

GCSS–Army Materiel Management

By Chief Warrant Officer 3 Lasandra A. Talleyrand

In August 2011, the 916th Support Brigade received training from Global Combat Support System–Army (GCSS–Army) master trainers as part of the ongoing operational test of GCSS–Army. This training prepared the support brigade to assume sustainment brigade level materiel management functions for the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) at Fort Irwin, California. This article highlights some of the advantages of GCSS–Army over legacy systems.

GCSS–Army significantly departs from Standard Army Management Information Systems by providing one common platform to control an array of supply, maintenance, property book, financial, and task organization functions. The system uses best practices by focusing on materiel consumption and will not automatically order or reorder items not consumed.

The materiel management function in GCSS–Army, which is used to plan and procure materiel and resources to support the mission of supply support activities (SSAs) and customer units, has been reengineered to facilitate decisionmaking in lieu of data gathering.

One decision-support tool is the “overdue delivery” tool, which helps to manage overdue deliveries by reengineering the old receipt process. Materiel managers can reconcile overdue deliveries daily, eliminating the need to enter and rework the same data in multiple systems.

Another tool that helps materiel managers support the SSA is planned delivery time analysis, which calculates customer wait time (CWT) and, more specifically, requisition wait time (RWT), by sorting and analyzing data by a single materiel, or stock, number. This is the first change to the process for calculating CWT and RWT in more than 30 years. (Before, the wait times for all receipts and requisitions were added together and divided by the number receipts and requisitions to achieve an average.) GCSS–Army allows the materiel manager to more precisely examine CWT and RWT through data analysis by materiel, weapon system designator, or source of fill. This helps materiel managers better procure hard-to-get parts for critical systems.

The SSA will continue to perform basic core functions such as receiving, issuing, and storing. However, GCSS–Army simplifies materiel management by integrating the SSA and its organizational levels (from the plant where the item is produced down to the individual SSA bin) into the same database. This eliminates the need for reconciliations, closeouts, backups, restores, transaction in-and-out processes, and availability file uploads performed daily, weekly, and monthly in the Standard Army

Retail Supply System. Eliminating these multiple tasks makes materiel management simpler and timelier.

Enterprise application software, including that used by GCSS–Army, has changed many naming conventions for supply terms and processes outlined in Army regulation. In legacy systems, a materiel manager worked on the Manager Review File (MRF) for customer units in order to pass a requisition to the SSA or out to wholesale. With GCSS–Army, the MRF is now known as the “release strategy.” In the release strategy, a large number of reason-referred codes are eliminated and only a select set of value-added filters are performed by materiel managers.

When a customer initiates a purchase request for a repair part against a work order, it first has to be approved by the unit budget officer and the brigade support battalion support operations materiel manager. Once the budget officer funds the request, it then becomes a purchase order and is sent to a sustainment brigade materiel manager for final review, approval, and release to the SSA or wholesale.

A purchase order only stops at the sustainment brigade materiel manager if it falls under one of the release strategy checks: high dollar, large quantity, specific material (watches and laptops), sensitive, acquisition/restriction type, expendable, durable and nonexpendable, or item category.

Understanding GCSS–Army, with all of the new terminology can be daunting. That is why GCSS–Army has an aggressive educational strategy and a growing website: <https://www.gcss.army.mil>. The website’s “Education Tab” offers web-based training, and there is an online user’s manual for materiel managers.

GCSS–Army is working well for the 916th Support Brigade and 11th ACR to enable a real-time, logistics common operating picture with reliable logistics information to enhance sustainment, readiness, and combat operations at the National Training Center.

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