

This month the *Gazette* focuses on the opportunities and challenges of logistics modernization. The articles highlight the requirement that change in how Marine forces are supported logistically is necessary in order to get beyond the 1950's supply support mentality.

Logistics Modernization: A Marine Corps Warfighting Imperative

by LtGen Richard L. Kelly

'The program's importance is either above or at least on the same level with weapons systems we have coming down the road . . . MV-22, Joint Strike Fighter, and Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle. . . .'

—Gen Michael W. Hagee,
33d Commandant of the Marine Corps

In my August 2003 *Marine Corps Gazette* article, "Excellence in Logistics Supporting Excellence in Warfighting," and in the wake of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM lessons relearned, I called for nothing short of reform in Marine Corps logistics. I identified the seminal work done since late 1998 by our best and brightest, our emerging information technology (IT) enabler, and the lion's share of work yet to be done, primarily in process/procedural reengineering and doctrine/training/organizational reform. Much foundational work has been done since then, but the fact remains that little has yet to be delivered to our Marines. In this article, I will build on last year's article and discuss what has been done, where we are today, where we must go on the road to 2015, and what our Marines can expect in the next few years.

Logistics modernization is without question the most important institutional warfighting imperative in which I have been involved in my 34 years of service, most of which having been in logistics. It has also been, by far, the most difficult. Our Commandant has clearly articulated the importance of logistics modernization:

I ask commanders at all levels to be engaged in this important MAGTF [Marine air-ground task force] Logistics Modernization effort that is critically needed today and without which we will not be able to support Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare and Sea Basing in 2015.

As for its difficulty, I can attest that this is a huge enterprise integration effort that is simultaneously addressing all three components—technologies, processes, and doctrine/training/organizations, etc.—in a Marine Corps that has never truly valued logistics as a MAGTF warfighting imperative and invested in it accordingly. We are changing this mindset with the most comprehensive, end-to-end approach we have ever taken to improve MAGTF logistics, with a laser focus at the tactical level.

We have accomplished much since August 2003. On the technology side, the Global Combat Support System-Marine Corps (GCSS-MC) became a program of record on 1 October 2003 and has been designated an acquisition Category 1 program (one of only two Marine Corps programs, along with the expeditionary fighting vehicle). Led by our Marine Corps Systems Command

(MarCorSysCom), GCSS-MC has cleared Milestone A. By the time this article is published we will have selected our software partner and be very close to selecting our systems integrator partner.

On the process side we have changed policy and are now transitioning from five echelons to three levels of maintenance. All new equipment acquisitions will have three or fewer levels of maintenance. Fielded equipment is being assessed for transition to three levels by our realignment of maintenance working group and MarCorSysCom, along with the associated procedures, training, and equipment. Realignments of supply functions, such as nuclear, biological, and chemical defense equipment consolidation continue, relieving our supported units of noncore competencies.

On the doctrine/training/organizational side, our education advisory group is working with Training and Education Command to reengineer officer and enlisted logistics education and training, consistent with GCSS-MC fielding and our logistics operational architecture (LogOA). Our logistics command and control

(C²) requirements group continues to assess logistics C² requirements, our fielded common logistics C² system, and other complementary work being done in C² (i.e., common aviation C² system). On 27 February of this year we transitioned our LogOA to the Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC) Expeditionary Force Development Center (EFDC) for doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF) assessment and implementation, with ambitious timelines that track to GCSS-MC Block 1 fielding. This is the first time the Marine Corps, in general, and an advocate (Deputy Commandant, Installations and Logistics), in particular, have embraced MCCDC's new process using a comprehensive systems approach.

Furthermore, I have assigned a full-time transition task force (TTF) to assist the EFDC in this groundbreaking work that will address all facets of logistics modernization in a disciplined, methodical approach. This TTF is in addition to the full-time task force I have assigned to the GCSS-MC program manager. I have also redirected the efforts of our three logistics chain assessment teams (former Field Supply Maintenance Analyses Office) to assist the Marine expeditionary forces (MEFs) in logistics modernization and GCSS-MC implementation. As part of our focus on the Operating Forces, II and III MEFs have formed change management structures. These structures are critical in the management of both the cultural and socialization of Marines to our logistics modernization efforts. We have solid traction in both II and III MEFs as they have become very active in their support of logistics modernization. Regarding I MEF, they have begun implementation of a major GCSS-MC enabling technology (active radio frequency identification (RFID)) for in-transit visibility from their home bases and into Kuwait and Iraq. II MEF is also aggressively incorporating active RFID in preparation for deployment, while at the same time testing the next wave of enabling technology—passive RFID.

Perhaps the most important reinforcing fire of the year was the Center for Naval Analyses-led, senior mentor-conducted (Gen Richard I. Neal, USMC(Ret); LtGens Bruce B. Knutson, Jr., USMC(Ret); Raymond P. Ayers, Jr., USMC(Ret); and Gary S. McKissock, USMC(Ret)) executive assessment (EA) of logistics modernization that addressed three questions: is logistics modernization moving the Marine Corps in the right direction? Is it on track? What course corrections are required? This EA was used as a means to “check our homework,” by a team that is expert in their respective warfighting fields. The results were outbriefed to the Commandant on 20 January, and the team's recommendations were fully embraced in our logistics modernization strategy. I encourage you to read “An Imperative for Change: The Case for Logistics Modernization,” which also appears in this issue of *Marine Corps Gazette*.

Within the next 12 months the combined efforts of the program manager, GCSS-MC; the TTF; and the EFDC will be critical to the success of logistics modernization. While much of our energy has been and will continue to be on the acquisition and initial fielding of GCSS-MC and the reengineering of our processes (integrated supply, maintenance, and distribution), there is another equally important change management effort that must parallel the acquisition strategy. That effort is focused on making the necessary changes to the newly instituted expeditionary force development system (EFDS) to ensure that the full impact of logistics modernization is realized.

While GCSS-MC is often considered the key enabler for logistics modernization, the key enabler for GCSS-MC is really the EFDS. If we consider that GCSS-MC will bring us a highly effective, web-based, collaborative logistics system applicable from the tactical to the strategic levels—a system that will bring the currently stovepiped functions of supply, maintenance, transportation, and logistics C² into one common operational picture—then there are significant ramifi-

cations that go well beyond our new logistics IT. Those implications are not yet fully known and won't be until the software suite is selected, integrated, and fielded in 2006. However, we do know that new processes and procedures for ordering supplies, maintaining equipment, transporting cargo, managing information, and ensuring all of it feeds into a logistics common operational picture is where we are going. We also know that these new processes, procedures, and focus on logistics C² mean that there will be many changes necessary.

We can expect changes to doctrine (e.g., how logistics support and C² are conducted on the battlefield), training and education (teaching logistics chain management vice stovepiped, functional supply management), organization (logistics organizations will change with the advent of three levels of maintenance—the realignment of supply functions, the advent of real distribution management capability, and the acquisition of the right MAGTF logistics long-range organic communications capabilities), and personnel/skill sets (our logisticians in a GCSS-MC world must be trained and equipped to manage the full spectrum of logistics functions to best support our supported units). What has just been described is the DOTMLPF pillars that are the intended targets of the change management effort built into the EFDS. Instituting sustainable, enterprise-wide change must be accomplished through the EFDS since it turns the keys of DOTMLPF by adjusting all of its components. This is the reason I have assigned a full-time, squad-sized logistics modernization TTF this summer in direct support of MCCDC's EFDS.

While the program manager, GCSS-MC is focused on selecting our software and systems integrator partners, configuration, blueprinting, and testing, the logistics modernization TTF will be undertaking several key events. First, I have defined and prioritized the key logistics modernization initiatives that need to be vetted through the EFDS:

- Implement the LogOA.
- Realign maintenance from five

echelons to three levels.

- Realign/integrate supply and distribution functions to best support the MAGTF.
- Identify the required communications/bandwidth to support GCSS-MC.
- Determine supply battalion processes/organization using the National Inventory Management Strategy.
- Determine maintenance battalion processes/organization using the three maintenance-level construct and consistent with International Standards Organization 9000 standards.
- Establish force service support group naming conventions.

Next, we will develop a “family tree” of universal needs statements (UNSS) for logistics modernization that supports these priorities. The TTF will have to decipher which priorities are best served by not only UNSSs but also by policy changes. The TTF will focus strictly on setting the

necessary conditions to enable the initial fielding of GCSS-MC Block 1 in 2006. That will include working with the EFDC to select the best courses of action to implement the above priorities. Once we select a course of action, the TTF will work with MCCDC on detailed solution planning to ensure that the necessary DOTMLPF changes are made for each UNS. The end product is a solution planning directive (SPD) that contains detailed taskings that address the affected DOTMLPF pillars. The Deputy Commandant, Combat Development (owner of the EFDS) and I have agreed to publish the SPD by 1 June 2005.

We cannot have real MAGTF logistics modernization if we stick with our current technologies, processes, and doctrine/training/organizations, etc. We have to make the break—burn the boats—or risk being truly unprepared for expeditionary maneuver warfare and seabasing in 2015. As I stated last

year, “We are perfectly aligned to get the results we are getting. If we are satisfied with the results, we shouldn’t change anything. I’m not!” Logistics modernization means addressing all aspects of the way we provide and receive support. We cannot just fix the IT, or rework a process, or reorganize and expect improvement. We must have the courage and tenacity to take all of this on—simultaneously and now! If we do not do this we will only see the lessons relearned again and again. Our performance, especially in supply, maintenance, and distribution response times, will never get much past the standards of the 1950s. We will run the business of our Corps on the backs of our Marines and unnecessarily burden our supported units. Most important, though, we put ourselves at risk of failing in combat tomorrow and at high risk of not being able to pull off what we say we will be able to do in 2015.

The good news is that all of the preparations have been made, and our foundation is solid—very solid. No one has laid down prep fires as we have. Our IT enabler—GCSS-MC—is on its way. All of the conditions are set for us to make the bold but informed changes necessary across the MAGTF (and the Marine Corps) to modernize Marine Corps logistics. The only unknown is the will of the institution—the entire Marine Corps—to act decisively and make the timely decisions that will deliver a 2015 logistics force with a truly modernized capability. We are at a fork in the road that requires us to ask ourselves two questions and act accordingly: are we ready for greatness, which will require us to operate with a degree of uncertainty for a few years as we navigate through some “white water,” or are we satisfied with the status quo with its Cold War sense of comfort and predictability?



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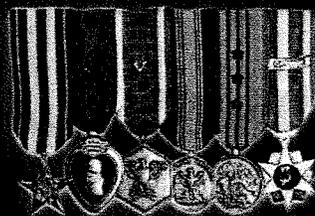
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