

AIRDROP SUPPORT OPERATIONS IN A THEATER OF OPERATIONS

Table of Contents

	Page
PREFACE	iii
CHAPTER 1 Airdrop Support on the Battlefield	
Introduction	1-1
Tenets of AirLand Battle and Sustainment	
Imperatives	1-1
Joint Operations	1-1
Combined Operations	1-2
Threat	1-2
Battlefield Environment	1-2
CHAPTER 2 Principles of Airdrop Supply and Resupply Operations	
Introduction	2-1
Stages of Supply	2-1
Types and Methods of Airdrop	2-2
Advantages of Airdrop Resupply Operations	2-4
Disadvantages of Airdrop Resupply Operations	2-4
CHAPTER 3 Airdrop Support Units	
Introduction	3-1
Units in Current Airdrop Concept	3-1
Units in New Airdrop Concept	3-8
CHAPTER 4 Airdrop Support Responsibilities	
Introduction	4-1
Theater Level	4-1
Corps Level	4-1
Division Level	4-1
Special Operations Forces	4-2
Requesting Unit	4-2
CHAPTER 5 Airdrop Request Procedures	
Introduction	5-1
Preplanned Airdrop Resupply Requests	5-1
Immediate Airdrop Resupply Requests	5-1
Army Responsibilities	5-1

DISTRIBUTION RESTRICTION. Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

CHAPTER 6 Retrograde of Airdrop Equipment

Introduction 6-1
Retrograde 6-1

CHAPTER 7 Planning Considerations

Introduction 7-1
Airdrop Resupply Planning Factors 7-1
Planning Factors for Air Delivery Equipment
 Recovery 7-1
Force Structure 7-1
Force Structure Alternatives 7-2

CHAPTER 8 General Logistics Considerations

Introduction 8-1
Rear Area Security Operations 8-1
Mission Kill Operations 8-1
Reconstitution 8-1
Host-Nation Support 8-1
NBC Environment 8-2

GLOSSARY Glossary-1

REFERENCES References-1

INDEX Index-1

Preface

PURPOSE

FM 100-10 states that airdrop is a primary field service that will be required on the battlefield at the onset of hostilities. This manual (FM 10-500-1) provides doctrinal guidance to commanders and staff officers. It is used to plan, coordinate, and request the airdrop of supplies and equipment in a theater of operations. Its contents conform to Army and Air Force doctrine and procedures.

SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

This manual addresses the Army's airdrop mission, both the joint and combined aspects. It presents basic principles of airdrop supply and resupply and the types and methods of airdrop, including the advantages and disadvantages of each. It also covers airdrop support units and their responsibilities at each echelon. Airdrop request procedures, recovery and evacuation procedures, and planning considerations are also covered. This manual applies to US forces worldwide under all levels of conflict and in all climates and geographical environments. It can be modified to apply to allied forces who may have been authorized to receive airdrop resupply support from US elements.

This manual supports FM 10-1. It should be used with FMs 63-1 through 63-4 and FMs 100-10, 100-16, 100-26, and 100-27.

USER INFORMATION

Proponent of this publication is HQ TRADOC. Send comments and recommendations on DA Form 2028 directly to:

**Commander
US Army Quartermaster Center and School
ATTN: ATSM-DTL
Fort Lee, Virginia 23801-5036**

Unless this publication states otherwise, masculine nouns and pronouns do not refer exclusively to men.

CHAPTER 1

Airdrop Support on the Battlefield

INTRODUCTION

Combat units carry only the supplies and equipment they will need until they can be resupplied. Airdrop planning and coordination must be continuous so that supplies and equipment are available for the supported units. Equally important is the distribution system. It must allow the timely delivery of the supplies and equipment. When possible, supplies and equipment are delivered directly to the using unit or close-by to save the units' time. As a primary field service (Table 1-1, page 1-1), airdrop provides a vital link in the distribution system. Therefore, field service and transportation planners must plan carefully for airdrop. Airdrop resupply operations can be used to extend all lines of communication. They are extremely important during the early stages of hostilities. Ground lines of communication and forward supply points will be priority threat targets at this time. Later, airdrop will become more important as the combat intensity increases and the depth of the battlefield extends. Airdrop resupply adds flexibility to the distribution system. It allows the combat commander to take the initiative while reducing the impact of overextending his supply lines. The force structure required to support airdrop resupply operations is highly specialized. It should be in place and ready to support this critical field service when hostilities first erupt.

TENETS OF AIRLAND BATTLE AND SUSTAINMENT IMPERATIVES

The basic tenets of AirLand Battle are initiative, agility, depth, and synchronization. Airdrop supports these tenets. It allows the combat commander to fulfill his duties while minimizing his concern about supply support or overextension of the logistic trail. It also allows the commander to place forces in greater depth and to maneuver them more effectively. The sustainment imperatives outlined in FMs 100-5 and 100-10 are anticipation, integration, continuity, responsiveness, and improvisation. Airdrop supports these imperatives by providing the supply and distribution systems the flexibility to change with the tactical situation.

Table 1-1.
Primary and secondary field services

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PRIMARY <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Airdrop <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Mortuary affairs (graves registration) <li style="margin-top: 10px;">● SECONDARY <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Clothing exchange and bath <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Laundry and reimpregnation <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Bread baking <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Light textile and clothing renovation <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Salvage
--

JOINT OPERATIONS

As a rule, the airdrop of supplies and equipment is a joint Army and Air Force effort. The Army owns the supplies and equipment to be rigged for airdrop and the special rigging equipment (parachutes, platforms, and containers). All supplies and equipment to be airdropped are rigged according to joint service manuals (Army FMs and Air Force TOs). Once the supplies and equipment are rigged for airdrop, they are moved to the departure airfield aboard Army transportation. They are then placed in a temporary holding location run by the Air Force or transloaded onto Air Force K-loaders which are used to load cargo aircraft. Loading the rigged loads aboard Air Force aircraft is an Air Force responsibility; however, Army personnel routinely assist the Air Force. The Air Force requires a specially trained crew for each type of airdrop mission being flown. Several types of Army-owned aircraft can be used for airdrop missions. However, their range and carrying capacity severely limit their use.