
STARR/PC: Supply Tracking and Reparable Return Systems

by

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INTRODUCTION

STARR/PC is a PC-based system designed for the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) customer primarily to help the customer manage requisitions against his FMS cases. This paper will explain in general terms how this cost-effective system works and why it benefits both the customer and the U.S.

BACKGROUND

Each of the three U.S. military services uses mainframe information systems for keeping track of the requisitioning that occurs on its FMS cases: the Navy's MISIL (Mgmt Info Sys for Intl Logistics), Air Force's SAMIS (Security Assistance Mgmt Info Sys and Army's CISIL (Centralized Info Sys for Intl Logistics). A standard function of all three systems for many years has been to process MILSTRIP (Military Standard Requisitions and Issue Procedures) transactions, which are standard transactions for tracking requisitions, supply status, shipment status, cancellations and so forth.

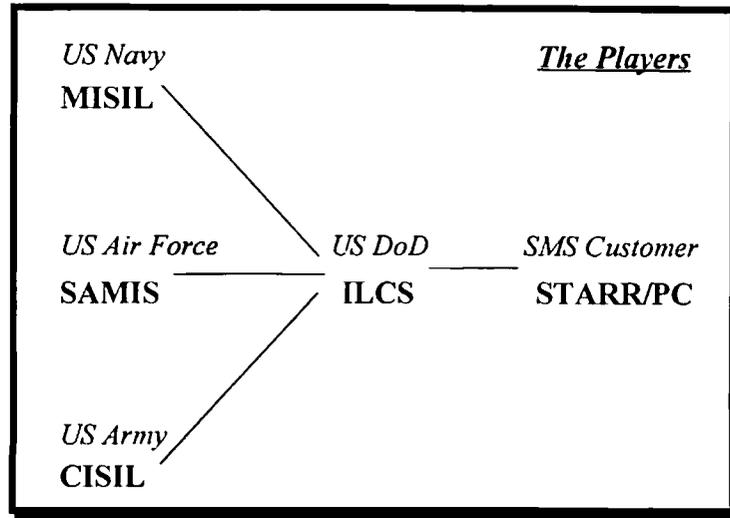
The three services have electronically transmitted MILSTRIP transactions to the FMS customer for many years. Some customers developed their own systems to receive this data, process it, and maintain accurate status. This required a duplication of logic included in the U.S. services' computer systems and a constant awareness of all approved MILSTRIP changes to ensure customer systems were updated to process this data correctly. These requirements caused these systems to extremely difficult and costly to support.

In 1988 the U.S. Air Force Security Assistance Center (AFSAC) developed STARR/PC as an alternative for its customers, and the U.S. Army Security Assistance Command (USASAC) began using it in 1990 as well. FMS customers became interested in working with US data in a consistent manner, so in early 1994 the Defense Security Assistance Agency (DSAA) selected STARR PC as the best choice to provide FMS customers a standard, unified interface with the U.S. FMS logistics systems. After certain enhancements were made to accommodate Navy requirements, the US Naval Supply Systems Command agreed to participate, and the modified version of STARR/PC that supported all three services became available on 1 December 1994.

HOW IT WORKS

STARR/PC is designed around a data download from MISIL, SAMIS or CISIL. Each day as status is received and processed by these three systems, they produce a series of "master records" that duplicate the current status of a country's updated requisitions. These records are then transmitted, via the International Logistics Communications System new set of records will replace the last set of master records for the affected requisitions. All processing of the MILSTRIP transactions is actually accomplished by MISIL, SAMIS, or CISIL. STARR/PC merely updates its databases with the same status as found in the DoD systems. This method of overlaying the STARR/PC master records eliminates the need for duplication of system logic

between STARR/PC and DoD. It also eliminates the need for continuous updates to the customer's software as MILSTRIP changes occur.



WHAT IT GIVES THE FMS CUSTOMER

The primary goal is to improve logistics support by providing timely status visibility. The customer can use STARR/PC to *input* the following:

- Requisitions (including those with remarks and technical data)
- Follow-ups
- Cancellation and modification requests
- Material receipts
- Reports of Discrepancy (RODs)

The customer *receives* the following:

- All supply and shipment status
- Freight tracking information from the country's freight forwarder (if the country participates in the freight tracking program)
- ROD status
- Case line financial summary (weekly)

THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

Before initiating any communications via the ILCS, the customer can use his STARR/PC software to load up any number of requisitions, cancellations, material receipts, etc., using simplified data entry screens or via a batch process. Opportunities exist to correct or delete any of that information, and when the customer is satisfied that his inputs are correct, he initiates a dial-up communications session with the Defense Automated Addressing System Center (DAASC), using software from DAASC called "DAMES", to connect via the ILCS. When the DAASC computer responds, all the customer's inputs are transmitted to DAASC, and DAASC sends back to the customer any transactions from MISIL/SAMIS/CISIL that are waiting in his "mailbox". After the exchange is complete, the communications session is automatically ended, and a full audit trail of the records transmitted and received is provided.

QUERIES & REPORTS

After the electronic connection is ended, the customer has a complete database on the PC against which to perform queries and reports. Some examples:

- Any *specific* requisition (reqn)
- All reqns for a specific Stock Number, Transportation Control Number, Contract or Case
- All reqns *received* by the Freight Forwarder
- All reqns *due-in* from the Freight Forwarder
- All *CASREP/NMCS* reqns

- *Financial summary* for a specific or all case lines, showing the following values:
 - Total Line Value
 - Obligational Authority
 - Uncommitted
 - Committed
 - Obligated
 - Expended
- Status of any or all RODs

REQUISITION TRACKING

The system allows for the complete control of the FMS requisition process. Included are: the input of requisitions and other transactions mentioned earlier; the acquiring of status from the U.S. supply systems and freight tracking from freight forwarders; and the output of a variety of reports and queries to help the user manage requisitions.

Transactions are validated as entered, and if any errors are encountered, clear text messages and screen prompts will be displayed to help the user correct the data. This will assure the transmission of valid transactions to the U.S. with fewer rejections. In addition, a batch function is available for those countries where the requisitions may be generated by a different system.

As a country's requisition and freight status are processed in MISIL, SAMIS or CISIL, and update transaction will be generated for transmission to the country. Depending upon the frequency of the users' communication with DAASC and upon the processing schedules for MISIL/SAMIS/CISIL, customers can normally expect to receive their status within 24-72 hours after US processing. This means that the STARR/PC database will reflect the same data as MISIL/SAMIS/CISIL within these time frames.

STARR/PC was enhanced to add two features to accommodate U.S. Navy status. First, in addition to the "master record" level, status can be accessed at the requisition suffix level for MISIL data. For example, if the customer requisitioned a quantity of 10, the DoD can split the *requisition suffix* level for MISIL data. For example, if the customer requisitioned a quantity of parts using suffixes if multiple supply actions occur (such as backorders, cancellations, referrals, or release for shipment).

The second feature unique to the US Navy is that supply and shipment information is provided for all deliverable requisitions on cases managed under MISIL's Contract Accounting procedures. *Contract Accounting* is primarily useful for financial control of commitments and obligations, but supply information in STARR/PC on its *deliverable requisitions* is very similar to that on normal *MILSTRIP requisitions*.

REQUIREMENTS

If a customer wants to use STARR/PC, that customer must use DAASC's ILCS, which does have an annual fee. Then, a certain minimum configuration of PC equipment and software is required to ease support and to allow for future enhancements. At this writing, the basic hardware requirements include an IBM-compatible 486DX-33MHz PC, laser or dot-matrix printer, and a Hayes-compatible 9600 baud modem. The basic software requirements include DOS 5.1, dBase IV or V for DOS, Carbon Copy for DOS, DAMES and the STARR/PC software itself. The DAMES and STARR/PC software files are free, and all the other requirements are widely available in the commercial sector. Finally, an installation and training trip to the customer's location is required.

WHO USES STARR/PC

STARR/PC is currently used by over two dozen countries for at least one of its military services. The number is growing, particularly since the U.S. Navy is now a participant, making STARR/PC truly a tri-service product. Shown below is a list of countries who have STARR/PC installed at an in-country military service location, embassy, liaison office, freight forwarder or other organization.

Argentina	Morocco
Brazil	NATO
Chile	Peru
Colombia	Philippines
Dominican Republic	Portugal
Egypt	Saudi Arabia
El Salvador	Singapore
Finland	Somolia
France	Spain
Guatemala	Sweden
Honduras	Switzerland
Israel	Taiwan
Korea	Thailand
Malaysia	Tunisia
Mexico	Turkey

CONCLUSION

STARR/PC benefits the FMS customers by furnishing a simplified, cost-effective means for managing the requisitioning press. It provides him with an accurate reflection of data stored in U.S. FMS logistics systems without imposing all of the overhead associated with MILSTRIP changes. It also allows him to deal with the US in consistent manner now that all three U.S. services support STARR/PC.

The U.S. service benefits from STARR/PC as well, primarily at the International Logistics Control Office. STARR/PC validates the data coming from the customer, thus reducing rejections due to the improper coding. In addition, because the customer can now electronically prepare certain transactions that previously required mailing to the ILCO, the ILCO has fewer pieces of paper to manage. Also, the electronic link allows for much faster resolution of problems.

If further information is desired, interested parties should contact one of the following:

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