

# Techniques For Sustaining Your Task Force

by Major James C. Madigan, Captain Arthur S. DeGroat, Captain Bobby B. Brown, Captain Kevin W. Wright, and Captain Scott K. Jacobsen

It is 30 minutes prior to LD. Your task force is to lead the brigade combat team in a deliberate attack against a well defended enemy force. Your operational readiness (OR) rate for combat systems is 74 percent. Twelve of your "killing systems" are below basic load of fuel and ammunition. Thirty-seven of your replacement soldiers have not arrived due to the 40 percent died-of-wound (DOW) rate sustained during your last combat mission. Has your CSS team succeeded? Are you ready to execute your mission? Does this situation sound familiar?

CSS is a key and essential battlefield operating system (BOS) and is just as important as the others, but rarely receives the attention necessary for success. Leaders have four inherent difficulties regarding CSS operations. These are: (1) the lack of detailed information in doctrinal manuals that establish standards and procedures for TF CSS systems; (2) lack of practical experience in CSS operations by commanders, executive officers, S4s, S1s, medical platoon leaders, and maintenance officers; (3) the great disparity between garrison and field CSS systems, and (4) a lack of dedicated sustainment training at home station. Current manuals, such as FM 71-123 and FM 71-2, address these functions, but do not offer detailed information to establish efficient sustainment operations over extended periods of time. In the absence of "how to" information, units must use proven techniques, and experience to execute. The intent of our article is to provide a few proven techniques to improve task force sustainment operations. We will discuss these techniques for members of your CSS team.

The TF XO is the most critical player on the CSS team. He must synchronize all staff actions to support the mission. He must know the functions and responsibilities of his CSS

team and effectively supervise them on the battlefield.

The synchronization process begins with the issue of detailed warning orders (WARNO) to all subordinates, to include all CSS leaders. The XO must develop a timeline, which includes key CSS events that support the maneuver plan. As the TF "chief of staff," the XO is responsible for the integration of CSS into all TF plans. He must ensure that key CSS leaders are involved in all planning events, to include course of action (COA) development, wargaming, and COA comparison. The TF XO must consider all battlefield operating systems (BOS) when developing, wargaming, and comparing COAs. Once the commander approves a course of action, the TF XO must supervise the production of the service support paragraph to the operations order (OPORD), CSS matrix, and overlay/graphics.

It is critical for the TF XO to understand the functions and responsibilities of all CSS activities. He must understand the detailed procedures involved in vehicle recovery and repair, medical treatment and evacuation, LOGPAC, emergency resupply, weapon system replacement, KIA evacuation, personnel replacement operations, and logistical reporting. The tool enabling him to accomplish this is the tactical standard operating procedures (TACSOP). The XO must ensure that the logistics annex to the

TF TACSOP accurately articulates the systems used within the TF. He must continuously direct the refinement and use of the TACSOP. Additionally, the TF XO must require that all CSS staff sections have internal SOPs which describe procedures for the planning, preparation, and execution of their missions, and are in accordance with the TF TACSOP.

Command supervision of the CSS functions is a critical troop leading procedure performed by the TF XO. He supervises the tactical operations center (TOC) and monitors CSS operations through reports and on-site visits to the combat trains command post (CTCP), unit maintenance collection point (UMCP), main and forward aid stations (MAS/FAS) and the field trains command post (FTCP). The TF

Figure 1 is a detailed tactical standard operating procedure (TACSOP) form for CSS operations. It is structured as follows:

- CLASSIFICATION:** A line for classification and a 'COPY' field with 'OF' and a blank space.
- OPORD:** A line for the operations order reference.
- CSS EXECUTION MATRIX:** A grid with columns for PHASE, UNIT, CL I, MED, EVAC, and REC. Rows include FAB, RECON, CBT TRNS, MAS, and UMCP.
- CSS SUPPORT MATRIX:** A grid with columns for UNIT, CL I, MED, EVAC, and REC. Rows include SCTR, MSTR, ADA, ENG, and TOC.
- LOGPAC:** A table with columns for DATE, ACTION CYCLE, LRP, TIME, and WROOF.
- MEDICAL:** A table with columns for ASPN, GRID, TIME, and GRID. It includes sub-sections for MSR and ASR with NAME and EFFECT TIME fields.
- CSS CHECK POINTS:** A table with columns for CP, GRID, CP, GRID, CP, and GRID.
- DECON:** A table with columns for TEMPLATED ADJENT, LINKUP SITE, DECON SITE, and ORRY ROUTE.
- MAINTENANCE PRIORITIES:** A table with columns for TRACKS, WHEELS, and UNIT.
- CLASSES OF SUPPLY:** A table with columns for CL I, CL II, CL III, CL IV, CL V, and CL VI.
- FIELD TRAINS LOCATION:** A line for the location of field trains.

Figure 1

XO's ability to execute these visits requires a system where the TOC can be managed for short periods of time (2-4 hours) by battle captains and staff NCOs. The TF XO must involve himself in maintenance and resupply of the task force. He must verify the deadline report with the BMO daily and provide guidance to maximize combat power for each mission. He should review the status of all supplies and reports with the S4, and establish priorities for resupply. Finally, the TF XO facilitates the maneuver rehearsal and ensures critical sustainment actions support the operation.

The S4 and S1 are also key players in task force sustainment operations. We observed two distinct shortcomings of their roles in logistical planning and reporting.

The following techniques, when used, improve these systems. The S4 is the CSS planner for the task force. He often performs this function without input from the other CSS leaders (BMO, Med Plt, S1). The S4 must formally elicit key information from the CSS team in order to develop a sound logistics estimate and timeline. This estimate, coupled with the commander's planning guidance and an understanding of the S3's scheme of maneuver, should give the S4 the essential information needed to develop a good service support plan for the task force.

The next area needing improvement is the communication of the service support plan. The S4 needs to produce a service support paragraph (paragraph 4) to the OPORD to articulate the "concept of support." This concise paragraph must give an overview on "how" the task force will execute the support plan. The next product needed is the CSS matrix. This matrix should give details pertaining to the "what, when, and where" of the plan. We advocate the use of a matrix as seen in Figure 1.

Accurate and timely logistical reporting is an absolute necessity to efficiently resupply the task force. Most units demonstrate great difficulty with this task. Shortfalls in reporting result in poor LOGPAC formation, inefficient resupply operations, insufficient emergency resupply, and critical sup-

LINE#	UNIT	CO/TA	SCOUTS	MORTARS	ADA	ENGINEERS	TOC	UMCP	CBT TNS	FLD TNS
	LRP TIME									
	LRP LOCATION									
	AREA SPT RESPT									
	IND RESPT FOR LOGPAC									
	ITEM	REGLOGPAC	REGLOGPAC	REGLOGPAC	REGLOGPAC	REGLOGPAC	REGLOGPAC	REGLOGPAC	REGLOGPAC	REGLOGPAC
1	HEADCOUNT	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
2	ICE BREAK	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
3	WATER	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	CL MIV REQ RCVD 7									
	CLASS III									
5	PACK POL REQST RCVD 7									
6	BULK/TYP FUELERS	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
7	MIGAS	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	CLASS IV BARRIER									
8	CONCERTINA ROLLS	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
9	PICKETS	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
10	2XA	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	CLASS V									
14	120 MM HEAT	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
15	120 MM BABOT	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
16	TOW	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
17	25 MM AP	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
	CLASS V BARRIER									
31	M17 MINES	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
32	M21 MINES	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
33	M15 MINES	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
34	MINE DUMP LOCATION									
	CLASS VII RECONBT									
	CLASS IX									
35	PARTS									
36	2404 LULLS PRINT OUT									
37	FIELD TRANS 2408									
	PERSONNEL									
38	MAIL									
39	REPLACEMENTS									
40	CMED RTD									
41	DISTRIBUTION									
	LOGPAC RETURN									
42	MESB EQUIP RETURNED									
43	WATER TLR TOPPED OFF									
44	NEXT AM HEADCOUNT RI									
45	CLMIV REQNS DROPPED									
46	LOGPAC WANT BLRPS TI									

Figure 2

ply shortfalls. The key to ensuring accurate and timely reporting is the use of a standard, user friendly system. The format for this system must be the same for both written (hard copy) and radio (FM) reports. The S4 and the HHC commander must track these reports at the CTCP and FTCP, using the same chart format. Additionally, the TOC must track the status of combat power and resupply. The S4 is responsible for receipt and dissemination of supply requests to the logistic executor, the HHC commander, in the field trains. All subordinate units must report within one hour of consolidation and reorganization, and submit the hard copy reports to the S4 at the daily LRP meeting. The reporting formats must require units to report on-hand quantities for each class of supply. The S4 can then allocate and cross level supplies based on the commander's guidance and priorities. The tracking chart shown in Figure 2 is an excellent tool to accomplish this task.

The efficiency of LOGPAC formation is directly related to the task force logistical reporting system. Units that report well demonstrate

greater ability to efficiently resupply using the LOGPAC system. The HHC commander is responsible for the formation of the LOGPAC. He must chair the pre-LOGPAC meeting to guide the formation of the LOGPACs based on reports received from subordinate units and established priorities. Units with well established systems of reporting and LOGPAC formation provide "custom made" LOGPACs as opposed to standard "push packages" which may not bring the unit to full basic load. Units that can resupply by routine LOGPACs have sufficient time to prepare for the upcoming mission.

The greatest inefficiency in field maintenance operations is the failure to maximize combat power prior to each tactical operation. Most task forces observed did not use controlled exchange procedures effectively. A lack of reporting of on-going repairs by the company maintenance team (CMT) contributes to this shortcoming. The BMO often finds out that a combat vehicle is non-mission capable (NMC) minutes before the mission begins. CMTs attempt to repair vehi-

## Linear Layout Site (Forward/Main Aid Stations)

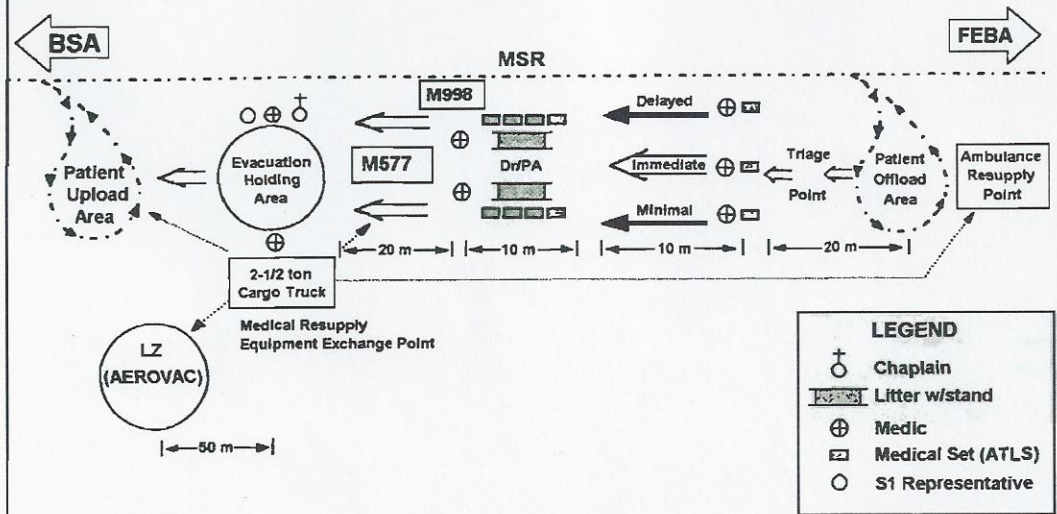


Figure 3

standardized method of organizing and operating aid stations. Aid stations operating without uniformity create confusion for medics. Many units cause DOWs at the aid stations due to ineffective lay-out and control. We recommend the site layout plan shown in Figure 3.

In conclusion, we feel that these techniques will increase the efficiency of your task force sustainment operation. By integrating these tips into your standard operating procedures, and training these systems at home station, your task force will improve its capability to kill the enemy, and protect and sustain the force.

cles forward until the last minute and often fail to notify the BMO or BMT of problems. This lack of information gives the BMO, BMT and TF XO a false status of the maintenance situation and, consequently, no time to fix these vehicles. Accurate reporting gives the BMO an accurate assessment of the maintenance situation and will enable him to direct the repair effort at all repair sites (UMCP, field trains, and company trains).

Controlled exchange generates and sustains combat power when needed repair parts are not readily available. The BMO, BMT and TF XO must develop a timeline to (1) assess the maintenance situation, (2) determine what exchanges to perform, (3) perform repairs, and (4) to evacuate non-repaired vehicles to the rear. Once a system is in place, units must establish a chain of responsibility to authorize and direct controlled exchanges.

Units that do this effectively consistently produce 90 percent or greater combat power rates for their commander.

The most serious issue facing the Health Service Support (HSS) at the TF level is reducing the died-of-

wound (DOW) rate, and increasing the return-to-duty (RTD) rate. The problem of high DOW rates is caused by poor or nonexistent initial treatment at the crew level, poorly executed evacuation plans, and inefficient site-management at the forward and main aid stations.

The ability to provide timely self and buddy aid is critical to saving soldiers lives. We often see poorly trained and resourced combat lifesavers. Properly trained and employed combat lifesavers are the key resource needed for initial treatment. Units must maximize participation in this training program and enforce the standards of proficiency.

Effective evacuation of wounded soldiers begins with a sound plan. Most often, the medical platoon leader and S1 do not estimate the number of casualties nor anticipate casualty distribution on the battlefield. An accurate estimate will help to develop an effective plan. Units must then communicate and rehearse their evacuation plan and procedures to make it work.

The final area needing improvement is site management of the aid stations. Unit medics must develop and train a

bility to kill the enemy, and protect and sustain the force.

*This article was prepared by former members (\*) of the Armor Task Force CSS Training Team (Cobra's) NTC, Fort Irwin, California. The team members include:*

*Major James C. Madigan, XO/CSS Trainer; XO of 2/2 ACR; XO and S3 of 2/7 CAV.\**

*Captain Arthur S. DeGroat, Maintenance Trainer; A Company commander and BMO, 2-67 Armor, 3AD.\**

*Captain Bobby B. Brown, S4 Trainer; HHC Cdr, 4-8 Cav and HHC, 2D Brigade, 3AD.\**

*Captain Kevin W. Wright, HHC Trainer; S4, B Company commander and HHC commander of 4-8 Cav, 3AD.\**

*Captain Scott K. Jacobsen, Medical Trainer; Medical Platoon Leader, 4/17 IN, C Company (Med) commander, 79th FSB, 7th ID.*