



# ASC History Newsletter

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The Logistics Assistance Program (LAP) provides early detection and resolution of logistics related problems that affect unit and materiel readiness; logistical assessments in coordination with the supported commands to identify and correct systemic problems; and support to units/soldier in garrison/home station, before, during and after deployments. The LAP program began in 1965 with the creation of Customer Assistance Offices in Korea and Europe in support of the Theater Army Commander. The CAOs were intended to resolve non-routine AMC logistical issues. The earliest offices were led by a colonel and small staff augmented by technical representatives from the AMC commodity commands. In 1966 a CAO was established in Vietnam to meet the demands of a rapidly growing theater of war.

In 1970 the name was changed to Logistics Assistance Office (LAO), but the focus remained at the theater level. The next year the role of the LAO was expanded to include supply support, management of modification work orders, and select item management. In 1972-73 LAOs were established in CONUS in support of major Army commands. The program continued to evolve and by 1979 the

## LOGISTICS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LAP)

LAOs were instituted at the installation level in the United States. By the mid-1980s some LAOs were aligned specifically with tactical divisions, but it was not until after the First Gulf War that most LAOs were aligned to division and major unit levels. Despite being aligned with divisions and major units, LAOs also continued to support on a geographic basis. In 2000 the new Operations Support Command assumed management of the LAP program. OSC was in the forefront of expanding AMC efforts in unit readiness. Together with the AMC Forwards and APS sites, the LAOs were critical in creating OSC as the "single point of entry" into AMC. While some planning had occurred to create a program that could rapidly convert to contingency operations with life support, communications, and operational staff, much of the plan had not translated into reality. OSC was able to push plans forward just in time to support the start of OEF in late 2001 and truly support OEF in 2003. As they deployed into SWA, the name of the LAOs converted into Logistics Support Elements. Eventually LSE became the name for all LAOs at home station and deployed.

Since 2003 the LAP program has evolved to support deployed forces in the theaters of war while simultaneously supporting the units at home station. Changes continued with modularity. The Brigade Logistics Support Teams provides integrated LAP support down to the brigade level. Later, the LSEs converted into Army Field Support Battalions. The commanders are centrally selected as are other battalion commanders in the Army. The LAP program is now a critical professional development stage for future AFSB commanders as well as the future civilian SPO and Deputy commander leadership. The program has become more mobile and deployable and is now viewed by the customers as a critical component in their logistics support structure in peace and war. While the structure has changed since 1965, the LAP remains the one constant for soldiers and units to access and leverage "The Power of the AMC Materiel Enterprise."

## This MONTH in military history...

- **1813:** BATTLE OF TALLASAHATCHEE
- **1835:** TEXANS BEGIN SIEGE OF SAN ANTONIO
- **1863:** BATTLE OF GRAND COTEAU, GA
- **1904:** ARMY WAR COLLEGE OPENS WITH CPT JOHN J. PERSHING IN FIRST CLASS
- **1915:** FIRST US SHIPBOARD CATAPULT PLANE LAUNCH
- **1917:** FIRST US WWI TROOPS KIA IN FRANCE
- **1940:** FIRST US AIR RAID SHELTER OPENS IN FLEETWOOD, PA
- **1942:** OPERATION TORCH: US & BRITISH FORCES LAND IN NORTH-WESTERN AFRICA
- **1944:** US & FILIPINO TROOPS CLEAR JAPANESE FROM THE CENTRAL VALLEY ON LEYTE
- **1952:** FIRST THERMONUCLEAR BOMB DETONATED
- **1973:** WAR POWERS ACT BECOMES LAW

## Indian War Logistics



exacerbated the difficulties of moving supplies over a large area.

In order to support frontier outposts, major quantities of supplies were procured by contract in the East or Midwest and shipped by rail and river boat to the accessible

After the Civil War, a chain of forts formed a general line of defense on the frontier from Mexico to Canada to provide security to new settlements emerging in the West. As the post-Civil War Regular Army took shape, its personnel strength began a decade of decline, dropping from an 1867 level of 57,000 to half that in 1876, then leveling off at an average of 26,000 for the remaining years up to the War with Spain. Even with small numbers of troops, supplying troops in the West caused significant logistics difficulties. The West's sparsely settled area, its great distances, and extreme variations of climate and geography served as significant impediments for the creation of an effective logistics system. These natural factors were accentuated by Army manpower limitations as well as logistical and communications problems, which

Army post nearest the forts or troops to be supplied. From the post, supplies were carried by wagon trains or pack animals in order to support small detachments scattered over thousands of miles of plains and mountains. Most of the wagon trains were operated by contract drivers with contractors often providing security as well. Costs to support frontier troops were high. For example, General Sherman estimated that in order to effectively police the territory of New Mexico a cavalry force of 2500 would be needed. Food would have to be hauled 1000 miles costing \$1000 a year for each soldier supported.

By far the most expensive element in the supply business was transportation. Army wagons driven by contract teams along with regular express lines such as Wells Fargo and other private

contractors all moved military supplies throughout the West. Total expenditures for wagon transportation exceeded those for rail and water transportation combined. The least satisfactory element of supply in the western outposts was the food supply. Buffalo, beef, and local garden produce could make up for deficiencies, but the official ration, even when of fair quality, was none too palatable without these supplements. Unfortunately, some unscrupulous contractors supplied inferior foods—or sometimes no food at all. Major Gen. George A. Custer reported an instance when unbroken packages of provisions shipped from the main depot were found to contain nothing but huge stones.

The Army would continue to struggle with logistics issues over such a large and rugged terrain throughout the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with many of the logistics problems observed during the Indian Wars reoccurring in later conflicts including the GWOT.



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