
Tactical-Level Logistics



U.S. Marine Corps

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
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FOREWORD

1. PURPOSE

Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 4-11, *Tactical-Level Logistics*, provides the doctrinal basis for the planning and execution of ground and aviation logistic support for Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) operations at the tactical level of war. It establishes standard terms of reference for tactical logistics and combat service support operations and provides guidance for developing local Fleet Marine Force standing operating procedures. MCWP 4-11 expands on MCWP 4-1, *Logistics Operations*, and provides detailed guidance to Marine Corps logisticians for the conduct of tactical-level logistics.

2. SCOPE

This manual is intended for commanders and their staffs who are responsible for planning and conducting logistic support at the tactical level of war. The secondary audience is commanders and staff officers who require logistical support or who will benefit from a greater understanding of logistical support at the tactical level.

3. SUPERSESION

Fleet Marine Force Manual 4-1, *Combat Service Support Operations*, 12 July 1993.

4. CERTIFICATION

Reviewed and approved this date.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

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To Our Readers

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Unless otherwise stated, whenever the masculine or feminine gender is used, both men and women are included.

Tactical-Level Logistics

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Chapter 1

Fundamentals

Logistics is defined as “the science of planning and carrying out the movement and maintenance of forces. In its most comprehensive sense, those aspects of military operations which deal with: a. design and development, acquisition, storage, movement, distribution, maintenance, evacuation, and disposition of materiel; b. movement, evacuation, and hospitalization of personnel; c. acquisition or construction, maintenance, operation, and disposition of facilities; and d. acquisition or furnishing of services.” (Joint Publication [JP] 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*)

Logistics is a fundamental element of Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) expeditionary operations. Marine expeditionary forces provide self-contained and self-sustained forces that have everything necessary to accomplish the mission—from individual equipment to expeditionary airfields and medical treatment facilities. These forces are structured to meet a wide range of contingency operations and possess the logistic capabilities needed to initiate an operation, sustain forces, and reconstitute for follow-on missions.

Effective logistic support must be viewed from the perspectives of supported (e.g., ground combat element) and supporting (e.g., combat service support element) organizations. It emphasizes the need for detailed planning and close integration of logistic capabilities of both supported combat units and supporting combat service support units.

Combat service support (CSS) is defined as “the essential capabilities, functions, activities, and tasks necessary to sustain all elements of operating forces in theater at all levels of war. Within the national and theater logistic systems, it includes but is not limited to that support rendered by service forces in ensuring the aspects of supply, maintenance, transportation, health services,

and other services required by aviation and ground combat troops to permit those units to accomplish their missions in combat. Combat service support encompasses those activities at all levels of war that produce sustainment to all operating forces on the battlefield.” (JP 1-02) CSS in the Marine Corps is a function or tasking associated with a unit that, by table of organization (T/O) and table of equipment (T/E), is organized, equipped, and trained as a CSS organization to perform CSS operations.

1001. Levels of War

Military operations require specific logistic support which is based on the strategic, operational, or tactical levels of war.

a. Strategic

“The level of war at which a nation, often as a member of a group of nations, determines national or multinational (alliance or coalition) security objectives and guidance, and develops and uses national resources to accomplish those objectives. Activities at this level establish national and multinational military objectives; sequence initiatives; define limits and assess risks for the use of military and other instruments of national power; develop global plans or theater war plans to achieve these objectives; and provide military forces and other capabilities in accordance with strategic plans.” (JP 1-02)

b. Operational

“The level of war at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theaters or areas of operations. Activities at this level link tactics and strategy by establishing operations objectives needed to accomplish the strategic objectives sequencing events to achieve the operational

objectives, initiating actions, and applying resources to bring about and sustain these events. These activities imply a broader dimension of time or space than do tactics; they ensure the logistic and administrative support of tactical forces, and provide the means by which tactical successes are exploited to achieve strategic objectives.” (JP 1-02)

c. Tactical

“The level of war at which battles and engagements are planned and executed to accomplish military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces. Activities at this level focus on the ordered arrangement and maneuver of combat elements in relation to each other and to the enemy to achieve combat objectives.” (JP 1-02)

1002. The Logistic Continuum

Strategic, operational, and tactical logistics parallel and complement the levels of war. Strategic logistics supports the organizing, training, and equipping of forces needed to further the national interest. Operational logistics links tactical requirements and strategic capabilities to accomplish operational goals and objectives. Tactical logistics includes organic unit capabilities and combat service support activities required to support military operations.

Effective tactical logistic support results from the proper employment of logistic capabilities within the MAGTF concept of operations and scheme of maneuver. Commanders and logisticians must carefully integrate logistic considerations into operations planning and execution. Tactical-level logistic capabilities are a primary element of a self-sufficient MAGTF, which is supported externally through the logistic activity at the strategic and operational levels. Figure 1-1 depicts the continuum of logistic support through the levels of war.

1003. Strategic Logistics

Strategic logistic capabilities are generated based on guidance from the National Command Authorities and logistic requirements identified by the operating forces. The combatant command and staff plan and oversee logistics from a theater strategic perspective. They assign execution responsibilities to Service components unless a joint or multinational functional command is formed to perform theater strategic logistic functions. The joint staff and combatant commanders generate and move forces and materiel into theater and areas of operations where operational logistic concepts are employed.

1004. Operational Logistics

Operational logistics connects the logistic efforts of the strategic level with those of the tactical level. The Marine component commander is responsible for conducting operational logistics and coordinating operational logistic support with tactical logistic operations. The component commander may assign operational-level logistic tasks to the combat service support element and aviation combat element commanders in addition to their tactical logistic responsibilities. In larger operations, a Marine logistic command may be

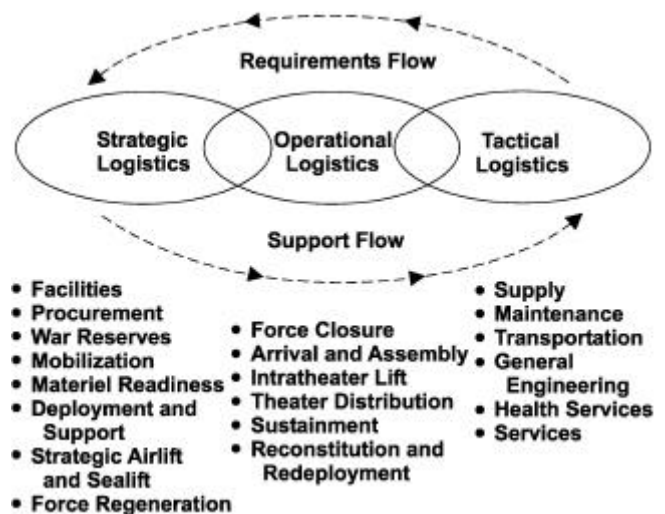


Figure 1-1. The Logistic Continuum.