MUNITIONS SUPPORT IN THE THEATER OF OPERATIONS

HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

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IN THE
THEATER OF OPERATIONS

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PREFACE This FM prescribes doctrine for munitions support. It explains in general terms how munitions units operate and how they interact to provide munitions to the user. It is the basis for munitions doctrine, materiel, training, and organizational development. This manual addresses munitions unit missions, operations, and interactions between the various levels of munitions support.

FM 9-6 explains to combat arms, combat support (CS), and combat service support (CSS) commanders and their staffs how and where they receive munitions support. It establishes guidelines and procedures for munitions unit commanders and their staffs operating the munitions support structure.

Also, this manual introduces two very important doctrinal changes. First, it incorporates the maneuver-oriented ammunition distribution system, palletized load system (MOADS-PLS) into the ammunition support structure as Army doctrine. This allows for the extensive use of PLS for the distribution of ammunition. Second is the modular ammunition platoon concept. There are two types of modular platoons: heavy lift and medium lift. The heavy lift platoon (HLP) is best suited for port, theater storage area (TSA), and corps storage area (CSA) operations. Medium lift platoons (MLPs) operate in TSAs and CSAs when needed and are designed to operate ammunition supply points (ASPs). These platoons are capable of deploying and operating independently from their company headquarters, but require external support for sustainment. They allow the Army to effectively take advantage of technology and the PLS. The PLS incorporates strategic and mission configured loads (MCLs). These palletized loads are capable of being shipped to TSAs, CSAs, and ASPs. The type and number of platoons deployed is based on mission, enemy, troops, terrain and weather, and time available (METT-T) and the commander’s intent. Modular units provide a flexible design tailorable to the theater commander’s intent. They give the theater commander the capability to expand and contract the ammunition supply capability when and where needed to meet operational requirements.

This publication implements the following standardization agreements (STANAGs):


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Send comments and recommendations on DA Form 2028 (or in 2028 format) directly to Commander, USACASCOM&FL, Training Directorate, ATTN: ATCL-AO, 801 Lee Avenue, Fort Lee, VA 23801-1713.

Unless this publication states otherwise, masculine nouns and pronouns do not refer exclusively to men.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION TO MUNITIONS SUPPORT

"A soldier can survive on the battlefield for months without mail, weeks without food, days without water, minutes without air, but not one second without ammo!"

(Author Unknown)

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Munitions is the dominant factor in determining the outcome of combat or stability and support operations (SASO). It is a critical component of fire and maneuver operations performed by the force projection Army. Munitions provide the means to defeat as well as destroy the enemy. They give the force the ability to block, screen, or protect itself.

The limited quantity of our modern munitions and weapons systems requires that munitions are managed to ensure availability and enhance combat readiness. In the future, most major military operations will be joint or coalition and based on unexpected contingencies. These operations will require the munitions logistic system to be modular, tailorable, easily deployed, and flexible.

This chapter introduces the munitions support structure and its mission. It addresses the following topics:

- Supported units.
- Support environment.
- Munitions support considerations.
- Sustainment imperatives.
- Munitions strategic, operational, and tactical interfaces.
- Transportation interfaces.

MUNITIONS SUPPORT MISSION

Our national security needs form the basis of our national military strategy. We must support the four basic demands that are fulfilled by the military. They are:

- Guarantee strategic deterrence and defense.
- Exercise a forward presence in vital areas of the world.
- Respond effectively to a crisis.
- Retain the capacity to reconstitute forces.

The Army’s ability to react and sustain the battle improves the chances of conducting a successful operation. The munitions soldier’s mission is to ensure munitions arrive in the hands of the warfighter in the right quantities and proper types at the decisive time and place. Munitions logistic plans must mesh the tactical level
commander’s plan to the operational and strategic plans. This helps ensure timely support and sustains the operation.

Commanders, with advice from logistics, tailor support packages to meet theater requirements for a variety of strategic contingency plans. The use of modular ammunition units increases our ability to meet theater munitions requirements. Modular units will be deployed based on operational needs and will help ease strategic lift requirements.

The Army’s ability to meet its force projection requirements calls for highly mobile, multifunctional organizations capable of projecting munitions support anywhere in the world. The measure of success is the ability to accomplish the following effectively and efficiently:

- Provide munitions to operational and tactical commanders.
- Support current and future generations of combat power anywhere in the world.
- Sustain maneuver forces in a wide variety of mission profiles.
- Support the tenets of Army operations doctrine.
- Retrograde munitions to the continental United States (CONUS) or other theaters of operations.

SUPPORTED UNITS

Every unit on the battlefield requires munitions. Providing sufficient types and quantities at the right place on time is critical to the success of combat operations and SASO. When the Army fights as part of a joint, multinational, or combined force, US Army munitions units may support other US services and allied forces.

SUPPORT ENVIRONMENT

Ammunition units must push munitions forward on the battlefield. At the same time, they must maintain minimum essential stocks throughout the distribution system to retain maximum flexibility and mobility for future combat operations. The need to protect ammunition support activities (ASAs) from rear area threat activities complicates munitions support operations. Military Police (MP) units augment ammunition units to provide security for ASAs.

Ammunition units may find themselves close to combat. In such situations, units must continue to provide essential munitions support while relocating away from the threat. Disruptions from threat forces are likely to occur throughout the theater of operations, from brigade support areas to deep within the communications zone (COMMZ).

CSS CHARACTERISTICS

The tenets of Army operations doctrine, as presented in FM 100-5 (see Figure 1-1), are basic to operational and tactical success on the battlefield. These tenets also establish the framework for organizing sustainment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TENETS OF ARMY OPERATIONS DOCTRINE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synchronization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Versatility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Doctrine enables the combat force to take advantage of opportunities to achieve tactical or operational success. Ammunition units must follow the five logistics characteristics, as presented in FM 100-5 (see Figure 1-2), to support combined arms operations.

**LOGISTICS CHARACTERISTICS**

- Anticipation
- Integration
- Continuity
- Responsiveness
- Improvisation

**Figure 1-2. Five logistics characteristics**

**Anticipation**

Combat service support (CSS) commanders must anticipate future events and the needs of combat commanders. Staffs must devise and develop new methods for supporting those needs. While the unit is still supporting current operations, the logistics planner must forecast munitions demands based on future operations plans. Logistics planners must anticipate events and still remain flexible enough to accommodate likely contingencies. Successful anticipation in munitions support operations is the ability to meet shifting demands resulting from rapidly changing tactical conditions. To best support combat units, it is imperative that logistics officers be tactically and technically competent. See FM 100-5, Chapter 3, for a more detailed explanation of this characteristic.

**Integration**

Unity of effort requires that CSS commanders fully integrate logistical support into the tactical and operational plans of the combat commanders. Munitions support must be bold, innovative, and based on a clear understanding of the commander’s intent; however, guidelines for safe, secure operations must be followed. Combat commanders require the greatest possible freedom of action; therefore, munitions units must organize to support the combat forces and their operations. Also, munitions support must be fully integrated into deception plans.

**Continuity**

*Continuity* in munitions support is a critical factor in allowing combat commanders to have depth, retain momentum, and maintain the initiative. The *continuity* of sustainment is paramount to the continued success of the operation. While the tempo of combat operations varies, sustainment operations never cease. During lulls in combat, munitions units must rebuild combat loads and replenish stocks. Also, they must conduct inspections, preventive maintenance services, repacking, demilitarization, destruction, and retrograde operations.

**Responsiveness**

All munitions support units must be responsive to the changing needs of the combat user. They must be
prepared to relocate their support base and redirect incoming munitions without interrupting the flow of ammunition to the fighting force. CSS plans must be flexible to allow the combat commander the ability to fully exploit a tactical opportunity.

**Improvisation**

*Improvisation* is the ability that allows the commander to react to unexpected and unanticipated events and to exploit them to the fullest to accomplish his mission. No amount of planning can account for all possible contingencies on the battlefield. When the normal supply of ammunition is interrupted, extraordinary effort, innovative supply procedures, and other unconventional methods may be needed to support combat operations. However, improvisation is not the answer for poor prior planning on the part of the commander.

**PLANNING GUIDANCE**

The CSS commander should use the four support considerations (see Figure 1-3) as a guide when incorporating combat service support sustainment into operational plans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPORT CONSIDERATIONS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Support combat commander’s intent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Support forward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Maintain total asset visibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Rely upon the Army's system of effective leadership.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 1-3. Four support considerations*

The first consideration is *supporting the combat commander's intent*. The commander’s intent may change with the situation and depends on many variables.

The second is *supporting as far forward as possible*. As ammunition containers arrive in theater, they are sent forward to a TSA or CSA. At the CSA the containers are unloaded, and the ammunition is configured into mission configured loads (MCLs). The MCLs are then sent forward to ASPs or ATPs.

The third is *maintaining total asset visibility* (TAV) to meet the needs of the combat forces. TAV means that munitions supplies are tracked from the time that they are introduced into the distribution pipeline until they arrive at their final destination so that their exact location is known at all times.

The fourth is *relying upon the Army's system of effective leadership* to adapt to the changing needs of the battlefield. Effective leadership enables ammunition unit commanders to accomplish their critical munitions support mission to the combat forces. All commissioned officers, warrant officers, and noncommissioned officers must be effective leaders as well as technically and tactically proficient.

**MUNITIONS STRATEGIC, OPERATIONAL, AND TACTICAL LOGISTIC LEVELS**

Levels of munitions support parallel the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war (see Figure 1-4). At the strategic level, the national military strategy determines the theater strategy. The theater campaign plan is derived from the theater strategy and links the operational level (joint task force [JTF] campaign plans) to the strategic level (theater strategy). Plans for conducting major operations are derived from the JTF campaign
Battles and engagements are the tactical level components of major operations. Ammunition support is an integral part of the plan at each of these levels.

Munitions support is instrumental to the commander in building, sustaining, and projecting combat power to shape the battle. It is an essential part of the logistics system at each level of war. The theater (operational level) munitions system links the strategic and tactical levels of war. For more information, see FMs 100-5, 100-10, and 100-16.

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**Figure 1-4. Levels of war and guidance hierarchy**

**Strategic Level of Munitions Logistics**

The strategic level of the munitions logistic system is the support base for all deployed forces and provides munitions based upon projected munitions expenditures. The strategic munitions logistic system includes special activities under Department of the Army (DA) control. These include national inventory control points (NICPs), national maintenance points, depots, arsenals, plants, and factories. Supporting the strategic level of munitions is the function of these CONUS organizations or the theater base in the COMMZ and is coordinated with the logistics support element (LSE).
The LSE is the forward element of the munitions logistical base. It provides limited strategic level or other directed logistics support in the theater on an interim basis. The Army service component commander (ASCC) (formerly known as the theater commander) has command and control of the LSE.

An LSE consists of military, contractors, and civilian employees. They provide support within, as well as outside, the theater of operations, producing a seamless system. To optimize the logistics flow, the munitions logistics system is centrally managed at the strategic level and decentralized at the operational and tactical levels.

The United States Army Materiel Command (USAMC) coordinates strategic organization actions through the LSE deployed in the theater. The early deployment of the LSE ensures a positive link to deploying ammunition units. Also, the LSE may have to fill gaps in the munitions support force infrastructure until the deploying units arrive in theater. The initial deployment will be for logistical assistance along with the other logistics personnel assigned to major units. The LSE does not replace capabilities provided by munitions support units in the force structure. Rather, it provides an interface between the strategic and operational munitions logistics levels.

Operational Level of Munitions Logistics

The ASCC links Army plans to the combat commander’s strategic level plans. The Army forces (ARFOR) commander links his plans to the operational level plans. These links enable the operational level of munitions logistics to support the commander in chief’s (CINC’s) plan. See FM 100-7 for more information.

Providing this support in a force projection environment presents new challenges. The ARFOR commander establishes priorities for operational level munitions. Operational bases within a theater provide strategic and operational munitions support to the tactical forces. Based on METT-T, the CINC develops a munitions organization capable of executing munitions CSS tasks to support the campaign plan.

The difference between the operational and tactical levels of munitions logistics is the longer planning and preparation time required to support extended operations. The operational level of munitions logistics encompasses support required to sustain campaign plans and major operations. It attempts to balance current consumption of munitions supplies with the needs of future major operations. It also enables success at the tactical level of war.

Operational munitions support significantly impacts the ARFOR commander’s decision process. The commander uses METT-T to determine logistics time and distance factors, throughput, and lines of communication (LOCs). Assured logistics communications supporting high data transmission rates with the national industrial base provide TAV of critical items. In-transit visibility (ITV) allows the commander to know the location of resources in transit and to allocate them based on their projected arrival. The operational level of the munitions logistic system provides the link between the strategic and tactical levels.

Tactical Level of Munitions Logistics

The tactical level of munitions logistics sustains the tactical commander’s ability to fight battles and engagements. Successful tactical level munitions logistics provide the right munitions, on time, at the correct location to the requesting unit. Mobile, responsive capabilities are essential for preparation and execution of the tactical level of munitions logistics.

The munitions distribution system includes all supply activities needed to provide munitions to the using units within a theater of operations. Munitions requirements from combat battalions and brigades proceed through
the materiel management channels of the divisions, corps, and theater until they ultimately reach the 
CONUS-based NICP.

The use, and therefore the structure, of ASAs have evolved. ASAs vary in size, capability, and mission. They are not bound by strict, hierarchical support structures but are based on projected mission requirements.

**SUPPORT STRUCTURES**

Munitions support units are organized to meet mission support requirements. Each unit has the appropriate mix of personnel, MOS skills, tools, and equipment to accomplish assigned missions. Chapter 2 of this manual provides more information on the structure of munitions support units and doctrine.
CHAPTER 2
MUNITIONS SUPPORT STRUCTURE

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This chapter describes the munitions support structure and distribution system. Topics include the two types of munitions support units: MOADS-PLS units and modular ammunition units. Also discussed is the flow of munitions, information, and documents, as well as the responsibilities of distribution managers at each echelon.

AMMUNITION SURGE SUPPORT

Major operations and deployments create a tremendous demand on CONUS ammunition depots and port facilities. The Army no longer has massive stockpiles of munitions outside CONUS (OCONUS), and the amount of Army prepositioned stocks (APS) are limited. This leaves stateside depots and ports to provide most of the munitions required in an operation. Very early in the deployment process, planners must provide augmentation support to these depot and port facilities. A significant number of the Army’s munitions units are in the Reserve Components (RC). For that reason, RC units should assist in the planning process. Also, RC munitions units will probably assist in providing both planning and surge support.

When planning to use RC units to provide surge support, planners must consider the time required to mobilize and deploy the units. It usually takes an RC unit at least two weeks to complete the mobilization process. This time must be factored into all operational plans.

When the modular ammunition unit concept is implemented, one or more medium or heavy lift platoons may be assigned to each depot and port requiring augmentation. The number assigned will depend on several factors:

- Projected size and duration of the operation.
- Projected amount of munitions to be shipped.
- Size of the depot or port and the facilities, equipment, and personnel organic to the depot or port.
- Readiness level of augmentee units.

Providing surge support to CONUS depots and ports is critical to the success of any operation. Ammunition sitting in state-side storage facilities does not win battles; the failure to get it to the theater of operations may result in unnecessary casualties and an unsuccessful operation.

SUPPORT STRUCTURE OVERVIEW

The mission of the munitions support structure is to deliver the required type and amount of munitions to the combat user at the time and location it is needed. This requires an efficient, effective, and flexible munitions distribution system. To meet the needs of combat commanders, the munitions distribution system must adhere to the sustainment imperatives presented in FM 100-10 and Chapter 1 of this manual.

AMMUNITION SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

Three types of ASAs are in the theater: TSAs, CSAs, and ASPs. An ammunition transfer point (ATP) is not considered an ASA because of its temporary nature.

The ASA mission is to receive, store, issue, and maintain the theater’s conventional ammunition stocks. Also, ASAs configure ammunition into MCLs. Once configured, MCLs are shipped forward to ATPs for issue to combat units.

Theater Storage Area

Operations

The TSA encompasses the storage facilities located in the COMMZ. This is where the bulk of the theater reserve ammunition
The TSA stockage objective is determined by the ASCC. AR 710-2 contains basic days of supply (DOS) policy for Class V. The theater army area command (TAACOM) ammunition group must keep the operational level materiel management center (MMC) informed of storage limitations or shortages in each TSA.

**Corps Storage Area Operations**

The CSA is the primary source of high-tonnage ammunition for the division and corps. It is operated by one or more GS ammunition companies or one or more medium or heavy lift modular ammunition platoons. The number of units assigned to operate a CSA depends on the corps authorized ammunition stockage level. CSAs receive 50 percent of their ammunition from the port of debarkation (POD) and 50 percent from the TSA. At a minimum, each corps will identify an ASA to meet these requirements.

CSAs provide 100 percent of the ASP’s ammunition and 75 percent of the ATP’s ammunition, configured as MCLs. Besides providing ammunition to ASPs and ATPs, CSAs provide area ammunition support to units operating in the corps rear.

One CSA is normally required to support ASP and ATP operations for each committed division. Stockage objectives for the CSA are established by the corps support command (COSCOM) and are based on projected theater combat rates. Initially, the stockage objective of a CSA should be 10-15 days of supply. After the initial combat drawdown, the CSA should maintain 7-10 days of supply. When a CSA’s wartime stockage objective exceeds 25,000 ST, a second CSA should be established.
The COSCOM ammunition battalion analyzes workload requirements based on the forecast and resupply requirements provided by the division ammunition officer (DAO). From this requirements analysis, the battalion determines how to best provide ammunition resupply to the combat units it supports.

The ammunition battalion must synchronize ASA operations with corps transportation assets to ensure the timely movement of ammunition stocks. With the incorporation of modular units, the number of medium lift and heavy lift platoons will be based on workload. At a minimum, one MLP will be required at each CSA to meet MCL workload.

### Ammunition Supply Point Operations

ASPs are another source of ammunition for the division. ASPs receive, store, issue, and maintain a one- to three-day supply of ammunition. ASP stockage levels are based on tactical plans, availability of ammunition, and the threat to the resupply operation.

ASPs are located in the division rear. Normally, three MLPs are required to support a division and to provide manning for the division rear ATP. An ASP is normally operated by a direct support (DS) ammunition company or one or more medium lift modular ammunition platoons. (A DS ammunition company can operate up to three ASPs plus an ATP.) If the ASP must handle containerized ammunition, based on METT-T, HLPs must be assigned to the ASP. Depending on METT-T, engineer support may be required to establish and maintain the ASP. During the ASP site selection process, commanders should focus on locations that minimize the need for engineer support. Possibilities include villages, commercial buildings, or farm complexes.

ASPs provide 25 percent of each ATP’s ammunition requirement in the form of MCLs. Besides supporting ATPs, ASPs provide ammunition to units operating in the division rear area. These nondivisional and corps units normally receive support from the closest ASA.

### Ammunition Transfer Point Operations

ATPs are the most mobile and responsive of the munitions supply activities. CSAs and ASPs deliver ammunition to the ATP using corps transportation assets. This ammunition is kept loaded on semitrailers or PLS flatracks until ATP personnel transload it to using unit vehicles. If the situation demands, the ammunition can be transferred immediately to using unit tactical vehicles.

ATPs receive about 75 percent of their ammunition as throughput from the CSA. The other 25 percent comes from an ASP and is in the form of MCLs.

ATPs are located in each brigade support area (BSA) with an additional one in the division support area (DSA). The mission of each ATP is to provide 100 percent of the ammunition required by all infantry, armor, artillery, combat aviation, combat engineer, and air defense units in its sector. This includes divisional and non-divisional units (i.e., corps artillery) operating in the brigade area. A DAO noncommissioned officer (NCO) is located at each ATP to control the issue of munitions.

The corps DS ammunition company operates the ATP in the DSA. This ATP supports all corps, divisional, and nondivisional units in the DSA. It receives mission guidance and responds to the priorities established by the DAO.

Each maneuver brigade has a forward support battalion (FSB) that operates an ATP. ATPs are operated by the ammunition section of the supply company in the FSB. These ATPs provide ammunition support to all units in the brigade support sector and receive mission guidance from the DAO.

The FSB support operations officer, in conjunction with the DAO NCO representative, coordinates directly with nonorganic units supported by the ATP. Their munitions requirements are consolidated by the support operations officer/DAO, and their request for resupply consolidated with the brigade request. The DAO/movement control battalion (MCB) and the FSB support operations officer coordinate the location, amount, and type of munitions (MCLs) to be received at the ATP. Munitions are delivered by corps transportation assets. ATP personnel interrogate radio frequency (RF) tags of arriving PLS shipments to gain immediate visibility of the shipment and to identify the organization to which it will be issued.

Units arriving at the ATP to pick up munitions drop off empty, or partially empty, PLS flatracks and retrieve fully loaded flatracks. ATP personnel assist units without the PLS to transload munitions. Uploaded flatracks are normally issued in the same configuration as received.

All empty flatracks are shipped back to the nearest ASP, CSA, or TSA as soon as possible. All issues and turn-ins are reported by the DAO representative. The unit ammunition turn-ins are picked up for immediate retrograde by corps transportation assets used.