and initiate necessary actions that most appropriately satisfy a response.

- **RESPONSIVENESS:** The ability to meet changing requirements on short notice and to rapidly sustain efforts to meet changing circumstances over time.

- **CONTINUITY:** The uninterrupted provision of sustainment across all levels of war.

As logisticians, it is our responsibility to anticipate what the operating forces need before they need it, respond in a timely manner and continue to support the operating forces trying our very best to avoid catastrophic shortfalls that impact or hinder lethal operations.

In theater, there is one organization that brings all levels (high and low) of logistics together. This organization is the bread and butter of logistics. This organization is known as the sustainment brigade. Synergism is defined as the interaction of elements that when combined produce a total effect that is greater the sum of the individual elements or contributions. Management at the Sustainment Brigade level can only be described as synergistic. Logistic managers in this organization are the link and facilitators between operational and tactical level operations.

Sustainment brigade managers are the voice that translates strategic and operational level decisions to the support elements supporting the operating forces. Furthermore and more importantly, managers at this level are the voice, eyes and ears that help strategic and operational level managers hone in on what is truly needed in the battlefield. At this level, logisticians are responsible to create homeostasis between the tactical level and operational level of sustainment.

There are several challenges the sustainment brigade faces when managing ammunition. The first challenge is finding

a way to successfully articulate what the task force requirements and needs are to the ESC/TSC and actually getting through. Identifying the requirements is easy; the challenge lies on the fact that at this level we have found that we have to fight and convince the higher head quarters of the requirements that have been identified. ESC/TSC representatives do not circulate the battlefield enough to understand and be able to make informed decisions. They focus on their bubble charts and only hear what is tangible in their eyes; colors.

The second challenge is to gain the trust and confidence of the operating forces and convince them that we are here to support them with the munitions they need. Task forces are skeptical to trust us and feel it necessary to hoard ammunition and stock pile as much as possible for several reasons. These reasons vary between having faith that they will get the munitions they need in time and getting the amount they actually need (more than their basic load).

As a middle man between the ESC/TSC and the operating forces, when we cannot provide combat commanders and their troops with the munitions they need it's easier for them to take matters into their own hands; this without fault or blame of course. Anyone who has walked in the shoes of a Soldier in the midst of a battle can understand the need to have the munitions you need, at the right place at the right time.

"Leadership is often about shaping a new way of life. To do that, you must advance change, take risks and accept responsibility for making change happen" – Charles E. Rice

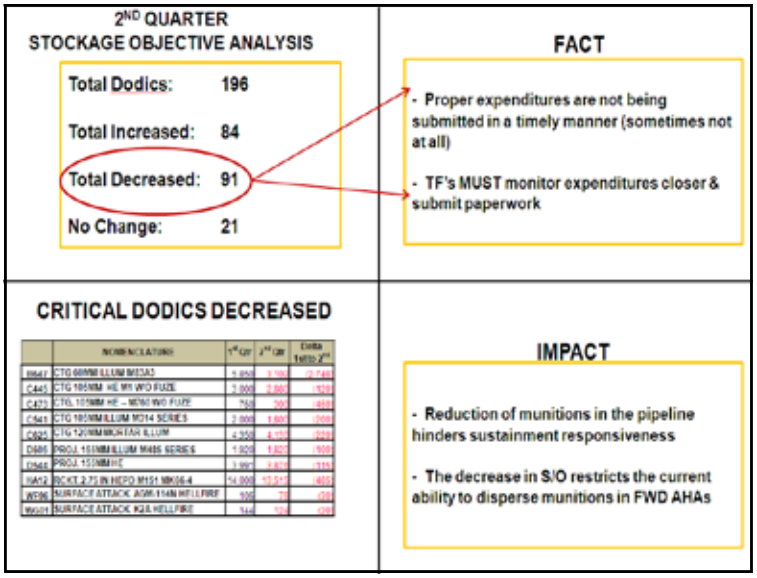
There is a ripple effect for the current business practices set by ARCENT and 1st TSC. It seems like those rotating in and out of positions that can affect change are satisfied to go with the flow of things and have the "why fix what's not broken" attitude. It seems like these organizations lack the courage to "advance change, take risks and accept responsibility for making change happen." The irony of the situation here is that there truly is a lot to fix and a lot broken that is neglected by those with the ability to evoke change.

Gone are the days where operation officers calculate required supply rates for their units and the supply officers manage the controlled supply rates. The Army has gone to tracking expenditures and setting stockage objectives for Ammunition Support Activities (ASAs). The role of the sustainment brigade is to compile the data that helps justify a stockage objective that can support, sustain and replenish basic combat loads and sustainment combat loads. Basic Load and sustainment loads are based on weapon densities and approved Combat Load Increases (CLI). A little background on CLIs; these CLIs are requested by the task forces because they have identified a need to increase their basic load. This can be due to ongoing operations, terrain challenges, un-anticipated high expenditures rates and more. I say again, the Operating forces have identified a need to increase the quantity of munitions they have to operate with.

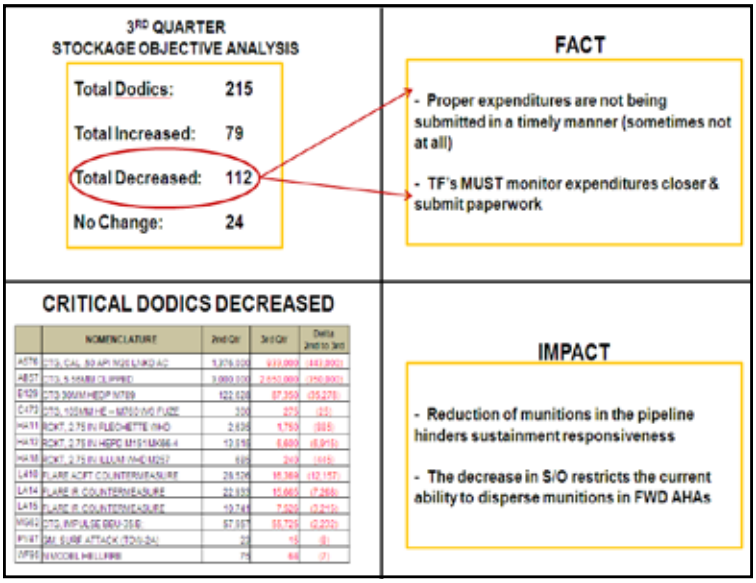
Each quarter sustainment brigades attend a Stockage Objective Conference where ARCENT, DA G4, ESC and TSC review line by line every single Department of Defense Identification Code (DODIC) authorized in theater to determine what they will allocate toward the combat theater. This event is a 3-4 day event where every representative for each organization sits to review and exchange notes and determine who needs what and how much. The first time I attended this conference I went not as a participant but as an observant. My goal was to learn the intricacies of management and requirements needed to be prepared. My very first observation was that there is absolutely no representative from the operations side of the house that can articulate or shed light on future lethal operations. There was no one there to voice what campaigns each theater is engaged in or future campaigns in need of munitions support. The second observation was that other theaters were represented by young Non-Commissioned Officers that sat in a room full of officers. I couldn't help to think about level of experience these NCOs had and how they were there to make decisions for munitions for an entire theater.

This train of thought made me curious enough to find out what level of experience or prior service experience the Joint Munitions Command (JMC) civilian representative had. This representative continuously denied pleas for increase of stockage to Officers, Warrant Officers and the young NCOs. I was disappointed to find out that the individual denying combat theaters of stocks had no military experience. So there, in a stuffy room with young inexperienced Soldiers and individuals that that have never set foot in a battlefield and civilians without prior military experience, decisions that will ultimately affect how much ammunition the operating forces can have took place without hesitance. It was my first experience and it left me disheartened and disappointed to know exactly who is behind these decisions and how business was taken care of.

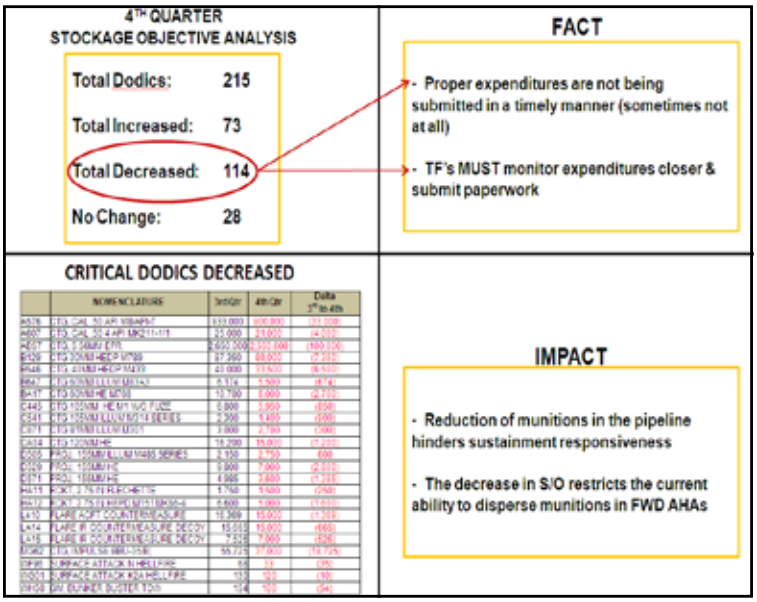
My last observation in this conference left me baffled and nearly floored me. The prime element taken into consideration to decide what gets allocated in our battle space is expenditure reports. Never mind the quantity of weapon systems in each battle space, never mind how many approved combat load increases there are and never mind the number of units each battle space has. I am not saying these elements were completely ignored but if you could not prove consumption rates; you could not justify your need of the munitions.



2nd Quarter Stockage, 91 total DODICS decreased



3rd Quarter Stockage, 112 total DODICS decreased



4th Quarter Stockage, 114 total DODICS decreased

Therefore, all prior preparation to gather weapon systems data, unit numbers, combat load increases and projected operations is futile. The only thing you need to know and be prepared with is the processed expenditure reports for your battle space.

This approach to stockage objective allocations has created an even bigger challenge for the sustainment brigade. At My level, we can only process what is being fed to us. The sustainment brigade has no tasking authority over any Brigade Combat Team and has little influence to compel the operating forces to submit their expenditure reports in a timely manner. The only thing we can do is emphasize to the units and task force ammunition managers the importance of submitting their expenditures in a timely manner. Beyond the advice, we have no control. The effects of considering only expenditures to decide on a stockage objective have impacted My battle space significantly. Each quarter, more and more DODICs have been reduced because of lack of justification. In the second quarter, 10 critical DODICs were reduced, 13 in the third quarter and a whopping 23 in the fourth quarter.

Are we completely against at managing munitions based on expenditures only? Yes we most certainly are. There has to be a middle ground and a more methodical way to determine what munitions each combat theater needs. We recommend that the system used to determine stocks take in consideration future campaigns and current lethal operations, weapon systems, number of units within each battle space, combat load increases and historical expenditure data.

"If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?" George Berkeley is the founder of this philosophical riddle that raises questions regarding observation and knowledge of reality. Along with this philosophy I can't help but ask, "If a trigger is pulled and no expenditure document was submitted, was the ammo really expended?"

In conclusion, the intricacies of the ammunition MOS are proven to be misunderstood by many. In peace time operations the loss of the units and mission for this MOS is not felt. However, in war time operations this MOS is one of the critical ones that cannot fail the operating forces. What good does water and food do if they don't have another day to live? In combat, the only way to stay alive is by having the tactical skills and the ammunition you need to fend your enemies off. The tunnel vision management cannot be ignored and neglected for they inevitably impact combat theater management and operations.

M-ATV: The Best Choice for Afghanistan

by CPT David Weinreich
SPO Maintenance Officer

As reinforcements flow into Afghanistan as part of the "surge", they are being pushed out to small combat outposts as part of the counterinsurgency strategy. Keeping those widely separated outposts supplied means the war is likely to enter a more costly phase for troops as the Taliban turns to stepping up Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attacks against the increasing number of ground convoy targets. The Mine Resistant Ambush Protected – All Terrain Vehicle (M-ATV), produced by Oshkosh Defense Corporation, is the most logical up-armored vehicle suited for the needs of troops and terrain in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's rough terrain and road networks, consisting of fewer than 8,000 miles of pavement (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], 2007), demonstrated early on that the original series of Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles were unfit to play the same role they had in Iraq. They are too heavy, too unstable, too big and very difficult to recover when they break down ("MRAP Safety", 2008). Their sheer size and mass limit the number of roads they can be driven on and reduce its off-road capability making routes predictable. The second vehicle being used, the High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV), has been pushed past its maximum capabilities and beyond. Up-armored kits have increased the weight, raised the center of gravity of the vehicle, reduced its acceleration, handling, braking, reliability, and impacted service life due to its overstressed suspension and drive train. The armor on most up-armored HMMWVs offers little protection from a mine blast below the truck, such as buried IEDs and land mines.

Due to these inefficiencies, it was decided that the U.S. military needed something else to facilitate ground operations in Afghanistan. In November 2008, the government issued an urgent Request For Proposal (Department of Defense, 2008) for an off-road-capable MRAP. The basic intent was to combine the characteristics of a HMMWVs mobility and a MRAP's protection into a single off-road-capable vehicle in order to support Operation Enduring Freedom.

The Oshkosh M-ATV is capable of being produced

in record time and at a significantly lower cost than the comparable United States Marine Corps (USMC) Cougar MRAP currently in use. It is well suited to the terrain of Afghanistan because it was designed around the well-proven Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement (MTVR) platform, which protects troops by putting them farther from the blast and deflecting its impact. The TAK-4 independent suspension system bolts up easily and not only provides 16" of wheel travel, but reduces pitch, bump steer, and traction hop, all problems that have plagued other MRAP chassis (Oshkosh Website, 2010). This suspension system is rated for 70 percent of use off-road, where in comparison the HMMWV suspension system was rated for just 30 percent. This off-road capability makes it more difficult for the enemy to target troops, enabling them to go where the enemy might not expect. Traction is further enhanced by a Central Tire Inflation System (CTIS), which features two channels and four terrain settings that allows the driver not only to adjust tire pressures from high (for paved roads) to very low (for sand and mud), but can also engage the system so that it can control vehicle speed based on terrain ("M-ATV Specifications, 2009").

A unique feature of the M-ATV design is that it makes use of many off-the-shelf components from the family of medium tactical vehicle series. Power comes from a turbocharged 7.2 liter 370 HP Caterpillar C7 engine and a six-speed Allison 3500 SP automatic transmission ("M-ATV Specifications", 2009). The vehicle is capable of traveling at least one kilometer after suffering a single 7.62mm perforation in the engine oil system, coolant system, or fuel storage system ("M-ATV Specifications", 2009).

The M-ATV is designed to transport five Soldiers and has a reduced interior noise level compared to the original MRAPs fielded in Iraq. While the vehicle does not have amphibious capabilities, it can ford hard bottom water to depths of up to 60 inches without special preparation or kits. The M-ATV is provided with illumination, capable of both white light and Infrared light (IR) for visibility, on the side of the vehicle to facilitate road clearance and patrols during night operations ("M-ATV Specifications", 2009).

The M-ATV meets the Army's requirements with an ability to maintain traveling speeds up to 75 mph on a paved level road and sustain 45 mph on a 5% grade. The 12 ton vehicle can accelerate from 0 to 30 mph in 12 seconds and travel for 300 – 400 miles without refueling. It can travel on a paved surface with a 40% grade at a speed of 10 mph, safely ascend up to a 60% longitudinal grade at a minimum of 2 mph, and can safely maneuver over a 40% side slope on a paved surface, traveling at 5 mph ("M-ATV Specifications", 2009). In comparison, the MRAP has sluggish acceleration and is more conducive to roll-overs at even slight gradients.

When the original MRAPs were first fielded in Iraq, they were sent ahead of the special tools and spare part kits necessary for maintenance support. Due to the fact that maintenance and operator's level training were lacking, MRAPs were not reliable and were often dead-lined for extended periods of time making them a liability to their units. However, with the M-ATV, the military did a better job. A program was instituted in order to provide spare parts and special tools before the M-ATVs arrived in theater. Subject matter experts from Tank-automotive and Armaments Command (TACOM) were provided via mobile training teams in order to provide operators, drivers, and maintenance training prior to units even arriving in theater.

The M-ATV has been designed to be Soldier friendly by minimizing operator and maintenance training. It maximizes effectiveness by allowing the crew to be able to focus on familiarizing themselves with the vehicle systems, capabilities and mission tasks; rather than worrying about frequent maintenance support. The M-ATV has 80 percent parts commonality in its automotive systems with the Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles (FMTV). It also shares common armor systems, power generation systems, seats, windows, and fire suppression systems. This standardization of components is a key and critical focus within modern army logistics. With ever decreasing budgets and the need to utilize tax payer's dollars more effectively, standardization enables lower inventory levels to be held with correspondingly reduced costs. Standardization also leads to improved serviceability in the field saving lives.

Some components can be substituted from other vehicles (e.g., a FMTV to an M-ATV) reducing breakdown times and enables the unit to get a critically needed vehicle back online where it is needed. As fewer parts are required to be carried or deployed to the front line, mobility and the speed of logistics operations are improved.

Enemy threats down range come in multiple sizes and shapes, so there is no possible way that a vehicle can be tested for every threat, in every condition, for every location. Since 1984 the HMMWV has provided the armed forces of the United States of America with a rugged and multipurpose vehicle platform but it has come to the end of the line for improvements that can be made. As the nature of warfare changes so does the way we must fight it. The M-ATV is the best chance of bringing our Soldiers home in one piece because of its utility, survivability, protection, and mobility in the terrain of Afghanistan.

Maintenance Readiness of Towed Howitzers

by CW4 Dwarka Singh
Senior Armament Technician

Artillery replaced air power as the primary source of the fighting in Iraq, today, this fire support plays a very vital role in Afghanistan, the mission includes counter battery, Harassing and interdiction fire, illumination support and indirect fire. These carriage Mounted armament and associated fire control systems need proactive Inspection and Maintenance to keep them fully mission capable. This article outlines the procedures to fully enhance the towed howitzer's maintenance readiness. This will extend the life of the Howitzers before they are brought in for complete overhaul and reset.

The English word howitzer derives from Czech word "houfnice" meaning "crowd" which suggest early cannons be used against massed enemies in order to break up enemy attacks by mass formations of Soldiers. Early artillery pieces used by European (and European-style) armies in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries stood between the "gun" (characterized by a longer barrel, larger propelling charges, smaller shells, higher velocities, and flatter trajectories) and the "mortar" (which was meant to fire at even higher angles of ascent and descent). Artillery pieces of today bear little resemblance to guns of earlier eras. As the weapon system developed and gained greater range and lethality so did its complexity because of this howitzer of today require more maintenance and care in order to be combat effective.

Howitzers by nature are lightweight towed weapons. There are three types currently used by the US Army, they are the M119A2 (105MM), M198 (155MM medium weight) and M777 (155MM light weight). There are commonalities in all three howitzers with Regards to safety and maintenance. All howitzers are low silhouette when in the firing position, they are transported by airlifted, dropped by parachute and towed by a prime mover. Howitzers can engage targets through both direct and indirect fire, using fire control

Instruments, a Panoramic Telescope for indirect fire and a straight telescope for direct fire. The Major components are the Cannon, Top and Bottom Carriages, Recoil mechanism and Fire Control equipment.

The top carriage supports the cannon and recoil mechanisms with the following assemblies mounted on it: the travel lock assembly, equilibrator cylinders, cradle assembly, elevating mechanism and traversing mechanism. The cannon is composed of the cannon tube which is rifled to rotate projectile, aid to maintain direction, prevent tumbling and increase stability in flight, the muzzle brake, a heavy steel fixture containing baffles designed to provide braking action to the cannon tube during recoil. The breech mechanism assembly seals the rear of the cannon tube during the force of explosion (expanding gases) against the rear of the projectile, this provides the maximum force to propel the projectile in flight. The breech mechanism assembly is manually operated and the ammunition is manually loaded. It includes the firing mechanism assembly, breechblock assembly, and the

obturator spindle assembly.

The recoil mechanism is a hydro-pneumatic, variable dependent type system with a floating piston. During recoil, hydraulic fluid is forced from the two recoil cylinder assemblies through front (oil transfer) yoke and control orifice of the regulator assembly. As the control rod and floating piston are displaced by the increase volume of hydraulic fluid in the recuperator cylinder assembly, the fluid throttling orifice area is varied, and the nitrogen pressure is compressed on the floating piston. Nitrogen flows from the gas side of the recuperator cylinder assembly through the air cylinder assembly, and to the replenisher cylinder assembly. The bottom carriage supports the traversing parts and also provide the hinged points for the trails. The trails, wheel suspension system, speed shift assembly, firing base plate, and spades which are mounted on the bottom of the carriage assembly.

For the continued use and readiness of fire power, these weapons must be continuously maintained. Non Mission Capable (NMC) howitzers are normally mechanical, electrical or hydraulically faulted or a combination. Maintenance starts with the Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services (PMCS) starts with first the **Before, Daily, After, Weekly, Monthly, Quarterly, Semi-Annually, Annual, Borescope** (Gun Tube Inspection) **Fire Control Alignment Test** (FCAT). In Howitzer's maintenance, The Before PMCS as per the Technical Manual (TM), starts with the Gun round count card, DA form 2408-4, check to see if the howitzer has been borescoped within the past 180 days, ensure all the basic issue items are present and are in proper working order.

Have unit mechanic, 13 series, check nitrogen pressure in the reservoir before and after firing of the weapon or if the nitrogen has not been checked in a month. Check for correct oil level in recoil recuperator inner cylinder, check recoil indicator slider chuck assembly. Check general condition of the tires, ensure wheel lugs are tight. Check handbrakes for smooth operation and damage. Ensure the overrun brake lever holds properly. Visually check brake lines and connections for leaks. For the Carriage, ensure firing platform is properly secured on trail assembly, check for damage, kinks, frays or rust and check the lunette for visible cracks. Look at the shock absorbers, jack strut brackets and tighten any loose components. Clean and lubricate the trail and saddle bearing surface and check the jack struts for corrosion.

Check the cannon tube for inside and outside obstruction, dents, and other defects. Muzzle brake and key must be free of damage, corrosion or missing parts. The panoramic and straight telescopes must be checked for illumination, moisture and clarity in the level vials and counters, check for missing, damaged and smooth operation of the deflection clutch, the gunners aid, elevation and azimuth knobs, check for reticle image and illumination, reticle should be clear and free of moisture. Check for illumination in the M1A2 Collimator and the M140A1 Alignment Device. Operate the elevation and traverse mechanism, there should be no binding, slipping, unusual noise or excessive play. Check Breech and Breech Operating Handle and breech counterbalance for operation. Conduct a function check on the firing mechanism, check the firing pin protrusion clearance. During operation, check elevating and traversing mechanism for equal effort through entire range, with no evidence of binding, or unusual noise. After operation, enter day's firing and update Equivalent Full Charge (EFC) rounds total. After howitzer is parked, elevate, and lock wheels as per TM.

Weekly, check for proper operation of stoplights, brake lights, blackout markers, and mounting brackets.

Monthly, perform breechblock and cocking lever function check, service recoil mechanism. Inspect towing eye and overrun mechanism for serviceability. Inspect trail leg and the trail box weld. Inspect weld at the bottom of the stiffener plate

Quarterly, set the breech ring SAFE/FIRE arm assembly (1) to safe. Set the firing mechanism (2) fire. Recheck firing pin protrusion and retraction. Exercise the Recoil System. Remove, clean, check for cracks on the Muzzle Brake / Key and lubricate the Muzzle Brake's threads with Water and Temperature Resistant (WTR). Operate Breechblock cocking lever, breechblock should open and close smoothly and firing mechanism should recock. Pull back on firing lever to relieve tension on firing pin spring, dissemble breechblock, gun firing mechanism and lubricate with Clean Lubricate Protect (CLP). Inspect variable recoil mechanism for damage on connecting rod. Service the Recuperator and Reservoir Assembly. Ensure Cannon travel lock securely holds cannon, in traveling position and locks into place. Inspect wheel and tire assemblies, hub, brake drums and brake cylinders. Adjust trail end hand brake assembly, Inspect suspension system, gun safety lock mounting bracket and elevating firing stop pin. Inspect howitzer mount and adjust the balancing gears. Inspect gun handwheel, and remove the traversing gear shouldered shaft and inspect for damage.

Semi-annual starts with the removal of the wheel and brake drum especially after deep water fording. Service recuperator air

intake valve and adjust firing stop. Remove, clean and service the cannon tube, rails and breech ring. Borescope the gun tube and perform pullover gauge in accordance with (IAW) TM 9-1000-202-14. Record the first, second, third and actual reading and come up with the final reading and then calculate the equivalent full charge percentage and tube life.

The Fire Control Alignment Test (FCAT) determine if on–carriage fire control, gunners quadrant, and alignment device, are in correct adjustment. Tests are done once a year, every 3 months if howitzer is fired, after extensive use, following an accident, after traveling over extremely rough terrain, when fire control mounts have been replaced, whenever the howitzer fires inaccurately for no apparent reason, after the replacement of the cannon tube and after the third echelon (sustainment maintenance).

The Annual Service starts with servicing the gun's recuperator cap, remove cover from elevation mechanism clean dirt, replace gasket and check for smooth operation. Remove firing mechanism, clean and lubricate internal parts with WTR. Remove clean and service the cannon tube, breech mechanism, service and align the cradle extension. For the M198, remove, dissemble, clean lube with WTR and assemble the Elevating Angle Drive Unit, drain OHT hydraulic fluid from reservoir of the Manifold Assembly, actuate selector valves and ram pumps to ensure all OHT is removed. Add uncontaminated OHT and purge the complete hydraulic system. Annual Service for the M777, which has the electronic rack and cables, check all the Digital Fire Control System (DFCS) interconnect cables for cuts, breaks in insulation, missing, bent or broken pins. Perform operator initiated Built In Test (BIT). Remove Loading Tray, cylinder, front and rear arm assembly, clean, inspect grease pivots and reinstall back the system.

In summary, the detailed inspection and constant timely maintenance performed on the towed howitzers will give the war fighters longevity in the fight with fully mission capable guns. Consumables to service and parts list of the towed howitzers.

CHECK #	SERVICE	NOMEN	NSN	QTY	CLASS
	ALL	CLEANER, GENERAL PURPOSE	6850-01-474-2319	1	36
	ALL	HEAT SHRINK TUBING	5330-99-995-7884	1	9
	ALL	THREAD LOCKER	8030-01-104-5392	1	4X
	ALL	SOAP	8520-00-228-0598	1	2B
	ALL	OIL, HYDRAULIC	9150-00-935-9808	1	36
	ALL	SEALANT	8030-01-529-3839	1	9M
	ALL	GREASE MOLYBDENIUM DISULFIDE (GMD)	9150-00-223-4004	6.5	36
	ALL	SANDPAPER	5350-00-221-0872	1	2
	ALL	SEALANT	8030-99-257-3495	1	4X
	ALL	LOCK WIRE	9505-00-076-8640	1	9K
	ALL	GREASE	9150-01-529-3909	1	36
	ALL	CLP	9150-01-054-6453	1	36
	ALL	BFS	9150-01-102-9455	1	36
	ALL	WTR	9150-00-944-2953	1	33
	ALL	LOCK WIRE	2815-01-529-3278	1	9K

The Role of Human Resources Operation Branch in Sustainment Brigade

by MAJ Michael J. Thiesfeld
SPO HROB Officer

For the past 8 years, I have been a Human Resources (HR) Officer, primarily serving in S1/Adjutant duties positions. During this time I served also as a Chief of Personnel Services and Support (PSS) and a 20-month tour as a Company and Rear-Detachment Commander. My experience as an HR professional has been centered on "typical" HR duties (awards, personnel actions, evaluations, etc.), therefore, upon learning that I was being assigned as the Human Resources Operation Branch (HROB) Officer-in-Charge, I was confident (due to serving primarily in operational units and my past HR experience) that I could accomplish this assigned mission yet, I was still curious on what the HROB "was," its mission and expectations.

The purpose of this paper is to briefly discuss the task and purpose of the HROB as per doctrine and regulation; discuss the mission of my HROB while deployed in the Afghanistan theater of operations (which the discussion will be broken down by focusing on my "core" responsibilities and missions); and finally offer a perspective on the future and way-ahead of HROB operations in theater.

Definition of the HROB

The HROB is a subordinate branch of the Support Operations (SPO) section in the Sustainment Brigade. According to Field Manual (FM) 1-0 (Human Resources Support), the HROB is "responsible for the planning, coordinating, integrating, and synchronizing PA (personnel accountability), casualty, and postal operations missions within the Sustainment Brigade's AO (Area of Operation)." FMI 4-93.2 (The Sustainment Brigade) echoes FM 1-0's definition, adding that the HROB "ensures they (above mentioned organizations) are resourced, correctly positioned, and properly allocated to provide required postal, PAT, and casualty support." In short, the HROB is charged with providing HR technical guidance and recommendations to subordinate HR units/organizations, specifically the Human Resources Company, in the brigade's assigned area of operation. However, as the HROB, we don't provide "execution" guidance, that comes from the Brigade Commander through the Special Troops Battalion Commander.

My Mission

The 101st Sustainment Brigade's HROB mission in Afghanistan focused on two core missions: postal operations and Personnel Accountability Teams (PAT). Though the Casualty Liaison Teams (CLT) was task organized under the HR Company, we were not involved with their mission for they more or less answered to the Regional Command Casualty section in the J1.

Postal Operations

I will preface my discussion on postal operations by saying that the "postal" portion of the mission was easy. When it comes to understanding the rules, regulations and policies governing the administrative, requirements and basic "do's and don'ts" as it applies to postal, it was only a regulation or policy letter away. Though in some cases, it took exhaustive research, coordination and discussion with our higher HR organizations to validate official requirements and rules, this was by no means close to the real challenges we faced daily on the "operational" portion of the mission. It is no secret that mail is a huge morale boost to Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and civilians in theater. And it was the HROB's duty to ensure that we were planning, synchronizing and coordinating efforts to ensure the mail reached each individual in a timely manner.

One of the most important lessons I learned while being in the Sustainment Brigade was understanding the importance of planning logistical movements and the thought process required to ensure you become effective and efficient. As our Brigade Commander put it, we needed to consider three things: Visibility, Capacity and Command and Control (C2). These concepts applied directly to our postal mission and also created a few of those challenges that I described in the previous paragraph. The most difficult aspect of the postal operations from my point of view was visibility.

In the Sustainment Brigade, regardless of the commodity, whether it be ammo, Class I, water or fuel, visibility is important. Our challenge in the postal mission was gaining visibility far enough ahead so we could properly plan and synchronize transportation assets to move mail, get ahead of weather conditions and forecast the capabilities of our down trace units

and post offices to move and store mail. What we didn't want to do is push large amounts of mail to our outlying locations and them not having the assets, resources or storage capabilities to properly secure or transport mail. We proved that at my location we could hold over 400,000 pounds of mail at one time; however, most locations down range where we delivered to could only up to 5,000 pounds and as the FOB got "smaller", so did the storage capacity. We had multiple means to project mail volumes coming in from the CONUS (AMPS-Automated Military Postal System) or from Bahrain (DAYSTAT and/or Flight Manifest). The issue we had though with those means where that the mail coming from CONUS was merely a guess and did not reflect actual pounds coming into Bagram. It would reflect only the volumes going into Bahrain and did not tell us what was coming into Bagram. The data from Bahrain only reflected the number of flights and never provided mail volume. Though we insisted and communicated our concerns with Bahrain, the information we requested was never provided. With that being said, most notice from using those two methods would only provide us a 24-48 hour notice at best. While we were able to "successfully" process nearly 12 million pounds of mail during the Holiday Mail Season (November through mid-January), our down trace units struggled to keep up with the volume we sent to them and often had days of "backlog" (mail that failed to move to the next/final destination within 72 hours after receipt.) The bottom line on visibility that we learned is that our ability to project mail volumes enables down trace units to balance priorities, plan and coordinate for additional storage and resources; and allow our postal plans and operations section at the HR Company and HROB to coordinate for the right transportation assets, synchronize efforts to ensure mail is not backlogged and to keep a steady flow of mail movement.

All in all, the postal mission for my HROB has gone fairly well with multiple challenges but none too difficult to overcome due to some coaching, research and common sense. The main take away from understanding the postal mission in this theater is that it is truly a logistical mission which requires constant communication and the synchronization of efforts between the HROB and the transportation and distribution section of the SPO; synchronization between the HROB and subordinate STB and HR Company; ability to analyze routes, weather conditions; calculating and determining the load capacities of transportation assets, storage facilities and capabilities of those resources (important because when determining storage capacity, a 100 pounds of letter mail is not the same as a 100 pound box, thus affecting "load plans") and finally, being fully aware that even though the HROB is a HR enabler, the true mission mind set should be on logistics.

Personnel Accountability Teams

The Personnel Accountability Team (PAT) mission was initially our "easiest" mission from the HROB perspective. With a majority of the focus being on postal, the PAT mission was considered a self-sustaining process, in which all our PAT did was scan the common access card (CAC) for personnel departing on rest and recuperation leave (R&R) as well as those returning from R&R. The HROB's role was primarily to report the number of personnel departing on R&R and returning and offer assistance when additional air frames were needed to fly Soldier either out on R&R or back to their parent units upon return. The mission seemed more

like the typical HR role in personnel accountability than anything else. However, as the months went by, we found ourselves, again, putting on the logistical mindset. We were often in discussions with the HR Company and PAT analyzing requirements (additional air frames) to move passengers; basically a daily math problem calculating the number of personnel on the ground waiting to depart against those who had waited the longest to depart and further add in the number of seats available (based on projected arrival/departure times) and so forth. All this was done in order to justify the requirement for additional flights, which can be an expensive action if there are less than 72% seats filled on the requested additional plane.

Other Challenges

One of the most difficult experiences I had as the HROB OIC was defining the relationship between the Brigade, STB and HR Company. In a normal sense, all requirements, orders and execution requests were pushed down from BDE level to the STB, which would then task the HR Company. However, as the HROB, one of my roles was to provide technical guidance and recommendations all falling short of "telling" the HR Company what to do. Many times this was not the case, my guidance to the HR Company was normally a result of direct guidance I received from the BDE Commander and there were more times than not where guidance from me to the HR Company completely by passed the STB, which would obviously create its own issues. As the deployment moved forward, we communicated more effectively, gained an understanding of each other's role and before approaching the HR Company, I would more times than not, address the topic with the STB XO prior to going to the company. Other challenges:

Need to become smart on distribution management and warehouse distribution. Reason being, you need to understand how mail (cargo) flows in and out of theater and become familiar with how the process works. Learning the mail piece is one thing, but getting inside the mindset of logisticians and learning their terminology, etc. is vital.

Consider putting a Logistics officer in the HROB. Having someone in the section that is experienced or at least knowledgeable of how to speak, talk, and interact with the MCT, MCB, etc. will pay off. Yes, the SPO Transportation/Distribution section will eventually fight the fight to keep your mail moving, but having an asset in the office would be great.

Push for an AG officer who has experience in a BSB or logistics to be your plans/ops officer. Again they know the language. O3 is needed, O2 is acceptable, and an O1 can be overwhelmed. Same deal with the postal officer. I was extremely lucky that my 2LT is smart, assertive and willing to learn; however, it is a bit overwhelming and a higher rank with experience is helpful.

Postal/AG mind set vs. Operational mindset. The postal piece is easy per say. Meaning that rules, regulations, do's and don'ts are in an SOP and regulation away, the mission in our current theater is all about distribution management, monitoring weather, doing the math or science problem over and over to project mail volume and how much is coming in and out, etc.

Understand relationships. Many higher AG organizations will be in your business (HRSC, POD, Kuwait, etc.) all good and good, however, remember you work for the ESC and your BDE. They don't see how work is done down at this level and can only make assumptions on why mail is sitting for more than 72 hours. I have had some say "it's too easy" to fix, blame us for not using all available assets, etc. The truth is we are working our distribution folks hard.

Identify roles relationship and responsibilities of the HROB, HR Company and STB now. Harder when you deploy w/o your organic HR Company. You can't tell an HR company how to suck the egg. Offer friendly advice is about as far as you can go. It is a circus when your BDE wants to push mail faster, do something different with the process, etc, and I made the mistake once by asking (which was interpreted as a tasking) to the HR Company and the STB thought we were in company business. And that's the point, with the HR Company not being organic; they can be on pins and needles not knowing who they answer to. Need to engage early and set a system up

Understand contracting. With a majority of your postal force being contracted and a movement toward making the postal mission entirely contracted, an HROB needs to be knowledgeable of all contracts, be involved in the development of the Statement of Work and work alongside your BDE's Contracting cell to ensure standards of performance/work is met. The same can be said about the PAT mission, where it too is endanger of being completely contracted out.

In summary, the HROB holds a vital mission in the Sustainment Brigade foot print. We are a combat multiplier that provides the HR Technical expertise and knowledge to ensure the HR mission is conducted within regulatory guidance. However, one should understand that the true mission from my perspective is that the HROB is a logistical mission versus an HR mission. Understanding the rules that govern postal and PAT operations from an HR perspective is only a small part of the job. The true success behind the HROB depends on the ability, experience, and knowledge on logistics and operations of the personnel in the HROB.

Accounting for Our Most Valuable Resources

An Article on Personnel Accountability in the Afghanistan Theater of Operations

by CW2 LaShawn M. Ingram
SPO HROB Technician

Currently on my second deployment in a fourteen year career, I have noticed the Army has become more innovative. Its leaders possess more versatility, its equipment is able to withstand complex enemy attacks, and its training is adoptive with the environment to provide the skill leaders need to be successful in contingency operations.

However, what has not changed is our ability as an institution to accurately account for our personnel. Personnel are the military's most valued resources. They are the planners and executors behind the directives of versatile leaders. They are suppliers, transporters, operators, medics, finance, signal, mechanics; they are HR Specialists.

So why, after 10 years in combat, are we [HR field] not able to provide field commanders and Non-Commissioned Officers with an accurate personnel system to track the military's most valuable resources? Why does unit leaders have to include an additional form in the R&R Packet, directing personnel to contact the unit at the stateside Personnel Assistance Point (PAP) because there is currently no automated system at the CONUS/USAREUR PAP to accomplish this tracking requirement?

Why is accountability of deployed personnel inaccurate throughout the theaters of operation when we have been doing this for over 10 years?

DTAS Incorporation

The Deployed Theater Accountability System (DTAS) was integrated by Congressional mandate in fiscal year 2004. This system was part of a Global War on Terror initiative to manage deployed personnel accountability. DTAS is able to show unit deployment history and has lower bandwidth requirements, able to support austere environments with limited connectivity.

DTAS system levels include an operational level for the entire theater of operations (managed by the Theater Gateway in Kuwait) and a tactical level (managed in the theater of operations by deployed J1/S1 DTAS mobile users.

Personnel Accountability Concerns

For too long, the deployed theater of operations has experienced high variances between DTAS and the Joint Personnel Status Report (JPERSTAT). High variance between the two are a result of shortfalls ranging from inexperienced users and inadequate training, lack of consistent policies between US Forces – Afghanistan (USFOR-A), and the Human Resources Sustainment Center (HRSC), and failure to synch necessary transportation, life support, and medical systems (tracking modules only) to create an accurate common operating picture of operational strengths and requirements.

Inexperienced Users/Inadequate Training

A few weeks ago, I viewed a power point presentation from CENTCOM's Personnel Accounting Branch offering S-1 theater related classes and hands-on DTAS training depending on flight schedules. In disbelief, I asked myself, "has the importance of accurately accounting for our operational capability been reduced to convenience of flights arriving between a set work schedule?"

Coupled with casualty operations, DTAS and affiliated software training (Tactical Personnel System, transfer file upload, etc.,) are single-handedly the most critical training an HR Specialist will receive for a deployed theater of operations.

Additionally, as a member of the Sustainment Brigade's Human Resources Operations Branch (HROB), we manage US Army and US Air Force Personnel Accountability Teams (PAT). These teams must be well-practiced in the multiplicity of DTAS, related APOD Modules, Tactical Personnel System (TPS) functions, and Transfer (TRN) File upload.

System Synching

For a majority of these teams, deployment is the first time they hear the term DTAS. We must take into consideration the differences of other service's personnel tracking systems. DTAS is used in the Army, but was mandated for use by all subordinate units in theater, regardless of branch of service. Many Army

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"Accountability breeds response-ability"

-Dr. Stephen R. Covey

HR Specialists are unfamiliar with the system. It is absurd to believe an Airman has received much more DTAS/TPS training.

In our new way of thinking, we must live by the old Army adage, "train to standard; not to time." Mandatory classes need to be held at all theater of operations APODs (regardless of flight schedule) for personnel required to perform theater personnel accountability functions. Each class must have a task, purpose, standard, and metric in which to gauge whether an HR Specialist is prepared to assume such duties, or if additional training is required.

Inconsistent Policies

From Division to Battalion level, I have inquired on DTAS processes. What I discovered, is that many DTAS inputs or uploads are driven from USFOR-A directives and policies. My concern with this is that personnel accountability guidance from USFOR-A does not coincide with guidance from the HRSC. For example, the question on whether the physical location should be changed or remain unchanged for personnel going on R&R? One echelon states, temporary location updates need to be changed on the JPERSTAT only; the other echelon states, temporary location changes must also reflect in DTAS.

Another policy difference is related to whether updates in DTAS and TRN File uploads are necessary for all types of movement. More specifically, the question is surrounding R&R travel. One echelon believes changing a person's location (manual DTAS input or TRN file upload) to reflect "CONUS" or an out of theater location, will subsequently generate a finance transaction to stop deployed entitlements. The other echelon believes transactions to update a person's physical location (even inter/intra-theater travel) should always be done, and does not impact entitlements.

The evident inconsistencies in higher echelon policies impact the DTAS mobile users at the J-1/S-1/and PAT levels. This contributes to higher variance rates.

Synching Systems

Probably one of the most troubling issues surrounding personnel accountability is the [lack of] existence of a "super" system that interfaces and pulls information from real-time US Military transportation systems, life support tracking systems, and medical personnel tracking modules (only). Personnel can be tracked thru their visits to the dining facility, travel around the battlefield, or medical actions involving movement of personnel from the theater of operations to an OCONUS or CONUS node. Knowing the advantages of systems like Joint Active Movement Management System (JAMMS) – Synchronized Pre-deployment Operations Tracker (SPOT), Integrated Data Environment/Global Transportation Network Convergence (IGC), and Theater Medical Data Store (TMDS), why are we not tying these systems into DTAS to provide accurate accountability?

In closing, it is our job to provide accurate personnel accountability so commanders are able to make operational decisions. For too long, the field has made excuses for and delayed bringing HR training and systems on-line with the rest of the operational Army.

The Accounting Process and FM 1-06

by CPT Ralph E. Schneider IV
Finance Management Officer

"The FM Community uses the phrase, money as a weapon system, however the FM community does not know how to load it, fire it, its effective range or even how to maintain it."

- COL Michael P Peterman, 101st SUS BDE CDR, OEF X-XI

Preface

Having been in the Financial Management career field for the past 8 years I have done two Resource Management Jobs and two Financial Management Operations (currently on my third) across two separate services, the Air Force and the Army. It is through my experience through two deployments to Afghanistan I have seen Field Manual 1-06 Financial Management Operations completely fail. FM 1-06 has in effect taken four players and a simple four step process and completely bogged up with multiple players that impede the natural relationships in the process.

For maximum effectiveness the four Stages of accounting are managed under a single roof and I have seen it where they are separated. What I have found is that the closer the stakeholders are in the four stages of accounting process the more effective the process is, and FM 1-06 does the exact opposite of this. Approximately three to four years ago the Finance career field and the Budget career field merged into what is now called the Financial Management MOS. With the merger of Finance (44 MOS) and Budget (45 MOS) came the FM 1-06 for field that outlined how this career field would work and also move the FM Co into the Sustainment Brigade. This move has had it challenges, and at times has been like trying to fit a square peg into a cylindrical hole. That in some aspects the FM Co can definitely fit into the Sustainment Brigade but not the whole thing. This paper will define the roles of the players in the 4 stage accounting process, show how FM 1-06 has affected this process and then provide a short term fixes and then long term fixes.

Process

Goods and service purchased by DoD come from funds that are "authorized" (appropriated by the government) and then accounted for using a four stage administrative accounting process: A "commitment stage" reserves and certifies that the funds are available for obligation by a certifying official underneath the G8; the stage that legally binds the funds to a specific good or service is called an "Obligation"; "Accrued Expenditures Unpaid" (AEU) stage is where services are complete but they have not been paid for (this step is defined by a receiving report which shows that service has been rendered); and finally, the Aggregate Expenditures Paid (AEP) stage is when government funds are given to the vendor for services completed. The diagram below demonstrates the flow of funds and the stages associated with it.

Once the "Line of Accounting" LOA has reached the final stage and is marked final payment it can only then be closed out and the funds left over can be redistributed. However, in a contingency environment, closure of the LOA is not sought out at the tactical level, but rather the operational level. This has resulted in ability for the tactical J8 to have control of funding and redistribute current year funding.

However if this stage is not properly monitored then the funding that could be left over on that particular LOA will not be redistributed within that current year and will go to ARCENT. This is depicted in the diagram on the next page and the tactical challenges that are seen.

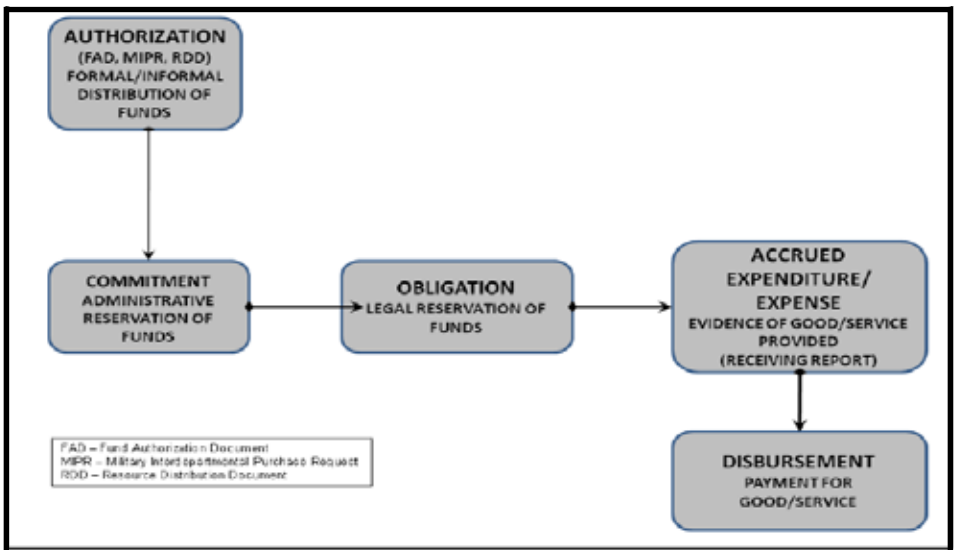
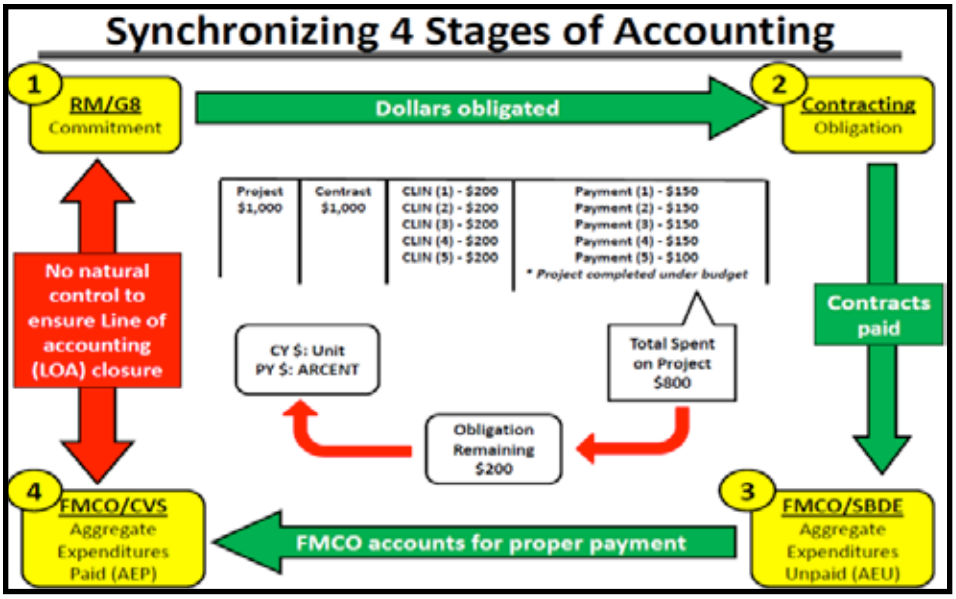


Figure 5-1. Stages of a Transaction



Current Structure

U.S. Army Field Manual 1-06 (FM 1-06) is the FM doctrinal reference that defines FM operations and structure in both contingency and garrison environments – to include the accounting process. FM 1-06 takes the four stage process flow and divides the process into three distinct phases that are mutually exclusive from each other. The first phase is executed by the RM/G8/J8 inputting funding into the accounting systems (committing funds). The second phase is owned by the Regional Contracting Center (RCC) which executes and legally binds dollars to specific goods and services. The final phase is owned by the FMCO in theater which ensures proper and timely payment for goods and services rendered. The AEU stage is when vendors complete work and have not been paid while the AEP stage is when the payment is disbursed. The FMCO plays a vital role in the AEU phase since the FMCO ensures documentation is properly prepared prior to disbursement. The AEP stage occurs when the vendor receives payment. This structure has caused the stages to become compartmentalized with stakeholders only monitoring / facilitating their relevant phase of the accounting process; and no one single entity providing oversight to ensure proper process flow to assist in the closure of the LOA at the tactical level.

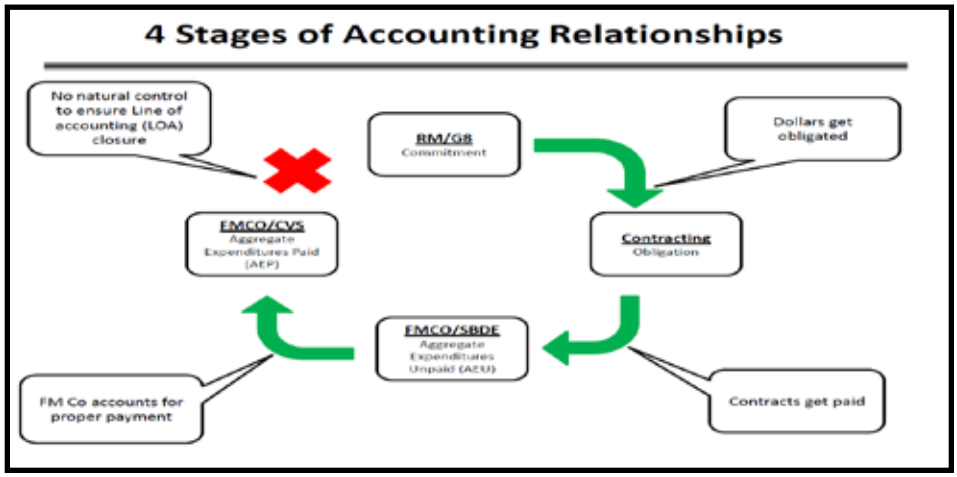
Compartmentalization is inherently created by the accounting process' structure. This structure has separated a single MOS / Job Skill known as Financial Management to handle two stages with Contracting handling the other.

The Resource Manager (RM)/J8 are the commitment stakeholder. This section normally resides as a staff section to the command at Division (in Garrison) or Regional Command (Deployed Environment). This section is a staff element to the Command. The purpose of this section is to use appropriated dollars to fund requirements (goods and services) and enter them into the accounting process known as the commitment stage. All dollars that enter this process will go through the J8. The J8 is assigned with tracking the Commitments, Obligations and AEU, however only executes the Commitment stage. The J8 is neither charged nor responsible with tracking disbursements.

Contracting is spearheaded by a contracting command. Contracting is the Obligation stakeholder which legally binds the funds used for goods and services - normally seen in the form of a contract award. By involving the Regional Contracting Center, or RCC, fraud is mitigated by preventing a single stakeholder from owning the entire requirements procurement process. Contracting Officer Representatives (CORs) are trained by the RCC and are responsible for monitoring contract performance and progress.

The stakeholder of the AEU and AEP stages, is the FMCO under the Sustainment Brigade (SUS BDE). The FMCO handles all contracts payments in theater under $3000. The FMCO also handles all military pay (Milpay) transactions but this will not be covered in this paper. The FMCO ensures contracts are paid in accordance with the Prompt Payment Act, and controls all physical cash.

The Graph below depicts the relationship between all pieces of the accounting process



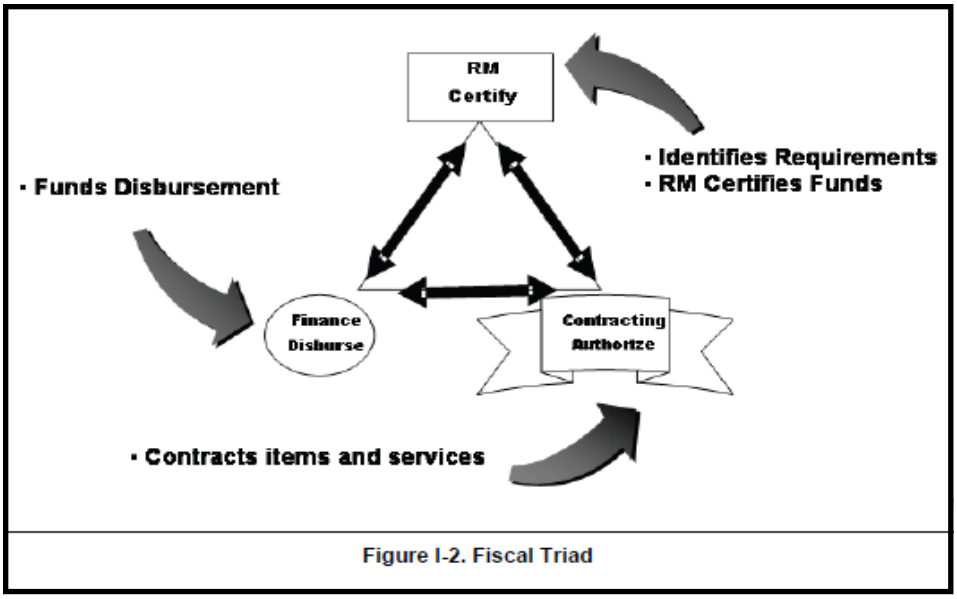


Figure I-2. Fiscal Triad

Relationships in the Fiscal Triad

The Graphic above depicts the Fiscal Triad, the three key players and the requirements process.

RM to Contracting Relationship

The relationship between RM and Contracting involves the RM forwarding committed documents to the Contracting Office for award and subsequent obligation. Once this action is complete, the Contracting Office sends the obligating documents to the RM and the Finance Office. Once the RM receives this paperwork it is considered obligated (aka spent). What is crucial in this relationship is that RM and Contracting routinely communicate with each other to ensure that committed dollars do not remain stagnant for extended periods of time (METT-TC). Unobligated commitments are a signal to hire funding echelons that dollars are not needed, which in turn, negatively affects the ability for the RM to get future money (higher funding authorities desire high obligation rates). This creates a natural relationship that is inherent with the job.

Contracting to Finance Relationship

The relationship between Contracting and Finance involves the Contracting Office obligating the government for goods and services while the Finance Office pays vendors for services rendered. This relationship is based on the obligating documents produced by contracting. Once a CLIN (period of performance) is completed, the COR produces documentation to the contracting office which is then submitted to Finance to initiate vendor payment through the CVS cell. The Finance office works with contracting to ensure proper documentation is done so that the payments can be met. Note (contracts greater than $3K go directly to DFAS for reachback processing).

Finance and RM Relationship

The relationship between Finance and the RM should involve Finance releasing disbursing documents to the RM to ensure closure and proper disbursement documentation. The current relationship structure is typically based on existing prior relationships established by FM Officers that have a strategic view of the 4 stages of accounting.

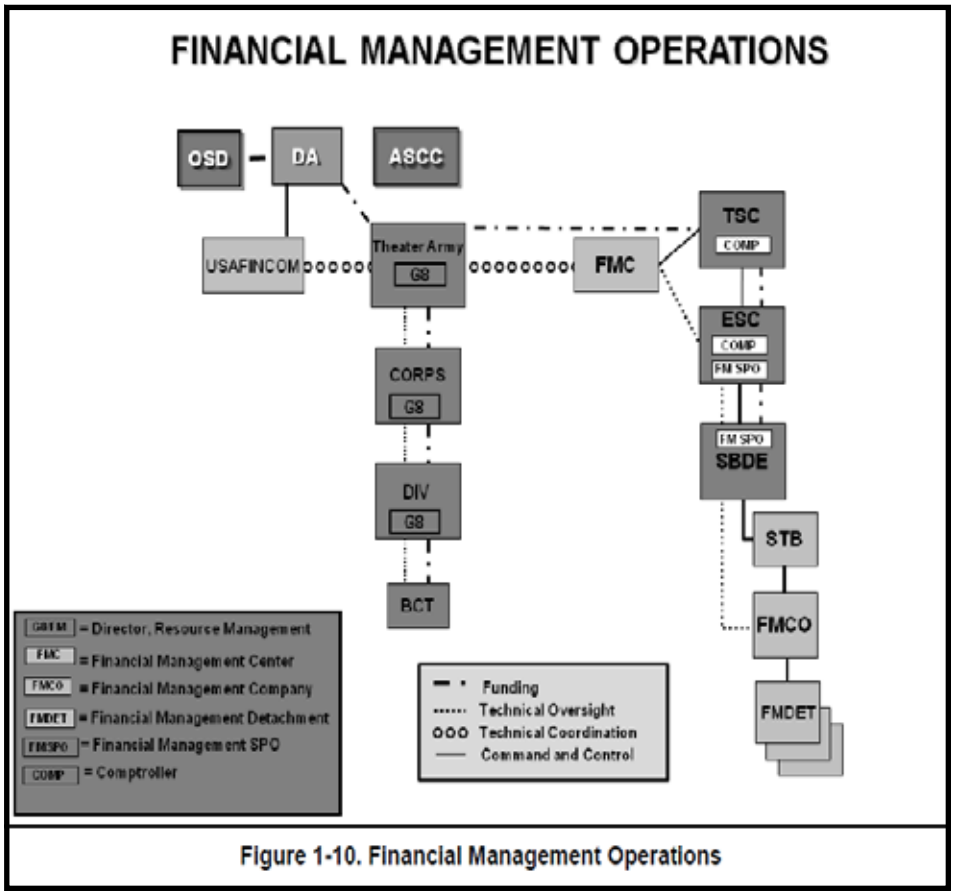


Figure 1-10. Financial Management Operations

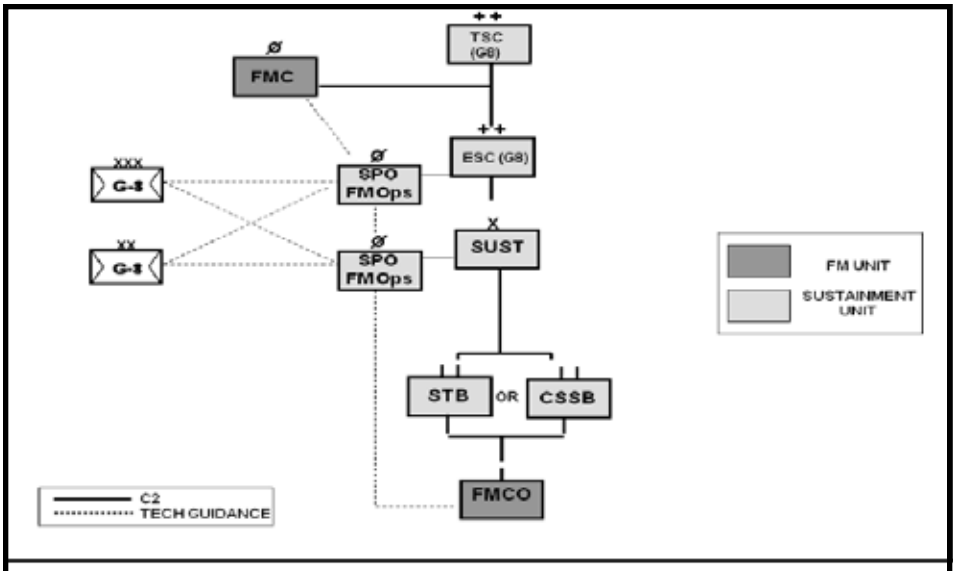


Figure 1-16. Financial Management Support Operations (SPO)

FM SPO relevancy in the FM process

Unique to this process is the design of the Financial Management Support Office (FM SPO). The FM SPO works to support the FMCO and ensure proper life support and operational needs. The FM SPO is designed to bridge the J8 and FMCO in order to synchronize efforts in the accounting process so that disbursements match obligations and LOAs are closed. Also the FM SPO is the single point of entry for outside agencies to talk to the FMCO.

The relationship is depicted below with a dashed line showing J8 to SPO FM Ops to FMCO relationships.

Inherent Problem and possible solutions

Completion of accounting process

The completion of the accounting process is done but there is no tactical oversight to ensure expedited closure of the LOAs. Disbursements are paid either through DFAS-Rome (contracts greater than $3,000) or through the FMCO (up to $3,000). Without tactical oversight, this will affect the ability to redistribute funds. Currently, only ad hoc coordination occurs, but nothing formally defined per doctrine that appoints an entity as the responsible stakeholder at the tactical level. One specific example can be highlighted using LOAs that are processed but not properly processed, which in turn, result in open LOAs with associated "unused" dollars remaining on the LOA. Upon Fiscal Yearend Closeout (each September 30th) these "unused" dollars are no longer available at the tactical level. Negative Unliquidated Obligations (NULOs) provide a good indicator since they create roadblocks to the closure of LOAs: payment packet is incorrect; payment charged to wrong LOA; or improper documentation. Some possible reasons for NULOs include the majority of payments are sent to DFAS; incorrect input at the user level; or FMCOs not distributing disbursement vouchers to RMs in order to match disbursements to obligations. Without an entity with direct oversight (or active measuring) of LOA status, payments are pushed out but not handled afterwards for "clean-up." In other words, improper payments are handled after they have aged. A secondary issue that these open LOAs can create is that can continue to be charged against which overdraws the LOA, creating a NULO. Currently in Afghanistan (Regional Command East) the CJ8s have a DFAS-ESO employee whose primary function is resolving NULO cases and since 2008, NULOs have been identified as issues. Now, with the inclusion of an Accounting Subject Matter Expert, NULOs are finally being resolved in an expeditious manner. One key contributing factor has been the continuous communication between the DFAS-ESO employee and the FMCO to ensure system access for the DFAS employee to resolve the NULOs. This has proven to be an effective measure but would actually be more effective by a co-location between the RM-FMCO. This is depicted in the graphic below the need to complete this cycle.

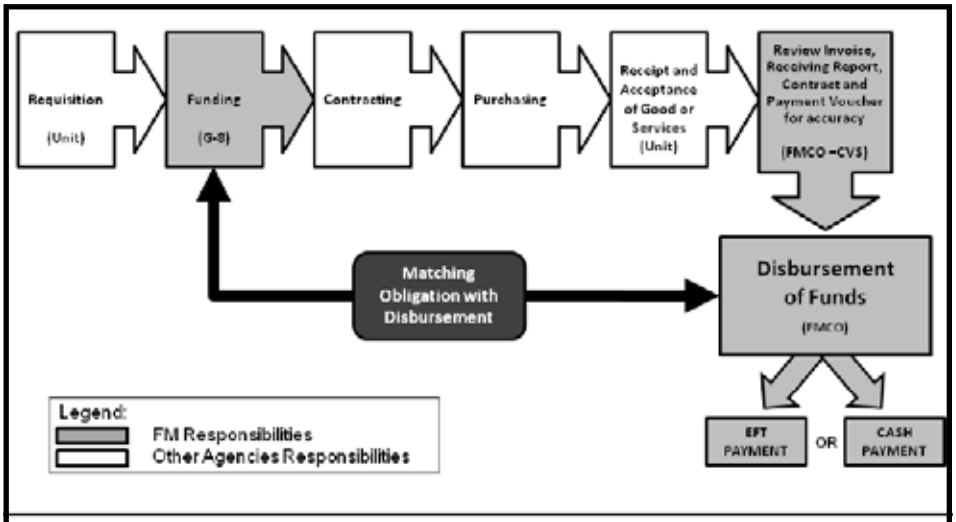


Figure 3-1. Procure to Pay Process (FM Procurement Support)

Technical Coordination vs. Command Control (C2)

One issue that seems to be persistant is the idea of technical coordination and C2 relationships. FM 1-06 places C2 control underneath the SUS BDE that places the FM Co under the Special Troops Battalion. The FMC, the operational FM stakeholder, receives technical coordination over the FM Co within this document. The problem is that the roles and responsibilities are not defined within FM 1-06. This creates friction between the CDRs and the FMC, hindering the accounting process. C2 normally works with other unit because there is a normal chain of command (graphic page 7) and the process is owned by that particular MOS. The current structure separates the accounting process and put non-stakeholders in control of the pieces of the process. What tends to happen is when the FMC tries affects the FM CO in order to help ensure the accounting process is working, but if the relationship between the FMC and the SUS CDR is not good, there will be a tremendous amount of pushback and will stall any quick resolution to a problem. What this will do is force the FM Co CDR to choose sides in order to do work.

Short Run Corrections

There are three minor adjustments that would dramatically improve the overall flow of the accounting process in Theater.

FM 1-06 relationship defines the relationship between the FMCO, the FMC and the SUS BDE. This document places the FMCO under Command and Control (C2) of the FMCO and Technical Oversight (TECHCON) to the Theater Financial Management Center (FMC). From my experience, the technical oversight is not specifically defined nor does it define the roles between entities. I have seen too often overlapping interests and at times too many hands in the pot which confuses the FMCO. My recommendation is that the term TECHCON should be further defined and the phrase "technical coordination" must be eliminated from the verbiage in FM 1-06 and replaced with "control." This would eliminate confusion on who owns the process and provide a better understanding between all involved entities.

My second short-run recommendation involves the FMC positioning a two to five person cell collocated with the FMCO. This would provide better cross talk between the C2 elements and also provide the FMC with a better view of how the operations work in Theater. In Afghanistan, we often hear the phrase "in Iraq…" and many times from individuals who have little recent / relevant information. However, each Combined Joint Operations Area (CJOA) has its own unique challenges. Providing an FMC Cell would provide a real CJOA picture, increase IC manpower, give a new perspective to the FMCO of what the FMC is looking at, and finally allow better coordination between SUS BDE leadership and the FMC.

My final recommendation is that there are too many Contracts being retrograded back to DFAS when they should be processed in Theater. Currently, only contracts below the $3,000 threshold are processed in Theater. This dramatically increases the costs used to pay contracts when there are finance units on the ground. Currently, 62% of Contracts are below the $30,000 threshold and could be easily processed in Theater, saving the government millions of dollars paid to DFAS. Finally having the contracts paid here would also allow for a better reaction time to correcting unpaid contracts while also helping to rectify frustrated LOAs.

Long Run Corrections

Contingency Environment and the locations among the stakeholders

In a contingency environment it is vital that all stakeholders (G8/J8, FMCO, and Contracting) in the accounting process have active communication amongst themselves. Obviously, some situations will dictate that the stakeholders will not be able to be in the same location but it must try to ensure that the stakeholders are in the closest proximity to each other. The importance of this is that communication is vital to ensuring that the process of accounting is done expeditiously. These stakeholders depend on close relationships among each other to make sure the processing is done properly.

Structural Changes

The current FMCO structure outlined in FM 1-06 seems to be based on the idea that money is a commodity, which results in detachments being treated much like distribution hubs, pushing cash out to Paying Agents (PA). This idea is brilliant in that it allows adaptability to the battlefield by allowing its detachments to deploy individually from its headquarters and fall in wherever needed to enable line units to pay vendors. However this concept does not take into account that the FMCO and its detachments are vital pieces to a larger process. It has created problems in the ability complete the accounting cycle. In the short run this can be resolved but in the long run there needs to be a structural change to make sure the process is completed. Within the new model I propose below is a built-in structure that encourages natural conversations between the RM

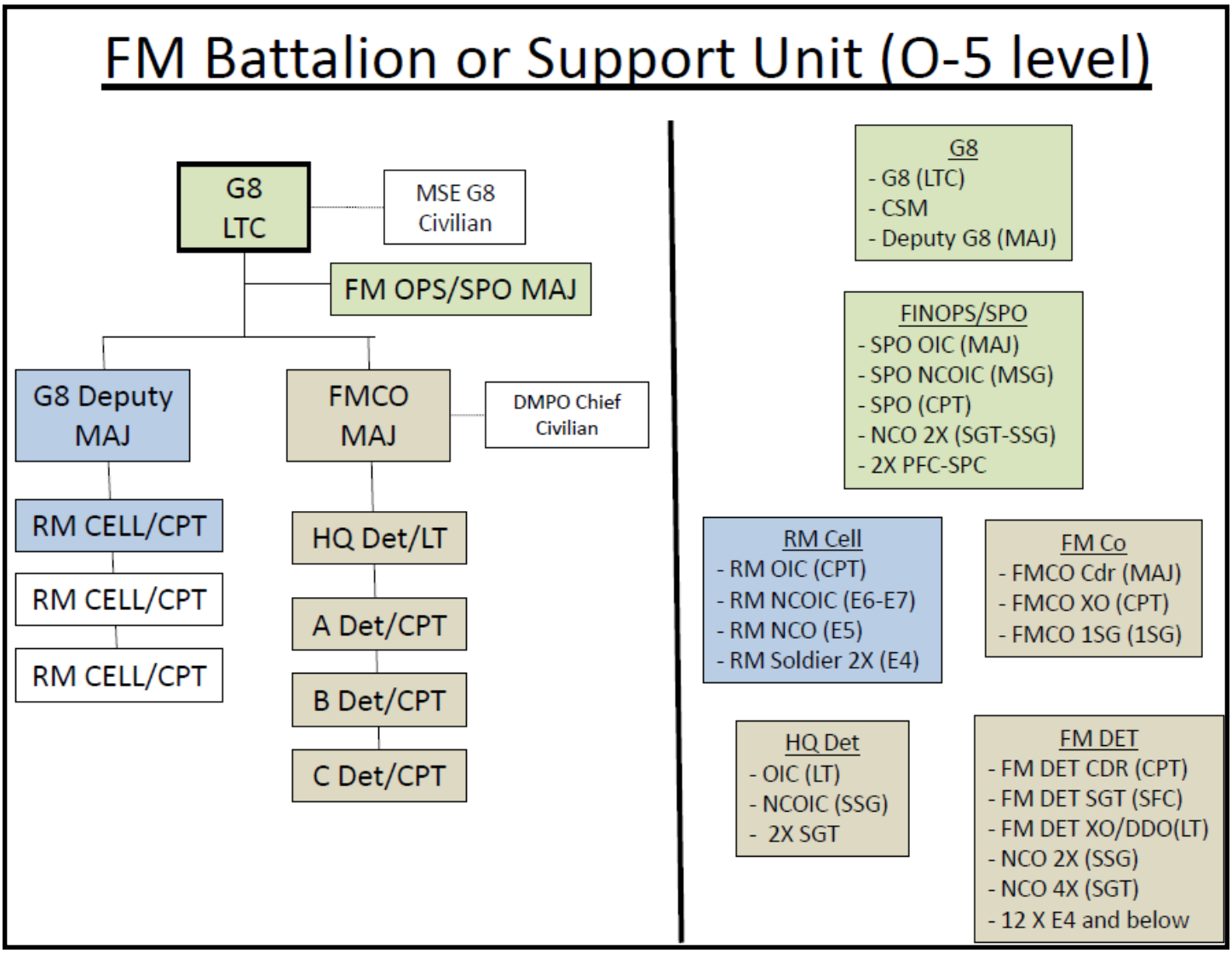
function and the FMCO operations and eliminates the disjointed conversations in both garrison and deployed environments.

My concept is based on the idea that the FMCO and the G8/J8 provide division level mission support. This new element would create an element designated as a "Battalion" or FM Support Unit (FMSU) that would fall under the Division as a Battalion equivalent organization. This structure would be deployable as individual units (plug-and-play) and would work in conjunction with the Garrison / FORSCOM Mission Support Element (MSE) in the G8 and a Military Pay Office at the FMCO level. This would also fall in line with FM 1-06 paragraph 2-10 which states,

"Financial management conducts a large portion of its wartime functions at the tactical level. The G8, in consultation with the FMC Chief, is the principle staff advisor to the ASCC, division and corps commanders, and the staff and subordinate commanders in all matters relating to FM operations. The financial management company (FMCO) commander exercises command and control of the company headquarters and three to seven financial management detachments (FM DETs)."

Instituting the Battalion concept would enhance the spirit of this paragraph in that it would give the G8/J8 full control of the FM operations without affecting the modularity of the current structure.

Below is the model of how I envision the FM Battalion Model. It would be headed by a dual hatted G8/J8 who would act as a staff officer but also as a CDR of all FM units within the Division. This would create a single conduit for all things FM-orientated. Within the staff it would have three O-4 Majors: FM OPS/SPO, Deputy G8, FMCO CDR. The FM OPS/SPO would act as an IC team along with being a planner for all FM Operations. The SPO would coordinate with outside agencies for support of their units. The Deputy G8 would oversee the RM units while also providing the tactical oversight of the accounting process and would work with the FMCO CDR to ensure completion



of the accounting process.

Within this model there are RM Cells and FM Dets that would be assigned to that BDE solely for life support to an individual BCT. The RM Cells would fill the slot that would be named as the S-8 office. These cells would be collocated with BCTs so that they can provide RM functions. This would be headed by a CPT with an NCOIC, NCO and 2 FM Soldiers. This function would provide a conduit for BCTs S4 to enter their requirements packets into the accounting process. The FM Det would remain intact with the structure but would be located with BCTs to support that their AO, this would provide maximum coverage for Soldier support. Currently in Afghanistan there are 5 Dets that covers 9 locations. What I have noticed is that the FM Det that is not split has a robust FMST mission and can handle the accounting piece exceptionally well. Also this model fosters a natural relationship between the FM Det and the S-8 office, because he RM Cell and the FM Det would be able to train together at home station.

Training and Professional Development

The added benefit of this model includes the RM and Finance Ops pieces training together in garrison, while eliminating the "pigeon-holing" of FM Soldiers in either Finance Ops or RM. We would in essence go back to the days of "training as we fight"." My experience shows that if an FM Soldier is asked what the 4 stages of accounting are and where they fit into it, the answer is all too often a blank stare. This is extremely problematic because it doesn't allow Soldiers in the FM career field to see the larger perspective or the 2nd and 3rd order effects of contributions. Fully merging these two areas (not only in name, but in reality) would eliminate this. Currently, the FMCO trains solely on Financial Management Operations: CVS, Milpay, Disbursing. The G8/J8 trains solely on Resource Management: commitments, obligations and accounting. Having the two entities train together also enables the ability for FM Soldiers to move between the G8/RM and FM Ops freely. Additionally, this would provide the CSM an opportunity to mold true FM Soldiers proficient in all aspects within FM and not just single-tracked within FM OPS or RM.

Conclusion

In my time in the Sustainment Brigade I learned one important thing which is to understand the process you own. You need to know how it works, how to measure its effectiveness, how to improve it, look at all the constraints and always think about the 2nd, and 3rd order of effects of how you do business. Without taking control of the accounting process that we as FMers own, the FM community will lose sight of their mission, which is to be the stewards of the government's dollars. FM leadership needs to revisit FM 1-06 and take back the accounting process and incorporate that process into the structure at which business needs to be done. Without claiming this process our career field will lack the proper vision and ability to adapt to any battlefield.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