

Deploying the Global Combat Support System–Army to the JRTC

■ By Chief Warrant Officer 3 Lasandra A. Talleyrand

In April 2014, the 1st and 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Teams (IBCTs), 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), began using the Global Combat Support System–Army (GCSS–Army) and, less than 90 days later, deployed their supply support activities (SSAs) to the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) at Fort Polk, Louisiana. The units also conducted a relief-in-place, transferring pre-positioned equipment from the 3rd IBCT directly to the 1st IBCT.

GCSS–Army stakeholders, whether deployed forward to JRTC or remaining with the rear detachment at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, were the main line of effort in ensuring that each business area performed its daily GCSS–Army tasks in a timely manner. This article provides observations and lessons learned from the deployment that may benefit units deploying GCSS–Army to JRTC in the near future.

Deployment Preparation

Units must discuss and assign GCSS–Army tasks that have to be performed before and after a deployment to a combat training center. A time line should be established to ensure personnel complete each task on time.

One lesson learned is that units should use the Combined Arms Support Command (CASCOM) GCSS–Army Combat Training Center Handbook as a planning guide. It can be found at <http://www.gcss.army.mil> under “GCSS–Army Updates.” The document describes in detail, critical pre- and post-deployment GCSS–Army tasks that significantly contribute to a successful rotation.

The 101st Airborne Division G–4 published those tasks in a JRTC operations order for units to execute. The sequence of events is based on a time line, and units should start executing tasks no later than 120 days before the start of the rotation.

DODAAC Management

Units should decide early on whether they are going to use training Department of Defense activity address codes (DODAACs) or home station DODAACs during the rotation. The DODAACs are loaded in the Standard Army Maintenance System–Enhanced (SAMS–E) to manage and order repair parts for pre-positioned equipment drawn at JRTC.

The lesson learned is that units should request training DODAACs no later than 120 days before the start of the rotation. Failing to request DODAACs on time can result in the Logistics Support Activity or GCSS–Army activating them after the start of the rotation.

The 1st and 3rd IBCTs deployed using their home station DODAACs. Each battalion used a clean, existing direct support DODAAC to manage pre-positioned equipment. Using home station DODAACs required minimal parameter changes (such as Internet protocol addresses or training fund codes) within SAMS–E during the standard Army management information system (STAMIS) gunnery.

STAMIS Gunnery

Units questioned the value added of conducting a STAMIS gunnery when deploying GCSS–Army to JRTC because it seemed time-consuming. A STAMIS gunnery is

necessary to identify issues within the entire STAMIS architecture. All systems and processes are tested and validated before deploying to the area of operations.

The lesson learned is that the gunnery confirms the connectivity of the Very Small Aperture Terminal, Combat Service Support Automated Information System Interface, SAMS–E, and GCSS–Army and validates the funding of each DODAAC. During the gunnery, the battalions verified that each SAMS–E operator set up the correct DODAAC or fund code relationship.

Units changed their home station fund codes to the JRTC fund code provided to them by the G–8. The Logistics Modernization Program search matrix for wholesale support was changed from Fort Campbell’s logistics readiness center (LRC) to Fort Polk’s LRC for zero-balanced and nonstocked authorized stockage list (ASL) items.

The GCSS–Army routing identifier code “ZRIC” is used to establish a retrograde destination by individual piece of materiel, materiel class, and batch or condition code range. The ZRIC table was changed to Fort Polk to accommodate unit turn-ins after the rotation. Once all parameter changes were made, the unit conducted a “washer test” to validate the ordering process before deploying to its area of responsibility.

ZPARK and Materiel Management

GCSS–Army requires each business area to perform daily tasks that are critical to successful maintenance operations. Purchase orders are held in ZPARK, where they await funding approval by the supporting re-

source manager.

Once approved, the purchase orders are forwarded to the release strategy, which is a workflow inbox that allows the unit to verify the validity of a purchase order and make a decision to pass or cancel the order. These two processes must be done quickly when deployed to a combat training center.

Requisitions remaining in ZPARK and the release strategy longer than 24 hours can essentially halt maintenance operations. All business areas must work together to ensure that purchase orders and requisitions are released in a timely, efficient manner.

The lesson learned is that sustainment brigade level 1 materiel managers, resource managers, and deployed execution managers must synchronize their battle rhythms to ensure purchase orders are passed within 12 to 24 hours, seven days a week.

The 1st and 3rd IBCTs requested overtime for the JRTC SSA contractors to pull materiel release orders and conduct walk-throughs on the weekend for zero-balanced, non-stocked ASL items. A resource manager from the division G-8 shop was co-located with the JRTC G-8 to process walk-throughs.

The resource manager preloaded the obligation amount into GCSS-Army before the unit conducted the walk-through transaction. This process was put in place to avoid receiving unmatched disbursements and transactions or encountering any other significant financial issues.

Best Practices

The following best practices can be used during the planning, deployment, and sustainment phases when deploying GCSS-Army to JRTC:

- Request and use CASCOM's GCSS-Army Combat Training Center Handbook.
- Publish an operations or fragmentary order to identify essential tasks.
- Request training DODAACs no later than 120 days before the start



Soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) prepare to deploy GCSS-Army from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, to the Joint Readiness Training Center. (Photo by Capt. Earl E. Wilson)

of the rotation.

- Perform an early scrub of each home station DODAAC to identify issues that could interrupt procurement operations (for example, an inactive status).
- Deploy sustainment automation support management office personnel, field service representatives, accountable officers, maintenance technicians, and SAMS-E and GCSS-Army operators with pertinent equipment, to include the ASL, as the torch party to conduct the STAMIS gunnery.
- Conduct a washer test to validate the funding for each DODAAC. This test also validates each step within the ordering process.
- Conduct a 100-percent ASL inventory no later than 30 days before redeployment for accountability purposes.
- Ensure command emphasis and involvement.

The overall success of the 1st and 3rd IBCT's JRTC rotations can be attributed to the key leaders' command emphasis on GCSS-Army. The system fostered a "train as you fight" environment, giving the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) the ability to operate independently without having to depend on any external supply organization to accomplish the mission.

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