



Elements of the 353rd Transportation Company, 103rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command, pass by the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah on a U.S. highway during the company's convoy from Buffalo, Minnesota, to Camp Roberts, California. (Photo by Sgt. Victor Ayala)

How the Department of Transportation Supports the DOD

The Department of Transportation is a critical enabler of civilian transportation for the Department of Defense during peacetime and contingency operations.

■ By Maj. Harry Mars IV

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) is a diverse organization that creates the regulations that ensure our nation's transportation networks are safe and efficient and support the movement of commerce. In addition to its core domestic mission of safety, the DOT is capable of supporting the Department of Defense (DOD)

across maritime, air, and land domains during contingency and war operations.

Understanding and leveraging the DOT's capabilities in support of our nation's defense is consistent with the whole-of-government approach outlined in the 2015 National Security Strategy. This approach stresses the need for our nation's collective

interagency and intergovernmental organizations to leverage each other's capabilities to solve complex national problems.

This article specifically examines the DOT's background and structure, support to the DOD during contingency operations, and its special military-to-civilian transition programs. Overall, the DOT is a

tremendous enabler in supporting our nation's defense and national interests.

DOT Background and Structure

The DOT was established in 1966 to synchronize and regulate all aspects of our nation's transportation system. Private sector companies and organizations own most of the physical transportation assets in the United States; however, the DOT creates the safety regulations that govern the nation's transportation networks.

The DOT executes its safety and regulation missions through the following nine operating administrations:

- The Maritime Administration.
- The Federal Transit Administration.
- The Federal Aviation Administration.
- The Federal Highway Administration.

- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
- The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.
- The Federal Railroad Administration.
- The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.
- The St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation.

Each operating administration focuses on a unique aspect of transportation and routinely interacts with its counterparts in the state, local, tribal, territorial, and private sectors to solve specific issues. For instance, the Federal Railroad Administration partners with private-sector freight rail companies, such as Norfolk Southern Corp. and Union Pacific Corp., to ascertain the best safety practices for transporting hazardous materials across state lines.

Likewise, the Federal Aviation Administration partners with private aviation companies, such as Boeing Co. and Lockheed Martin Corp., to determine best safety practices for manufacturing commercial aircraft. Each operating administration works with its relevant counterparts to ensure safe, efficient vehicular use and movement on the nation's transportation networks.

DOT Support of the DOD

The DOT supports the DOD during times of war and contingencies through three primary means: the Maritime Security Program (MSP), the Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF), and the Strategic Rail Corridor Network (STRACNET). Collectively these programs ensure the DOD has adequate sea-lift, airlift, and domestic land transit capacity during contingency

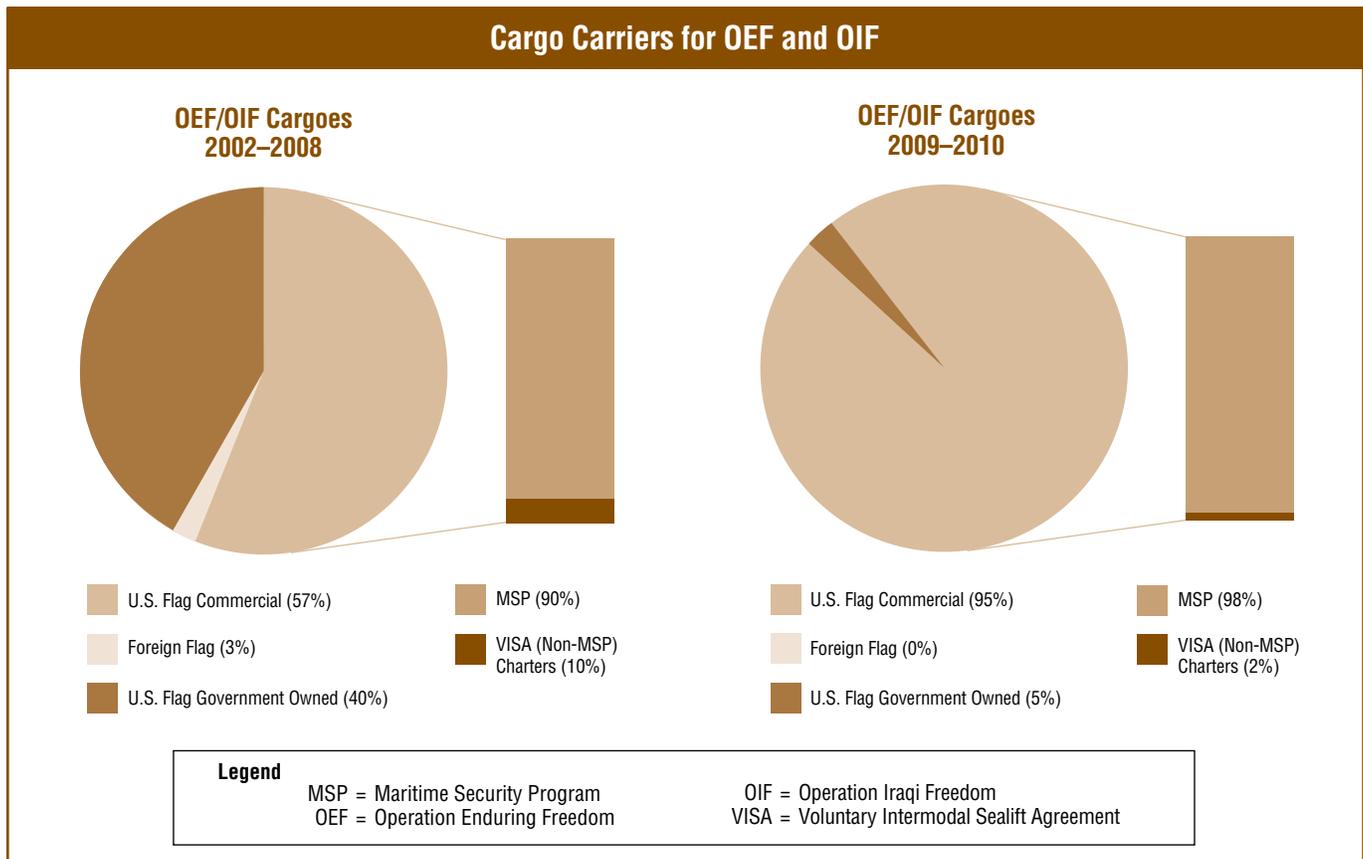


Figure 1. These charts show the amount of cargo transported before and after 2008 by carriers, including U.S. flag commercial carriers, in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

A Soldier from the Florida National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 116th Field Artillery Regiment, guides an M270 multiple launch rocket system onto a railroad car in Avon Park, Florida, in preparation to transport the system to Fort Stewart, Georgia, for annual training. (Photo by Sgt. Blair Heusdens)



operations.

MSP. The MSP falls under the Strategic Sealift Office of the Maritime Administration, the DOT's maritime arm. This vital program ensures that our nation has access to U.S. flag strategic sealift assets in support of national security and civil emergencies (such as natural disasters). This program also ensures that our military has and maintains a ready reserve force of 46 sealift vessels for use during war and domestic emergencies.

This is a tremendously important capability, especially as our forces outside the continental United States draw down. These Ready Reserve assets allow our military to project power and sustain it anywhere in the world. Figure 1 shows the percentage of MSP sealift used in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom between 2002 and 2010. This data underscores the importance of maintaining and operating the strategic sealift capability.

CRAF. The DOT's Office of Intelligence, Security, and Emergency Response and the Federal Aviation Administration co-manage the CRAF program with the U.S. Transportation Command's Air Mobility Command. The CRAF program was created in 1952 through the Defense Production Act of 1950 and contractually obligates U.S. flag airlines to provide aircraft to the military during times of emergency.

The CRAF program consists of 31 commercial airline carriers that can provide up to 1,025 aircraft to the DOD to support airlift during war. CRAF greatly assists the DOD with sustaining the vital air lines of communication, or "air bridge," within a theater of operations.

Higher echelon military staffs should consider this asset when conducting mission analysis and while developing a course of action for a given theater or crisis. To date, this program has been activated twice since its inception—during

Operation Desert Shield and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

STRACNET. The DOT supports the DOD's railroad needs for national defense through the STRACNET program. STRACNET enables the DOD to access more than 32,000 miles of rail lines to move essential military equipment to ports located around the country and to connect military facilities. The DOT's Federal Railroad Administration works closely with industry partners to deconflict rail routes as required to support DOD requirements.

Collectively, the MSP, CRAF, and STRACNET enable our military forces to mobilize quickly and efficiently to defend our nation during emergencies.

DOT Transition Programs

The DOT also manages and supports transition programs for veterans departing military service. DOT operates a Veterans Transportation Career Center that works closely with the DOD, the Department of Labor, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Small Business Administration.

The center specifically assists transitioning veterans with job placement into various public and private-sector jobs, ensuring that they have the right credentials. Examples of such credentials include commercial driver's licenses, train conductor certifications, and commercial vessel licenses. The center supports programs such as Troops to Truckers, Military to Mariners, the Association of American Railroads, and the White House Joining Forces initiative.

The DOT's veteran hiring and training programs are worthy tools for transitioning veterans. The DOT values the high work ethic, discipline, and experience veterans bring to the table. The DOD uses the DOT to help transitioning veterans obtain good jobs, and the DOT and its industry partners gain a steady stream of high-caliber

Three Civil Reserve Air Fleet Mission Areas

- 1. International Section:** 946 aircraft
 - a. Long Range—394 passenger and cargo aircraft capable of transoceanic operations (wide-body and extended range aircraft) augment the Air Mobility Command's long-range intertheater C-5s and C-17s
 - b. Short Range—552 medium-sized passenger aircraft that support near offshore airlift requirements
- 2. National Section:** 40 aircraft to satisfy increased Department of Defense airlift requirements in the United States during an emergency
- 3. Aeromedical Section:** 39 aircraft to assist with the evacuation of casualties from operational theaters to hospitals in the continental United States

Three Civil Reserve Air Fleet Activation Levels

- 1. Stage I:** Minor regional crises—provides an expansion of committed airlift
- 2. Stage II:** Major theater war—addresses an airlift emergency with a major shortfall of military airlift capability
- 3. Stage III:** Periods of national emergency

applicants from the DOD.

The DOT is a diverse organization that ensures our nation's transportation networks operate in a safe and efficient manner. The DOT supports the DOD during national crises and times of war. Military planners should fully understand the DOT's capabilities to ensure a rapid response and prevent duplication of effort. The MSP, CRAF, and STRACNET programs are valuable assets that enable our military forces to surge capability when needed anywhere in the world.

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