



The 51st Transportation Company stages a convoy in the unit motor pool in preparation to move from Germany to Poland. (Photo by 2nd Lt. Mark Schneider)

Moving Across Europe for Operation Atlantic Resolve

Logisticians must work through the unique challenges of multinational transportation when supporting Atlantic Resolve.

■ By Capt. Alex Brubaker and Sgt. 1st Class Lucas W. Pedigo

Imagine a transportation company operating out of Fort Riley, Kansas, that is required to deliver fuel to New York City, ammunition to Atlanta, and repair parts to California simultaneously. Now imagine that each state communicates in a different language, operates under its own set of rules and

regulations, has its own administrative requirements, and even has its own currency.

U.S. Army Europe's (USAREUR's) Operation Atlantic Resolve is a demonstration of the continued commitment of the United States to the collective security of NATO. It consists of

multinational training exercises and security cooperation activities conducted by maneuver elements throughout Eastern European countries, including Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria. It also includes operations in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Ukraine.

Coordinating Movements

In September 2014, the 51st Transportation Company (Light Composite) received numerous distribution missions to set the theater and support Atlantic Resolve. The unit discovered new rules, restrictions, and requirements that challenged its execution of timely distribution.

Anticipatory and response-based logistics are imperative now as USAREUR increases its operational reach. Maneuver units require light-, medium-, and heavy-lift capabilities, vehicle recovery, fuel, repair parts, and ammunition. This sustainment enables maneuver units to train with allied forces.

Logisticians must understand the challenges associated with multinational transportation on the European continent. During the first several months supporting Atlantic Resolve, the 51st Transportation Company identified six unique challenges of transportation distribution:

- Diplomatic clearances.
- Hazardous materials (HAZMAT).
- Host-nation escorts.
- Secured staging areas.
- March credits and movement bids.
- Oversized and outsized movement requirements (paragraph 29 waivers).

Diplomatic Clearances

A diplomatic clearance is a detailed document that lists the convoy commander's contact information, standard name lines of all personnel, weapons and ammunition, cargo descriptions, vehicle data, origin, destination, border crossings, and purpose for movement.

This clearance is perhaps the single most important document for conducting distribution operations throughout the Atlantic Resolve area of operations. It is required from each sovereign nation to gain approval for the movement of U.S. Soldiers and equipment through its country.

U.S. forces cannot enter a country without this approval. Each sovereign nation that is being crossed has

a specific approval time line, particular requirements, and its own form; unfortunately, no standardization agreement for this requirement exists among the 28 NATO nations.

The submission time line is based on the most restrictive nation that is on the route. For example, the Czech Republic requires the clearance to be submitted 30 days prior to move-

Units that consider the six distribution challenges in this article during their planning processes will be better prepared to provide anticipatory logistics in support of Atlantic Resolve.

ment, but Estonia's requirement is only 15 days. When U.S. forces travel to Estonia from Germany, they are required to submit the clearance documents 30 days prior because they cross through the Czech Republic.

The nations receive the diplomatic clearance documents from the local branch movement control team (BMCT). The unit designated to move the equipment is responsible for filling out the forms and sending them back to the BMCT. The BMCT then forwards the diplomatic clearance forms to the 39th Transportation Battalion (Movement Control) and on to the 21st Theater Sustainment Command, which processes these documents through the diplomatic channels of the countries that U.S. Soldiers are traversing.

Units must follow up on a regular basis to ensure clearances are approved. Moving into these countries without approval strains relationships with allies and affects the approval process for future clearances. Failure to follow diplomatic clearances has resulted in borders being closed to U.S. military movements.

HAZMAT Movements

The two most common types of HAZMAT that are moved in Atlantic Resolve are ammunition and fuel.

HAZMAT moves are particularly complex to execute in Europe and require two specific certifications.

First, military vehicles must be certified by an agent who verifies their ability to travel with HAZMAT cargo across European roads. Second, the driver and truck commander must complete the weeklong Hazardous Materials Drivers Training

Course. The drivers must be aware of what they are transporting, how to safely transport the materials, how to protect civilians on the roads, and how to protect themselves from HAZMAT exposure.

In Europe, military vehicles transporting certain HAZMAT must carry a special certification. Beginning in 2006, all U.S. military vehicles transporting ammunition were required to comply with a 1957 United Nations treaty called the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road, also known as ADR.

The United States has no ADR certification capability, and only two military locations in Germany can perform modifications to make vehicles ADR compliant: Maintenance Activity Vilseck and Maintenance Activity Kaiserslautern. Some common modifications that vehicles require include placard frames for HAZMAT identification signs, new fire extinguishers, warning stickers, electrical rewiring, and pressure tests for fuel tankers.

The equipment must be recertified annually through a small inspection, and a larger, comprehensive inspection must occur every three years. It can take two to six months to certify a new piece of equipment, depending



upon the vehicle type.

Units must follow all ADR certification steps or they put their organizations at significant risk of fines and endanger the public. Failure to comply with ADR requirements may even result in imprisonment.

USAREUR is diligently working to have its European Activity Set ADR certified to enable internal distribution operations for rotational units, but that process is not complete. Continental U.S. units deploying into theater must rely completely on USAREUR assets for HAZMAT transportation.

Host-Nation Escorts

Host-nation escorts are often required for movements of sensitive items, HAZMAT, military equipment, ammunition, and oversized and oversized vehicles. These special con-

siderations should be listed on the diplomatic clearance along with the request for host-nation escorts. The host nation will indicate if escorts are required and, if so, provide meetup times.

Escorts ensure that convoy operations run smoothly. When in doubt, always ask for escorts. They have the capability to block roads for the convoy, assist if there is an accident, and prevent wrong turns.

The host-nation escorts in Germany are civilian, but other countries tend to use military police. Typically, the trucks meet the escort at a border at a specific time. If the unit is early, it is required to wait for the escort to arrive unless the clearance document says otherwise. If the unit is running late, it must contact the escort.

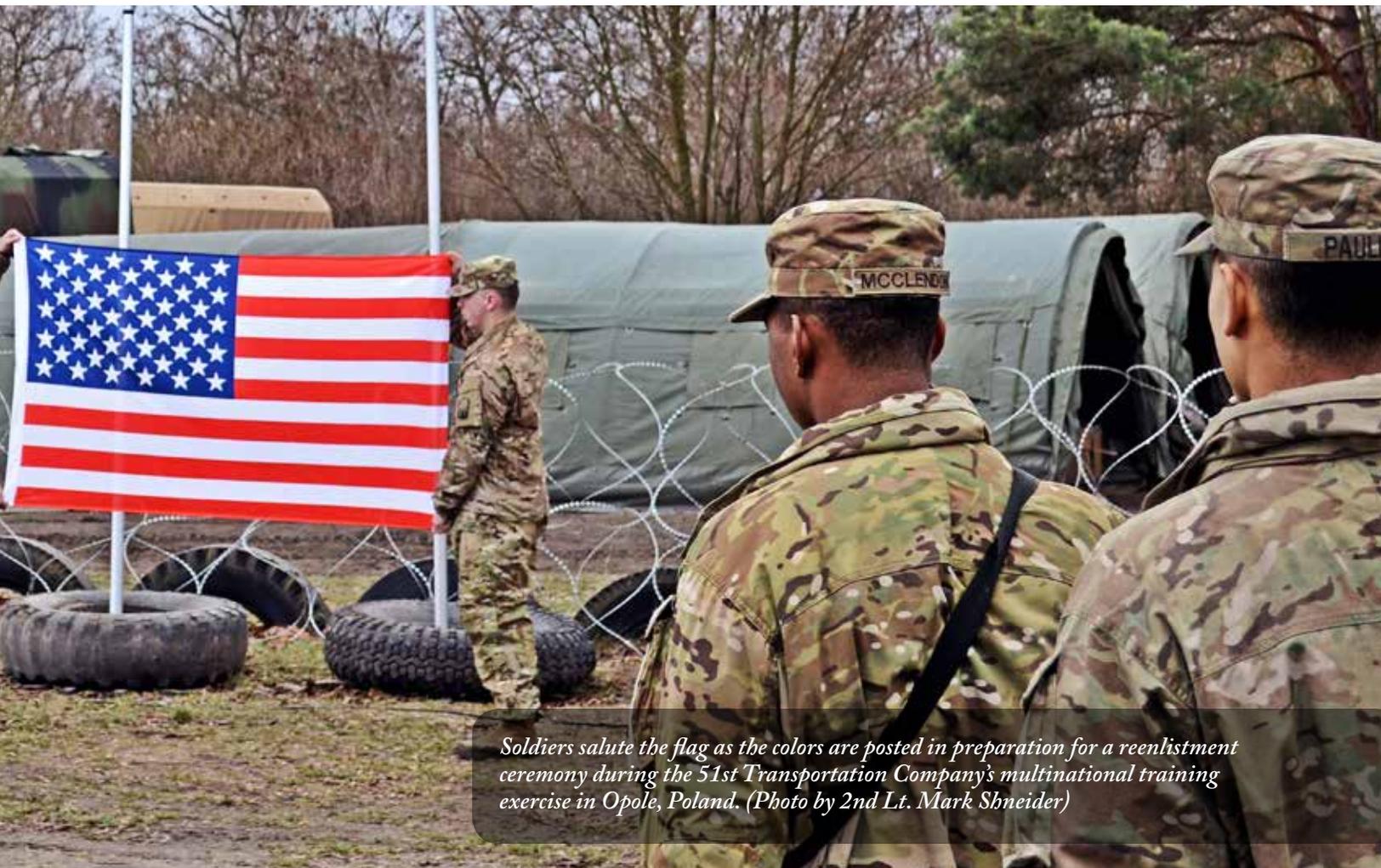
Most escorts will typically wait only 15 to 30 minutes; after which,

they will inform their chain of command that the convoy did not show and they will leave. Missing established escort meetup times is detrimental to the U.S. relationship with allies, so it is vital to adhere to the time line and keep the escorts informed.

Escorts will both lead and trail the convoy. Most operate in two- or three-hour intervals, switching to a new team at a certain number of miles or at a new border.

Secured Staging Areas

Secured staging areas, more commonly referred to as “safe havens,” are host-nation military bases that are open to U.S. troops for parking and, if available, billeting. To request secured staging, a unit must annotate it on the diplomatic clearance. The staging areas are coordi-



Soldiers salute the flag as the colors are posted in preparation for a reenlistment ceremony during the 51st Transportation Company's multinational training exercise in Opole, Poland. (Photo by 2nd Lt. Mark Shneider)

nated by the unit operations section through the 21st Theater Sustainment Command.

Secured staging areas enable Soldiers to safely leave their vehicles and equipment overnight and not worry about their cargo while they stay in barracks or a nearby hotel. Specific considerations must be taken when transporting HAZMAT; many of the currently approved safe havens will not accept large quantities of explosives.

More than 20 safe havens are currently used throughout the Atlantic Resolve countries, and additional sites are available upon request to the host nation. Almost all military bases within the eight countries can be used with enough prior coordination. This is important for convoy planning to ensure Soldiers get enough rest per day.

March Credits and Movement Bids

March credits (in Germany and Italy) or movement bids (in Atlantic Resolve countries) are documents that allow one or more vehicles to move over a controlled route in a fixed time according to movement instructions. The documents specify the departure time, speed, route, and distances between turns.

March credits are required for four types of movements: convoys, oversized vehicles, emergency requests, and HAZMAT cargo. To request movements throughout Europe, units must contact the 39th Transportation Battalion or its BMCTs. The typical turnaround time is less than a week for normal requests and up to 45 days for large vehicles like heavy equipment transporters.

What constitutes a convoy differs from country to country, but all con-

sider a convoy to be at least five vehicles. All vehicles must be marked with the march credit numbers and have rotating amber warning lights, "convoy follows" and "convoy ahead" signs, and flags indicating lead, trail, and convoy commander vehicles.

Emergency requests must still be approved by the host nation. They typically involve crews responding to truck breakdowns and recovery operations.

For HAZMAT moves, having more than 2,200 pounds of net explosive weight or 1,560 gallons of fuel requires march credits. If the cargo is under these amounts and the vehicles are traveling less than 60 miles, march credits are not required.

In Atlantic Resolve countries, movement bids are coordinated in the same way; however, they are routed through the movement control teams responsible for Atlantic Re-

solve. The teams have Soldiers embedded within the country's national movement coordination center and work directly with the host-nation government to enable a smoother process for travel.

Paragraph 29 Waivers

Paragraph 29 waivers are special requests when the vehicle or load is considered oversized. These requests require at least 30 working days to be approved because the host nation must determine the safest travel route. Oversized movements typically have extra restrictions that must be accounted for, such as the size of the roads, construction zones, bridge weight capacity, and traffic density. The paragraph 29 waivers will come with the approved march credits.

A paragraph 29 waiver is required if any of these dimensions or weights are exceeded:

- A height of 400 centimeters (157 inches).
- A width of 255 centimeters (100 inches).
- A length of 1,200 centimeters

(472 inches) for a single vehicle and 1,800 centimeters (708 inches) for a truck-trailer combination.

- A military load classification of 50 short tons.
- An axle weight of over 8 short tons per axle. In Germany, the axle weight may not exceed 12 short tons.

Common vehicles that do not require a paragraph 29 waiver are empty palletized load system prime mover trucks, family of medium tactical vehicles, and M915 tractor trucks. Vehicles that always require a paragraph 29 waiver are heavy equipment transporters and palletized load systems with trailer and flatrack or container handling unit.

Logistics planners within rotationally aligned and regionally allocated forces should consider these distribution factors while preparing for operations in Atlantic Resolve. The key to accomplishing the mission is to plan well in advance of anticipated movements. Units that consider the six distribution challenges

in this article during their planning processes will be better prepared to provide anticipatory logistics in support of Atlantic Resolve.

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The 51st Transportation Company moves Abrams tanks to Estonia as part of Able Falcon, a strategic operation that relocated U.S. assets throughout the Baltic States. (Photo by Sgt. Bridget Cantu)