



# ***News Release***

**U.S. ARMY SUSTAINMENT COMMAND**

***May 22, 2009***

## **Property accountability key to sustaining expeditionary operations**

*By Charles W. Fick, Jr.  
ASC Public Affairs*

*ROCK ISLAND, Ill.* – Hand receipts, property books, inventories - at first glance, it's pretty dry stuff. Unless you're a company commander concerned about what happens to the property your deploying troops will leave behind, or whether you'll be training on the same types of equipment you'll be using on the battlefield, or the location and condition of equipment your Soldiers will be issued when you arrive in Afghanistan.

From Iraq to Afghanistan, from New York to Hawaii, Army Sustainment Command Soldiers, civilian employees and contract workers are keeping a sharp eye on millions of items, worth billions of dollars. It's a relatively new mission for a very young command.

"From our start, less than three years ago, ASC has been on point developing new methods of logistics support to our transforming Army," said Jim Orasky, chief of ASC's Systems Accountability and Enterprise Integration Division. "One of our evolving missions is applying property accountability methods on a global scale - then integrating that capability with our materiel management operations to give the Army a whole new way of ensuring combat readiness."

The enterprise is tied directly to sustaining our modular, expeditionary and transforming Army. The Army Force Generation process places units on a planned, predictable path with focused resources based on progressive readiness requirements. At every stage - training/reset, ready, available - unit effectiveness is tied to materiel readiness. And

materiel readiness is dependent on knowing the amounts, locations and condition of accountable property.

Keeping track of property on the battlefield, in garrison, at training sites and undergoing maintenance is more than a paperwork drill.

“At every step of ARFORGEN, Forces Command planners and Department of the Army managers have to know how much of what equipment is available, where it’s located and what condition it’s in. Without that information, the whole machine grinds to a halt,” said Dennis Wells, chief of ASC’s Accountability Branch.

While units and troops are on the move, so is the accountable property - and not always in the same direction. It’s a new way of doing business, a small slice of what is being called the Materiel Enterprise. The essence of the Materiel Enterprise is matching materiel to missions - and the Soldiers who meet the mission.

Gone are the days when a unit would pack up all its equipment, move to a training site, then into battle, finally bringing what’s left back to home station. Equipment is increasingly viewed as a strategic asset, moved around as requirements demand.

It makes sense to assign a portion of the accountable property mission to ASC. Besides freeing supported units to focus on warfighting skills, the Army gains increased asset visibility.

“Taking property onto our books enables planners to make well-informed choices,” said Wells. “A whole range of possibilities opens: The property can remain with ASC, in which case we can schedule maintenance and repair, fill shortages and arrange storage. If a need exists elsewhere, higher echelons can direct internal transfer within the supported command or to another unit entirely. Some property might even be moved into Reset programs and returned to the national inventory.”

A simple example illustrates ASC’s three main accountable property missions. A unit preparing to deploy moves its troops to a training center, but leaves most of its equipment at home, saving money and time. At the training site, ASC managers use hand receipts to transfer ready equipment, called pre-deployment training equipment, or PDTE. Training complete, the unit hands the equipment back, reducing unit maintenance requirements while saving time and transportation costs.

Back at home station, the unit makes final preparations to deploy, determining what gear they'll take along and what will be left behind. ASC professionals step in to take over accountability for the left-behind equipment, or LBE, freeing the deploying unit from a requirement to safeguard and maintain equipment they don't need to do the job at hand.

Stepping off the plane down range, the newly arrived unit falls in on theater-provided equipment, or TPE, managed by ASC. Later, its mission complete, the same unit will again turn to ASC, this time as the go-between to sign over property to its replacement.

It's a huge - and hugely important - mission, keeping track of and taking responsibility for the property Soldiers need to do their jobs. According to Wells, TPE amounts to 15 million items, serving some 2,300 Unit Identification Codes and valued at more than \$20 billion. The LBE team has more than 400,000 items on its books, valued at more than \$6.5 billion and covering nearly 2,000 UICs. Still in its infancy, the PDTE program includes about 10,000 items for 15 UICs, with a value of nearly \$400 million.

In addition to its three main accountable property missions, ASC has taken on other tasks - all with an eye to supporting warfighters. "In Iraq, our people provide installation property book services. Most of these items were acquired in theater and remain there as units come and go, so ASC has stepped up to maintain accountability," Wells said. "We also provide property accountability teams that ensure a smooth handover of TPE between outgoing and incoming units."

As the number of units in Iraq decreases, the amount of property heading out is increasing.

"We have retrograde property accountability teams in the thick of a large and growing mission," Wells said. "This aspect of our mission is vital to ensuring accountability and asset visibility of a very big part of the Army's inventory."

The property accountability pros have also taken on special missions.

"When MRAPs were pouring out of factories and into Charleston, S.C., we worked out a process with TACOM Life Cycle Management Command project managers to take the vehicles onto our books, then follow through until they were issued to troops in the field," Wells said.

Sometimes, even trophies and unit memorabilia find their way into ASC care.

“A deploying unit knew it would not return to its familiar offices and workspaces. Leaders were concerned about preserving their heritage, so we stepped up and took their treasure into our care. It was certainly a non-traditional supply transaction, but it meant the world to the Soldiers we serve,” Wells said.

It takes good people - and plenty of them - to keep property records straight. “ASC has two contract service providers on the job, with 1,600 contracted workers augmenting our government staff,” Wells said. “So, in addition to being property book officers and responsible officers, we also serve as contracting officer representatives, administrative contracting officer representatives and contracting officer technical representatives.”

It’s safe to say ASC’s property accountability mission is a vital part of the Materiel Enterprise, Army Materiel Command’s far-reaching effort to harness and apply logistics capabilities to operational needs.

“We’re like the synchro gear in a transmission,” Wells said. “By taking responsibility for property on the move, we’re enabling the warfighters we support to shift smoothly from garrison to training to combat and back again.”

-30-

**ASC PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**  
**PHONE: (309) 782-5421; FAX: (309) 782-5011**  
**E-MAIL: rock-amsas-pa@conus.army.mil**