

Global Combat Support System–Army and Sustainment 2020

By Major General Larry D. Wyche

The Army's 2020 sustainment concept incorporates numerous changes and enhancements to our current systems and practices. Perhaps none of the changes are more important than those that will affect the systems that manage inventories, equipment maintenance, supply orders, and unit finances. Our Standard Army Management Information Systems (STAMISs) have served us well in this regard for many years, but the Army of 2020 is poised to move to the next level of logistics support.

After seven years of development, testing, and validation, Global Combat Support System–Army (GCSS–Army) is in fielding. Combining myriad automated sustainment systems into a single web-based system, GCSS–Army is ready to revolutionize the way sustainers support the force and enhance readiness. The system provides improved readiness, accountability, and the ability to be financially audited by integrating key capabilities into one common system.

**GCSS–ARMY ENABLES THE
LOGISTICS COMMUNITY TO
RESTORE BALANCE WHILE
SIMULTANEOUSLY SETTING
CONDITIONS FOR THE FUTURE.**

One Consolidated System

GCSS–Army replaces the suite of current tactical logistics information technology programs and integrates field financial management into one system. This system will affect every supply room, motor pool, maintenance repair shop, warehouse, and property book in the Army, both in operational units and fixed-base operations such as directorate of logistics (DOL) warehouses and maintenance organizations. The capabilities within GCSS–Army provide leaders more accurate information more quickly, allowing commanders to better manage critical resources and make informed decisions ensuring maximum readiness and combat power.

Commanders will have near real-time integrated

information, total asset visibility, and property and financial accountability to enable rapid and effective decisionmaking in a fluid environment. GCSS–Army alters mission command by providing staffs and commanders real-time data on the disposition of supplies and equipment. Staffs are able to accurately project when supplies will

arrive and when vehicles will be fully mission capable. This information allows commanders to react quickly to changes on the battlefield, seize opportunities to exploit weaknesses, and more deliberately plan operations.

GCSS–Army enables logisticians to have a complete operational picture that includes the location, status, and scheduled distribution of equipment and supplies. Having 360-degree visibility helps us prepare for any requirement. It also prepares us to plan future budgets, determine requirements, and shape readiness.

Soldiers will experience benefits in a number of areas. Warehouses will no longer have time-consuming closeouts and will have improved forecasting and reduced customer wait times. Unit supply rooms will have a virtual picture of customer bins at the supply support activity, which promises to reduce risk to Soldiers by limiting movements around the battlefield.

Maintenance sections will benefit from operator records that are in the system permanently and from improved visibility of parts and readiness across all levels. Catalog records will automatically update as changes occur, and inbound deliveries will be visible throughout the supply chain. Finance will benefit from the management of year-end and previous year-end closeouts, while resource managers will im-



mediately be able to track financial transactions and funding related to logistics.

Finally, GCSS–Army operates in concert with the General Fund Enterprise Business System (GFEBS) to create a financial system of record that integrates logistics and finance capability. This integration of logistics and financial systems will finally produce an auditable system of record for commanders to ensure that they are making maximum use of their resources to improve readiness.

GCSS–Army enables the logistics community to restore balance while simultaneously setting conditions for the future. Logisticians have operated in a single stovepipe environment for decades. However, as we experience advancements in technology, partnership opportunities within the Army, and commonality of equipment and services, our ability to share processes and procedures that extend across the battlefield must advance as well.

Fielding

The 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment has been using GCSS–Army to manage its logistics functions since July 2010, and the 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, was fielded the full suite for initial operational test and evaluation in August 2011. Following its certification, Wave 1 fielding of GCSS–Army began in November 2012. The first units to receive the system were the Virginia Army National Guard headquarters, the 85th and 87th Army Reserve Support Commands; customers of the 335th Theater Signal Command; and the supply support activity at the Fort Lee, Va., Directorate of Logistics.

Wave 1 began in the first quarter of fiscal year 2013 and will extend through the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2014. This includes replacing all levels of the Standard Army Retail Supply System (SARSS) and logistics finance, including the funds control module.

Wave 2 starts in fiscal year 2015 and runs through the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2017. This segment will include the replacement of all levels of the Standard Army Maintenance System–Enhanced and Property Book Unit Supply Enhanced.

Training

The Army introduced institutional training for GCSS–Army in the first quarter of fiscal year 2013 to Warrant Officer Basic Course students who completed an online training prerequisite before reporting to school. GCSS–Army training for the first quarter of fiscal year 2013 also began for automated logistical specialists operating warehouses. SARSS and SAMS–E will be removed from the plan of instruction course map beginning no later than the third quarter of fiscal year 2014 and completely replaced with GCSS–Army training.

Additionally, since the Systems, Applications, Products in Data Processing (SAP) enterprise application is the foundation of GCSS–Army, the Combined Arms Support Command is working now to build a base of SAP-certified professionals. The Army Logistics University is partnering with Virginia State University to offer SAP certification at Fort Lee. The first students will graduate in third quarter of fiscal year 2013.

**GCSS–ARMY WILL ALLOW
COMMANDERS TO MASS MORE
COMBAT POWER IN THE RIGHT
PLACES ON THE BATTLEFIELD
AT THE RIGHT TIME. IT
DOES THIS BY INCREASING
COMMANDER’S KNOWLEDGE
AND ALLOWING HIM TO MAKE
BETTER DECISIONS, FASTER.**

By implementing GCSS–Army training early in initial-entry training and professional military education and by providing a mechanism for SAP certification, we are ensuring units will have a knowledge base before receiving GCSS–Army.

The Army is fielding its future field-level logistics system now. GCSS–Army will subsume the legacy STAMISs into one system that will be accessible through the Internet. This web-based system has improved equipment management throughout the life cycle, visibility of the supply pipeline, reporting for planning, execution and readiness, and near real-time data. GCSS–Army will allow commanders to mass more combat power in the right places on the battlefield at the right time. It does this by increasing commanders’ knowledge and allowing him to make better decisions, faster.

Major General Larry D. Wyche is the commanding general of the Combined Arms Support Command and Sustainment Center of Excellence at Fort Lee, Virginia.

Editor’s Note: In the next “Focus,” Maj. Gen. Wyche discusses skills-based training and credentialing initiatives—a series of programs designed to ensure Soldiers have the best, most current training in their specialties that better prepares them to serve the Army now and sets them up for continued success after their service is complete.