

A Commander's Guide to the Forward Support Company

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Background

The Army is making great progress in its transformation as it moves to a brigade-centric organization. Part of this transformation is the creation of forward support companies that provide logistics support to battalions and operate as a subordinate of the battalion. The integration of these companies has created some challenges for their supported units. Many of these challenges stem from the creation of new doctrine and deviate from the accepted norms of Army of Excellence (AOE) doctrine. Battalion commanders and executive officers struggle with the differences between the AOE doctrine they learned early in their careers and the emerging doctrine of the transformational Army. Many commanders across the Army do not use the forward support company (FSC) and the expertise within it to its full potential. This appears to be due to a lack of understanding of forward support companies' capabilities and subject matter expertise and because these leaders have not yet been trained on the new logistics doctrine by the institutional Army.

For many years, brigade-level logisticians created forward logistics elements (FLE) "out of hide" to augment

existing capabilities like the support platoon or battalion maintenance section to weight the battlefield logistically as needed with assets and C2 (command and control). This ensured that critical supply and maintenance capabilities were forward with supported battalions. The FSC was created to provide all of the assets a battalion needed to be self-sufficient and the necessary C4I (command, control, communications, computers and intelligence) to plan, synchronize, and control logistics operations. The forward support company is a multifunctional unit that includes a distribution platoon and a maintenance platoon organized to provide support to a maneuver battalion (FM 4-90.1).

Purpose

The purpose of this article is to provide information on the doctrinal composition, capabilities, and operations of the forward support company and will provide both doctrinal and non-doctrinal tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) to both current and future combined arms battalion

(CAB) commanders and staff officers. This article will also address methods of applying the capabilities of the forward support company to sustain current counterinsurgency operations.

Scope

This article focuses on the CAB FSC and will not address the unique requirements of FSCs supporting RSTA (reconnaissance surveillance and target acquisition) squadrons and fires battalions; however, the fundamental principles are the same for all FSCs. Also, for the sake of discussion, the heavy brigade combat team (HBCT), combined arms battalion, forward support company's modified table of equipment will be used throughout the article.

The Forward Support Company

The forward support company is a 233-Soldier, multifunctional unit that includes a distribution platoon and a maintenance platoon organized to provide support to a maneuver battalion (FM 4-90.1). This is

Courtesy photos

Forward support company Soldiers conduct a tactical refueling at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California.



intentionally a very broad mission statement. The FSC provides each battalion a robust and flexible logistics capability that can perform both doctrinal and non-doctrinal missions for the battalion in support of full spectrum operations. Although the FSC is organic to the brigade support battalion due to Title IX considerations, it operates under the command and control of the CAB commander through attachment or operational control. The sections highlighted below provide the doctrinal missions and capabilities of the subordinate elements of the FSC. These elements are the company HQ section, the food service section, the distribution platoon, and the maintenance platoon. Each section's critical equipment, military occupational specialties, and potential shortfalls are highlighted.

The Company Headquarters

The FSC headquarters is similar to every other company headquarters in the Army. The headquarters section is responsible for the command, control, supply, and administration of the company. It also performs the following logistics tasks:

- 1) Coordinates and provides technical support to the combined arms battalion.
- 2) Advises the combined arms battalion commander on sustainment requirements versus available assets.
- 3) Determines the unit's sustainment requirements in coordination with the BSB (brigade support battalion) operations section, combined arms battalion S4, and logistics representatives from attached units.
- 4) Provides input to the combined arms battalion logistics estimate and service support paragraph of the operations order (OPORD).
- 5) Plans and monitors support operations and makes necessary adjustments to ensure support requirements are met.
- 6) Plans and coordinates allocation of available CSS resources.
- 7) Tracks available assets through subordinate company teams, BSB support operations section, combined arms battalion S4, and other units.
- 8) Requests backup support when needed.
- 9) Recommends support priorities and

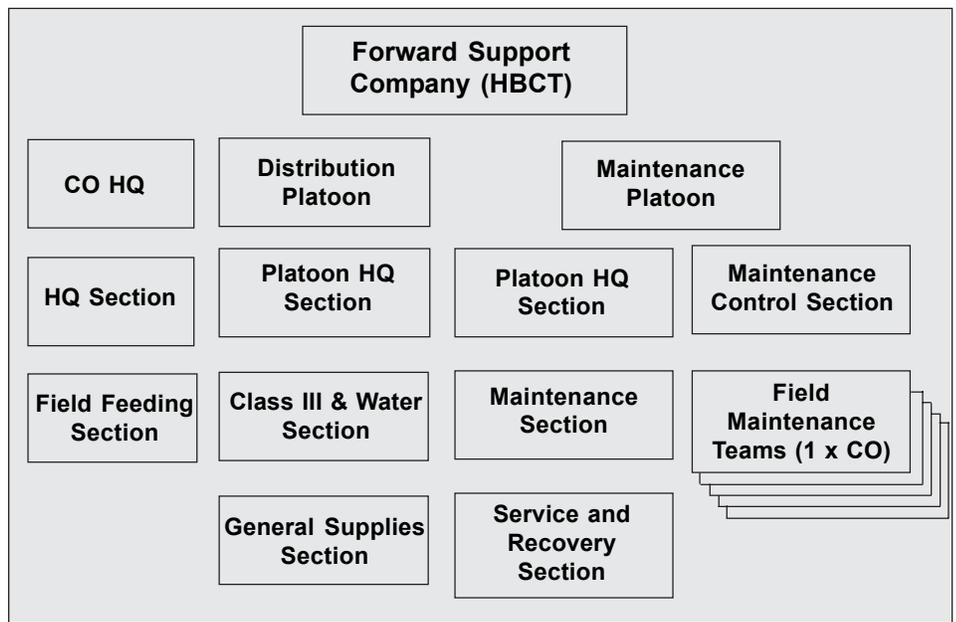


Figure 1

enforces priorities received from higher headquarters.

10) Coordinates with the S3, S4 and HHC commander on CAB support area (CABSA) locations.

11) Plans and executes contingency operations as required.

12) Coordinates with the S3 and S4 on primary and alternate routes into the combined arms battalion support area.

13) Establishes and monitors brigade and battalion logistics situation report (LOGSITREP), logistics status (LOGSTAT), and logistics spot reports in accordance with an SOP.

14) Plans future logistics operations in coordination with the S4.

15) Develops and maintains tactical and CSS overlays.

16) Develops the CSS synchronization matrix.

17) Keeps the BSB abreast of the logistics situation and future support requirements. (Field Manual-Interim 3-90.5, *Heavy Brigade Combat Team Combined Arms Battalion*)

(Many of these tasks were previously performed by the battalion S4, but now the battalion has trained and dedicated logisticicians to coordinate and provide continuous support.)

The headquarters section also has a couple unique items of communication equipment which allow for theater-wide communications:

Battle Command Sustainment Support System (BCS3)

BCS3 is the Army's maneuver sustainment command and control system. It aligns sustainment, in-transit, and force data to aid commanders in making critical decisions. This system capability provides operators the complete logistics picture in the form of the "running estimate." BCS3 provides:

- * A map-centric display on a commercial laptop — a thorough technical and visual picture of the battlefield,
- * The ability to plan, rehearse, train and execute on one system, and
- * System software that can operate on unclassified or classified networks.

Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT)

The VSAT is the satellite communications system that allows the BCS3 and the Standard Army Maintenance System-Enhanced in the maintenance platoon to transmit and receive data.

CSS Automated Information Systems Interface (CAISI)

CAISI is a secure, wireless local area network (LAN) which provides the "last mile" connectivity between logistics automation systems and VSAT type networks.

Movement Tracking System (MTS) Controller Station

This is a satellite-based, messaging and mapping system that provides asset visibility of and communication with transportation assets. This system is designed to be integrated with command post operations.

Movement Tracking System Vehicle Mounted — The vehicle mounted system provides the FSC commander the same capability as the controller station while on the move.

All of these systems combine to provide the FSC and the combined arms battalion with a logistics common operating picture. They also provide the FSC a “reach back” logistics capability. When combined with the combined arms battalion’s ABCS (Army Battlefield Command System) suite, these systems create a complete picture of the battlefield for the battalion commander.

Field Feeding Section

The FSC food service section provides Class I food service and food preparation. The food service section can prepare and deliver hot meals to the maneuver company teams. It distributes prepackaged food, prepared food, or both. It can provide one heat-and-serve meal and one cook-prepared (A or B ration) meal per day. Central to the food service section’s mission is its ability to task organize and deploy with company teams and operate remote feeding sites. The field feeding section has two critical pieces of food service equipment. They are:

* **Containerized Kitchen (CK)** — The CK is a mobile field kitchen that can support 800 Soldiers with up to three hot, cook-prepared or heat-and-serve meals per day. One CK replaces two mobile kitchen trailers and provides more food preparation capability. The CK is mounted on a tactical trailer and towed. Major features of the CK include electrical power from an on-board tactical quiet generator (TQG), an environmental control for heating and cooling, and refrigerated storage of 60 cubic feet. Cooks in the CK can roast, grill, boil, fry and bake. The CK has running water, a protected serving line, and ventilation of exhaust and cooking by-products.

* **Kitchen, Company Level, Field Feeding-Enhanced (KCLFF-E)** — The KCLFF-E is used for field feeding of company-sized units. It is designed to heat, deliver and serve one heat-and-serve ration per day for up to 200 Soldiers. It also has a limited capability to provide perishable and shelf-stable meals prepared by cooks. In order to operate, the KCLFF-E requires two food service specialists along with assistance from the unit being supported. The KCLFF-E is moved using a HMMWV or larger vehicle.



Sergeant First Class Kap Kim

A cook with a forward support company takes water into a containerized kitchen before dinner at Forward Operating Base Hope in Iraq.

Distribution Platoon

The mission of the distribution platoon is to provide supply and transportation support to the combined arms battalion. It consists of a platoon headquarters section, Class III transportation section, general supply section, and Class V transportation section. The distribution platoon receives, transloads, and distributes all classes of supply minus Class VIII; although the platoon may distribute Class VIII based on battalion SOPs. The platoon may distribute supplies via unit distribution (combat logistics patrols [CLPs]), supply point distribution (FOB-centric), or both. It also has the ability to conduct simultaneous Class III and V support to line companies, HHC, and the FSC itself. The platoon can provide its own security while conducting CLPs or it can be augmented by maneuver forces based on METT-TC.

Key Equipment:

- 1 x FBCB2
- 1 x Forward Area Water Point Supply System
- 12 x M978 HEMTT Fueler
- 1 x M977 HEMTT Cargo
- 5 x M1120 HEMTT Load Handling System
- 5 x M1075 Palletized Loading System
- 5 x M1083 MTV w/Ring Mount
- 5 x M2 .50 CAL MG
- 1 x Container Handling Unit (CHU)

Personnel:

- Platoon leader: Quartermaster Corps
- Platoon sergeant: 92A40 automated logistics specialist
- 13 x petroleum specialists
- 1 x water treatment specialist
- 28 x motor transport operators
- 1 x automated logistics specialist

The real shortfall of the distribution platoon is the lack of ammunition specialists (89B) within the platoon. The Class V section is composed of only motor transport specialists. The battalion relies on these specialists to get on the job training in the management of ammunition.

Maintenance Platoon

The maintenance platoon provides field maintenance to the CAB. With more than 140 Soldiers, the maintenance platoon is larger than most companies. The platoon consists of nine sections: platoon headquarters, maintenance control, maintenance, service and recovery, and five company-level field maintenance teams (FMTs). The platoon has a wide variety of military occupational specialties giving it a robust maintenance capability. The maintenance platoon provides maintenance support for the following types of systems:

- M1 series tanks,
- M2/M3 series fighting vehicles,
- Construction equipment,
- Tracked vehicles,
- Wheeled vehicles,
- Weapons systems,
- Fire control systems,
- Power generation equipment,
- Communications equipment,

- Specialty electronic devices,
- Utility equipment, and
- Quartermaster and chemical equipment (pumps, hoses, water/fuel systems, etc.).

The platoon maintains a limited quantity of combat spares (prescribed load list [PLL] and shop/bench stock) in the maintenance control section. The maintenance platoon operates the unit maintenance collection point. When a company is detached from the battalion, the FSC commander detaches a supporting maintenance package that includes the personnel, tools, test equipment, and PLL stocks necessary to support the company, usually the habitual FMT plus any additional capabilities required by the mission.

The maintenance platoon headquarters section provides command, control, and supervision for all administrative functions of the platoon. With guidance from the FSC commander, the headquarters section monitors established maintenance priorities, provides recommendations for reinforcing support, as well as plans and conducts all necessary platoon training activities.

The maintenance control section is the primary manager for all field maintenance in the HBCT combined arms battalion and serves as the “nerve center” for the battalion’s maintenance activities. The maintenance control section performs all of the Army Maintenance Management System (TAMMS) and dispatching operations and tracks scheduled services for the combined arms battalion using the Standard Army Maintenance System-Enhanced (SAMS-E). All company team SAMS-E boxes and PLL clerks are collocated with the maintenance control section. The maintenance control officer (MCO) manages all the SAMS-E operators. The SAMS-E clerks operating each company box process each DA Form 5988-E (Equipment Inspection Maintenance Worksheet) completed by the operator or crew and verified by the FMT. Field Manual-Interim (FMI) 4-90.1, *Heavy Brigade Combat Team Logistics*, defines the responsibilities of the maintenance control officer, as follows: “The



A Soldier with an FSC's Maintenance Platoon replaces an engine on an M88 recovery vehicle.

maintenance control officer (MCO) is the principal assistant to the commander, both battalion and FSC, on all matters pertaining to the field maintenance mission. The MCO serves as maintenance officer for the maneuver battalion and FSC ... He is responsible to the commander for the management of the combined efforts of the maintenance control section, maintenance section and service and recovery section, and the maintenance system teams...”

This eliminates the need for maneuver commanders to pull a battalion motor officer (BMO) “out of hide.” Battalion commanders now have a school-trained maintenance officer with supervision (the FSC commander) to manage their fleets! The MCO is also aided by a maintenance officer, usually a chief warrant officer 1 or 2, plus a sergeant first class who serves as the maintenance sergeant. According to the article “Maintenance Management in the Heavy BCT” which appeared in the September-October 2006 issue of *Army Logistician*, author Captain Eric A. McCoy pointed out that the maintenance control section must accomplish the following tasks:

- 1) Coordinate recovery of the battalion’s equipment,
- 2) Evaluate and ensure the quality of all maintenance completed by the maintenance platoon,
- 3) Monitor the status of equipment undergoing repairs, and determine the status of the repair parts required to

complete those repairs, and
4) Perform maintenance according to the priorities established by the maneuver battalion commander.

The service/recovery section provides recovery support to elements of the combined arms battalion. This section also provides limited reinforcing recovery support to field maintenance teams. When reinforcing recovery support is required, FMTs request support from the maintenance control section.

The maintenance section provides field maintenance for the HBCT combined arms battalion. This section primarily focuses on the HHC and the FSC. It also provides maintenance support to elements attached to the combined arms battalion and provides reinforcing maintenance to the FMTs.

Each field maintenance team is tailored to support infantry, armor, and engineer companies. As the FSC commander task organizes his company, all or part of an FMT goes with the company teams to maintain habitual support doctrinally. The company commander sets the FMT’s priorities for his company, and the FMT operates under the control of the company first sergeant while supervised by the FMT maintenance NCOIC. FMTs carry limited onboard combat spares to help facilitate repairs forward. If inoperable equipment is not repairable by the FMT due either to METT-TC or a lack of repair parts, the FMT uses recovery assets to recover the equipment to the unit maintenance collection point (UMCP) or designated link-up point. FMTs are fully integrated into the combined arms units’ operational plans.

Key equipment includes the FBCB2, M88A1, M88A2, M984 HEMTT wrecker, M1089 MTV wrecker, M1075 PLS, Forward Repair System, FMTV Series, and M2 .50 cal. machine gun.

The Role of the FSC in COIN

The forward support company fulfills its primary mission of supporting its battalion almost without fail at combat training centers

and in theater. This is done through traditional methods of command and control, distribution operations, and maintenance activities. However, the FSC has many other capabilities and possesses areas of expertise not currently being used. The following sections may assist battalion commanders in exercising the capabilities of the FSC as it conducts both doctrinal and non-doctrinal missions. The FSC can perform valuable shaping operations such as combat logistics patrols, assessment of essential services, and limited support and training for host-nation security forces logistics.

Combat Logistics Patrols

The enemy wants the most visible and “easiest” targets to exploit in the media. The enemy thinks the most vulnerable targets are lightly armored, logistics convoys. So if the enemy wants to attack logistics targets why not operate them at night when we are at our best? Combat logistics patrols should not be used as “bait” as some may suggest, but supplies must be moved across the battlefield, so why not force the bugs to come out of hiding when we are at our best? Why not position our assets at those critical points on the battlefield so that the bugs can be crushed?

The most common mission for the FSC is combat logistics patrols (CLPs). Much has been written on the subject of convoy security in the last few years. It is not the intent of this article to discuss convoy battle drills and things of that nature. The things that will be covered are decisions that must be made by battalion commanders such as security, air/ground integration, and setting the conditions for success.

Security. The question of security for combat logistics patrols and who provides it is a question that every unit that rotates through the National Training Center asks itself. Each unit struggles with convoy SOPs and the allocation of combat forces to the FSC. Additionally, the question of, “Who’s the convoy commander?” becomes a heated topic of discussion; the answer to which is not clear and must be settled by the unit through standard operating procedures. There are basically three methods of security for a CLP:

- 1) Self: The FSC uses organic assets to provide its own security.
- 2) Allocation of external assets: Roughly a platoon-sized element is temporarily attached to the FSC for the conduct of the mission.
- 3) Combination of both: Platoon-sized elements secure the patrol through more dangerous terrain, and the FSC secures itself through less dangerous terrain. This usually involves link up operations with multiple companies within the battalion AO.

All three of these methods can be successful. The decision comes down to METT-TC, and the level of training of the Soldiers involved.

Air/Ground Integration. The use of Army aviation is almost automatic when plans for ground combat operations begin. Immediately, battalion S3s contact higher to find out what air assets are available for the next cordon and search, but what about combat logistics patrols, especially if the CLP is “self securing?” Is the use of an air weapons team for convoy security a good economy of force mission? Aviation support provides valuable firepower and “eyes forward” for combat logistics patrols. They can detect IEDs and other potential threats, and

they can provide accurate fires for the convoy commander as he actions through the kill zone.

Critical to the integration of aviation is training for the leaders of the forward support company. Planning and using close air support is not taught at the logistics schoolhouse yet. These tasks need to be incorporated into training at home station for at least squad leaders and above. Then the use of air support can be refined at a combat training center by all elements within the battalion. Finally, upon deployment, battalion S3s should include CLPs into habitual aviation requests to brigade.

Setting the Conditions. Much is written on setting conditions for offensive operations. Terms like tactical patience and momentum are often used, but do we apply the same level of thought and analysis for tactical logistics operations? No. More often than not, the battle captain does not even know when the FSC is on the road because some other operation has his attention. Below is an example of a conditions checklist that could be helpful for battalion S3s and battle captains in planning, coordinating, and tracking combat logistics patrols.

- 1) What is the mission, route, and frequency/call sign of the CLP?
- 2) Is aviation support on-station? Frequency/call sign?
- 3) Has the security force linked up with the FSC and completed rehearsals?
- 4) When was the last route clearance conducted?
- 5) What friendly operations are in progress or planned during the CLP? Is there a conflict?
- 6) Is the QRF postured to support the CLP?
- 7) Do the units know that a CLP is moving through their AO?
- 8) What is the latest intelligence for the route?
- 9) Is the CLP traveling through Tier I IED sites at prime hours?
- 10) Convoy commander turns in final manifest and receives latest intelligence update.

Assessment of Essential Service Requirements

The FSC has a wide variety of military occupational specialties that can be readily applied in the civilian world on commercial equipment. The reason many Soldiers enlist in the Army is to obtain job skills for use upon completion of their enlistment. Why not use these same skills to assist in helping local populations during counterinsurgency operations? Chapter 8 of the new FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, states:

“In general, according to existing U.S. military logistic doctrine, there is no provision for U.S. forces to become decisively or exclusively engaged in providing essential services to the HN (host nation) population during COIN operations. However, this doctrinal position does not prohibit units from using applicable skills and expertise resident in their military organizations to help assess essential HN service needs. In conjunction with these assessments, logistics and other units can also be used to meet immediate needs where possible and in the commander’s interest, and to assist in the handoff of essential service functions to appropriate U.S. government agencies, HN agencies, and other civil support organizations.”

In other words, if you have the ability, do what you can with what you have until it can be turned over to the appropriate parties. By having an FSC within the battalion, commanders now have

the ability to do more. The ability to assist the local populace can lend credibility to commanders. The FSC commander along with the Civil Affairs team leader/S-5 can work together to build area assessments for the battalion commander. Below is a list of capabilities available to commanders within the FSC using the SWEAT framework:

Sanitation: Water treatment specialist and field sanitation expertise in food service section (along with HHC medical platoon)

Water: Water treatment specialist

Electricity: Power generation specialists

Academic: All can aid in training and education for critical job skills

Transportation: Assessment of rail/bus/ferry/port capacities and facilities and assessment of mechanical maintenance of rail/bus/truck/ferry operating equipment

Food Supply: Food service section can inspect packaging and facilities, with veterinary assistance food quality and vector control

Fuel: Petroleum specialists can inspect and test fuel facilities and storage

A potential SWEAT team could be:

Security Team

Civil Affairs Team

Sanitation/Water/Fuel/Food:

1 x 92W, water treatment specialist

2 x 92F, petroleum supply specialist

1 x 63J, quartermaster/NBC equipment repairer

1 x 92G, food service specialist

1 x 68W (HHC), combat medic

Electricity: 1 x 52D, power generation equipment repairer and 1 x 52C, utilities equipment repairer

Academic: CA team

Transportation: Distribution platoon leader

Host-Nation Security Forces Logistics

Since the advent of military transition teams, deployed units are not as involved in the logistics of the Iraq/Afghanistan Security Forces; however, units may still be called upon to assist these forces with training and/or logistics support. The most significant logistics challenge in training HN security forces is enforcing accountability and curtailing corruption.

FM 3-24 states: "Logisticians conducting such training should expect to find themselves repeatedly emphasizing the long term benefits of supply discipline and materiel accountability and the importance of those practices to the security and development of the host nation. For this reason, emphasis should be placed on inventory procedures. Simultaneously the black market should be monitored for the presence of pilfered military equipment as a means of determining the effectiveness of logistic procedures and accountability training."

Other areas of logistics training may include warehousing and transporting supplies, combat logistics patrols, maintenance, and recovery operations.

Units may also be called upon to provide emergency resupply to HN security forces. If so, then contingency stocks of Halal MREs, bottled water, and ammunition should be kept on hand. Ammunition can be obtained through captured stocks. Overall, support to HN security forces should have a minimal impact; however, units will

increasingly find themselves conducting joint patrols with HN forces and are better postured to react quickly to urgent needs.

Maintenance Support to the Combined Arms Battalion

Current doctrine relating to maintenance support to the combined arms battalion is written in the context of supporting high-intensity conflict (HIC). FMI 3-90.5 discusses the allocation of field maintenance teams to the companies of the combined arms battalions. In a HIC fight, this makes perfect sense, but what about in the current FOB-centric counterinsurgency?

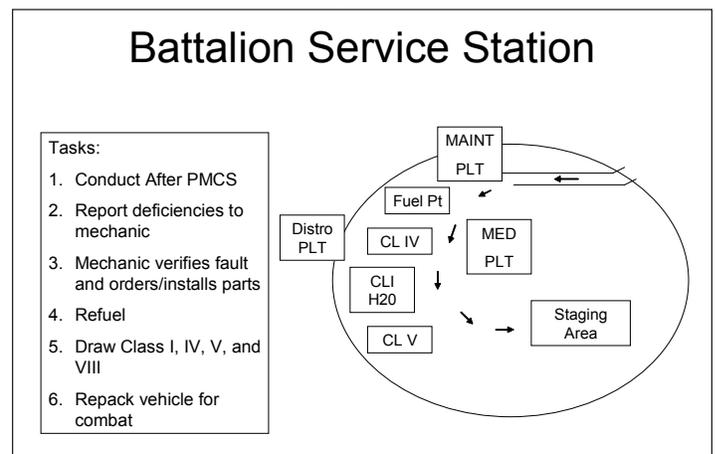
When a preponderance of the maintenance personnel is sliced out to the companies, decentralized maintenance activities occur and in a HIC fight they should; but in units operating on battalion or larger FOBs, maintenance should be centralized at the battalion level. This ensures a number of things. First, the maintenance control section has better visibility of the battalion's non-mission capable vehicles' and parts' statuses. The maintenance control officer can better enforce maintenance priorities and surge mechanics for high priority efforts. Second, maintenance personnel can better sustain 24-hour operations. It is important to remember that mechanics will not only be performing their primary duties but will also have force protection requirements and other details. Historically, 30 percent of personnel from support units provide force protection at FOBs; having all of the mechanics underneath the umbrella of the maintenance platoon ensures both the force protection and maintenance missions. Thirdly, the consolidation of maintenance personnel in a FOB environment provides for both the specialization and cross-training of mechanics leading to better efficiencies in the production capabilities of the platoon.

A final recommendation for the employment of the FSC maintenance platoon is to establish a "service station" for patrols when they return to the FOB. This ensures combat vehicles are being taken care of and returned to the fight in peak condition. The service station is a one-stop shop for the line companies returning from missions. See Figure 2.

The changing role of the Army Cook

Current field feeding is primarily performed by logistics contractors. These contractors provide quality meals for over 90 percent of coalition facilities in Iraq and Afghanistan. These services have limited the role of the Army cook in providing prepared meals to Soldiers to only working in remote locations. So what are all the

Figure 2



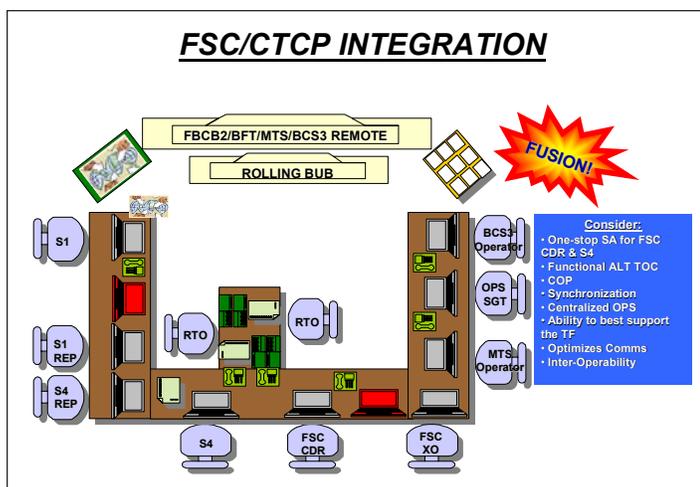


Figure 3

cooks doing now? Cooks are now performing security functions far from their MOS. The field feeding section in the FSC has 23 Soldiers. This number of Soldiers provides the commander a pool of personnel to accomplish many tasks. Here are a few recommendations for the employment of the field feeding section:

- Convoy/area security — Alleviates the security burden from the line companies and ensures every combat logistics patrol has a maneuverable security element. This element can also perform security for area assessment teams or MEDCAPs.

- Personal Security Detachment — Train approximately 16 Soldiers in personal security for the battalion commander and other battalion leaders.

- Force Protection — Entry control points and other guard duties.

- Dislocated field feeding — The FSC should maintain a reserve of four cooks to operate two KCLFF-Es in case of unforeseen, out of sector missions.

The field feeding section should be resourced with four M1114s with M2 .50 caliber machine guns and MBITR radios for dismounted operations. The key to success for these security operations is home station training, followed by utilization at a CTC prior to deployment.

Other Nontraditional Logistics Missions

Below is a list of four other nontraditional missions the FSC can perform:

- Nonstandard casualty evacuation: The FSC has 28 FMTV vehicles that can mobilize to support casualty evacuation.

- Split-based operations: The FSC has enough communications equipment to support logistics command and control in two nodes.

- Female search teams: Since the FSC is the only unit that has females at the battalion task force-level, having all of them trained in personnel search techniques allows units to search indigenous female personnel without violating cultural differences.

- Captured ammunition/arms holding area (CAHA): The FSC should operate the initial storage point for captured ammunition, arms, and equipment. This will also provide for contingency stocks of ammunition, weapons, and armament repair

parts for HN security forces.

What battalion commanders must ensure...

Some battalion commanders place more emphasis on logistics than others. What follows is a discussion of the things battalion commanders can do to ensure their FSC provides all it is capable of and is a full member of the battalion.

Integration of the FSC as a unit — This starts with the relationship the maneuver battalion commander has with the FSC commander. If the battalion commander treats him or her like a lesser Soldier/officer because of their branch of service, then that is how the rest of the battalion will treat the FSC. The FSC commander is the senior logistician in the battalion and should be held fully responsible for the material readiness and supply status of the battalion. Additionally, FSC officers and Soldiers should be held to the same standards as the rest of the battalion.

Integration of the Combat Trains Command Post and FSC Command Post — Units are finding much success consolidating CSS command and control in one centralized command post. Many times the S1 and S4 operate independently of the FSC commander and this creates a disjointed concept of support. Creation of a “fusion cell” combines the S1, S4, and FSC and provides a “one-stop” point for all administration and logistics. An example of this integration is shown in Figure 3.

Battle Tracking in the TOC — FSC operations, including recovery missions and combat logistics patrols, should be planned, coordinated, and tracked just as other battalion operations.

Medical Support — Commanders should task the medical platoon to provide at least one medic to support FSC missions. The FSC has no organic medical capability and although the FSC will have first responders and combat lifesavers, having a true medic will save lives.

Training the FSC — FSC operations should be fully integrated in all battalion training. The FSC should not be allowed to just simply feed, fix, and supply the battalion while the line companies train. The FSC should conduct convoy operations, tactical refuel and recovery missions, establish tactical feeding sites, and conduct crew-served and individual weapons training.

Summary

The FSC provides each supported battalion a robust logistics capability. The FSC can provide critical shaping and sustaining operations to be integrated with the other lines of operations. The FSC commander gives battalion commanders an executive agent for all logistics matters and ensures integration with higher levels of support. After fully integrating the FSC into the maneuver battalion, commanders will see just how effective their logistics systems are and how well they are integrated with other combat operations.

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