

Building the Theater Planner

What happened to the Theater Logistics Studies Program?

■ By Maj. Gen. Darrell K. Williams and Ron Jaeckle



In 2007, the Combined Arms Support Command (CASCOM) and the Army Logistics Management College (ALMC) established the Theater Logistics Studies Program (TLog) to develop a cadre of logisticians equipped with the operational- and strategic-level tools to plan and conduct logistics operations at the theater level.

For its intended purpose of producing quality logistics professionals, TLog was a resounding success. It met its objectives of building competent operational-level planners, and the field valued its graduates.

Losing TLog

Unfortunately, CASCOM was forced to halt TLog because of a lack of participation. Annual enrollment declined from its zenith of about 80 students in fiscal year 2011 to a low of only 19 students by the first class of fiscal year 2015. Even fewer enrolled in the second class of the year before it was suspended.

The resources required to sustain the course for so few students, in the midst of declining resources, made the case for keeping it untenable. The 19-week course length also made it extremely difficult to educate the great number of theater logisticians the field required in both the active and reserve components.

The demise of TLog created a clear gap in theater logistics planning education, so the Army Logistics University (ALU), ALMC's successor, developed an alternate approach to mitigate its loss.

It would be impossible to completely replicate the TLog experience, so ALU chose not to create a

course that taught the same level of expertise in all aspects of operational sustainment. Instead, ALU has developed the Theater Sustainment Planners Course (TSPC), which will instruct students on only the most essential aspects of theater logistics and sustainment planning.

TSPC

TSPC is a rigorous two-week course designed for Logistics Branch senior captains and majors, but senior noncommissioned officers, warrant officers, and Department of the Army civilians in logistics fields may also attend.

The course has a prerequisite of 40 hours of computer-based instruction. That instruction, which comes from Command and General Staff College modules, covers tactical sustainment, decisive action, defense support of civil authorities, the military decision-making process, strategic and operational sustainment, operational contract support, and joint, interorganizational, and multinational logistics.

Prospective students may enroll in the online instruction by going to the ALU Blackboard page at <https://almc.ellc.learn.army.mil/> and searching for "TSPC Foundations." Having that baseline education will allow students to better comprehend the resident course material, so it is critical that students complete the distance learning first.

The resident course will include case studies, exercises, and nightly readings. It will cover the following topics:

- Sustainment within the operational level of war.

So, what happened to TLog? It gave way to a more feasible alternative that will enable the development of a strategic-level course that is part of a more comprehensive approach.

- Planning methods and tools.
- Sustainment functions at the operational level.
- Theater supply chain and distribution management.
- Integration of strategic partners and operational contract support.
- Reception, staging, and onward movement.

The course will culminate with the development of a theater sustainment plan, which students will brief to a senior sustainment leader. Successful completion of this course will earn the student the skill identifier P1 (theater logistics planner). The military occupational classification and structure change to the P1 qualification is currently in the approval staffing process.

TSPC will help bridge the expertise gap, but operational assignments to theater sustainment commands, expeditionary sustainment commands, and sustainment brigades, along with continual self-development, will be the bedrock to understanding joint logistics doctrine and theater sustainment structures and operations.

In addition, the resident Command and General Staff College program at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, will include the 72-hour elective Theater Sustainment Planners Program beginning in March 2017. This program will build on foundations in the core curriculum and the Advanced Operations Course and meet the same learning objectives as TSPC.

Students will take the theory and

art elective in the first elective term and the application elective in the second. Successful completion of this program will also earn a student the P1 skill identifier.

Quotas and Branch Transfers

It is important to note that the viability of TSPC, as with all functional courses, rests with the number of requests for seats in the course provided by the field during the structure manning decision review process.

ALU has been working to run pilots and develop the program of instruction. Once the program of instruction is entered into the Army Training Requirements and Resource System, the field will be able to request quotas for fiscal year 2019.



Capt. Andrew Zemany, a student in the Theater Sustainment Planners Course at the Army Logistics University, briefs his concept of sustainment to instructors as part of the course at Fort Lee, Virginia. The concept of sustainment briefing is the final graded exercise of the course and takes place on the final day of class.

As an interim solution, ALU will begin teaching TSPC in lieu of the Reserve Component Theater Sustainment Course (RC TSC) starting in October 2016. Commands with RC TSC quotas for fiscal year 2017 can use them to have personnel attend TSPC instead.

For commands that needed quotas in RC TSC for transfers to the Logistics Branch, there is also an-

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Because RC TSC and TLog are going away, the Support Operations Course (SOC) will meet the need for branch transfers. SOC gives branch transfers a solid foundation in tactical support, which is the starting point for sustainment leader development.

In support of this plan, ALU is also revamping SOC. The first phase, which is distance learning, is being updated and tailored to meet the branch transfer education requirement. Implementation is expected to begin on Oct. 1, 2016.

The second phase, which is resident at ALU and conducted through mobile training teams, has also been revised. Together, these two phases will provide a foundation in multifunctional logistics at the tactical level, support operations, and concept of support development.

ALU will work with commands that need additional quotas in SOC to meet branch transfer requirements that would have been

ELog Studies

As valuable as TLog was for operational planners, by design it did not comprehensively address enterprise and strategic logistics. Those higher order concepts were taught in the old Logistics Executive Development Course, which was the

only course that ALMC offered with a comprehensive approach at the strategic level.

To fill this gap, ALU will use the institutional resources affiliated with TLog to develop a new course focused on the strategic and enterprise levels. The Enterprise Logistics Studies Program (ELog Studies) will promote complex problem analysis and solution development for midgrade to executive logistics professionals, thereby growing a pool of qualified military and civilian candidates for the most senior levels of leadership.

The ELog Studies target audience will primarily be civilian logistics management specialists in the ranks of GS-12 through GS-14 and midgrade through senior military personnel working in or preparing for positions at the enterprise level (for example, at the Army Materiel Command, Defense Logistics Agency, or U.S. Transportation Command).

The course is still under development, but the current plan is for a rigorous five-week, graduate-level resident course to be conducted at ALU.

The ELog Studies curriculum will give students the tools to develop comprehensive analyses and potential solutions. It will prepare them to provide advice on enterprise-level policy, readiness, and decision-making.

As currently planned, the ELog Studies course will include three modules over the five-week period: Enterprise Logistics Intelligence, Logistics and National Defense, and the Defense and Army Logistics Enterprise. Data analytics and executive communication skills will be integrated throughout the course.

ALU projects that it will have five ELog Studies classes per year with 16 students per class, depending on field requests.

So, what happened to TLog? It gave way to a more feasible alternative that will enable the development of a strategic-level course that is part of a more comprehensive approach. In short, the new approach is this:

- Students will take TSPC for an educational foundation in sustainment at the theater level and to acquire the skill identifier P1.
- Students will take SOC to transfer to the Logistics Branch.
- Students will take ELog Studies to learn about logistics at the strategic level.

ALU believes this approach will overcome the educational shortfalls the Army has recently experienced and will best meet the needs of the field.

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