

After three feverish months preparing the Defense Supply Agency for full operation, Army Lt. Gen. Andrew T. McNamara embarked on a month-long trip across the United States. The agency's first director left to do what corporate heads of expanding organizations are supposed to do: visit acquisitions and reconnoiter possible additions. DSA's acquisitions were the former single-item managers. The possible additions were service-run depots the defense secretary would give the agency if the director thought them necessary for establishing "a wholesale distribution system for assigned supplies," one of his charter responsibilities.¹

Much was riding on which depots the director chose. DSA already had storage capacity. Inventory control points in Columbus, Ohio, and Richmond, Virginia, used their own warehouses to release their own items. These depots were capable, as the one in Richmond would prove after the Cuban Missile Crisis by kitting fallout shelter material for the entire nation. Even so, they had not been established as part of a plan, with the Columbus compound formed during World War I and its Richmond counterpart during World War II.

Additional installations would not be cheap. Land and buildings cost money, as did labor to receive, maintain, inventory, kit, package, and ship material. DSA had been formed to reduce waste. If McNamara chose too many sites, the agency would fail its mission. Service leaders, suspicious of integration, would question the need for DSA's continued existence.

McNamara selected four properties. On 1 January 1963, the agency received the Army's depot in Tracy, California, and the Navy's depot in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. Defense Depot Tracy

¹ Department of Defense Directive 5105.22, Defense Supply Agency, 6 Nov 1961, para. IV.E., p. 4.

covered 448 acres and was proximate to two transcontinental highways, two major railroads, and a deep water port. Defense Depot Mechanicsburg sat on 832 acres and a rail head. A year later, DSA added Defense Depot Memphis, which covered 642 acres and supported customers in the central time zone, and Defense Depot Ogden, which covered 1,682 acres and supported customers in the mountain time zone.

DSA incorporated these properties just as distribution was becoming important. America's involvement in Vietnam had grown during President John F. Kennedy's administration but became full-fledged intervention when President Lyndon B. Johnson deployed forty-four combat battalions in 1965. The agency handled 55 percent more supplies the following year, forcing it to hire additional warehouse employees and run depots twenty-four hours a day.²

Escalation produced shortages and hindered communications. DSA had to mobilize quickly to prevent depots from running out of jungle boots and warm weather uniforms, both newly introduced and popular with troops in theater.³ One communications problem dealt with unit of issue. On 24 April 1967, the U.S. Army in Thailand ordered 350,000 packages of dry cereal.⁴ The requester's error converted 350,000 cartons into 35 million packages.⁵ Excess had to remain at Defense Depot Ogden.⁶ Another communications problem resulted from trying to please a senior leader. In summer 1968, contract specialists at Defense Personnel Supply Center over-

² "Viet Nam Proves DSA Soundness, Says Sec. McNamara," *DSA News* 5, no. 2, 17 Feb 1967, p. 1.

³ "Brig. Gen. John M. Kenderdine Reports on Recent Vietnam Trip," *DSA News* 5, no. 12, 15 Sep 1967, p. 1.

⁴ fact sheet, Cereal in Thailand, 20 Nov 1967, p. 1, Folder: 915.01, Distribution (General) (66-71), Box 1, UD 40, RG 361, NARA.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

procured “food packet, long range, patrol” at the Chief of Staff of the Army’s request.⁷ About the time rations started coming in, DSA learned the Chief of Staff had misjudged need, leaving commands in Vietnam with an eleven-month supply and DSA with nine million extras.⁸

Warehouses proved effective despite customer errors. DSA participated in a department-wide program to accelerate delivery named after a similar effort in World War II. The Red Ball Express flew goods on regularly scheduled flights from Travis Air Force Base in California. The agency’s role was to ensure items moved from warehouse to airbase in time for departure. Another success was transporting fresh fruits and vegetables in refrigerated containers. Soon 90 percent of service members in Vietnam were eating produce straight from American farms.⁹

Vietnam proved the wisdom of networking depots. A network was not a distribution system, however. To McNamara and his successors, fulfilling the agency’s charter responsibility meant automating warehouses and connecting them electronically to inventory control points. In 1965, the year Vietnam accelerated, DSA began designing MOWASP, or Mechanization of Warehousing and Shipment Procedures.¹⁰ MOWASP used telescoping conveyor belts to move items from delivery trucks to warehouses, a mechanical sorter to direct shipments to offload points, computers to select storage locations, and a second conveyor belt to whisk away

⁷ MFR, DSA, Reduced Demands for Food Packet, Long Range Patrol for Vietnam, 11 Jul 1968, p. 1, Folder: 915.01, Distribution (General) (66-71), Box 1, UD 40, RG 361, NARA.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ *Annual History, Personnel Support Center, FY 1996*, p. 4, Binder: Annual History Reports, FY 1968-1978, DLA Troop Support; “Brig. Gen. John M. Kenderdine Reports on Recent Vietnam Trip,” *DSA News* 5, no. 12, 15 Sep 1967, p. 1.

¹⁰ *An Introduction to the DSA: Defense Supply Agency*, n.d. Jan 1966, p. 30.

dunnage.¹¹ It communicated with the Standard Automated Materiel Management System, DSA's program for inventory control points.

MOWASP was a success. McNamara's replacement, Navy Vice Adm. Joseph M. Lyle, tested the system at Defense Depot Tracy. Despite costing \$906,000, not an inconsiderable sum in 1965, the technology proved remunerative, and Lyle ordered it implemented at Defense Depot Mechanicsburg, Defense Depot Ogden, and Defense Depot Memphis.¹² Lt. Gen. Earl C. Hedlund, Lyle's successor, recognized MOWASP's importance and accelerated installment.¹³ All DSA warehouses were running the program by 1969, two years into his tenure.¹⁴

Hedlund's interest in distribution extended beyond mechanization. In 1967, the year warehouse growth pushed DSA past 62,000 employees, the director had his staff analyze the agency's storage and delivery system, something not done since 1961. Hours worked, shipments received, and shipments dispatched indicated a deficiency of "3.2 million net spare feet or 5.6 million gross square feet" on the West Coast, even after factoring in the end of the Vietnam War.¹⁵ Hedlund enlarged Defense Depot Tracy in response.

The 1960s ended with a "wholesale distribution system for assigned supplies" fully in place. Four stand-alone installations combined with depots at inventory control points to support units in the United States and installations overseas. MOWASP automated material receipt and

¹¹ "New Facilities at Ogden Depot to Aid Materials Handling," *DSA News* 5, no. 13, 29 Sep 1967, pp. 1, 4.

¹² *DSA News* 5, no. 5, 7 Apr 1967, p. 1.

¹³ *DSA News* 5, no. 15, 27 Oct 1967, p. 2

¹⁴ *Department of Defense Supply Agency*, n.d. Jan 1969, p. 6

¹⁵ "OASD(I&L) Evaluation of the Defense Supply Agency Distribution System Study with Respect to the Need for Construction of Additional Storage Space on the West Coast," n.d. 1967, pp. 2, 9, Folder: DSA Distribution System Study, EDSADS, COFF 31 Dec 67," Box 1, UD-42, RG 361, NARA.

standardized paperwork, saving time and reducing costs. The one area left for improvement was dispatching goods. DSA devoted the 1970s to this last leg of wholesale distribution.

1970s

DSA addressed customer delivery with the Mechanization of Freight and Shipping Terminal. MOFAST determined “the best way to route shipments,” selected “the carrier to be used,” and calculated “shipping costs.”¹⁶ It used data from SAMMS and MOWASP to prepare shipping labels, bills of lading, and other transportation documents.¹⁷

Headquarters tested MOFAST at Defense Depot Ogden. Implementation increased efficiency, reduced processing time, and eliminated fifteen positions.¹⁸ Next to receive the technology was Defense Depot Memphis. MOFAST went live in Tennessee on 1 July 1975.¹⁹

MOFAST was not without problems. In 1978, Marine Corps Brig. Gen. L. F. Sullivan, executive director of supply operations, surveyed depot commanders to learn what they thought of the system. The group believed MOFAST worthwhile but inflexible, designed for depots shipping

¹⁶ *Defense Logistics Agency News* 15, no. 14, 7 Oct 1977, pp. 1,4.

¹⁷ MFR, Highlights, Plans, Programs and Systems, 11 Jul 1975, p. 2, Folder: Plans, Programs & Systems 1975, Box 1, UD(06W) 2, RG 361, NARA.

¹⁸ memo, Col Robert B. Ladd, cdr, DDOU, to dir, DSA, Deviation to DSAM 5810.1, 19 Aug 1971, Folder: DDOU, Box 2, UD 55, RG 361, NARA.

¹⁹ MFR, Highlights, Plans, Programs and Systems, 11 Jul 1975, p. 2, Folder: Plans, Programs & Systems 1975, Box 1, UD(06W) 2, RG 361, NARA.

many small items but not those releasing a few big ones.²⁰ It also required too much computing power for small distribution centers, whose IBM 360/50s had trouble preparing shipping labels.²¹

Like MOFAST, MOWASP needed attention. The system's main drawback was its inability to communicate with service systems. DSA elevated this problem, resulting in the Defense Department comptroller and acting assistant secretary of defense for installations and logistics directing it to develop a "standard warehousing and shipping automated system concept."²² The agency proceeded to form a team to develop DADS: the Defense Automated Depot System.

Unfortunately, Congress eliminated funding for DADS in 1976.²³ Unable to pay for the project on its own, DSA collapsed the division of its Data Systems Automation Office developing the technology, forcing it to release four workers and reassign twenty-nine.²⁴ Cancellation did nothing to improve service interoperability, however, and the Pentagon had to reengage DLA's services two years later.²⁵ Instead of a system programmed for deployment throughout the Defense Department, DLA upgraded MOWASP so that it could be integrated in the future, if the

²⁰ memo, BrigGen L. F. Sullivan, exec dir, sply ops, DLA, to Lt. Gen. Woodrow W. Vaughan, dir, DLA, Consensus of DLA Depot Commanders' Opinion Regarding MOFAST, 31 Mar 1978, p. 1, Folder: Historical Background – 1978 (2 of 3), Box 32, PAO Archives.

²¹ ltr, Col C. B. Nichols, cdr, DDOU, to BrigGen L. F. Sullivan, exec dir, sply ops, DLA, 1 Mar 1978, p. 2, Folder: Historical Background – 1978 (2 of 3), Box 32, PAO Archives.

²² memo, Terrence E. McClary, ASD(C), and John J. Bennett, act ASD(I&L), to DoD logisticians, DoD Standard Warehousing and Shipping Automated System Development Project, 31 Dec 1975, p. 1, Folder: MOWASP-DADS, Box 33, PAO Archives.

²³ memo, Lt. Gen. Woodrow W. Vaughan, dir, DLA, to ASD(I&L), DADS Development Project, 23 Sep 1976, Folder: MOWASP, Box 33, PAO Archives.

²⁴ Kurt N. Molhom, asst chf, systems div, to DSAO, Termination of the DADS Development Project, 4 Oct 1976, p. 1, Folder: MOWASP, Box 33, PAO Archives.

²⁵ memo, Capt. J. A. Gillespie, cdr, DSAC, to Col. C. P. Gillespie, DLA-LS, Initial Estimate of Resources Required for the DoD Standard Warehousing and Shipping Automated System, 12 Dec 1978, p. 1, Folder: Historical Background – 1978 (1 of 3), Box 32, PAO Archives.

Pentagon ever issued the directive. Because of the narrower application, the agency called the new product DLA Warehousing and Shipping Procedures, or DWASP.

Another project that never achieved its potential involved first shipments. Army Lt. Gen. Woodrow W. Vaughan, DLA's fifth director, ended a program that forwarded items from manufacturers to Defense Depot Mechanicsburg and Defense Depot Tracy.²⁶ Shipping vendor material allowed procurement officials to reduce contract prices, which DSA estimated would save money in the long run. In truth, loading vans was "a complicated, time-consuming and labor-draining procedure" that worked only when deliveries arrived on time.²⁷ The director and his successors responded by changing tack. Instead of using DSA labor to pay vendors less, they paid them more to ship directly to customers.²⁸

1980s

The constant search for efficiency drove DLA to treat disposition more as agency than supply center business in the 1980s. A model for this arrangement already existed. The Defense Industrial Supply Center lacked a depot at its Northeast Philadelphia headquarters. Instead of centralized stocks, it used DSA's network and service warehouses.²⁹ The Defense Electronics

²⁶ Lt. Gen. Woodrow W. Vaughan, "MM Talks with DSA's Gen. Vaughan," *Military Market*, commissary ed. (Dec 1976), p. 38, Folder: 1970s, Box 36, PAO Archives.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ As reported in the agency's 1978 annual management report, "In an effort to save some of the costs of operating its own distribution system, DLA is placing increasing emphasis on direct supply from the commercial sources to customers when appropriate and when the needs of the Military Services can be satisfied on a timely basis." *Annual Management Report of the Defense Logistics Agency, FY 1978*, p. 15, PAO Archives.

²⁹ Nick Yevitz, "We Never Close," *Dimensions*, n.d. Oct 1986, p. 12, Box 57, PAO Archives.

Supply Center adopted this policy on 29 March 1979, transferring items from its own storage to agency depots beginning the first day of Fiscal Year 1980.³⁰

The DESC decision was typical of DLA. The agency frequently modified operations to increase efficiency. Good stewardship nonetheless fell short of the efficiency President Ronald W.

Reagan wanted. On 25 February 1986, Executive Order 12552 directed “a 20 percent improvement in . . . government operations.”³¹ Translated by Defense Secretary Caspar W.

Weinberger, the order meant reducing warehouse labor.³²

Reductions were not just executive department fiat. Congress targeted “wholesale depot facilities” in the Defense Select Consolidation Act of 1986.³³ Army Lt. Gen. Vincent M. Russo, DLA’s ninth director, responded by setting goals, the most ambitious being a 30 percent improvement in Defense Depot Memphis efficiency.³⁴ Knowing warehouse workers feared loosing their jobs, he decided not “to separate involuntarily any . . . [depot] employees . . . [since] the savings to be realized by involuntary separation . . . would be offset by the resulting disruptions” to the workforce and readiness.³⁵ Instead, he planned “a 10 percent reduction in our

³⁰ Condensed Historical Summary, Fiscal Year 1979, Defense Electronics Supply Center, p. 1, Folder: 15-3, Box 4, PAO Archives.

³¹ memo, Lt. Gen. Vincent M. Russo, dir, DLA, Defense Logistics Agency FY 1988 Productivity Improvement Plan, 10 Nov 1986, Folder: DLA Chron File signed by Director (November 1986), Box 2, UD (17W) 2, RG 361, NARA.

³² Ibid.

³³ IOM, Lt. Gen. Vincent M. Russo, dir, DLA, Defense Select Consolidation Act of 1986, 18 Aug 1986, p. 1, Folder: DLA Chron File signed by Director (August 1986), Box 1, UD(17W) 2, RG 361, NARA.

³⁴ memo, Lt. Gen. Vincent M. Russo, dir, DLA, to cdr, Defense Depot Memphis, Depot Resourcing, 23 Aug 1986, p. 2, Folder: DLA Chron File signed by Director (August 1986), Box 1, UD(17W) 2, RG 361, NARA.

³⁵ Ibid.

costs for” each of Fiscal Years 1987, 1988, and 1989.³⁶ Calling the contraction challenging but realistic, Russo believed it would prevent outsourcing, a more drastic option.³⁷

Russo relied on technology to achieve his goal. After almost ten years in program management, DLA Warehousing and Shipping Procedures, or DWASP, was ready for installation. The agency started deploying the new system in April 1987, finishing in January 1988.³⁸ Among other things, DWASP used barcodes to increase accuracy and decrease administrative burden.³⁹

1990s

The distribution business changed greatly in the 1990s. Much of what was new – service property, base closures, outsourcing – resulted from America’s Cold War victory. Other modifications were prompted by the 1990-1991 Gulf War.

The most significant change was Defense Management Report Decision 902.⁴⁰ DMRDs were a Defense Secretary Richard B. Cheney initiative to reduce end strength and enact reform. DMRD 902 called for consolidating service depots under DLA.⁴¹

³⁶ memo, Lt. Gen. Vincent M. Russo, dir, DLA, to cdrs, DLA depots, Cost of Doing Business, 17 Oct 1986, p. 1, Folder: DLA Chron File signed by Director (October 1986), Box 1, UD(17W) 2, RG 361, NARA.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 2.

³⁸ SS, Rear Adm. J. E. Eckelberger, ex dir, sapply ops, Bar-Coded Shipping Documentation, 14 Nov 1986, Folder: DLA Chron File signed by Director (November 1986), Box 2, UD (17W) 2, RG 361, NARA.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ The Defense Department issued DMRD 902 three times: first under the subject header “Consolidation of Defense Supply Depots,” next under the header “Implementation Plan for the Consolidation of Supply Depots,” and finally under the header “Implementation Plan of the Consolidation of Supply Depots.” The second release focused on budget savings and the third on schedule.

⁴¹ memo, D. J. Atwood, dep SECDEF, to DoD leadership, Supply Depot Consolidation Plan, 13 Apr 1990, Folder: Defense Management Review Supply Depot consolidation Study, 27 Mar 1990, DMR 02,” Box 12, PAO Archives. DMRD 902 defined distribution “as all actions involving the receipt of new procurement, redistributions and field returns; storage of materiel; issue of materiel; consolidation and containerization of materiel; preservation, packaging, packing, and marking; physical inventory; quality control; traffic management; other transportation

The Defense Department distributed items from thirty-eight locations in 1990. When plotted on a map, these sites were not strategically located, with four (Sharpe Army Depot, Sacramento Air Force Depot, Defense Depot Tracy, and Naval Supply Center Oakland) clustered in California's Bay area, Hill Air Force Base and Defense Depot Ogden at different ends of the same town in central Utah, and Defense Depot Mechanicsburg and New Cumberland Army Depot neighbors in east-central Pennsylvania.⁴² DMRD 902 instructed DLA to form a network from the Army's seventeen depots, the Navy's eight, its own six (Mechanicsburg, Memphis, Ogden, Columbus, Richmond, and Tracy), the Air Force's five, and the Marine Corps's two.⁴³ Consolidations would remove 5,500 material handlers from the workforce by Fiscal Year 1995.⁴⁴

The Defense Department chose DLA because consolidating common logistics functions was "consistent with the original purpose" of the agency.⁴⁵ Additionally, DLA had a management structure, was joint, and had replaced MOWASP with DLA Standard Warehousing and Shipping Procedures.⁴⁶ DWASP was "the DoD system" and operated on "the newest main frame supply system in the department."⁴⁷ Expanding it to the services – the driving force for its design – resulted in DWASP being renamed Defense Warehousing and Shipping Procedures.

services; unit materiel fielding and set assembly/disassembly; transshipment; and minor repair." rpt, OASD (P&L), Consolidation of Supply Depots, n.d. Jan 1992, p. 2-1, Historian Files.

⁴² ppr, DLA, Subject Area #6: Distribution Costs, n.d., p. 1, Folder: Tab 6, Box 80, PAO Archives.

⁴³ DoD, Defense Management Report Decision 902, "Consolidation of Defense Supply Depots," 9 Nov 1989, p. 10, Historian Files.

⁴⁴ rpt, OASD (P&L), "Consolidation of Supply Depots," n.d. Jan 1992, p. 3-1, Historian Files. The idea was to close three to four depots upon consolidation and more later. DoD, Defense Management Report Decision 902, "Consolidation of Defense Supply Depots," 9 Nov 1989, p. 1, Historian Files.

⁴⁵ DoD, Defense Management Report Decision 902, "Consolidation of Defense Supply Depots," 9 Nov 1989, p. 1, Historian Files.

⁴⁶ Ibid. pp. 1, 10.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

Air Force Lt. Gen. Charles P. McCausland, the agency's tenth director, oversaw consolidation.⁴⁸ He began with California's Bay area.⁴⁹ Sharpe Army Depot and Defense Depot Tracy merged, then accepted Naval Supply Center Oakland and Sacramento Air Logistics Center functions.⁵⁰

The Defense Department disliked how McCausland consolidated the remaining depots. The DLA director wanted three regional headquarters; the DoD considered regions "management layering" and wanted none.⁵¹ In a memo to the defense department comptroller, the agency's deputy director argued that subordinating all depots under one headquarters would cause span of control problems, at least initially.⁵² Ironically, DLA's most vocal critic was Principal Deputy Comptroller Donald B. Shycoff, an agency alum.⁵³ McCausland's opinion carried more weight than Shycoff's, and regional headquarters played an important role in consolidation.

Before any of this happened, DLA had to fight a war. On 2 August 1990, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait and threatened Saudi Arabia. Three days later President H. W. Bush announced "this will not stand." DLA depots released 1.6 million lines and 196,000 tons of material over the

⁴⁸ memo, Colin McMillan, ASD (P&L), to MILSECs, DoD comptroller, and dir, DLA, Supply Depot Consolidation Plan, 13 Apr 1990, p. 1, Historian Files.

⁴⁹ stdy, Defense Management Review, "Prototype of the Consolidation of Distribution Operations," 27 Mar 1990, p. 1, Historian Files.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. B-1.

⁵¹ DoD, Defense Management Report Decision 902, schedule and management structure for implementation of supply depot consolidation, n.d., p. 7, Historian Files.

⁵² memo, Rear Adm. Brady M Cole, dpty dir, DLA, to comptr, DoD, DMRD 902 Implementation, 13 Nov 1990, p. 3.

⁵³ See memo, prncpl dpty cmptrl Donald B. Shycoff, to Lt Gen Charles P. McCausland, dir, DLA, "DMRD 902, Supply Depot Consolidation," 17 Sep 1991. Shycoff was a 2001 inductee to the DLA Hall of Fame: <https://www.dla.mil/AboutDLA/History/DLAHallofFame/#donald-shycoff>.

eight-month Gulf War.⁵⁴ Distribution Depot Mechanicsburg shipped the most lines with 359,163 while Distribution Depot Richmond shipped the most mass with 47,760 tons.⁵⁵

Despite what the television show 60 Minutes reported, DLA's depots helped win the war.⁵⁶ Prepositioned stock was not nearly enough to sustain half a million service members in an austere environment. Only DLA had the cots, tents, and food to bivouac a force of this size.⁵⁷ With the services deploying thousands of weapons, repair parts were also important.

The Gulf War delayed DMRD 902 only two months.⁵⁸ DLA began by establishing Defense Distribution Region East on 17 April 1991, merging New Cumberland Army Depot and Defense Depot Mechanicsburg into Defense Depot Susquehanna in the process.⁵⁹ Among other things, consolidation added the Eastern Distribution Center to the agency's properties. At 1.7 million square feet, the center was the largest military storage facility in the world. Construction had finished July 1989, just in time for the Gulf War.

⁵⁴ ppr, Anita Gilstrap, Desert Storm support by DLA Distribution Depots, 1 Mar 1995, p. 1, Folder: BRAC 95 – Congressional Testimonies, Q&A, Part 1 of 2, Box 20, PAO Archives.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ The show aired 19 January 1992. It filmed both DLA items in long supply and service items considered war reserves. memo, Sara M. Bird, DPSC, to Bill Santos, "Information Papers for the 60 Minutes Interview," 12 Nov 1991, p. 1, Folder: 60 Minutes Fact Book, Box 50, PAO Archives. Items were in long supply because of management errors, such as medical assistant smocks that bore incorrect NSNs and dresses there were not know to be on the shelves. rpt, DPSC, "Reply to Questions Regarding Items Filmed at Mechanicsburg for 60 Minutes," 19 Nov 1991, Folder: 60 Minutes and Fallout, Box 50, PAO Archives.

⁵⁷ "What was thought to be a 25 years contingency stock for cots were immediately needed in the first week of Desert Shield." rpt, Sean O'Keefe, "Statement of the Comptroller of the Defense," 25 Feb 1992, p. 8, Folder: 60 Minutes and Fallout, 1992, Box 50, PAO Archives.

⁵⁸ news rel, DLA, Defense Depot Distribution Region to be Established April 17, 8 Mar 1991, Folder: Mar 1991, Box 61, PAO Archives.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

Automation was central to consolidation. DWASP did not function as universally as hoped, forcing DLA to begin designing a new system in Fiscal Year 1992.⁶⁰ The agency released the result, Distribution Standard System, four years later.⁶¹

Not every depot received DSS. Before the program could be completed, the agency underwent two Base Realignment and Closure rounds. BRAC was a legally prescribed process that forced the Defense Department to nominate installation reductions to neutral commissioners. Neither of the rounds held before 1992 had demanded much from distribution. In 1993, however, the process offered up Letterkenny, Pennsylvania; Tooele, Utah; Oakland, California; Charleston, South Carolina; and Pensacola, Florida.⁶² Letterkenny escaped closure; the others did not.

DLA closed warehouses because “too many employees . . . [were chasing] too little work.”⁶³ Workers left in two tranches. In August 1993, 1,103 employees in Defense Distribution Region West – nine percent of the region’s workforce – accepted incentive pay to separate or retire.⁶⁴ Depots in the other two regions followed a few months later, with Memphis shedding 435 employees, Susquehanna 251, and Warner Robbins 210.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ awd cit, DDSC, p. 1, Folder: JUL-SEP 1999, Box 29, PAO Archives.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² rpt, “Defense Logistics Agency: Base Realignment and Closure Detailed Analysis,” 12 Mar 1993, p. 7.2, Folder: BRAC 2003 Detailed Analysis, Box 67, PAO Archives.

⁶³ Lt. Col. Jim LaBounty, *Western Region Roundup* 3, no. 9 (Aug 1993), p. 3, Folder: “Western Region Roundup” Newsletters, Box 23, PAO Archives.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 1.

⁶⁵ rpt, “Total VERA/VSIP Separations by Depot,” Folder: The BRAC Process, Box 68, PAO Archives. The Memphis number included both depot and regional command employees. Ibid.

Depots faced the same threat when BRAC 1995 forced them to reduce attainable cubic feet by 18 percent.⁶⁶ Losses included Defense Depot Memphis and the collocated Central Distribution Region. As a partial replacement, DLA established a “Premium Service” with FedEx, a major Memphis employer. FedEx stored 200 key items in a 60,000 square-foot warehouse and delivered them in 24 to 48 hours, seven days a week.⁶⁷ Also targeted were Defense Depot San Antonio and Defense Depot Letterkenny. Ending operations in central Pennsylvania would cost the government \$39,852,000 over four years, perhaps why it had survived BRAC 1993.⁶⁸ As a compromise, the distribution mission was withdrawn but the Army continued to use the depot. Removing San Antonio and Letterkenny dropped DLA to fifteen depots.

DDC

Further reductions would lead to the single command the Defense Department had wanted in 1990. In May 1997, DLA began studying which region should manage all depots.⁶⁹ It chose the eastern, establishing Defense Distribution Center at New Cumberland on 1 October 1997.⁷⁰

One of DDC’s initial projects involved mission segmentation. Predicting a decrease in orders, the command reconfigured operations at Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna.⁷¹ The depot

⁶⁶ ppr, DLA, “More Congressional Responses,” p. 1, Folder: BRAC 95 – Congressional Testimonies, Q&A, Part 1 of 2, Box 20, PAO Archives.

⁶⁷ “DLA Teams with FedEx for Faster Service,” *Dimensions* 16, no. 5, n.d. Fall 1995, pp. 8-9, Box 75, PAO Archives.

⁶⁸ memo, Maj. Gen. Ray E. McCoy, prncpl deputy dir, DLA, to assistant chief of staff for installation management, 17 Jan 1996, Box 2, PAO Archives.

⁶⁹ news rel, DLA, DLA Taps New Cumberland, Pa., for New Defense Distribution Center Headquarters, 16 Sep 1997, p. 1, Folder: Sep 1997, Box 61, PAO Archives.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ “Defense Distribution Center Restructures Depot Operations,” *Dimensions*, Nov / Dec 1999, p. 5, Box 77, PAO Archives.

consisted of two collocated properties, New Cumberland, with 1,398 employees, and Mechanicsburg, with 810. The idea was to transfer material so New Cumberland could focus on high-demand items and Mechanicsburg on low-demand and inactive ones.⁷² The split was complete by September 2005.⁷³ It remains in effect today.

Another effort was public-private competitions. Regulated by Office of Management and Budget Circular A-76, these competitions pitted commercial companies against DDC organizations, all which had to justify how they would save the government money. Competitions for Warner Robins, Barstow, and Columbus began March 1998.⁷⁴ Hill Air Force Base, Utah (664 employees); Richmond, Virginia (532 employees); San Diego, California (411 employees); Albany, Georgia (165 employees); Jacksonville, Florida (152 employees); and Cherry Point, North Carolina (131 employees) were added a year later. Depots deemed inherently governmental, such as Susquehanna and San Joaquin, did not have to undergo the process.⁷⁵

DLA had never used OMB Circular A-76 for anything as large as a depot. It chose Defense Depot San Antonio to rehearse procedures. The site had been selected for closure in BRAC 1995; as of 1998, it had two years remaining as a government facility.⁷⁶ Using lessons learned from San Antonio, DDC competed twelve of its remaining fifteen properties.

⁷² The initiative was “the result of [a] projected decrease in DDSF’s workload of up to 40 percent from 1998 to 2005” Ibid. Consolidation was expected to boost DDSF productivity 33 percent. Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ “Cost Comparison Studies to be Conducted at 6 Depots,” *Dimensions*, Mar / Apr 1999, p. 32, Box 77, PAO Archives.

⁷⁵ prss rel, DLA, Defense Logistics Agency announces Defense Distribution Depot results, 10 Nov 1999, p. 1, Folder: Nov 1999, Box 62, PAO Archives.

⁷⁶ art, “DLA Transfers Management of Distribution Depot San Antonio,” *Loglines* 3, no. 4, and 4, no. 1, n.d. Jun 1998, Folder: June 1998, Box 81, PAO Archives.

Results differed depending on depot. The first announced was Columbus, whose employees learned they would continue working for the government November 1999.⁷⁷ The news was not good for the in-house party two months later, with EG&G Logistics selected to run Defense Distribution Depot Barstow, California.⁷⁸ The appeals authority upheld the decision three times in the next two months, and affected employees were given the right of first refusal with EG&G.⁷⁹ EG&G also won Defense Distribution Depot Warner Robins in February 2000.⁸⁰ In all, seven depots were privatized, although Warner Robins later returned to agency operation.

Public-private competitions were upsetting and time consuming. Their fairness rested on accurate work statements and separation between decision makers and those assembling government offers, both which resided in the agency. Unions used perceived irregularities to appeal private sector wins. Meanwhile, human resources personnel reassigned as many employees as possible, to include from depots remaining under DLA operation, which survived only because they promised drastic cuts to expenses and personnel.

Efficiency never prevented DLA from constructing sites overseas, important for global readiness. The first such addition since the agency had assumed Defense Distribution Depot Europe during DMRD 902 consolidation was DLA Distribution Yokosuka in Japan. Established 1999, the site supported Pacific theater operations and cut thousands of miles from the distance critical material had to travel.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ "DLA Announces Barstow Competition Results," *Dimensions*, Jan / Feb 2000, p. 6, Box 77, PAO Archives.

⁷⁹ prss rel, DLA, Defense Logistics Agency affirms Distribution Depot competition results, 10 Mar 2000, p. 1, Folder: Mar 2000, Box 62, PAO Archives

⁸⁰ prss rel, DLA, DLA Announces Public-Private Competition for Automated Printing, 4 Feb 2000, Folder: Feb 2000, Box 62, PAO Archives. EG&G prevailed during the appeals process. prss rel, DLA, Defense Logistics Agency affirms Distribution Depot competition results, 7 Apr 2000, p. 1, Folder: Apr 2000, Box 62, PAO Archives.

Although contractions, closures, and outsourcing dominated the second half of the 1990s, other problems had to be addressed as well. One was space. Despite consolidation, the services still decided where their material was stored. Efficiencies realized earlier in the decade had been achieved through infrastructure and personnel reductions. Stocking decisions, much to the chagrin of DDC and DLA, were still not a DoD prerogative.⁸¹

One thing DDC could influence was how material left its warehouses. In February 2000, the command began regular truck service from Defense Depot San Joaquin to Fort Sill and Tinker Airforce Base in Oklahoma. A thirty-day study had revealed DDJC shipped 1,842 lines weighing 30,458 pounds to Fort Sill and 2,905 lines weighing 101,929 pounds to Tinker.⁸² DDC believed transporting this material by set routes would save \$28,350 a month.⁸³

DLA had spent the 1990s consolidating and reducing warehouses. The services, meanwhile, were adjusting to an environment in which fewer units deployed more often but on a scale smaller than Korea or Vietnam. Distribution had been an obvious target for efficiency during the drawdown. All this would change four years after DDC's formation with the War on Terror.

⁸¹ According to Rear Adm. Raymond A. Archer II, DLA vice director, "DDC should decide where material sits not the services. The services should be a demanding customer and require response. DDC should figure out how best to provide that response. The service should be given access to level of performance and visibility, but what and where are internal decisions." memo, Rear Adm. Raymond A. Archer, III, vice dir, DLA, to cdr, Defense Logistics Support Cmd, Orientation Visit to the Defense Distribution Center, 17 Feb 2000, p. 3, Folder: JAN-MAR 2000, Box 29, PAO Archives. This structure would continue for years. rpt, Marc Robbins, Patricia Boren, Kristin Leuschner, RAND, "The Strategic Distribution System in Support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM," n.d. Mar 2004, p. 5, Historian Files.

⁸² "Defense Distribution San Joaquin, California (DDJC) Starts Dedicated Truck Service to Oklahoma," *Loglines*, Summer 2000, p. 14, Folder: Summer 2000, Box 81, PAO Archives.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

GWOT

Expansion replaced contraction after 9/11. Acceleration began slowly, with the Bush administration pursuing a light footprint in Afghanistan. The agency supported Operation ENDURING FREEDOM's ground forces by shipping stock on hand to Karshi-Khanabad Air Base (K2) in Uzbekistan. In all, 71 percent of what operators consumed came from DDC shelves – 5 percent from Germersheim in Germany and 66 percent from Susquehanna in Pennsylvania.⁸⁴ To support the bombers and carrier task forces providing ground forces firepower, DLA flew repair parts to Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean and Bahrain in the Arabian Sea.⁸⁵

Bahrain was critical for another reason. DLA faced a second mobilization in late 2002 when the U.S. prepared to invade Iraq. Expecting barrier material to be important, it stocked lumber, fencing, barbed wire, bastions, and thirty-one other force protection items on the island.⁸⁶ This Class IV proved invaluable three weeks after invasion when forces settled on bases.

Other items reached the warfighter from father afield. Defense Distribution Depot Europe provided Class I and hardware. Later studies revealed “60% of requests” reached customers within 5.5 days because they could be pulled from Germany.⁸⁷ The remaining 40 percent took longer because they included high-demand Class II and Class IIIP items from CONUS.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ rpt, Marc Robbins, Patricia Boren, Kristin Leuschner, RAND, “The Strategic Distribution System in Support of Operation Enduring Freedom,” n.d. March 2004, pp. 47-48, Historian Files.

⁸⁵ Ibid., pp. xvii, 43.

⁸⁶ Jessica Walter, “DDC Deactivates Forward Stocking Site in Bahrain,” in *Loglines*, Spring/Summer 2005, p. 39, Box 81, PAO Archives.

⁸⁷ brf, DLA Europe, OIF Lessons Learned, 24 Jun 2003, p. 5, Historian Files.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Scale made supporting Operation IRAQI FREEDOM difficult. Poor requirements analysis and misunderstood delivery times led to shortages of Class I early in the conflict.⁸⁹ Also troublesome was the inability of the nation's clothing & textile industry to provide desert camouflage uniforms and desert boots.⁹⁰ While neither problem resulted from stockage decisions, warehouses experienced mobilization pains when troops settled and began conducting maintenance. The spike in repair part orders increased shipping times 500 percent before settling at normal levels nine months later.⁹¹

The agency reduced shipping times by pushing material closer to the warfighter. It started by contracting a subsistence prime vendor for the Middle East. It continued by establishing a distribution facility in Southwest Asia.⁹² Fully operational by September 2004, Defense Distribution Kuwait subsumed the Bahrain operation and forwarded material from CONUS to warfighters in Iraq and Afghanistan. Prepositioning permitted U.S. Transportation Command to convey goods by ship instead of aircraft, a mode one twelfth as expensive.⁹³ DDKS would grow in time to encompass two million square feet, half covered.⁹⁴ It had an inventory accuracy of 99.9 percent.⁹⁵

⁸⁹ rpt, Charles D. Matthews, Coker Logistics Solutions, "Operation Iraqi Freedom After Action Report," p. 7, Historian Files.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 8. DLA had the same problem during the first Gulf War. It solved it by having its Directorate of Manufacturing, an in-house sew shop, make up the difference. The Directorate of Manufacturing closed when BRAC 1993 moved the Defense Personnel Support Center.

⁹¹ rpt, Marc L. Robbins, Thomas Lippiatt, and Michael Shanley, RAND, "Surging Capacity for Wartime (Strategies for the Defense Distribution Center)," n.d. Apr 2007, p. iii, Historian Files.

⁹² rpt, "Defense Distribution Center, Post 9/11," n.d., p. 5, Folder: DDC Post 9/11, Box 67, PAO Archives. DDC tested its plan to establish a distribution facility in Kuwait at Focused Logistics Warfighting 2003, a Defense Department wargaming event. With support from combatant commands, it committed to depots in Guam; Sigonella, Italy; and the Republic of Korea. rpt, DLA, OIF AAR, 15 Feb 2004, p. 28, Historian Files.

⁹³ Ocean transport cost the DLA \$.22 per pound; flown material \$2.66 per pound. "Transformation in Support of the Future Force," n.d. 2005, pp. 2, 7, 9, Folder: Warfighter Support Improvement, Box 67, PAO Archives.

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 2, 7.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 12.

DLA and TRANSCOM worked shoulder-to-shoulder to push material into theater. In December 2003, four months after being named the Defense Department's disposition process owner, TRANSCOM formed the CENTCOM Deployable Distribution Operations Center.⁹⁶ CDDOC coordinated delivery to Iraq and Afghanistan from Kuwait. It also worked the reverse route, planning the first retrograde of depot-level reparable from Iraq in February 2004. DLA helped man this cell and filled its command billet at least twice.⁹⁷

Warfighter support was not restricted to the Middle East. As a global enterprise, DDC supported overseas customers by establishing two depots half a decade into the twenty-first century. First was Defense Distribution Sigonella, Italy, in April 2004.⁹⁸ Next was Defense Distribution Depot Guam, Marianas, in October of the same year.⁹⁹

With the warfighter's immediate needs met, DDC returned to efficiency measures in August 2004. To reduce shipping and containerization, it implemented a hub and spoke structure.¹⁰⁰ The result of two years' planning, the structure applied to half the items on DDC shelves.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ TRANSCOM activated the CDDOC on 2 January 2004. Christine Born, "Herculean Efforts Keeps Troops Supplied," in *Loglines*, Fall/Winter 2004, p. 26, Box 81, PAO Archives. "From the concept stage to actual operation, . . . CDDOC implementation took only 90 days." Jonathan Stack, "End-to-End Distribution: Improvements for Central Command and Beyond," *Loglines*, Spring 2008, p. 5, Box 81, PAO Archives.

⁹⁷ Army Brig. Gen. John C. Levasseur, director of DLA Reserve Mobilization Office, commanded CDDOC from March to August 2004. art, DLA, "New Director for the CENTCOM DDOC," 17 Mar 2004, Historian Files. Navy Rear Admiral March F. Heinrich, director of DLA Logistics Operations, commanded CDDOC from June to December 2008.

⁹⁸ rpt, "Defense Distribution Center, Post 9/11," n.d., p. 4, Folder: DDC Post-9/11, Box 67, PAO Archives.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁰ Jessica Walter, "New Hub & Spoke Distribution Model Ensures Lean, Agile Supply Network," in *Loglines*, Spring/Summer 2005, p. 22, Box 81, PAO Archives.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 24.

Developments made 2005 consequential for distribution. The year began with DDC establishing Defense Distribution Depot Korea at Camp Carroll.¹⁰² Then, after a ten-year interim, the Defense Department held another BRAC. Effects on material management were significant. First came confirmation of hub-and-spoke operations, with depots designated either strategic distribution platforms or forward distribution points.¹⁰³ In addition to Susquehanna and San Joaquin, the two strategic platforms DDC had identified, BRAC 2005 added Oklahoma City and Albany.¹⁰⁴

BRAC 2005 drove other change as well. It took petroleum products, compressed gases, vehicle tires, and aviation tires off DDC shelves and directed their provision by prime vendors.¹⁰⁵ It made DLA responsible for the supply, storage, and distribution of depot-level reparable, long a service mission.¹⁰⁶ BRAC 2005 also disestablished DLA's depot in Columbus, Ohio.¹⁰⁷ DDC's smallest center, DDCO had survived previous rounds due to its location on agency property.

Despite the need for forward distribution, it was at home where DDC received its next shock.

Hurricane Katrina's effect on New Orleans was devastating. Material flowed into the city from twenty-five of the center's twenty-six depots.¹⁰⁸ Collectively, they released 1,148,450 items on

¹⁰² rpt, "Defense Distribution Center, Post 9/11," n.d., p. 9, Folder: DDC Post-9/11, Box 67, PAO Archives.

¹⁰³ slides, R. Burlison, et al., "BRAC 2005 Supply and Storage Introductory Information Session," 14 Sep 2006, pp. 4, 30, Folder: BRAC Change Management Briefs, Box 67, PAO Archives.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Vice Adm. Alan S. Thompson, dir, DLA, "Globally Driving Cost Efficiencies and Supply Chain Excellence," *Military Logistics Forum* 5, no. 5 (June 2011), p. 28, Historian Files.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ broc, "BRAC 2005: Supply and Storage Decisions," n.d., p. 2, Folder: Current BRAC Projects, Box 67, PAO Archives.

¹⁰⁸ Stacy L. Umstead, "Defense Distribution Center Celebrates 8th Anniversary," *Loglines*, Spring/Summer 2006, p. 22, Box 81, PAO Archives; rpt, "Defense Distribution Center, Post 9/11," n.d., p. 20, Folder: DDC Post-9/11, Box 67, PAO Archives.

59,564 orders.¹⁰⁹ In one of the center's first actions, Defense Distribution Susquehanna provided 80,000 pounds of aerial cargo slings for dropping sandbags used in levee repair.¹¹⁰

Retail also advanced in 2005. DLA had been working with TRANSCOM on radio frequency identification ever since the Gulf War. Both agency and command wanted to avoid the waste and inefficiency of that conflict, which ended with containers unopened in Kuwait, their contents and final destinations unknown to port operators.

By 2005, DDC was pursuing three radio-frequency projects. First, it was helping contractors install passive RFID technology.¹¹¹ Boeing had adopted the practice and Lockheed Martin and General Electric Engines were poised to do the same.¹¹² Active RFID tags were the second effort.¹¹³ These battery-powered devices emitted a signal that could be read without line-of-sight scanning. They saved time by eliminating the need to open boxes. The newest effort was a passive RFID tag with global position capability, which allowed satellites to track shipments.¹¹⁴

DLA understood the importance of delivery. In March, the agency established a theater consolidation and shipping point in Kuwait.¹¹⁵ Fully operational by February 2006, this appendage to the CDDOC helped material transit the Middle East, "consolidating and segregating shipments . . .

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ notes, Dawn Bonsell, PAO, DLA Distribution, "2000s Content," p. 1, Historian Files.

¹¹¹ *DDC Review* 5, no. 6 (Summer 2005), p. 15, Folder: "DDC Review" Newsletters, Box 23, PAO Archives.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 12.

¹¹⁴ *DDC Review* 5, no. 5 (Spring 2005), pp. 8-9, Folder: "DDC Review" Newsletters, Box 23, PAO Archives.

¹¹⁵ Stacy L. Umstead, "DDC Opens Doors of Theater Consolidation and Shipping Point," *Loglines*, Fall/Winter 2006, p. 18, Box 81, PAO Archives.

from multiple sources.”¹¹⁶ It complemented the command’s depot in Kuwait by configuring and loading what material handlers received, stored, issued, and kitted.¹¹⁷

Customer Focused

With its capability enhanced, DDC concentrated on the warfighter after 2005. Warehouse projects combined with customer service to “extend the enterprise,” a phrase coined by Army Lt. Gen. Robert T. Dail, DLA’s fifteenth director.¹¹⁸ For DDC, extending the enterprise meant positioning “distribution depots closer to our customers.”¹¹⁹

The first step in forward positioning was a deployable depot, which the agency stood up 1 June 2006.¹²⁰ Although not designed exclusively for Afghanistan or Iraq, DDXX had been prompted by the increasingly expeditious nature of distribution, a development whose necessity the War on Terror made clear.

The War on Terror also dictated distribution activities in Europe and the United States. With the Cold War ended, the Defense Department began withdrawing from Germany. To support repositioning, DLA accepted the 21st Theater Support Command’s mission of breaking bulk

¹¹⁶ rpt, “Defense Distribution Center, Post 9/11,” n.d., p. 5, Folder: DDC Post-9/11, Box 67, PAO Archives.

¹¹⁷ Jessica Walter, “DDC Enhances Distribution Capabilities in Middle East,” *Loglines*, Spring/Summer 2006, p. 19, Box 81, PAO Archives.

¹¹⁸ Lt. Gen. Robert T. Dail, dir, DLA, in *Military Logistics Forum* 2, no. 2 (n.d. Mar 2008), p. 20, Folder: Defense Logistics 2008, Box 73, PAO Archives.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Stacy L. Umstead, “DDXX Officially Stands Up: Team DDXX Receives Orientation,” *Loglines*, Fall/Winter 2006, p. 20, Box 81, PAO Archives.

“cargo inbound to EUCOM units by either air or sealift.”¹²¹ At home, Defense Distribution Depot Albany, Georgia, helped the Marine Corps up-armor vehicles by assembling material for 3,000 kits over summer 2007.¹²² Workers spent six to eight hours on each kit, delivering the product to their neighbor, Marine Corps Maintenance Center Albany, when complete.¹²³

“Extending the enterprise” applied beyond the Middle East. The concept included establishing a distribution site on Camp Kinser, a Marine Corps base on Okinawa.¹²⁴ Lt. Gen. Dail estimated the depot would save “\$4 million per year in transportation costs” and reduce customer wait time from “10 or more days” to three.¹²⁵

While troops in the Middle East received priority, they sometimes frustrated DDKS and DDOC. In one instance, the DDOC had to adjust to a unit of issue problem, just like material handlers in Vietnam. In 2008, a stock control officer from one of the services, not realizing HESCO barriers came in increments of 100 feet, ordered 50 miles instead of 2,640 units.¹²⁶ DDKS caught the error and prevented it from happening again.¹²⁷ Another mistake involved sand bags. The Army had overestimated need in Iraq, leaving DDKS with 55,000 extra.¹²⁸ DLA had misjudged need as well, leaving it with 80,000 surplus.¹²⁹ The problem was not prediction – an impossibility – but

¹²¹ Stacy Umstead, “Consolidation and Shipping Point Improves Center’s Distribution Capabilities,” *Loglines*, Spring/Summer 2007, p. 6, Box 81, PAO Archives.

¹²² Jessica Walter and Scott Woosley, “Albany Team Provides Support to Armor Project,” *Loglines*, Spring/Summer 2007, p. 11, Box 81, PAO Archives.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ Lt. Gen. Robert T. Dail, dir, DLA, in *Military Logistics Forum* 2, no. 2 (n.d. Mar 2008), p. 20, Folder: Defense Logistics 2008, Box 73, PAO Archives.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ interv, Adam H. Gray, DORRA, with Rear Adm. Mark F. Heinrich, dir, J3, DLA, 13 Mar 2009, p.4.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

the warehouse having to absorb the inefficiency of two organizations purchasing the same item for the same user. A similar inefficiency can be observed in order prioritization. As relayed by DDOC commander Navy Rear Admiral Mark F. Heinrich, on assignment from service as DLA's J3, units had requested over 11,000 of a week's 14,000 orders as top priority, preventing any from being treated as such.¹³⁰

Shifting

The War on Terror shifted late in DDC's second decade as Operation IRAQI FREEDOM receded and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM surged. DDKS collected items exiting Iraq so they could be forwarded to Afghanistan without having to return to the states.¹³¹ Especially important was material for base construction, vehicle maintenance, and sustainment.¹³²

Many items entered Afghanistan by the Northern Distribution Network. The NDN overlaid routes DESC contractors used to deliver fuel. TRANSCOM converted these routes into a multimodal network to reduce reliance on Pakistan. The NDN was ideal for DLA supplies, few of which were expensive, explosive, or proprietary. All material transiting the network, to include that from units exiting Iraq, came through DLA's distribution center in Germany.¹³³

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 7.

¹³¹ Jonathan Stack, "Drawing Down," *Loglines*, November-December 2009, p. 11, Box 81, PAO Archives.

¹³² DLA supplied material used to construct new forward operating bases in Afghanistan. *DDC Review* 13, no. 1 (fall 2009), p. 4, Folder: DDC Review Newsletters, Box 23, PAO Archives.

¹³³ Vice Adm. Alan S. Thompson, dir, DLA, in *Military Logistics Forum* 3, no. 5 (n.d. Jun 2009), p. 32, Folder: Defense Logistics 2009, Box 73, PAO Archives.

DDC's missions were not all related to war. After Haiti was struck with an earthquake in January 2010, the command provided 2.7 million meals, ready-to-eat; two million bottles of water; tents; and cots as part of Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE.¹³⁴ Natural disasters, if big enough, triggered the deployment of DDC personnel and movement of goods to affected areas.

DLA coordinated DDC's participation in these emergencies. The defense agency had served as the command's higher headquarters since formation. With the exception of the Defense Reutilization and Marking Service, other primary-level field activities predated DLA, leaving their employees inclined to identify with their command first and agency second. Navy Vice Adm. Alan S. Thompson, DLA's sixteenth director, sought to reverse this balance in June 2010 by launching the We are DLA campaign. The campaign changed Defense Distribution Center's name to DLA Distribution.

DLA Distribution continued to receive, stock, inventory, maintain, containerize, and palletize goods for the warfighter as the twenty-first century's first decade came to an end. In January 2010, the command deployed DDXX to Kandahar, Afghanistan. DDSP containerized and shipped 515 types of supplies to Kandahar so the team could establish operations.¹³⁵ The deployable warehouse achieved initial operating capability in May, then stayed six months before transitioning to a contractor.¹³⁶ DLA Distribution added a theater consolidation and shipping point to the site later in the year.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ rpt, DLA Distribution, 2010 Accomplishments, 24 May 2011, p. 2, Historian Files.

¹³⁵ notes, Dawn Bonsell, PAO, DLA Distribution, "2010 to 2018," p. 1, Historian Files.

¹³⁶ Jonathan Stack and Stacy Umstead, "Moving Forward," *Loglines*, n.d. 2011, p. 18, Box 8, PAO Archives.

¹³⁷ operating pln, DLA Distribution, 28 Mar 2012, p. 9, Historian Files.

The next events testing DLA Distribution's responsiveness were humanitarian-related. In July 2011, following a devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan, the command "processed over 70 tons of food, almost 20,000 gallons of water, and over 317 pounds of medical supplies in support of Operation TOMODACHI in Japan."¹³⁸ Three years later, it sent eleven distribution workers to Monrovia and Dakar in response to Ebola in eastern Africa. These workers stored construction material for twenty-five treatment units and protective equipment for aid workers.¹³⁹

DLA Distribution benefitted from military construction in 2016. The command's New Cumberland headquarters had been using a building constructed in 1952; employees unable to find space in its narrow corridors worked in structures half a century older.¹⁴⁰ After years of campaigning by Deputy Commander Phyllis C. Campbell, DoD appropriated funds for a replacement.¹⁴¹ The result was a 265,000 sq. ft. multi-story edifice worthy of the command's mission. Efficient lighting, rainwater harvesting, recycled material, photovoltaic panels, increased insulation, and geothermal wells earned the building a silver Leadership in Energy and Environment Design rating.¹⁴²

With a new building came a new task. On 21 December 2018, the Pentagon designated DLA and TRANSCOM Global Transportation and North American Warehouse Provider for the F-35

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ talking pts, DLA Distribution, DDX in Monrovia, for 60 Minutes, 23 Oct 2014, p. 1, Historian Files.

¹⁴⁰ notes, Dawn Bonsell, PAO, DLA Distribution, "2010 to 2018," p. 1, Historian Files; art, Emily Tsambiras, Chris Erbe, and Catherine Hopkins, "Grand Opening: DLA Distribution's State-of-the-Art Headquarters is Open for Business after 15 Years," *Loglines*, March-April 2017, p. 3, Historian Files.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid., pp. 2-3.

Lighting II.¹⁴³ The F-35 had evolved from the Defense Department's joint strike fighter program. With the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps all flying variants, parts storage was important.

Crises abounded as DLA Distribution approached its twenty-fifth anniversary. The most significant was COVID-19. The command had become involved early, helping DLA provision the entire nation through the Department of Health and Human Services and Federal Emergency Management Agency. When the U.S. was able to aid other countries, DLA Distribution shipped protective, diagnostic, and treatment equipment. Unlike other employees, those in warehouses could not work from home: material handling demanded in-person work.

DLA Distribution became increasingly important as the nation's COVID-19 response progressed. When vaccines became available December 2020, the command shipped them to overseas service and family members, to include the deployed fleet. Over the next year, DLA Distribution processed more than a million doses without a single loss.¹⁴⁴ Success came despite multiple vaccines, each with its own cold storage requirements.¹⁴⁵

Test kits were DLA Distribution's next COVID-19 mission. With citizens returning to work and school in late 2021, the need to determine who was infected became paramount. After the Food and Drug Administration approved at-home test versions, the federal government bought them in mass. DLA Distribution used contractor warehouses in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, and its own distribution center in San Joaquin, California, to transship vendor stock to U.S. Post Offices,

¹⁴³ ODSO, "OSD Update: Logistics Reform – DLA," 19 Feb 2019, p. 25, Folder: 2018 (2 of 2), Box 78, PAO Archives.

¹⁴⁴ article, Dawn Bonsell, "DLA Distribution Distributes 1 Million COVID-19 Vaccines," 23 Dec 2021, p.1.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

averaging eighty-two truckloads daily.¹⁴⁶ Expeditionary teams deployed to contracted warehouses to initiate operations, then transitioned work to commercial companies.¹⁴⁷

2020s

DLA Distribution led the agency's transformation as the current decade began. Under its modernization initiative, the command implemented a goods-to-man strategy, maximizing wireless and mobile technologies and implementing a new warehouse management system that aligned with industry standards and advanced audit preparedness. The command installed WMS at DLA Distribution Corpus Christi, Texas, in June 2018 and went live August, 2022. By 2025, all twenty-four DLA Distribution centers will have transitioned from DSS. The effort will save the agency \$107 million and register a positive return on investment in 4.3 years.

Other modernization efforts will bring DLA Distribution warehouses into the twenty-first century. A Wi-Fi backbone is being installed at eight distribution centers to support autonomous/semi-autonomous vehicles, voice technology, tablets, printers, and a real-time location system. A new two-story, 250,000-square-foot warehouse is being constructed on Camp Carroll, South Korea; it is over 90% complete as of the writing of this history. The most significant modernization project after WMS, however, is a \$200 million upgrade of DDSP's Eastern Distribution Center, the largest warehouse in the Defense Department. Currently, the receiving department has been updated and new goods-to-person stations are under construction.

¹⁴⁶ article, Dawn Bonsell, "DLA Packs, Ships COVID-19 Tests for White House Mission," 22 Feb 2022, p. 2.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 3.

Conclusion

DLA Distribution exists to support the warfighter. While quickly manufactured items with robust supply chains can be delivered directly to customers, most commodities and repair parts need to be bought beforehand, stored in warehouses, and issued from stock. Orders are sometimes kitted, sometimes broken down into individual deliveries, and sometimes containerized or palletized with other items. DLA Distribution has kept the nation ready, responsive, and effective by providing these services to warfighters and whole-of-government partners for twenty-five years.