



A biomedical equipment specialist conducts services on not-mission-capable equipment.

the 170th IBCT BMSO biomedical equipment specialist was a skill level 1 technician right out of advanced individual training. Being skill level 1 and the only biomedical equipment specialist in the brigade gave him a steep learning curve.

Getting the biomedical equipment specialist well-versed on the scope of his job in the BMSO became essential. Fortunately, some training opportunities at USAMMCE with more senior biomedical equipment specialists were available. He began performing services as soon as he arrived in theater. With the assistance of contact repair teams (CRTs) from the MEDLOG company and on his own, he completed all services throughout the brigade in the allotted time.

Keeping up with test, measurement, and diagnostic equipment (TMDE) services and repairs was also important. After completing all medical maintenance services, the TMDE that the biomedical equipment specialist used for services had to be sent to USAMMCE in Germany for its own services and repairs. Staying up to date on these services and managing them ensured no loss in assistance to the units that the BMSO supported.

Fortunately, CRTs could be sent out from the MEDLOG company if any maintenance issues arose while the TMDE was being serviced. Since the BMSO's biomedical equipment specialist was the only one in RC North, it was imperative that he received support from the CRTs.

Many of the initial challenges faced by the 170th IBCT BMSO team when it arrived in Afghanistan were soon resolved. The BMSO updated many processes to create a more streamlined operation. This allowed it to reduce customer wait times and increase customer satisfaction. Many of the initial issues faced were resolved through hard work and diligence. Some issues, like weather and connectivity, continued to pose slight problems.

As the BMSO team began redeployment operations, it shared its knowledge with the incoming BMSO replacements to ensure a smooth transition.

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support operations medical operations section and executed by the biomedical equipment specialist, pharmacy technician, and medical logistics specialist. For the initial customer assistance visit, the BMSO's biomedical equipment specialist received assistance from a more senior biomedical equipment specialist from the MEDLOG company. This was a good mentoring opportunity and set the tone for future visits.

The pharmacy technician and biomedical specialist visited the five FOBs and four combat outposts in RC North. The pharmacy technician checked the pharmacy at each location to ensure that narcotics were being accounted for and documented properly and all pharmaceutical procedures were being followed.

In late May, the BMSO's senior medical logistics specialist provided training and guidance to ensure that medical logistics operations were fully capable at two FOBs that were having DCAM and warehouse management issues. During the following quarter, the medical logistics specialist and pharmacy technician conducted customer assistance visits to ensure that DCAM was running properly and all ordering questions were addressed and to make sure that the pharmacy practices put in place during the previous quarter were being continued. They also checked on each aid station's storage procedures and made suggestions on ways to improve their stocking methods. Customer assistance visits were used to ensure that medical logistics throughout the brigade was at its very best.

Medical Equipment Maintenance

Medical equipment maintenance is a crucial part of medical readiness. Having fully mission capable equipment can be the difference between life and death. Therefore, the importance of keeping up with medical equipment services within the 170th IBCT was paramount. This was made difficult at times by the geographic dispersion of the supported units.

Typically, the biomedical equipment specialist in a BMSO is slotted as a skill level 2 technician. However,

Supply Support Activity Operations in Regional Command North

BY CAPTAIN SEAN M. CHERMER

Working with Afghan locals and using liaison officers allowed a brigade support battalion's distribution company to support all of its customers while maintaining property accountability.

A Company, 24th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB), 170th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, assumed operational control of the Regional Command North (RC North) multiclass supply support activity (SSA) at Camp Deh Dadi II, Afghanistan, in early March 2011. The SSA's primary mission was to receive, process, and issue classes II (clothing and individual equipment), IV (construction and barrier materials), VII (major end items), and IX (repair parts) in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

As RC North's ground support warehouse, the SSA maintained an authorized stockage list (ASL) comprising 5,157 lines with 163 customer units. Using Afghan trucks helped to enhance efficient throughput, which enabled the SSA to maintain the highest level of customer support. Local nationals subsidized the workforce by providing manual and operator labor; this freed Soldiers to perform counterinsurgency duties inside the wire and injected money into the local economy. The use of liaison officers (LNOs) located at the SSA made it possible to streamline the receipt and issue of equipment and supplies to outlying battalions.

Support operations were conducted bilaterally by retrograding excess or unserviceable items through coordinated operations and the routine turn-in of items for onward movement. The mission always came first, allowing commanders to plan and execute their wartime missions with logistics support serving as a combat multiplier, not as a hindrance.

Partnering With the Locals

Supply distribution throughout RC North increasingly relied on Afghan trucks to sustain a continuous logistics



A Soldier of A Company, 24th Brigade Support Battalion, loads class IX (repair parts) onto a load-handling-system trailer for movement to a forward operating base in Afghanistan.

pipeline to the warfighter. The relative stability of northern Afghanistan permitted the SSA to routinely use Afghan trucks to move equipment and supplies across the RC. Most delivery of class II, III, IV, and IX items was made by unescorted Afghan trucks moving 20- or 40-foot containers that were fixed with one-time seals.

The relative stability of RC North allowed emerging standard operating procedures to be executed with a 100-percent success rate. Afghan trucks were given 7 days to travel from their point of origin to their destination. In many cases, the suspenses were met, but the timeliness of a delivery was not guaranteed without an escort. Class VII, mail, sensitive items, priority supplies, and parts traveled with the A Company convoy security platoons on Afghan and military trucks.

SSA capabilities were further enhanced through the