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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE: US INDOPACOM OPERATIONAL LOGISTICS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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Executive Summary

Title: United States (US) Marine Corps Operational Logistics within the US Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) Area of Operation (AO)

Author: Major Brian T. Geisen, USMC

Thesis: The US Marine Corps must make operational logistics the main effort in the US INDOPACOM AO in order to deter potential adversaries from elevating from competition to conflict.

Discussion: The Marine Corps will play a critical role across all levels of war during a conflict in the USINDOPACOM AO. In order to effectively set the theater during the competition phase, the Marine Corps must adapt to the challenges presented by the People's Republic of China (PRC). First, the Marine Corps must delegate authorities based on mission and not rank. If the Marine Corps' concept of support remains linear, the size of the USINDOPACOM AO along with the requirement to enable naval forces through sea denial and sea control will prove unsupportable. Second, a less hierarchical and flattened logistical network will be able to tap into operational unit such as LOGCOM. LOGCOM has untapped potential which has the capability to increase a Commander's freedom of movement by driving down the amount of logistical risk associated with maneuver. Finally, DLA is merely one example of the agencies that the Marine Corps can utilize in the US INDOPACOM theater. Joint, allies, and partner nations are all suited to provide varying levels of support external to the Marine Corps. A multi-faceted supply chain will benefit the Marine Corps and provide a roadmap for success of the entire joint force.

Conclusion: This paper concludes that the Marine Corps is capable of transforming our concept of logistics in the US INDOPACOM AO in order to deter the PRC. By delegating authorities, implementing a less hierarchical and flattened logistical network, and utilizing external agencies, the Marine Corps can improve its posture in the US INDOPACOM AO. The Commandant led Force Design is on track via multiple Operational Planning Teams (OPTs) to develop the structure and technology to fulfill this requirement. Investment in further research regarding the delegation of authorities, operationalizing LOGCOM, etc. will ensure the Marine Corps remains America's finest fighting force.

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Preface

This paper would not have been possible without the support provided by several subject matter experts. The staff of Marine Corps University, specifically Dr. Eric Shibuya, gave me the direction and guidance necessary to shape this paper while I juggled the many requirements of Command and Staff College. The Marine Corps Library Staff granted me continuous access to references and sources while volunteering their time to help me research this paper. The staffs of Deputy Commandant, Installations and Logistics and Deputy Commandant, Combat Development and Integration for granting me multiple interviews with key leaders. The willingness of others to forfeit their time for my betterment is greatly appreciated.

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Introduction

This paper will discuss the role of Marine Corps operational logistics in the United States Indo-Pacific Command Area of Operations (US INDOPACOM AO). The Marine Corps must overcome several challenges associated with supporting the USINDOPACOM AO regarding factors such as time and space, component roles and responsibilities, as well as adversarial threats. Operational logistics requires a multitude of coordination, lines of effort, and synergy.¹ For the sake of focus and brevity, this paper will focus on three themes within operational logistics: delegation of authorities, future role of Marine Corps Logistics Command (LOGCOM), and integration with external support networks such as the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA). First, delegated authorities to the lowest possible tactical level will enable the removal of a linear concept of support in the US INDOPACOM theater. Coupled with realistic training, tactical units will be able to reach back to operational support while simultaneously receiving classes of supply pushed to them. Without this delegation of authorities, a peer adversary such as the People's Republic of China (PRC) will be able to out cycle our ability to resupply forces within the Weapon Engagement Zone (WEZ) which will directly diminish our ability to attain sea control and sea denial. Second, LOGCOM has the ability to enable operational logistics and advance capabilities to service the needs of Marines anywhere on the globe to include the US INDOPACOM AO.² Third, DLA along with several other external logistical networks provides the Marine Corps potential access to an entity designed to provide support across multiple operations concurrently.³ Finally, this paper will present recommendations to improve the Marine Corps' current concept of logistics within the US INDOPACOM AO.

General David Berger published his planning guidance the same week that he became the 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps to ensure that all Marines knew his top priority was force design.⁴ He released subsequent documents, such as Force Design 2030, to inform members of

the Marine Corps of progress made and the way ahead.⁵ The Commandant's intent is to ensure the Marine Corps is ready to support guidance received from the National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, and National Military Strategy.⁶ These guiding documents direct the Department of Defense to prepare for conflict with a pacing threat in the US INDOPACOM AO. This pacing threat is the PRC. The Biden Administration plans to invest close to \$7 billion in the Pacific Deterrence Initiative.⁷ This Department of Defense fund is similar to the European Reassurance Initiative and indicates the new administration's resolve to allies and partners in the Pacific by enabling a more consistent U.S. military presence.⁸

Before setting the US INDOPACOM AO with a robust logistical support network, an understanding of the PRC's ideology, objectives, and goals in this AO is necessary. An article by Dr. Saunders, stated in 2019 that "if PLA reforms succeed, they will have significant implications for China's neighbors, competitors, and opponents. A better trained, organized, and equipped PLA will be in a stronger position to accomplish its primary functions: winning modern wars, especially what the U.S. Department of Defense terms 'short-duration, high-intensity regional conflicts;' deterring both large and small competitors; performing a variety of military operations other than war (also known as nontraditional security missions); and protecting Chinese interests in Asia."⁹ The concept of protecting implies a defensive strategy, not offensive in nature. However, upon closer study of Chinese defense white papers and the PRC's Science of Military Strategy it is evident that their definition of defensive action threaten United States interests in the region and are both aggressive and offensive in nature.¹⁰ With this in mind, the United States must develop a coherent strategy to combat a pacing threat with an expanding presence and growing military capability in the US INDOPACOM AO.

Based on research and multiple sources identified throughout this paper, a robust logistics network is the best deterrent for adversary action. First, it is a means to shape the theater effectively at all times. Due to the vast size of the US INDOPACOM AO and the persistent threat of PRC action, the United States must remain engaged in shaping actions as a means of always engaging in the competition phase. Second, the Marine Corps must remain ready to conduct Joint Forcible Entry (JFEO) in the US INDOPACOM AO when directed.¹¹ JFEO require logistical support and supplies dispersed across pre-planned locations throughout the theater to enable successful execution. Finally, the Marine Corps' role in the joint fight may require the establishment of a lodgment.¹² The Commandant has an unfavorable view of logistics throughput requirements in the future operating environment. He expressed low confidence that the logistics community "identified the additional structure required to provide the tactical maneuver and logistical sustainment needed to execute Distributed Maritime Operations (DMO), Littoral Operations in a Contested Environment (LOCE), and Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO) in contested littoral environments against our pacing threat."¹³ However, by placing logistics as the main effort in the US INDOPACOM AO the Marine Corps can set the conditions for success in the ongoing competition in this theater.

Authorities

Commanding Officers have procurement authority which they delegate to a Supply Officer who serves as a Special Staff Officer within their unit.¹⁴ This Special Staff Officer must manage and maintain procurement systems, accountability systems, budget and fiscal functions, manage the internal control program for the command, build system architecture for operations, perform trouble shooting, conduct analysis, ensure quality assurance, conduct shipping and receiving operations, supervise disposition services, and a litany of other command capabilities based on the Commander's authorities.¹⁵ This is not realistic or supportable. A Supply Battalion

functions in the same way but serves a dual-purpose as the supply chain representative of the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) Commanding General. Since the MEF Commanding General owns all equipment, funds, materials, and personnel within the MEF, the MEF Commanding General is responsible for those requirements. The MEF Commanding General's sub-delegates his authority for supply management to subordinate Commanders and Supply Officers (i.e., a Supply Battalion) within his or her command to enable operations. The MEF Commanding General maintains overall responsibility and authority of the entire supply chain to include all the equipment and personnel serviced by the supply chain.

The Commanding General may sub-delegated his or her authorities to an Accountable Officer and a Supply Officer within a command.¹⁶ Since the Supply Officer represents the Commander's procurement authorities (general officer level), that Supply Officer can approve contracts, service requests, Department of Defense Activity Address Codes (DODAAC), charge card procurements, manage Using Unit Account Manager (UUAM) functions for units entering theater, and other supply functions on behalf of that general.¹⁷ The Supply Officer can also delegate shipping, receiving, inventory, and procurement functions to sub-locations within the Commander's theater of operation. In this case, the theater represents the entire US INDOPOCOM AO wherever Marine forces fall within the Commander's authorities. This delegation of authorities is made possible because the Commander received those authorities in order to support the US INDOPACOM Commander.

Supply Battalion

- A supply battalion is organized to provide commodity-oriented, task-organized detachments for the sustainment of MAGTF operations. The supply battalion consolidates the intermediate supply capabilities of the Marine Logistics Group. Commodity-oriented detachments are task-organized to support MAGTF requirements. When supporting the entire MEF, supply management and control are centralized in the supply management unit, which is part of the supply company of the supply battalion.
- **Headquarters and Service Company**: Provides C2, administration, and command support functions for the supply battalion and general subsistence supply support to the MEF.
- **Supply Company**: Provides general support supply support, including supply management and control, to sustain the operations of the MEF.
- **Ammunition Company**: The mission of the ammunition company is to provide general support class V supply support to the MEF.
- **Medical Logistics Company**: The mission of the medical logistics company is to provide general supply and maintenance support for class VIII materiel of the MEF.

Marine Corps Reference Publication (MCRP) 5-12D
Organization of the United States Marine Corps

A Supply Battalion has very specific capabilities as the intermediate supply activity to shape systems and wholesale resources.¹⁸ Unlike the tactical level battalions such as those within a Marine Littoral Regiment, the Marine Corps man, train, and equip a Supply Battalion to order parts without service requests tied to a specific end item, can manage unlimited quantities of stocks, and can receive any equipment or materials for an entire MEF on behalf of the MEF Commanding General. A Supply Battalion has the authority to task equipment assigned to subordinate units within a MEF for support. Through the control and management of Ground Combat Service Support-Marine Corps (GCSS-MC), Supply Battalion can also connect strategic logistics organizations, such as LOGCOM, to units within the MEF through these same authorities by developing workflows and operating procedures within those systems. While a command owns the authorities (i.e., a MEF) and command relationships determine the structure, a Commander has authority to delegate authorities to any unit. This delegation has the potential

to greatly increase access and decrease customer wait time to critical stores across a theater and provide Commander's additional freedom of movement.

A Supply Battalion's capabilities translate directly to the Marine Corps' supply chain management platform. Within this program of record, a Supply Battalion has immense capability to command and control logistics through inventory management, UUAM functions, procurement, network architecture, Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) integration and global target mapping. Within GCSS-MC, a Supply Battalion can control inventory located in support of a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) at an expeditionary base through a sub-location within GCSS-MC or inform DLA when exactly to ship an item or cancel the request based on a deployment window in support of a Deployment for Training (DFT) event. The Supply Battalion located in a forward location supporting global operations maintains, controls, issues, and funds the inventory. The Marine Corps can support this capability by creating a distribution network (global ship-to-DODAACs), building sub-locations within a system (GCSS-MC), controlling the system and materials through command authorities (policy and law), and managing the issue of equipment at the forward location (Marines and training).¹⁹ In the future, the same concept could be applied to a Marine Littoral Regiment forward deployed in support of EABO.

An intermediate supply capability is mission critical when units are forward deployed in a DFT event without a support network. Secondary repairables (SECREP) are an example of equipment that Supply Officers can forward deploy in support of these types of operations. As the Intermediate Supply Activity (ISA), a Supply Battalion has distinct authorities to requisition, receive, stock, and issue both consumables and SECREPs. I and III MEF Supply Battalions maintain this capability on behalf of the US INDOPACOM Commander to service all the Marine Corps units under the USINDOPACOM command and all units geographically aligned to the I

and III MEF Repairable Issue Point (RIP). The Marine Corps may require the return of all SECREPs for this theater to the applicable MEF RIP for servicing, but there is no need to maintain all SECREPs in that location for issue. For deployed or deploying units, the Supply Officer usually establish a SECREP block to take with them based on RIP and maintainer inputs. Currently, the MEU is the best example of this process. The process is different for non-MEU units executing a DFT to conduct an exercise or to support a crisis response. The Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force-Crisis Response-Africa (SPMAGTF-CR-AF) Logistics Combat Element (LCE) located on Naval Air Station Sigonella (NASSIG) provides a real-world example. The SPMAGTF-CR-AF LCE Commanding Officer owns an Intermediate Supply Activity DODAAC (MX3002) and Supply Battalion Marines to manage SECREPs and consumable repair parts as part of a Class IX Block at forward deployed locations across Europe. Regardless of which unit deploys to Europe, MX3002 can support their Class IX Block and SECREP requirements. MX3002 is also aligned to the DLA Hubs in both Germersheim, Germany and Sigonella, Italy allowing for demand registering, expedited requisitions through a higher Force Activity Designator (FAD), and direct DLA support.²⁰ The II MEF Supply Battalion could provide this same support from Camp Lejeune, NC without having to source Marines for the SPMAGTF-CR-AF manning document. The Marines necessary to manage this forward deployed capability would remain fully under the control of Supply Battalion, but in a forward deployed status.

Delegate Authorities

To command and control forward locations, such as in support of EABO, a Supply Battalion needs a network and the ability to manage that same network. A MEF DODAAC Manager's role is an enabling capability, which allows a Supply Battalion to manage supply

chains between sources of supply and Marines requesting materials in forward deployed locations.²¹ The DODAAC defines the location and provides all procurement platforms the ability to see the actual delivery location. During non-combat operations, a Supply Battalion controls requisition deliveries to subordinate units at home-station. During conflict, a Supply Battalion establishes distribution nodes in support of MEF level forces advancing throughout a theater (i.e., the US INDOPACOM AO). A Supply Battalion needs the DODAAC Management capability to update unit information, liaison with LOGCOM for materials, control distribution nodes, and conduct planning with DLA for major operational changes.

The network defines the targets or nodes, while the system connects them. The incorporation of GCSS-MC as a command-and-control platform allows a Supply Battalion a much more active role in system management. MEF UUAM authorities enable a Supply Battalion to affect deploying units around the world, manipulate deployed DODAACs and manage the global network to facilitate force employment.²² The Marine Corps revolves around the authority of a Supply Officer to control access to procurement systems. If a Supply Battalion represents the Supply Officer of a MEF, then the MEF UUAM function is a natural progression for Supply Battalion to control. As the UUAM, a Supply Battalion will oversee quality assurance, trouble-shooting, remedies, and internal controls.

A MEF UUAM serves as the Logistics Systems Coordination Office (LSCO).²³ The LSCO capability also enables a Supply Battalion to affect every DODAAC within a MEF to support the Commander's operational requirements. For instance, a Supply Battalion would be able to fix problems within a MEF's standard supply chains, provide education and training to all MEF subordinate battalions, and ensure audit readiness for an entire MEF. As a result of having these capabilities operationalized within the unit, a Supply Battalion would also have the ability

to command and control theater sustainment requirements for enduring units such as a Marine Littoral Regiment as well as create exercise DODAACs, mass transfers of equipment to-and-from those exercise DODAACs, and the alignment of a MEF forces to those same exercise DODAACs.

Unfortunately, Supply Battalions are only capable of providing a certain amount of support based on their manning and trained mission essential tasks. Supply Battalions receives demand signals and attempts to fill them. However, organizations such as DLA, can fill every consumable repair part requested from the Supply Battalion, but with far more resources. DLA is capable of receiving a requisition directly from a using unit and delivering that requisition to the actual warehouse of that unit. If Supply Battalion released its consumable inventories, the Marine Corps could reallocate the associated manpower as those Marines would no longer need to manage those stocks. This surplus manpower would be available for the Marine Corps to reassign as part of the force design initiative. Another option is for these Marines to be forward deployed to manage SECREPs and limited Class IX Blocks in support of a MEF or MEU operations forward on a global ship-to-DODAAC network. Likewise, if a Supply Battalion spends millions of dollars on parts every fiscal year to fill Supply Battalion shelves, the Marine Corps now has freed resources to put towards readiness elsewhere.

To achieve these ends and establish new warfighting capabilities, a Supply Battalion must become a supply chain manager capable of enabling new operational supply chain capabilities that have global reach. Supply Battalion is the central nervous system for support to Marine forces and capable of much more than currently employed. A Supply Battalion is capable of managing distribution with Marine mobile detachments located at key locations within the US INDOPACOM AO. A Supply Battalion can also enable force flow, arrival and assembly, force

closure and sustainment of Marine forces by leveraging joint platforms, joint distribution nodes, and joint commodities. A Supply Battalion is a global operational supply chain provider and if employed as such could give the Marine Corps a competitive advantage as a naval integrated force in readiness.

Marine Corps Logistics Command

Expanding the aperture of the logistics network above the authorities within a MEF, LOGCOM provides support at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of logistics for the Marine Corps.²⁴ LOGCOM is the lead for overseeing all logistics systems that enable support within the Marine Corps. The systems that LOGCOM employs enable tactical level units like those within the Marine Littoral Regiment so they can compete in the US INDOPACOM AO. As of this writing, the Marine Littoral Regiment does not yet have the authorities to access the systems within LOGCOM to fully integrate into the logistical network available.

One such system is the Defense Property Accounting System (DPAS). Much like GCSS-MC, it is an electronic, server-based system used to function inventory control, issue, receipts, storage, accountability, requisitioning, reporting and dispositions to name a few functions.²⁵ A deployment equipment list is the list of equipment required for deployment to a specific operational theater. Currently, the service component commander, such as Marine Forces Pacific (MARFORPAC), releases a message to the supporting establishments outlining requirements for entry to a theater in support of a combatant commander (COCOM). For instance, the US INDOPACOM Commander would release a deployed equipment list for any unit deployed to the US INDOPACOM theater. Once the component commander publishes the list, the Individual Issue Facility (IIF) and the Unit Issue Facility (UIF) implement the list into DPAS. Once complete, the IIF/UIF employee clicks on the US INDOPACOM gear list drop down. The

required items automatically populate making equipment issue simple, efficient and transparent. This becomes very efficient when deploying Marines from multiple locations around the globe to the same theater. For example, a Marine deploying from III MEF and a Marine deploying from II MEF in support of a US INDOPACOM theater mission will have the same deployment equipment list. Each IIF/UIF employee will be able to see the same list because DPAS is a server-based system that is accessible from around the globe.

Global access to DPAS provides Component Commanders a unique opportunity. A Component Commander does not need to necessarily release a message to control individual protective equipment issued to Marines prior to a Marine arriving in theater. The Component Commander needs access to the deployment equipment list within DPAS to make adjustments as required to support their COCOM. The forward or component headquarters can manually enter the gear list remotely. For instance, the MARFORPAC Commander could authorize a list of equipment that is also updated from within the Commander's headquarters by an officer or contractor with the appropriate system authorities delegated by LOGCOM.

DPAS is a multifaceted system allowing for multiple access points and inventories globally.²⁶ Access to the system does not necessarily equate to access to LOGCOM's inventories, processes, and capabilities. LOGCOM officially oversees the Consolidated Storage Program (CSP) and controls much of the Marine Corps' strategic war reserves.²⁷ Both of those functions are at the operational and strategic levels. However, the CSP issues equipment from an operational logistics capability at the tactical level to individual Marines. The Marine Corps uses DPAS as a bridging function between tactical employment, operational logistics sustainment and strategic warfighting inventories. Component Commanders have the authority and responsibility for the full breadth of tactical, operational and strategic warfare within their assigned theaters.²⁸

LOGCOM offers a new way to employ those operational and strategic assets to support Component Commanders through systems, access, and authorities.

While LOGCOM has certain Headquarters Marine Corps level authorities, LOGCOM's reach is limited within that scope. LOGCOM could extend its scope through the Component Commanders. Component Commanders represent their services to the CCDR to do many things. Their theaters are synonymous with the COCOM's as they engage Headquarters Marine Corps on behalf of the COCOM and shape theaters to support service operational logistics functions. The Marine Corps defines those in MCTP 3-40C: Operational Level Logistics as force closure, arrival and assembly, intra-theater lift, theater distribution, sustainment, reconstitution and redeployment.²⁹ Per MCO 4400.201, Component Commanders are also responsible for all equipment, systems, procurements, etc. within their same areas of responsibility (AOR).³⁰ A Component Commander, therefore, has both the authority and responsibility to shape theaters to support service forces entering that theater across all levels of warfare; tactical, operational and strategic.³¹

The need to find solutions for unique classes of supply such as Class II (clothing) is paramount for Marine Corps units deployed to an environment where Class II replacements are essential to operations.³² For example, a Marine deployed in support of Marine Rotational Forces – Darwin located in Australia. Marines assigned to this unit will conduct extensive training. They will require unique and specific equipment. The deployment equipment list is much more extensive and complicated than the already complicated standard issue list. The majority of these items are UIF items that are normally bulk issued to a unit Supply Officer in the continental United States (CONUS) and deployed to a location of training. Those same unit Supply Officers do not have access to DPAS. They also do not have a program of record that can facilitate issue

of that equipment to individuals. Another problem for overseas units, such as MRF-Darwin, is that there are no CSPs located in the same geographic location meaning that equipment issued to one Supply Officer must be turned in by that same Supply Officer back at home station, thereby adding to the embark and sustainment costs of the unit.³³

Flatten the Logistical Network

DPAS provides a unique opportunity to help solve these problems. From war reserves, individual equipment, and unit equipment, everything can have a location in DPAS, everything can have a place and everything can be issued to a Common Access Card (CAC). The same deployment specific equipment under the UIF could be issued out to individuals through DPAS. Since DPAS is a global accessible system, the equipment could be issued to individuals internationally via DPAS.³⁴ To do this, the Marine Corps would need computers, basic storage, internet, and personnel with the authorities to maintain, issue, receive and adjudicate equipment negligence. The service component headquarters has those capabilities.

Regardless of the location of a CSP, the MARFORPAC Commander has the authorities and responsibility to affect policies, resources, systems, and relationships to support Marine deployments to the US INDOPACOM AO.³⁵ A physical CSP is not necessary to obtain the capability necessary to sustain a forward deployed force. In Australia, MARFORPAC could employ a forward deployed LOGCOM representation to run the program. This option might be expensive considering the legal and cost requirements to forward deploy U.S. contractors. This option also does not support a rapidly mobile force, which might deploy away from the contractor. Host nation support is also problematic since host nation personnel are not U.S. citizens or U.S. military. However, an Intermediate Supply Activity could, is capable of functioning in this capacity based on its core competencies.³⁶ If MRF-Darwin had a Supply

Battalion detachment at their location, a Supply Battalion could command and control the Class II stocks on behalf of LOGCOM. Each Supply Battalion has the ability to manage a ship-to-DODAAC network, the authorities to control almost all classes of supply, the authorities to manage systems, and the capability to manage manpower and training to conduct operations. A Supply Battalion can enhance the force closure, arrival and assembly, and sustainment of any Marine force under its domain or geographically aligned theater. The CSP is a large program that is expensive, but the Marine Corps does not need a physical CSP to have similar capabilities. The Marine Corps should implement a full integration of the CSP into GCSS-MC and an integration of Supply Battalions to LOGCOM.

Additionally, the incorporation of GCSS-MC bridges that gap between LOGCOM and tactical Marine forces. GCSS-MC is an electronic system that is accessible from anywhere on the globe.³⁷ Within that system, any unit can send a Service Request to any other unit. Those same units can develop workflows to maintain certain resource groups to enable certain capabilities. For example, 1st Battalion, 8th Marines would be in the same workflow as 8th Marine Regiment and 2nd Marine Division for transportation support requests. The command hierarchy determines the approval flow to support these requests. With the introduction of GCSS-MC, LOGCOM now has the opportunity to integrate into these workflows to enable operational logistics functions. For example, LOGOM could increase efficiencies within the disposition instructions workflow. Requests for disposition are generated by the operating unit, forwarded to higher headquarters, reviewed and forwarded to the Major Supporting Command (MSC) level, reviewed and forwarded to the MEF level and then forwarded to LOGCOM.³⁸ Upon review, LOGCOM adjudicates and responds within GCSS-MC to the originating tactical level unit outlining specific instructions on the disposition.

GCSS-MC allows LOGCOM to connect and exert its authorities with MSCs and subordinate tactical level units.³⁹ As a result, the system allows the Marine Corps to connect those same strategic war reserves to the tactical level unit. The key point is that the system allows for a Higher Headquarters to review, approve and task specific actions to subordinate units. This process is very similar to almost any other type of request and almost any other system, such as Automated Message Handling System (AMHS).⁴⁰ Unlike official message traffic, all parties within the workflow can see the request, see who took action, when they took action, their comments, and the real time status of the request from anywhere on the globe. In a supply chain context, when tactical level units are attempting to provide sustainment across a theater, such as the US INDOPACOM AO, they have the perspective to identify issues that LOGCOM does not. As a result, they are then able to route these issues to higher for correction. However, without the necessary authorities, a Marine Littoral Regiment would not be able to access LOGCOM efficiently thereby negating LOGCOM's ability to fully understand and correct issues within a theater's logistics network. It is important to note that GCSS-MC is tied to a DODAAC.⁴¹ That same DODAAC is tied to a Commander who has specific authorities assigned based on command. Those authorities are further sub-delegated to Supply Officers to essentially supervise and manage the system. LOGCOM has similar, but more robust authorities at the operational logistics, wholesale inventory, and strategic war reserves levels.⁴²

This is important because tactical level units will require high demand, low density equipment that few organizations maintain around the entire joint logistics enterprise. LOGCOM is one of those entities. With the use of the system and LOGCOM's authorities, the Marine Corps would have a way to deliver equipment to the tactical level without losing operational control of the operational or strategic equipment. It is important to note that LOGCOM is

responsible to ensure the Marine Corps' war materiel requirement required to be on hand on D-day is available.⁴³ As such, the war materiel requirement less the sum of the peacetime assets assumed to be available on D-day is not readily available to the Fleet Marine Forces during the competition phase. This gap is unnecessary and must be overcome in order to best set the US INDOPACOM AO. By largely employing LOGCOM during the competition phase, it removes a potential enemy's ability to respond when war reserves are mobilized. A shift in theater reserves can be mandated within the system by LOGCOM much like disposition instructions. Marines need equipment, commands request equipment, MSCs endorse requests, and LOGCOM approves, sources and tasks the equipment to the command or end user.

Another example of system enabled logistics is the Equipment Density Listing (EDL) sustainment for SPMAGTFs around the world. A SPMAGTF is a conglomeration of equipment and Marines from various different portions of a MEF. The conglomeration does not have a set table of equipment or table of organization. The EDL and manning document are the near-term fixes for the SPMAGTF. The mission of the SPMAGTF is what drives both the EDL and the manning document. If the mission changes, so does the equipment and people. In the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), Europe Command (EUCOM), and Africa Command (AFRICOM) models, the equipment must be sourced from CONUS, typically through message traffic. Message traffic is problematic because the interface is limited, it is difficult to execute, has local procedures for release, and even after the message is released the information is not actionable within the same system.

As an alternative, GCSS-MC has well defined roles, procedures, orders, access controls, internal controls, and real time information that can be actioned from the same screen the message or service request is received.⁴⁴ For instance, during the course of mission analysis, a

SPMAGTF Commanding Officer determines that equipment is required to conduct a mission with equipment that is not on hand in theater. Within GCSS-MC, the SPMAGTF could submit a request for equipment sourcing through an EDL workflow to Higher Headquarters.⁴⁵ Once approved, the Higher Headquarters could forward the request for equipment and EDL adjustment to LOGCOM. LOGCOM could forward the request to Headquarter Marine Corps for approval. Once approval is received, LOGCOM could pull the equipment from war reserves, from refurbished lots or LOGCOM could send the request as a task to a MEF. The supporting MEF could, in turn, task the request to an MSC. Likewise, the MSC could task the request down until the request is finally tasked to a specific unit with the equipment on hand. The Due and Status File Clerk would receive the request, have all the information within the request necessary to mail the equipment to the deployed unit.⁴⁶ Within the request would be the shipping DODAAC, points of contact, shipping information, funding, quantities, etc.⁴⁷ Within the system, any Marine can lookup that service request number, see exactly who has it, what they did with it and when it was transacted.⁴⁸ Likewise, updated shipping information can be inputted to the same service request upon shipment. Finally, the individual equipment can be transferred directly between units based on the tasking instructions from within GCSS-MC ensuring complete audit control.⁴⁹

This system of record offers these capabilities. By creating new hierarchies and procedures, the Marine Corps could enable operational logistics and advance abilities to service the needs of Marines anywhere on the globe to include the US INDOPACOM AO. This would minimalize and eventually remove the gap in support currently provided by LOGCOM to the Fleet Marine Force. Another means to increase flexibility and resiliency across the US INDOPACOM AO is accessing resources external to the Marine Corps. Moving past authorities

and LOGCOM provides tactical units with a versatile responsive logistical network that would continue to deter PRC aggression in the US INDOPACOM AO.

Defense Logistics Agency

There are several external logistical networks currently available to the Marine Corps. These agencies, sister services, etc. each bring unique capabilities that can assist the Marine Corps' in setting the US INDOPACOM AO through logistics as a deterrence. Defense Logistics Agency is the nation's combat logistics support agency.⁵⁰ As such, DLA "manages the global supply chain – from raw materials to end user to disposition – for the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, 11 combatant commands, other federal agencies, and partner and allied nations."⁵¹ To do so, DLA needs a customer with a demand (requisition), funding, and a desired location for shipment. In the MEU example provided, the customer is the MEU DODAAC, the money is through that DODAAC, but the demand is registered with the MEU's home station and not DLA, because of where the DODAAC is aligned. The demand will eventually register with DLA, but only after it goes through the customer located at the home station Supply Battalion. The customer is the Supply Battalion and the location for delivery is the Supply Battalion, even though the true demand may be thousands of miles away. A Supply Battalion does not have the same vested interest in a customer operating forward deployed as the co-located DLA Hub who can coordinate directly with the customer.

A Multi-Faceted Supply Chain Network

The Marine Corps does have a way to change this inefficient supply chain paradigm by building a better system that will enable stronger partnerships and operations with joint organizations such as DLA. The first step in creating a better supply chain is to create an endpoint that is tied to the customer's location and true demand. The endpoint is simply an

address for delivery that can be utilized by multiple services concurrently. The US Postal Service provides an excellent example. That shipping address can then be utilized to build supplemental supply chains that can deliver an infinite assortment of products and services. Companies such as Amazon, FedEx, Walmart, Ford, IBM, or Costco can recognize every address across the United States and, in many cases, the globe to build complete supply chains from product to customer with absolute validity. This global capability is achievable for the Marine Corps as well.

In Marine Corps terms, a ship-to-DODAAC provides a way of establishing a generic address that is tied to a location and not a specific customer.⁵² In essence, the ship-to-DODAAC affords the service an opportunity to create a “call-for-fire” logistics location to which multiple organizations can send supplies, materials, services, contracts, forces, ships, and aircraft concurrently. The ship-to-DODAAC can also be overlaid on a joint shipping and receiving location as a way to segregate shipments between units. As an example, 1st Battalion, 8th Marines is a customer wishing to ship an item to their logistical node. The billing address would remain with 1st Battalion, 8th Marines. The shipping location would be their current location. In the event of a large-scale operation where thousands of Marines are deployed to the exact same location, such as a large-scale exercise or Marine Prepositioning Force (MPF) offload, the ship-to-DODAAC provides an easy transparent way of segregating multiple unit shipments quickly in support of arrival and assembly operations.

Currently, the Marine Corps should leverage more from the Joint Logistics Enterprise. By establishing demand signals for the logistical hubs across the US INDOPACOM AO, DLA would be capable of stocking Marine-centric requirements at forward locations. One reason the Marine Corps is not fully employing DLA is the method the service supports its supply chains. For instance, a MEU could be tasked to reside on an expeditionary base for several months for

operational purposes. Typically, demands for Class IX, Class II, and basic admin supplies are requested back to each ship within an Amphibious Ready Group. If the stocks are available, the stocks are delivered from the designated ship, thus reducing the MEU inventory of supplies. The demand is also registered first with the ship and not a co-located DLA Hub. If the ship cannot fill the demand, the requisition is sent back to the home-station Supply Battalion for expedited fill. This system relies on Marines expediting parts and materials to a location that already has a DLA Hub capable of the same logistical support.

In this MEU example, only MEU demands are covered. However, it is important to note that this applies to other Marine forces, such as Marine Littoral Regiments or SPMAGTF, are not covered. Likewise, Marine forces deployed onboard allied vessels in support of exercises in US INDOPACOM AO are limited to the support provided from their host ships.

This is an inefficient system because Marine supply chains do not enable joint or coalition operations. There is an alternative that would support rapid aggregation of any Marine forces by reorienting the employment of our supply chains. Instead of expediting parts across the world, the parts could already reside at predetermined logistical nodes. Instead of pulling materials and supplies off a ship, those same materials and supplies could already reside on a littoral lodgment or base. The Marine Corps must be agile to operate globally even if there is not a supply chain supporting rotational Marine forces abroad. By establishing supply chains that can register demands for parts, materials, and supplies at logistical nodes, the Marine Corps can supplement integrated naval operations and extend the Marine Corps global supply chains to rapidly aggregate for exercises or operations.

For the US INDOPACOM AO, logistical nodes established with DLA Hubs could serve as a centralized reception area for shipments. Establishing a ship-to-DODAAC overlaid on top of

the DLA Hub is simple. The request to establish the address must be authorized by a component headquarters, such as a MARFORPAC, a valid shipping address (i.e., DLA Hub) must be inputted to establish the physical node, and a DODAAC code must be created.⁵³ For example, in GCSS-MC, a MEU could order a part from its parent DODAAC (i.e., home station) to be delivered to their current location, thereby creating an instant demand signal for DLA.⁵⁴ The MEU could then maintain its ship-board reserves without affecting integrity of the theater reserve or the MEU's crisis response readiness. With more demands populating over time, DLA will also start to automatically stock those materials across the US INDOPACOM AO.

There are other benefits to Marine-centric DODAAC-branded logistics. The "MX" portion of the DODAAC is immediately recognizable within the DLA supply chains as Marine specific.⁵⁵ In a facility that manages thousands of requisitions a day, the MX stands out from all other deliveries. Since Marines outside of the CONUS are typically forward deployed for a reason, the MX signals a non-routine shipment: expeditionary operations and extra-ordinary requisitions.

To summarize, once the Marine Corps establishes a continual presence in places across the US INDOPACOM AO the creation of a ship-to-DODAAC allows the Marine Corps to change its operational logistics concept while branding its logistics and registering demand signals for the places it rapidly aggregates. The Marine Corps must take advantage of existing supply chains and continually flatten the supply chain to meet the needs of the internal customer, who is the Marine forward deployed. Global mapping of distribution nodes and DLA locations worldwide is a step towards creating more flexibility in supply chains.

Future Research

As stated in the introduction, there are a plethora of topics that require further research and analysis regarding operational logistics in the US INDOPACOM AO. It is my recommendation that the role of authorities take priority for a future Command and Staff College Student. As Force Design continues to refine and shape the Marine Corps, future structure and their associated missions will undergo experimentation. At this time, the necessary authorities can be tested and validated simultaneously. If the Marine Corps fails to confirm and validate authorities during experimentation, the capabilities of units within the US INDOPACOM AO will be unnecessarily degraded. Research into the findings of this experimentation and the associated outcomes would prove beneficial to the entire Marine Corps and as a result the joint force.

Conclusion

In January 2021, the Chief of Naval Operations released *Transforming Naval Logistics for Great Power Competition* which lays out a strategy to deliver “operationally-relevant logistics.”⁵⁶ This strategy depends on the Marine Corps’ ability to sustain Naval and Joint forces “while improving the ability to transition, rapidly and seamlessly, from a day-to-day competition posture to a force positioned and sustained to prevail in a crisis, or conflict in a highly contested battlespace.”⁵⁷ The Chief of Naval Operations seeks to develop a resilient, integrated logistics command and control that will “support global logistics domain awareness and improve the lethality of the Navy – Marine Corps team by enabling decision and execution superiority, allowing commanders to outpace the enemies’ decision cycle.”⁵⁸ Once established, this transformed concept of logistics “will allow the logistics enterprise to deliver the right resources to the right place at the right time regardless of the pace of operations or the level of demand as the Joint Force maneuvers in a distributed and dynamic battlespace.”⁵⁹

The Marine Corps is capable of transforming our concept of logistics in the US INDOPACOM AO in order to deter the PRC. The United States is in continuous state of competition in this theater.⁶⁰ As such, a persistent and credible presence must be maintained at all times.⁶¹ By implementing the recommendations within this paper, the Marine Corps can improve its posture in the US INDOPACOM AO. First, the delegation of authorities to the lowest tactical level possible is critical. By delegating these authorities, tactical units will be able to employ them routinely during training and exercises. These repetitions will fine tune the logistics in theater and draw the attention of the PRC. A tactical force with operational reach back support closes the gap in the competition phase. Second, a less hierarchical and flattened logistical network will be able to tap into operational unit such as LOGCOM. LOGCOM has untapped potential which has the capability to increase a Commander's freedom of movement by driving down the amount of logistical risk associated with maneuver. Finally, DLA is merely one example of the agencies that the Marine Corps can utilize in the US INDOPACOM theater. Joint, allies, and partner nations are all suited to provide varying levels of support external to the Marine Corps. A multi-faceted supply chain will benefit the Marine Corps and provide a roadmap to success for the entire joint force. If the Marine Corps chooses to make logistics the main effort in the US INDOPACOM AO, the term "Strategic Corporal" could be redefined. A young Marine with the proper authorities and access to a vast logistical network could maintain the balance against the PRC and shift it to the United States' favor.

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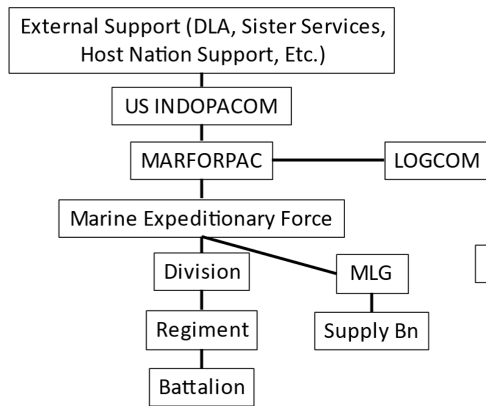
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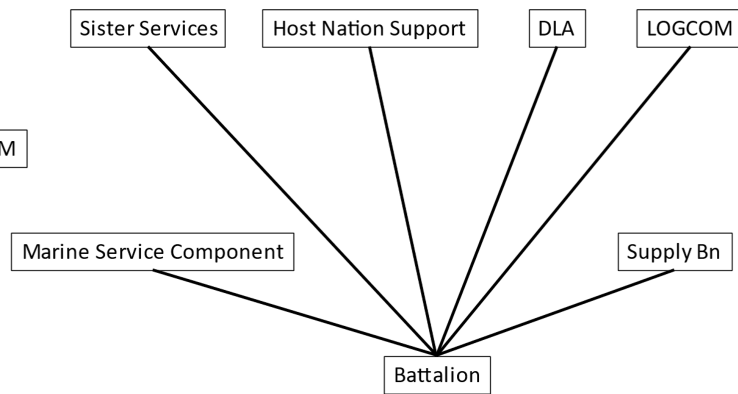
Appendix A

US INDOPACOM Operational Logistics

Current Concept of Support



Proposed Concept of Support



Appendix B

Acronym List

<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
AFRICOM	United States Africa Command
AMHS	Automated Message Handling System
AO	Area of Operations
AOR	Areas of Responsibility
CAC	Common Access Card
COCOM	Combatant Commander
CONUS	Continental United States
CSP	Consolidated Storage Program
DFT	Deployment for Training
DLA	Defense Logistics Agency
DMO	Distributed Maritime Operations
DODAAC	Department of Defense Activity Address Codes
DPAS	Defense Property Accounting System
CENTCOM	United States Central Command
EABO	Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations
EDL	Equipment Density Listing
EUCOM	United States Europe Command
FAD	Force Activity Designator
GCSS-MC	Ground Combat Service Support-Marine Corps
IIF	Individual Issue Facility
ISA	Intermediate Supply Activity
LCE	Logistics Combat Element
LOCE	Littoral Operations in a Contested Environment
LOGCOM	Marine Corps Logistics Command
LSCO	Logistics Systems Coordination Office
JFEO	Joint Forcible Entry
MARFORPAC	Marine Forces Pacific
MEF	Marine Expeditionary Force
MEU	Marine Expeditionary Unit
MPF	Marine Prepositioning Force
MSC	Major Supporting Command
NASSIG	Naval Air Station Sigonella
PRC	People's Republic of China
RIP	Repairable Issue Point
SECREP	Secondary Repairables
SPMAGTF-CR-AF	Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force-Crisis Response-Africa
UIF	Unit Issue Facility
US INDOPACOM	United States Indo-Pacific Command
UUAM	Using Unit Account Manager
WEZ	Weapon Engagement Zone