Brigade Logistics Support Team 101

The answers to six questions can provide the basics needed to understand a new assignment as a brigade logistics support team chief.

■ By Maj. Michael Spears

When I became the brigade logistics support team (BLST) chief for the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT), 1st Cavalry Division, at Fort Hood, Texas, in June 2016, I had very little knowledge of what a BLST chief was. In my previous assignments, I was a logistics plans officer on the III Corps G-4 staff and a brigade S-4 in the 3rd ABCT.

I took it upon myself to research the duties and responsibilities of a BLST chief. Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management, and Department of the Army Pamphlet 750-1, Commanders' Maintenance Handbook, provided limited information. So, I checked Army Regulation 700-4, Logistics Assistance; Army Materiel Command (AMC) Regulation 700-19, Mobility Program for Logistics Assistance Program (LAP) Civilian Personnel; and the AMC BLST Handbook. I developed the following six questions that I wanted answered about being a BLST chief:

☐ Who does the BLST chief turn to in a time of need?
☐ What is the task organization of a BLST?
☐ When does the BLST chief start building support relationships within his unit?
☐ Where can the BLST chief go to find the resources he needs to best support his unit?
☐ Why is a BLST so important to its supported unit?
☐ How can the BLST chief ensure his supported unit is successful at combat training centers (CTCs) and while deployed?

The BLST Chief

A BLST chief is usually a major or chief warrant officer 4 or 5 who acts as AMC's advisor to the brigade combat team (BCT) or combat aviation brigade (CAB) commander. The BLST chief is responsible for coordinating all AMC alternative support with the BCT or CAB commander and staff. He coordinates day-to-day activities through the BCT's brigade support battalion (BSB) support operations (SPO) section, S-3, S-4, and S-6.

The LMS

A logistics management specialist (LMS) is responsible for monitoring unit equipment readiness. The LMS provides assistance in analyzing, reporting, effecting improvements, and coordinating support for LAP-related trends and issues.

The LMS directly advises the Army field support battalion (AFSBn) commander on equipment readiness issues and trends that may affect national-level provider resources. The LMS performs the duties of the BLST chief in his absence and has operational control of logistics assistance representatives (LARs).

LARs

LARs provide weapon systems-oriented supply, maintenance, and technical assistance to supported units. LARs have substantial technical experience on the equipment they support and answer questions about maintenance, training, supply parts, and operational readiness.

LARs share information from the field with their respective life cycle management commands (LCMCs) and the Army Sustainment Command to efficiently and effectively support equipment and systems throughout the Army.

Support Relationships

The BLST chief must build several support relationships in order to be successful. The BLST chief's most important support relationship is with the BCT commander. Building rapport with the BCT commander and establishing strong lines of communication will enable the BLST to effectively support the BCT.

Another important support relationship is between the BLST chief and the BSB commander and SPO officer. These relationships will help keep the BLST chief up to date on any class IX (repair parts) requisitions that take over 30 days to arrive to the unit's supply support activity (SSA).

BLST Task Organization

A BLST is organized to meet the needs of its supported unit. (See figure 1 on page 50.)

An ABCT BLST is authorized 10 LARs. However, it usually has four LARs from the TACOM LCMC, one LAR from the Aviation and Missile Command (AMCOM) LCMC, and three LARs from the Communications-

ABCT		IBCT		SBCT		CAB	
BLST CHIEF		BLST CHIEF		BLST CHIEF		BLST CHIEF	
LMS		LMS		LMS		LMS	
TACOM		**TACOM**		**TACOM**		**TACOM**	
LAR	Combat	LAR	Armament	LAR	Armament	LAR	Armament
LAR	Armament	LAR	Tactical	LAR	Tactical		
LAR	Tactical	LAR	Tactical	LAR	Tactical		
LAR	Tactical			LAR	Tactical		
CECOM		**CECOM**		**CECOM**		**CECOM**	
LAR	IT-Radio	LAR	IT-Radio	LAR	IT-Radio	LAR	Avionics
LAR	IT-Switch	LAR	IT-Switch	LAR	IT-Switch		
LAR	Sensor	LAR	Sensor	LAR	Sensor		
		LAR	P&E	LAR	Sensor		
AMCOM		**AMCOM**		**AMCOM**		**AMCOM**	
LAR	Missile			LAR	Ammunition	SSTR	Advisor
				LAR	Missile	LAR	Electronics
				LAR	Supply	LAR	Electronics
				LAR	Supply	LAR	Electronics
						LAR	Electronics
						LAR	Electronics
						LAR	Electronics

Legend:
ABCT = Armored brigade combat team
AMCOM = Aviation and Missile Command
BLST = Brigade logistics support team
CAB = Combat aviation brigade
CECOM = Communications-Electronics Command
IBCT = Infantry brigade combat team
IT = Information technology
LAR = Logistics assistance representative
LMS = Logistics management specialist
P&E = Power generation and environmental control equipment
SBCT = Stryker brigade combat team
SSTR = Senior system technical representative

Figure 1. This table outlines the task organization of the different types of brigade logistics support teams. The organizational structure is based on the needs of the supported unit.

Electronics Command (CECOM) LCMC.

An infantry brigade combat team (IBCT) BLST is authorized seven LARs. Typically an IBCT BLST has three TACOM LARs and four CECOM LARs, including one power generation and environmental control equipment LAR. The IBCT BLST does not have an AMCOM LAR assigned because of its low density of ground missile systems.

A Stryker brigade combat team (SBCT) BLST is authorized 15 LARs but normally is assigned 12.

The 12 LARs provide a variety of technical skills including ammunition, supply, communications, electronics, missile, armament, and automotive support. The increase in LARs for the SBCT BLST is based on the fact that it serves a greater number of maneuver battalions.

A CAB BLST is authorized nine LARs. The CAB BLST usually has one TACOM LAR, one CECOM LAR, and six to eight AMCOM LARs based on the total number and type of aviation battalions that are organic to the CAB it supports.

There is usually one AMCOM LAR for each of the five battalions, two LARs for each Apache battalion, and one senior system technical representative who acts as the CAB's senior technical advisor and mentors all AMCOM LARs within the CAB.

The 026 Report

The 026 report is the Army maintenance report that provides information about deadlined equipment. It is the document most used by the BLST chief and is updated daily by the SPO staff.

The BLST chief must be able to accurately read the BCT's 026 report and to correctly identify not-mission-capable system trends that affect the supported unit's readiness rate.

During the BCT's weekly maintenance meeting, the BLST chief and LMS use the 026 report to track critical parts for combat systems and to determine long estimated ship dates for repair parts that are hard to get. The BLST chief and LMS will identify long lead time parts (LLTPs) for systems and expedite LLTPs through lateral support from units within the brigade, throughout the installation, and throughout Army.

The COP

The common operational picture (COP) is a snapshot of the supported BCT's total combat power. It includes information on combat, combat support, and sustainment readiness percentages, the total number of LLTPs that affect the BCT's systems, fleet readiness issues, and readiness drivers. It also outlines the amount of equipment on hand for critical systems, the authorized to forecast status of the SSA warehouse, LCMC concerns, support activities, and support priorities.

The COP also includes a snapshot of the BCT's annual training calendar with key training events that allow the BLST chief to predict possible LLTPs that will be needed no less than 365 days ahead of time. The COP allows senior leaders across the Army to access equipment readiness data and answer readiness questions effectively.

Training and Deployment

The BLST chief is fully engaged and embedded with his supported unit during all phases of CTC operations. During CTC training, the BLST chief and his team plan, coordinate, and synchronize AMC and LCMC capabilities to effectively and safely sustain and support the unit through all phases of operations.

The BLST chief and the LMS deploy with the unit to the theater of operations. The BLST chief should coordinate with the supported unit at least three months before deployment to determine the best time to arrive in theater. The incoming BLST chief should determine the exact arrival date and coordinate with the outgoing BLST chief and LMS. This process begins with obtaining deployment orders from the local AFSBn S-1.

So who does the BLST chief turn to in time of need? The BLST chief turns to his LMS and LARs for subject matter expertise on critical parts. What is the task organization of a BLST? The task organization of the BLST depends on the type of unit it supports.

When does the BLST chief start building support relationships within his unit? Immediately! The BLST chief needs to build a support relationship with key personnel throughout the brigade and battalion in order to ensure that the importance of expediting critical parts for combat systems is echoed at all levels.

Where can the BLST chief go to find the resources he needs to best support his unit? The BLST chief's primary documents for unit support are the 026 report, the COP, the situation report, and the not mission capable over 60 days report.

Why is a BLST so important to its supported unit? The BLST is the single face to the field for technical, logistics, and acquisition support from the AMC enterprise.

How can the BLST chief ensure his supported unit is successful at CTCs and while deployed? The

> When does the BLST chief start building support relationships within his unit? Immediately! The BLST chief needs to build a support relationship with key personnel throughout the brigade and battalion in order to ensure that the importance of expediting critical parts for combat systems is echoed at all levels.

BLST chief must be able to develop solutions to overcome LLTPs, ensure that critical parts for combat systems are quickly identified and ordered immediately, and work with his LMS and item managers to expedite or redirect critical parts to the supported unit.

Knowing the answers to these questions sets the BLST chief and, in turn, the supported unit up for success.

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