



A Stryker is loaded onto a Malaysian lowboy at the Port of Kuantan, Malaysia, on Sept. 5, 2014. (Photo by 1st Lt. Taylor Whitten)

Logistics for Pacific Pathways: Malaysia

■ By 1st Lt. Michael McMillan and Chief Warrant Officer 3 Brian W. Tuttle

As part of the efforts to rebalance U.S. forces in the Pacific region, the Army conducted an exercise in Asia called Pacific Pathways. During Pacific Pathways, the Army joined with multinational partners to conduct three exercises, each in a different country: Malaysia, Japan, and Indonesia.

The 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment (1-17 Infantry Battalion), and the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, participated in Keris Strike, which was the Pacific Pathways mission to Malaysia. When Keris Strike was over, the units moved to Japan to conduct the next portion of the exercise. The 1-17 Infantry Battalion conducted a combined training exercise September 13 to 26, 2014, with the Malaysian Army's 5th Royal Ranger Regiment

during its annual Keris Strike exercise. Task Force Buffalo-Headhunter, comprising the two units, operated in a combined environment with the 3rd General Support Aviation Battalion, the 25th Aviation Regiment, the 585th Engineer Company, the 81st Brigade Special Troops Battalion, the 2nd Brigade Support Battalion, an Air Force staff weather office, and pararescue jumpers.

The complexity of fulfilling the logistics and basic life support needs for the combined task force in a foreign country proved to be an immense challenge for the 1-17 Infantry Battalion's S-4.

Preparing and Moving Equipment

Preparation for the Pacific Pathways mission began during a successful rotation at the National Training

Center at Fort Irwin, California. Establishing a unit deployment list (UDL) for mission-essential equipment early on was key to determining the order in which pieces of equipment would be repaired during the National Training Center redeployment phase. The unit movement officer (UMO) played an integral role in compiling the UDL. A UMO must be detail-oriented and willing to dedicate the time to prepare the UDL properly.

Transportation Coordinators' Automated Information for Movements System II operators also need to be detail oriented, computer literate, and willing to take the time needed to input information correctly. It is important to understand that the UDL is fluid and not complete until all equipment is on board the

ship. For example, an M1120 heavy expanded-mobility tactical truck (HEMTT) load handling system that carried a forward repair system was damaged at the port and thus removed from the UDL just before embarkation.

Another critical piece of the preparation process was to build a shop stock with sufficient parts to allow the task force to maintain the equipment so that training would not be disrupted. The maintenance technicians planned for a shop stock with 120 days' worth of parts. Requests for nonrecurring parts were sent to the 7th Infantry Division G-4 for funding approval.

The parts list was based on the amount of equipment, types of training exercises, and the length of the Pacific Pathways mission. For example, one of the training focuses was conducting live-fire exercises, so emphasis was put on remote weapon system parts.

Once approved, the requisitions went through the Standard Army Maintenance System or Standard Army Retail Supply System in order to fill the shop stock to carry forward. The unit did not take its demand-supported shop stock from home station because most of the unit's equipment was being left behind and would need regular maintenance.

To manage its standard pricing and credit, the battalion used a nonrecurring demand code for ordering. This indicated that the items would not be turned in within 60 days. The unit temporarily borrowed high-dollar items, such as Stryker full up power packs, from the home station supply support activity (SSA) to carry forward.

The SSA issued the items only if notified of their use. This ensured the unit received full credit upon turn in of unused items.

The long lead time for requisitioned parts made the on-hand shop stock important. Without prior planning, the unit would not have been able to maintain its equipment during Keris Strike.

Another challenge during the pre-deployment process was the limited amount of hands-on time available with the equipment. Having a strong maintenance team that understood the condensed timeline was essential. The team's ability to identify faults, order parts, and fix problems resulted in a 100-percent operational rate for all equipment going on the Pacific Pathways mission.

Receiving Equipment in Malaysia

The first and most important action the 1-17 Infantry Battalion took before receiving equipment at Kem Desa Pahlawan (KDP), Malaysia, was establishing a working relationship with the Malaysian logisticians. This relationship enabled the battalion to achieve its goals in a manner that would not have been possible otherwise. The Malaysian S-1 and S-4 offered the unit an invaluable command presence and outstanding logistics support that lasted throughout Keris Strike.

Receiving equipment from the Port of Kuantan required external support and took three days. Contracted civilian lowboys and flatbed trucks transported the equipment to KDP. To assist with the download, a 20-ton crane and a 10,000-pound forklift were also contracted. The crane was a critical piece of equipment; it was used to download 90 percent of the vehicles, rolling stock, and containers.

One significant issue was dead batteries on light medium tactical vehicles (LMTVs). Having easy access to a set of NATO slave cables allowed the battalion to jump-start the LMTVs and drive them to the motor pool. With the containers arrayed, vehicles parked, and the combat repair team's equipment emplaced, the motor pool and maintenance bay were fully established.

Sensitive item containers required special treatment and processes. When bringing weapons into Malaysia, the battalion had to consider the implications with the customs officials and Malaysian Police Force. The officials

and police had to inventory and verify the serial numbers of weapons entering their country. Having the Department of Defense (DD) Form 1750, Packing List, readily available to present to the officials sped up the inventory process.

Food and Water

The battalion was not authorized to ship a containerized kitchen to Malaysia. All food and water were contracted. Breakfast and dinner were catered, and bottled water was the only authorized water source. Two 20-foot refrigerated containers were contracted for ice and cold water storage.

During the exercise, 96 pallets of water (1,200 bottles per pallet) were delivered to KDP. During the mission, 41 pallets of water were consumed by 368 service members. It is worth considering reducing the amount of water based on the number of service members and the duration of the exercise.

The potential is great for cutting costs for future operations in Malaysia. A cost analysis should be conducted comparing the cost of providing catered food to that of using a containerized kitchen and having Soldiers prepare the food.

Fuel

Three M978 HEMTT tankers were located at KDP during Keris Strike. The 1-17 Infantry Battalion had one M978 that it used for ground fuel operations. The 3rd General Support Aviation Battalion, 25th Aviation Regiment, had two M978s that were used for aviation refueling.

The ground fuel was provided by a contractor who could provide fuel after a 24-hour notice. This short turnaround time allowed the aviation and ground units to effectively manage their bulk fuel levels in the M978 trucks. This, in turn, was beneficial when preparing the trucks for movement to Japan because the tankers had to have 150 gallons of fuel or less. Receiving only what was needed to complete the combined exercise prevented



additional fuel costs to the Army.

Repair Parts

Ordering and receiving parts was a time-consuming process. After a fault and replacement parts were identified, the mechanic would fill out a high priority walk-through request, which was emailed to the 7th Infantry Division G-4, who coordinated the issue of parts from the SSA on Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. The parts were consolidated at the logistics readiness center, which packaged them and obtained a shipping estimate from FedEx.

After the shipping cost was approved, FedEx picked up the parts from the logistics readiness center. If there was time to receive the parts, they were sent to Malaysia, but if the cut-off day had been reached, the parts were sent to Japan. Historically, from the time the fault and parts were identified, it took 10 to 12 days to receive the parts.

This process was used because the battalion's very small aperture ter-

restrial (VSAT) was damaged and not mission capable. A comparison of the two processes (VSAT versus email) indicated that the amount of time to receive the part would be the same for both processes. All requested parts should be given high priority, and transportation accounting codes should be ready for shipping the parts through the logistics readiness center.

Ammunition

Customs regulations affected ammunition shipments. Ammunition was stored in the Malaysian ammunition holding area with 24-hour guards. The relationships the U.S. Soldiers built with the guards made it easy for them to get into the ammunition holding area daily.

The ammunition remaining at the end of the exercise was stored on the ship when it docked in Japan. Any unused ammunition with a hazard classification higher than 1.4 had to be expended before the 1-17 Infantry Battalion left Malaysia. Japanese law prohibited the ship from docking if it

contained ammunition with a hazard classification above 1.4, which poses a mass explosion hazard.

When planning for ammunition for an exercise, planners should consider the locations of follow-on missions. This is important when requesting certain types of ammunition, which can greatly affect operational costs.

Movement Plan

Setting the right conditions for movement from Malaysia to Japan required coordination among all units. The first step in the process was backward planning to establish a timeline.

The second was disseminating all movement requirements to the units participating in Keris Strike, to include the following:

- Submit all DD Form 1750s to the UMO.
- Pressure wash containers and vehicles.
- Conduct sensitive item and ammunition inspections.



Local contractors load shipping containers onto a flatbed in the motor pool at Kem Desa Pahlawan, Malaysia, on Sept. 26, 2014. (Photo by 1st Lt. Vincent Reil)

- Repack equipment.
- Ensure fuel levels are at a quarter of a tank or less.
- Seal the containers with one-time bolt seals.

In-progress reviews and commander's update briefs were used to disseminate the information. These meetings were essential to a timely movement from Malaysia; they brought representatives from all units together, ensuring the timeline and requirements were understood and answering any request for information.

The movement was accomplished in two days and required the right external equipment. Because of their size, LMTVs, M978 HEMTT tankers, and 10,000-pound all-terrain lifter Army system (ATLAS) forklifts were loaded onto contracted lowboys. Containers, humvees, and rolling stock were loaded onto contracted flatbed trucks.

A local 15-ton crane and 5,000-pound forklift were contracted to load the equipment. Unfortunately, the 5,000-pound forklift

was ineffective, so the unit relied on the 10,000-pound ATLAS, which proved to be an essential piece of equipment. The 15-ton crane could not lift the 37,000-pound forward repair system, so a 20-ton crane was used the following day.

Units preparing for this type of exercise should conduct precombat checks and inspections of any contracted equipment to understand the equipment's capabilities. To avoid the issues with the 15-ton crane and 5,000-pound forklift, units should identify any shortfalls early and immediately contact the contracting officer to have the equipment replaced. Otherwise, the unit will risk not meeting strict timelines that could delay the vessels' movement and, in the end, cost the Army additional fees.

The complexity of fulfilling the logistics and basic life support needs for the combined task force in a foreign country proved to be an immense challenge for the 1-17 Infantry Battalion S-4. The lessons learned during

this expeditionary effort are valuable. Each unit, including the Malaysian Army, had its own complex logistics problems to identify and solve. Some issues could be discovered only while conducting the combined training exercise. No problem was too great once all units came together to discuss the issue, develop a course of action, and execute the plan.

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