

CHAPTER FOUR

Naval Theater Distribution

“A real knowledge of supply and movement factors must be the basis of every leader’s plan; only then can he know how and when to take risks with those factors, and battles are won by taking risks.”

—Napoleon, ca. 1805

Introduction

Expeditionary naval forces provide mission capabilities that can quickly reach and maintain station anywhere on the oceans, littorals, and airways. Exceptional mobility and sustainability mark the unique role of naval forces. Supply, engineering, transportation, maintenance, health services, and other services facilitate this readiness and thus the effectiveness of naval forces. A sound distribution system incorporating supply and transportation systems is critical for this sustainability.

The Distribution Components of the Defense Supply System

The greatest volume of materiel support is generated within CONUS through the defense supply system. This network of agency and service organizations includes the DLA, the GSA, Service supply systems, and miscellaneous DOD agencies. Primary naval components of this network are NAVSUP, Marine Corps Materiel Command (MARCORMATCOM), and NAVMEDLOGCOM.

Within the defense supply system, Integrated Materiel Managers (IMMs) are designated as the single point for acquisition and management of each item. This reduces redundancy and waste, and encourages economies of scale. DLA is the IMM for most items consumed by the Services. Exceptions generally fall into the areas of ordnance, major end items (ships, aircraft, and major equipment), repairables, cryptological material, and items with special circumstances dictating Service management.

Logistics support of operating forces is a Service responsibility, and each service maintains supply systems tailored to organic requirements. These systems are network components of the defense supply system. For the naval services, the primary supply systems are the Navy supply system and the Marine Corps supply system.

The Naval Supply System

The Naval supply system consists of NAVSUP, other naval organizations providing supply support, and organic supply capabilities of the operating forces. CINCPACFLT and CINCLANTFLT determine requisitioning channels for fleet units. These channels are coordinated with NAVSUP shore station channels, and are changed to reflect operational and distribution requirements.

NAVSUP conducts overall supply system management through an Inventory Control Point (ICP) and Fleet and Industrial Supply Centers (FISCs), and has responsibility for supply, disbursing, food services, postal services, and exchange services, as well as materiel transportation management. NAVSUP provides supply support to Navy forces, coordinates Navy participation in the defense supply system, establishes Navy supply methods and procedures, and provides certain contracting support. NAVSUP is organized functionally, with the following major components.

- ◆ Naval Inventory Control Point (NAVICP)
- ◆ Fleet and Industrial Supply Centers (FISC)
- ◆ Fleet Materiel Support Office (FMSO)
- ◆ Naval Transportation Support Center (NAVTRANS)

- ◆ Navy Petroleum Office (NAVPETOFF)
- ◆ Naval Ammunition Logistics Center (NALC)
- ◆ Navy Field Contracting Service (NFCS)

Other naval organizations providing significant supply support include:

- ◆ NAVMEDLOGCOM is the Navy and Marine Corps subject matter expert for medical materiel, and procures all medical and dental equipment, services, and supplies for naval forces.
- ◆ NAVFAC provides initial outfitting of chemical, biological, and radiological defense (CBR-D) material and equipment to overseas shore installations, and NCF and NBG units.
- ◆ SPAWAR provides software support for the fleet logistics programs that automate supply, inventory control, maintenance, and financial management.

The Marine Corps Supply System

The MARCORMATCOM has responsibility for materiel life cycle management of Marine Corps ground weapons systems, equipment, munitions and information systems. MARCORMATCOM exercises materiel support management through its two subordinate commands, Marine Corps Logistics Bases (MARCORLOGBASES) and Marine Corps Systems Command (MARCORSYSCOM). Together, these Commands plan, manage, and control the acquisition and sustainment of these systems. To properly sustain these systems, the Marine Corps executes its supply functions via wholesale and retail material management entities. At the wholesale level, MARCORLOGBASES performs traditional DOD inventory control point (ICP) functions for assigned items, as well as serving as the single service level manager for all Marine Corps ground weapons systems. At the retail level, Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEFs) operate intermediate stockpoints and process requisitions generated by the consumer level maintenance and supply systems. The Supply Battalions of the Force Service Support Groups (FSSG) operate these stockpoints and provide the primary source of supply for MEFs. The Navy provides support for Navy furnished material, ammunition, and equipment through cognizant SYSCOMs.

The Defense Transportation System

The Defense Transportation System (DTS) provides global transportation. The DTS includes military and commercial assets, systems, and services of the Department of Defense, including those contracted or controlled by DOD. The DTS does not include Service-unique assets or those assigned to a theater CINC. The Commander in Chief of the U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) is the unified commander designated as the DOD single manager for common-user transportation. USTRANSCOM manages military transportation through three component commands: Air Mobility Command (AMC), Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC), and Military Sealift Command (MSC). In addition to their roles as component commands of USTRANSCOM, these are major commands of the Air Force, Army, and Navy respectively. Assets controlled or operated by USTRANSCOM components include a wide range of military, domestic commercial, and foreign commercial. The ability to readily access commercial capacity for continuing operations and surge requirements permits economical deployment of a responsive and flexible transportation system.

As the naval component of USTRANSCOM, MSC operates the Strategic Sealift Force to provide surge and sustainment shipping, and pre-positioning. Organic common-user sealift ships are part of this command and operate in reduced operating status, and can be activated on four days to full status. MSC responsibilities include negotiation and procurement of sealift ships, and activation and oversight of Ready-Reserve Fleet (RRF) ships (in coordination with Maritime Administration (MARAD)). MSC also schedules DOD controlled shipping, coordinates required ship services with port authorities, and maintains availability and status data on MSC-controlled ships. MSC supports joint deployments with Afloat Pre-positioning Ships, stocked with materiel and supplies for all Services. Army rapid deployment requirements are addressed by the MSC Large Medium Speed Roll-on/Roll-off (LMSR) ships and Fast Sealift Ships (FSS).

In addition to USTRANSCOM components, the DTS includes other government agencies that manage or administer civil transportation assets. These include:

- ◆ The Maritime Administration (MARAD) supports and oversees the U.S. Merchant Marine. In addition it owns and manages the Ready

Reserve Force (RRF) ships. These ships are available for activation and employment in strategic sealift operations. RRF ships in active service are under the operational control of the Military Sealift Command. MARAD also requisitions ocean shipping and coordinates activities with the NATO Defense Shipping Authority for allocation of NATO sealift assets to meet U.S. requirements during a NATO contingency.

- ◆ The Coast Guard provides safety and security of shipping, waterways, harbors, and ports. The USCG has civil law enforcement authority to ensure water safety, navigational safety, and vessel inspections, maintains aids to navigation, and licenses merchant mariners. The USCG is unique in that it is a military service, that upon declaration of war or presidential direction, changes operational control from the Department of Transportation (DOT), to the Department of the Navy.

The Naval Transportation System

Naval organic transportation assets are concentrated in sealift and airlift assets and with minimal land transportation assets. NAVSUP controls and oversees Navy materiel transportation through the Naval Transportation Support Center (NAVTRANS). This center provides Navy shippers with management guidance, provides limited mobile Navy overseas air cargo terminal, serves as the Navy shipper service representative to other transportation components, provides Navy airlift/sealift cargo requirement forecasts, and controls the Navy's Service-wide Transportation account.

The CNO and the CMC set policy for organic airlift. Navy organic transportation resources are heavily concentrated in the Naval Reserve, and the CNO has designated the Commander, Naval Air Reserve Force as executive agent for organic logistics aircraft. Limited aircraft are under the scheduling and administrative control of a variety of major Navy and Marine Corps claimants, providing direct support for major commands. Organic airlift assets provide a range of peacetime support in CONUS and overseas, but they are provided specifically to meet approved emergency or wartime requirements for organic support. All Navy and Marine Corps transport aircraft fall into the category of Operational Support Airlift (OSA). The Joint Operational Support Airlift Center (JOSAC) uses data supplied through the Joint Air Logistics Information System (JALIS) to schedule theater support aircraft, including some Navy and Marine Corps assets. OSA includes operational support aircraft (such as those assigned to

the major claimants), Navy-Unique Fleet Essential Aircraft (NUFEA), COD/VOD aircraft, Marine Corps helicopter and refueling aircraft operating in support of landing forces, and other miscellaneous aircraft. NUFEA and COD/VOD aircraft are assigned to Fleet CINCs to provide theater airlift support. Such support is not intended to replace common-user airlift; it is to provide specific support of fleet operations. Most commonly, fixed-wing medium transport aircraft will operate between the ALSSs and FLSs, supporting the COD/VOD operations from those sites to the fleet at sea. NUFEA aircraft also support deployment, redeployment, and sustainment of shore-based naval forces.

CLF ships provide strategic transportation during initial deployment, and are capable of providing additional emergency strategic lift. Similarly, hospital ships and prepositioning ships act as defense stockpoints, strategic transporters, theater transporters, and combat service support providers. With these various assets, a full range of strategic and theater distribution functions is possible with limited or no theater shore-based support. While forward basing, fixed or expeditionary, is critical to support maneuver and provide economy of operations and throughput capacity, naval forces afloat are able to maintain station anywhere.

The Logistics Pipeline

The flow of logistics support to the operating forces has often been depicted as a flow through a pipeline channeling support from sources (most commonly CONUS-based acquisition), through nodes (bases, stock points, fixed and expeditionary sites, etc.), to the end user (forces). This pipeline is illustrated in Figure 4-1. Personnel and materiel flow from seaports and airports of embarkation (SPOE/APOE) via strategic lift. This strategic phase of distribution ends at the aerial port or seaport of debarkation (APOD/SPOD) in theater. RSOI of forces commences at these nodes. Theater distribution entails both operational and tactical logistics. Once at the end user, logistic resources, unless expended, must reenter the logistics pipeline in the reverse flow during redeployment, disposal, or other retrograde actions.

Acquisition decisions have traditionally limited overseas purchases. Consequently, overseas purchases for afloat forces were limited to consumable supplies and port and intermediate maintenance services. Planners and operational commanders now place greater emphasis on the use of

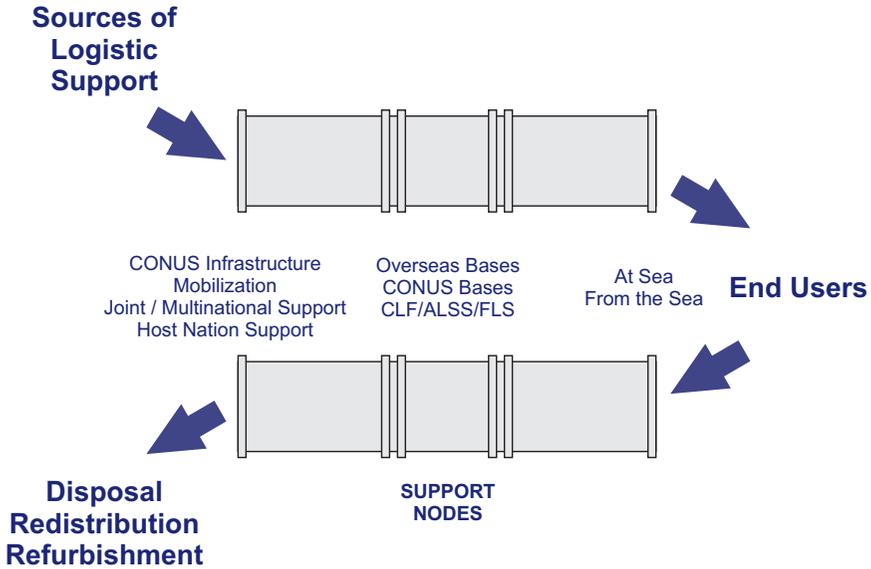


Figure 4-1. Naval Logistics Pipeline

host nation, allied, coalition partner, or other foreign support reducing throughput through the naval logistics pipeline. Civilian contractors—domestic and foreign—directly provide support previously accomplished by the Services.

Transportation modes for the pipeline are selected based on mission need, capability, transportation priority, regulatory restrictions, and available capacity. Regulatory restrictions include transportation and storage issues such as hazardous material regulations, and security and custody issues such as registered mail regulations. Strategic transportation choices include a range of military and commercial options, both foreign and domestic. The combatant commander’s options for operational (theater) lift extend across services, modes, allied services, and host nation or other nation capabilities.

Selection of the service support provider at point of issue in theater is straightforward for the naval forces afloat, but vary significantly for shore-based forces. Tactical service support is normally under Service control. The majority of common-user items will be requisitioned by an organic supply organization for issue within the operating unit. However, as

directed by the CINC, shore based naval forces may utilize common-user, other-Service, combined, contract, host or other-nation, or small purchase options to effect tactical delivery of a commodity or service.

Disposition requires a reversal of the flow through the network and involves the same considerations and participants as during sourcing the resources. Collection services, modes and nodes of redistribution, and disposal services form a near-mirror-image of the acquisition, distribution, and sustainment elements. Disposal activities include survey and local destruction, environmental cleanup, consignment to local disposal sites, transfer to allies, coalition partners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or private voluntary organizations (PVOs), and redeployment. With multiple options at each step in the process, the logistics network provides the combatant commander, planner, and logistician with a complex decision matrix. Any number of sources may be matched to varying transportation modes and nodes at successive points en route to multiple tactical users. The overall goal of the logistics network is to deploy forces and sustainment in the accomplishment of assigned missions.

Force Projection

Force projection is the doctrine under which U.S. armed forces are employed in overseas missions. Joint doctrine identifies five activities in force projection. They are Mobilization, Deployment, Employment, Sustainment, and Redeployment. These generally parallel the four logistics process elements that support and enable the employment of forces. Figure 4-2 depicts these parallels. Deployment and redeployment are of critical interest to the operational commander or logistician in theater. Mobilization—concerned with the acquisition, assembly, and organization of assets—is primarily a strategic activity that the operational commander will be able to influence only in indirect or incidental manners. Sustainment is received at the tactical level out of services and supplies distributed to the end user.

Strategic Distribution and Force Projection

Strategic distribution is the movement of forces, materiel, and personnel to the theater of operations. In force projection doctrine, deployment is the movement of forces and their sustainment from point of origin to an end user in a specific operational area. Deployment takes place in four phases.

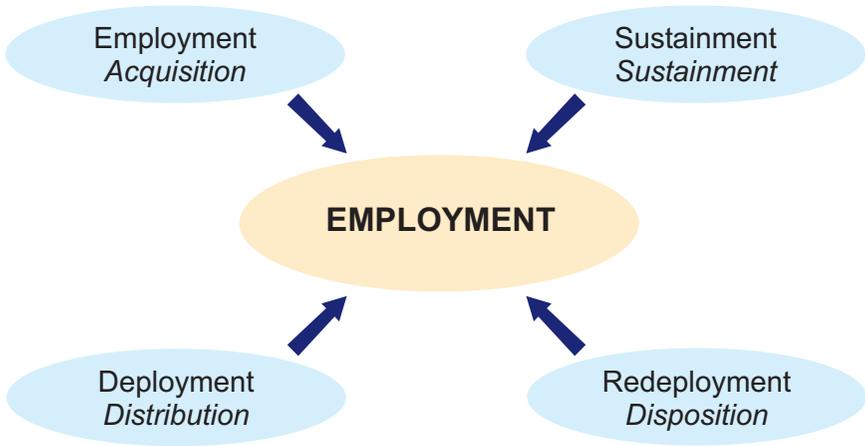


Figure 4-2. Force Projection: The Logistics Process

- ◆ The first phase is predeployment activities that begin at the point of origin, and include planning and preparations required to prepare units and materiel for deployment. For deployments requiring strategic movement, this normally means movement of materiel or forces to a seaport or airport, and preparation for loading. CONUS, MTMC will coordinate commercial movement requirements with Service transportation authorities. Substantial Navy and Marine Corps forces including reserves and war reserves will deploy through this phase. For OPLAN execution, the POE for each movement of sustainment or forces is designated in the TPFDD.
- ◆ The second phase is the movement from the POE in CONUS or elsewhere to the theater POD. This is the strategic transportation phase of deployment. Most Navy operating forces are self-deploying, as are the War Reserve Material (WRM) and ships of the MPF. Shore based naval forces and sustainment requiring strategic movement will rely on DTS for this phase. Normally, movement from the POE to the POD involves sealift or airlift, but movement of materiel and forces between theaters can be by land or inland waterway. TPFDD development and refinement in the planning process is critical to apportioning available lift. Material, forces, and personnel are loaded at the POE in accordance with established transportation priorities, and load and storage limitations. When the strategic lift arrives at the theater POD and is downloaded,

strategic movement is complete and the final phase known as RSOI begins.

- ◆ The third phase, theater distribution, commences when forces or sustainment arrive at a POD. This “arrival” can occur administratively when WRM prepositioned ashore in theater is broken out. For terminals with significant throughput for naval forces, the Navy and/or Marine Corps will normally assign appropriate liaison or forces to ensure accurate identification and rapid handling of their respective resources. At aerial ports, this will often entail the deployment of an Air Cargo Company (ACC), element-sized and configured to the projected throughput with appropriate terminal operation capabilities present. The MSC will establish offices at ocean terminals to support MSC controlled ships and operations. The Navy Cargo Handling and Port Group (NAVCHAP-GRU), Navy Cargo Handling Battalions (NCHBs) and other expeditionary units may be assigned to support aerial and sea port operations. Common-user SPOD operations will normally be under MTMC control, and will be operated by Army, civilian, host nation, joint, combined, or Navy forces.

- ◆ RSOI is the final phase of the deployment process in force projection. RSOI of Navy and Marine Corps forces and sustainment may occur through service, joint, or combined organizations. The relevance of RSOI is more evident for forces ashore than for forces afloat or items of supply. All deploying forces and sustainment are subject to this sub-process of force deployment, and may undergo varying forms or degrees of these steps:
 - ◇ Reception is receiving and accounting for components of force and sustainment at the theater POD. Reception includes reporting of receipt that updates in-transit visibility.

 - ◇ Staging involves the assembly of personnel, equipment, and supplies and preparation for onward movement. For Navy shore-based forces this entails “marrying up” with unit equipment shipped separately or drawn from WRM, and task organization of forces for projected employment. In MPF operations, it involves the merging of Marines and the NCF with their offloaded equipment and supplies.

 - ◇ Onward movement is the theater movement of forces and supplies toward their final destination. This includes self-transport by Marine

and supporting Navy forces, organic delivery through the Navy hub and spoke system, or consignment to joint or combined delivery modes.

- ◇ Integration includes the remaining steps necessary to make the forces or sustainment ready for employment. Forces report to their operational commander in the operating area and establish required Service, joint, or combined communications and reporting processes. Forces “plug in” to non-organic (Service, common-user, cross Service, host nation, or commercial) service support providers as appropriate.

The Hub and Spoke Concept of Navy Theater Distribution

Navy theater distribution is accomplished through a hub and spoke system. Non-self-deploying forces transit this system on their way to employment, and all Navy forces receive sustainment through this system. See Figure 4-3.

Primary Hubs Ashore – The Advanced Logistics Support Site

The primary theater distribution hub is called an ALSS. The ALSS centers on the availability of an aerial port and seaport in relative proximity. An ALSS normally possesses the capabilities to receive, store, consolidate, and transfer the full range of required support for forward-deployed Navy forces. An ALSS is stood up at military or civilian sites using a mix of active and reserve units augmented by contract, host nation, and allied and coalition support. These units cover required logistics functions, as well as administration and support of the ALSS itself. Tenders and hospital ships can also augment an ALSS.

Onward movement from the ALSS may be via organic or contracted local delivery; organic, common-user, or combined theater airlift; CLF shuttle ship; common-user or combined ground or water transportation; customer pickup; COD; or organic, contracted, or VOD. This movement is directed to the next transshipment point or to the end user.

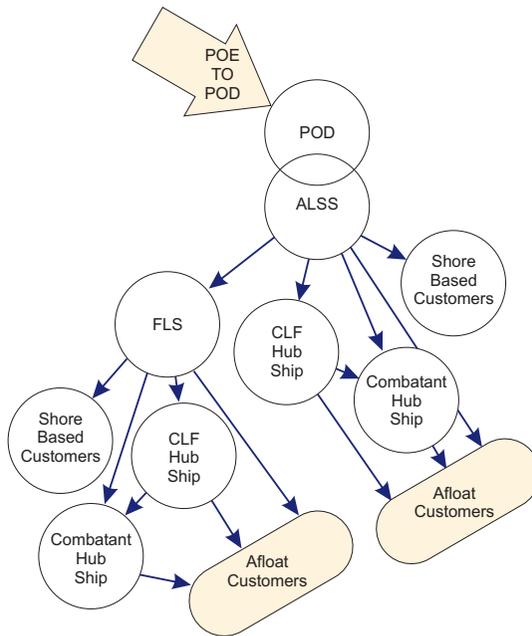


Figure 4-3. Hub and Spoke Distribution

Secondary Hubs Ashore – The Forward Logistics Site

The final transshipment point ashore in theater is the FLS. A FLS is usually closer to the operating forces than the ALSS, and capabilities may range from very austere to nearly as capable as an ALSS. Naval expeditionary logistics units and equipment, host nation, and contracted resources are task organized and assigned based on established and anticipated support requirements. FLSs normally include both a seaport and airport, but may have only one or the other when appropriate to the support requirement or site availability. While most logistics flow is from the ALSS to the FLS, FLSs may receive direct shipments into the theater in response to operational emergencies. FLSs are expeditionary and are established, moved, and disestablished readily in response to movement of the supported forces.

The final spoke in distribution can be via CLF ship to afloat forces by local issue within the ALSS/FLS, or by surface delivery from the ALSS or FLS for nearby customers and ships in port. Similarly, customer pickup—usually by ship’s organic helicopters or by shore based

customers—may complete operational distribution. For forces at sea, distribution may proceed through direct delivery or through an afloat hub. Navy COD aircraft provide direct links from the closest FLS or ALSS to carriers at sea. COD is usually reserved for the highest priority passengers, mail, and cargo (PMC). Weight, size, and cube are strictly limited on COD aircraft, so both the volume and nature of support via COD is very restricted. COD overheads are often cancelled due to offensive and defensive operations or training, weather conditions, or other more urgent requirements of the carrier or battle group.

VOD aircraft offer another option for direct delivery of high priority PMC from the FLS or ALSS to ships with adequate helicopter facilities. VOD has commonly been accomplished by Navy heavy helicopters, but other-Service, allied, and commercial aircraft have proven capable of operating to and from Navy ships with proper aircraft and crew certification and standardization of procedures. Considerations in VOD are generally similar to those involved with COD. Range limitations of COD/VOD aircraft are driving forces in the placement of FLSs. Introduction of V/STOL capabilities promise to significantly increase speed and range in some future VOD operations.

Hubs and Spokes Afloat – Replenishment at Sea

To accomplish effective support at sea, the Navy establishes hubs afloat. These hubs carry or receive PMC for transfer to other ships at sea. Replenishment at sea, primarily through UNREP, is done by moving materiel across rigging between two ships (CONREP) or by military or commercial helicopter (VERTREP).

The primary hub for UNREP is the CLF ship. These ships are configured and equipped for cargo transfer to other ships underway. Other military or commercial vessels can be pressed into service by embarking cargo afloat rig teams (CARTs) to provide and operate temporary rigging for limited ship-to-ship transfers. Primary CLF ships involved in UNREP of supplies today are the T-AFS, T-AO, T-AE, and the AOE. CLF hub ships primarily receive materiel in port at the FLS, ALSS, or other supply point. The T-AFS is stocked to a specific plan—called a fleet issue load list (FILL)—for issue to requisitioning ships. In addition, the CLF ship will pick up freight for ships it will be replenishing. Dependent on operations, materiel availability, and logistics replenishment (LOGREP) schedules,

the T-AFS may also receive materiel from other CLF ships at sea. T-AOs and AOE load petroleum products at defense energy supply points (DESPs) at the FLS, ALSS, or other locations in or near the theater. T-AOs and AOE at sea also receive transfers from other oilers and point to point tankers; this is termed consolidation (CONSOL). T-AOs and AOE also load ordnance at in theater U.S. ordnance facilities.

Combatant ships also serve as hub ships for specific support. Many ships cannot accept COD aircraft or heavy VOD aircraft. Delivery of high priority air-transportable PMC to these ships may be via COD/VOD to a carrier or VOD to another large-deck air capable ship (LHD/LHA). For VOD delivery, a CLF ship in company will normally perform as hub ship when available. When a CLF ship is not available, or when most of the VOD delivery is destined for the large deck combatant, the combatant will normally accept delivery of items for ships in company, with final transfer to be subject to operational considerations.

Tactical Distribution Within the Battle Group

Delivery to the final hub ends the operational level of theater distribution. Afloat units link directly to the supply system; they are individual customers that requisition directly, maintaining their own inventories and operating budgets. While different types and classes of ships have widely differing capabilities, basic combat service support is organic—self-contained and self-deploying with the ship; larger ships enjoy organic logistics capabilities ranging up to some intermediate level maintenance. Consolidated Shipboard Allowance Lists (COSALs), Aviation Consolidated Allowance Lists (AVCALs), and carefully developed and tested planning factors for endurance loading allow the efficiency of supply planning necessitated by finite storage limits. U.S. Navy afloat supply operations permit tailored, focused throughput of precise requirements. This, in turn, allows streamlined distribution featuring reduced logistics footprint in theater, minimal intermediate inventories, and negligible movement of superfluous supply to forward areas.

CLF ships within a battle force or battle group conduct tactical distribution during replenishment at sea, and other hub ships distribute PMC to ships in company as possible. LOGREP cycles are determined by the operational commander in response to operational requirements, unit locations, elapsed time since replenishment, and urgency of requirements. By

minimizing forward inventories and shore-based infrastructure, and providing the means to rapidly move sustainment to and between units in direct response to precise requirements, Navy tactical distribution and shipboard supply have predicted and practiced the future direction of joint logistics.

Tactical Distribution Ashore

Naval forces ashore rely on a combination of unit-organic, Navy fixed base, Naval Expeditionary Logistics Support Force (NELSF), contract, common-user, host nation, cross-Service, and multinational sustainment. As most Navy shore-based forces—other than those assigned to Marine Corps forces—will be within the ALSS or FLS, tactical distribution is largely confined to immediate issue or local delivery. Thus, while sourcing of sustainment may be very flexible and innovative, tactical distribution is generally simple and direct. Exceptions arise in areas where U.S. Navy shore-based operations are not in proximity to adequate support. An example is the remote and austere FLS with very limited organic capability; tactical distribution of support as basic as disbursing payments for local contracts can require periodic movement of support either down the operational distribution channels from the ALSS or back from supported forces. It is not uncommon for afloat forces to provide critical tactical support of remote FLSs. Such distribution is accomplished through local coordination between the FLS and either the ALSS or the afloat forces. The NCF, the medical force, and other Navy forces assigned to support Marine Corps units derive tactical distribution through Marine Corps channels.

Marine Corps tactical distribution ashore is accomplished through organic unit capabilities and units of the CSSE of the MAGTF. The Marine Corps identifies tactical logistics as the tactical-level execution of logistics functions by either CSS units or unit organic actions. The Marine Corps consider combat service support as intermediate support provided to units lacking organic capability. Marine Corps practice differentiates distribution to the unit as being either “unit” or “supply point” distribution. Simply put, this identifies whether the distribution system is responsible for delivery to the unit, or the unit is responsible for pickup at the supply point. Though seemingly a minor distinction, the selection between these two sources of tactical delivery has serious consequences for the transportation assets of both the supported unit and the CSS element.

Naval Theater Distribution in Multinational Operations

NATO has developed distribution procedures and policies allowing combined support. NATO naval operational logistics are similar to that of the U.S. and readily understood by U.S. naval logisticians. The information given above on hub and spoke theater distribution ashore and within the battle force generally applies to NATO maritime logistics operations.

The principles and policies of NATO establish logistics support as a collective responsibility, effected by the cooperation of the nations and the transfer of sufficient authority over logistics resources to enable effective employment and sustainment of forces. Implicit in this is an understanding that transfer of authority, or even transfer of a repair part, is voluntary and may be prevented or limited by national laws and interests. Nations are not required to solely use the multinational logistics organization. They may rely solely on national channels if available. In any case, provision of materiel support is a national responsibility, and supply items are requisitioned through national channels. For nations utilizing the multinational distribution channel, delivery to the ALSS remains a national responsibility. For U.S. forces, this translates to strategic distribution. National supply systems inform MNLC of all PMC en route. Once forces or materiel reach the ALSS, RSOI are the responsibility of the MNLC organization.

Host nation and multinational agreements for specific support will often result in substantial savings in distribution. Shared resources and shortened transportation legs made possible by these agreements allow a distribution system that is at once more responsive and more economical. Increasing commonality and interoperability of multinational supported and supporting forces continue to enhance this trend. Distribution through the multinational system economically offers the certainty of support necessary to mission accomplishment.

Conclusion

Our naval, joint, and multinational supply and transportation systems provide distribution services to U.S. naval forces around the world sustaining both operating and support forces. Well-defined and well-established acquisition systems fill the strategic pipeline with the wherewithal of military operations on and from the sea. The CONUS supply system and the

strategic transportation system respond to crisis by focusing their efforts on rapid achievement of attainability and sustainability.

Theater distribution operations can be complicated by a variety of factors: the competing requirements of other Services within the joint force; the political atmosphere of the host nation; as well as the potential needs of allied or coalition partners. For the storekeeper aboard ship, the customer remains constant and co-located. For the air cargo specialist at the FLS, the ship keeps moving. For the air cargo specialist at the ALSS, the FLS that serves the ship keeps changing, and even the FLSs themselves may move!

Unlike the CONUS and shipboard systems at each end of the pipeline, the theater distribution system may not pre-exist. It may form around existing theater structures, or stand up from scratch. It may incorporate existing bases, but will probably be expeditionary. It will be manned by forces drawn from some combination of active, reserve, joint, combined, and civilian sources. It will deploy quickly and commence operations with a mix of facilities and equipment drawn from many sources. Theater distribution to naval forces works because highly mobile and forward-focused Navy and Marine Corps forces have the backing of a deliberate, responsive, and robust infrastructure that operates under proven procedures to provide responsive support under all conditions.



