

## CHAPTER 7

# Planning Considerations

### INTRODUCTION

Most airdrop support units are allocated to forces other than those of the active Army. Since airdrop is generally required at the onset of hostilities, this creates a situation where detailed planning is required at all levels for units to receive the required airdrop support. Planning considerations discussed in this chapter will help the staff planner at division, corps, and theater level to develop an airdrop support plan for his unit. Also, planners should have a working knowledge of the total Army analysis process. This process allocates units to the various force compositions, such as the active Army, the National Guard, the Army reserves, and an unresourced force composition. See AR 71-11 for more information on the total Army analysis process. The planner must also have an understanding of supply as it pertains to authorized stockage lists, operational projects, war reserves, and planning factors. This chapter is designed to be used only as a guide for the airdrop planner.

### AIRDROP RESUPPLY PLANNING FACTORS

Airdrop resupply planning factors and information on how to use them are given in FM 101-10-1/2. These planning factors can be used by staff planners at all levels. They will assist the staff planner in formalizing the anticipated airdrop work load, the force structure needed to support the work load, equipment stockage levels, aircraft requirements, and the type of airdrop delivery. FM 101-10-1/2 contains tables providing planning data (factors) for four geographic areas. These areas are Northern and Central Europe; Southwest Asia and Southern Europe; Korean peninsula; and Central America, the Pacific area less Korea, and low-intensity areas. Figure 7-1 (page 7-2) depicts one such planning factor table from FM 101-10-1/2. In using the airdrop resupply planning factors, the planner must assume—

- Hostilities may erupt on short notice in remote areas without existing logistics facilities or pre-positioned war reserve stocks.
- Airdrop resupply may be required with the onset of hostilities.
- Units deploy with enough supplies and equipment for two to five days.

- Increased reliance will be placed on airdrop as a resupply means, especially for light forces in contingency operations.

- Transportation priority will be surface, air-land, and airdrop.

- Airdrop resupply will be used primarily in the division area.

### PLANNING FACTORS FOR AIR DELIVERY EQUIPMENT RECOVERY

Staff planners must use air delivery equipment recovery data to compute estimated quantities of equipment to be retrograded. Such data, with detailed information on how to use them, are found in FM 101-10-1/2. Figure 7-2 (page 7-3) is an extract of the data from FM 101-10-1/2. Two distinct types of airborne operations are given in this table: airborne assault and airdrop resupply. Airborne assault is conducted by an airborne unit, such as the airborne division. Airborne assault normally results in the setup of an airhead that is slowly expanded outward with all-around protection. Since airdrop equipment is normally located inside the airhead, recovery rates are higher. Airdrop resupply operations are conducted to support all units near the FLOT. Under AirLand Battle doctrine with its nonlinear operations and scattered units, recovery operations will be more difficult; therefore, lower recovery rates are shown.

### FORCE STRUCTURE

The staff planner must compare the doctrinal laydown of his combat service support units to the actual force structure available to execute the doctrine. In airdrop, the shortfall between doctrine and actual force structure is significant. Therefore, this becomes the planner's starting point. If the required airdrop force structure is not available in a particular corps or TAACOM, the staff planner must do the following:

- Examine the appropriate time-phased force deployment list to see when the required units will be in place.
- Determine if the designated airdrop support units are committed to more than one geographic area.

NORTHERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE						
Supply Class	% of Gross Rqmts	Low-Velocity Platforms (%)	Low-Velocity Containers (%)	High-Velocity Containers (%)	Low-Altitude Parachute Extraction (%)	Free Drop
I	1.10	17	70	10	3	0
II	.30	12	42	30	6	10
III	1.79	34	31	6	29	0
IV	.66	42	15	10	21	12
V	3.26	16	59	8	17	0
VII	.39	60	2	0	38	0
VIII	.58	14	70	5	11	0
IX	.58	16	72	3	8	1
Water	.15	35	38	7	20	0

**Figure 7-1. Sample of airdrop resupply planning factors extracted from FM 101-10-1/2**

- Determine the force composition of the designated airdrop support units; for example, active Army (COMPO 1), National Guard (COMPO 2), Army reserve (COMPO 3), or the unresourced composition (COMPO 4).

- Maintain visibility over unit readiness.

Even though airdrop support units are not allocated to divisions, other than the airborne division, the division logistics planners should be sure that the supporting COSCOM and TAACOM logistics planners address these points.

### FORCE STRUCTURE ALTERNATIVES

When airdrop support units are not available to meet airdrop resupply needs, the staff planner should develop alternatives. These will serve to minimize the impact on combat operations.

The primary alternative to offset a shortage of airdrop resupply units is the prerigging of critical supplies and equipment. Such supplies and equipment can be set up as an operational project to support a particular unit or contingency. When

establishing prerigged projects, the planner should consider the following questions:

- Which supplies (and what quantities) are to be prerigged for airdrop? This is critical since the operational project will by necessity be of limited size. Planners may wish to check existing prerigged projects to get an idea as to what other planners have developed.

- What air delivery items are needed to rig the supplies? Airdrop rigging manuals (FM 10-500-series manuals) give various rigging procedures. Each manual also contains a list of the airdrop items needed to rig that specific load. The airdrop items will normally be listed in the operational project.

- Where will the prerigged supplies be stored? Normally, a storage area close to an airfield will be selected. Rigged loads should be stored in an area that is dry, secure, and protected from direct sunlight. Temperature- and humidity-controlled areas are preferred, but not required. The storage area must be free of rodents.

### AIR DELIVERY EQUIPMENT ITEM RECOVERY RATES

1. Percent air delivery equipment items recovered/evacuated:
  - a. Airborne assault - 39%
  - b. Resupply operations - 25%
2. Condition of air delivery equipment items recovered/evacuated:
  - a. Airborne assault
    - (1) Serviceable - 35%
    - (2) Repairable - 16% unit-level maintenance;  
14% intermediate
    - (3) Salvage - 35%
  - b. Resupply operations
    - (1) Serviceable - 32%
    - (2) Repairable - 15% unit-level maintenance;  
14% intermediate
    - (3) Salvage - 39%
3. Ratio of air delivery equipment weight to total rigged weight:
  - a. Containers - 10%
  - b. Platform loads - 28%

**Figure 7-2. Air delivery equipment item recovery planning factors extracted from FM 101-10-1/2**

- Which activity will rig the supplies for airdrop and perform in-storage inspections? The first choice would be to have the supplies and equipment rigged by an airdrop support unit. If active Army units are not available, the planner may use reserve component airdrop support units. Another choice may be to consider training other support personnel, military or civilian, to rig the loads. This will reduce the need for parachute rigger personnel.

- How will the supplies and equipment be tested and rotated? Supply managers must monitor the prerigged loads for items with a prescribed life span. A system must also be set up to test petro-

leum products with minimum disruptions to the rigging. If water is a part of the prerigged project, a system should be set up to fill containers with fresh water at the last moment. Good planning ensures that the supplies and equipment in the prerigged projects will be delivered to the combat unit in a usable condition.

- How will the supplies and equipment be called for when needed? The logistics planner must set up a system to allow the combat leader to know what supplies and equipment are available in the prerigged project. Each load should be given a unique number. These loads can then be identified in the airdrop request, thereby reducing response

times. Call forward procedures for the prerigged projects held in CONUS for designated units are referred to in Army Materiel Command logistics policies and procedures.

- Will procedures be set up for reconstitution of the prerigged loads once they have been airdropped? Reconstitution of prerigged loads will be difficult unless airdrop support units are in place. If logistics planners are not able to reconstitute the prerigged loads quickly, the combat leaders should be aware of this information.

Another planning alternative is to establish airdrop equipment operational projects for selected high-risk theaters. With this, the combat commander will need only a minimum airdrop force structure in theater. The force structure resourced should be able to provide satisfactory training support as well as to maintain the operational project. Early deploying airdrop supply companies can then use the pre-positioned airdrop equipment. This makes the unit lighter and more deployable. It also reduces the early transportation requirement for airdrop equipment.