

# Ground LOGPACs for Light Infantry

## Lessons Learned at the JRTC

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Aerial resupply, primarily by helicopter, is always the preferred method for light infantry operations. But there are times when an infantry battalion or brigade is forced to use ground resupply techniques, for various reasons—poor weather, a superior enemy air defense effort, the maintenance of helicopters, crew rest, or the inability of the chain of command to task organize air frames for resupply operations because of other mission requirements. It is therefore important for infantry leaders to understand and drill ground logistical operations.

A decision to conduct any resupply operation by ground requires the synchronization of the following battlefield operating systems (BOSs):

- Air defense (Stinger teams or Avenger vehicles).
- Fire support (field artillery).
- Maneuver (infantry squads and armed or hardened fighting vehicles).
- Engineer (breach elements).
- Air support (OH 58s or any aerial weapons platform on call).
- Casualty evacuation (standard and non-standard rotary wing and ground ambulance).
- Communications.
- Intelligence.

The commander of the forward support battalion (FSB) is normally responsible for the overall coordination of convoys leaving the brigade support area (BSA). He and his staff should control the frequency, composition,

combat power, release, tracking, briefing, and debriefing of all convoys leaving and entering the BSA. If these convoys are properly equipped, well coordinated, and well-organized, they stand a much better chance of accomplishing the mission. They can also serve as a valuable source of recent intelligence for activities along the main supply route. The debriefing conducted in the BSA after the mission has been accomplished can then be used to modify the briefing issued by each of the BOS representatives.

### **The Briefing**

Before the unit quartering parties leave, they should be required to attend a briefing in which each of the BOS

representatives within the BSA TOC can update convoy personnel. The convoy commander and subordinate leaders or unit representatives moving with the convoy should receive a one-page document or overlay that contains the following:

- Targets and target numbers.
- Known or suspected enemy locations (snipers, ambush locations).
- Natural and manmade obstacles (minefields, streams, channeling terrain).
- Casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) locations (casualty collection points, ambulance exchange points).
- Frequencies (convoy, medical evacuation, mortar net, or fire support).
- A hasty schematic of the route and destinations—logistics release points (LRPs).
- A contingency plan for disabled vehicles.
- Rally points along the route.

The following BOS representatives need to give five-minute updates to the convoy leaders in the TOC before the convoy leaves. The battle captain on shift can give a quick situational overview for the immediate operational area. The intelligence officer can give a quick update of the enemy situation. The FSO can brief planned targets along the convoy route and inform the firing batteries when the convoys are about to depart and alert them to be prepared to receive fire missions along the route. Medical personnel can talk about the current medevac plan and the locations of CCPs. Finally, the signal NCO or officer on duty can brief frequencies and call signs. Ensuring that the compromise of friendly priority intelligence requirements (PIRs) is kept to a minimum, the one-page overlay will show NCOs and officers within the convoy the support that is available to them.

Because the FSB combat power allocated for convoys depends upon the task force's needs, the force package the task force commander allocates to the BSA will change from one operation to another. The FSB S-3 should consider this and develop battle drills, using the habitual convoy combat power they plan to send with each convoy. These

drills can be incorporated into an easy-to-read battle book that senior representatives from convoy elements can read and disseminate to their subordinates. The following is an example:

*STANDARD BATTLE DRILL FOR 10TH FSB LOGPAC (REACTION TO CONTACT):*

*The convoy/LOGPAC combat power is as follows:*

- M55A1 Sheridan (2)
- M1025 HMMWV w/Mk 19 (2)
- Battalion support platoon M998 HMMWV (4)
- Battalion support platoon M923 5-ton (4)
- FSB M923 5-ton w/infantry squad + engineer (2)
- FLA (front line ambulance) M997 (1)
- M998 HMMWV C&C FSB vehicle (1)

*The battle book should also address contingencies such as reactions of all elements upon receiving fire.*

Easy-to-follow instructions and a sketch for each battle drill should be available. Unit representatives within the convoy must ensure that the drivers and track commanders see the drills and understand them. If infantry support is provided, these soldiers must rehearse the standing operating procedures (SOPs) that they will execute under varying conditions, as they are the convoy's most flexible and lethal asset. Additionally, the commander's intent for mission success for each convoy must be clear. It is not unheard of for a task force commander to want to target any and all enemy personnel during the low-intensity phase at the JRTC. His guidance may go as far as allocating a heliborne quick reaction force that will employ, search, and attack all sightings by the convoy. Therefore, it is important that the mission and intent for the convoy be identified before its potential as a targeting/intelligence collection asset overshadows its primary role as a support asset. LOGPACs and convoys need to target and report enemy personnel and obstacles to support their mission.

#### **LOGPAC Planning**

Logistic resupply packages are most

effective when they are well coordinated, standardized operations. To facilitate this coordination, the task force S-4 needs to include an annex for LOGPAC operations in the operations order. If all the battalions roll ground resupply convoys and quartering parties together, the following benefits will result:

- Habitual working relationships between units in the convoy will enable them to react to situations more effectively.
- Routine requesting of fires and aviation support (helicopter gunships and scout overflights) will become easier to execute.
- With the LOGPAC an SOP, move-out times can be more flexible to adjust to METT-T (mission, enemy, terrain, troops, and time).
- With all battalions or companies rolling out together, there is less strain on the limited security assets that have to roll with every convoy.
- The LOGPAC will become a standardized method for moving all types of items, including ammunition, water, personnel replacements, dunnage, trash, mermite, and hard copies of reports, if necessary. As units identify assets that need to be moved, they can default to the LOGPAC as a habitual method of delivering items. This will reduce the number of "emergency resupply" missions that need to be executed due to poor planning every day.
- This will reduce stress on the combat BOSs providing support to resupply missions, allowing them to spend more time supporting standard combat operations.
- The time for the unit representatives to receive their convoy briefing and move out should be disseminated 36 hours before the time of execution, but the convoy time should vary to keep from establishing a traffic pattern for enemy observers.

#### **The Logistics Release Point**

The purpose of the logistics release point (LRP) is to provide a geographic location where units can separate from the convoy/LOGPAC they are accompanying and meet their own subordinate elements to distribute classes of supply,

personnel, etc. In a battalion-sponsored LOGPAC, the LRP would be the linkup point for company supply representatives and the convoy coming from the BSA field trains to receive supplies before driving to their company area.

There are many techniques for conducting actions at the LRP. The method described here is a compilation of lessons learned and proven SOPs from the training centers. (The following information discusses techniques, not doctrine.)

The subordinate units receiving supplies from the LOGPAC should always arrive at the LRP before the supporting convoy so that they can perform the following tasks:

- Provide local security for themselves and the arriving LOGPAC.
- Provide LRP control, assume guidance of inbound vehicles, and provide a far-side recognition signal.
- Prepare mermite dunnage, empty fuel cans, trash, and waste products from the previous LOGPAC so they can be easily picked up for return.
- Have assets on hand to receive and transport inbound supplies and personnel from LOGPAC to unit areas.
- If possible, have the same person-

nel from the subordinate units always receive their breakout of supplies from the LOGPAC.

When the units arrive at the LOGPAC and divide the supplies, they must adhere to a definite schedule and have a detailed contingency plan if they are to return items and information to the LOGPAC in time for its return trip. A good planning time is three hours from the time units link up at the LRP. This gives unit supply sergeants an hour to travel to their companies, an hour to feed personnel and drop off supplies, and an hour to get back to the LRP to meet the convoy/LOGPAC before it goes back to the BSA. This planning time depends, of course, upon the mission and other factors of METT-T.

The following are examples of items that units normally send back to the BSA:

- Weapon systems and equipment to be evacuated for repair.
- Personnel in need of transportation to be processed through the BSA (emergency leave, prisoners).
- Logistics reports or other hard-copy information.
- Gasoline and water cans that need to be filled.

- Air items that need to be returned to the BSA or unit field trains.

- Non-mission essential equipment to support future operations.

- Trash, dunnage, and waste products.

Security assets and combat power escorting the LOGPAC remain in place at the LRP until the convoy is ready to return to the BSA.

While ground convoys may be more vulnerable to enemy contact and obstacles than air delivered assets, they often become a reality during the course of combat operations. By planning and rehearsing the actions necessary for the successful completion of ground convoys, units will be more prepared to execute these missions when they need to be carried out. In ground LOGPAC operations, planning, coordination, and rehearsal are vital to success, just as they are in any other combat operation.

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