

ARMY LOGISTICS WHITE PAPER  
Delivering Materiel Readiness to the Army



# Modernize Theater Distribution

- 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



U.S. ARMY

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



---

## Modernize Theater Distribution

---

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 *Modernize Theater Distribution* initiative, our capability to respond to the joint force commanders’ sustainment needs.

Today’s operating environment demands a distribution-based sustainment system: a system that delivers rapid and precise support when it is needed. An effective distribution system must guarantee delivery on time, every time. To accomplish this mission, the Army is transforming its structure to:

- Provide unity of effort with a single command and control element responsible for the operational distribution system from ports of debarkation to the brigade combat team
- Provide total situational awareness of what is in and what is moving through the distribution system
- Provide modern delivery platforms with increased reliability that permit continuous operations and remain capable over their life spans
- Provide rapid and precise, time-definite delivery using effective and efficient processes that are in complete harmony with the Department of Defense (DoD) distribution process owner

Assured 24/7 communications, shared distribution information across the enterprise, and reliable communications and tracking capabilities embedded into distribution platforms are essential to modernizing theater distribution. An example of an embedded capability is the movement tracking system (MTS). This is a vehicle-mounted, satellite-based, two-way text messaging, and position navigation system that provides a communications, command and control, and global positioning and tracking capability throughout the tactical surface distribution system from the theater level to the individual driver. Armed with this technology, convoys can be tracked and diverted en route to meet changing requirements. Today’s objective is to put one MTS in every five tactical distribution vehicles, one in every two military police vehicles, one in every two movement control team vehicles, one in every combat service support company level command and control

vehicle, and one in every ground ambulance. This fielding will ensure that every distribution convoy leader, all critical mission platforms, and any platform that controls vehicle movement on the battlefield will be equipped to connect to command and control elements from anywhere on the battlefield.



An integrated information system is key to providing shared, end-to-end, real-time visibility of what is in and what is moving through the distribution pipeline. The Army is using radio frequency identification (RFID) tagging and standardized data fields to provide the source data for visibility. DoD components must now ensure that all consolidated shipments, including retrograde, moving to, from, or between overseas locations, are tagged. The Army is improving the capability



to track shipments by fielding RFID interrogation packages that are capable of both reading and writing RFID tags with each



of the standard Army retail supply system (SARSS) computers. SARSS is the backbone of the Army supply chain and currently serves as the final node in the distribution pipeline. Equipping SARSS with RFID capability

Army-wide will increase the accuracy of in-transit visibility in theater to the brigade area. Providing global end-to-end visibility is the best way to gain customer confidence and eliminate duplication of effort.

Today's trucks will be sustaining tomorrow's Army. The Army must modernize its delivery platforms. To begin this modernization, we are focused on four essential capabilities: improved vehicle and crew connectivity, improved crew/operator protection, enhanced maintainability, and reduced operating costs. The tactical wheeled vehicle (TWV) strategy for the Army strikes a balance between new procurement and cyclic refurbishment while leveraging the spiral insertion of new technologies as vehicles are refurbished. This strategy recognizes that the Army will be



operating its current TWV fleet through the next several decades and that our vehicles must go through a refurbishment several



times over their lifetime. The initial steps to implement the TWV strategy have begun; this includes partial fleet upgrades, limited vehicle rebuilds, accelerated elimination of some older fleets, and increased new vehicle procurement. Additionally, the

Army transition to a modular force will increase the TWV fleet requirements by approximately 55,000 trucks. The increased requirements are compounded by the battle losses from the

Global War on Terrorism. The Army has funded the refurbishment of 24,000 TWVs through fiscal year 2011 as well as the research and development for the future tactical truck system, but it is not enough. **The bottom line: there are currently not enough TWVs to support the modular Army.** Annual assessments of TWV capabilities against requirements, coupled with adequate funding, are essential to ensure that the necessary TWV capability will be available to support the future force.

The theater distribution process was greatly improved with the implementation of a shipment policy directing the “pure packing” of air cargo to the supply support activity (SSA). Pure packing consolidates air cargo pallets for shipment to a single SSA, streamlining the theater distribution process since those pure pallets are no longer packed, unpacked, and repacked in the theater en route to the warfighter. This policy was key to reducing the time to move repair parts from the continental U.S. to the tactical SSA from 45 days at the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom to an average of 25 days during the past several months.



## Summary

The *Modernize Theater Distribution* integrated process team will continue to focus on the measures of success: creating theater distribution unity of effort, ensuring total asset visibility of the materiel flow, providing capable delivery platforms, and achieving improved joint processes. We must change our distribution system if we expect to effectively support a joint and expeditionary Army on tomorrow’s battlefield. These initiatives cannot succeed, however, without the integration and support of the entire DoD distribution community and its commercial partners.

