



A Soldier from the 1st Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, guides an M2A3 Bradley fighting vehicle to a maintenance area on July 1, 2017, at the Cincu Joint Multinational Training Center in Cincu, Romania. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Ange Desinor)



Establishing Europe's Army Pre-positioned Stocks

■ By Col. Rodney H. Honeycutt, Richard A. Bezold, and Robin T. Dothager

When the United States decided to position a force in Europe for credible deterrence, it had to bolster its capabilities. The Army set in motion several actions, including extending regionally aligned forces (RAF) rotations to nine months, having RAF operate “heel to toe,” and pre-positioning combat, combat support, and sustainment equipment in Europe.

On Dec. 2, 2015, the deputy secretary of defense directed the management action group for the Army to initiate planning to support the U.S. European Command's expanding mission requirements for credible deterrence. His guidance was that European Activity Set (EAS) equipment would transition to be part of the Army Pre-positioned Stock 2 (APS-2) once the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT), 3rd Infantry Division (ID), finished us-

ing it for its RAF rotation. Future rotational forces would deploy with their unit-owned equipment from the continental United States.

The Department of the Army (DA) execution order establishing APS-2 unit requirements was published in May 2016. The order directed timelines for establishing expanded APS-2 capabilities.

The Army Materiel Command (AMC) began planning the establishment of APS-2 enablers including an ABCT, a division headquarters, a fires brigade, and a sustainment brigade. To meet DA timelines, AMC assessed the current situation and developed a plan to meet requirements given the limited equipment, personnel, and facilities in Europe.

Planning the Transition

At the time the order was published, the 1st ABCT, 3rd ID, had

Atlantic Resolve is changing the way the Army stores and distributes pre-positioned equipment.

drawn the EAS equipment from the 405th Army Field Support Brigade (AFSB) and was operating in Eastern Europe and Germany. The ABCT equipment set was established, but none of the equipment for the division headquarters, fires brigade, or ABCT enablers was on hand.

Tentative sites for equipment positioning had been identified, but none of the sites were controlled by the U.S. European Command. Additionally, none of the sites had host-nation agreements or a trained workforce.

U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR) worked with host nations to obtain sites in Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands. USAREUR also developed a timeline for EAS equipment turn-in so that the ABCT equipment could become an APS-2 unit set. The timeline included retaining combat platforms in Eastern Europe until January 2017. This was when the 3rd ABCT, 4th ID, would deploy to assume the Atlantic Resolve mission.

Establishing AFSBn–Benelux

The Army Sustainment Command (ASC) directed the 405th AFSB to establish Army Field Support Battalion (AFSBn)–Benelux to provide mission command over APS-2 operations located north of the Alps. This required the 405th AFSB to establish operations at three APS-2 sites, develop each site’s table of distribution and allowances, execute hiring plans, and reset EAS equipment.

At the same time, the 405th AFSB had to operate six Eastern Europe sites used to store equipment until the 4th ID’s ABCT arrived and then close these sites in addition to EAS sites in Grafenwoehr and Mannheim, Germany.

The 405th AFSB used a team of teams approach to acquire facilities, synchronize the arrival of 15,000 pieces of globally redistributed equipment, and hire an 800-person workforce consisting of DA civilians,

contractors, host-nation ministry of defenses employees, and Soldiers in 15 just months. The AFSB staff worked closely with ASC and AMC to develop the concept for the AFSBn.

The staff also worked with USAREUR to establish host-nation agreements and with the Installation Management Command for facilities issues. USAREUR was able to obtain facilities in Belgium and the Netherlands that had previously been used to store pre-positioned materiel configured to unit sets. USAREUR also obtained a former United Kingdom base in Germany with facilities capable of providing indoor storage for large amounts of equipment.

Host-nation technical agreements specified the type of workforce that would be acceptable to the host nation, which ranged from contractors to host-nation ministry of defense personnel. Until the hiring concept plan was approved, USAREUR leveraged Army Reserve Sustainment Command Soldiers deployed in a “temporary change of station” status and temporary-duty personnel from AMC.

Enabling Speed

In December 2016, USAREUR’s commander spoke at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the APS-2 facility in Eyselshoven, Netherlands. In his remarks, he highlighted how APS-2 equipment enables the speed of recognition (understanding that a threat exists), the speed of decision (reacting to the threat), and the speed of assembly (issuing the APS-2 equipment to a designated unit).

Enabling speed of assembly is driving the transition of APS-2 facilities into power projection platforms and forcing changes to APS doctrine. AMC’s goal is to deliver APS equipment to the tactical point of need. In conjunction with ASC, the 405th AFSB is training the workforce to quickly outload equipment via rail, road, air, or barge to an assembly area designated by USAREUR.

In the assembly area, an equip-



A train loaded with M2A3 Bradley fighting vehicles and M1A2 Abrams tanks belonging to the 1st Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, arrives in Tapa, Estonia, on Feb. 6, 2017, in support of Atlantic Resolve. (Photo by Sgt. Lauren Harrah)

ment configuration handling area (ECHA) team will receive, stage, and execute equipment transfers. To set conditions for ECHA operations in an assembly area, the AFSB maintains an early-entry module capability. The early-entry module executes the reception, staging, and onward movement of a contracted or local-national ECHA team. Deploying an ECHA team eliminates the need for the inbound ABCT to draw equipment from an APS-2 facility.

Changing APS Procedures

APS procedures are changing because of the modifications to APS-2. Maintaining the equipment in a “configured for combat” posture is altering how AMC stores the equipment. To facilitate outload operations, the AFSB is choosing effect over efficiency by storing the equipment in unit sets. These unit sets take less time to outload than the equipment sets that were used previously.

Another adjustment includes maintaining platforms with command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR) packages. The de-

cision to maintain C4ISR and other equipment forward is pending DA approval.

Keeping the C4ISR configured for combat changes how supplies are stored and maintained. Normally APS equipment is on a four-year maintenance cycle. Maintaining C4ISR packages on APS platforms requires increased maintenance and changes to the security requirements for local nationals and contractors who store and maintain the equipment.

A continental United States-based Army is more likely to use APS equipment in support of contingency operations and for maintaining credible deterrence. In addition to maintaining APS equipment, the AFSB and two APS AFSBns in Europe are becoming masters of strategic communications, outload operations, and freedom of movement as they operate power projection platforms that support warfighter readiness.

Col. Rodney H. Honeycutt is the commander of the 405th AFSB in Kaiserslautern, Germany. He has a bache-

lor’s degree in criminal justice from the University of South Carolina, a master’s degree in logistics management from the Florida Institute of Technology, and a master’s degree in strategic studies from the U.S. Army War College. He is a graduate of the Quartermaster Advanced Course and the Command and General Staff College.

Richard A. Bezold is the deputy to the commander of the 405th AFSB. He served 29 years in the Army and has served as the support operations director for the 403rd AFSB and the 405th AFSB. He holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Thomas More College, a master’s degree in business management from Saint Mary’s College, and a master’s degree in strategic studies from the Army War College. He is a graduate of the Ordnance Officer Basic and Advanced Courses and the Command and General Staff College.

Robin T. Dothager is the director of operations for the 405th AFSB. He is a former Army noncommissioned officer who held occupational specialties in ground vehicle maintenance and supply.