Using LOGSTAT Reporting to Train As We Fight

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Soldiers with the 129th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 101st Airborne Division Sustainment Brigade, fill a load handling system compatible water tank on Sept. 3, 2015, at the Joint Readiness Training Center's intermediate staging base in Alexandria, Louisiana. (Photo by Master Sgt. Mary Rose Mittlesteadt)

The accurate and timely submission of a logistics status (LOGSTAT) report is the cornerstone to effectively operating within the sustainment warfighting function. A sustainer's proficiency in managing limited resources and mitigating the risks of sustainment operations depends on the capacity to forecast requirements.

During early-entry and decisive action operations, observer-coach trainers (OC/Ts) at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), at Fort Polk, Louisiana, have noticed that units rarely transition from a reactive to a predictive sustainment environment because they struggle to forecast requirements. A unit's ability to capture and report LOGSTATs at all echelons significantly affects its capability to forecast and transition to predictive sustainment planning.

At the JRTC, LOGSTAT reporting is typically inconsistent and inaccurate during decisive action rotations, especially during joint forcible-entry operations. After observing six consecutive rotations, Task Force Sustainment OC/Ts witnessed the reporting status of brigade combat team (BCT) LOGSTATs was less than 48 percent. OC/Ts further discerned that most of the supporting sustainment units did not understand their supported units' supply statuses. This lack of understanding resulted in reactive sustainment operations that substantially increased safety, operational, and tactical risks. The JRTC OC/Ts recognized three contributing factors to the inaccurate reporting:

☐ A lack of standardized report formats with understood metrics for reporting at each echelon.
☐ A lack of a specified LOGSTAT reporting formats across all platforms that are part of the pri-

"Codifying logistics status reporting requirements through standard operating procedures ensures accurate sustainment planning can occur in support of the maneuver commander's mission. This article provides Joint Readiness Training Center observations and some tactics, techniques, and procedures to assist units in building relationships and identifying training opportunities among tactical sustainment units at home station to improve logistics status reporting."

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mary, alternate, contingency, and emergency (PACE) communications plan.

☐ Gaps between the sustainment reporting and battle rhythms for garrison operations, home-station field training, and combat training centers deployments.

LOGSTAT Reporting

The LOGSTAT reporting process is not solely the sustainer's responsibility. Supported units including maneuver units also have an obligation to the process. The process should begin with teams, squads, and platoons reporting to the company. The battalion S-4 section assesses each company's report and forwards a consolidated battalion LOGSTAT to the brigade S-4 and support operations officer (SPO).

The brigade S-4 validates and prioritizes the requirements, and the SPO coordinates and synchronizes their fulfillment. Company, battalion, and brigade executive officers should enforce this process and ensure systems are in place to accomplish it.

The most significant trend contributing to reporting inaccuracy is a lack of standardized commodity metrics. Various metrics used to report on-hand classes of supply could distort the data and complicate the understanding of requirements. For instance, when OC/Ts inquire on the metrics used to describe a day-of-supply for particular commodities, they typically find a vague understanding or a gross assumption of what constitutes a day of supply.

Formats Across Communications

The communication platforms available to transmit LOGSTATs are rarely standardized across the PACE communications plan and may require different formats. This contributes to some confusion.

Decisive action operations, especially forcible-entry operations, require units to operate on various and separate communications platforms as they move into the area of operations. For example, the Microsoft

Excel reporting format that battalions use and submit through the secret internet protocol router network may be different from the format used by a platoon on a joint communications network or a squad using an FM radio.

In some cases, one battalion may solely operate on a joint communications network while another has secret internet protocol router network capability as they transition into an area of operations. Successful battalion and brigade S-4s and SPOs recognize this problem and develop and rehearse a solid PACE plan with the associated reporting formats for each echelon. They also understand the importance of monitoring each mission command system listed on the PACE plan throughout the operation.

LOGSTAT Reporting Gap

Another contributing factor to the fragmented LOGSTAT process identified by OC/Ts involves how forward support companies (FSCs) support their maneuver elements during home-station training. FSCs rarely require support from the brigade support battalion (BSB) during home-station exercises. FSCs can operate independently from the BSB because they can draw fuel, ammunition, food and water directly from their installation assets.

The FSCs' attachment to their maneuver battalions also limits their need to interact with the BSB. Consequently, the FSCs' tactical support requests processes are not validated. In addition, companies and battalions struggle to process joint movement requests (ground and air), medical support requests, and transportation movement requests.

The JRTC sustainment OC/Ts recommend creating a habitual FSC to BSB relationship and enforcing LOGSTAT reporting processes within the BCT during home-station training. BCTs would greatly benefit from the development and implementation of LOGSTAT reporting that starts at the team level

Spc. Jonathan Munoz, with the 574th Quartermaster Company, monitors a truck's fuel supply during rotation 16–04 at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana. (Photo by Sgt. Bethany L. Huff)

and rising to the BCT S-4 and SPO.

BCTs should use the support operations staff to manage commodities across the brigade instead of allowing direct access to installation support. Furthermore, we recommend enforcing coordination through the SPO for supply and support by restricting FSC installation support access. At a minimum, restricted access should occur during all major battalion-and-above level high-density training exercises such as gunneries, field training exercises, and combined arms live-fire exercises to reinforce the "train as you fight" mentality.

Narrowing the gap between garrison and field training and combat sustainment operations can drastically reduce the tactical, operational, and safety risks that the BCT assumes to sustain its objectives. Establishing formal reporting requirements in standard operating procedures ensures leaders can make sound deci-

sions while planning operations and sustaining their Soldiers.

When used correctly, the LOGSTAT process will reward the reporting unit with requested supplies and services on time while instilling confidence in the sustainment warfighting function's ability to meet the supported unit's requirements. Specifically, LOGSTAT reporting is critical for providing realistic needs-based sustainment, increased responsiveness, and reduced risk.

Training our formations to perform sustainment in a systematic manner independent of the home-station or combat training center environment is a significant step toward synchronizing tactical sustainment with operations.

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