

The Army Needs a Single Ammunition Management System

The Army uses three systems to manage ammunition during stability and reconstruction operations, but the Standard Army Ammunition System–Modernization can do it alone.

■ By Lt. Col. Jeffrey L. Lucowitz

In order to have accurate theater ammunition planning and management during the transition from phase III (combat) operations to phase IV (stability and reconstruction) operations, the Army needs a single management system for both training and operational ammunition.

The use of operational ammunition for mission rehearsal exercises and test firing should be expected and planned for during combat operations. However, this is not the case when it comes to how logistics planners manage and account for munitions during a transition to stability and reconstruction operations in a joint or combined operations environment.

Stability and reconstruction operations come with a new bag of logistics support requirements, including weapons proficiency training, familiarization, and qualification for U.S., coalition, interagency, and host-nation security forces.

To preface this discussion, it is necessary to clarify that using one system would not change the services' Title 10 responsibilities to equip and train with both common and specialized conventional munitions.

The authorities of the joint forces commander, defined by the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, would remain unchanged regarding the delegated responsibilities of the geographic combatant commander to provide common-user logistics for all ground troops within the geographic theater of war. And the Army would

remain the Department of Defense's executive agent for common-user conventional munitions.

Three Ammunition Systems

Ammunition planners currently manage three different ammunition accounting management systems. Using three systems makes it difficult to accurately plan for and manage ammunition for a rapidly evolving battlefield, especially once forces have transitioned from combat operations to stability and reconstruction operations.

The ordnance community uses two management systems to manage munitions belonging to two very different ammunition budgets. These systems are the Standard Army Ammunition System–Modernization (SAAS–MOD) and the Total Ammunition Management Information System–Redesigned (TAMIS–R).

SAAS–MOD is the automated management system used at ammunition supply points to track and report ammunition that is dedicated to the logistics support of commanders. TAMIS–R is used to manage training ammunition for the Army and its sister services.

A third management system accounts for ammunition down to the unit identification code level. This capability was previously accomplished through the Property Book Unit Supply Enhanced, but now it is accomplished through the Global Combat Support System–Army (GCSS–Army).

Units use GCSS–Army to update the on-hand stockage levels of their ammunition basic loads (ABLs) on

their property books and to show expenditures.

Challenges of Three Systems

The challenges theater ammunition managers experience when transitioning from combat operations to stability and reconstruction operations can be divided into three distinct categories.

First, ammunition planners must trust that units continually update their ABLs in GCSS–Army. Second, ammunition planners must account for operational munitions that are stored at supply points throughout all levels on the battlefield through SAAS–MOD, which feeds information into GCSS–Army. That includes ammunition on-hand, used for re-supply, and due-in at the ammunition storage area.

Third, ammunition planners must rely on TAMIS–R to plan for training ammunition requirements, including ammunition for familiarization, qualification, mission rehearsals, and test firing. However, TAMIS–R does not account for ammunition requirements for coalition forces training, interagency training, and host-nation security forces training.

When used properly, these systems are designed to feed real-time status reports to GCSS–Army to provide commanders and logistics managers with a common operational picture (COP) for logistics statuses throughout the theater of operations. However, TAMIS–R and SAAS–MOD do not currently feed the status of on hand or requested training munitions to GCSS–Army.



A Soldier assigned to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, loads training ammunition during a decisive action rotation at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., on April 6, 2018. (Photo by Spc. Daniel Parrott)



Ammunition belts are given to each convoy live-fire escort team during qualification as part of Operation Cold Steel II hosted by the 377th Theater Sustainment Command at Fort Knox, Ky., on March 23, 2018. (Photo by Sgt. Jasmine Spain)

Training Munitions

Training munitions statuses can be tracked only by executing a manual Department of the Army Form 581, Request for Issue and Turn-in of Ammunition, between TAMIS-R and SAAS-MOD for the training munitions being requested and expended. This transaction is even more cumbersome when transitioning to stability and reconstruction operations because of the added requirements of commanders who must conduct regularly scheduled weapons proficiency training, familiarization, and qualification in accordance with Army regulations.

TAMIS-R is not available at the operational and tactical levels, while SAAS-MOD is available at the lowest tactical level of the brigade combat team. However, the advantage of TAMIS-R is that it allows the joint services to request and forecast ammunition. Its drawback is that it does not support commanders and lower level leaders in forecasting or requesting training ammunition for combined task forces or host-nation security forces that must use acquisi-

tion and cross-servicing agreements to request, purchase, and account for training munitions.

For ammunition planners and managers, it is clear that the commodity management tool that provides commanders with the logistics COP for the battlefield and feeds status reports in GCSS-Army is SAAS-MOD.

The Global Command and Control System-Army receives status report feeds from GCSS-Army and transmits status reports directly into the Defense Readiness Reporting System-Army. This fuses Army training, readiness, and equipment data so the commander can track detailed information on unit capabilities in the high-operating-tempo conditions that are inherent in wartime.

Once SAAS-MOD is converted to GCSS-Army, units will be able to report on-hand stockage levels of munitions both on the unit property books and at ammunition storage points.

In a combat environment that is sure to require a joint, combined, interagency effort, the art of mission command and the need for a COP

among theater ammunition managers is greater than ever, especially during prolonged stability and reconstruction operations. When it comes to the management and accountability of training and operational munitions for combined forces, there is truly a need for one ammunition management system. The best system to provide uninterrupted ammunition support throughout the battlefield during stability and reconstruction operations is SAAS-MOD.

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