Supply Support in SAO Operations

By

Major Kerry Bowers, USA

During the course of a military career, most military officers will become involved in some area of security assistance, and some will even have the opportunity to serve a tour in a security assistance (SA) billet. And as is the custom, tailored specific training is provided to prepare SAO personnel for managing the SA programs in their respective country. The preparatory instruction for SAO personnel usually includes training, finance, logistics, foreign military sales (FMS) processes, and other functional areas necessary for the detailed management of these programs. This training, coupled with the individuals experience has proven very successful in the accomplishment of the SA programs.

However, in addition to these purely SA functions, personnel assigned to SAO billets are required to perform a variety of administrative and logistical "housekeeping duties" which may be labeled "supply support." One of these duties is to insure that the equipment necessary to do the job is on hand (or on requisition), and is serviceable. It is unlikely that the SAO will have the technical expertise or training to effectively deal with this housekeeping burden. This is especially true of the smaller, more isolated SAOs that do not have the luxury of additional personnel billets that could provide the administrative and logistical staffing to insure smooth internal operations.

It is neither necessary or expected of the SA officer to be a supply technician or logistician. However, the prudent individual should understand the basic requirements for providing logistical support for his operation. At a minimum, the SA officer will be responsible for accomplishing or insuring that the following supply actions are performed on a routine basis:

- requisitioning of supplies, equipment, and services;
- disposal/turn-in of excess or unserviceable supplies and equipment;
- 100 percent inventory of property;
- maintenance of property books, document registers, and other accountability records;
- timely submission of routine supply records as required; and
- maintenance and reconciliation of applicable Joint Table of Allowances (JTAs) and Common Table of Allowances (CTAs).

Based upon several factors of size, complexity, location of the SAO, and the experience or training of personnel, performing these function may or may not prove to be difficult. However, it would be fair to say that it is important that the SA officer dealing with supply issues knows who does what, what is the best way to do it, and where help can be obtained.

Of course, understanding how to manage any resource requires a basic grasp of where the majority of funds originate. In SAO operations there are three basic sources of monies that support the SAO. They are Operation and Maintenance [O&M, OMN (Navy)], Foreign Military Sales (FMS), and the Foreign Affairs Administrative Support (FAAS) funds. The O&M money represents obligated funds from the administrative agency or MILDEP, while the FMS & FAAS monies are supplied thru DSAA.

Like the budget there are three primary sources of supplies available to the SAO; the administrative agency, the U.S. Embassy, and the host country. The administrative agencies work thru the Unified Commands (UCMDs) to support SAO operations within their areas of operations. The UCMDs and their assigned administrative agencies are:

- USEUCOM - U.S. Army
- USSOCOM - U.S. Army
- USCENTCOM - U.S. Air Force
- USPACOM - U.S. Navy
- USLANTCOM - U.S. Navy

The UCMD and administrative agency are the two primary sources of information and guidance for SAO supply management. The country desk officer at the UCMD will become more and more important as he is the SAO's most available point of contact.

It is during the UCMD's initial orientation briefing that the SA officer will get the first real opportunity to find out what is happening in the SAO, what needs to be done, and what is expected. It is to the SAO's advantage to make the most of the country desk officer's position and knowledge. That staff officer should be able to provide the SAO with current SA newsletters, reports, directives, JTAs, and other information related to a particular SAO. Remember, the country desk office has dealt with an SAO overtime, and will know of any peculiarities or pending actions. This includes Internal Management Controls required by the UCMD and administrative agencies.

The newly assigned SA officer should develop a good idea of what to expect and what needs to be done prior to arriving in-country. Upon arrival it will be time to execute one's own supply plan. Initially, when there is so much to do and the new officer is trying to adjust to a new environment, the key to successful supply operations is a good in-brief and inventory, to include property records. Take a little extra time to get it right at the start and then hold on by staying on top. Remember to keep your supply simple, break it out by source of supply, and type of equipment. The source which supplied the equipment is a good tip on how to maintain accountability; the same goes for type of equipment.

The type of equipment can be divided into major and secondary items. Let's take a look at the major items and their authorization. The JTA provides the authorization to submit requisitions, and to maintain and retain major items of equipment. It is the responsibility of the administrative agency to provide current JTAs based upon the recommendation of the SAO and the concurrence of the UCMD. In addition to the JTAs, CTAs can be used as authorization documents. However, items and equipment provided by CTAs cannot be duplicated on the JTAs.

Regardless of the authorizations, the SAO will requisition supplies and equipment from the responsible administrative agency's supply activity designated by the UCMD. When requisitioning authorized equipment and supplies, the Military Standard Requisitioning and Issue Procedure (MILSTRIP) will be used unless otherwise directed. The 80 cc. format should be used, and regardless of the method of communications, certain information will be necessary.

Service Item	Geographical Area	Supply Center
Army	Europe	USAEUR
	Africa	USAREUR
	Pacific	WESCOM
	Latin America	USARSO
	Middle East (CENTCOM)	Warner Robins ALC GA
Navy	Pacific	Navy Supply Center, Oakland
	Caribbean Basin	Navy Supply Center, Oakland
	Europe	Navy Supply Center, Norfolk
	Africa	Navy Supply Center, Norfolk
	Latin America	Navy Supply Center, Norfolk
	Middle East (CENTCOM)	Warner Robins ALC GA
	Middle East (Other)	Navy Supply Center, Norfolk
Air Force	Europe, North Africa	USAF, Europe
	Sub-Sahara	Warner Robins ALC GA
	Africa (CENTCOM)	Warner Robins ALC GA
	Asia	USAF, Pacific
	Pacific	USAF, Pacific

As a minimum, you will need to determine:

- nomenclature
- National Stock Number
- authorization document
- priority
- quantity
- DOD Activity Address Code
- fund cite
- SAO document number

With this information, a MILSTRIP requisition can be constructed.

The administrative agency is just one source of supply for the SAO; two others are the U.S. Embassy and the host country. The Embassy normally provides limited equipment and some expendable supplies, as well as contract services. By law, only a duly appointed contracting officer is authorized to execute a contract, and in many instances the Contracting Officer of the Embassy is the only source available to the SAO. The supplies and services provided by the Department of State (DOS) and U.S. Embassy in support of SA is done under a FAAS agreement. Obviously, it will be necessary to discuss this potential source with the country desk officer and

the Embassy General Services Officer to determine what is available and the procedures which are peculiar to that Embassy. It is important to keep in mind that charges under the FAAS agreement should include only the support and services actually received.

The same is true in obtaining items and equipment from the host country. It should be noted that unlike support from U.S. Government sources, host country support should be limited to specific durable items intended for use under FMS cases for MTTs, TATs, and TAFTs. Normally, the best source of information in obtaining this support is the host country liaison officer. When host country equipment is used, the UCMD should be informed, and strict accountability must be maintained. Host country support should not be used except in exceptional circumstances and only for a limited period of time. This should avoid a possible problem should the equipment become lost or damaged.

In some SAOs, impress funds, petty cash, and representational funds may be available. Control of these funds and what can be obtained by them are strictly regulated. Make sure you understand the requirements and maintain detailed separate records of expenditures for accountability.

Regardless of the source of supply, every effort should be made to insure accountability and proper maintenance of all equipment in the SAO. This is not as difficult as it might appear, if control is established from the beginning and maintained until the equipment is properly turned in or disposed of and contract services are terminated. Equipment deemed to be in excess or to be unserviceable should be disposed of in accordance with the applicable supply activity directive. Normally, excess items are redistributed to other SAOs. Unserviceable items are returned to the nearest Defense Reutilization and Marking Office (DRMO) or Embassy General Services Office (GSO). A receipt for the items should be obtained and property books properly annotated. The termination of services should be accomplished in conjunction with the contracting officer responsible for the contracts management.

The first thing the SAO chief should do is to establish an Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), if one is not already in use. The SOP should be in sufficient enough detail to ensure it functions IAW the applicable regulations and guidance set forth by the administrative agency, UCMD, embassy, or host country.

It is extremely helpful to establish accountability documents by the source of supply, to maintain separate Property Books, and to maintain document registers, hand receipts, and other management files. Remember, the forms and regulations required are dictated by the agency or command providing the support. It behooves the incoming SAO chief and/or his representative to personally inventory the property, reconcile the files, and make the proper adjustments (e.g., Report of Survey) as soon as possible. Take the time to sit down and go over the books with the outgoing responsible party, and assure that such a meeting is on the agenda as part of your incoming briefing.

Being assigned to a security assistance operation will provide a variety of challenges for both the experienced and uninitiated. In either case, the focus will be on accomplishing the primary mission of managing the security assistance programs in the host country. But there are other responsibilities inherent in the assignment, such as the administrative, logistical, and operational areas that will be affected by geography, distance, environment, and communication capabilities. It is for these reasons that personnel assigned to an SAO should become familiar with the internal operations and peculiar operational requirements prior to arriving in country.

Ask the questions and find out about the "housekeeping" responsibilities as you progress to your SA assignment. Understand what you have, what you need and most important, where you can find assistance. Having an effective supply program isn't difficult and it will have a direct affect upon successfully accomplishing the mission.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major Kerry Bowers is an instructor at DISAM. His instructional areas at DISAM include DOD Logistics, Middle East Studies, and Personal Security Awareness. Major Bowers holds a BA in Political Science from Arizona State University and a MBS from East Texas State University. He is a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and the Logistics Executive Development Course.