

DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY

VOL. 2015, ISSUE 1

# DISTRIBUTION *in Review*



**HELP WANTED: STORIES  
FROM DISTRIBUTION IN  
WEST AFRICA**





## An update from the DLA Distribution commander

Army Brig. Gen. Richard B. Dix  
Commander, Defense Logistics Agency Distribution

Even though we don't all wear a uniform, each of my teammates at Distribution plays an important part in keeping the world safe. Our Expeditionary Team is no exception, and in this issue of the *Review*, I salute you.

I am so proud of the capabilities this team possesses. Even before I was your Commander, I watched you support humanitarian missions here at home with support to hurricanes and floods - providing cots, blankets, and water to those in need. I watched you stand up our first distribution center in a war zone in Afghanistan.

This latest effort in Africa shows just how amazing this team is when called upon to help. You - and many other members of our Distribution family -

As I reflect on my first year as your Commander here at DLA Distribution, one of the accomplishments I am most proud of was our support to the fight to eliminate the Ebola virus in West Africa.

I am so proud of the many members of our Expeditionary Team, who worked hand-in-hand with a cadre here at headquarters and teammates at our distribution centers in support of Operation United Assistance. Each of you readily stepped up to the plate for this mission - whether it was traveling to Africa, or shipping items at lightning speed here in Pennsylvania.

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### DISTRIBUTION in Review

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**ON THE COVER: CHRIS EARLY, A MEMBER OF DLA DISTRIBUTION SUSQUEHANNA'S EXPEDITIONARY TEAM, DRIVES A ROUGH TERRAIN CARGO HANDLER ONTO A C-17 GLOBEMASTER III AIRCRAFT, IN SUPPORT OF OPERATION UNITED ASSISTANCE. PHOTO BY JESSICA ROMAN.**



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# HELP WANTED: STORIES FROM DISTRIBUTION IN WEST AFRICA

BY EMILY TSAMBIAS, DLA DISTRIBUTION PUBLIC AFFAIRS

If you were flown into a rainforest in one of the poorest countries in the world and tasked with receiving, storing and issuing items to support the construction and operation of treatment units to battle the deadliest Ebola outbreak on record, what would be your first step?

To aid in your decision, know that the main port for importing items, most of which will be flown in or delivered via ship, is temporarily unavailable due to hang-ups in obtaining approval for use; currently, no materiel handling equipment has yet been procured; you have one small warehouse for storage, but you do not know how much materiel you will be receiving; and

there are not enough trucks to move the items you will soon have in your possession for distribution.

Also, manpower is in short supply, the country's infrastructure is badly damaged from a civil war, you need to inventory all your items by hand, and it's going to rain every day. Sound like a logistical nightmare?

Lastly, factor in the obvious: you have to be away from your family, for an indeterminate amount of time, in a potentially dangerous environment.

Have you decided on that first step?

Ultimately, 28 DLA Distribution

team members readily accepted that challenge, and, without a moment's hesitation, immersed themselves in the planning and execution stages of a task that seemed nearly impossible.

Within 90 days, the team had set up distribution operations in warehouses located in Liberia and Senegal, created an accountable, manual system to receive, store and issue items, and executed over 1,300 truck transportation missions to assist in the erection of 15 ETUs.

According to the team, the mission wasn't easy, but, despite its challenges, was worth it. Here are the personal accounts of several of those team members.

## UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS MAJ. JOHN SIMPSON: OFFICER IN CHARGE

Unlike many of his fellow teammates, Marine Corps Maj. John Simpson did not have to go to West Africa; he volunteered.

A strategic planning officer within DLA Distribution headquarters' Future Plans directorate, Simpson is not a member of DLA's expeditionary team. Rather, when the mission arose in September 2014, he simply decided he needed to contribute to the team, had the deployment approved by his boss, and prepared to leave without many details of the trip upon which he was embarking.

Despite an initial lack of mission analysis and concept of operations, Simpson says he knew deploying was the right thing to do. "The situation was still developing as I was preparing to leave [for Africa]. Everything was very loose. Scenarios were changing so fast, and new knowledge was coming in, so the CONOPS was constantly changing; but I love a challenge, and I also knew the situation was critical and people were dying."

Several years earlier, Simpson had served as the operations officer providing logistics support to Operation Tomodachi, the humanitarian mission to support Japan in aiding those affected by the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami; a mission, he says, that had many knowns. "The U.S. had a good relationship with the Japanese government, so coordination of efforts was straightforward. While my experience did prepare me for the mission in West Africa, I knew I would

be facing many more challenges."

Emotions were high when he arrived, says Simpson. "Coordination between the Liberian leadership and local entities was still evolving so people were less understanding about our presence. But in spite of this, the support of the people and government officials was critical to our success and enabled us to focus on the mission at hand."

The greatest issue was that the area's infrastructure was unknown. "My first objective was to assess capabilities. While we had an understanding of the mission, which was to support the establishment of the ETUs, I didn't know if the available storage and transportation options would be adequate."

Planning for the builds mostly occurred in reverse. Once the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division came to an agreement with the Liberian government on the dates clinics would be opened in each county, Simpson and his team went to work, pre-packaging items for ETUs based on estimated bills of materiel.

However, with one small warehouse and a trucking contract in place, he had to simultaneously focus on finding more storage space and determining an appropriate number of trucks to have in place for transporting the needed items. "It was difficult to keep up with the rapidly increasing flow of cargo needed to sustain the ETU builds and arriving forces."

Keeping the tasks orderly, although difficult at times, was essential. In total, Distribution was slated to assist in the receipt and delivery of items to support the standup of 30 ETUs. Two 100 bed hospitals had been established prior to Simpson's arrival, but moving the items to the build sites was difficult due to the quality of the roads, and the fact that it rained every day made the situation even more frustrating for the team. Also, a container yard had not yet been secured to serve as a storage area for emptied seavan containers.

To solve the latter issue, luck became a main factor. "I knew I had 500 containers coming in on a ship. I had been out scouting good land to set up a container yard, when a native Liberian came to our team and said 'I have to help. I have 23 acres in Buchanan if you need.'"

To combat the former, a strong relationship with the local trucking union was essential. "Once it was determined when an ETU would be going up, my transportation team would get the map and meet with the Liberian trucking union to figure out a path for travel. Trucks were traveling dirt roads that would frequently get washed out. Determining alternate paths for delivery was extremely challenging."

Keeping contact with drivers to track deliveries also proved a challenge. Despite in country cell towers, if a driver was stuck in the mud and his cell phone battery died or he was out of range, it was extremely difficult to determine where the driver was

DLA DISTRIBUTION'S WAREHOUSE IN MONROVIA, LIBERIA.







stranded. Simpson says the team once lost contact with a 12-truck convoy for two weeks.

“We were constantly adjusting on the fly. Sometimes we would send out scouts to see if roads were passable and safe. Conditions made estimating delivery timelines much more difficult,” said Simpson.

Another issue was finding drivers

willing to accept the longer routes to the ETU build sites. Initially, the trucking contract stated that drivers would be paid per load delivered. Drivers were hesitant to accept longer routes, knowing they would be paid the same to perform the shorter drives from the port to the warehouses and could ultimately complete more deliveries. “We requested a change in the contract to state drivers would be paid a daily rate and that there

would be two cell phones per truck, significantly reducing the chance of losing a driver while they were on the road and increasing our long-haul drivers.”

Putting out these types of fires was the norm, says Simpson.

One of the most challenging issues the team encountered was the offload and delivery of a 60-ton Rough Terrain

Container Handler, which had to be flown in via a C-17 Globemaster III to accommodate its size. Initially, the plan was to have a contractor haul the machine from the airport to the container yard, approximately 55 miles away. When the contractor announced it was unable to accommodate the move, the team was left with a dilemma. A large order was scheduled to arrive very soon via ship, and the equipment was needed to handle the hundreds of containers that were to be offloaded and stored.

“We decided to road march [the RTCH] from the airport to the container yard. Obviously, the equipment is not built for this length of travel, but we were slow and methodical in our efforts and, despite several stops to cool the engine, we arrived safely at our destination six hours later. The manufacturer [of the RTCH] was surprised when we told them what their equipment had done.”

Together, the team was consistently overcoming obstacles. “I was very fortunate the way everything worked out. Leading civilians was a definite change of pace for me, but I had DLA’s best.”

The work could be frustrating, the hours were long and the team was without the comforts of home, but according to Simpson, when he left Monrovia in early January, he left with a rewarding feeling. “This is part of who I am and what I do. I just hope that in a small way, I’ve made an

impact that makes the world a better place.”

“We ended up supporting the construction and operation of 15 ETUs. To see the locals coming up to you in the streets and wanting to thank you for the work your country is doing to save their people, it was touching.”

During a February 2015 DLA Distribution Town Hall, commander Army Brig. Gen. Richard Dix called Simpson “One of the best logisticians I’ve ever met.” Simpson, however, humbly denies the title. “I got lucky. I couldn’t have accomplished the things I did without my team. These guys put their lives on hold to go fight the unknown. They did an amazing job.”

### JASON ZEPPUHAR: SUSQUEHANNA EXPEDITIONARY TEAM MEMBER

Jason Zeppuhar had been with DLA Distribution’s Expeditionary Team for two and half years and had previously deployed to assist with projects at Portsmouth, Va., and Ft. Knox. When he heard he was headed to Monrovia, Liberia, he was ready for a new challenge.

Despite sadness at leaving his newborn son and other small children, with two days’ notice he prepared to head to Texas to receive preventative medicine for his trip to Africa. The mission was still undefined but Zeppuhar says he wasn’t concerned with what the actual work would be or the danger of the location. “This is not voluntary. I signed up to go and I was prepared to go anywhere I was needed.”

He was curious, he says, about the working and living conditions. “I knew I could be gone for up to six months. I assumed I would be

sleeping in a tent, but had no idea what the warehouse would be like or what type of clothes to pack.”

Once on the ground, Zeppuhar discovered, happily, he would not be sleeping outside. For the first month or so, he stayed in what he calls the “embassy apartments,” a group of suites attached to the former U.S. embassy in Liberia. From there, his team moved into condos.

The warehouse was not such a happy surprise, however. “It turned out to be four walls and a tin roof that held in the humidity and the diesel fumes released from the trucks we were loading and unloading.”

In addition to the lack of sensory appeal, the warehouse was not laid out well, and the lack of DSS, DLA’s main warehousing system, made receipting, stowing and issuing materiel difficult, says Zeppuhar. “Initially, we had no

MARINE CORPS MAJ. JOHN SIMPSON, LEFT, WATCHES A SHIP ARRIVING IN THE PORT OF BUCHANAN IN MONROVIA, LIBERIA.







stackable storage racks, so storage could only be built out, rather than up, which would have saved space. Keeping track of items manually was also frustrating. The locals would be unloading materiel while we tried to get a count.”

He says once the group developed a system for writing out receipted materiel, the process was smoother. “We’d pick one, consistent name for like items- say ‘gloves,’ for example- and when we were unloading that item, each man knew to put the item into the spreadsheet by that name.”

Another challenge was remaining cautious of avoiding disease. “I packed mostly shorts and tees, but we were required to be in long pants and long sleeve shirts at the port to keep our bodies covered. I ended up buying ten shirts for \$5 off the street. We were also constantly washing our hands in chlorine to avoid transmittal. There were billboards everywhere reminding people to wash their hands.”

One great advantage to serving in the field with the customer, says Zeppuhar, was viewing DLA Distribution’s work from the other end of the supply chain. “When I first arrived, we were receiving local lumber. It arrived loose on a dump truck. We had no supplies to prepare these for issue. I needed a bander, tape and skids to make the lumber easier to ship out. I reached back to New Cumberland, and DLA Distribution Susquehanna got me the supplies I needed to get the job done. It was really neat to see the materiel

arrive with New Cumberland labels. I truly got to see the whole process.”

He says the locals made the trip enjoyable, as well. “We only had one day off. But that wasn’t an issue for our local workers. They were doing hard work, but they knew work was limited and were always smiling. We really wanted to show them how much we appreciated them, so we threw a party before we left and made their favorite

meal. It was the best meal I had the entire trip.”

As Christmas approached, Zeppuhar says he was ready to return to his family. He left many of his belongings behind, giving away his clothing and air mattress to locals. Following his 21-day quarantine, he celebrated Christmas with his family in mid-January, presenting his children with the carvings and necklaces he had purchased in Monrovia.

Zeppuhar says he explained the reason for his absence to his children, and, because of their ages, they didn’t fully understand. But he hopes one day they will. “I didn’t sign up to pick and choose where the mission is; I did it to help my country. Everyone that went to West Africa played a great role, remained flexible and didn’t complain. The whole experience was very humbling.”

## WAYNE MYERS: DEPUTY TO THE OFFICER IN CHARGE

An employee with the federal government for 32 years, travel was very familiar to Wayne Myers. Supporting the customer on site in West Africa, however, was new to him. “I have served as a lead on a variety of projects doing data collection at many of our distribution sites around the globe, so I have participated in a lot of travel. Liberia was a lot further forward; from data gathering and plan development to the operational end in an austere environment.”

Myers is not a member of the Expeditionary Team; rather, he was asked to make the trip to share his diverse knowledge of distribution and to serve as deputy to the officer-in-charge. “The scope and volume of the mission was much bigger than anticipated. The team was short staffed and I was excited to take advantage of a unique opportunity to be of assistance to my country and to do something that was just the right thing to do.”

Despite his excitement, Myers was also a bit hesitant to leave home. “When I was initially asked to go, I was told I’d be in Africa probably seven days or less, but definitely no more than fourteen. I was going to scout out potential warehouse locations but then another team member successfully completed that mission, so my trip was turned off.”

When Myers was once again asked to make the trip, this time to serve as deputy, the timeframe had changed. “Leadership came back and said I needed to go for up to six months. I had to leave one week later. My wife was left to manage the household, which included our two 21-month old granddaughters living with us, and the facts about Ebola were still unclear, so I was leaving my wife with a lot to handle.”

Once on the ground in Liberia, the first thing Myers says he noticed was that the conditions were challenging and personnel were spread thin between the APOD, port and container yard. The entire country was suffering from a lack of infrastructure; the temperature was in the nineties; there was heavy humidity; and it rained regularly and heavily even into what was referred to as the “dry season.” A large, fenced-in area had been turned into a container yard and heavy container-handling equipment was sinking into the mud. There were no spare parts for equipment repair or maintenance.

“Our guys had to get very creative to work with what they had. The one thing that really blew me away was how they all stepped up. It was an impressive thing to see. These guys were in an uncomfortable situation, thrust into roles they didn’t normally fill, working a mission with tight



JASON ZEPPUHAR, SECOND ROW FROM BACK, SECOND FROM RIGHT, POSE WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE DLA DISTRIBUTION EXPEDITIONARY TEAM AND LOCALS FROM THE AREA DURING A PARTY BEFORE THE TEAM DEPARTED.





MEMBERS OF THE DLA DISTRIBUTION EXPEDITIONARY TEAM POSE AT THEIR LOCATION IN MONROVIA, LIBERIA.

deadlines, with literal life or death consequences, and they all stepped up.”

He says the 18-person team was handling a “mind-boggling mission;” one that greatly outweighed the manpower and resources available. “Major Simpson [the officer-in-charge] was the right man, in the right place, at the right time. The skills, experience and personality he brought to the table enabled the team to accomplish what they did and it was impressive to see how hard they worked in poor conditions and met the deadlines regardless of the difficulties. Depending upon the site, they were

working in some combination of dirt/dust covered floors, poor lighting, no ventilation, in a mud pit with continuous rain, over dirt roads in high temperatures and humidity. I saw guys stepping into leadership roles that had never been tasked to lead. Everyone met the challenge. They knew the requirements did not go away just because it was raining and because things got tough.”

According to Myers, the spirit of the local citizens was also remarkable. “It really struck me how, in my multiple conversations with locals, they said they were really without hope prior

to the U.S.’s arrival. They felt the rest of the world had turned its back on them and just left them to die. Then America showed up and they knew something would happen. It really made me proud to be an American.”

He says that life in Liberia was similar to the U.S. in some ways. “Most of the people spoke English and there was cable with American movies- although they were ten years old. They had a good cellular service that we used to stay in communication with our sites, and there were some good restaurants. The economy ran on U.S. currency, but it was a cash economy- no debit or credit cards were used. The big

difference, obviously, was the wealth disparity. Locals lived on \$1.25 per day. The average person was working meal to meal.”

Another difference was the rampant disease. Aside from Ebola, Yellow Fever, AIDS, and Malaria were real threats if proper care was not taken to avoid the illnesses, says Myers. He says that threat weighed heavily on his wife at home, even though he wasn’t aware until he had returned home. “She was nervous because I was working

around Liberians. Even though I said it was fine, she was seeing the news. She knew people were dying and was scared I could catch Ebola or something else and bring it home.”

After missing Thanksgiving and Christmas with family, as well as his birthday and his wife’s birthday, Myers says he was ready to head home in early January. “When it was time to go, we were ready. We had worked a lot of hours every day, for months.

Our part was done; the ETUs were built.”

Following his departure from Liberia, Myers headed into quarantine and reflected on his time spent in the country. “I was excited to come home to my family; happy that I could alleviate some of the fear by participating in the quarantine; and, overall, just really proud of the work that our team did. If DLA hadn’t been there, this [outbreak] might still be going on. It was truly great to be part of this mission.”



PETE TODD, SECOND FROM LEFT, AND WAYNE MYERS, THIRD FROM LEFT, OTHER MEMBERS OF THE DLA DISTRIBUTION EXPEDITIONARY TEAM AND A MEMBER OF DLA TROOP SUPPORT MEDICAL, POSE WITH SUPPLIES IN WEST AFRICA.





## PETE TODD, SUSQUEHANNA EXPEDITIONARY TEAM MEMBER

A 23-year retired Marine, Peter Todd wasn't worried about finding his way in a third-world country. Describing himself as flexible, he was confident that wherever DLA sent him, he'd be able to succeed.

A member of the DLA Distribution expeditionary team for seven years, Todd assisted in major projects for the organization such as the DLA Distribution Warner Robins, Ga., transition from a contractor-operated to government-run operation, Exercise Balikatan in the Philippines, missions in Kuwait and Afghanistan, and humanitarian assistance operations for Hurricane Ike in Texas.

He says that while he was a bit nervous to enter an environment where a somewhat mysterious and highly-communicable disease was running rampant, he knew that, ultimately, he would fare well in the mission, which was still unknown.

Todd's original deployment plan had him head for the CONUS Replacement Center in Fort Bliss, Texas, for his obligatory medical checks one week out from his scheduled arrival in West Africa.

However, he received a phone call two days before he was to report to the CRC, requesting that he board a plane to Germany that afternoon. Unsure of the next steps, he quickly planned for a possible six-month deployment and informed his family of the change in plans.

"I was apprehensive, not knowing all the facts about Ebola, and I still didn't know what my role would be once on the ground in Africa. I also didn't know whether I'd be sleeping in tents or indoors- everything was an unknown. I arrived in Manheim and got my shots and country clearances. Soon after, I landed in Monrovia to await the rest of my team and my first task."

After linking up with the team's officer-in-charge, he learned of DLA Distribution's mission and the challenges the team was currently facing. More warehouse space was needed because what the team currently had would not be adequate for the amount of incoming materiel.

Additionally, access to the main port where most of the materiel would be received was an issue. The process for obtaining port access required a request to the U.S. embassy, which was then pushed to the Liberian government for approval; a process that needed repeated on a bi-weekly basis.

Once the other members of the team arrived in-country, Todd was tasked with managing incoming inventory. With daily tasks including the loading and unloading of trucks, forecasting materiel arrival, and inventorying materiel by hand onto an Excel spreadsheet, he says the days were long and arduous. "Items were coming in from different directions, in different quantities and varying conditions. We

would count everything up, check the paperwork, and then input everything manually. We had no idea when anything would arrive. We might have 2000 boards of lumber anticipated to arrive, and 1200 would come today, and another 800 tomorrow. We had to be flexible; this was life in a third world country."

Another difficulty for Todd and his team was unloading trucks. Locally-sourced materiel such as cinder blocks and lumber didn't arrive packaged in a way that made for easy handling. "We unloaded items hand to hand, one at a time. It was extremely strenuous."

Amplifying the laboriousness, warehouse conditions were not ideal for the men. Humidity hung in the air inside the iron warehouses, which contained no ventilation. Todd says when local trucks backed up to the only two bay doors, the noxious fumes filled the enclosure, creating furnace-like conditions.

A small relief came, says Todd, when the decision was made to implement DLA's main warehousing system, Distribution Standard System, to begin tracking materiel. "Once implementation was complete, we were able to create Materiel Release Orders, and inventory and materiel visibility was much easier."

To forget the stresses of the long work days over the three-month deployment, Todd says he looked to his teammates, including the local nationals. "We only received one day off, and that was for Thanksgiving. But when we closed down one of our warehouses in Monrovia, it was

decided that we would have a thank-you party for the local workers. A few of my peers opted for a pizza and soda party, and it occurred to me that this may not be the local national's first choice. I asked him to check with our local national friends. With excitement, the locals asked for chicken and rice. We all had a great time celebrating them and their efforts."

After three months in Liberia, Todd and his teammates transitioned

their mission to the Army. The last shipment, Personal Protective Equipment for those working in the ETUs, was to a Forward Logistics Base, part of USAID. DLA Distribution's work was complete.

"When we arrived, the plan was to not use DSS. The warehouses were empty, and the infrastructure was horrid. Transportation was difficult, and everything was a learning experience for us. We were busy from the first day to the last and we did a great job with

what we had to work with. I am very proud of our work, and it wouldn't have gone as smoothly with a different team," said Todd.

He says the ultimate gratification came when, after returning home, he received an email from one of his local national coworkers in Monrovia. "The message said that the kids were allowed to return to school. The president had declared Liberia 'Ebola-free.' It was a great feeling." ◊



A NEWS BILLBOARD IN LIBERIA.





## DLA DISTRIBUTION WELCOMES NEW COMMANDERS AND DIRECTORS



**NAVY SUPPLY CORPS CAPT. HARRY T. THETFORD, JR.  
COMMANDER, DLA DISTRIBUTION NORFOLK, VA.**

Thetford assumed command of DLA Distribution Norfolk, Va., on April 24, 2015. He received his commission in February 1989 from Officer Candidate School in Newport, R.I. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Finance and Management and a Master of Business Administration from Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C.

Thetford most recently served as the force supply officer of Naval Surface Force Atlantic. He most recently deployed as the chief of staff, Central Command Joint Theater Support Contracting Command, headquartered at Camp As Sayliyah, Qatar, in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

**ARMY LT. COL. JOHN T. TURNER, JR.  
COMMANDER, DLA DISTRIBUTION TOBYHANNA, PA**

Turner assumed command of DLA Distribution Tobyhanna, Pa., on May 21, 2015. He is a native of Okarche, Okla. He is a 1996 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, NY, where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in International Relations and received an active Army commission in the Infantry. He later branch transferred into the Quartermaster Corps.

Turner continued his education by completing a Master of Arts in Transportation and Logistics Management from American Military University.

Prior to his selection as commander, DLA Distribution Tobyhanna, he served as army watch officer, Army Operations Center, National Military Command Center at the Pentagon.



**ARMY LT. COL. BRIAN K. RICHIE  
COMMANDER, DLA DISTRIBUTION CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS**

Richie assumed command of DLA Distribution Corpus Christi, Texas, on June 11, 2015. He was born and raised in Raphine, Va. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from the Virginia Military Institute.

His most recent assignment was support operations officer with the 501st Sustainment Brigade.

**ARMY LT. COL. ANTHONY A. STOEGER  
COMMANDER, DLA DISTRIBUTION RED RIVER, TEXAS**

Stoeger assumed command of DLA Distribution Red River, Texas, on June 12, 2015. He was born in Two Rivers, Wis. He received his commission as a lieutenant in the Ordnance Corps from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Management.

His most recent assignment was as brigade executive officer for the 916th Support Brigade.



**MR. BRIAN BURKHOLDER  
DIRECTOR, DLA DISTRIBUTION JACKSONVILLE, FLA.**

Burkholder became the director of DLA Distribution Jacksonville, Fla., on Aug. 27, 2014. He was born in Allentown, Pa., and enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1986, where he spent six years as a field artillery surveyor.

After completion of his Army enlistment, Burkholder was selected as a materials handler with DLA Distribution Europe in January 2002. He served in a variety of positions with DLA Distribution from 2002 to 2013. In 2013, he joined the General Services Administration as the director of the Eastern Supply Operations Center, until his return to DLA Distribution.

**MR. KENT E. WHEELER  
DIRECTOR, DLA DISTRIBUTION WARNER ROBINS, GA.**

Wheeler became director of DLA Distribution Warner Robins, Ga., in March 2015. He is a retired United States Marine Corps major. He is a 1990 graduate of Wheeling Jesuit University, and was commissioned a 2d Lieutenant in the Marine Corps.

Since his retirement in 2010, Wheeler has been working as a program lead and business developer for corporate companies. In 2014, he returned back to DLA and was assigned as the DLA liaison officer and planner to Special Operations Command Central.



**MS. MACY OOKA  
DIRECTOR, DLA DISTRIBUTION GUAM, MARIANAS**

Ooka became the director of DLA Distribution Guam, Marianas, in April 2015. A Pacific Islander from the Island of Guam, Ooka has been employed with the federal government for 23 years. She began her career during Operation Desert Storm in 1991 as a temporary GS-01 with Naval Supply Depot Security.

In October 2004, DLA Distribution established Guam as a distribution center, and Ooka joined the DLA team as a quality assurance evaluator. She has served in various positions with the distribution center since that time.





## ROTA HELICOPTER INTERMODAL MOVEMENT AIMS FOR LARGE COST SAVINGS

BY SANDRA TURNER, DLA DISTRIBUTION SIGONELLA, ITALY, AT ROTA, SPAIN, SITE DIRECTOR

DLA Distribution Sigonella, Italy's detachment in Rota, Spain, is working hard to assist in a U.S. European and Central Command-directed operation to modify helicopter intermodal operations. The initiative focuses on experimentally moving helicopters by land and sea verses air, and is poised

to save the U.S. a significant amount of money.

Previously, deployed helicopters were flown via large military transport aircraft from within the continental U.S. to their overseas location. Due to the significant cost associated with airlifting the helos, however, the combatant commands have been seeking more economical means of transportation.

This is where DLA Distribution Sigonella at Rota stepped in to assist.

In late March, the team participated in a two-day, two-phase operation to move helicopters and supporting materiel to a forward-operating site. The first day consisted of the continuous transportation of tri-walls, propellers and other support gear from the vessel, the Green Cove out of Mobile, Ala., three miles to the nearby

DLA DISTRIBUTION SIGONELLA, ITALY, AT ROTA, SPAIN, PARTICIPATED IN THE MOVEMENT OF 48 HELICOPTERS AND OTHER CARGO AS PART OF AN INITIATIVE AIMED AT SAVING MONEY BY MOVING THE ITEMS BY LAND AND SEA VERSES AIR.



HELICOPTERS, INCLUDING APACHES, BLACKHAWKS, AND CHINOOKS, ARE UNLOADED FROM THE GREEN COVE OUT OF MOBILE, ALA., FOR TRANSPORT TO THE NEARBY AIRFIELD AT ROTA NAVAL AIR STATION TO BE UPLOADED TO AIRCRAFT FOR FORWARD SHIPMENT TO AN OPERATIONAL SITE.

airfield at Rota Naval Air Station to be uploaded to aircraft for forward shipment to an operational site. The second day, the team transported 48 helos, including Apaches, Blackhawks, and Chinooks, via convoy, with assistance from the Tactical Air Support for Maritime Operations and its Materiel Handling Equipment. Over the course of the day, it took five convoys an average approximately an hour each to cover the short distance, in order to adhere to strict safety standards.

Retrograde cargo is anticipated to be returned to the U.S. from its

operational site via a similar process. Units will be flown back to Rota, where they will be transported from the airfield to the pier to arrive CONUS via commercial vessel.

“Considering the initiative’s associated cost avoidance is roughly \$5 to 7 million per year, we realized it was extremely important to successfully complete the operation and prove its viability,” said Freddie Hildrich, DLA Distribution Sigonella, Italy, director.

Hildrich added that the operation was a coordinated event between many players. DLA Distribution Sigonella

at Rota’s port manager prepared the pier to remove any obstacles that could have impeded the evolution. Naval Station Air Operations and Air Mobility Command Rota prepared the units to safely operate on the airfield. The Naval Supply Systems Command provided expert technical oversight to the evolution. And, finally, the Security Department and the local Fire Department provided for safe movement of the equipment and cargo.

“The entire team at Rota did a remarkable job and we are very proud to have assisted in this operation,” said Hildrich.





## DLA DIRECTOR HOSTS DISTRIBUTION TOWN HALL, SHARES LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES, FUTURE OUTLOOK

BY EMILY TSAMBIAS, DLA DISTRIBUTION PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Navigating DLA through an unknown future with affordable continuous process improvements, increased accountability and resilient team members was the focus of the DLA Director's first address to the DLA Distribution workforce in a town hall May 11.

To introduce Air Force Lt. Gen. Andy Busch, DLA Distribution commander Army Brig. Gen. Richard Dix told the audience, "He's a people's leader. He walks the path he expects everyone to take."

Defining that path, Busch led the audience through his guiding principles for leading the organization. "It's my pledge to you that I will maintain an 'action orientation.' We will continue to move out on problems and get things done. I will do my best to set

tough goals. I also pledge to help you all remain resilient enough to take on everything that comes your way in your personal and professional lives."

He says that the Agency's posture of making promises and keeping them has served the organization well in the past. "I've been out meeting with the combatant commanders. While I feel some are underserved and we could be doing more, they are extremely complimentary of what they're getting out of DLA."

Busch also noted that the combatant commanders are not the only ones recognizing DLA's hard work. "I can tell you that [former] Secretary Hagel, Secretary Carter, and Frank Kendall, undersecretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics, know about the great things DLA is doing. Don't underestimate the national visibility of what you do."

Ensuring that customers and stakeholders understand DLA's mission and progress toward audit readiness and financial stewardship is important with the challenges DLA, and greater DoD, face in the coming year, Busch said. "The challenge is getting bigger every day. Sequestration is the 'Law of the Land' and every day that Congress does not come up with a solution, we move closer to sequestration. We need to accept that all the things we thought couldn't happen can, and we need to keep that in mind for all of our future planning."

Avenues to navigate that uncertain future, Busch said, include strengthening DLA's alignment to Kendall's strategic message toward Better Buying Power, which focuses on acquisition savings and improved buying power. "The tenants of Mr. Kendall's 'Better Buying Power' initiative are clear guidance of what he wants us to do- focus on continuous process improvements and affordable innovation," he said. "I want you to know that I have not had a single success as a General Officer that wasn't tied to CPI. I know that DLA and Distribution has invested in people that have skills in CPI and we need to harness that and really focus on those areas of our business that need improvement."

Additionally, Busch emphasized the need to stay the course following DLA's 2015 audits, saying "Admiral Harnitchek got us up to audit readiness. Andy Busch gets audit sustainment. What I want you all to realize is that this isn't a final exam. You won't just take it and walk out the door. We need to carry this into the future, otherwise all this effort will go to waste."

Closing the town hall, Busch fielded question from the audience. In response to the question "Where do you see Distribution 5 to 10 years from now?" Busch answered, "Distribution was very relevant coming off the last 13 to 14 years of war. Now that the volume of materiel moving back through the supply chain is diminishing, you need to continue to be innovative and find new ways to do work."



DLA DIRECTOR AIR FORCE LT. GEN. ANDY BUSCH LEADS HIS FIRST TOWN HALL WITH THE DLA DISTRIBUTION WORKFORCE MAY 11. (PHOTO BY BRIANNE BENDER, DLA DISTRIBUTION PUBLIC AFFAIRS)

## EUROPE DISTRIBUTION CENTER SUPPORTS MOVEMENT OF FITNESS CONTAINERS

BY JOHN GALLAGHER, DLA DISTRIBUTION EUROPE

In conjunction with the United Service Organization-Europe, Defense Logistics Agency Distribution Europe moved containers filled with fitness equipment to U.S. soldiers participating in land-training exercises in Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

USO2GO, a program that delivers the USO's most popular services to troops in remote and restricted areas, worked with BeaverFit UK to have four containers of fitness equipment delivered to DLA Distribution Europe in Gernersheim, Germany. The containers were custom-fabricated to anchor a BeaverFit functional training rig and store equipment necessary to create a multi-modality training center for 40 to 50 personnel.

Once on site at the distribution center, the containers were transhipped to the troops via a weekly dedicated truck that runs to Poland and the Baltics.

The troops are currently in the area participating in training with partners in Poland and the Baltics. The exercise, entitled Operation Atlantic Resolve, aims to bolster the security and capacity of America's Eastern European allies.

Army Lt. Col. Krista Hoffman, DLA Distribution Europe's commander, believes that the transshipment of these items for the forward-deployed U.S. personnel was important. "We regularly ship all classes of items for operations and exercises; but the morale-boosting items that the USO provides just further augment and enhance the personal demand items that the service components are already receiving. We were very happy to be part of this mission."

According to Hoffman, the USO is looking to transship more items through DLA Distribution Europe's Theater Consolidation and Shipping Point for U.S. service members



FITNESS EQUIPMENT FROM THE BEAVERFIT CONTAINERS SHIPPED BY THE UNITED SERVICE ORGANIZATION-EUROPE IS USED BY SOLDIERS FROM 2ND CAVALRY REGIMENT, U.S. ARMY EUROPE, AT THE ADAZI TRAINING AREA NEAR RIGA, LATVIA.

forward-deployed in the U.S. European Command and U.S. Africa Command areas of responsibility.

"As Operation Atlantic Resolve expands to include Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia, DLA Distribution Europe sees more sustainment pushes and additional routes being added to the 22 routes and 41 locations we already support with dedicated weekly trucks," said Hoffman.

BEAVERFIT FITNESS CONTAINERS FROM THE UNITED SERVICE ORGANIZATION-EUROPE ARRIVE AT THE DLA DISTRIBUTION EUROPE THEATER CONSOLIDATION AND SHIPPING POINT.







## TOBYHANNA DISTRIBUTION CENTER TAKES ON NEW STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION FUNCTIONS

BY JESSICA ROMAN, DLA DISTRIBUTION PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Defense Logistics Agency Distribution Tobyhanna, Pa., has extended new storage and distribution programs to 23 new customers, acquired from across the Department of Defense community. These new DLA Distribution customers are unique program manager-owned equipment programs, and include items such as computers, servers, sights for crew-served weapons, different types of electronic countermeasure equipment, and repair parts.

Through DLA Distribution Tobyhanna, participating PMs are able to maintain stocks co-located with

their servicing maintenance activity, while having those stocks controlled on a DoD accountable record that's also audit compliant. Additionally, PMs are seeing cost savings, leveraging DLA Distribution's economical S&D rates in combination with DoD's transportation network and best-value pricing.

"The Tobyhanna Program Manager S&D initiative is a huge win for DoD and DLA," said Joe Faris, DLA Distribution's Business Development director. "We now have 20 Army PMs, two Defense Health Agency PMs, and one Navy PM leveraging our existing capability at DLA Distribution Tobyhanna, supporting maintenance and worldwide customers. This

effort enabled DoD PMs to reduce their costs by eliminating redundant S&D providers into a single service provider."

TYAD, already a retail customer of DLA Distribution Tobyhanna, has the benefit of potential service and manufacturing workload on PMs' serviceable and

unservicable major end items and secondary items stored directly across the street from their production lines.

The transition of PM stocks to DLA Distribution Tobyhanna began in October 2014 and currently, the distribution center is running three of the PM's material in DLA Distribution's warehousing system, the Distribution Standard System, with the remaining 20 PM's stocks in a modified "where is, as is" process. For stocks outside of DSS, DLA processes the receipts manually, and if required, directly accesses Wide Area Work Flow to confirm the receipt of material to allow the vendor to be paid. For stock issuance, DLA processes the issues manually and creates the required paperwork using the transshipment function.

"DLA Distribution and DLA Distribution Tobyhanna were able to realize immediate gains and continued relevancy, while creating the case-study for long-term growth by offering DLA storage and distribution support to all other PMs who would benefit from co-located maintenance and storage and distribution activities," said Robert Dodson, DLA Distribution Tobyhanna deputy commander.

Following the transfer of stocks in October 2014, DLA Distribution Tobyhanna began wall-to-wall inventories for one of the PMs,

Medical Communications for Combat Casualty Care, known as MC4. PM MC4 conducted a customer visit during their inventory to better understand DLA Distribution's processes, and both MC4 and DLA Distribution Tobyhanna came away with a deeper, shared understanding and appreciation of each other's mission and requirements to the mutual benefit of the organizations, according to Dodson.

"The well-defined on-the-ground coordination and teamwork with MC4 established the framework for the remaining inventory," said Louis Fingerman, DLA Distribution Business Development specialist. "Many issues were resolved on-the-spot through great communication between the two organizations."

DLA Distribution Tobyhanna worked with the customer to give them a better understanding of the specialized handling performed to support customer needs, such as portable laptops and barcode scanners that minimize movement of stocks to complete data entry of serial numbers.

"Although DLA provides a myriad of services and capabilities to our program, I feel their DoD automated inventory accounting system provides the best return on investment," said Benjamin Pryor, lead logistics management specialist at MC4. "This system not only provides in-storage and in-transit asset visibility, it supports Army accountability and audit readiness compliance."

"Ultimately, the warfighter benefits from our new combined partnership," said Dodson. "They get what they ask for, when and where they need it, in support of their readiness and mission success."



DAVID RICHLINE DISTRIBUTION PROCESS WORKER AT DLA DISTRIBUTION TOBYHANNA, PA., WORKS TO RECEIVE A COMMODITY FOR A CUSTOMER IN THE PROGRAM MANAGER S&D INITIATIVE.



JOSEPH HENSHAW, DISTRIBUTION PROCESS WORKER, LEFT, AND JOSEPH GENSEL, GENERAL SUPPLY SPECIALIST, RIGHT, WORK ON INVENTORY FOR THEIR CUSTOMER, MEDICAL COMMUNICATIONS FOR COMBAT CASUALTY CARE.





## LIFE LESSONS FROM A TEAM MEMBER AND VIETNAM VETERAN AT DLA DISTRIBUTION KOREA

BY ARMY LT. COL. MARK WOLF,  
DLA DISTRIBUTION KOREA  
COMMANDER

By his calm and respectful demeanor, Chae Pong Yu seems no different from many of his colleagues at Defense Logistics Agency Distribution Korea. Indeed, his full head of dark hair and toned skin suggest a man much younger than his life experiences. Yu's work ethic and energy level reinforces the notion that he is a much younger man. But looks often deceive, and quiet professionals do not announce their many accomplishments. Yu is in fact a proud veteran of the Vietnam War and has served United States Forces Korea for over four decades, including the last 10 years here at DLA Distribution Korea.

A material handler by trade,



CHAE PONG YU, IN VIETNAM FROM SEPTEMBER 1970 TO MAY 1971.

Yu epitomizes competence and professionalism. He serves as a teacher and coach to many of his younger colleagues on issues of work, home and living a balanced and successful life. Only recently have I come to recognize how Vietnam shaped him, strengthened his character, and contributed to the man he is today.

Drafted into the Republic of Korea Army in 1968, Yu spent three years as a military intelligence analyst. He

deployed to Vietnam in May 1970 and returned home wearing sergeants' stripes in June 1971. He served primarily in the famed "White Horse" Division, which was subsequently reflagged as the ROK Army 9th Infantry Division. Yu remembers the sound and feel of enemy artillery shelling the base. "The first time that bombs dropped near my barracks, I was very afraid that I would die there, and never go home. Over time I got numb to it all, and after a while I just didn't fear it anymore," said Yu.

Repatriation ceremonies were emotional events, "During those ceremonies we witnessed many flag draped coffins being loaded onto aircraft to be flown home. That's when I felt the worst, that I was alive and relatively safe, and those soldiers killed in combat were already dead," recalled Yu.



CHAE PONG YU, PACKER AT DLA DISTRIBUTION KOREA IS A UNITED STATES FORCES KOREA VIETNAM VETERAN.

Since returning home in 1971, Yu has worked for United States Forces Korea as a material handler, first for the Material Support Center-Korea, and then for DLA Distribution Korea since 2005. Over the past four decades, he has often reflected on his experience as a noncommissioned officer in war. Indeed, much of his principled approach to work and life was forged during those 13 months in Vietnam. Of all his virtues, gratefulness and discipline are the two most important to him.

The war had brought tremendous loss,

misery and economic hardship to Vietnam. Witnessing those hardships gave Yu a different, more mature perspective. He returned from Vietnam with a newfound appreciation for his homeland. Though life has not always been easy, Yu has a deep and abiding appreciation for USFK, the security the U.S. has ensured for South Korea and the freedom and economic opportunities its citizens have enjoyed for multiple generations.

Additionally, Yu considers discipline as the key to his success as both an NCO in Vietnam and as a leader at

DLA Distribution Korea. It is this discipline and relentless focus on doing things right which I notice most about him. During a recent Audit Readiness mock audit, I noticed his deliberate and thorough manner. Seemingly small things, like lining up shipping labels perfectly on outbound shipments illustrate Yu's attention to detail and caring about doing things in the most professional manner. As the DLA Distribution Korea commander, I see Yu as a senior NCO who embodies competence and instills professionalism in those around him.



CHAE PONG YU, CENTER, STANDS WITH HIS PACKING SECTION TEAMMATES AT DLA DISTRIBUTION KOREA INCLUDING, LEFT TO RIGHT: SU SONG YI, SUPPLY TECH; TOK MYONG YUN, QUALITY INSPECTION TECH; SONG KYU KANG, MATERIALS HANDLER; AND HYON U YI, MATERIALS HANDLER.



