

Logisticians Are Tacticians Too: Bridging The Doctrinal Gap In Urban CSS Operations

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Logisticians Are Tacticians Too:

Bridging The Doctrinal Gap In Urban CSS Operations

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to

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Ongoing counterinsurgency operations, as well as recent humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) operations, highlight the inherent need for Marine Corps' logisticians to be flexible, adaptive, and innovative in the execution of their diverse and challenging duties. On the 21<sup>st</sup> Century battlefield, combat service support elements (CSSE) will re-supply refugees while protecting supplies from war-lords during humanitarian relief operations, re-supply natural disaster victims during domestic and foreign disaster relief operations, and sustain fellow Marines fighting in "any clime and place" in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Given the nature of these operations, the enemy will often choose the clime and place to disrupt friendly forces. Consequently, the common trend in each of these scenarios is the requirement to conduct urban operations and the implied task of urban sustainment. Unfortunately, the majority of today's CSSEs are not adequately trained in urban combat service support (CSS) procedures because there is no standard/approved set of established tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) for this mission, and existing urban training exercises do not adequately focus on sustainment techniques.

## **Background**

According to a recent United Nations report: "The world's urban population is expected to rise to 5 billion by 2030 and virtually all population growth will be concentrated in urban areas."<sup>1</sup> The rapid growth of urban areas will outstrip the ability of infrastructure and resources to keep pace. This phenomenon can be seen in Iraq, where Marine logisticians are actively engaged in cities supporting everything from high-intensity combat (Fallujah) to humanitarian relief operations, not to mention the requirement to conduct convoy operations through built-up areas to and from these missions. Currently, urban sustainment operations are conducted using *ad hoc* TTPs contrived on the spot by our outstanding small-unit leaders.

### **The Doctrinal Gap**

Some might argue that urban CSS techniques are merely common sense or a natural extension of existing procedures. The truth is that the unique demands of the urban environment require a solid game plan reinforced by tough, realistic training for MAGTF element. Unfortunately, the Marine Corps' game plan for urban sustainment does not exist.

Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 3-35.3 (Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain (MOUT)): "provides doctrinal guidance for the organization, planning, and conduct of the full range of military operations on urbanized terrain."<sup>2</sup> However, the five-page section (of 368 total pages) on CSS

contains only a general dialogue about the difficulty of operating in this terrain. Specific techniques for urban CSS are not mentioned.

MCWP 4-11 (Tactical-Level Logistics) is the publication designed to provide "detailed guidance to Marine Corps' logisticians for the conduct of tactical-level logistics." <sup>3</sup> However, this warfighting publication also fails to mention CSS tactics in an urban environment. Techniques for urban supply distribution are not mentioned in either MCWP, but this is our current doctrine for tactical level logistics and MOUT. These omissions constitute a serious gap in Marine Corps doctrine.

### **Urban CSS Training**

Currently, there are two excellent urban training opportunities for deploying units. The Marine Corps has recently expanded its traditional Combined Arms Exercise (CAX) to include pre-deployment urban training. Mojave Viper involves a larger tactical role for CSSEs.<sup>4</sup> This training provides the ideal opportunity for CSSEs to work with their supported units and develop solid urban sustainment TTPs. Similarly, Training in an Urban Environment Exercise (TRUEX) provides another excellent urban CSS training opportunity. However, since Marine Expeditionary Unit Service Support Groups (MSSG) are not required to participate in TRUEX, their ability to foster urban sustainment relationships with supported units

of the MAGTF is vastly reduced. The end result is that, although training opportunities exist, the Marine Corps is not taking complete advantage of the urban exercises. This disregard is due to a lack of emphasis on urban CSS operations as well as a lack of solid urban sustainment doctrine.

This said, the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) (15<sup>th</sup> MEU (SOC)) conducted TRUEX-04 at Victorville, CA in August 2004 as a full Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) stability and support operation (SASO) exercise. This was the first time that an entire West Coast MSSG participated in TRUEX. MSSG-15 was fully integrated into the Basic Urban Combat Skills (BUST), urban convoy packages, as well as the play of the SASO problem. This training was invaluable because it provided the opportunity to hone urban CSS and basic urban convoy/combat skills with the supported unit.<sup>5</sup> More importantly, MSSG-15 used this opportunity to address the gap in urban CSS doctrine. Using a scenario-based approach, the unit developed and tested nine basic urban sustainment techniques in cooperation with Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 1/1.

MSSG-15 subsequently used these methods while supporting real-world operations during WESTPAC 04-2. They are provided here as a point of departure for the development of a formal, standardized approach to urban sustainment.

## **Nine Urban Sustainment Techniques**

Three basic scenarios were developed based on different circumstances and threat levels likely to be encountered; various methods or techniques were then crafted to respond to each scenario. For example, Scenario 1 is the re-supply of a ground combat element (GCE) combat train in any threat condition. Scenario 2 is the direct re-supply of a GCE unit in a moderate threat environment. The last scenario is the direct re-supply of a GCE unit in a high threat environment. Although written from a CSSE perspective, these TTPs are equally applicable for use by GCE combat trains and can be adapted for operations across the spectrum of conflict. A common trend throughout these scenarios is the emphasis on responsiveness, simplicity, and survivability. Finally, these scenarios offer commanders the flexibility to conduct urban sustainment in multiple ways.

### **Scenario 1**

Scenario 1 involves the re-supply of a GCE combat train by a supporting CSSE in a high to moderate threat environment. This scenario is designed for the transfer of multiple days of supply (DOS) packages, the re-supply of bulk liquids, or the collection of enemy prisoners of war (EPW). TTPs for Scenario 1 involve three basic techniques (Figure (1)):

- Method 1A: Unit re-supply to a combat train in an H&S Company operating base.
- Method 1B: GCE combat train pulls sustainment from a CSSE operating base.
- Method 1C: Point re-supply using an established logistics release point (LRP).

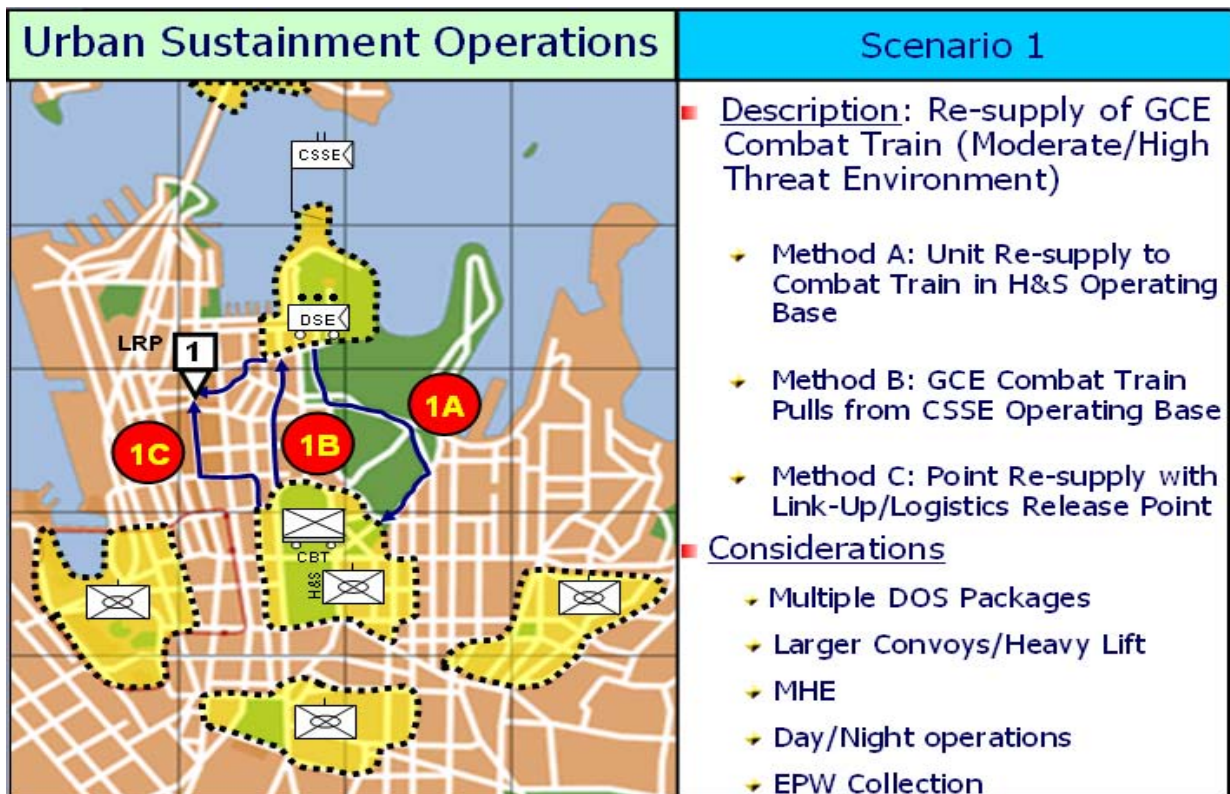


Figure (1): Scenario 1<sup>6</sup>

Method 1A uses a large convoy package of six to eight MTVRs and two to three HMMWVs. M105 Trailers are used to maximize space in order to minimize the amount of vehicles. LVS 48/16s or 48/18s are only used to transport material handling equipment (MHE). "Expeditionary refuelers" (MTVRs) transport 500-gallon collapsible fuel bladders with armored bed sides, which provide protection from enemy fire.<sup>7</sup> In Method 1B, a CSSE

provides escorts to guide a GCE combat train into and out of a CSSE operating base using two to four HMMWVs. For Method 1C, a CSSE Direct Support Element (DSE) with three to five MTVRs and two to three HMMWVs conduct point re-supply at an LRP with a GCE combat train. Smaller convoy packages improve speed, security, and reduce turnaround time at an LRP.

## **Scenario 2**

Scenario 2 is the re-supply of a GCE unit in a moderate threat environment. This scenario allows a CSSE the use of speed and maneuverability to reinforce the efforts of a GCE combat train supporting multiple company positions simultaneously. TTPs for Scenario 2 involve three basic techniques (Figure (2)):

- Method 2A: Unit re-supply to a company position.
- Method 2B: GCE pulls supplies from a CSSE operating base.
- Method 2C: Point re-supply using an established LRP.

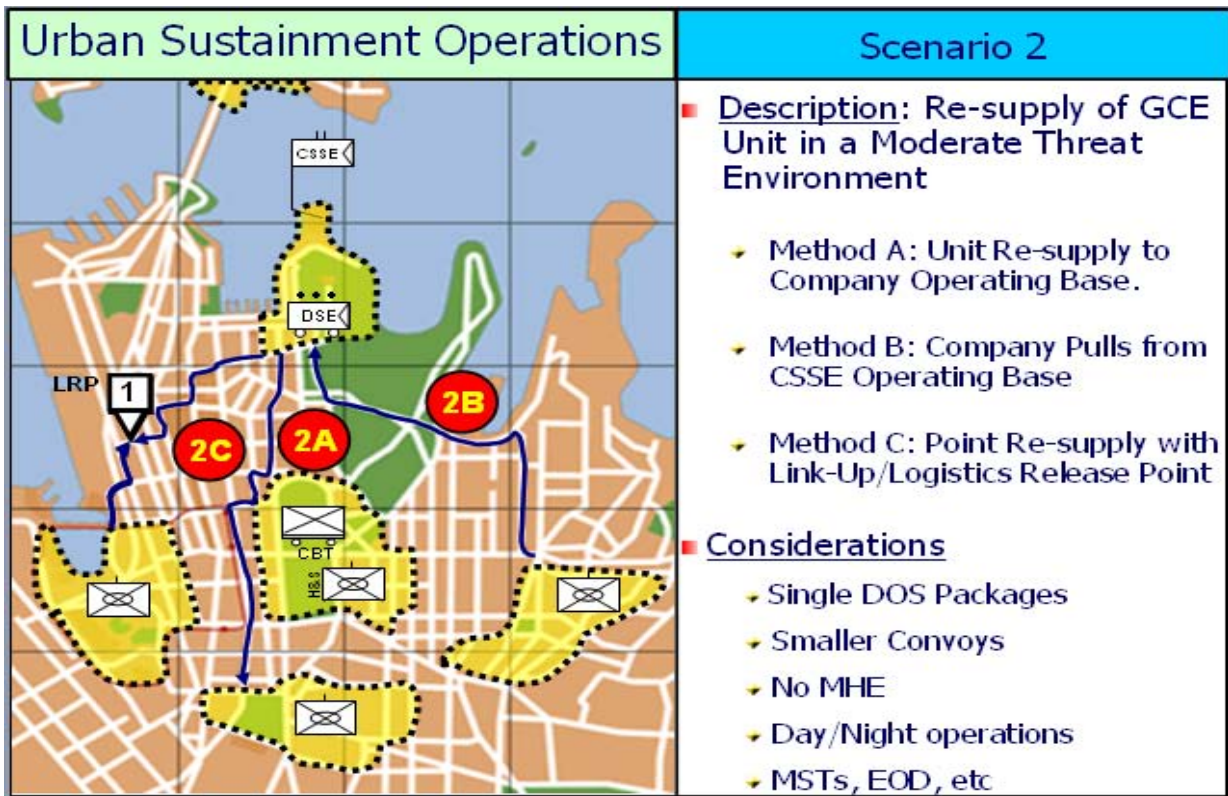


Figure (2): Scenario 2<sup>8</sup>

Method 2A is a light convoy package of one to two MTRVs and one to two HMMWVs that push sustainment directly to the requesting unit. Furthermore, this method implements the use of maintenance support teams (MST), EOD Teams, or other CSSE capabilities at company positions. Method 2B consists of two to four HMMWVs that guide GCE vehicles into and out of a CSSE operating base. This method is the ideal way to conduct bulk liquid re-supply since movement of bulk fuel is minimized, and refueling occurs in a secure position. However, this method does require GCE units to displace from their fighting positions to receive fuel from a CSSE fuel farm. Method 2C is used in situations prohibiting deep displacement of the GCE.

This method requires a light convoy package of one to two MTVRs and two to four HMMWVs using a DSE to conduct point re-supply, including bulk liquids using the MTRV expeditionary bulk fuel concept. MHE is not included in the package.

### **Scenario 3**

Scenario 3 reflects the most difficult urban sustainment operation: re-supply of a GCE unit in a high threat environment. This scenario can be used by a GCE combat train or by a supporting CSSE. TTPs for this scenario involve three basic techniques (Figure (3)):

- Method 3A: Unit re-supply to a company operating base.
- Method 3B: Unit re-supply to a squad or platoon position.
- Method 3C: Point re-supply using an established LRP.

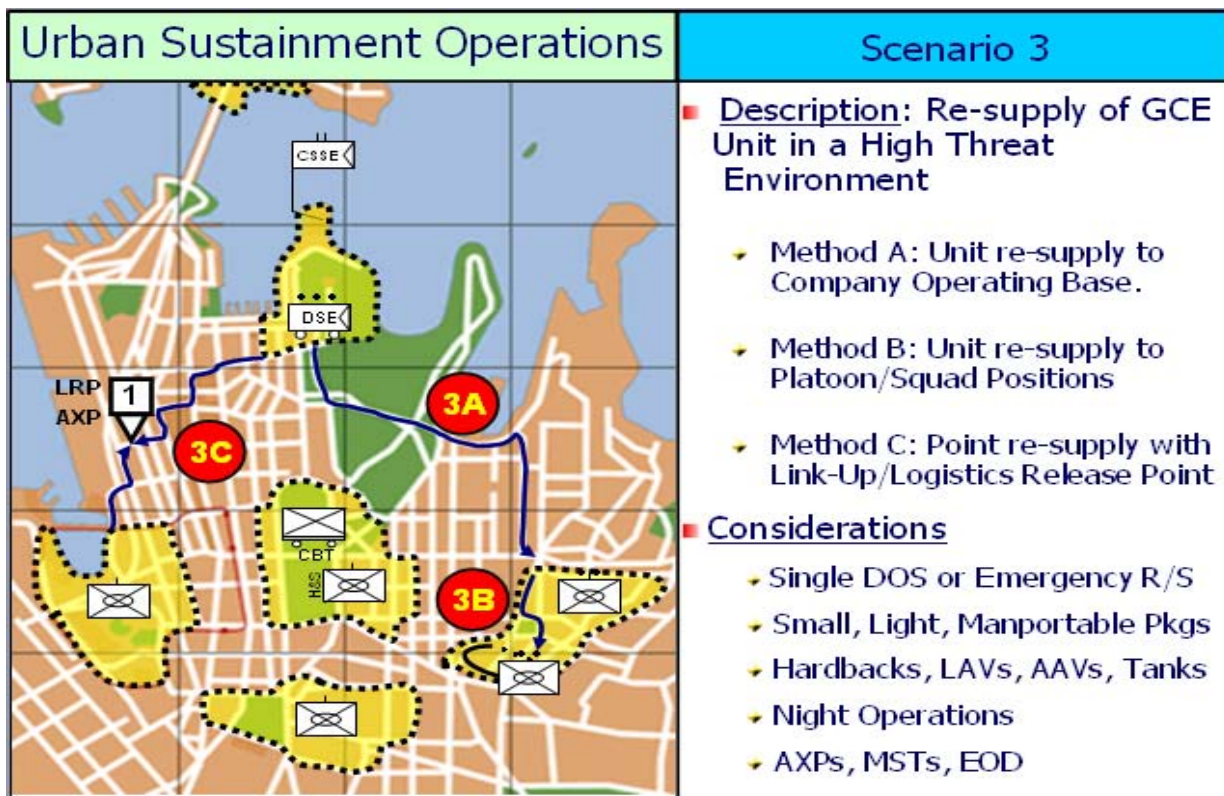


Figure (3): Scenario 3<sup>9</sup>

In this scenario, convoys are kept very light due to the need for responsiveness and survivability. LAVs, AAVs, or tanks can replace light-skinned vehicles as cargo carriers to support ground re-supply efforts or the evacuation/transfer of casualties. Another option is to attach trailers to LAVs, AAVs, or tanks (exhaust deflector needed for tanks) and deliver supplies by leaving a supply trailer at a fighting position. Ambulance exchange points (AXP) should be co-located with LRPs to expedite casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) to a shock trauma platoon (STP) or Level II medical facility. Method 3A uses a light convoy package of one to two MTRVs and two to four HMMWVs and is conducted in similar fashion as Method 2A. However,

Method 3B pushes sustainment directly to the platoon or squad level. This method is essential when the GCE cannot leave their fighting position and require a re-supply at the engagement area. A light convoy package of two to four HMMWVs, use trailers to move supplies to a transfer point as close as possible to a squad or platoon fighting position. Simplicity and survivability are improved by leaving the trailer at a temporary supply point one "major terrain feature" (block) away or at the nearest casualty collection point (CCP). Supplies are ready for immediate use (loaded magazines, full camelback bladders, etc) and man-portable for ease of transfer. If the GCE is involved in a vertical fight, supplies are delivered to the nearest CCP, and casualties can then be evacuated to a STP or Level II medical facility. In addition, Scenarios 3A and 3B implement MSTs, EOD Teams, or other CSSE capabilities. Method 3C consists of a light convoy package of one to two MTRVs and one to two HMMWVs with trailers. Supplies are delivered to a company logistics representative at an LRP using point re-supply by exchanging supply trailers for empty ones in a rotational fashion. Furthermore, casualties can be transferred to the CSSE at an AXP for evacuation to a STP or Level II medical facility.

## Conclusion

The GCE can not withdrawal from their urban fighting position to a "benign" environment to receive support. Urban support concepts must allow commanders multiple sustainment options during MOUT operations that overcome unique urban challenges. The absence of doctrinal TTPs forces CSSEs to develop *ad hoc* concepts of support for urban environments. This is an unnecessary risk for both the mission and the Marines. Urban support concepts will not survive first contact with the enemy in a high or medium urban threat environment without solid doctrine, reinforced by tough, realistic training. The nine urban sustainment techniques outlined above are a step in that direction. The next logical step is for Training and Education Command (TECOM) to formalize these TTPs and codify them into doctrine. This formalization will provide a baseline for training and evaluating urban sustainment TTPs during Mojave Viper and TRUEX.<sup>10</sup> This approach ensures proficiency in urban sustainment procedures between supported and supporting units using an attainable pre-deployment training objective. Short of these measures, the Marine Corps will continue to deploy CSSEs seriously deficient in urban sustainment skills needed to operate effectively in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century urban environment.

Word Count: 2010

## Notes

1. United Nations Secretariat, *World Urbanization Prospects*, 20 March 2002, <<http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/wup2001/wup2001dh.pdf>> 5 December 2005.
2. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCWP 3-35.3 Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain (MOUT)* (U.S. Marine Corps, 1998), foreword.
3. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCWP 4-11 Tactical-Level Logistics* (U.S. Marine Corps, 2000), foreword.
4. Major Joe Raftery, *EWS Research Paper*, 28 October 2005, personal e-mail (28 October 2005). Major Raftery states: "This allows the CSSE to work in a tactical supported/ supporting relationship with the GCE conducting the training."
5. Lieutenant Colonel Jay Hatton, "TRUEX email," 19 November 2005. personal e-mail (19 November 2005). He states: "It was significant that the MSSG fully participated in the urban combat/patrolling/ convoy aspects of the urban package alongside our colleagues in the BLT in preparation for subsequent SASO operations in Iraq."
6. First Lieutenant Justin Jordan, *MSSG-15 Urban CSS Brief version 8-13* (MSSG-15, 17 August 2004).
7. This "Expeditionary Bulk Fuel" concept avoids the high tare weight of the 6-CON and maximizes fuel-to-weight capacity for the MTRV, which is preferred over the LVS in this environment due to mobility and survivability. The 125-GPM pump that accompanies the Expeditionary Rapid Refueling System (ERRS) can be attached to the vehicle to pump the fuel. The three full pods that fit into a standard-bed MTRV provide 1500-gals of bulk fuel on a highly mobile and survivable platform. This concept works equally well for bulk water distribution (using FAWPSS pods) and was successfully used by MSSG-15 in both Indonesia (Operation Unified Assistance) and Iraq.
8. Jordan, *MSSG-15 Urban CSS Brief version 8-13*.
9. Jordan, *MSSG-15 Urban CSS Brief version 8-13*.
10. Hatton. "TRUEX e-mail," At the end of TRUEX-04, LtCol. Hatton briefed Major General Jones, CG TECOM, on the absence of solid urban CSS doctrine and proposed this scenario-based approach as a possible solution.

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