

DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY

NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2012

# LOGGLINES



**WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT**



# from the **DIRECTOR**

## Navy Vice Adm. Mark Harnitchek, USN Director, Defense Logistics Agency

It's a great time to work at the Defense Logistics Agency. The agency continues to be focused on its mission as we strive to "delight" all our customers. On the back end, we have committed to saving \$10 billion for the department and taxpayers through fiscal year 2018. I'm proud of the work being done by DLA's civil servants, military members and our contractor partners — you are great team.

As a Navy customer of DLA for more than 35 years, I always appreciated the agency's ability to provide the full spectrum of end-to-end logistics to the warfighter. Now, as the director of DLA

just short of a year, I've come to appreciate even more the competence, continuity, diversity and professionalism our more than 25,000 civil servants bring to the DLA mission. You make DLA great!

The defense logistics system relies heavily on the experience, training and expertise of all our dedicated civilian and military members, and this DLA workforce is a critical partner on the "Log Nation" team. It's important we continue to develop our workforce and expand our expertise and knowledge through programs focused on education, leadership and professional development, diversity and career enhancement. And it's important to me that every DLA employee has the opportunity to reach his or her full potential and perform to the best of his or her ability.

DLA has several workforce development initiatives in place to help employees reach their goals — from

tuition assistance and internships, to programs that provide employment opportunities for wounded warriors and tailored training plans for employees seeking career progression.

In the coming years, we will face additional fiscal constraints and potential new mission requirements. To address these unique opportunities to excel, it's crucial that we are armed with the right people in the right positions to ensure the agency remains a high-performing, cost-effective logistics leader within the Department of Defense. The warfighters and taxpayers deserve nothing less. I'm confident that as we pursue this challenging, but highly rewarding journey, this great workforce will sustain and enhance its performance, and continue to merit the superb reputation you have earned over the past 51 years.

Thank you for all you do. 🌟

## LOGLINES

Official Flagship Publication of the Defense Logistics Agency

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# Developing Leaders

Story by Beth Reece

**R**obert Ratner was surprised when Defense Logistics Agency Human Resources officials told him he was being enrolled in a leadership development program upon his selection for a civilian supervisory position at DLA Troop Support. He was a retired Air Force colonel with a whole career's worth of leadership training and years of experience managing people and projects.

The DLA Troop Support chief of staff thought he'd already proven himself as

a leader, but quickly realized he had more to learn and gain through DLA's Enterprise Leader Development Program.

"The ELDP has enabled me to meet with other DLA managers and supervisors to find out firsthand what their challenges were through discussions of real-life experiences and, more importantly, the solutions they found beneficial to resolve day-to-day issues," he said. "The program helped position me for success in my current job."

DLA Human Resources launched the refreshed ELDP in August 2011 to

DLA Human Resources launched the Enterprise Leader Development Program in 2011 to align the agency's leader development process with the Defense Department blueprint for developing civilian leaders.



“In the managerial world, you need to break down problems, ensure that people are communicating across the organization and have a vision for where your part of the organization is going.”

— Janet Lynch



align the agency’s leader development process with the Department of Defense’s Civilian Leader Development Framework and Continuum, DoD’s blueprint for developing civilian leaders.

The program includes five levels that match employees’ roles with core competencies ranging from technical capability and decisiveness in lower levels to entrepreneurship and strategic thinking in higher levels. Each level has its own curriculum and lets employees use a mixture of classroom and online training, as well as experiential learning such as rotational assignments and cross training, to develop new skills.

“Our intent is to encourage the development of leadership traits early in an employee’s work life, recognizing that leadership can be exhibited at any level,” DLA Human Resources Director Brad Bunn said when the program debuted.

The ELDP also supports DLA’s talent-management initiative by addressing leadership development needs identified through workforce analysis and leadership competency assessments such as the 2012 DLA Culture Survey, he added.

Level 1 includes all civilian employees who are not team leaders, project leaders, supervisors or managers. About 16,000 of DLA’s 27,000 employees are in Level 1, ELDP Manager Janet Lynch said. These employees are encouraged to work with their supervisors to determine strengths and areas needing development, then take on self-development activities for three of 13 competencies, such as problem-solving and flexibility. Two new one-day courses, “Is Supervision for You?” and “Everyone is a Leader,” are also available but not mandatory.

“Although there are no requirements for employees in Level 1, supervisors need to encourage them to be involved in continuous self-development. As they create career goals and work toward reaching their potential, employees become more competitive for advancement,” Lynch said, adding that progress should also be included in employees’ individual development plans.

Level 2 includes civilian employees who have “lead” or “leader” in their job title or are responsible for leading projects. A two-day course called

“Leading Teams and Projects” is required, and additional courses such as “Understanding and Managing Conflict” and “Myers-Briggs Type Indicator” are also beneficial, Lynch added.

Newly selected supervisors and managers are in Level 3 and must complete a two-year formal program that includes 160 hours of developmental activities focused on human resources and people-management skills. New leaders also undergo a leadership assessment by supervisors and peers. Afterward, they are paired with a certified coach who can help them develop new behaviors and create action plans to become better leaders.

“This gives our new managers the chance to speak with an outside source about ideas and issues they might be encountering during their transition period,” Lynch said. “Discussions could include anything from advice on how to balance work to how to motivate a team.”

Experienced supervisors and managers are in Level 4 and are required to take 20 hours of self-chosen learning activities that range from serving as mentors or special



**DLA's Executive Development Program is aligned with the Enterprise Leader Development Program to provide all leader development opportunities and resources under one program. The Executive Development Program gives employees in grades GS-13 through GS-15 the opportunity to be nominated for up to two high-level leadership courses offered outside of DLA.**

project members to academic work.

"This gives employees the flexibility to focus their activities on their needs and career goals," Lynch said, adding that employees should consider future mission requirements when determining which skills to further develop.

A two-day "Transition to Manager" course is required for Level 4 employees who have been managers less than two years and optional for others. The course helps leaders understand the difference between being a supervisor and being a manager.

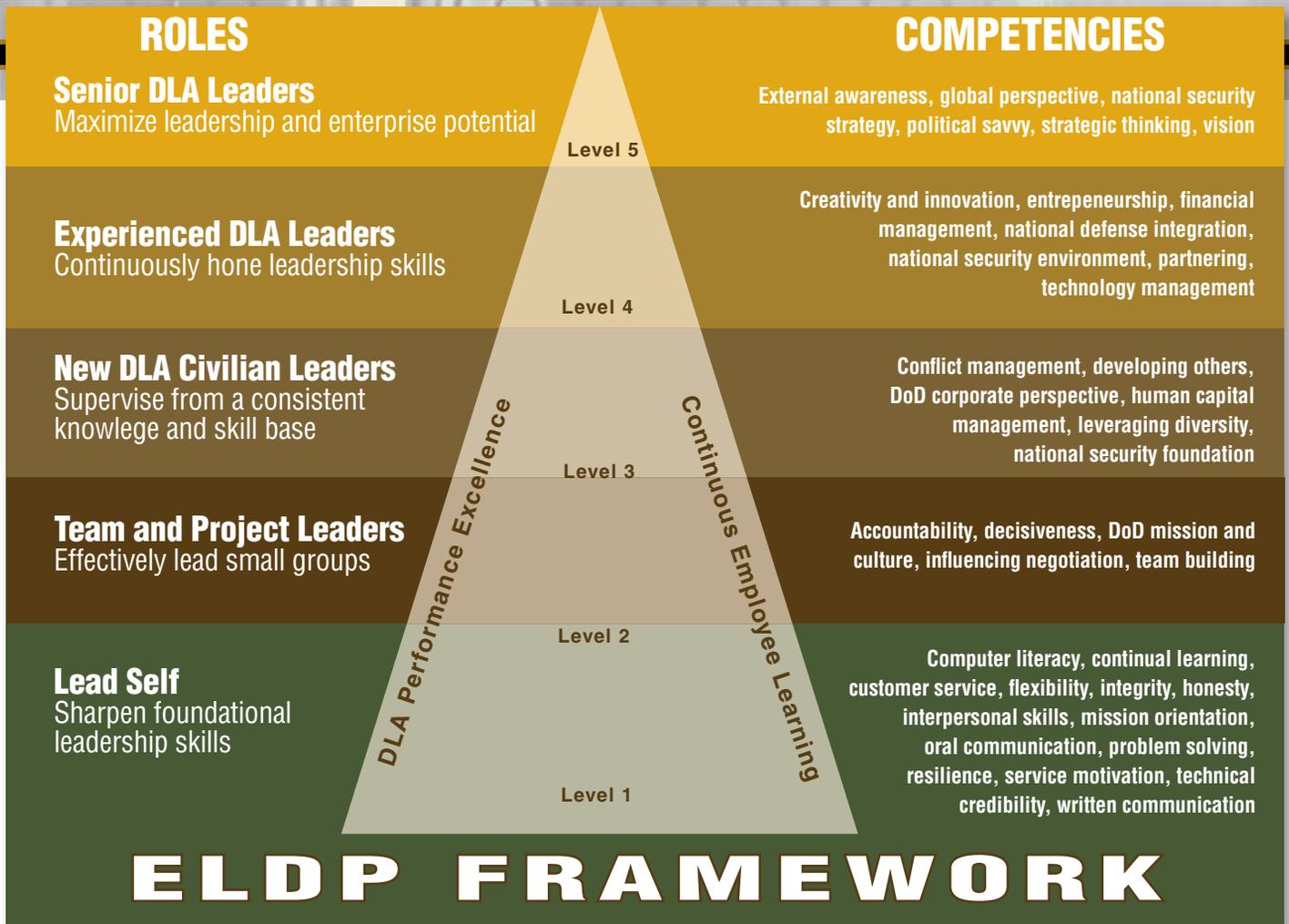
"In the managerial world, for example, you need to break down problems, ensure that people are communicating across the organization and have a vision for where your part of the organization is going," Lynch said.

Level 5 is for members of the Senior Executive Service. These employees must attend the two-week Senior Executive Orientation Program within the first two years of transitioning to an SES position and complete 20 hours of learning activities.

Lynch said that even employees who don't aspire to become supervisors or senior leaders should cultivate leadership traits.

"You have to be able to work with others and through others to get projects done, so no matter where you are in your career, whether you're in charge of others or working independently, you're still going to need things like good interpersonal skills and flexibility to be successful," she said.

DLA's Executive Development Program is also aligned with the Enterprise Leader Development Program to provide all leader development opportunities and resources under one program. The Executive Development Program gives employees in grades GS-13 through GS-15 the opportunity to be nominated for up to two high-level leadership courses offered outside of DLA. The courses available change each fiscal year, but range from the DoD Executive Leadership Development Program to Excellence in Government Fellows.



DLA's Enterprise Leader Development Program is a comprehensive program that provides leadership development opportunities needed to meet the agency's challenging mission requirements today and into the future.

Cless Allman, chief of DLA Europe & Africa's Business Management Office, completed the Excellence in Government Fellows' Partnership for Peace Program in August. The 10-month program strengthens federal employees' leadership skills through innovative coursework, best practices benchmarking, executive coaching and governmentwide networking.

"Hopefully this will make me more competitive for the next level. It's helped me in terms of critical and strategic thinking, and that's especially important in our business, where it can be easy to just take the path of least resistance," he said.

Attending the course alongside employees from numerous federal agencies also helped broaden his perspective, Allman added.

"I grew up in the Department of

Defense," he said. "Other than DLA, I'm career Air Force, so this opportunity helped me see things from the perspectives of non-military leaders."

Allman's skills will be a benefit for the agency, DLA Europe & Africa Commander Army Col. Joseph Ladner said.

"Cless will be able to analyze and review support processes across the enterprise, including how DLA's business processes either contribute to or hinder support to our customers. I can also use him to identify trends in support efficiency and effectiveness, as well as developing

solutions," Ladner said, adding that he is already looking for similar opportunities for other DLA Europe & Africa employees.

Courses available through DLA's Executive Development Program range from four days to two years with intermittent residencies, and the nominating organization must pay tuition, travel and per diem. But whether an employee seeks lower- or upper-level leadership training, there are numerous possibilities to choose from, Lynch said.

"There's something for everybody; employees just have to look," she said. 🌟

A complete list of leadership competencies, a list of activities to develop those competencies, course descriptions and other information are available at the DLA Enterprise Leader Development Program at:

<http://www.hr.dla.mil/resources/workforce/eldp/leadership.asp>



# Operation Warfighter

Story by Beth Reece

**J**ennifer Brande spent a year bouncing from one doctors' appointment to the next before she found an escape working as a historian for the Defense Logistics Agency in February 2011. The former Army sergeant was assigned to the warrior transition unit at Fort Belvoir, Va., recovering from a foot injury and multiple concussions she suffered while deployed to Iraq.

"Being in a medical-hold status can make you feel disconnected from everything around you, so having the chance to work at DLA gave me a sense of purpose that I really needed," she said.

Brande is one of about 30 service members who have been placed in temporary positions at DLA Headquarters and primary-level field activities through Operation Warfighter since 2010. The program is sponsored by the Defense Department and provides work

assignments to wounded, ill and injured service members recuperating at military treatment facilities.

The program was created to help service members prepare to return to active duty or transition to the civilian workforce by building resumes, exploring other career fields and gaining experience in the federal government, said Hettie Holmes-Carter, program manager for DLA Human Resources' Corporate Recruitment and Operation Warfighter programs.

"While service members may not be able to perform their active-duty job, they may be able – and want – to perform other work. This program helps them find opportunities that are available. At the same time, federal agencies get free labor, have an opportunity to support service members and get the chance to use their skills and capabilities," she said.

The length of Operation Warfighter assignments varies according to the service member's recovery, and work performed is arranged between supervisors and a participant's warrior transition unit. Most assignments take advantage of the skills service members gained while on active duty, but Holmes-

Carter said she encourages DLA managers to also consider special interests and hobbies that may be mentioned in potential candidates' resumes.

She also recommended that managers tailor position duties to the skills and capabilities of a potential candidate rather than being inflexible in position requirements.

"Unless you find someone who has actually worked in the same field as the temporary position you want to fill, you're probably going to have to spend some time training the service member. Someone who served in the infantry, for example, may not be proficient in Excel and PowerPoint, but they may have other experience and skills that are a good fit for a manager," she said.

Clay Henson, a former Army infantryman, was one of the first service members to work for DLA through Operation Warfighter. Henson mentioned having a knack for photography on his resume, so DLA Installation Support's Multimedia Division Chief Ken Whitehead brought

him in as a temporary photographer to shoot local events.

Brande, a public affairs specialist with background as a military historian, is one of the few Operation Warfighter participants whose military occupational skills were a 100-percent match for DLA, Holmes-Carter said. As soon as he read Brande's resume, DLA Strategic Communications Deputy Director Jack Hooper knew she could help fill in the gaps of DLA's history, which had gone undocumented for the past 10 years.

"She got to work bringing our history up to date as soon as we brought her on, without any help or training," Hooper said. "This program is good on so many levels. It provides an opportunity for wounded warriors to serve in meaningful jobs and provides a talent pool for federal agencies that can use the experience and training these service members bring with them."

DLA officials are hoping to attract more Operation Warfighter participants with a new announcement on USAJOBS,



## Benefits of Participation for Employers

- Ability to demonstrate support for the military service and sacrifices of wounded warriors.
- Access to the talent, dedication, and considerable military and non-military skills of these recuperating service members.
- Salaries are paid by the military.
- No open positions are required.
- Assisted technology and accommodations provided by the DoD Computer/Electronics Accommodations Program free of charge.
- Assignment can be terminated at any time with written justification.
- Although employers are not obligated to hire service members, the OWF program can serve as a pipeline for future employment.

Joy Brunk



Jennifer Brande is one of about 30 service members who have been placed in temporary positions at DLA Headquarters and primary-level field activities through Operation Warfighter since 2010.



### Benefits of Participation for Service Members

- Gain meaningful activity outside of the hospital environment.
- Explore employment interests.
- Develop job skills.
- Build a resume.
- Gain valuable federal government work experience.

the federal government's official job list.

Holmes-Carter said the announcement is generic; it doesn't specify job series, grades or descriptions of available positions because applicants don't undergo formal evaluations.

Access to the announcement is limited to prevent a flood of applicants who aren't eligible for the program. However, Holmes-Carter and her staff are working with officials at warrior transition units to ensure potential applicants know how to apply through USAJOBS and have a direct link to the announcement. The staff is also distributing flyers with application instructions at job fairs and veterans' outreach events.

Using USAJOBS to announce positions available to Operation Warfighter participants is good for two reasons, she added. First, it eliminates the need to share resumes through email and protects personal information such as Social Security numbers and home addresses. Second, it gives applicants the opportunity to list which locations they want to be referred for.

"This is great because when a DLA manager has a need, we can go in and pull the resumes for everyone who applied with an interest in that location. It also ensures service members aren't referred for positions in areas where they aren't available or aren't interested," Holmes-Carter said.

DLA Distribution was among the first activities to take advantage of the USAJOBS announcement as it looked for service members with experience in administrative assistance, physical security and financial analysis to fill positions in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, said Edward Fisher, chief of DLA Distribution's Command Control Center.

Brande said it makes sense for DLA to announce Operation Warfighter vacancies through USAJOBS because many of the service members at warrior transition units are preparing to leave the military and already use the site to search for future employment.

While there's no promise of permanent employment under Operation Warfighter, some participants do get lucky. Brande was medically retired from the Army in May and accepted two consecutive, six-month temporary appointments to finish compiling DLA's history.

"DLA really helped me get back on my feet again. It's given me the opportunity to work with some of the most amazing people in my field and has helped me further develop my skills," she said.

The opportunity also gave her a chance to learn how to adapt and work around limitations posed by ongoing medical problems, she added.

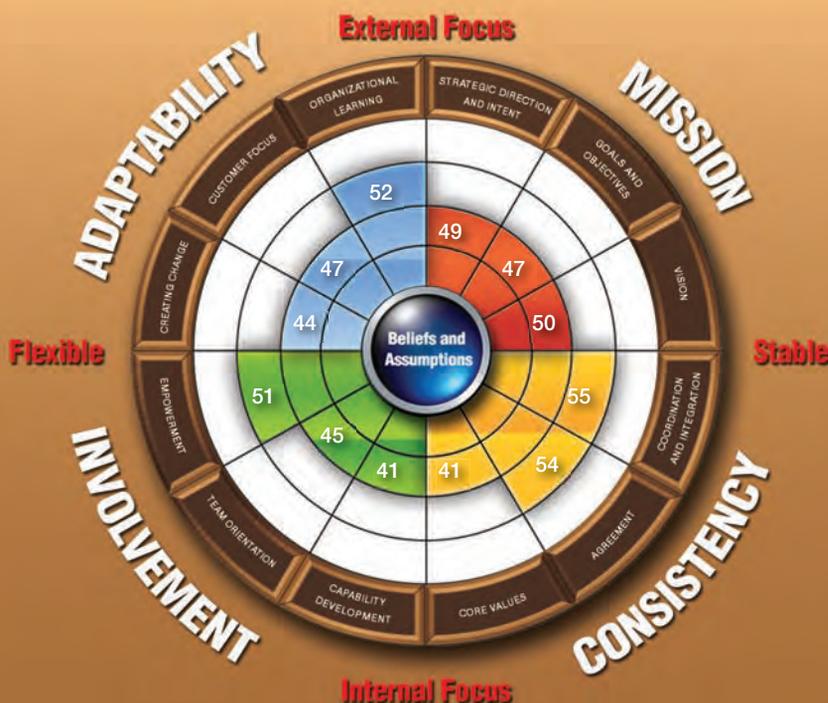
Operation Warfighter assignments also led to full-time employment for two other participants, Holmes-Carter said. One was placed in the DLA Corporate Intern Program, and another will be placed in a permanent position with DLA upon release from active duty.

"A lot of these service members have been in the military most of their working careers, so it's all they know. This program lets us help them transition, whether they return to active duty or move out into the civilian sector," she said. "It's just one of the ways we can thank them for the sacrifices they've made." 🌟

# Measuring the Workplace

Story by Beth Reece

## DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY Culture Survey Results 2012



More than 66 percent of DLA employees believe DLA is a great place to work, according to results of the 2012 DLA Culture Survey.

**D**efense Logistics Agency employees get at least one chance every 18 months to give uncensored, confidential opinions on life and work at the Defense Department's largest combat logistics support agency. More than 70 percent of the workforce accepted the opportunity to complete the 2012 DLA Culture Survey in May and June, rating everything from morale and mission capability to how well leaders communicate with employees.

"We had a 71 percent response rate, which says to me that you care about your workplace and want to continue to improve DLA and its support to the warfighter," DLA Human Resources Director Brad Bunn said in a Sept. 13 blog post letting employees know results were in.

The survey follows the Denison Consulting Model and consists of two parts. The first measures organizational performance and behaviors with 60 questions relating to mission, adaptability, employee involvement and consistency. DLA's overall score was 48 percent, down slightly from 52 percent in the 2010 survey. The score represents a comparison against a composite database of more than 900 organizations in such industries as manufacturing, health care and financial services.

"That means we're still performing better than 48 percent of the organizations



## Survey Trends Over the Years

Average Denison Score



Employees showed an increasingly positive outlook for DLA since 2004 when compared to other benchmarked organizations. Almost 27,000 employees were invited to take the Denison survey with 19,000 of them responding.



The index score represents a percentile comparison against the Denison composite database of benchmarked organizations rather than a percentage of respondents or responses. A higher score is indicated by more color slices in the model. The yearly score is calculated as an average of total points from the four culture traits depicted in the Denison model.

in Denison's database. We're just slightly below average in comparison to the global benchmark. Plus, as a general rule, Denison tells us percentile changes of zero to four points are considered insignificant," Bunn said. The results indicate that the agency remains strong in such areas as adapting to change and the ability to align short-term goals with long-term strategies, but more work is needed on customer focus and team orientation.

The second part of the survey consisted of an additional 60 questions specific to DLA, such as job satisfaction, accountability, diversity and telework. Job satisfaction dropped to 69.3 percent from 72.3 in 2010, and 66.3 percent of respondents recommended DLA as a great place to work.

Employees' views on telework also declined. Just 66.6 percent said they clearly understood DLA's telework policy, compared to 72.7 percent in 2010, and only 50.2 percent agreed that their supervisor encourages and supports telework.

Denison's consultants believe DLA's culture is still strong despite the decline, said Jackie Cookston, program manager for this year's survey.

"If you look at the results of the

Employee Viewpoint Survey that [the Office of Personnel Management] does annually, you'll see that many scores have gone down or remained the same throughout the government in the past two years," she said, adding that the uncertainty of the budget environment and continued pay freezes could be impacting employees' perceptions of their workplaces. Leadership and

mission changes, as well as new technologies and restructuring, may also be contributing factors.

Communication and diversity were two areas that improved, with more employees agreeing that leaders communicate well with employees and that supervisors work well with employees of different backgrounds.

Participants left more than 17,000 comments, with the most common themes being communication, leadership, training, senior management and staffing.

"This is the largest number of comments ever received for a DLA Culture Survey. It shows that our employees are engaged and interested in their workplace, seeking out avenues for change, as well as indicating their approval for existing benefits and initiatives that make DLA a great place to work," Cookston said.

Results were broken down by directorate, field activity and work unit to give employees an idea of where their part of the organization stands

Results indicate the agency remains strong in adapting to change and the ability to align short-term goals with long-term strategies



# DLA Climate Survey 2012

on all aspects of culture, and to provide a framework for change at local and headquarters levels.

“These results are driving discussions and decisions across the agency. By looking closely at areas we scored low in, we can develop detailed action plans that bring about improvements,” Cookston added.

Culture “champions” in every directorate and activity are working with leaders and employees through December to analyze the data and create action plans and initiatives that address shortfalls. Those plans will be briefed to agency leaders beginning in January.

Alicia Arvelo-Torres, culture champion for DLA Disposition Services, said the key to making the action plans work is time.

“We all want to see improvements right away, but the truth is, it takes time to analyze the data and create plans that give results. It’s better to have progress that’s consistent, even if it takes longer, than to have change that doesn’t withstand time,” she said.

Previous culture survey results have inspired such initiatives as the We Are DLA campaign, which was designed to improve communication and instill a sense of camaraderie across the agency’s organizations. Employees’ dissatisfaction with leadership also led to the development of the Enterprise Leader Development Program.

This is the sixth time the survey has been conducted since 2003, when the agency’s score was 34 percent. DLA spent subsequent years on an upward trend, rising from 37 percent in 2006 to 52 percent in 2010. The next survey is planned for fall 2013. 🌟

|  | 2010   | 2012   |
|--|--|--|
| <b>JOB SATISFACTION</b><br><b>Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your job?</b>   | <b>72.3%</b>                                 | <b>69.3%</b>                                 |
| <b>TRUST IN SUPERVISOR</b><br><b>I have trust and confidence in my supervisor.</b>   | <b>65.5%</b>                                 | <b>64.2%</b>                                 |
| <b>PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT</b><br><b>Employees are recognized for providing high-quality products and services to customers.</b><br><b>Awards in my work unit depend upon how well employees perform their jobs.</b>                          | <b>60.6%</b><br><b>55.0%</b>                 | <b>55.6%</b><br><b>50.0%</b>                 |
| <b>ENTERPRISE BUSINESS SYSTEMS</b><br><b>I understand how EBS initiatives are intended to help accomplish its mission</b><br><b>I believe EBS initiatives are successful in helping DLA accomplish its mission.</b>                          | <b>50.0%</b><br><b>37.4%</b>                 | <b>49.0%</b><br><b>38.5%</b>                 |
| <b>COMMUNICATION</b><br><b>My work unit communicates well with its employees.</b>  | <b>51.7%</b>                                 | <b>52.2%</b>                                 |
| <b>DIVERSITY</b><br><b>My supervisor/manager works well with employees of different backgrounds.</b>   | <b>70.9%</b>                                 | <b>71.3%</b>                                 |
| <b>TELEWORK</b><br><b>I have a clear understanding of DLA’s policy on telework.</b><br><b>My immediate supervisor encourages and supports telework.</b><br><b>My work unit’s managers and senior leaders encourage and support telework.</b> | <b>72.7%</b><br><b>53.9%</b><br><b>48.6%</b> | <b>66.5%</b><br><b>50.2%</b><br><b>47.6%</b> |



# Funding Education

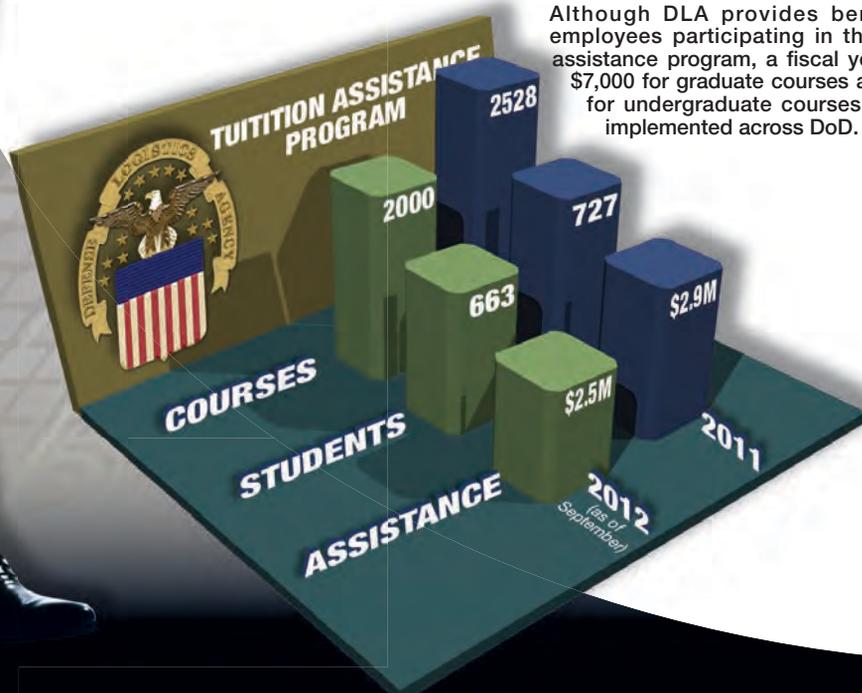
Story by Sara Moore

**A**fter seven years with Defense Logistics Agency Distribution in New Cumberland, Pa., amid pursuing a master's degree in organizational leadership, Laura Hooper decided to take a new role at DLA Distribution San Joaquin, Calif. That job meant a cross-country move, which for many people would put the brakes on education because of financial strain. But DLA's tuition assistance program helped Hooper continue her classes while settling into her new job and home.

"For people who are already driven and want to improve, [the tuition assistance program] just takes the financial stress out of the picture," she said. "I was trying to move across the country, and if I hadn't been in the tuition assistance program and they weren't committing funds, I probably would have looked in the private sector."

DLA's tuition assistance program is a benefit available to all full-time civilian employees who take courses at an accredited college or university. Although employees have to meet conditions to

Although DLA provides benefits for employees participating in the tuition assistance program, a fiscal year cap of \$7,000 for graduate courses and \$4,700 for undergraduate courses has been implemented across DoD.



qualify for the program and not all courses are covered, it is tailored to those looking to advance their careers within DLA and the government.

“With tuition being as expensive as it is and going up every year, this is a good way to come in, get your feet in the door and go on with your education,” said Cathy Tangey, a DLA tuition assistance program manager. “It does make a difference in an employee’s career along the way. Education is always a good thing.”

The tuition assistance program is open to permanent employees with at least one year of full-time service, said Tom Griffin, another DLA tuition assistance program manager. Contractors and non-appropriated fund employees are not eligible. Courses must be taken at a school accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, he said, and courses must be related to DLA’s mission. There is no minimum or maximum number of credit hours for the program, he noted, but each participant has a fiscal year cap of \$7,000 for graduate courses and \$4,700 for undergraduate courses. Griffin stressed that the tuition assistance program is not a degree program, but pays for individual courses. Most students will have to pay for additional courses that don’t meet the criteria or exceed the yearly cap.

The requirement for courses to be DLA mission-related may seem restrictive at first, Griffin said, but employees can take courses related to any aspect of the agency’s mission, not only their specific roles. In fact, the overwhelming majority of employees who participate in the program take business courses, he said.

“That’s pretty nice for the employees, because it gives them a little more flexibility,” he said. “If we were to restrict courses to job relevance, it would be a much narrower program.”

“With tuition being as expensive as it is and going up every year, this is a good way to come in, get your feet in the door and go on with your education.”

— Cathy Tangey



The flexibility of the program has helped Teresa Gasaway, who is using tuition assistance to pursue a Master of Business Administration. A supply planner supporting the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle program at DLA Land and Maritime, Gasaway started using tuition assistance in 2010 and will continue pursuing her degree in November after taking a few months off. When she started her classes, Gasaway was an editorial assistant in DLA Training, but she was able to take business courses because they related to the agency’s mission. She said using the program – which is accessed through DLA’s internal Learning Management System – was easy, and support personnel were very helpful. Her tuition payments have never been late, she noted, so she has always started her classes on time.

“The tuition assistance program has been very helpful with my professional and personal life, because I do not need to have a second job working to pay off school loans,” Gasaway said. “DLA supports and emboldens its employees to take their education to the next level by the convenience of this program.”

As of mid-September, DLA had invested almost \$2.5 million in the tuition assistance program in fiscal 2012, with 663 students taking more than 2,000 courses. Those amounts are comparable to fiscal 2011, when almost \$2.9 million was invested in 2,528 courses for

727 students. Each organization within DLA funds the tuition assistance program for its employees, Griffin said, setting a budget for the program each year. He and Tangey both noted that all of DLA’s leaders strongly support the program and consistently commit more than enough money to cover their students.

“I’ve not seen any reduction of support for this program, because it’s an extremely popular program and it has support among the upper leadership,” Griffin said.

Despite the popularity among its users, Hooper said she worries that not enough employees know about the tuition assistance program and how to use it. Taking college classes while working full time isn’t easy and requires commitment, she said, but added that she sees education as a path to advancement.

“I think it’s definitely going to make me more competitive as I apply for jobs and continue to move up,” she said. “A lot of what we study has to do with private industry, so it’ll give me an opportunity to bring that and help DLA gain some efficiencies.”

Griffin also cited self-improvement as a reason people use the program, noting that many participants go on to earn degrees and advance in their careers.

“People see education as a vehicle to advancement in their careers,” he said. “And I think there’s a basic desire in most people to improve themselves.” 🌟



# On the Right Track

Story by Amanda Neumann

**A**re you certain that you're in the right career field? Are you focusing on the right types of developmental activities? Do you want to further your career? Thanks to a new human resources initiative called career mapping, employees in the Defense Logistics Agency can now find the answers to these questions.

Designed with both employees and supervisors in mind, career mapping is a step-by-step guide that puts career information at employees' fingertips, said Pam Latker, chief of DLA Training's Career Management Division. DLA Training is part of DLA Human Resources Services, in Columbus, Ohio.

"Career mapping is designed to help employees and supervisors when they are developing their individual development plans," she said. "You have many different avenues, like formal developmental programs,

rotational assignments and other informal avenues to develop yourself, and we've put them under an accessible tool where employees see and use them and say, 'Hey, these are the kinds of opportunities, developmental activities or training that can help me grow.'"

Located on the DLA Human Resources website, detailed career maps are being posted for each of the DLA mission-critical occupational paths, such as contracting. Using the DLA career guides and career-specific detailed maps, employees can focus on the career path they are most interested in and the developmental activities associated with each. From there, employees can identify their individualized goals and plan out activities and opportunities that will help further their careers, Latker said.

"DLA employees have the opportunity to look at the map and see what kind of developmental activities are identified for the different levels," she said. "They see what competencies are connected to those levels, and they can strategically plan out activities that will help them grow within their organization."

The first step in career mapping is reviewing the career pyramid, consisting

of four sides: education and training, job functions, leadership competencies, and technical competencies for each job series.

“The main side of the pyramid lists the job functions starting with the basic level, then the lower-mid, upper-mid and senior, and identifies functions that are associated with the specific career field such as contracting for a contract specialist,” she said. “Then we mapped out the technical competencies and the education and training for each of the levels. Each is unique to that career field.”

DLA Training collaborated with functional community managers and representatives from across the agency to develop career-specific products. Each career pyramid is based on the respective career field, Latker said, and each consolidates career information in a visually appealing, user-friendly format.

“It’s a fairly new concept for DLA,” she said. “Instead of employees surfing different websites for information or going into the HR website and looking at different career developmental activities such as the Enterprise Leader Development Program or the DLA Rotation Program, etc., they can see and use these easy-to-read maps

“Career mapping is there to help employees and supervisors when they are developing their individual development plans.”

— Pam Latker

that highlight activities and include links to websites.

“We also have checklists associated with each career map, and employees can use these to identify competencies and experiences that can assist in their growth,” she added.

Latker said several people worked together to devise the four-sided pyramid approach.

“The career mapping approach and products we’re using are unique to DLA,” Latker said. “When we met with our initial focus groups, our goal was to design a three-dimensional approach so people could see that all of the sides of the pyramid are representative of their career, not just one individual side. All four sides of the pyramid are extremely important to their development and who they are as an employee.”

Once employees identify a career goal, they can then move onto the career guide. The guide, the second step in the process, gives employees the background they need

to connect to other DLA programs, widening the scope of available opportunities.

“We have a DLA Career Guide and specific career guides for each of the career fields we’ve mapped,” Latker said. “The DLA Career Guide is designed for every DLA employee and contains career planning steps to assist employees thinking about where they would like to focus, whether it be today or tomorrow. The guide itself is only about 20 pages. Our goal was to design a user-friendly guide, not something so in-depth that employees would shy away from using the resource.

DLA career guides also contain links to important resources and developmental information such as the agency’s Learning Management System and tuition assistance policy.

“It’s very user-friendly and helps lay out a foundation so [employees] can lay out their goals,” Latker said.

Once an employee has identified a career goal, the next step is to create an individual development plan. An IDP is

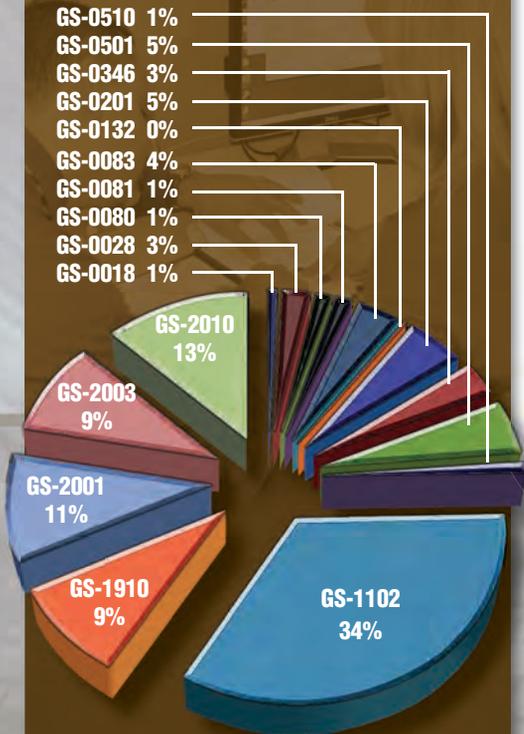




## MISSION-CRITICAL OCCUPATIONS

All Department of Defense agencies have developed a list of occupations that are critical to their particular missions. Occupations most critical to the Defense Logistics Agency are:

- GS-0018 Safety and Occupational Health Management
- GS-0028 Environmental Protection Specialist
- GS-0080 Security Administration
- GS-0081 Fire Protection and Prevention
- GS-0083 Police
- GS-0132 Intelligence
- GS-0201 Human Resources Management
- GS-0346 Logistics Management
- GS-0501 Financial Administration and Programs
- GS-0510 Accounting
- GS-1102 Contracting
- GS-1910 Quality Assurance
- GS-2001 General Supply
- GS-2003 Supply Program Management
- GS-2010 Inventory Management



This graphic represents the relative size of each occupation as compared with other DLA mission-critical occupations.

the most important piece of an employee's development, Latker said. "An IDP lays out your goals," she said. "It's also a formal plan between you and your supervisor that balances the needs of the organization while focusing on your developmental growth. It gives you a foundation around what you want to do for the future. Anybody can say, 'I know what I want to do,' but you need to put that down in writing. You need to list what your goals are and identify activities to support those goals."

Although IDPs are important, some DLA employees don't create or put time into developing them, Latker said. "They think an IDP is a wish list; it's not," she said. "The IDP process is very structured. It should discuss your short- and long-term goals; list your competencies; identify your knowledge, skills and abilities; and be linked to your training, education and other professional development. It's a road map that says, 'I'm here, and this is where I would like to be in the future.'"

Although much of career development is focused on employees, supervisors aren't left out of the equation, Latker stressed. "As a supervisor looking at the career map, I can identify where my employee is on the map, identify skills gaps, and partner with my employee to determine the training and developmental opportunities that should be incorporated into their IDP," she said. "It's truly a benefit to the employee,

the supervisor and the organization." The creation of the career mapping tool has been a work in progress, Latker said. Finding a simplified way to consolidate information into a manageable, user-friendly tool wasn't easy, she said.

"What most of the Defense Department agencies have developed is either a career guide or ladders or both, which may not be usable to everyone," she said. "There's often so much information that employees get lost or experience information overload. We wanted to design a tool that all employees, whether they're just out of college or five years from retirement, could go in and search, something that was user-friendly and at their fingertips."

She added that she also wanted a tool that she would use herself. "I wanted something that I would use as an employee," she said, adding that she aimed for simplicity in developing the guides. "I want something that gets to the point, and that's what career mapping is all about. It's short, simple and gives you what you need to make good decisions."

With contracting, the largest of DLA's mission-critical fields, already mapped out, Latker and her team are focusing on mapping other mission-critical occupations. Human resources, environmental and property disposal were mapped out in fiscal 2011. In fiscal 2012, finance and accounting, Enterprise Business System supply, DLA Distribution supply and DLA Distribution traffic management were mapped, Latker said.

Career mapping is a collaborative, long-term endeavor. "Our initial focus has been mapping careers with the highest number of employees," Latker said. "There are at least 21 career fields, with several career series in each, so we're tackling each of these. It's a very intensive process. We want to ensure functional community managers and their representatives are involved throughout the

process. Contracting employees, whose career fields were mapped out first, seem pleased with the result, Latker said, noting that feedback has been positive.

“Feedback has been extremely favorable, especially from the contracting community since they have used the career map for about two years now,” Latker said. “We’ve made about 650 three-dimensional, hard-copy pyramids for the supervisors to use in their discussions with their employees at their mid-year review, as well as during IDP open season.”

For those unsure of the process, Latker offered a few suggestions.

“I suggest they go in and read the career guide on the HR website and review all the documents we’ve created for the individual career field. There’s a detailed map of the developmental levels. Employees should partner with their supervisor to work on an IDP that includes five- and 10-year goals. They should review career-specific maps, look at available opportunities to include training and development or rotational programs and tuition assistance to name a few.”

With a new, interactive website specifically for career mapping in the works, Latker said she hopes employees will visit the site to look at their career map and mark it as a favorite site.

“I’m excited to get the website up and running in collaboration with DLA Information Operations,” she said. “I have a wish list of features I want in the site: competencies that you can scroll over and see the definitions, and features that wouldn’t be possible in a hard-copy format. It’s putting everything under one framework, one website. Once the site is up and operational, we’ll be loading the completed career-specific maps. If someone is interested in transitioning to a new career, they will have documents that are easy to read, very user-friendly and



Sara West, a senior contract specialist in DLA Contracting Services, part of DLA Acquisition, accesses the career pyramid for contracting employees from the DLA Human Resources website. Career pyramids are being developed to help guide employees’ career paths.

have links to other sites all in one place.”

Although designed for all employees, the career mapping tool is the greatest advantage to those new to DLA, Latker said.

“I think the tool is unbelievable, and once we get it onto an interactive website, it’s going to be a great asset for all employees,” Latker said. “Especially seeing our newest DLA hires, the ones beginning their career with DLA, wanting to use these career maps to say, ‘OK, I’m here and I know where I want to go, now how can I get there?’ Career maps will be the tool they can use to get them started and headed in the right direction.”

In the future, Latker has even bigger plans for the career maps – recruitment.

“Right now, our goal is to continue to communicate and socialize career

mapping to our DLA employees,” she said. “We’re discussing it and introducing it at our DLA Pathways orientations. We’ve had management meetings with many senior and executive-level personnel in DLA, guiding them through the career mapping document, demonstrating how the documents are linked and discussing the strategy used in our approach. Although we’re not there yet, we want to use this as a recruitment tool so potential employees can get a feel for DLA and all the wonderful opportunities our agency offers to its employees.

“Eventually we may map other positions that are not considered mission-critical occupations but are essential to our mission like the administrative support field.” 📍





# Pathways to Federal Jobs

Story by Amanda Neumann

**W**hen many people think of an intern, descriptors like fresh out of college, young and inexperienced come to mind. Those descriptions fit many interns, but they can also be veterans, people looking to change careers, or people with disabilities.

Recent changes to the definition of “intern” have altered what that means for employees, supervisors and potential hires.

President Barack Obama signed the order that established the Pathways Program in December 2010. The program provides federal employment opportunities to degree-seeking students taking at least a halftime course load in an accredited high school, technical or vocational school, or college. After they finish their academic and work experience requirements, students may be noncompetitively converted to term, career or career-conditional appointments.

Officially referred to as “Pathways for Students and Recent Graduates to Federal Careers”

on the Defense Logistics Agency Human Resources website, Pathways consists of three programs: the Internship Program, the Presidential Management Fellows Program and the Recent Graduates Program.

“With the passage of Pathways, [the Office of Personnel Management] required all the agencies to use internship in the titling of their program for their current students,” said Char Swingle, a human resources specialist with DLA Human Resources Policy.

The Internship Program, whose participants are referred to as interns, is the avenue for students enrolled in educational institutions. It replaces the Student Temporary Employment Program and the Student Career Experience Program and is officially called the DLA Pathways Internship Program.

“Basically the STEP and SCEP names are gone; they’re now called interns,” said Pam Latker, chief of the Career Management Division at DLA Training.

The Recent Graduates Program is aimed at those who have recently graduated from qualifying educational institutions. Along with competitive examining, merit promotion and special hiring authorities such as the veterans



DLA Document Services interns past and present gather and meet with Steve Sherman, director of DLA Document Services, as part of an intern workshop hosted at the organization's headquarters in Mechanicsburg, Pa.

and disabled authorities, the Recent Graduates Program will be used to fill DLA's Pathways to Career Excellence Program, formerly the DLA Corporate Intern Program.

The final rule implementing the Pathways programs was effective July 10. With the law now in effect, DLA Human Resources has made significant progress in implementing it, Swingle said.

DLA's SCEP program gave Douglas Rakestraw his first position in the federal government as a document automation specialist in DLA Document Services in 2010. Currently a career employee, he credits that internship for exposing him to different parts of DLA.

"It was interesting when I first started, because they moved me around a lot," he said. "I did different things here and there for the first year. In the last year and a half, I've done more specific, more set, jobs where I'm there for a longer period of time. Because they moved me around a lot, it gave me more opportunities to figure out what I could do and helped me get an idea of what I actually want to do."

Rakestraw, 26, who graduated last year with an associate's degree in

electrical information technology, plans to continue his education.

"Right now, I'm still doing a variety of things," he said. "I'm running some technical stuff on a server to get stuff out to our production area; I do some billing, plus some technical projects, etc. I want to eventually shift into something else, like project management.

Arina Zaitseva, a contracting trainee in the intern program at DLA Document Services, has been in the SCEP program for a couple of months. She is pursuing a business minor as an addition to her bachelor's degree in psychology and researched DLA before applying for an internship.

"DLA is a forward-thinking organization," she said. "It's global, worldwide and very big. They've given me a rotation in different departments, from broad to specific, which has given me

options. I have some room to decide, and there's lots of movement."

Zaitseva said DLA's emphasis on education is what attracted her to a career with the agency.

"It's a good environment; they value education and support you to get more education," she said. "I'm getting my extra education just for this. With the intern program, I've broadened my knowledge of DLA, got more in-depth on what DLA does, how it operates, and I recommend internships to my friends."

Latker said internships can provide a ladder to other career opportunities.

"There are people out there who say, 'I want to do other things and broaden my experiences,'" Latker said. "Those are the ones who tend to get other experiences and tend to move up much faster because they're willing to do those kinds of things to grow." ✪

The Pathways Programs assist students from high school, post-graduate school and recent graduates and provides meaningful training and career development opportunities for individuals at the beginning of their federal service. For more information on Pathways opportunities, visit:

<https://my.usajobs.gov/StudentsAndGrads>

# A Conversation with . . .

# Brad Bunn

DLA's Human Resources Director Talks About What Makes the Agency a Great Place to Work

***What makes the Defense Logistics Agency a great place to work for its employees? Why should people come to work here, and why should they stay?***

Our mission, our culture and our people make DLA a great place to work.

We have a clear mission and vision. The mission is important. We can relate to it. We get it! And we can be proud of it. Just walk around our work spaces, and you'll see pictures of someone in uniform: fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, sisters, brothers or friends who serve or have served in the armed forces. We all know somebody who benefits from what we do. We come to work every day knowing that the warfighter depends on us, and we go home every night knowing that we have done something to meet their needs.

Our culture embraces trust, respect and empowerment. Like

Defense Logistics Agency



Brad Bunn

any large organization, DLA is not perfect, but overall DLA offers an environment where people can come to work and excel. People come to DLA seeking meaningful work, fair pay, occasional recognition, and opportunities to balance work and home lives. DLA lives up to these expectations. We have a great

benefits package, including flexible hours, telework, paid leave, high-quality health and life insurance options, training and tuition reimbursement, career ladders, and promotional opportunities. The work is satisfying, the pay is good, and we are recognized for our contributions.

These attributes make DLA a good place to work, but it is the people who make it great, people who commit to the organization and the mission, who actively work to improve skills and performance, who care about their co-workers and their customers, and who step up to make us proud of what we do and where we do it.

***What are some of the challenges facing DLA Human Resources and the workforce in general in the near future?***

First of all, there are no challenges that we can't overcome. As DLA Director Navy

Vice Adm. Mark Harnitchek is fond of saying, we're a giant in the logistics world, and there's nothing we can't do. If we didn't have challenges, work wouldn't be as fun. That said, I think our greatest challenge will be the uncertainty associated with the current budget environment and how that will affect our mission picture. Although the impact of uncertainty is far reaching, I think we can group the most compelling into three broad categories.

We've been expecting the "retirement tsunami" for several years now and have been preparing with talent management and succession planning strategies. Knowledge transfer, the sharing of information from one generation of employees to the next, is an essential element. During an economic downturn, attrition slows as employees remain in stable positions and delay retirement. As the percentage of DLA employees who are retirement eligible increases, so does the knowledge base that may leave en masse with an economic upturn. In fact, recent survey results indicate that nearly 25 percent of DLA employees plan to retire in the next five years. We must be constantly vigilant to prepare our more junior workforce through inclusion and information sharing.

The second challenge is

rightsizing and reskilling. We hear every day about our nation's budget crisis and the need to economize. Combined with the reduction in America's global military presence, it's reasonable to expect that DLA's operational tempo will change as well. What is the right size for our workforce in five years? What skill sets will be valued as our current mission changes or new missions replace old? As an agency, we can't afford to get too comfortable with where we are today. Tomorrow is likely to look very different.

Lastly, I believe we need to focus increased attention on remaining an employer of choice. With smaller budgets, pay freezes and media criticism, the perception of government employment as an attractive alternative is shaken. We must continue to strive for a positive image, both for our current workforce and for future workers. DLA's quality of life programs are, in my opinion, hard to ignore. Federal benefits programs are unsurpassed, and many DLA activities offer flexible work schedules, telework and a variety of family-friendly programs. Our excellent workforce is testimony that DLA is an excellent employer. Our public face is increasingly important in maintaining that image.

The bottom line is that good stewardship of American tax dollars does not have to devastate us, and it won't as long as we are forward thinking, responsive to change, and ever mindful of the impact our work has on military service members, our nation and the world.

***What are some of the things DLA is doing to increase its recruiting of veterans?***

DLA has an excellent track record in employing veterans and former military members. About 36 percent of our current workforce is veterans, and about a third of those are disabled veterans. Service members who are retiring or leaving the military often gravitate to DLA and other Defense Department activities because they have a great affinity for our mission, and we're proud of that tradition.

DLA's efforts to recruit and employ severely disabled veterans include ensuring all job opportunity announcements include 30 percent or more disabled veterans in the area of consideration. As a result of this practice, disabled veterans are able to be considered for vacant positions for which they meet the minimum qualification requirements. Additionally, managers are encouraged to participate in local job fairs and to

# A Conversation with . . .

work with state and local veterans outreach programs and military transition centers in an effort to attract qualified candidates for agency positions.

In addition, managers have been asked to designate positions specifically for veteran hiring and to utilize veteran intern programs to provide meaningful work assignments for recovering service members and veterans. These intern programs may be used as possible pipelines for placing veterans.

Operation Warfighter provides wounded warriors with temporary opportunities for meaningful activity outside of the hospital environment while they wait to return to active duty or transition to the civilian world. Service members receive military salaries and therefore are not otherwise compensated by the agencies to which they are assigned. There is no commitment or promise of permanent employment.

For many recovering service members, the Operation Warfighter program represents their first post-injury work experience. Placing these service members in supportive work settings that positively impact the recuperation process is the underlying purpose of the Operation Warfighter program.

Under the Department of Veteran Affairs Non-Paid Work Experience Program, veterans with service-connected disabilities

are placed in local, state or federal government offices. Such a placement does not count against an agency's limit of full-time employees, and the agency does not pay the veteran. The VA pays the veteran a monthly subsistence allowance while the veteran is participating in the program. During the placement, the veteran works toward gaining or strengthening particular skill sets. Though the office is under no obligation to hire the veteran, the goal of this program is for the veteran to obtain full-time, permanent employment.

## ***What's the most important thing new employees need to know that the agency provides?***

DLA supports warfighters. DLA provides clothing, medicine, meals, fuel and replacement parts for ships, airplanes, ground vehicles and other equipment that our men and women in the military need to perform their duties that keep America free. If the military eats it, wears it, or needs a replacement part, medicine or fuel for their equipment, DLA supplies it.

DLA also supports its workforce. We have a generous benefits package, flextime, telework, paid annual, sick and holiday leave, insurance, retirement benefits, career development support, career guides and maps with structured career paths, cross training,

and rotational assignment opportunities. We take pride in knowing that our support to warfighters ensures they have the parts, equipment and supplies necessary to carry out their mission at a fair price to the taxpayer.

## ***What are some of the things DLA Human Resources does for the agency's employees they may not be aware of?***

DLA HR provides automated systems that enable employees to manage their retirement accounts, the benefits and beneficiaries of their life and health insurance, and their growth and development as they choose, including websites with educational material, e-seminars, retirement calculators, and other financial resources.

Financial Literacy Program course offerings have been added to the Learning Management System and are now available to all DLA employees. The DLA Financial Literacy Team in DLA Human Resources developed the Financial Literacy Education Program in accordance with U.S. Office of Personnel Management guidelines that state each agency must develop a retirement financial education plan. Our interagency agreement with OPM provides DLA associates with a one-year license to access financial literacy training modules through the LMS. ⚙️

## DLA Aviation, VA Collaborate on Vet Job-Shadowing Opportunities

The Servicemember Transitional Advanced Rehabilitation Program at Hunter Homes McGuire Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Richmond, Va., and Defense Logistics Agency Aviation's Disability Program are collaborating to form a job-shadowing program.

"The intent of the program [is] to have service members and veterans job shadow DLA employees and observe them performing their job duties so they can get an idea of what is necessary to work [here], what kinds of qualifications are needed to be considered for a particular job, and whether or not they actually like the job," said Cynthia Young, a vocational rehabilitation counselor with the STAR Program.

The program works with transitioning service members.

"This is a great opportunity for people interested in federal employment or interested in certain jobs to make connections on lots of levels," Young said.

Cathy Hobson, DLA Aviation's Disability Program manager, said DLA as a whole is interested in helping people with disabilities and has developed extensive reasonable accommodations

The majority of the service members and veterans who go through the STAR Program have a service-related disability, Hobson said.

"We would like this to give them an opportunity to work or do something other than be in the hospital," she said.

— Trinace Johnson  
DLA Aviation Public Affairs

## DLA Energy Ensures Troops Get Fuel

The Defense Logistics Agency Energy Stewardship Office is working to make sure service members never have to worry about running out of fuel.

"If a warfighter needs fuel, he can rest assured ... that fuel is going to be there because we have validated processes in place," said Devon Williams, DLA Energy Managers' Internal Control Program administrator and lead logistics analyst in the DLA Energy Stewardship Office.

"Our processes are constantly being evaluated so we can ensure on-time delivery and that the fuel is going to be available when and where it's needed," Williams continued.

The Stewardship Office helps assure warfighters that the inventory they need is actually there by providing oversight and maintenance of DLA and DLA Energy's financial officers' certifications of auditability.

"DLA Energy [leaders were] smart enough to develop an office just for that," said Claudia Waters, DLA Energy Stewardship Office director. "The reason we are outside of the supply chain is because if we're going to assess any of the controls or the processes that people conduct, we can't be a part of the supply chain."

**Soldiers roll barrels of fuel into a vehicle. The DLA Energy Stewardship Office helps assure warfighters their fuel is available and delivered on time by making sure defense fuel support points and service control points are audit ready.**

The office has two main missions, which are directly linked to stewardship. The first mission is implementing, managing and administering the Managers Internal Controls Program throughout DLA Energy. The MIC Program provides a structure to establish, assess, evaluate and report on DLA Energy's system of internal controls in all operations areas.

"[Internal controls] are policies and procedures that help the organization obtain its goals in order to accomplish the mission," said Toni Williams, a DLA Energy Stewardship Office logistics analyst. "The controls are supposed to be documented."

Internal controls help prevent fraud, waste or mismanagement; accidents; unauthorized access to information systems; mission failure; negative publicity; and losses from pilferage.

The Stewardship Office's second mission is ensuring defense fuel support points and service control points are audit ready in accordance with the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982 and Office of Management and Budget Circular 123.

"We're testing that they're using their internal controls and that every sale and receipt has a source document that is completed correctly and matches all the way through the system," said Doug Collins, from the DLA Energy Stewardship Office.

— Jonathan Stack  
DLA Energy Public Affairs

Army Spc. Kimberly Menzies





## DLA TROOP SUPPORT REVERSE AUCTIONS

Story by Michael Tuttle and Nick Sistrun

**D**efense Logistics Agency Troop Support personnel used the reverse-auction process to garner major savings on two recent contract awards.

In August, personnel in the subsistence supply chain saved \$5.1 million on a first-strike rations contract. The construction and equipment supply chain saved roughly \$400,000 in September on a specific air filter used on Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyers.

“I think it is wonderful any time we can save the taxpayers’ money while still getting the military servicemen and women a quality product,” Eileen Friel, a contracting officer in DLA Troop Support Subsistence, said.

Through reverse auctioning, contractors bid online for government contracts, allowing them to view the lowest offer and bid against it, creating intense competition, Friel explained. Within a few hours, the auction concludes with a winner.

A first-strike ration is smaller and lighter than a meal, ready-to-eat. It is used by the U.S.

Michael Tuttle and Nick Sistrun are writers for DLA Troop Support Public Affairs.

military during the first 72 hours of an operation, when troops are moving from location to location and are not likely to eat in stable field settings or dining facilities.

The DLA Troop Support Construction and Equipment contract for the air filters is a two-year base contract that has three option years and is valued at an estimated \$3.9 million. The savings are based on the previous contract price. The “agglomerator” air filter is specially sized to be used in the destroyers’ turbine intake, said Alberta Jones, a Construction and Equipment Integrated Supply Team supervisor.

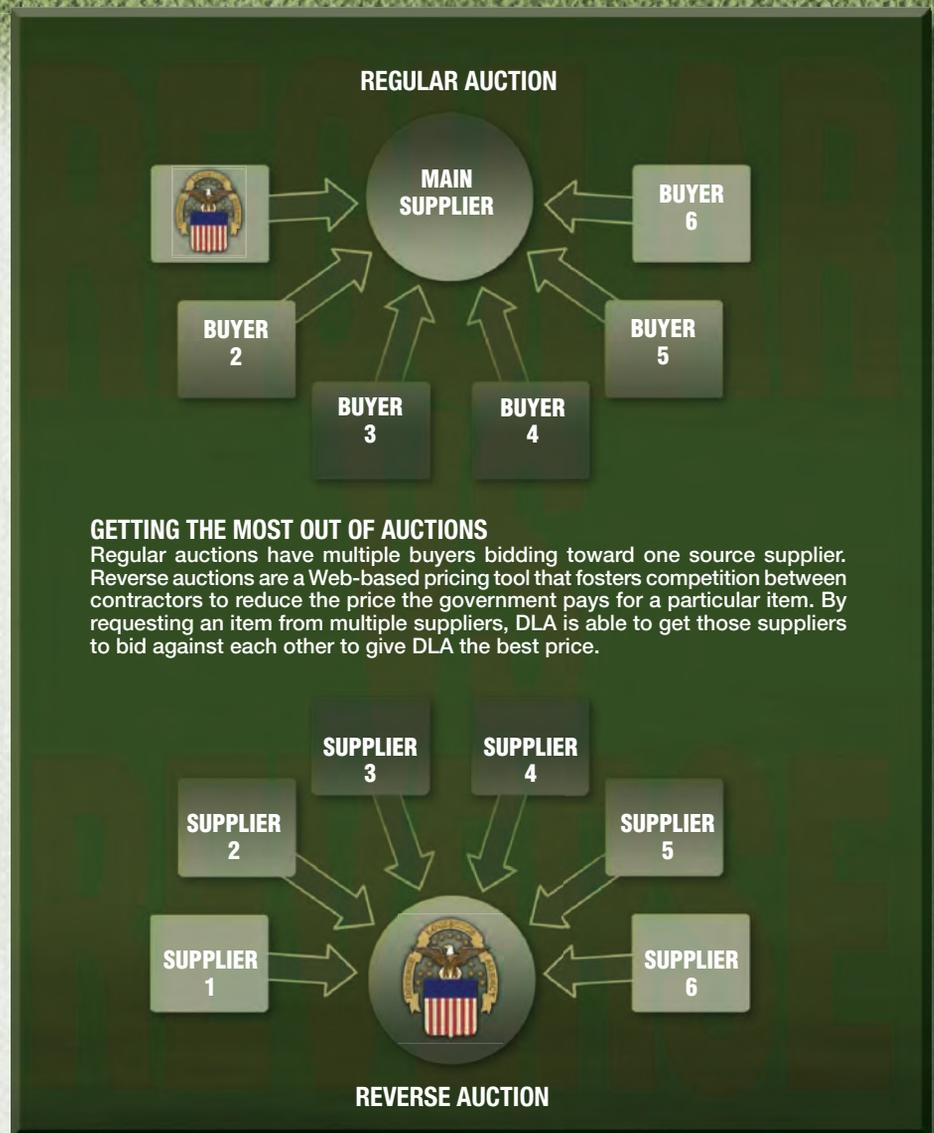
Both these contracts were awarded before DLA announced Sept. 11 that reverse auctions are the mandatory method for price negotiations on competitive contracts valued at more than \$150,000.

DLA Director Navy Vice Adm. Mark Harnitchek set a goal for the agency to save \$10.3 billion by the end of fiscal 2018, based on a national defense strategy that includes budget cuts to the Defense Department. Reverse auctions are one tool being used to achieve the director’s goal of saving \$8.6 billion in material costs.

DLA has saved more than \$34 million through reverse auctions since fiscal 2010, when reverse auction savings were first tracked.

Most of the savings stems from about 400 auctions held so far in fiscal 2012, Charles Howerton, a procurement and systems analyst for the DLA Acquisition Programs and Industrial Capabilities

Through reverse auctioning, contractors bid online for government contracts, allowing them to view the lowest offer and bid against it, creating intense competition.



### GETTING THE MOST OUT OF AUCTIONS

Regular auctions have multiple buyers bidding toward one source supplier. Reverse auctions are a Web-based pricing tool that fosters competition between contractors to reduce the price the government pays for a particular item. By requesting an item from multiple suppliers, DLA is able to get those suppliers to bid against each other to give DLA the best price.

Division, said in the announcement on the new requirements.

Cost savings are not the only benefit to reverse auctions.

“(They are a) good pricing tool in expediting the negotiation process,” Jones said.

Reverse auctions are useful when competition exists and when the item

is commercial and in high demand, Jones said.

Subsistence Operational Rations Division Chief Harry Streibich said using reverse auctioning to buy rations is cost effective and in line with DLA’s strategic goal to reduce costs.

“Across the subsistence supply chain we are looking for ways to meet DLA’s strategic goals of reducing cost,” Streibich said. “I can see reverse auctions being used for operational rations for a number of different procurements, enabling us to see some dramatic savings for DLA over the next five years.”

# We are DLA

## DLA DISTRIBUTION New Cumberland, Pa.

Story by Stacy Umstead

**W**ith 26 distribution centers located around the world, Defense Logistics Agency Distribution provides service to more than 243,000

different customers representing each branch of the military and several other government agencies.

“While the number may be staggering, it’s not just about the volume of material flowing through our distribution network, it’s about understanding the

customers’ needs, providing best-value distribution solutions, and ensuring we are good stewards of the taxpayers’ dollars,” Deputy Commander William Budden said.

“DLA Distribution manages over 2.9 million items, both DLA-owned and service-owned,” Budden said, adding that inventory stored at distribution locations is valued at more than \$102 billion.

The organization is marking 15 years as a DLA primary-level field activity and has processed more than 349 million receipts and issues in support of the

nation’s men and women in uniform.

The organization, headquartered in New Cumberland, Pa., helps the military services determine and carry out the most efficient ways to ship material.

“From the smallest first aid kit to a deployable hospital unit or even a deployable distribution center ready to deploy anywhere in the world at a moment’s notice, DLA Distribution, along with our supply chain partners, can provide that service,” Budden said.

Working with its customers, DLA Distribution helps military units assemble kits of items used together so troops can perform their duties more efficiently. The organization assembled more than 78,000 kits in fiscal 2012.

“In the past, our customers would requisition numerous supply items and assemble their own kits, whether it was for

Stacy Umstead is the public affairs officer for DLA Distribution.



An employee at DLA Distribution Corpus Christi, Texas, pulls parts to assemble a kit.

DLA Distribution



a first aid kit, or a tool kit for maintenance on a vehicle,” Budden said. “By our organization performing the kitting operations for them, our military can focus on their mission. Whether it is a doctor in the field caring for a patient or a maintenance worker performing routine maintenance on an aircraft, DLA Distribution gives critical time back to the specialists performing their jobs.”

Industrial kits include items such as main rotor brakes, shock rebuild kits and fuel filters. The organization also puts kits together for Air Force customers.

“Our time-compliant technical order kits support numerous aircraft weapon systems,” Budden said.

Stock medical kits include various types of first aid kits such as combat lifesaver kits, general purpose first aid kits and individual first aid kits.

A much larger kitting operation is the assembly, repair and shipment of deployable medical systems.

“This specialized mission is performed by our experts at DLA Distribution’s facility in Hill, Utah. The deployable medical system is a self-contained, portable unit capable of being positioned quickly in an area of operations during war or a national emergency and can be linked with tents to form a modular hospital,” Budden said. “Essentially, it is a hospital in a box and can range in size from a single-unit, general-purpose lab to a 1,000-bed hospital containing multiple line items.”

Another tailored logistics service that continues to grow and evolve is the dedicated truck program.

“Dedicated truck is the direct delivery of shipments to specified locations to meet pre-established delivery date and time,” Budden said. “This process provides the customer direct delivery services from the

shipper’s location to the customer’s door.”

Direct delivery service via dedicated truck supports high-volume customers receiving numerous shipments. Through coordination with customers, all cargo regardless of the priority and size may be delivered up to seven days a week from some DLA Distribution facilities.

“In most instances, the material is processed and delivered next business day after the receipt of the materiel release order,” Budden said.

Dedicated trucks improve efficiencies at the distribution centers and customer locations by guaranteeing a scheduled pickup and delivery.

“This higher level of quality service improves both the flexibility and mobility of the warfighter, eliminating non-value-added activities. For example, the time cargo waits on the dock for pickup or the time the mechanic waits for the parts to show up,” Budden said.

DLA Distribution has nearly 500 dedicated truck delivery locations and more than 150 different routes.

In another efficiency measure, Navy customers benefit from materiel processing centers.

“MPC operations are designed to receive materiel for the Navy, provide materiel visibility, sort materiel by customer requirements, and then deliver the materiel so that it can be more easily placed into its location once onboard the ship,” Budden said.

MPCs are located at more than 15 different DLA Distribution sites.

Today’s military requires that DLA Distribution be flexible, mobile, integrated and compatible, Budden said. To meet this need, DLA’s tailored logistics force, DLA

Distribution Expeditionary, provides a deployable capability.

“This capability is designed to improve theater distribution in the opening days of a conflict, a period in which materiel historically arrives faster than it can be processed,” Budden said.

That scenario occurred in 2010 when DLA Distribution deployed its expeditionary team to support contingency operations in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

“In less than 30 days on the ground, our team built the compound, set up the deployable capability and processed its first requisition,” Budden said.

The team provided items such as critical repair parts, kit assemblies, clothing, repair parts for equipment maintenance, and construction materials supporting primarily Army and Marine customers in theater.

In less than five months, DLA Distribution’s 26th distribution facility was formally established. Budden said this is the capability that strategic planners are strongly considering during operational and war-planning phases and looking to DLA to provide.

As future customer requirements evolve, DLA Distribution stands ready to support, Budden said.

“We continually strive to do what is right for our customers,” he said. “As we enhance our global distribution network to further enable logistics solutions, we will ensure that we are delivering global distribution excellence.” ★

A photograph of two women in a laboratory setting. The woman in the foreground is wearing a light-colored lab coat and has her hair pulled back. She is looking down at something out of frame. The woman in the background is also wearing a lab coat and glasses, looking towards the camera. The background shows laboratory cabinets and equipment.

# More Than Meets the Eye

Fluorescent fabric samples are displayed in the color science testing laboratory at the DLA Product Testing Center. Fabric and materials procured by the clothing and textiles supply chain are color-science tested at the center to meet specified standards.



Story and Photo by Mikia Muhammad

**T**he human eye is capable of seeing up to 10 million colors, but most people cannot distinguish between all of them. Two fabric shade evaluators at the Defense Logistics Agency Product Testing Center in Philadelphia are among the fraction of the population who can.

Ardra Farally and Jamie Hieber conduct color science testing on fabric the military buys for uniforms and other items through DLA Troop Support's clothing and textiles supply chain.

Color scientists work with C&T specialists to test fabric shades against standards the military services provide, both before and after items are produced.

Product Testing Center Manager Paul Conrad, who oversees the center's color science laboratory, said getting the right color for military fabrics is critical.

"In the military, shade evaluation is very important. Samples are tested under specified lighting conditions," Conrad said. "Per contract requirements, fabric the military buys has to be evaluated by this laboratory to meet the standards and tolerances. If it doesn't meet it, the contractor can't ship it."

Farally and Hieber have a natural ability for superior color sight that enables them to perform these shade evaluations. That ability is measured through a specialized test.

"The Farnsworth Munsell 100 Hue Test is specifically set up to check the color acuity in people who work in almost any field that deals [with] color," Hieber said. "What it does is determine how good your color acuity is."

People being evaluated in the test are presented four boxes of 84 colored tiles from red to blue, blue to green, green to red and red to yellow and must identify the hues within two minutes per box. Each tile is numbered on the back. The tiles are scrambled during the

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Mikia Muhammad works for DLA Troop Support.

test and the test taker is scored based on the number of errors made.

The lower the score, the better a person's color acuity, Hieber explained. She and Farally are tested every six months.

"[With a score of] 100 or less, you're considered to have normal color vision. These ladies score consistently at zero or four. They're very good at what they do," Conrad said.

In addition to having this ability, DLA color science employees must hold a degree in chemistry and undergo a year of extensive on-the-job training before they can begin evaluating materials. Staffing in the color science laboratory is maintained through a master-apprentice cycle of training, Farally said.

"When I came in seven years ago, Jamie was and is the expert," Farally said of Hieber, who has worked for DLA for 22 years. "She taught me how to describe what I'm seeing."

Being able to accurately convey errors is important to customers, Farally said.

"We need to be able to say [the shade test] failed, and this is why," she said. "It's redder than the standard [or] it's greener than the standard. That's information back to them so that they know where the error is and they know how to correct it."

With a goal of evaluating samples within 24 to 48 hours, Farally and Hieber analyze hundreds of thousands of yards of fabric to meet military service-specific tolerances and standards for dress and utility uniforms, accessories, and other uniform items.

While the product testing center uses state-of-the-art equipment for testing fabrics, Farally and Hieber are the human eyes who review what technology may miss.

"We're the final step in the shade evaluation process," Farally said. "We're just that last look at it to make sure that what the government is procuring is what they actually ordered and what they actually want." 🙄

The product testing center uses state-of-the-art equipment for testing fabrics. Shade evaluators are the human eyes who review what technology may miss.



# I AM DLA

**My name is:**

Navy Lt. Cmdr. Florence "Bok" D. Beato.

**I am:**

The executive officer and military liaison officer at DLA Distribution San Diego.

**Describe your job in a sentence:**

In the absence of the commander and deputy commander, I perform the commander's functions, but my day-to-day duties as the military liaison officer are similar to a customer service officer, handling DLA-related issues and warfighter concerns.

**How long have you worked for DLA?**

I started working for DLA Jan. 27, 2012.

**What is your favorite thing about working for DLA?**

My favorite thing about DLA is that there are lots of changes going on and I am in a position to help affect change in collaboration with DLA Land and Maritime and DLA Distribution. For example, I am the project manager for the implementation of the storage and distribution functions at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Detachment - San Diego at Naval Base Point Loma. This project will have a huge positive impact on the performance of simultaneous intermediate maintenance availabilities of the submarines.

**What is your best memory of working here?**

One month into my job, I had the privilege of working with my former co-workers at Military Sealift Command Pacific, assisting contractors in the receipt and delivery of a container filled with sensitive electronic repair equipment for the Military Sealift Command Special Mission Ship USNS Zeus.

**How do you make a difference to warfighters?**

Listening to the warfighters' needs and improving the DLA processes that fall within my purview, so that the end results are streamlined, optimized and value-added distribution solutions and services for the warfighters.

Florence "Bok" D. Beato

