



## Before a Logistical Revolution: The Gulf War

### FROM THE ARCHIVES



Rock Island Arsenal in the Gulf War

The Arsenal's primary role in Operation Desert Storm was to provide the parts and tools for the maintenance and repair of the Army's weapon systems. The Arsenal completed orders 17,792 for components. The components contributed to the maintenance and success of the M198 Howitzer, M102 towed Howitzers, M110 self-prepared Howitzer, M109 self-propelled howitzer, the M1A1 Abrams tank.

In the days leading up to February of 1991, the U.S. military was posturing itself with Allies in the Persian Gulf to sustain and support a peacekeeping operation and the liberation of Kuwait. By 8 AUG 1990, U.S. forces were already in the region ready to offload materiel into ports in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait for use by Coalition Fighters against Saddam Hussein's invading forces. The command historian for Army Materiel Command (AMC) in 1994 reported that most of the initial logistics support for the Gulf War came from Saudi Arabia, with a separate host nation acting as a staging point for war stocks and materiel. The Army drew upon its plentiful naval vessels for shipping, but still required immediate logistics support to begin staging. It was dependent upon the Air Force and their fleet of C-5 and C-141 aircraft. Coordination between the two military branches was imperative but was sluggish at first. With the mobilization of home front railway, the cooperation with the Air Force, and its naval fleet, the U.S. was prepared to send stocks overseas, but the problem remained of how to distribute these supplies once they made it to Southwest Asia (SWA).<sup>1</sup>

The Armament, Munitions, and Chemical Command (AMCCOM) history from the period cites an anonymous contributor to an AMC Newsletter in 1991 that reported "the miracle in the desert can be traced to one source: people." A popular slogan for the civilian workforce of America's military has been "the force behind the fight", and the AMCCOM historian certainly paints such a picture. Almost \$900 million of procurements were made in 1990 and 1991, virtually all of which were passed through civilian hands to the warfighter. What is perhaps most overlooked is the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) that were sent. Over 500,000 pieces including facemasks, gas masks, and chemical agent alarms were shipped in the months leading up to Operation DESERT STORM. There seemed to be no shortcoming of personal equipment. AMCCOM reported around thirty systems shipped from August to December of 1990. Approximately 500,000 short tons of munitions, bombs, and ammunition was sent during the same time by comparison.<sup>2</sup>

There were multiple factors that contributed to the overall success of the materiel campaign in logistics during the buildup. The first key factor was the operation of a dedicated logistics command and control structure. AMC's establishment of a dedicated logistics command in AMCCOM helped to streamline much of the logistics hurdles that had to be overcome, but it was not without its own share of difficulties. Challenges in feedback of need proved to be a valuable lesson learned that contributed to the merger of AMCCOM and Depot Systems Command (DESCOM) in the 1995 incarnation of Industrial Operations Command (IOC). The second key factor was the sustainment of Soldiers and systems in the area of operations (AO). A robust support network was in place within the logistics train that contributed to ongoing materiel support and maintenance of equipment.

The final piece excluding the force and materiel projection component, was the joint reception, staging, onward movement, and integration (JRSOI). This enabled the logistics train to deliver materiel to the right place at the right time at a tactical level point-of-need.

The lessons learned from DESERT STORM and DESERT SHIELD resulted in a major revolution in military affairs (RMA). Among them was the Revolution in Military Logistics (RML). Within the RML was the established need for maintained prepositioned stocks that forces could fall-in on in an AO. More direct logistical support for theater combatant commanders through a robust multi-layer logistics system was another key. The resulting demand led IOC to create the Army War Reserve Support Command (AWRSPTCMD) to manage materiel reserves and prepositioned stocks.



### National Hispanic Heritage Month



We all mess up sometimes, and there are days, weeks, months, and sometimes even years when things just don't seem to go right. But that's okay!

10-16 SEP is National Suicide Awareness & Prevention Week. Remember to check on your battle buddy, you never know when you might have the opportunity to save a life.



National Hispanic Heritage Month (NHHM) is celebrated from September 15th through October 15th. Each year the Department of Defense, along with the rest of the Nation, recognizes the important contributions and rich culture of Hispanic Americans.

NHHM coincides with important dates in many communities and encompasses independence days for several Latin American countries.

This month the Department of Defense joins the nation in honoring the generations of Hispanic Americans who have influenced and enriched our nation and society. "Todos Somos, Somos Uno: We Are All, We Are One."



History is being made every day at this command.

1. McGrath, John J.; Krause, Michael D. *Theater Logistics and the Gulf War*. Army Materiel Command, 1994. pp9-12.

2. Porter, Kimberly K.; LePore, Herbert P. *Legacy in the Sand: The U.S. Army AMCCOM in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm*. U.S. Army, 1992. pp33-34.

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