

ARMY LOGISTICS WHITE PAPER  
Delivering Materiel Readiness to the Army



# Connect Army Logisticians

- FOCUS AREAS -  
Connect Army Logisticians  
Modernize Theater Distribution  
Improve Force Reception  
Integrate the Supply Chain

G-4 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS  
500 ARMY PENTAGON, ROOM 1D359  
WASHINGTON, DC 20310-0500  
703-697-6666  
TELLARMYG4@HQDA.ARMY.MIL



[WWW.ARMY.MIL](http://WWW.ARMY.MIL)



# CONNECT ARMY LOGISTICIANS

In the December 2003, "Army Logistics White Paper: Delivering Materiel Readiness to the Army," the Army G-4 identified four key focus areas to address the logistics problems encountered during Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom, many of which were similar to those experienced during Operations Desert



Shield and Storm. **Connect Army Logisticians, Modernize Theater Distribution, Improve Force Reception, and Integrate the Supply Chain** were identified as the areas needing a singular focus to develop solutions for the joint and expeditionary Army.

This paper provides an update on the *Connect Army Logisticians* initiative, building a logistics information network that will empower tomorrow's logistician.

Joint logistics is changing to support an expeditionary force operating across a nonlinear, noncontiguous battlefield. *Connect Army Logisticians* is the linchpin of a strategy to dramatically improve the Army's ability to support joint war fighting by providing seven critical capabilities:

- **Calculate the requirements accurately**
- **Tell suppliers what customers want or need**
- **Know that suppliers received the requisitions**
- **See progress in the fulfillment of the requisition**
- **Know the estimated dates of arrival of supplies**
- **See the location of the supplies in the pipeline**
- **Communicate with suppliers/customers to prioritize shipments or to take other actions**

The *Connect Army Logisticians* initiative is well underway and is executing an integrated plan centered on four high-payoff tasks:

- **Connect critical logistics nodes**
- **Implement movement tracking system (MTS) "good enough"**
- **Field the battle command sustainment support system (BCS3)**
- **Enhance the standard Army retail supply system (SARSS) with native radio frequency identification (RFID) capabilities**

## ***Connect Critical Logistics Nodes***

By far, the majority of our logistics problems stem directly from the inability of our information systems to provide accurate and actionable data from which we make decisions and prioritize work. There is a direct relationship between the accuracy of the information and the availability of data communications. Space-based satellite communications networks provide unmatched reliability, with far fewer potential points of failure than terrestrial solutions, and empower logisticians with a native capability to support military operations anywhere in the world. Connecting critical logistics nodes, e.g., tactical warehouses, ammunition supply points, hospitals, and



distribution hubs; using commercial very small aperture terminals (VSAT) for long-distance communications, and having combat service support automated information system interface (CAISI) equipment for wireless local area network connectivity gives logisticians the reliable, responsive, and flexible capabilities they need to support the joint fight.

The Army is fielding approximately 700 commercial VSATs to units over the next four years. Capitalizing on satellite commu-



nications lessons learned from deployed forces, the 3rd Infantry Division was the first non-deployed unit to receive the new VSAT communications system — the critical entry point into this new, logistics information network. Comments from exercises at the National Training Center this past summer

provide a glimpse of the impact that *Connect Army Logisticians* will have on Army and joint operations.

“VSAT is a beast – a combat multiplier. It’s saving a minimum of five trips a day between units. Our Soldiers can get on the ground, get ‘hot’ (get their communications up and running) and get combat ready faster. During lulls, they can order what they’ll need during the fight. We’re using VSAT to share documents, pass requisitions, conduct meetings online, and use like a telephone inside the Division. I don’t know who coined the term ‘Connect the Logistician,’ but by the time I leave here (National Training Center) we will have connected every single logistician in the brigade to the information he needs.”

- Chief Warrant Officer-2 (CW2) Angel Montero,  
CSSAMO, 3rd Infantry Division

## **Implement Movement Tracking System (MTS) “Good Enough”**

The movement tracking system (MTS) is a mobile satellite, two-way text messaging, and position navigation system that provides in-transit visibility and communications with logistics convoys. Current

funding levels for MTS preclude the Army from fielding the total number of units needed to meet the Army’s basis of issue plan in a timely manner. As part of the *Connect Army Logisticians* initiative, a good enough fielding strategy was developed to speed up the process — providing a minimum level of MTS across the entire Army with an acceptable level of risk. This good enough plan is enabling a standard template for movement tracking and improving the ability to deliver consistent in-transit visibility, to control logistics assets, and to perform vital distribution management functions Army-wide.



As part of the *Connect Army Logisticians* initiative, a good enough fielding strategy was developed to speed up the process — providing a minimum level of MTS across the entire Army with an acceptable level of risk. This good enough plan is enabling a standard template for movement tracking and improving the ability to deliver consistent in-transit visibility, to control logistics assets, and to perform vital distribution management functions Army-wide.

### **MTS Fielding Plan**

- 1 out of 2 military police vehicles
- 1 out of 5 trucks
- all ground ambulances
- all movement and control/dispatchers
- all command and control elements of a logistic unit

## ***Field the Battle Command Sustainment Support System (BCS3)***

The battle command sustainment support system (BCS3) is the Army's tactical logistics command and control data system. BCS3 is the Army's portion of the joint logistics common relevant operational picture (CROP) and provides the capability to view the joint CROP. BCS3 ties together information from numerous, dis-



parate Army logistics systems, in-transit visibility systems, and other fragmented data sources. In this way, it is a decision-support system that enables the key principles underlying distribution-based logistics: velocity over mass; centralized management with decentralized execution; multiple hubs and multiple methods of execution; maximum throughput; minimum essential stockpiling; seamless two-way flow of resources; in-transit visibility of stocks and supplies; and near real-time combat service support situational understanding. Finally, BCS3 provides a digital view of the

battlefield showing the quantity and position of supplies, and the system provides the maneuver commander with a running estimate of critical logistics items.

## ***Enhance the Standard Army Retail Supply System (SARSS) with Native Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Capabilities***

The standard Army retail supply system (SARSS) family of systems is the backbone of the Army supply chain. SARSS represents the tactical end of the distribution chain and, in many cases, points in the middle. Currently, only a small portion of the SARSS

systems have been fielded with radio frequency identification (RFID) packages that are capable of both RFID tag-read and tag-write functions. Fielding SARSS sites with this capability Army-wide will ensure that the end points are equipped for RFID and will improve the accuracy of in-transit visibility many times over. The Army will field 211 forward-distribution points by 2006.

## ***Summary***

The *Connect Army Logisticians* initiative is off to a well-defined and integrated start. At its nucleus, connecting critical logistics nodes provides the core networking capability that logisticians previously have not had available to them. Complementing this, the MTS good enough plan fields enough MTS across the Army to enable a standard template for meaningful in-transit visibility of convoys. BCS3 will capitalize on both of these initiatives by aggregating data to provide logisticians and maneuver commanders required decision support tools. Finally, the RFID improvements to SARSS will ensure that the end points of the supply chain can send arrival/departure notifications over the new network to in-transit visibility servers that, in-turn, feed BCS3.



The way ahead for the *Connect Army Logisticians* focus area is comprised of several actions to further integrate and optimize our efforts with the Army Campaign Plan, the joint community, other G-4 focus areas, and Army software system developers. Our sister service, the U.S. Marine Corps, is actively experimenting with VSAT, MTS, BCS3 and CAISI systems. Through selective modernization, our efforts will allow the Army to meet today's challenges and provide the flexibility to transform Army logistics to a joint-capable force.