



News Release

U.S. ARMY SUSTAINMENT COMMAND

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Logistics assistance representatives keep Army rolling along

By Charles W. Fick Jr.
ASC Public Affairs

ROCK ISLAND, Ill. – From Valley Forge to Afghanistan’s Korengal Valley, civilian specialists have served shoulder-to-shoulder with Soldiers, pitching in to keep equipment operating and supplies flowing.

Today, more than 1,000 logistics assistance representatives are working with Army units across the country and around the world, adding their expertise and experience to logistics solutions.

“LARs are the equipment and supply specialists troops turn to when they’re looking for solutions,” said Carl Cartwright, executive director for Field Support Operations at Army Sustainment Command, Rock Island Arsenal, Ill. “In my 30-plus years’ experience, a LAR is worth his or her weight in gold. Their unique blend of expertise and experience, matched by a strong sense of duty, makes for a formidable force multiplier,” said Cartwright, a retired Army officer and member of the Senior Executive Service.

Managed by ASC’s Logistics Assistance Program Directorate, LARs are Department of the Army civilians serving in motor pools, hangars, maintenance shops and offices around the world, including with units in combat. Highly trained, they bring 27 different specialty skills to bear on Army equipment readiness requirements. They’re all part of ASC’s global network of Army Field Support Brigades and Battalions, linked to every echelon of the Army in the field.

Experienced experts, many LARs are also former Soldiers. “Being a LAR is a way I can bring a lifetime of experience to a new generation of Soldiers,” said David Urbi, a retired Army noncommissioned officer and member of the Brigade Logistics Support Team serving with the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) at Fort Campbell, Ky. “We’re the ‘go-to guys’ when our Soldiers encounter problems. And if we don’t have the answer, we know who to reach back

to for information and support,” said Urbi, who recently returned from Afghanistan, his second combat assignment.

Mike Guster, acting director of the LAP, heads a group of about 20 people at ASC Headquarters. “Our charter is to organize, train and support LARs in the field,” he said. “The LAP mission is simple and enduring: provide warfighters with hands-on technical expertise to solve logistics problems and improve weapons systems readiness.

“Our LARs represent the full range of Army Materiel Command capabilities, including TACOM, CECOM and Aviation and Missile Life Cycle Management Commands, Joint Munitions Command, and our own ASC specialists. They all have technical lines of communication and responsibility to their parent commands, enabling them to reach back for solutions,” Guster said.

Proof of LARs’ critical role in field operations was recently highlighted during delivery of mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles to fighting forces in Iraq. In the early going, brand-new MRAPs rolling off airplanes and ships were plagued by unforeseen trouble with a serpentine drive belt. Because the vehicles were fielded so rapidly, no stock numbers existed to order repair parts.

A logistics problem with far-reaching operational impact was looming. “Our people on the ground were quick to assess the problem and implement a solution by reaching back to our stateside counterparts,” said Sue Moynihan, a headquarters LAP staff member who was supervising the Taji, Iraq, MRAP fielding site at the time. “New belts were on their way in a matter of days and, in less than a month, a National Stock Number was assigned, smoothing the way for troops to order replacements down the line.”

With their proven record, demand for LARs is growing, accelerated by our Army’s transformation to a modular, expeditionary, brigade-centric force. “Managing our program during transformation is challenging,” said Guster, “Doing so while also supporting forces in overseas contingency operations makes our task both more urgent and more complicated.”

Recent actions by the Department of the Army have increased the number of LARs from about 850 in 2005 to nearly 1,100. Plans call for more than 1,500 LARs in the field by 2012. “The increase is driven by the need to grow LAR strength to meet increases in supported forces,” said Cartwright.

“ASC capabilities are delivered through field structures that mirror the forces we support. Our Army Field Support Brigades are linked to regions or operational theaters (*see organizational diagram*). Logistics support elements work with corps headquarters while Army field support battalions are matched to division-installation activities – and selected

battlefield missions. Brigade logistics support teams are our smallest echelon, operating directly with and for brigade combat teams and similar formations.”

Combining their lengthy experience with support from their parent commands, LARs can cover a lot of ground. “We’re the ‘old’ pros, part of the team, living and working with and for the troops. Commanders and leaders look to ‘their’ LARs for an incredible range of support, often under intense pressure,” said Guster, who’s been in the logistics assistance business for more than 20 years, including four deployments.

The habit of Soldiers referring to “their” LAR is born out of respect and camaraderie. “We all know what it means when we volunteer to become LARs: This is a muddy-boots job,” said Urbi, the Fort Campbell LAR. “We go wherever we’re needed. From our main base, we’ll travel to any outpost, and stay there until the work is done. Where our Soldiers go, we go; where they live, we live; what they eat, we eat.”

All LAP personnel are classified as Mandatory Mobile/Emergency Essential, meaning they deploy as AMC’s civilian “troops,” able to meet the needs of the Army’s force structure today and into the future.

In the field, Soldiers and units count on LARs for a wide range of support. It’s all spelled out in Army Regulation 700-4 *Logistics Assistance*, which outlines myriad tasks and capabilities. LARs, by definition:

- are subject matter experts from each of their parent commands (AMCOM, TACOM, CECOM, JMC, and ASC) who provide assistance to commanders and leaders in analyzing readiness, identifying problems, determining responsibility for resolution, and, when appropriate, assisting with resolution.
- provide commanders with technical guidance necessary to resolve weapons systems, equipment and systemic logistics problems while coordinating national-level sustainment support for non-standard equipment and contractor support, when required.
- identify and report through channels all logistics matters that have (or may create) an adverse impact on logistics readiness, including supply, maintenance, transportation, personnel, training, organization, systems, and doctrinal issues.

It's a tall order, and makes for a highly selective recruitment process. "When we accept a volunteer into the LAP, we have to be confident that person can operate far from home station, think on their feet and have their Soldiers' best interest at heart," said Guster.

There are many benefits to being a LAR. "Job satisfaction tops the list," said Bob Gottfreid, an ASC staff member with 12 years as a LAR. "The thanks of a re-equipped Soldier, grateful for what I bring to the fight, are my highest honors," he said.

Connecting AMC's vast resources to battlefield logistics is another benefit. "Expeditionary operations demand that we adapt, invent and implement sound supply and equipment solutions as we go," said Gottfreid, a veteran of four deployments. "Our knowledge, capabilities and responsibilities are expanding as fast as the Army is transforming."

In the pre-modular Army, primary logistics assistance functions included:

- Enhancing weapons systems operational availability
- Providing logistical/technical assistance on-site and reach-back to the industrial base
- Providing hands-on training to Soldiers at the unit level
- Cost avoidance through on-site technical (How-To-Repair) logistics assistance

Added LAP functions now include:

- Synchronization and integration of directed missions supporting Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) process
- Field-level Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (AL&T) integration
- Field-level Reset
- Left-Behind Equipment (LBE) management and accountability
- Equipment repair and provisioning during Reset
- Work load planning with sources of repair
- Fleet management, ensuring Training and Doctrine Command equipment readiness
- Pre-Deployment Training Equipment (PDTE)
- Prepare-to-Deploy Orders (PTDO) for Army prepositioned stocks (APS)
- Non-divisional post, camp, and station requirements
- Theater-Provided Equipment (TPE) management and accountability

- Command, Control, Communications, Computer, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) integration

“It can be very daunting,” said Guster. “Our numbers are few; our missions are many – and increasingly complex and urgent.”

Keeping an eye on more than 1,000 LARs dispersed in small groups to supported units in the U.S. and overseas tests management skills. “It’s a challenge,” Guster said. “We have to coordinate and synchronize our effort with our LARs’ parent commands. Four commands [AMCOM, CECOM, JMC and TACOM] besides ours get a vote in the process.”

Among the shared missions and functions are:

- Personnel accountability
- Training (mandatory, common, technical, & new equipment training)
- Mission assignment
- Reporting metrics
- Recruiting
- Funding
- Assignment process for permanent change of station/tasking
- Deployment/dwell time
- Career progression
- Entitlements
- Individual equipment

“Our intent is to leverage the full capabilities of our LARs to provide first-class support to Warfighters,” Guster said. “We’re shaping a comprehensive program that tracks and manages our people from recruitment through training and on to service in the field, right up to retirement. Our objective is guiding LAR careers in a logical progression, balancing their professional development and warfighter support.”

Night and day, in garrison, at training centers and in combat, LARs serve alongside Soldiers. “Logistics assistance representatives are teamed with troops all across the Army. They’re putting life in the ASC motto, *On the Line*,” said Cartwright. “A thousand times a day, a Soldier somewhere turns to a LAR for help, guidance, or sometimes just assurance. It’s a partnership built on trust and supported by faith. A LAR will never let you down.”

KOREA LAR:



Dennis Bell (left), a logistics assistance representative with the 403rd Army Field Support Brigade's 2nd Infantry Division Logistics Support Element, advises LEAR Siegler quality control inspector Richard Martin and Sgt. Tyler Walden, section chief, 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Ft. Stewart, Ga.; troubleshoot the control center of an M109A6 Paladin self-propelled 155mm howitzer at the Rodriguez Live Fire Complex in Paju, Republic of Korea, during Exercise Key Resolve/Foal Eagle. (Photo by Galen Putnam)

CECOM LAR 010:

Frank Rivera, a CECOM Life Cycle Management Command Sensor Master Technician assigned to the 405th Army Field Support Brigade, checks for leaks in an AN/TPQ-36 Firefinder radar unit at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Rivera is a logistics assistance representative, who can reach all the way back to CECOM and industrial capabilities to ensure materiel readiness. (Photo by Summer Barkley)



TACOM LAR Iraq 076:



Mike Rone, a TACOM Life Cycle Management Command Engineer logistics assistance representative assigned to 402nd Army Field Support Brigade, advises Soldiers from the 561st Engineer Company during repairs to a Caterpillar 621B Scraper at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Working together, they managed to repair rather than replace the engine. (Photo by Summer Barkley).

TACOM LAR Iraq 101:

Mike Rone, a TACOM LAR specializing in engineer equipment repair, works with Soldiers from the 50th Engineer Multi-role Bridge Company working on a 22-ton all-terrain crane at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Drawing on his experience and reach back to Stateside support, Rone trains Soldiers to troubleshoot while also assisting them obtain parts and tools (Photo by Summer Barkley)



TACOM LAR Iraq 107:



Mike Rone, a TACOM LAR specializing in engineer equipment repair, works with Soldiers from the 50th Engineer Multi-role Bridge Company working on a 22-ton all-terrain crane at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Drawing on his experience and reach back to Stateside support, Rone trains Soldiers to troubleshoot while also assisting them obtain parts and tools (Photo by Summer

Barkley)