
Logistics Lessons Learned

At the National Training Center

MAJOR DANIEL J. KLECKER
CAPTAIN JAMES M. FISCUS

Air assault forces of the U.S. Army conduct decisive, deep operations under a variety of complex conditions, and sustaining them poses distinct challenges and considerations.

In 1994 our unit of the 101st Airborne Division conducted a rotation at the National Training Center (NTC) that combined air assault and heavy units for the first time. During that training, many logistical principles were validated and many lessons learned. We offer here some logistics lessons that apply at brigade level, including the integration of the heavy force and some considerations unique to operating in a desert environment.

The initial logistical focus must be on the complete integration of the heavy force as it is attached to the air assault brigade task force headquarters. Opportunities must be created that will familiarize each unit with the other's assets, capabilities, doctrine, and language. These opportunities might include multiple liaison visits and a command post exercise, the exchange of standing operating procedures (SOPs), a discussion of Class IV and V combat configured loads (CCLs), and the introduction of the logistical status (LOGSTAT) report. Key personnel should be introduced and begin forging relationships.

It is important early in this process to identify the troop list and accurately quantify all available and required assets. Because of the diversity of the modified tables of organization and equipment, the two units have little equipment in common. The forward support battalion (FSB) must be carefully task organized to ensure

adequate and appropriate support for all supplies and services. Its foundation should be the air assault task force FSB, significantly augmented by resources from the heavy task force FSB.

Key logisticians must be at the tactical operations center (TOC) in the early stages of the planning process. The brigade S-4 and the FSB support operations officer should be there during the mission analysis. Frequent communication with the FSB at this stage will ensure greater responsiveness and earlier involvement by the entire logistics community.

The logistical preparation of the battle-

The initial logistical focus must be on the complete integration of the heavy force as it is attached to the air assault brigade task force headquarters.

field should begin immediately so that early planning can support the tactical scheme of maneuver. This planning must include detailed terrain analysis to identify potential sites for key logistics routes, facilities, supplies, and services.

Because of the austere nature of air assault operations, it is important to identify the facilities and assets to be found on or near the battlefield that will help sustain combat operations. Such assets include water (potable and non-potable), Class III and IV sources, electrical power, transportation assets, railroads, airfields, potential landing and pickup zones, hospitals, population centers, hard-stand main-

tenance facilities, and the like. Using these existing assets or facilities will reduce the number that must be brought forward or prepared.

Once the task organization has been determined, its logistical implications should be considered. A mission-specific task force may not have the required organic combat service support (CSS) assets. For example, this may be the case for a special task force created to conduct the counterreconnaissance battle. And the creation of a new or *ad hoc* element may generate new reporting requirements. The effective time of the task organization is important, as is the period of time it will remain in effect.

The brigade S-4's planning products, developed at the brigade TOC, are crucial to the support of the task force. Time for producing a CSS annex may not always be available. The high operational tempo often causes a compressed planning process that results in fragmentary orders instead of more complete ones. Furthermore, since the exacting detail in the CSS annex does not change much from mission to mission, changes to the original annex may be all that is needed.

The brigade S-4 should produce four CSS operation order (OPORD) products for the first mission: paragraph 4 (Concept of Support), execution matrix, CSS annex, and CSS overlay.

Paragraph 4 keys the entire logistics community to the CSS plan. It details, by phase, the supply and service priorities to support the scheme of maneuver. Every logistical asset in the brigade task force should take its cue from the concept of support. The early

TRAINING NOTES

involvement of the brigade S-4 and the FSB support operations officer in the planning process makes this crucial document better, to the benefit of the entire task force.

An event-triggered execution matrix should immediately follow paragraph 4 in the basic order. This matrix is useful to CSS planners because it indicates the locations of key logistical assets by phase.

The overlay should be a comprehensive, stand-alone product that graphically depicts all CSS information for task force units. The CSS plan is much more flexible if the area of operations is planned throughout the entire depth and width of the brigade sector.

The CSS annex shows details of the general support plan for missions in the theater of operations. It describes the basis for all supplies and services rendered and prescribes how, where, when, and which units in the area will be supported. Since the general support plan usually does not change drastically, an annex may be required only for the initial brigade OPORD. Subsequent changes and details can be conveyed in overlays, matrices, and paragraph 4.

These documents should be distributed with the OPORD at the briefing. Otherwise, they are unlikely to be disseminated to all units in time to be used. Units will continue to plan without a brigade logistics plan, and the result is likely to be disjointed and inefficient. Distributing CSS products quickly is more important than trying to make them perfect. It is better to distribute an 80 percent solution in a timely manner, and use rehearsals and staff visits to coordinate or disseminate additional information.

The S-4 and FSB support operations officer will have key information about specific unit requirements early in the planning process, and this information can be relayed to the appropriate units by a logistics warning order. This order gives subordinate units and logistic elements more time to prepare for the mission; they do not have to wait for the presentation and dissemination of the OPORD.

Resupply

The predominant method of resupply for air assault units during air assault missions is by air, particularly during the early

phases of an operation. The most reliable way of planning for aerial resupply is to include logistics in the air movement table (AMT) and make it an integral part of the tactical mission. When planned in this manner, supplies are pushed to the objective area with the flow of combat soldiers and key equipment. Aircraft sorties are dedicated to resupply as part of the tactical operation. Otherwise, logistics must follow as a separate mission, and other priorities may cause it to be delayed or less responsive.

Aerial resupply should be planned in four distinct categories during an air assault operation:

- Mission essential supplies.
- Immediate, on-call resupply.
- Routine, scheduled resupply.
- Emergency resupply.

Mission essential supplies should be factored into the AMT as part of the air assault mission. These supplies should be routinely requested, configured, and rigged for sling load by the using unit, at the air assault pickup zone (PZ) logistics point. They are pushed into the air flow and arrive on schedule at the designated LZ (selected by the using unit to sup-

Key logistics must be at the tactical operations center in the early stages of the planning process.

port the mission—as coordinated at the air mission meeting. All supplies required for the mission are moved by rotary aircraft (sling or internal loads) in accordance with the AMT. Command and control will be conducted over the command net, and the aircraft are allocated by the air assault task force S-3.

Immediate, on-call resupply consists of additional supplies anticipated for use during the mission but not included in the AMT. These supplies are requested in a routine manner, configured, and rigged on the air assault PZ logistics point by the air assault task force and made readily available for immediate resupply. The aircraft to move these supplies are either mission aircraft that become available once the air

assault is completed, or a diversion of the dedicated mass casualty aircraft prepositioned at the PZ. As is the case with mission essential supplies, command and control will be conducted over the command net.

Routine, scheduled resupply is configured at the brigade support area (BSA) logistics delivery point by the requesting unit's field trains. These are the supplies previously forecast on the unit LOGSTAT, issued to the unit during routine resupply operations, and staged in the field trains. Requests for aircraft to support this mission are submitted through the brigade S-4 to the FSB. The mission is supported by dedicated, daily logistical aircraft, routinely allocated by the brigade S-3 to the FSB.

Emergency resupply requests reflect supplies not forecast but needed immediately by the requesting unit, most likely in the vicinity of the objective area. These supplies are configured for sling load at the logistics pickup point in the BSA or the division support area (DSA). The aircraft are diverted from routine resupply missions by the brigade S-4 or FSB or requested from the brigade S-3 if the mission cannot otherwise be supported. Command and control is conducted on the administration and logistical net.

Since the heavy forces do not normally use aerial resupply as much as air assault task forces, our joint rotation was an opportunity to expedite important supplies, such as high-priority Class IX parts, ice, and emergency supplies. Air medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) is also an important asset. The helicopter lift capability available to the air assault task force, if carefully planned and coordinated, can provide great opportunity for the heavy force.

The deep insertion of assets to support the tactical plan—scouts, combat observation lasing teams, and communication nodes—poses unique support considerations. Since these assets are usually inserted for limited periods, up to 48 hours, the best way to support them is to use kick bundles, carefully configured packages that are air assaulted with the deep units into their LZ. These bundles contain all the supplies anticipated for the duration of their limited mission. Since follow-on resupply missions risk

com-promising these units and the mission as well, it is important to include all supplies during the initial insertion.

Rehearsals

Logistics rehearsals are vital to synchronize resupply with the scheme of maneuver. To be most effective, rehearsals should be conducted at every level and should include as many soldiers and systems as possible. As a minimum, the brigade logistics plan should be rehearsed twice—first as part of the brigade rehearsal, normally conducted at the brigade TOC, and second in the BSA with all key unit logisticians.

The first rehearsal ensures that the logistical plan includes all key leaders and is synchronized with the scheme of maneuver. This forum permits the discussion of the plan and enables the key logistical planners to be available to address any concerns. Any changes to the scheme made at the rehearsal will immediately be identified and the CSS plan promptly adjusted.

As a result, subordinate unit logisticians come to the second rehearsal with a thorough understanding of their commanders' plans and then brief the way those plans will be supported logistically. They can be prepared to address any issues or problems they have or anticipate and should give the brigade S-4 a copy of their CSS graphics at this rehearsal.

The brigade S-4 should collect CSS graphics from all subordinate units and consolidate them, producing one overlay that depicts all CSS units and plans. Time permitting, this overlay should be reproduced and disseminated to subordinate units. It will be useful in resolving any conflicts, help situational awareness and battle tracking, and facilitate area support requirements, by phase.

Any resupply activities required during the mission should be conducted as discussed previously. Dedicated logistic aircraft should be designated routinely to ease daily resupply activities. Consistent with mission requirements, one of these aircraft should be allocated to the DSA to push supplies forward to the BSA, under the control of the main support battalion (MSB) commander. Another should be allocated to the BSA to push routine resupply forward to the requesting units,

under the control of the FSB commander. Additional aircraft should be allocated as missions demand.

The Daily LOGSTAT

The key document that allows for prompt, yet routine resupply activities is the daily LOGSTAT. This document details the unit's current logistical posture and forecasts all requirements. The unit LOGSTATs are compiled by the brigade S-4 and submitted to the division G-4 and the FSB. Since this process triggers

Because of the austere nature of air assault operations, it is important to identify the facilities and assets to be found on or near the battlefield that will help sustain combat operations.

all routine resupply activities, it is important that the LOGSTAT accurately reflect the unit's current status and forecasts. The following techniques are effective in achieving this goal:

- Allow the unit adequate time to prepare the LOGSTAT by requiring its submission late in the day. Ensure that there is time enough to capture requirements as noted by the unit's returning logistical support elements. The units should validate expressed requirements and annotate quantities currently on-hand in the combat and field trains. The LOGSTAT system must be disciplined to ensure it is submitted in an accurate and timely fashion.

- Liberally exercise the use of the LOG warning order to ensure that subordinate units have the best available information with which to forecast supplies. They must codify all requirements as early as possible on the LOGSTAT so that the FSB and MSB can satisfy all logistical requirements.

- Use the daily meeting with unit logisticians in the BSA to keep them abreast of the tactical situation and all known future operations. The brigade S-4, who visits frequently and stays in con-

stant communication with the brigade TOC, often knows more than subordinate unit logisticians about their future operations. Keep them informed, and they will produce better LOGSTATs and do their jobs more effectively. This daily meeting is a good time to require submission of the daily LOGSTAT and to allow discussion.

- Ensure that all LOGSTATs are examined by an appropriate member of the brigade S-4 section. This final check will ensure that the document is in line with support for current and future operations. There may be times when the S-4 adds supplies to a subordinate unit's forecast on the basis of information he has from the brigade TOC. Request routine requirements routinely. The LOGSTAT is the key document in facilitating this procedure.

Battle Tracking

To function as an alternate TOC, the brigade rear command post must accurately track the battle. This promotes situational awareness, which allows for more responsive logistical support. Accurate battle tracking also helps logisticians anticipate triggered events.

At the tactical conclusion of the mission, units perform many routine actions that permit rapid and effective resupply. The ammunition, casualty, equipment (ACE) status report is conducted during consolidation and reorganization and may be conducted more than once during any given mission. The information that comes from the units during this process facilitates the cross-leveling of supplies and may be the basis of an emergency resupply request. The status at the tactical conclusion of the battle becomes the basis for the unit LOGSTAT report. It is important to obtain an accurate status as quickly as possible to trigger prompt casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) and vehicle recovery, as well as routine logistical activities.

The tactical conclusion of a battle often triggers other events as well, such as the displacement of logistical assets and the continuation of the planning process for the next mission. It is important that units police the battlefield promptly to take care of soldiers and equipment and then shift the focus to upcoming events.

CASEVAC requires thorough and detailed planning. One technique that helps streamline CASEVAC operations and save lives is to dedicate MEDEVAC helicopters to the mission. These aircraft, rigged for mass casualty situations, can be staged forward in the PZ LOGPAD, where they will be responsive to situational requirements. Used in this manner, the aircraft can be diverted, if necessary, to support immediate resupply requests to units on or near the objective. Such a mission is not a distractor; it is an efficient use of assets. When required for MEDEVAC, these helicopters are closer to the objective area and can bring patients back on their return trip.

An efficient method of Class V resupply is to use Class V CCLs. These loads consist of predetermined packages of ammunition that are based on the unit's number of weapon systems. The CCLs should include ammunition for all key weapons in all essential types and appropriate mixes. For example, an artillery CCL should include a standard package of artillery ammunition, with a mix of munitions and fuses so that it is complete and self-contained.

CCLs are an efficient way for the unit field trains to prepackage Class V to be sent forward, upon request, from the logistics pickup point in the BSA. CCLs should be standardized and included in unit SOPs.

Doctrinally, the FSB operates an ammunition transfer point (ATP) in the BSA, because it has no Class V storage capability. This means the supported units must forecast requirements and assemble these supplies in the field trains. Class V is then pushed forward to the combat trains or unit positions. Any ammunition not forecast and delivered to the unit field trains through the BSA ATP must be called forward from the corps supply point. This time-consuming process taxes transportation assets and is not responsive enough for emergency resupply.

The key is to forecast requirements accurately and push supplies forward before the mission. This process is best accomplished by requiring units to maintain an accurate status of ammunition on-hand, accurately forecast requirements on the LOGSTAT, and push these require-

ments as far forward as the tactical situation allows. This process is necessary for all classes of supply, but it is crucial for Class V.

There is also great merit in putting together Class IV CCLs, which helps in planning and streamlines resupply activities. Class IV CCLs should be planned for platoon survivability packages and tactical obstacle packages. Like Class V CCLs, these too should be validated, codified, and included in unit SOPs.

A platoon survivability package includes all the barrier material needed to emplace a platoon in defensive positions. The packages are staged, ready to be called forward when needed; then they are sling loaded forward to a location determined by the unit (close enough to

It takes continuous coordination between the brigade S-4 and the FSB support operations officer to maintain the critical link between the brigade and all external CSS support.

decrease transportation requirements at the site of the defensive positions). Sling loading preconfigured platoon survivability packages is the most expedient and efficient way of pushing these critical supplies forward.

Tactical obstacle CCLs should be planned in a similar manner. These include all Class IV barrier material and Class V mines required for the tactical obstacle effort. The CCLs are configured in the DSA and pushed forward to the unit Class IV and V points as soon as those locations are confirmed and the tactical situation permits.

Preconfiguring tactical obstacle CCLs early and pushing them forward leaves more time for defensive preparations. Although aerial resupply is possible for these packages, it is usually impractical because of the amounts required for deliberate defensive preparation. Using ground assets may be the most efficient method.

Decontamination assets make up another category of supply. The chemical platoon habitually attached to an air assault task force is very capable, but the attachment of a heavy force emphasizes the need for detailed planning to make enough decontamination assets available, consistent with METT-T (mission, enemy, terrain, troops, and time). During our rotation, because of the lack of water sources in the desert, a 5,000-gallon tanker was pushed forward to the chemical platoon when the METT-T analysis indicated the need for it.

Resupply windows in the BSA should be established, in coordination with the FSB support operations officer, and published by the brigade S-4 as part of the CSS plan. Such windows inform tenant units when to report to the appropriate BSA supply point to draw their scheduled supplies. Each tenant should be assigned a different time to draw supplies from the various points so that units do not have to wait in line or risk massing. Staggered schedules permit units to use their organic transportation assets more efficiently, reducing external transportation requirements. Resupply windows also give the FSB a predictable schedule for unit arrivals, which makes their operations more efficient. All resupply windows should be completed in time for the units to organize and prepare supply requests for the daily logistical support missions.

Whenever the mission suggests the need for extended lines of communication between the BSA and the combat units, as deep air assault missions do, a forward logistics element (FLE) should be planned. The FLE should include key personnel, supplies, materiel handling equipment, and command and control and communications assets. It must be prepared to air assault forward to ensure responsive and continuous support to combat units until the tactical situation permits the BSA to displace forward.

It takes continuous coordination between the brigade S-4 and the FSB support operations officer to maintain the critical link between the brigade and all external CSS support. For this reason, it is recommended that the FSB support operations officer accompany the brigade S-4 to the TOC early in the planning process to make

sure logistical considerations are discussed.

Coordination is a continuous process in the BSA. Periodic, informal meetings help ensure that all appropriate personnel know and execute the plan, along with any changes that are made. It provides the brigade with timely visibility of key logistics activities occurring in the BSA and DSA. It also identifies problem areas early so that more time is available for any necessary adjustments.

Once the ground lines of communication have been established, a ground attack convoy is the traditional way to link organic CSS assets to air assaulted forces. Light-heavy integration provides a unique opportunity to facilitate the early displacement of crucial CSS assets forward to an air

assault unit by ground means.

During our NTC rotation, offensive missions were characterized by deep air assaults by the air assault infantry task force, followed by attack-in-zone missions by an armor task force. Linkup operations were planned, deep in enemy territory.

The convoy would link up with the armor task force combat trains before line of departure time and follow them as the task force executed its attack-in-zone mission. This method made possible the early arrival of key, organic CSS assets at the air assault task force, which significantly facilitated other resupply efforts.

Air assault operations lend a unique dimension to U.S. military capability.

Tactical operations, to be most effective, must never be unnecessarily constrained by logistics. This means the logistics community must be well-trained and versatile in carrying out their vital mission.

Major Daniel J. Klecker served as S-3, 2d Battalion, 187th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division. He was previously an observer-controller at the Combat Maneuver Training Center in Germany and is now assigned to the Joint Readiness Training Center. He is a 1981 graduate of the United States Military Academy and holds a master's degree from Central Michigan University.

Captain James M. Fiscus served as S-4, 626th Forward Support Battalion, 101st Airborne Division, during the rotation discussed, and previously served as supply platoon leader during two rotations. He is a 1986 ROTC graduate of Southwest Missouri State University.

Developing a Training Plan For a Line Company Supply Section

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS JOHN DUEZABOU

There are some serious flaws in the training strategy for the supply section of a mechanized infantry or armor company. As a former Readiness NCO for a National Guard armor company, I helped develop a plan to correct these problems.

My company found the gaps while comparing different levels of our mission essential task list (METL) in accordance with Field Manual (FM) 25-101, *Battle Focused Training*. We had little trouble with our line platoons. Their mission training plan spells out collective tasks and ties in individual tasks to support them. But when we came to the supply section of our company headquarters, we ran into major problems in both collective and individual training.

Some may argue that a line company shouldn't worry about the supply

section's collective training, because the section trains as part of the support platoon while in the field. My unit didn't agree. The supply section belongs to the company, not to the support platoon. Thus, it's the company's job to train the section. This is especially true in a Reserve Component unit, where the section may work with the support platoon only two weeks a year during the unit's annual training period.

Even if the support platoon conducts the collective training, the company still needs to know the collective tasks. That's the only way to ensure that the section's soldiers—a supply sergeant (staff sergeant) and an armorer (sergeant)—train on the correct individual supporting tasks while in garrison.

Whichever unit conducts the collective

training, it will face two problems. The first is that the section performs vastly different tasks in garrison than they do in a tactical environment, yet neither can be ignored.

In garrison, the section's main job is ordering and accounting for all supplies except those for the company's vehicles. In wartime, logistic requests go from the platoons through the first sergeant directly to the battalion S-4 section. The supply section's duties then become more a delivery function than an ordering and accountability function. While we must "battle focus" the section's training, we cannot neglect the job it does routinely, day to day.

The second problem is that neither ARTEP 71-1-MTP, *Tank/Mechanized Infantry Company Team Mission Training*