



U.S. ARMY

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Invention of the First Transportation Officer

FROM THE ARCHIVES



Army Contractor / LOGCAP 1864 ?

A sutler is a civilian merchant who sells provisions to the army in the field, in camp, or in quarters. Sutlers sold wares from the back of a wagon or a temporary tent, traveling with an army or to remote military outposts. The above picture shows the Rock Island Prison Barracks sutler in 1864 supplying Soldiers of the Veterans Reserve Corps (VRC). The sutler was, at times, also allowed into the prison barracks to sell to the Confederate prisoners. The prisoners commonly complained at the high rates for the sutlers items but the cart usually left empty with a happy sutler.

MONTHLY TRIVIA

- 1 At what age did Alexander achieve the rank of General?
- 2 What famous individual did Alexander study under?
- 3 How did Parmenion leave Alexander's service?

ANSWERS FOR JANUARY 2023 QUESTIONS

- 1 What was the name of the machine that was used by German during World War II to send cryptic messages?
➤ **Enigma**
- 2 What was the price tag of Lend-Lease for all of the Allies during World War II?
➤ **\$49.1 Billion (\$881.5 Billion in 2022)**
- 3 How many Allied ships were sunk by U-boats during the D-Day Invasion?
➤ **None**



IF IT FITS, IT SHIPS.

"My logistics are a humorless lot. They know if my campaign fails, they are the first ones I will slay."

- Alexander the Great

As difficult as it can be to trace the origin of a concept it is commonly seen that Alexander the Great and the Macedonian Army first developed the basis to modern military logistics. In addition, the developer of the first formalized transportation officer also occurred during this time.

The changes all started during the reign of Philip II (Alexander's father), with the Macedonian army undergoing radical reforms reshaping the foundations and laying the principles of Resilience, Maneuverability and Speed. First, unlike traditional kingdoms of the time, Macedonia had an army of full-time troops, who were well-trained in maneuvers and outfitted with newly developed weapons. Next, Philip forbade the use of ox-drawn carts in the army, horse-drawn carts began to be used for the first time in the West, which made the army much faster and far more maneuverable. Additionally, the Soldiers kit was expanded to have a load of 10 days' worth of supplies reducing the time needed to resupply the army on the move. One of the most dramatic moves for the time was to reduce the number of civilian camp followers. This included forbidding women to accompany the Soldiers on campaign as well as reducing servants to one in every ten infantryman and one for each cavalry trooper. This gave the Macedonian army a dramatic advantage over the bordering Greek armies as they could deliver lightning strikes and longer sustained campaigns into enemy territory. Once Alexander would take power in 336 B.C., at the age of 20, this tactic would be honed to near perfection. An example of these reforms in action was the Debes campaign with Alexander and his army traveling approximately 528 miles in 13 days, taking its inhabitants by surprise and destroying the city as a result.

A later campaign Alexander had to modify his logistics train was to fight the Achaemenids, who had conquered a large part of the known world. The Achaemenid Empire stretched from the Hindu Kush Mountains to Ancient Egypt. Negotiating this diverse, difficult, and unfamiliar terrain required a large and reliable baggage train unlike earlier campaigns. To control all nuances of the march, a special position, "Skoidos," was created. The duty of the Skoidos was to ensure the protection of the train, the safety and welfare of the pack animals, the distribution of resources and the order in the march to ensure reliable supply distribution. This position was held by the charismatic Parmenion, a respected general who served Alexander's father and was one of his most respected generals. The Skoidos would become the world's first iteration of a modern transportation/ quartermaster officer. The wide range of geography and environment that Alexander eventually would oversee, at its largest approximately 3.2 million square miles, additional forms of transportation would be incorporated by the Skoidos. The camel would be pressed into service in Alexander's drive into the Persian heartland with a load capable of carrying 300 pounds of supplies over a long distance as opposed to 200 pounds of the horse or mule. They additionally came with the added benefit of being suited for arid terrain.

Throughout the Persian campaign Alexander would shift his plans to keep his army and accompanying logistics train supplied either with locally acquired food stocks (on longer campaigns) or having a coastal port or navigable river within easy supply distance for his approximate 48,000 Soldiers, 16,000 camp followers for a total of approximately 65,000 personnel. In addition to the humans and additional 6,100 cavalry horses and 1,300 baggage animals would require supplies. The Skoidos had calculated that each Macedonian Soldier on this campaign would need three pounds of grain, dried fruit products and one-half gallon of water per day which equaled about 3,600 calories. The pack animals would be rationed 10 pounds of straw or chaff along with 10 pounds of grain and 8 gallons of water per day.

Alexander the Great shows us the early successes of an effective logistical body. Having structure and organization to be able to deliver what was needed, when it was needed. Having the right people overseeing and directing these supplies to keep the army on campaign. Along with those individuals having logistical intelligence by understanding that they could not leave the seaside or river port unless they could obtain supplies from productive cities and nations along their path.

Sustindum Victoriam (Maintaining Victory)

Black History Month



In World War II, the Army trained, equipped, and deployed almost 90 divisions worldwide, but was desperately short of infantryman in early 1945. While ten percent of the American population consisted of African Americans, less than three percent of the Black units that deployed overseas were combat units and very few of them fought on the front lines. Close combat in Europe offered the opportunity for a few thousand Black soldiers to demonstrate their value as fighting men. When these soldiers, all volunteers from the Army Service Forces, fought side-by-side with White troops during the Battle of the Bulge and afterward, they began to change the minds of some of their harshest White critics and started a shift that would lead to full integration of the Army. The case of the missing World War II Black combat soldier offers lessons for today's military faced with similar issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.



1. Donald E. Engels, Alexander the Great and the Logistics of Macedonian Army (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978).
2. Ahmadov, Akbar, Alexander's Smart Logistics. (2021) <https://aze.media/alexanders-smart-logistics/>

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