

Sustainment Automation Support Management Office Operations at JRTC

The sustainment automation support management office of the 1st Brigade Combat Team from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, ensured all logistics information systems operated properly during a JRTC rotation.

By Warrant Officer 1 Joshua D. Neely

The 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, deployed to the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) at Fort Polk, Louisiana, for a 30-day rotation in July 2012. The brigade's training mission was focused on improving unit readiness in a highly stressful environment.

During the rotation, the sustainment automation support management office (SASMO) successfully established the logistics information system network, which includes 8 very small aperture terminals (VSATs) for 5 forward operating bases (FOBs), 12 Combat Service Support Automated Information Systems Interfaces (CAISIs), 8 voice over interface protocol (VOIP) phones, 18 Standard Army Maintenance Systems–Enhanced (SAMS–Es), and 12 Medical Communications for Combat Casualty Care (MC4) systems.

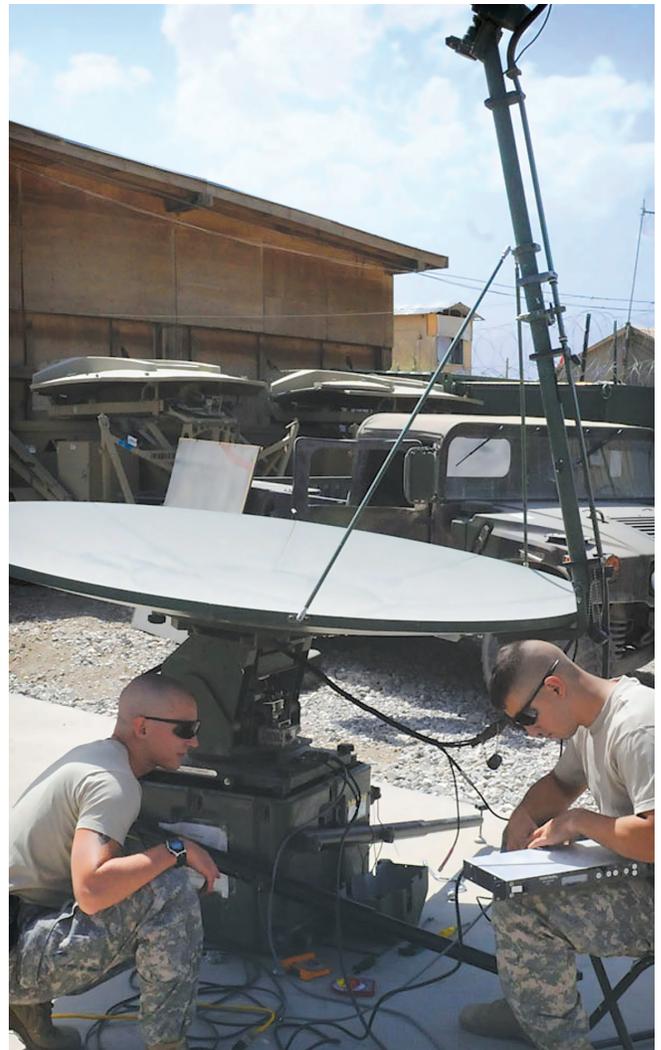
Setting Up VSAT

The VSAT is a two-way satellite dish that provides Nonsecure Internet Protocol Router Network data to satellites in orbit. In turn, the VSAT communicates with the logistics information systems, providing network connectivity within the brigade.

Upon arrival at JRTC, the SASMO ensured that multiple VSATs were placed at each FOB location. This was done to enable immediate replacement of a VSAT if it quit working, minimizing the impact on operations.

Using the VSATs for CAISI communications allowed the SASMO to expand the network to multiple locations at each FOB, which provided network connectivity to the MC4 at each FOB's aid station. The motor pools ran the VOIP phones off of six VSATs and one CAISI, which provided the battalion maintenance sections a secondary means of communication.

In an effort to maintain status on all systems across



Sergeants Matthew Grey and William Hemingway, C Company, Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, 101st Airborne Division, troubleshoot a problem with a very small aperture terminal. (Photo by SGT Grant Matthes)

the brigade's area of operations, the SASMO tested What's Up Gold software, which provided real-time information about the status of the network by sending pings to each device across the battlefield. This software proved to be beneficial because it allowed the SASMO to see when a VSAT, CAISI, VOIP phone, computer, or any other device lost connectivity and to address the issue instantly.

Setting Up MC4

The greatest challenge during the JRTC rotation was the setup of the MC4 computers. The first obstacle was the setup of the Defense Medical Logistics Standard Support (DMLSS) Customer Assistance Module (DCAM) program on the brigade medical supply office's (BMSO's) MC4. The SASMO worked with the medical logistics support operations office to coordinate information with the BMSO and the medical logistics branch of Fort Polk's Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital.

During this process, the SASMO created an interface protocol for the hospital computer, which allowed data to pass through the firewall. Once the battalion aid stations had DCAM software configured on their computer systems, they were able to place supply requests up to the BMSO. Once the BMSO consolidated the supply requests, the order was placed with the hospital's medical logistics branch. This process was efficient and effective for medical operations because it expedited all supply requests up to BMSO.

The second challenge that MC4 posed was in configuring the Armed Forces Health Longitudinal Technology Application—Theater (AHLTA—T). The AHLTA—T is used by medical staff to digitally document any outpatient and inpatient care via an MC4 laptop. In order for AHLTA—T to function, the SASMO had to coordinate directly with the Theater Medical Data Store (TMDS) and the MC4 helpdesk.

TMDS is a web-based tool used by medical providers to view a servicemember's medical treatment data and history. Coordination with the MC4 helpdesk was critical because it required a warning order for a new site to be activated. The physician assistant was responsible for inputting primary contact information to finalize the creation of the account.

The MC4 helpdesk also required the SASMO to fill out a joining report over the Secret Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNET). The MC4 helpdesk provided the information for a SIPRNET website as well as the information that had to be sent. After the MC4 helpdesk received the information from the warning order and the joining report from the SIPRNET website, the helpdesk emailed a file containing directions for connecting AHLTA—T to TMDS. This enabled the aid stations to send patient information up to TMDS.

All aid station MC4s were setup in a server-client



Sergeants Darrell Coffman and William Hemingway, C Company, Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, 101st Airborne Division, troubleshoot a problem with a VSAT. (Photo by SGT Grant Matthes)

configuration when multiple MC4 systems were present at that aid station. When an aid station had only one MC4, it was setup in a stand-alone configuration.

Communication is a critical element on and off the battlefield, especially when in a combat zone. During the 30-day rotation to JRTC, the SASMO ensured that all systems—specifically the network connection for the logistics information system computers, CSS, VSAT, CAISI, VOIP, and SAMS—E—were all operational and the brigade's mission set would not be interrupted. The synchronization of the AHLTA—T, TMDS, and MC4 allowed medical providers to maintain documented data on patients' medical histories within a combat zone, which provided information continuity for all medical providers within the brigade.

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