



U.S. Army Sgt. Brittany Deturo, weapons quality assurance specialist with the 401st Army Field Support Battalion-Kuwait, checks the gap between the charging handle and the body of a M2 .50-caliber machine gun in the weapons maintenance facility of Army Prepositioned Stocks-5 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Aug. 17, 2019. (U.S. Army photo by Kevin Fleming)

Supply Discipline

By 1st Sgt. Andrei Williamson

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The supply system in the Army has greatly evolved throughout the history of the Army. In the beginning the supply system was not very effective or efficient. Not a lot of focus was placed on the way in which the system was run and everyone just expected to always have what they needed to do the job. They just didn't realize or sometimes care, what the supply system was really about.

As time went on, individuals noticed that supplies were not always available and started to see how it affected their job. It was soon realized that if everyone took responsibility for their property and equipment, they would have what they needed. As technology became more advanced through the years the supply system has become more efficient, which clearly enabled the success of the mission. Through the years a great supply system was born largely out of individual discipline.

Supply discipline is the key to ensuring that the supply system will work. One of the best ways to maintain a great system is to support and enforce the Command Supply Discipline Program (CSDP) within your unit. From the beginning, responsibility – individual, leader, and organizational – has always been at the forefront of what makes the supply system truly work. The responsibility of supply discipline starts from the command all the way down to the individual. The commander is ultimately responsible, but every individual needs to be aware of their own responsibility within the supply system and that starts with discipline.

In today's operational environment, supply discipline is a crucial part of the effectiveness of the force. Whether in training or a real world mission, if you do not have the equipment and supplies you need, you will have a difficult time training to the standard and accomplishing

the mission. One of the big reasons why supplies and equipment are not always readily available is because individuals are not held accountable for the equipment for which they are currently responsible.

The commander and leaders must ensure that everyone in the unit understands what supply discipline is and how it impacts everyone in the unit. The best way to make sure everyone understands the system is by making sure CSDP is working in the unit. In today's operating environment we are heavily dependent on teamwork and as a team every individual must do his or her part to ensure the mission is successful. If we cannot be successful today then we will not be successful tomorrow.

Tomorrow's operational environment is nearly unforeseeable but one thing is certain: sustaining our



U.S. Army Soldiers receive and inventory equipment issued to the 41st Field Artillery Brigade at Grafenwoehr, Germany, Sept. 26, 2019. (U.S. Army photo by Matthias Fruth)

force in future operations will require a lot of resources. Funding is always changing and will not always be there but many behave as though our Army has an infinite amount of money and they simply do not worry about being responsible for the equipment they use. All leaders

need to ensure that supply discipline is being enforced at all levels so that the Army will remain the preeminent fighting force on the planet. Leadership involvement is a must to ensure that the unit is combat ready.

Not only do leaders need to ensure that the individuals in their unit are ready for the task, they must also make sure that their equipment is ready as well. If there is no supply discipline, supplies and equipment will not be available and the unit will not be ready for the task. The second and third order effect of this is that in order to make the unit ready, more money and time is needed. This vicious cycle can be avoided if responsibility, accountability, and discipline is enforced within the unit. To be ready for tomorrow's mission, units need to be ready today with the limited resources and equipment they may be provided.

Over the course of my career I have seen both good and bad examples which highlight the importance



U.S. Army Cpl. Evans, an augmentee working with the Supply Support Activities Platoon, Atlas Distribution Company, 101st Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, processes recently arrived items at a logistics yard in Grafenwoehr, Germany, Sept. 4, 2019. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Adam Decker)

of supply discipline. As a section chief, I can recall the first time I did not have a piece of equipment I needed to train my Soldiers. I didn't have the equipment to train because I failed to keep accountability of the equipment. I noticed how it not only impacted my ability to train but also the ability of my peers to train their Soldiers as I had to borrow their equipment in order to accomplish my own training mission. At that point my platoon sergeant pulled me aside and said I had failed my Soldiers and hurt the platoon. After talking to the platoon sergeant and receiving a statement of charges, I realized how serious keeping accountability of my equipment is and why supply discipline is such an important part of the unit's success.

During my career I have also seen how well supply discipline works within a unit. It all starts with enforcing standards and holding individuals accountable. When I was a platoon sergeant, I would make sure I followed the CSDP and ensured my platoon leader was adhering to the regulations that govern supply. I made sure that all hand receipt holders knew how important responsibility of their equipment was so they would not make the same mistake I had made. They also knew that I would hold them accountable for any piece of equipment they might lose. There were times when I knew my section chiefs hated that it was equipment layout time for our

monthly inventories but they soon realized why it was so important. During a change of command inventory they noticed a few other individuals in the unit receiving a statement of charges for equipment but when it came time for our platoon to be inventoried, the process went smoothly and all of our equipment was accounted for.

In conclusion, the bottom line is that it is all about leader involvement and doing what is expected. There are regulations, policies, and programs that we all must follow to ensure that we are mission capable at all times. Without leaders enforcing the standard and holding people accountable, the system will fail and so will the unit and the Army. I am not saying that this is an easy endeavor. But by putting in the appropriate amount of time and effort into your Command Supply Discipline Program you can go a long way in making sure that your Soldiers are effectively trained and the unit is combat ready for any task they are given.

If you would like to learn more about Supply Discipline and the Command Supply Discipline Program, I recommend you read *Army Regulation 735-5, Property Accountability Policies*, *Army Regulation 710-2, Supply Policy Below National Level*, and *Handbook 10-19, Small Unit Leaders Guide to: The Command Supply Discipline Program Handbook* found at: <https://usacac.army.mil/sites/default/files/publications/10-19.pdf>. ■



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