

The Nation's Logistics Combat Support Agency

RESHAPING MILITARY LOGISTICS

SUPPORTING NUCLEAR & SPACE PROGRAMS



DLA VICE DIRECTOR

DLA Vice Director answers questions from the agency in a one-on-one interview

Volume 2025, Issue 1

DLA White Papers

- Support at the Forward Edge of the Battlefield
- Illuminating Supply Chain Risk
- Modernizing Defense Logistics

Securing the Border

DLA empowers a new era of border security in partnership with U.S. Northern Command

WARFIGHTER ALWAYS!



Army Lt. Gen. Mark T. Simerly Director, Defense Logistics Agency

LOGLINES

THE OFFICIAL FLAGSHIP PUBLICATION OF THE DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY

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Layout and Design Paul Henry Crank

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THE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

It is with great pride that I welcome you back to the revitalized **Loglines** magazine. After a hiatus of several years, we are thrilled to bring our professional journal focused on defense logistics back to life. It offers a fresh platform to share the ideas that define the Defense Logistics Agency as we think, act and operate differently in today's rapidly changing and contested operating environment.

For more than two and a half decades starting in 1994, **Loglines** served as a window into DLA's mission, showcasing the dedication, innovation and resilience of our exceptional team. This inaugural issue marks not only a return but a renewed commitment to fostering transparency, collaboration and engagement with our stakeholders – military, government, industry and the American people. **Loglines** will also serve as a platform for deep thinking about logistics challenges facing the Joint Logistics Enterprise.

As we embark on this next chapter, **Loglines** will continue to highlight the achievements and challenges that shape our journey. From supporting warfighters across the globe to driving supply chain excellence and enabling critical humanitarian efforts, this magazine will reflect the breadth of DLA's capabilities and the values that guide us. It will also shine a spotlight on the individuals who make it all possible – the DLA team – whose ingenuity and hard work fuel our success.

In this issue, we explore key efforts shaping DLA's impact on national security and global readiness in support of Defense Department priorities. Highlights include our role in empowering border security by supporting U.S. Northern Command and federal partners, sustaining homeland defense through the Nuclear and Space Enterprise Office, and embarking on warehouse modernization to enhance the efficiency of critical supply chain operations.

Loglines will also serve as a vital resource to advance DLA's Campaign of Learning, our agencywide initiative to challenge assumptions, foster dialogue and encourage deeper understanding of future peer conflict challenges and needed adaptations. The white papers in this issue are examples of the critical thinking and professional writing we encourage from members of the DLA team.

Readers will also find regular features, including interviews with thought leaders, data acumen articles, history pieces, profiles of exceptional DLA teammates ... and more.

Whether you're a longtime reader or new to **Loglines**, we invite you to explore these pages with curiosity and pride. Together, we'll celebrate the enduring legacy of DLA while charting our path forward in an everchanging world.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Welcome to the next era of **Loglines** magazine!

Warfighter Always!

Mark T. Simer Lt. Gen, USA Director, DLA

Mission: Loglines' mission is to publish timely, accurate information about how the Defense Logistics Agency, as the nation's logistics combat support agency, delivers agile logistics support in all domains during peace and war. It provides a forum for agency employes, military and industry customers, defense professionals and the Joint Logistics Enterprise to learn about DLA's vision, operating principles and imperatives to provide global logistics solutions in support of the military services along with the combatant commands, other federal agencies, and partner and allied nations.

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I am DLA Back Cover Terrance Taylor, DLA Land and Maritime

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SECURING THE BORDER DLA BACKS NEW BORDER MISSION

By Beth Reece DLA Public Affairs

A s 1,500 troops reported for security operations on the southern border in late January, Ralph Laurie fixed his attention on U.S. Northern Command's plans to help the Department of Homeland Security bring new vigor to the mission, now a national emergency according to a Jan. 20 executive order.

"I kept hearing senior leaders say, 'We're not going to do more of the same.' The premise was that the administration is looking for results and we were going to do new things – different things – to get those results," said Laurie, a Defense Logistics Agency liaison officer embedded with NORTHCOM's logistics staff at Peterson Space Force Base in Colorado Springs, Colorado. For Laurie and the rest of DLA, "different" translated into quicker, more efficient support for DHS and Customs and Border Protection.

Laurie and supply chain experts at DLA's major subordinate commands, along with members of the Agency Synchronization and Operations Center, rushed to get ahead of equipment needs for units mounting physical barriers and boosting security. By mid-April, DLA had provided over \$24 million in support, according to ASOC reports.

"The initial spin-up was difficult," Laurie said of the team's decision on where along the southern border's 19,000 miles to stage supplies. "At the same time, we were also getting estimates of a total force package that could include as many as 15,000 troops." Laurie said. Marines assigned to the 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, 1st Marine Division, place concertina wire along the southern border wall near San Ysidro, California, Jan. 25, 2025. Defense Logistics Agency Troop Support is providing concertina wire, barbed wire and metal fence posts.

He and DLA Energy's Greg Knowles, who is also at NORTHCOM Headquarters, are entrenched in NORTHCOM planning and ensure units know how to plug into DLA's logistics capabilities so they can focus on their mission. The ASOC unifies DLA's support by capturing logistics requirements from numerous customers under Joint Task Force-Southern Border.

"We're a clearinghouse that ensures communication flows in our large organization to the right subject matter experts," said Army Maj. Hans Mogelgaard, an ASOC battle captain. "We rely on employees at all of our supply chains to pull data

"OUR SUPPLY CHAIN IS ALREADY BUILT TO BE FLEXIBLE FOR MISSIONS LIKE THIS."

- ARMY CAPT. RILEY TIDWELL

to help us determine how we're best able to respond to requirements, and then we synchronize all that data so DLA leaders can make informed decisions on our overall support."

Spares and Construction Material

One example is the need for spare parts by the 10th Mountain Division, which leads JTF-SB and has deployed armored vehicles and helicopters about 15 miles from the Mexico border at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, for detection and monitoring missions. The ASOC team connected the unit's logisticians to DLA Land and Maritime, where acquisition teams are ensuring spare parts are ready as needs arise during repair and maintenance.

A large chunk of support has also come from DLA Troop Support's construction and equipment supply chain. In January and February, the barriers team purchased 100,000 rolls of concertina wire, 6,000 rolls of barbed wire and about 290,000 metal fence posts for staging at DLA Distribution San Joaquin, California, so it would be ready upon units' arrival. The material has so far been used at CBP's Imperial Beach Station and by units deployed to Fort Huachuca. The barriers team has placed additional orders for the same items since February, and Vinny Oliva, chief of the Construction and Equipment Division, said his team is anticipating possible needs for items like sandbags and expeditionary barrier systems.

"We're working with our vendors to let them know what else may be needed because we want them to be flexible and ready if we drop a significant order for more material or different types," added Adam Tutolo, construction and equipment readiness chief. "We're dealing with a lot of unknowns, and this will likely be a long mission, but teams across DLA are working together and with industry to be adequately prepared."

Fuel

Fuel is also in high demand with forces spanning ground, air and sea operations. Some needs have been met using fuel points that have expanded to 24/7 operations, said Army Capt. Riley Tidwell, chief of operations at DLA Energy Headquarters. Additionally, regional teams are monitoring fuel inventory levels and adjusting as demands spike. "Our supply chain is already built to be flexible for missions like this. We could have an extra truck show up or squeeze in an extra fuel delivery between others that are already scheduled," Tidwell added. "We might also watch use patterns and do a pipeline push to ensure more product is available if needed."

Even the USS Gravely, which deployed to the Gulf Coast in March to help stop drug trafficking, is tapping into DLA fuel supplies. The vessel is using the agency's Ships' Easy Acquisition Card® program, which allows the military services to purchase fuel from specific contracted and commercial ports.

New Missions

CBP has benefited from DLA, too, with DLA Disposition Services providing agents with supplies ranging from optical gear to sensing equipment.



Army Spc. Ashton Pranschke, assigned to Joint Task Force-Southern Border, conducts a short halt during a patrol of the southern border near Ysleta, Texas, April 3, 2025. The Defense Logistics Agency is working with U.S. Northern Command to plan logistics support for the mission.



"The new mission sets and dynamic timelines and taskings mean we've had to form a relationship with CBP because it just wasn't an organization we worked with much in the past," Laurie said, adding that DLA has decades of experience supporting other federal agencies during emergencies like hurricane response and the pandemic.

In response to leaders' intent for support to be "different," DLA has also offered new and unconventional types of support. DLA Document Services, for example, can print metal signs that units might need to mark land as DOD property, so Laurie provided cost information. And since part of the security mission is to stop fentanyl from flowing across the border, NORTHCOM asked whether DLA could buy Narcan for issuing to soldiers in case they were inadvertently exposed to fentanyl.

"Narcan's just not something that DLA regularly buys," Laurie said, "even for forces going into combat missions overseas. The request is an example of the really weird, oh-mygosh items I never thought would come up, but DLA Troop Support's medical team was all over it."

The Long Haul

The next challenge is long-term sustainment.

"How do we do this for the next year and make sure we're not recreating the wheel every time there's a new requirement? Right now, we're getting the people, processes and tools in place to continue this over the long haul so it becomes standard, similar to what we do during hurricane response," Tidwell said.

Potential supply shortages could also impact ongoing support. Oliva's team has already ordered additional fence posts to get ahead of competition for raw materials needed to make them and is considering other advance purchases that might eliminate future supply chain issues.

Laurie noted that although the scope and scale of the current border mission dwarfs past efforts, U.S. troops have conducted some form of border security since the mid-90's and have often relied on DLA for construction and equipment material. He pointed to recent comments from U.S. Northern Command soldiers monitor the barrier near San Ysidro, California, Feb. 28, 2025. Supplies including construction material, fuel and optical gear are being provided by the Defense Logistics Agency.

Air Force Maj. Gen. Constance Jenkins, NORTHCOM's director of logistics and engineering, as proof that DLA is a trusted partner.

"She said that logistics is the neck that turns the head. As logisticians, we're making this mission possible in many ways," Laurie said. "I also believe we have a lot of credibility that encourages customers to invite us into their deliberations, and that allows us to help them build a logistics framework that sets them up for success."

He said he appreciates being able to see how DLA employees' work is needed and matters.

"There are people out there who are safe today because DLA Troop Support made sure they had the equipment they needed to defend their living and working positions," he said, adding that even ice is important to troops working in 120-degree temperatures.

"I also like that all this work is for our home, our people. It's not some nebulous, far-off land; it's America."

By Beth Reece DLA Public Affairs

ncharted territory is where Air Force Col. Matt York finds himself and the Defense Logistics Agency team that orchestrates material support for U.S. military nuclear and space programs.

"Strategic deterrence is critical in an uncertain security environment. That makes nuclear modernization so important, and it's also part of why DLA's transformation with the military services is a no-fail mission," said York, who leads the agency's Nuclear and Space Enterprise Support Office, or NESO.

DLA is working to bolster its support as the Defense Department prioritizes updating the nation's air-, land- and sea-based nuclear assets while achieving military advantage in space. A recent portfolio review by the NESO team and DLA major subordinate command staffs that manage military supply chains will guide future partnerships with nuclear and space programs. In the near term, the agency plans to identify performance metrics that match DOD priorities and create a framework for routine reviews with warfighting customers.

Efforts also include improving demand forecasting, implementing effective procurement processes to quickly source supplies, and promoting data interoperability across systems and organizations to enable real-time visibility of supplies.

"We're working hard to understand what new data DLA

The Defense Logistics Agency is supporting the Defense Department's efforts to update the nation's nuclear and space programs.

HOMELAND DEFENSE STRENGTHENING LOGISTICS FOR SPACE AND NUCLEAR DETERRENCE





Air Force 1st Lt. Alexander Hansen, 742nd Missile Squadron mission lead, right, and 2nd Lt. Elizabeth Jordan, 742nd MS missileer, go through an inspection at Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota, Jan. 15, 2019. Logistics support for nuclear assets is provided by the Defense Logistics Agency.

needs from the services to better capture their needs for aging weapons systems," York said. "As the military services look at bringing newer, modern systems on board, we're also helping them understand that if they want a part to be available two years from now, we need to be talking about that today so we can partner with industry to respond."

Although the services are increasingly using artificial intelligence and machine learning to capture supply chain data, York said one holistic picture is needed rather than disparate views so DLA can better measure gains and deficiencies in support.

"Data is the cornerstone to everything going forward," York added. "It's the one thing that will allow us to make timely and relevant decisions on where to spend money with the limited resources we have, to get the maximum readiness benefit for warfighters."

Building on Success

DLA is collaborating with the services to ensure weapons system designator codes are accurately assigned to national-stock-numbered items critical to nuclear and space programs. The code tells supply managers whether a part has a demand history and signals the need to stock the item.

"Just because a part hasn't had a demand in the past 10 years, however, doesn't mean it won't all of a sudden be needed for a bomber that's going to fly for another 10 years past what people projected," said Harold "Wes" Wescott, a supply program manager for NESO.

Reassessing demand history for weapons system parts that were previously deemed unneeded enables the agency to increase readiness by creating contracts to meet future demands when new use patterns reveal a potential need, he added. When the Air Force recently discovered production no longer existed for a part essential for the Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile, for example, DLA Land and Maritime worked with a manufacturer to create a lifetime buy, ensuring sustained support for almost 400 launch facilities.

Other instances of DLA's contribution to nuclear and space readiness include a creative contracting approach by DLA Aviation that expedited the delivery of parts for B-52 engines by 14 months. NESO also expanded support of UH-1 and MH-139 fleets that provide emergency maintenance on missile fields and overflight security for critical component transfers. In space support, the team helped reduce material shortages at nine locations for the Satellite Control Network Antenna Group.

Balancing Needs and Resources

York said close partnerships with joint logisticians are critical to DLA's ability to predict equipment needs, especially as customers stretch limited resources to maintain legacy systems while introducing modern systems that rival those of U.S. adversaries. Challenges often stem from fiscal constraints, global supply chain disruptions and the shrinking defense industrial base.

"It's kind of a wicked problem set. We don't have an endless pot of money or unlimited manufacturers who can make things, so our decisions have to be calculated and informed," York continued.

Needs of nuclear and space programs are also difficult to prioritize, with all facets collectively impacting the nation's integrated "IT'S KIND OF A WICKED PROBLEM SET. WE DON'T HAVE AN ENDLESS POT OF MONEY OR UNLIMITED MANUFACTURERS WHO CAN MAKE THINGS, SO OUR DECISIONS HAVE TO BE CALCULATED AND INFORMED."

- COL. MATT YORK

deterrence goals and efforts to fortify the U.S. homeland.

"You don't have the luxury of just saying one system is a lower priority. They all have to be ready – at all times," York said. "That adds up to a lot of tough decisions over time about where to direct money and resources."

Nuclear and space assets are also more linked now than ever, and a parts failure or lack of support for one system could hinder the successful operation of another. Although the services determine when to stop sustaining older systems in favor of resourcing modern assets, York said, DLA informs those choices by being involved in discussions and planning sessions and by making sure the services know what DLA brings to the table. It's not just parts.

"DLA Energy plays a huge role, especially in space. DLA Disposition Services ensures the recycling of strategic materials that are needed to modernize the nuclear enterprise. And DLA Troop Support provides gear and even medical equipment for the maintainers in the missile fields and bomber flight lines as well as for space applications," he continued. "Our support is much bigger than most people think."

Participation in training exercises like Elite Constellation and Global Thunder also prepares the agency to support warning drills and strategic preparedness while proving DLA's effectiveness in end-to-end supply chain management, innovation, adaptability and proactive planning for DOD logistics, Wescott said.

"NESO is the cornerstone of the National Defense Strategy, and DLA is focused on improving sustainment to protect the homeland," added Air Force Maj. Gen. David Sanford, DLA's director of operations.

NESO members like Daniel Nugent, a senior supply analyst who works in data analytics, have been part of the team since it was created in September 2015. Wescott said they bring continuity and passion to the operation. The team also includes DLA liaison officers who are embedded with warfighters at U.S. Space Force, U.S. Space Command, U.S. Strategic Command, Air Force Global Strike Command and Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center.

"This is such important work. I deal with data and numbers every day, looking for problems that DLA can solve on behalf of our warfighters," Nugent said. "The entire team serves a real need given the current geopolitical tension."

York noted that DLA is uniquely positioned to support acquisition and supply chain management for nuclear and space programs as the nation's logistics combat support agency, which was created in 1961 to bring efficiencies to logistics for all the services.

"Could they do it themselves at scale and speed to keep the modernization effort going? I don't think even they would tell you they could do that, and certainly not without incurring a lot of extra cost," he said. "Our experience as a big logistics enterprise, managing everything from acquisitions all the way through warehousing, distribution and disposal, brings tremendous value to this no-fail mission."



Munitions on display at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., demonstrate the full capabilities of the B-52 Stratofortress, in its sixth decade of operational service. The B-52 Stratofortress is the most combat-capable bomber in the U.S. inventory, for which the Defense Logistics Agency provides spare parts.

DEFENDING THE TRIAD SUSTAINING THE NUCLEAR SEA LEG

By Stefanie Hauck DLA Land and Maritime Public Affairs

he Defense Logistics Agency has helped sustain the "sea leg" of the U.S. nuclear triad since the Cold War began. It is one of the agency's first and most continuous efforts directly supporting the nation's defense.

From the forward-facing teams at the tip of the spear performing customer service to the enterprise supply chains ensuring critical parts are available – all in lockstep with the Navy – it literally takes a village to ensure the Navy's fleet of 14 Ohio-class ballistic missile submarines remain able to hold the line against America's adversaries.

"It's all about maintaining that sea leg of the nuclear triad," said Navy Capt. Scott Wallace, outgoing director of Maritime Customer Operations for DLA Land and Maritime. "And the secret to its success as the most lethal deterrent in America's nuclear arsenal for almost four decades is literally the cycle of keeping the fleet of Ohioclass boats on patrol to always have that strategic deterrent out there."

Representing 70% of the nuclear triad, the submarines, known as "boomers," act as the third leg of the silent backstop to America's national security, with intercontinental

"WE WILL NEVER FORGET IT WAS OUR SUBMARINES THAT HELD THE LINE AGAINST THE ENEMY." – NAVY FLEET ADMIRAL CHESTER NIMITZ, WORLD WAR II Trident Refit Facility, Bangor team members work together to undock the USS Maine, Oct. 16, 2023. TRFB supports the nation's strategic deterrence mission by repairing, incrementally overhauling and modernizing Pacific Fleet strategic ballistic missile submarines during refits.

ballistic missiles making up the land leg. The long-range bombers and dual capable aircraft.

Virtually undetectable, the hallmark of the Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine fleet is its potential to strike at a moment's notice anywhere in the world after a strategic nuclear attack commences. Known as a second strike, the boats ensure swift retaliation against any attack, intending to halt any further aggression.

"You won't know it's coming until it's too late," Wallace said, noting that the Trident missiles the subs carry can be launched from deep under the sea in any location and travel at hypersonic velocities with unmatched accuracy and range.

Each of the multiple, independently targeted nuclear warheads on a Trident missile are capable of unleashing more destruction than was seen in both Nagasaki and Hiroshima, Japan, at the end of World War II.

"It's the ultimate guarantor of our strategic deterrence," Wallace said.

DLA Maritime Customer Operations is continuously supporting the Ohio-class while the Navy undertakes modernization efforts to bring the more technologically advanced Columbiaclass ballistic missile submarine online by the end of this decade.

The Ohio-class fleet, first commissioned in the early 1980s, was originally designed to operate for 30 years. However, through major refits and overhauls the Navy has extended its service life past 42 years, longer than any previous class of submarines.

"The Navy is counting on the Ohio-class to stick around until the new Columbia-class is operational," said Joe Moore, the weapons system support manager for the Navy Nuclear Reactors Program at DLA.

Moore, who has been the nuclear reactor WSSM for 20 years, said he serves as the single weaponssystem-level contact for customers' concerns and issues and acts as a liaison with supply chain owners and logistics service providers across the enterprise.

A hallmark of maintaining the "silent service's" capabilities is nuclear power.

"Nuclear propulsion is essential for the Navy's ability to deploy and maintain a credible deterrent," Moore said. "This is because nuclear power allows submarines to operate stealthily, remain at sea indefinitely, and ensures the survivability of the third leg of the nuclear triad as they

An unarmed Trident II D5 Life Extension missile launches from Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine USS Alaska during a Commander Evaluation Test off the coast of Florida, June 23, 2018. are less vulnerable to an attack."

Wallace said supporting the Ohio-class is a team effort at both the strategic and transactional levels. The team unites expertise from across DLA and includes a multitude of disciplines embedded in the supply chains.

"From the dedicated WSSM providing strategic support to the multitude of customer-facing professionals throughout the enterprise – it's an all-hands-on-deck mentality daily," he said.

Originally the Ohio-class fleet consisted of 18 submarines, but in the 2000s, the Navy converted the first four boats to guided missile submarines following recommendations from the 1994 Nuclear Posture Review.

Ginalee Lewis, DLA's WSSM for the Ohio-class, is dedicated to successfully supporting the ballistic missile and guided missile submarine fleets. "True collaboration goes beyond coordination – it's a shared commitment," Lewis said. "The DLA team operates with a unified purpose to ensure the Ohio-class submarine fleet remains ready and capable in its mission of strategic deterrence."

DLA manages more than 100,000 consumable repair parts for the Ohio-class. Dedicated teams, both customer-facing and within the supply chain, prioritize the continuous availability of parts ranging from common to complex components to ensure strategic submarine mission readiness.

"As with any aging weapons system, the challenge lies in balancing the management of obsolescence issues and all that entails, all while ensuring the continued availability of parts so the Ohio-class never goes out to sea without what it needs," Lewis said.



Her day-to-day mission involves finding solutions to unique customer problems, taking corrective actions and initiating process improvements, she said, and that's what makes the job so exciting for her.

"That's what the majority of my job is like – a puzzle," she laughed. "In our business, we are always finding solutions to fit the problems."

Tom Caudle, a Maritime Customer Operations customer logistics site specialist based out of Trident Refit Facility Kings Bay, Georgia, recently worked with Lewis to get a part to a boat going into overseas maintenance in a very short window of time.

Lewis was indispensable in getting that part out to the warfighter as she leveraged her network on the supply chain side of the house, and the emergency repair ultimately allowed the boat to continue its mission, Caudle said.

"When it comes to servicing these boats, sometimes minutes matter. And I know I can reach back to [Lewis] to negotiate with the supply chains to get that emergency part to the customer no matter where the boat is in its mission cycle," he said.

Caudle, who acts as a liaison and on-the-ground problem solver working directly with Navy customers, credited the Columbus, Ohio-based team for helping him to do his job effectively as DLA's eyes and ears on the ground.

"Having that network back in Columbus makes all the difference to us out here in the field," he said. "Simply put, this business of submarine sustainment is a team sport," said Dyan Hooper, the product support manager for inservice strategic submarines in Naval Sea Systems Command's Program Executive Office for Strategic Submarines.

PEO Strategic Submarines stood up in October 2021 to align all Columbia-class ballistic missile submarine activities and Ohio-class activities under one umbrella.

"Every day Ginalee and team are working to identify and overcome complex parts challenges, they are expediting material delivery in support of critical operational and maintenance schedules, and they are working to get out ahead of future requirements by ensuring we have the right parts available when and where they are needed," Hooper said. "We simply would not be able to accomplish our mission without the dedication and support of the DLA Land and Maritime team."

Lewis echoed that sentiment.

"Having positive relationships within DLA, with the Navy OhioUSS Alaska, an Ohio-class nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, pictured here in dry dock May 2020 in the Trident Refit Facility, Kings Bay, Georgia, after completing an extended repair and maintenance period.

class Program Executive Office and many others is critical to my success as a WSSM at DLA," Lewis said.

Shannon Daniels, deputy site director at DLA Maritime Puget Sound, Trident Refit Facility Bangor, Washington, agreed.

"Every part plays a vital role, with some being more critical than others. That's why communication between internal and external stakeholders is essential to ensuring we meet the warfighters' needs," he said.

"Bottom line is getting that part to the boat that needs it so it can continue its vital mission no matter where it is located," said DLA Maritime Puget Sound TRF Bangor Site Director Navy Lt. Cmdr. Tyler Owen.

The decades-long success of the program boils down to one thing, Lewis added.

"It's all about relationships and understanding the mission at hand."





PROTECTING THE SUPPLY CHAIN KEEPING SENSITIVE GEAR OUT OF ENEMY HANDS

By Jake Joy DLA Disposition Services Public Affairs

The Defense Logistics Agency doesn't just deliver supplies; it also brings them back. Each year, millions of items return to the agency through "reverse logistics," in which military units return unwanted or obsolete equipment. But before DLA Disposition Services can accept the material, units must meticulously identify each piece to safeguard America's nuclear and space arsenal, ensuring the proper tracking and disposal of sensitive components.

"Our highest priority is to ensure that nuclear weapons-related material never enters the DLA Disposition Services network," said Nate Tichenor, nuclear and space enterprise program manager at DLA Disposition Services. "If the Air Force mistakenly ships us NWRM – if they misidentify it – and we don't catch that through our established policies and procedures, it could potentially be released to the public or the enemy." To ensure proper handling of NWRM property inadvertently shipped to a DLA property-disposal site, the organization began testing material receivers with no-warning NWRM receipt exercises about 10 years ago. These recurring tests, known in advance to only a handful of "trusted agents," simulate an unauthorized shipment of NWRM to a DLA Disposition Services field site. Upon identification as NWRM, rigid mitigation measures and rapid chain-of-command notifications must take place.

Increased training and awareness have steadily improved exercise success rates, with some ebbs and flows due primarily to employee turnover or the learning curve associated with adopting new technology such as DLA's new Warehouse Management System, Tichenor said.

A rise in the number of contractors that manufacture specialized components for increasingly complex systems adds to the complexity of proper identification, he continued. With so many source points, it might seem inevitable for incorrect Transportation specialists prepare to ship materials removed from a deactivated Vandenberg Space Force Base Minuteman III launch facility to the Defense Logistics Agency's demilitarization center in Tucson, Arizona, in early 2022.

National Stock Number or Local Stock Number data to occasionally be assigned to parts and complicate material identification efforts at the tail end of the supply chain. Property receipt specialists must maintain a watchful eye to prevent security lapses and consistently apply proper identification standards.

"We have frontline employees who need to identify hundreds of different types of property, who must know every demilitarization code and are entrusted to ensure items aren't classified. Does the property have the right certifications? Is it explosive? Was it turned in correctly? Is it misidentified?" Tichenor said, adding that employees may also need to look up definitions of the associated Federal Supply Codes to ensure the nomenclature matches.

Regional instructor-led training that's currently offered annually will soon be held more often and will include a new video component and more in-depth content for site supervisor and property receiver courses, he said.

The agency's property disposal specialists frequently provide presentations to warfighters and defense logisticians outside of DLA to educate them on topics like demilitarization, hazardous waste and equipment turn-in procedures. Agency educational outreach covering NWRM is no different. Tichenor said a hefty portion of his workload as program manager involves consulting with the services on current efforts and helping them project and plan for any future reverse-logistics requirements they expect in DOD's nuclear and space enterprise.

When the Air Force began putting an initial plan together for decommissioning and demilitarizing its aging Minuteman III arsenal, Tichenor was called to California's Vandenberg Space Force Base as a senior disposal advisor for dismantling a missile launch facility. Many of the component items lacked NSNs because they were "OUR HIGHEST PRIORITY IS TO ENSURE THAT NUCLEAR WEAPONS-RELATED MATERIAL NEVER ENTERS THE DLA DISPOSITION SERVICES NETWORK." – NATE TICHENOR

custom manufactured decades ago. Tichenor had to create custom LSNs to allow for future disposal, then validate lessons learned at a Minuteman site at Francis E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming.

Whatever the Air Force's plan for intercontinental ballistic missile modernization looks like, Tichenor said DLA Disposition Services will be prepared to offer disposal options for non-classified equipment the organization doesn't receive classified material. DLA will also continue working with Sentinel program provisioners to ensure controlled property for the future system is properly stock-listed at the outset to help stop controlled property from being released to the public or adversaries.

Defense modernization means the eventual disposition of weapons systems like the B-2 Spirit stealth bomber and adoption of new ones like the B-21 Raider. It also might mean the U.S. Space Force divestiture of Global Positioning System Block IIF and Space-Based Infrared Systems satellites and replacement with potentially classified ones. Each replacement and upgrade demands full lifecycle support, and that includes close coordination with the services on end-of-life property disposition strategy, Tichenor said.

"We want to educate our customers on the importance of concepts like stock-listing as much property as possible on the front end," he said, adding that such efforts help property receipt specialists ensure material is controlled based on correct supply data assigned during the initial acquisition process.

Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile program nonreuse materials at Vandenberg Space Force Base, California, await shipment for demilitarization and destruction in 2021.



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DATA-DRIVEN SUPPLY SOLUTIONS TURNING INSIGHTS INTO MISSION-READY PERFORMANCE

By Natalie Skelton DLA Aviation Public Affairs

hen supplying the military with the right parts at the right time is the mission, data acumen isn't a "nice-to-have;" it's a full-time detective partner.

Understanding the proper value and use of data enables buyers and others in the acquisition community to make better, more-informed decisions, Carl Allen, deputy director of Procurement Process Support for Defense Logistics Agency Aviation, wrote in data acumen procurement guidance.

"Data analysis can be used to identify cost-saving opportunities

[and] negotiate better pricing with suppliers with the goal of ensuring the right goods and services are acquired at the best possible price and quality," he wrote.

But sometimes, the hardest part of solving a problem isn't interpreting the data; it's defining the problem.

"Framing opportunities helps ensure that resources are focused on the right analysis at the right time by clearly defining the problem, aligning efforts with business objectives and prioritizing analyses that drive the most impact," said DLA Aviation's Adam Hardee, who heads the Research, Reviews and Analysis Division in the Business Process Support Directorate. "We encourage Behind every on-time delivery at DLA Aviation lies algorithms, dashboards and analysis.

our mission partners to approach us with the problem rather than the perceived solution to a problem we haven't even discussed."

He described a challenging push to improve timeliness at shop service centers at Robins, Tinker and Hill Air Force bases, explaining how his team took a step back to examine the business rules at the Georgia, Oklahoma and Utah bases, respectively. What they discovered, he said, changed the game.

"The then-current approach did not factor in replenishment timeliness to the SSC from DLA Distribution," he said, noting the approach relied on

"TO REFINE AND FINALIZE A PROBLEM STATEMENT FOR MAXIMUM CLARITY AND IMPACT, WE START BY CLEARLY DEFINING THE CORE ISSUE."

- ADAM HARDEE

assumptions rather than policy. "This resulted in [the Distribution Standard System] recommending inadequate levels to Aviation shop managers, which degraded performance."

They reframed the problem and solved it by developing a new algorithm and introducing the SSC Fill Rate Tool, which factored in Air Force ordering patterns and replenishment times. The tool led to historic fill rates and laid the groundwork for a new supportability system capable of predicting supply chain issues 24 months in advance.

"To refine and finalize a problem statement for maximum clarity and impact, we start by clearly defining the core issue," Hardee said. His team uses the "five Ws" technique to dig past the symptoms and uncover root causes.

Data acumen is also critical in preventing assumptions from derailing mission completion, as supply chain analyst Thomas Wright saw firsthand while working to forecast requirements for depot repairs to DLA-sourced parts.

"It was assumed the forecast requirements from the customer were accurate," Wright said. "But when we completed a comparison analysis using historic versus forecasted data, it revealed that customer requirement data was only about 70% accurate."

That 30% discrepancy could have cost money and resources, but Wright's team didn't just accept the data. They accounted

DLA Aviation analysts rely on historical trends, verified metrics and collaborative tools to define problems and shape smart logistics solutions.

for it and adjusted planning models accordingly.

Supply chain analyst Francisco Bermudez said a structured, datadriven approach relies on verified evidence rather than intuition influenced by unconscious biases. He helped build an unfilled orders dashboard for Navy Fleet Readiness Center Southeast in Jacksonville, Florida, and noted that collaboration is a key element of success. The result was a Qlik app that became a command-level tool for transparency, accountability and performance evaluations.

"All stakeholders had a shared understanding of objectives, data requirements and desired functionalities," he said.

A Demand Planner Tool that Wright helped build also compares Air Force demand forecasts with actual acquisition data in DLA's system. It even includes a note system for planners and sustainment specialists to leave breadcrumbs for each other. Before the tool was implemented, teams worked without clear insight into each others' efforts, but now they address challenges and develop solutions together.

In another example, senior demand and supply chain analyst Bill Huttemann ran into a snag while aligning Army UH-60 helicopter data with DLA supportability. The Health and Usage Monitoring System data didn't correlate with DLA's, he said, adding that his team created a crossreference system that he likened to a Rosetta Stone for helicopter maintenance and repair data.

Meanwhile, supply chain analyst Andrew Sabatini automated a sevenhour Unliquidated Obligations report with a cloud-based platform.

"Now I spend a few minutes getting my import files set up," he said.

Starting with a strong problem statement is a common thread among these successes at DLA Aviation.

Hardee said tomorrow's analysts will need more than Excel. They'll need programming chops in Python and R, visual storytelling in Power BI and Qlik, cloud fluency, and business acumen. Most importantly, he said, they'll need the ability to ask the right questions and tell the right story.



DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY CAMPAIGN OF LEARNING

Support at the Forward Edge of the Battlefield: Lessons Learned

DLA White Paper 25-2, February 2025 by COL Adrian J. Sullivan, USA, and Lt Col Russell C. Chance, USAF

Introduction

In any instance of Large-Scale Combat Operations (LSCO), targeting an adversary's logistics capabilities is at the top of the list for achieving maximum effect. Interrupting an adversary's ability to sustain or regenerate forces is a key element in either denying or defeating that adversary's objectives. During World War II, this was evidenced by the declaration that "victory in each Theater was assured when the quantity and quality of our weapons and equipment surpassed those of the enemy."¹ What history taught us is that contested logistics during LSCO is an absolute certainty and that victory can only be assured by ensuring sufficient resiliency in one's own logistics to have operational agility and flexibility.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict offers a myriad of lessons to be learned when it comes to achieving resiliency in the contested logistics environment. Three notable tenets are easily discernable. The first is the value of regionalized sustainment. Regionalized sustainment seeks to "harness the strengths of allies and global industry partners [for a] network of globally dispersed capabilities that deliver MRO [Maintenance, Repair, & Overhaul] to the point of need."² Second is the diversity of solution sets that can be leveraged by the integration

of partner and allied capabilities. Referred to as "collective logistics" in North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) doctrine, this concept is codified wherein "nations and NATO ... cooperatively share the provision and use of logistic capabilities and resources."³ This type of integration can affect a mutual-sustainment ecosystem that culminates in logistics resilience. Finally, the need for enhanced command, control, and coordination systems becomes evident as the synchronization of both the regionalized sustainment and allied/partner integration weaves a complex web of interconnected requirements and operations.

This paper will discuss support to the forward edge of the battlefield and the growing need for "technical reach forward" instead of "reaching back" and what that means to the logistician. This "collective logistics" approach allows nations to share resources and capabilities, creating a more resilient logistics system.

Regionalized Sustainment

In a contested logistics environment, shortening transportation chains and localizing sourcing can help to reduce vulnerabilities. These concepts have been explored, at scale, in the US Department of Defense's recently published 2024 Regional Sustainment Framework (RSF) seeking to operationalize the concept of integrating military capability, theater-located industry partners, and allied partner nations. This effort is aimed squarely at mitigating the risks associated with contested logistics.⁴ RSF is in its infant stages, but the goal is to accelerate implementation and actions, to include leveraging the capacity and capabilities in the EUCOM area of responsibility. Beyond the Office of Secretary of Defense (OSD) concept of RSF, regional capacity and capability are key enablers to sustaining the Joint operational force.

Capitalizing on such capability and capacity, referred to herein as "regionalized sustainment," is a deliberate offset to contested logistic and one of the hard lessons learned from the conflict in Ukraine.

An example of this regionalized sustainment is the MRO hub established at Logistics Enabling Node - Poland (LEN-P) to support the MRO and distribution needs of Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU). Located west of the Ukraine border in southern Poland, LEN-P serves as a launching-off point for sustainment and materiel for the AFU, as well as a retrograde hub for MRO of multiple ground weapon systems. The geographic location demonstrates the exploitation of the use of allied territory to create a degree of security, while at the same time pushing sustainment and MRO operations to the near edge of the battlefield; thereby reducing transit timelines and accelerating the return of equipment to the fight. The multinational efforts at

1 Brig Gen Nelson, H. W. (1993). Logistics in World War II. Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History. (pg 244) 3 North Atlantic Treaty Organization. (2018). NATO Standard AJP-4: Allied Joint Doctrine for Logistics. NATO Standardization Office. (Ch 1, Sec 3, para 1.13)

4 Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Product Support. (2024).

² Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Product Support. (2024). Regional Sustainment Framework. Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense. (pg 1)



LEN-P create a confluence of capability that serves to enable optimum sustainment and regeneration. Activity at LEN-P includes the receipt, warehousing, and distribution of spares, as well as the final preparation of major equipment end items prior to their release to the AFU.⁵ The footprint at LEN-P is multinational with parallel efforts on-going to create aggregated capability and interoperation. As the 21st Theater Sustainment Command has learned from this conflict, "Collective defense requires collective sustainment."⁶

Under the backings of "technical reach forward," a development of the LEN-P would require mobile maintenance capability and a steady stream of parts for battlefield repairs.

Currently LEN-P's MRO activity is largely accomplished by commercial contractors, but to push similar efforts into the nearbattlespace could require a footprint of similar scale but comprised of mostly military technicians. As weapons systems from multiple nations have poured into Ukraine the need to sustain those disparate systems has escalated; resulting in a call for Field Service Representatives from industry. Data analytics are also key to provide some type of predictive capability to determine and posture spare parts at the forward edge of the battlespace with maintenance technicians. While this highlights the value of bridging of regional sustainment by linking

military logistics operations with theater industrial partners, it also highlights the need for high-end technical expertise. Near-edge of the battlefield repair and sustainment will require superior materiel availability and technical expertise.

Integration of Allied and Partner Capability

Collaboration with allies and partners is a mechanism for building logistics operability that has the potential to create an effective offset to contested logistics. As Major General Ragin, Commander of the 21st Theater Sustainment Command, noted, "Interoperability, integration, and interchangeability of sustainment capabilities improve unity of effort and prolonged endurance in a future conflict."7 From early in the conflict, allied nations have responded with assistance, but as the conflict stretched into its tenth month, allied support began to coalesce into a formal structure. This coalition has proven instrumental in countering the consequence of contested logistics on the ground in Ukraine.

This is clear by both the integration efforts of the US Security Assistance Group – Ukraine (SAG-U) and the formation of the NATO Security and Assistance Training for Ukraine (NSATU) organization. Activated in December of 2022, the SAG-U was established as a "dedicated headquarters ... to provide long-term, focused organizational structure to coordinate and oversee the fullspectrum of security assistance to the Armed Forces of Ukraine."⁸ Within the SAG-U was nested the International Donation Coordination Cell, a 25-nation body that served to coordinate the multinational response to logistics requirements levied by Ukraine as it executed its defensive campaign against Russia. In time, that body evolved into the NSATU. The vision for NSATU was to optimize the coordination of security assistance for Ukraine.⁹

From the perspective of integrated, transparent multinational logistics, an extremely illustrative example has been the creation and employment of the KOROVAI database.¹⁰ The requirement for such a mechanism was two-fold. First, Ukraine needed the ability to communicate its materiel requirements to the entire body of nations seeking to lend support. Second, those nations willing to contribute materiel support needed to be able to communicate and quantify their ability to support. Implemented in March 2023,¹¹ the KOROVAI system springs from a U.K. database protocol made available to all members including non-NATO countries, exemplifying the concept of multilateralism.

In implementation, KOROVAI permits collective contribution on any requirement; thereby ensuring optimization through collaborative sourcing. To begin, the AFU list

- 6 MG Ragin, R. R., & MAJ Ingram, C. G. (2024, April 23). Theater Sustainment Transformation: Lessons Learned from the Russia-Ukraine War.
- 7 MG Ragin, R. R., & MAJ Ingram, C. G. (2024, April 23).
- 8 US Army Europe and Africa. (2024, August 5). Press Release -Security Assistance Group – Ukraine Change of Command.
- 9 SHAPE Public Affairs Office. (2024, July 11). NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine.
- 10 US Government Accountability Office. (2024). U.S. Agencies Should Improve Tracking of Authorized U.S.-Origin Defense Article Transfers Requested by Foreign Donors (GAO-24-106745). Washington, D.C.: US Government Accountability Office.
- 11 Vasquez, R. B. (2024). Audit of Accountability Controls for Defense Items Transferred to Ukraine Through Slovakia. Alexandria, VA: Inspector General, Department of Defense.

⁵ Malone, C. J. (2024). (pg 4)

their requests in the database. These requests can include requirements for major weapon systems, spare parts, technical data, and training. Partner nations can then review those requests and determine what, if any, capability they can bring to bear. If able to support a request, a nation submits an offer in the database in response to the request. Multiple nations can submit offers to the same requirement. For example, a request for 5,000 155mm artillery rounds might receive multiple offers for amounts less than the total but, when combined, meet the broader requirement.

As an offset to contested logistics, this minimizes the reliance on single supply chains and creates redundant options in sourcing, serving to make the supply chains resilient to both physical and cyber interdiction. Contributing nations can even indicate which Logistics Enabling Node (LEN) they will use to deliver material¹² which further permits coordinated distribution operations to prevent choke points or targets of opportunity for the adversary. The transparency of requirements to all partner nations allows for rapidity of response by leveraging the totality of the industry and capability of all partner nations. This multinational logistics data exchange allows Ukraine to continue to function, even under the duress of contested logistics.

NATO has identified the need for interoperability, but observations from Ukraine offer an opportunity to turn discussion into action. Weapons systems spanning the NATO nations are

diverse, disparate, and occasionally idiosyncratically unique to their home nation. As contributions to Ukraine were made from multiple nations, the diversity of Ukraine's air, sea, and ground fleets multiplied. Recent estimates of Ukraine's ground defense fleet exceed more than 100 distinct weapons systems, all with unique sustainment needs. This diversity culminates as a transportation prioritization challenge which becomes an untenable sustainment problem both operationally and logistically; in this fight and, if not learned-from, the next. The self-exacerbating problem of increasingly diverse breadth in a defense portfolio is proof that interoperability is a critical element of inter-sustainability. To be able to optimally capitalize on allied and partner capacity, it is essential to have first achieved maximum interoperability amongst those partners.

Enhanced Command, Control, and Coordination Systems

While KOROVAI is a clearly illustrative example of the efficacy of integrating allied and partner capability, it is also demonstrative of the value of robust digital logistics control and coordination infrastructure in offsetting contested logistics. NATO's AJP-4 emphasizes the need for "... a coherent logistic concept of operations ..."¹³ for "harmonization and synchronization of responsibilities ..." Both operational and tactical logistics controls are sensitive to the efficiencies gained by adaptive, highly coordinated responses across intelligence and command systems.

When logistics control and coordination break down, however, it can have devastating outcomes. As an example of the value of robust control systems, one lesson learned springs from Russian failure. Early in the war, Russia launched an offensive to Kyiv that included a 40- mile-long convoy¹⁴ of combat and sustainment forces. 30 miles from its objective, the convoy stalled. Mechanical breakdowns, fuel shortages, and even food shortages plagued the convoy. Assessments were that commandand-control failures (radio and network failures) prohibited the Russian forces from being able to rectify the logistics problems facing the force.¹⁵ The convoy never reached Kyiv, instead it wreaked havoc on Irpin and Bucha, but Kyiv never fell. Arguably, Russia's inability to reach its objective of Kyiv during that offensive cost them their only opportunity to achieve Ukrainian defeat.16

Not all command, control, and coordination systems have such an immediate tactical impact, however. Some systems, properly employed, enable the continued setting of conditions in a theater, even while the conflict continues. Army Materiel Command (AMC) maintains a system called the AMC Predictive Analytic Suite (APAS). This system does not give commanders "another dashboard of stuff," instead it is designed to provide commanders "analyzed data with options and risks assessed to make decisions." AMC's vision

12 Vasquez, R. B. (2024).

- 13 North Atlantic Treaty Organization. (2018).
- 14 Collett-White, M., Bankova, D., Bhandari, A., Dutta, P. K., & Ovaska, M. (2023, February 20). How Ukraine Endured.

Why has Russia's 64km convoy near Kyiv stopped moving? 16 Collett-White, M., Bankova, D., Bhandari, A., Dutta, P. K., & Ovaska, M. (2023, February 20). Vehicle 'Dilemma' Can Be Explained in 2 Words.

¹⁵ British Broadcasting Company. (2022, March 3). Ukraine:



for APAS is that it can inform service component and coalition decision making about materiel requirements, activities."¹⁷

APAS gives SAG-U logisticians a near-real-time view of the health of Ukrainian weapon systems. For example, the US has gifted more than 300 Bradley Fighting Vehicles to Ukraine since the beginning of the war.¹⁸ SAG-U logisticians can use tools within APAS to see the aggregate condition of the entire fleet of Ukrainian Bradleys (e.g. 75 percent fully mission capable) or it can drill down to specific serial number vehicles to determine the status of a particular hull's MRO. This system is not without its faults; however, it is heavily reliant on manual data updates by users at both ends and requires substantial housekeeping to ensure data integrity. Nonetheless, AMC is engaged in making systemwide improvements¹⁹ because the potential gains associated with the tool and its data set are inarguable. The ability to effectively leverage sustainment data for predictive planning is key to prolonged endurance during LSCO, because

"all wars become wars of attrition, eventually."²⁰

Conclusion

There is an old maxim perpetuated by military planners. When it comes to military plans, "the enemy gets a vote." In logistics, the enemy can cast its vote by attempting to thwart the logistics endeavors of the other side. This is not new, but the evolving character of war has made contested logistics increasingly impactful on a combatant force's ability to achieve its military objectives. In all conflicts, logistics will be contested, regardless of scale. As logisticians, our charge is no longer to simply get the right things, to the right place, at the right time. It is now ours to do so while we create offsets to our adversary's attempts to disrupt our strategic, operational, and tactical logistics.

The Russia-Ukraine war will continue to teach military planners lessons for years, but it is never too early to begin the process of learning. Already the nations who are contributing to the defense of Ukraine have begun to reinforce the value of regionalized sustainment. Linking the capabilities of theater militaries, regional industry, and partner nations has proven essential in the collective defense and sustainment of Ukraine. Allies and partners, who integrate collaboratively, become force multipliers and create resilience for logistics through increased optionality of multinational solutions. All of this is underpinned by the need for highly coordinated systems of command and control to create responsiveness and agility for forces employed in the contested logistics fight.

None of these elements stand alone. They are interwoven and inextricable from one another. Any nation that seeks to overcome the dangers of contested logistics must optimize all of them in pursuit of resiliency. We know the contest of logistics during LSCO is an absolute certainty and, from this study, we know that victory can only be assured by achieving such a degree of resiliency in our own logistics that we ultimately achieve logistics superiority.

17 LTG Mohan, C., MG Wilson, D., & BG Nicholson, B. (2023, November 15). Executing Sustained Logistics Support for the Defense of Ukraine.

18 Kass, H. (2024, November 2). Ukraine's Bradley Fighting

19 LTG Mohan, C., MG Wilson, D., & BG Nicholson, B. (2023, November 15).

20 MG Ragin, R. R., & MAJ Ingram, C. G. (2024, April 23).

CAMPAIGN OF LEARNING

Modernizing Defense Logistics: Converging Kill Chains and Supply Chains

"I DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS 'LOGISTICS' IS, ... BUT I WANT SOME OF IT." - Adm. E. J. King

By Leighann Martin

Navy ADM. E. J. King, fleet admiral during World War II, alluded to a truth that generations of successful military leaders have understood; logistics is key to winning wars.¹ Since World War II, the United States has focused on establishing robust systems to ensure warfighter readiness. The Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), founded in 1961, serves as the Nation's Logistics Combat Support Agency (CSA) by managing nine critical supply chains, operating a global storage and distribution network, and leveraging the defense industrial base to fortify national security.² Today, as the global defense landscape evolves, DLA is adapting to the emerging challenge of the Contested Logistics environment, ensuring effective and risk-mitigated worldwide supply chain support for Military Services, Combatant Commands (CCMDs), and allied nations.³ As ADM King understood, you cannot be lethal without logistics, and in the Department of Defense, you cannot get logistics without DLA.

Success in logistics requires being both predictive and responsive, with a linkage between maintaining resiliency and recovering from disruptions. Logisticians must think holistically and rely on state of the art tools for forecasting and planning to optimize supply chains and prevent disruptions before they occur.

The Army-developed concept

- 1 Bill Kobren, "Quotable Logistics Quotes," DAU, June 7, 2010.
- 2 Defense Logistics Agency, "DLA Fiscal 2024 Annual Report," DLA Annual Report, February 11, 2025.
- 3 LTG Mark Simerly and Col. Wes Adams, "The Defense Logistics Agency's Role in Overcoming the Challenges of Contested Logistics," DAU, accessed April 2, 2025.
- 4 Megan Gully, "Project Convergence 22: Connecting Sensor to

of "Sensor to Shooter to Sustainer" outlines an operational sustainment capability loop that enables decisionmaking at echelon in contested environments.⁴ This approach aims to achieve decision advantage at the speed of relevance through automated data flows for consumption and replenishment actions. This concept also affords the opportunity to highlight the pivotal role of the Defense Industrial Base in enhancing decision dominance through predictive logistics. DLA sees the addition of a fourth link – "Supplier" – to create a comprehensive "4S" framework: "Sensor to Shooter to Sustainer to Supplier." $(Fig.1)^2$ As a principal interlocutor between the Joint Force and the industrial bases, DLA has an inherent responsibility to lead in the development of this concept.

Wartime dynamics demand that the 4S linkages be precise, fast, and adaptive. On the battlefield,



Figure 1: 4S – "Sensor to Shooter to Sustainer to Supplier" graphic depiction U.S. warfighters rely on the highly optimized "kill chain," rapidly and precisely executing steps from locating, to engaging, and terminating enemy targets through a network of battle systems.⁵ Yet, our supply chains, although long established, fall short in terms of resilience and agility. It begs the question: given logistics' importance in winning wars, why aren't supply chains as well developed as kill chains?

A gap exists between the defense supply chain and the tactical kill chain, challenging the Joint Force's ability to sustain operations in highly contested environments. DLA, as the Nation's Logistics CSA, is positioned to bridge this gap and ensure uninterrupted support to warfighters. Converging the kill chain into the supply chain enhances speed of decision-making, improves demand forecasting, and provides actionable information to industry. Additionally, utilizing and integrating battlefield intelligence and operations data into sustainment operations will provide the integration necessary to better anticipate consumption, maintenance, and disruptions on the battlefield. With these benefits, the Joint Logistics Enterprise (JLEnt) can enhance demand forecasting and prediction capabilities, leading to optimized supply chains and more efficient factory operations – essentially connecting foxholes to factories.

In order to do so, the JLEnt must harness new technologies, rely on real-time data sensors, and integrate data-driven systems to create a

Shooter to Sustainer," U.S. Army, November 27, 2022.

- 5 Doug Graham, "Army Developing Faster, Improved Data 'Kill Chain' for Lethal and Non-Lethal Fires," U.S. Army, January 9, 2023.
- 6 Tara Murphy Dougherty, "To Win, US Must Eliminate Gap between the Supply Chain and the Kill Chain," Breaking Defense, December 23, 2024.

digitally interoperable network.⁶ A digitally interoperable Joint Force proactively shares data, has systems that "talk" to each other, and uses next-generation tools like artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) to enhance the speed and precision of demand forecasting to enhance the resiliency and adaptability of the supply chain.

For example, if an aircraft's flightpath to the nearest refueling site is blocked by adversarial threats, a digitally interoperable system of sensors can redirect the aircraft to an alternate refueling site that avoids the acute threat. The site's system will signal to DLA a need to reposition and increase fuel supplies to the alternate site. While a simple example, it demonstrates how intel-operationssustainment integration allows the Joint Force to deftly correct course and allow our supply chains to rapidly and precisely shift effective support in contested environments. Leveraging these new technologies and adopting kill chain qualities, like acting at the speed of relevance and precision, will not only revolutionize supply chains, it will also make supply chains perform like kill chains to better sustain warfighter needs.

Current efforts within the Joint Force to consolidate and modernize processes include a key initiative, Combined Joint All Domain Command & Control (CJADC2). This features interconnecting sensors and systems across the Joint Force, partners, and allies to enable decision advantage at the speed of relevance.⁷ Sustainment is the backbone throughout this initiative; it is the critical enabler of CJADC2, ensuring all facets of warfighting capacity meet warfighters' needs. DLA can serve as a critical partner, by acting as the connective tissue to the "supplier" within the 4S framework.

CJADC2 and other programs' success requires all stakeholders to share data, AI/ML, and automation systems to create a digitally interoperable Joint Force.

Adopting AI/ML tools into the defense logistics enterprise is not a magic solution to achieve decision advantage; rather, there are specific types of AI and advanced tools that can modernize the enterprise. For example, data-bots automate many administrative and data collection tasks, making previously tedious and possibly error-ridden processes more streamlined and efficient. Digital twins, virtual replicas of physical sensors and systems, have the potential to map complex supply chain systems for planning, warehouse management, and transportation management.⁸ ML algorithms easily process large data sets and improve systems over time. Additionally, in a short period of time generative AI has been adopted into the average person's everyday life with AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants.

Future capabilities, such as Agentic AI, hold the potential to revolutionize defense logistics capabilities. Unlike task-specific AI, Agentic AI can function autonomously within predefined parameters like "AI agents," making decisions and performing complex operations without constant human intervention.9 By deploying AI agents, organizations will be able to modernize inventory management, enabling real-time decision-making to achieve decision advantage. In addition, AI agents will use real-time pricing data to inform analysis and enhance pricing decisions, maximizing the use of tax-payer dollars. Even warehouse operations can benefit from advanced AI systems to streamline workflows, enhance accuracy, and reduce

operational costs. These advanced capabilities will empower DLA to adapt dynamically to shifting logistics challenges, particularly in Contested Logistics environments where speed and accuracy are paramount.

Integrating AI/ML and enhancing digital interoperability across the JLEnt is not just an aspirational goal — it is a strategic imperative. As with any new development, there are challenges and limitations. AI/ ML are tools for the defense logistics enterprise to utilize and cannot replace human reasoning, thought, and ingenuity. However, for the U.S. to maintain and advance its defense logistics capabilities in a rapidly evolving global environment, bold steps toward the future are essential. The power of understanding and harnessing these advanced tools that are software-oriented and data enabled to create "human-machine teams" will be key to winning in the future.

DLA must be at the forefront of these advancements, implementing logistics systems that are robust, adaptable, and future-ready. Progress is already underway, but DLA cannot achieve this transformation alone. This mission demands a unified effort. Government entities, military services, industry leaders, and partner nations must collaborate, innovate, and create digitally interoperable systems together. By employing the transformative power of advanced technologies to better predict and forecast warfighter needs, we can build resilient, efficient supply chains that are smarter, faster, better connected, and better protectedensuring readiness and lethality in any operational environment.

Editor's note: This paper was prepared by Leighann Martin under Contract No. SP4704-23-D-0001 for the Defense Logistics Agency, April 2025.

9 Mike Finley, "Price Smart, Act Fast: Agentic AI's Role in Retail's Next Chapter," Supply Chain Brain, November 27, 2024.

⁷ CDAO, CJADC2, accessed March 18, 2025.

⁸ Özden Tozanli and Maria Jesús Saénz, "Unlocking the Potential of Digital Twins in Supply Chains," MIT Sloan Management Review, August 18, 2022.



Utilization of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to Illuminate Supply Chain Risk

DLA White Paper 25-3, March 2025 by DLA Chief Information Officer Adarryl Roberts

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been a heavily researched topic with its concept evolving over recent decades and its scope of capabilities explored at renowned conferences like NeurIPS, AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence, and World AI Summit, leading R&D institutions like MIT, Harvard, and CMU, and even over family dinner tables. As groups have attempted to explain what AI is and what it is not, the number of definitions and societal confusion over what it is has unsurprisingly multiplied. At its core, AI is the ability of systems and/or machines to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as recognizing patterns, learning from experience, drawing conclusions, making predictions, or taking action.¹ By leveraging advanced algorithms, large datasets, and powerful computational tools, AI enables machines to learn from experience, adapt to new information, and autonomously make decisions. AI can be viewed as a broad and multidisciplinary field that encompasses several subsets, such as robotics, machine learning, deep learning, natural language processing, and more.

Robotics involves the design and creation of physical machines (robots) capable of performing autonomous

or semi-autonomous tasks. Machine learning (ML) is the science of using algorithms, which are a set of rules designed to perform a specific task or solve a particular problem, to learn from data and focuses on performance improvement over time. Deep learning is a specialized area within machine learning that is inspired by the human brain and uses artificial neural networks to solve problems like image and speech recognition. Natural language processing is another subset of AI that uses machine learning to enable computers to process human language and is used for tasks such as text analysis, sentiment analysis, and language translation.

From virtual assistants like Siri to autonomous vehicles built by Tesla and advanced robotics, AI is transforming industries and everyday life, pushing the boundaries of what technology can achieve. AI assists humans in everyday life by making intelligent decisions in a short amount of time and at scale. This process is made possible by enabling leadership buy-in, adopting ethical development of AI, powered by data processing and complex programming by highly skilled data scientists, data engineers, AI architects, and ML engineers. While AI cannot reason in the same way as humans³ can, it can automate repetitive tasks, detect patterns, and provide recommendations that enable people to focus on creative problem solving.

As with all technology, though, AI has its fair share of limitations. There

are operational limitations, which include a dependence on high quality, abundant data, as well as ethical limitations like bias and overreliance. Ethical limitations can be managed by implementing a Responsible AI (RAI) strategy. RAI is the practice of using AI in a way that emphasizes human oversight and societal wellbeing. It's about ensuring that AI models, datasets, and applications are developed and deployed ethically and legally, without causing intentional harm or perpetuating biases.⁴ The Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) manages ethical limitations by utilizing an RAI approach that provides a centralized process to identify, track, and improve the alignment of AI projects toward RAI best practices and the DOD AI Ethical Principles while capitalizing on opportunities for innovation.⁵

Despite its limitations, AI remains a transformative technology for an organization with access to abundant, high quality data sources. It can be particularly beneficial for supply chain risk management (SCRM), which is a systematic approach used by DLA to proactively identify, assess, and mitigate risks throughout the supply chain. This includes addressing vulnerabilities, threats, and potential disruptions to maintain the integrity and uninterrupted flow of materials, products, and services.⁶ Specifically, AI can assist with SCRM by improving visibility via predicting bottlenecks or disruptions, forecasting customer demand to optimize supply chain workflows, and recommending

- 1 Department of the Defense (DoD). "DoD AI Strategy (2018)"
- 2 International Journal of Scientific Advances, "Full Text Volume 2 Issue 1 Jan-Feb 2021."
- 3 Mirzadeh. "GSM-Symbolic: Understanding the Limitations of Mathematical Reasoning in Large Language Models"
- 4 SAP, "What is responsible AI?"

- 5 Chief Digital and Artificial Intelligence Office (CDAO). "Responsible AI Toolkit"
- 6 Harrison, Shawn. (January 2024). Defense Acquisition University. "Updated Supply Chain Resiliency & SCRM Resources"



alternative, pre-qualified suppliers during disruptions. Beyond these common SCRM applications, AI can assist with different types of supply chain risk. To further explore these, the authors of this paper have grouped supply chain risks into two broad categories: known and unknown.

To use common examples, a known supply chain risk could be when a supplier becomes bankrupt, which can be predicted by monitoring the supplier's financials over time. An unknown supply chain risk could be when a squall forms and forces a container ship transporting critical, Class I level supplies to change course, thus prolonging the original estimated arrival time to warfighters. Although it is easier for AI to predict known risks, it can be used to reduce the probability of unknown risks. For example, squalls, as mentioned above, are a dangerous weather event typically prevalent in the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), which impacts DLA's supply chains for international Area of Responsibilities (AOR) associated with higher-than-average adversary threat levels belonging to customers such as U.S. Southern Command, U.S. Africa Command, and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. Weather events like squalls cannot necessarily be predicted but modern supply chains incorporate weather data to reduce the probability of a weatherrelated disruption from occurring.

AI for supply chain management (SCM) has been researched and implemented in the commercial space for years. A 2021 study analyzed AI techniques utilized across four SCM fields (marketing, logistics, production, and supply chain) and found that artificial neural networks, which are associated with deep learning, were the most common technique used from 2008-2018.⁷ One of the best and most diverse applications of AI for SCM/SCRM in the commercial space is Amazon. Amazon has been using their "Supply Chain Optimization Technology (SCOT) to forecast demand for the past decade, AI-enabled robots to recognize, sort, and inspect goods at warehouses, predictive meteorology to make safe, informed driving decisions, and route optimization for last mile delivery."8 Walmart is another success story when it comes to adopting AI technology for SCM. Their Route Optimization technology enabled them to "avoid 94 million pounds of CO² by eliminating 33 million unnecessary miles driven and optimized routes to bypass 108,000 inefficient paths" in 2023.9

As government agencies face numerous policy barriers, they tend to trail behind the commercial space in terms of adopting advanced technology at scale. The Department of Defense has aimed to shorten this gap by publishing a Data, Analytics, and AI Adoption Strategy (DOD DAAIS) which outlined six key goals: improve foundational data management, deliver capabilities for enterprise business and joint warfighting impact, strengthen governance and remove policy barriers, invest in interoperable federated infrastructure, advance the data, analytics, and AI ecosystem, and expand digital talent management.¹⁰ The DOD DAAIS states that "accelerating the adoption of data, analytics, and AI technologies will enable enduring decision advantage, which is a competitive

condition characterized by five core outcomes - battlespace awareness and understanding, adaptive force planning and application, fast, precise, and resilient kill chains, resilient sustainment support, and efficient enterprise business operations."

By taking this proactive approach supported by a data-centric mindset and leveraging AI capabilities instead of a historically reactive and disconnected approach, DLA can simultaneously build more resilient and efficient supply chains, reduce the impact of disruptions, and increase availability of stable support for the warfighter at home and abroad.

DLA's Journey with Supply Chain Risk Management (SCRM) and AI

DLA plays a foundational role in supporting military operations and critical domestic needs, serving as a primary logistics provider across the United States' Defense Industrial Base (DIB) and as an essential partner in homeland resilience. DLA's ability to deliver reliable and rapid support to U.S. warfighters as well as Whole of Government (WoG) partners is essential. "Interruption of DLA supply chain operations compromises our nation's ability to deliver combat power and execute critical missions."¹¹

As part of the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan, DLA published a Supply Chain Security Strategy outlining how the agency will address supply chain security challenges across the enterprise. The strategy identifies the following four strategic focus areas:

9 Cherian. "6 Benefits of Route Optimization Software"10 Hicks. "2023 Data, Analytics, and Artificial Intelligence

- Adoption Strategy: Accelerating Decision Advantage"
- 11 Defense Logistics Agency. "Supply Chain Security Strategy."

⁷ Toorajipour. "Artificial intelligence in supply chain management: A systematic literature review"

⁸ Amazon Staff. "5 ways Amazon is using AI to improve your holiday shopping and deliver your package faster"



- Institutionalize supply chain security across the DLA enterprise
- Maintain integrity and access to key data
- Partner with valid, reputable vendors who produce quality supplies and services
- Strengthen the resiliency of systems, processes, infrastructure and people.⁷

Coupling these initiatives with AI technologies will transform DLA's logistics into an intelligent network capable of adapting to complex, rapidly changing demands and environments. DLA is fueling this AI-enabled transformation by building a data-centric workforce, investing resources to support the development of scalable AI solutions,¹² and funding Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) projects.¹³

Further propelling DLA's journey with AI, the agency established an AI Center of Excellence (AI CoE) in June 2024. The mission of the AI CoE is to "increase and coordinate the safe and responsible integration of AI throughout DLA, ensuring robust safeguards are established to mitigate risks". If applied correctly and responsibly, AI can revolutionize DLA's operations and support DLA's strategic vision, particularly around SCRM. Since the inception of these AI initiatives, DLA has bolstered their AI inventory. Today, DLA uses multiple Business Decision Analytics (BDA) Supplier Risk Assessment models to automate the identification of potential bad suppliers who provide counterfeit, non-conformant, or overpriced items, placing the warfighter and the agency at risk. To

date, the BDA Supplier Risk models have analyzed 43,000 vendors, identifying more than 19,000 as potentially high risk. Recently, BDAgenerated information was used to trigger an investigation, which led to a suspect actor pleading guilty to providing parts made in Turkey for U.S. weapon systems. Against several U.S. laws and regulations such as the False Claims Act, Buy American Act, and Arms Export Control Act, the supplier falsely certified compliance with U.S. procurement laws while outsourcing manufacturing to Turkey. More specifically, they misrepresented that parts were domestically produced, made fraudulent claims for payment from the DOD, and illegally transferred technical data and manufacturing specifications to Turkish firms without the required export licenses.

Beyond detecting risk, the BDA model enhances supply chain resiliency and cost efficiency by filtering unreliable suppliers, ensuring that materiel meet specifications and are delivered on time. This reduces delays, prevents operational disruptions, and minimizes the likelihood of defective parts entering critical defense programs. The models help DLA avoid inflated procurement costs by flagging overpriced items, ensuring defense budgets are maximized without sacrificing quality. The success of DLA's BDA model positions it as a template for broader SCRM initiatives across the DoD, aligning with the Government Accountability Office's (GAO) recommendation for tighter vendor oversight.¹⁴ DLA's efforts showcase how AI-driven analytics enhance accountability, streamline investigations, and preempt supply chain threats. DLA's BDA models

stand as a key asset in protecting the warfighter and ensuring national defense operations are fueled by reliable and compliant suppliers.

In 2019, DLA Aviation created the Long-Term Contract (LTC) Negotiations Analytics (LNA) tool as an R&D Proof-of Concept to develop an empirically driven, probabilistic modeling approach to generate contract parameter recommendations to optimize the reduction of overall LTC costs. The LTC Parameter Optimization Model ensures suppliers can effectively support the warfighter by streamlining the defense supply chain and enhancing procurement efficiency. Using past data and running advanced simulations, the model quantifies demand variability in terms of risk of over-procurement versus the benefit of quantitysensitive unit price breaks, helping DLA make best value procurement decisions for its customers. One of the key benefits of this model is identifying materiel where the data suggests DLA can assume more risk in the form of higher order quantities, thereby driving increased supplier interest and ensuring supplies are always on-hand, so warfighters are not left under-equipped. Suppliers also get a boost from steady, reliable contracts, which makes it easier for them to invest in resources and infrastructure. It keeps them prepared for future demands and strengthens their long-term commitment to support the defense supply.

DLA's model real-time dashboard lets suppliers adjust, helping them stay responsive to shifting battlefield conditions and new threats. Cutting waste and aligning procurement with actual demand makes better use of defense budgets, freeing up resources for advanced tech and

¹² Bohan. "DLA awards AI contracts to close out Hackathon"

¹³ Defense Logistics Agency. "Small business research projects use technology to help detect cyber threats" 14 GAO-24-105358



increasing readiness. Ultimately, the LTC Optimization Model strengthens the bond between suppliers and the defense sector, ensuring warfighters have the necessary materiel and supplies when it matters the most, directly supporting their missions and keeping operations running smoothly.

While DLA is working towards advancements in the fields of SCRM and AI, we are continuing to see traditional, linear supply chain models face new challenges in an environment marked by unpredictable disruptions, contested logistics, and the increasing complexity of modern supply needs. DLA continues to tackle these challenges head on, with an eagerness to apply innovative and effective solutions. A recent example of DLA's shift to an interconnected approach was evident through Operation Allies Welcome (OAW). OAW was an initiative directed by President Biden in August 2021 that supported Afghan evacuees, which required rapid mobilization, realtime coordination with WoG partners such as the Department of Homeland Security, and seamless responses at various CONUS locations.¹⁵ This highlighted DLA's capacity for largescale humanitarian support as well as the limitations of a traditional supply chain in a high pressure and multifaceted scenario.

AI Capabilities and Art of the Possible

In the face of an increasingly complex global logistics landscape, DLA must ensure its supply chains remain resilient, efficient, and adaptable. The GAO recently highlighted vulnerabilities in key areas such as stockpile management and Ground Combat Systems (GCS) inventory.^{16, 17} In contrast, the Department of Defense Inspector General (DOD IG) conducted an audit and discovered that DLA did not consistently manage or provide oversight of the Defense Fuel Support Points (DFSPs) per DOD policies. These gaps threaten the operational readiness of the DOD. AI offers transformative opportunities to address these challenges, enabling the DLA to manage risks, optimize operations, and improve decisionmaking processes.

Tantalum, a critical material essential for military aircraft, represents a supply chain vulnerability case study. The notional supply chain for tantalum begins with raw material extraction, followed by a complex refinement process into tantalum salts, powders, and metal ingots before being incorporated into end products such as jet turbines. This supply chain involves multiple stages, each presenting opportunities for inefficiencies or disruptions. AI tools offer actionable solutions to address these vulnerabilities. For example, inventory monitoring systems powered by AI can track tantalum as it moves through each stage of the supply chain, from mining to processing and finally to its use in military products. By providing continuous visibility, AI ensures that material flow remains transparent and potential delays are minimized. Additionally, AI-driven predictive analysis uses machine learning models to anticipate demand, identify supply chain risks, and optimize transportation routes. This capability allows DLA to stay ahead of potential disruptions and maintain a steady availability of materials.

The vulnerabilities within the DLA supply chain are further compounded by significant gaps in data modeling for the DOD's strategic and critical materials. The GAO findings reveal that the DOD has developed a process for identifying material requirements to determine shortfalls, but it does not have the appropriate data model requirements for 115, or roughly 40%, of the strategic and critical materials it wanted for fiscal year 2023. Over 90% of the materials the DOD identified in shortfall in fiscal year 2023 had zero or one domestic supplier.¹⁸ This gap hinders the DOD's ability to assess risks, forecast demand, and plan for contingencies. Without accurate data, decisionmakers face challenges in identifying vulnerabilities or inefficiencies in sourcing and distribution. AI provides a powerful solution to overcome these data limitations. AI systems can aggregate information from multiple sources through advanced data fusion and integration, filling critical gaps and creating a unified view of the supply chain. This comprehensive perspective enables more accurate modeling of stockpile requirements and better identification of potential weaknesses. AI tools can also analyze defense-specific and civilian-use materials to pinpoint vulnerabilities in sourcing or continuity of supply. Risk detection capabilities, driven by machine learning, monitor these critical materials to ensure that disruptions are identified early and addressed swiftly.

The findings and recommendations in the document highlight significant opportunities for leveraging AI to improve the management of DFSPs. AI offers transformative solutions that enhance oversight, optimize resources, and mitigate risks across these critical facilities, ensuring compliance and operational efficiency. One of

15 United States Department of Homeland Security. "Operation Allies Welcome" 16 GAO-24-106959 17 GAO-24-107176

18 28DoD, National Defense Industrial Strategy (2023).

the most impactful applications of AI lies in remote monitoring and inspection. AI-powered drones and advanced sensors can perform visual and thermal inspections of storage facilities without the need for continuous in-person visits. These tools provide real-time monitoring, enabling early identification of structural weaknesses or environmental hazards. This approach significantly reduces labor-intensive manual inspections while enhancing the reliability and frequency of monitoring activities.

In addition to monitoring, AI improves predictive maintenance by anticipating maintenance needs before problems occur. By analyzing historical data and real-time equipment conditions, AI can schedule maintenance activities proactively, minimizing the risk of fuel leaks, spills, or costly breakdowns. This predictive capability ensures that maintenance efforts are focused on areas with the highest risk, extending the equipment and infrastructure life cycle while reducing unplanned downtime. AI also plays a crucial role in resource optimization, particularly in staffing analysis. By evaluating staffing data and workload trends, AI tools can identify gaps or inefficiencies in workforce allocation. This ensures that regional offices are properly staffed to meet compliance requirements, streamlining operations while maintaining readiness. Furthermore, AI enhances compliance monitoring by automating critical oversight processes. For example, AI systems can track Staff Assistance Verification (SAV) schedules and generate automated alerts for upcoming or missed inspections. These automated reminders improve accountability and ensure compliance timelines are met, reducing the risk of regulatory issues or lapses in oversight.

To support decision-making, AIdriven data analysis and reporting provide valuable insights into DFSP operations. AI tools can analyze fuel loss data to detect anomalies, such as unexpected drops in fuel levels, which may indicate leaks or theft. By identifying these issues early, DLA can take corrective action before they escalate. Additionally, AI systems generate comprehensive reports on compliance and maintenance activities, offering decision-makers clear visibility into areas for improvement and enhancing accountability across operations. Lastly, AI enables robust simulation and scenario planning, allowing DFSP managers to assess risks and prepare for potential disruptions. Various risk scenarios can be simulated using AI models, such as equipment failure, environmental hazards, or supply chain interruptions. This proactive approach provides DLA with actionable strategies to mitigate disruptions, ensuring that fuel support operations remain resilient and adaptable under any conditions.

Implementing these AI-driven capabilities will significantly improve the management of DFSPs. AI enhances oversight by providing continuous monitoring, ensures compliance through automated alerts, optimizes resource allocation, and identifies risks early through advanced analysis and predictive tools. These solutions align with the recommendations to strengthen DFSP operations, reduce vulnerabilities, and improve overall accountability and efficiency within the fuel support infrastructure.

In both competition and conflict, AI has the potential to significantly enhance the capabilities of the DLA Joint Logistics Enterprise (JLEnt) by addressing critical logistics challenges currently impacting the enterprise, including, but not limited to, munition

shortfalls, fuel consumption and availability, enroute infrastructure, prepositioned assets and war reserves, the integrity of distribution nodes, and lines of communication. On top of managing a complex, global logistics ecosystem, DLA is also required to adhere to applicable DOD policy issuances, such as the DODI 5200.44 (2024).¹⁹ DODI 5200.44 (2024) is an issuance associated with implementing a program for information and communications technology (ICT)SCRM. AI can support DLA with this mandate by compiling supplier level data, narrowing the focus on suppliers operating in this subcategory (e.g., ICT), and predicting supplier risk. An end user facing output from this system could be as simple as a list of high-risk ICT suppliers broken down by parts and rationale outlining why it was marked as high-risk that is updated daily. The examples discussed in this paper merely scratch the surface of how AI will expand DLA's capabilities and drive innovation.

Conclusion

The DLA strategic adoption of AI is reshaping the future of SCRM, addressing vulnerabilities, enhancing operational resilience, and ensuring mission readiness. AI's integration across DLA's logistical infrastructure, monitoring equipment conditions for predictive maintenance, and automated compliance tracking underscore its transformative potential in safeguarding national defense operations. By leveraging AI-driven tools for predictive analytics, resource optimization, and scenario planning, DLA proactively mitigates risks, ensures seamless fuel and materiel support across DFSP and other sites, and reduces downtime through timely maintenance. AI's capacity

19 DoDI 5200.44 (2024).



to simulate risk scenarios, automate oversight, and identify supply chain anomalies, such as fuel loss or supplier inconsistencies, empowers decision-makers to respond swiftly and effectively to emerging threats.

DLA's AI initiatives align with key DOD policies, including DODI 5200.44 (2024), which mandates operational ICT SCRM programs to manage supply chain risks comprehensively. As DLA continues to expand its AI capabilities through workforce development and technological innovations, it is poised not only to meet but exceed the requirements set forth by the DOD for secure and efficient logistics operations. Ultimately, DLA's AI-enhanced logistics framework strengthens its ability to navigate complex global supply chains, ensuring uninterrupted support to warfighters, fortifying the integrity of defense infrastructure, and maintaining strategic superiority. By embedding AI at the core of its operations, DLA is positioning itself as a model of innovation and resilience, ready to face the evolving challenges of tomorrow's contested logistics environment.

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Defense Logistics Agency Vice Director Brad Bunn

A Conversation with BRAD BUNN

DLA's vice director describes how the agency's role as a logistics combat support agency makes it indispensable to warfighter success, ways it's changing to meet new challenges and opportunities for continued growth.

How do DLA's core strengths align the agency with Defense Department priorities?

When Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth issued his first communication to the workforce and established three key priorities – rebuilding the military, restoring the warrior ethos and reestablishing deterrence – DLA started looking at how our strategy and imperatives lined up with those goals. Our analysis showed a strong alignment. The agency's Strategic Plan, "DLA Transforms: A Call to Action," strengthens the focus on our mission as a logistics combat support agency and meshes well with new DOD priorities.

When I think about rebuilding our military, we're certainly in the business of ensuring warfighter readiness support as we posture our capabilities, materials and people, and build partnerships with our industrial base. We also have people embedded with the joint force and combatant commands to work with operational planners. So new departmental goals don't point to an existential question for DLA. Instead, they make it even more important for us to stay on target with our strategy and elevate awareness of the things we do and new ways we can provide support that ensures success of the National Defense Strategy. That awareness extends beyond our agency and workforce to industry, our new leadership in the Pentagon and to Congress.

Part of the value that we bring to the department lies in our understanding of warfighter needs and the operational environment as we foster relationships with the military services and industry to ensure efficient procurement strategies. It's not just delivering items like Amazon delivers orders to your house. We ensure the entire supply chain is resilient and can manage through surge requirements or challenges associated with a potential conflict. That kind of valuable work and contribution can't be outsourced; it's an inherently governmental and warfighting function, and as a combat support agency, we're accountable to the chairman, the secretary and the combatant commands.

There can be uncertainty about potential changes any time we have a new

administration or leadership, but it's critical we remain focused on our role as an executing arm of the department. We must be agile, responsive and adaptable as outlined in our strategy and imperatives. It's somewhat of a test of the principles we aim to embody as we transform.

How is DLA approaching the need to be more efficient?

We continue to be deliberate by reviewing our imperatives and prioritization, considering what it might mean if we're asked to reduce the size of the agency or need to accelerate our strategic goals even more. What's non-negotiable is our core mission: delivering world-class material support and services to the warfighters.

One way we can increase our efficiency is to expand our use of automation in acquisition and procurement processes, especially in terms of planning and demand forecasting, which are often manual and labor intensive. We often highlight the fact that over 90% of our 10,000 daily contract award actions are automated and happen seamlessly. Now we're asking ourselves how we can expand that further, possibly <u>leveraging</u> <u>artificial intelligence</u> to increase efficiency. There can also be challenges in balancing standardized, audit-ready processes with the need for speed



and agility, but new technology can help us optimize in these areas. We're doing it now in storage and distribution with the <u>new Warehouse</u> Management System, which enables process standardization, material visibility and auditability while integrating robotics to modernize physical material management functions, similar to practices in commercial industry.

Organizationally, we're also looking at our structure and resources for opportunities to better balance efficiency with effectiveness. Our financial and business model, which is the Defense Working Capital Fund, pushes us to be very transparent about our costs because we essentially pass those costs on to our warfighting partners and the services through our rates. Therefore, we're always in some mode of looking for ways to be better, faster, cheaper and smarter in how we do things; that's natural to us. Most of the dollars that flow through this agency are for buying the commodities, materials and capabilities that we deliver to our customers. The rest is for people, facilities, information technology and infrastructure. Even though we have a good track record of justifying our costs, this is an opportunity for us to find ways to be more efficient and explore new approaches to how we operate. We'll continue doing that as we always have.

What are some new areas we are exploring for improvement and growth?

We've made strides across all our <u>Strategic</u> <u>Plan imperatives</u> – people, posture, precision and partnerships, or the four P's as we like to call them. Each one is a key driver for change. However, during governance forums where we discuss progress, we've also identified areas for improvement, such as reducing duplication across objectives and project plans.

One major emerging focus is documenting and optimizing our supply chain strategies. We have strategies for buying things and performing services, but they're somewhat stove-piped based on how we've organized the agency with our major subordinate commands. In many ways, our strategies have also been inherited over decades and are based on the great work we've done in the past in buying and positioning material like food, fuel or repair parts for weapons systems across the globe. We're now building a common framework that forces us to document and formalize all these supply chain strategies. This new framework will guide us toward a more cohesive, future-oriented supply chain strategy. That will include validating what's working and reassessing what might need to change, especially in light of potential future conflicts. In a contested logistics environment, for example, our current strategies may not suffice. We need to build resilience that can deter adversaries, ensuring that we're capable of managing through a protracted conflict if necessary. The effort hasn't reached every nook and cranny of DLA yet, but it's eye-opening to look closely at whether the strategies we've been using will work if, God forbid, we enter a conflict in the

Indo-Pacific region and must support combat operations on a large scale. A future fight will be very different from what we dealt with during the 2000s and 2010s, so we've got to change how we do some things.

Could that result in a new Strategic Plan?

The strategy is fundamentally sound, but we may need to adjust some of the objectives and re-prioritize key results to stay on track with timely changes. Although I don't see us issuing a new strategy, the workforce can expect annual guidance from the director that will shape how our MSCs and headquarters elements shape their annual operating plans for the next fiscal year. Given our environment and changes being driven across the federal government, the director intends to issue guidance to reinforce the strategy and express priorities for the coming fiscal year.

What actions is the agency taking to ensure full compliance with new executive orders?

Those first few days with multiple orders and directives coming out simultaneously created quite a flurry of activity, but we anticipated the need to ensure compliance and stood up a task force to review new administration directives and orders from the White House and follow-on directives from the Office of the Secretary of Defense or other authoritative sources. The chief of staff oversees the group, and a senior GS-15 runs it. Members include senior DLA Headquarters staff with the ability to reach into the major subordinate commands, and support from the legal team and DLA Transformation for policy matters.

"A FUTURE FIGHT WILL BE VERY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT WE DEALT WITH DURING THE 2000S AND 2010S, SO WE'VE GOT TO CHANGE HOW WE DO SOME THINGS." — BRAD BUNN

Together, they're taking a deliberate and disciplined approach to review everything that comes in to determine potential impact on DLA. While many of the orders and directives haven't affected us and were well outside our realm, we've had some workforce and personnel issues that did pertain to us and have heavily involved our human resources team. There've been some workforce strategies that we're not accustomed to, such as the Deferred Resignation Program, and we had to wait for additional guidance from OSD. The group's overall goal though has been to document our compliance and the actions we've taken to comply, so we have a good record of those things.

Is there anything you would like to say to employees as they navigate new priorities and potential change?

First, we acknowledge the uncertainty in the current environment, particularly with how some other non-DOD agencies have been affected by leadership decisions prioritizing or deprioritizing certain mission areas that the federal government performs. Our federal workforce is very much impacted by those decisions. As civil servants, we're responsible for faithfully executing the missions and tasks assigned to us. We all took that oath. Regarding concerns about the future, our role in support of the department's priorities remains strong. The interim National Defense Strategy reaffirms our role as a combat support agency, and that's critical to the department's ability to execute the defense secretary's priorities.

On a more personal level, I try to stay focused on the tasks at hand. We are still very much an indispensable part of the Joint Logistics Enterprise and the ability of the joint force to project and sustain combat power. We have countless men and women in uniform relying on us every day. We still have an important job. In addition, DLA has a strong culture of performance and mission focus, as well as a commitment to treating our people with dignity and respect. I haven't seen anything that has caused us to not continue that. Some tough decisions may arise regarding our organizational structure, workforce investment in our people and broader government policies, but any changes will be made professionally and with respect.

Is there anything you'd like to add?

I want to credit the DLA Human Resources team, senior leaders in the MSCs and those in DLA Installation Management for their work as we've returned to full-time presence in the office. The initial three-days-a-week plan we executed starting in January 2024 prepared us for being back full time even though it's been an uncomfortable transition for some. I'm glad we got that rolling start because it required us to get back into some habits that we were out of. We evaluated our office spaces and amenities to ensure they could accommodate thousands of people. During my MSC visits, I walked through offices during the heavier days to assess whether there's enough space for everyone and whether we have any health concerns like air quality. I've seen lots of full parking lots and cubicle farms alive with chatter. It felt good to know that the team is back together, but I also noticed some reconfigurations of our office spaces were needed, as our telework culture dates to the late '90s. We're still working to ensure people are in environments where they can concentrate on their work, and some renovations are happening in some of our physical spaces. But generally, when I'm out and about, I see so many personal connections being made. I've been approached by a few people who said they didn't like the return to the office, but now they're glad because they're meeting colleagues in person. I also want to point out that our new situational telework policy provides some flexibility in balancing agency and individual needs, so that should ease some pressure.

Most importantly, I want to make sure employees understand that I truly value them whether they're long-serving staff or new to the agency, and as the vice director, I believe DLA's future is bright. The director often highlights that DLA's six-plus decades of history are marked with eras of transformation. We're in another transformative era, but we're built to change. We're also built to last, and that's important for the workforce to know. Transformation may be challenging and not everyone will agree with how we approach it, but DLA is designed to endure even though we won't always look the same.

FUELING SPACE SUPERIORITY DLA ENERGY EMPOWERS U.S. MISSIONS

By DLA Energy Public Affairs

Defense Logistics Agency Energy is best known for providing petroleum to the military, but it also plays a critical role in U.S. space dominance by supplying 92 product lines to that effort, including specialized fuels and chemicals for missiles, space launches and satellites.

DLA Energy's Aerospace Energy team oversees the complex supply chain for products including missile fuels, nitrogen, hydrogen and helium. Customer operations specialists work directly with military units to determine their needs and coordinate with the supplier operations team to ensure timely delivery of the correct products, DLA Energy Deputy Commander David Kless said.

"This team isn't just fueling missions, they're fueling American dominance in space. Their management of these specialized product lines – from missile propellants to aviator's breathing oxygen – is essential for national security and space exploration, powering everything from rockets to satellites," he said.

Since 2016, DLA Energy has supported more than 100 U.S. government launch missions, including Delta II, Delta IV, Atlas V, Falcon 9, Vulcan, New Glenn, Antares, Alpha, Minotaur and Pegasus rockets. DLA Energy also supported the Titan rocket and Space Shuttle programs, and it continues to support NASA's space exploration.

Kevin Ahern, DLA Energy's director of aerospace and installations, said his organization's support of the space and aviation communities is a "source of tremendous pride."

"Our Aerospace Energy team continues to provide innovative solutions to meet all requirements in these complex supply chains," Joint Land Attack Cruise Missile Defense Elevated Netted Sensor System personnel oversee the inflation of an aerostat at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland., Dec, 15, 2014. The Raytheon-developed device has a radar system that can see up to 340 miles. DLA Energy provides the gaseous helium for the aerostat.

he added. "The team's ability to turn challenges into solutions makes every day rewarding."

The supplier operations team oversees everything from sourcing materials like nitrogen, used for purging impurities. That includes contracting with vendors to convert liquid nitrogen to gas, transporting it via pipeline alongside other vital products like hydrogen and hydrazine materials, and maintaining bulk storage. The team emphasizes safety throughout the process due to the inherent dangers of materials like nitrogen.

McCoy Greer III, a supervisory inventory management specialist, described how pre-positioning these resources is crucial for mission success and requires careful long-term





An artist impression of NASA's Perseverance rover landing safely on Mars on Feb. 18, 2021, reaching its target zone inside of the Jezero Crater in search for traces of ancient microbial life on Mars. The Perserverance is said to be the most advanced astrobiology laboratory ever sent to another world. DLA Energy provided hydrazine for the mission.

planning and vendor partnerships.

"At Aerospace Energy, we're proactively building a hypergolic propellant inventory to support the next generation of space launch vehicles," Greer said. "We leverage years of experience and established customer/supplier relationships and engage with the entire space industry ... to forecast demand and preposition a five-year supply."

Chemists from DLA Energy's Quality Technical Directorate support the aerospace supply chain by ensuring product specifications and testing, said Robert Gloria, lead customer account specialist in DLA Energy's space launch branch.

"Our quality team's dedication has been essential to this program's success," Gloria said. "Their rigorous testing ... ensures our products consistently meet stringent military and commercial standards for space launch missions."

Another key component of the aerospace mission is providing backup oxygen for modern jets and supplying the primary oxygen source for older planes. These products are essential for pilot survival, said CJ Hunter, chief of the customer relationship branch for cryogenics.

"As the linchpin between the customer, the supplier and the combatant command, ... the Aerospace Energy customer operations team ensured seamless communication and execution," Hunter said. "We were able to ... ensure zero mission delays or impacts for our combined forces, including Air Force pilots."

DLA Energy's critical role in supporting space operations is further amplified by the daily efforts of the DLA Nuclear and Space Enterprise Support Office. Working in close coordination with the U.S. Space Force, DLA NESO plays a vital part in long-term sustainment planning for space operations. DLA's senior service integrator for USSF, Greg Ogorek, along with NESO liaisons to USSF and U.S. Space Command, collaborates with Aerospace Energy to anticipate and meet the evolving demands of the space domain.

"Space enterprise sustainment is only growing in importance," Ogorek said. "Aerospace Energy is vital to future space domain initiatives, ensuring our space capabilities are robust and resilient."

Collaboration ensures a cohesive logistics concept from initial design and mission planning through execution and sustainment, he said, highlighting the integrated partnership that supported USSF's development of on-orbit refueling and fuel storage capabilities.

"This collaborative effort is crucial for the success of on-orbit refueling, which promises to enhance satellite longevity, maneuverability and resilience while fostering a robust commercial ecosystem," Ogorek said. "These capabilities are critical for maintaining U.S. space dominance and deterring adversaries in an increasingly contested space environment."



Booster tanks filled with liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen propellants supplied by DLA Energy Aerospace Energy launch a United Launch Alliance Delta IV Heavy rocket from Vandenberg Space Force Base, California, Sept. 24, 2022. DLA Energy Aerospace Energy provided 470,000 gallons of liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen for the first and second stage boosters, and 340 pounds of hypergolic propellants for the second stage booster, enabling it to place the satellite into the correct orbit.

DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY



CAMPAIGN OF LEARNING White Papers and Warfighter Talks

The Defense Logistics Agency created its Campaign of Learning to promote a shared understanding throughout the joint logistics enterprise of today's rapidly changing and contested logistics environment and to capitalize on the strengths and capabilities of numerous organizations involved in logistics operations. The campaign includes white papers highlighting strategic issues, Warfighter Talks featuring presentations from defense leaders, and a curated reading list on topics like supply chain management, data analytics, risk management and more. These news briefs highlight previously published white papers and recent Warfighter Talks.

DLA WHITE PAPERS RELEASED IN OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Contested logistics to drive DLA transformation

The concepts and capabilities that have enabled the Defense Logistics Agency to sustain the nation's warfighters must be adapted to ensure continued success, agency leaders say in "The Defense Logistics Agency's Role in Overcoming the Challenges of Contested Logistics," published in Defense Acquisition Magazine.

DLA Director Army Lt. Gen. Mark Simerly and Air Force Col. Wes Adams, director of DLA's Strategic Plans and Futures Division, begin with the premise that ensuring warfighters have access to all supplies, everywhere, all the time is a flawed theory of success as adversaries continually threaten the joint force's ability to project power.

Contested logistics poses several conditions on DLA's efforts to adapt sustainment models, they write. To start, the U.S. is no longer a sanctuary. The effects of an attack in one time zone or hemisphere will likely flow into others. Modern-day adversaries are also more capable and can wreak even more havoc on logistics sustainment than they did in Iraq and Afghanistan – all while threats continue growing in cyberspace.

Transforming DLA to face contested logistics challenges must take into account the likelihood of a conflict spanning vast time, space and distance, Simerly and Adams continue. Precision in demand forecasting and in-transit visibility is critical to meeting the needs of a widely dispersed force. The agency will also use artificial intelligence to merge supply chain data from multiple domains and business environments. It will then create data-informed algorithms that present a real-time view of supply availability versus warfighter needs.

The next war will also require a long view of logistics, they write, adding that where DLA postures supplies, logistics capabilities and people will help inform decisions, manage access and ensure warfighters' needs are met on time. And since future wars won't be fought and won alone, DLA must continue strengthening partnerships with the joint force, allies and industry.

– Beth Reece DLA Public Affairs

US military logistics no longer uncontested in Europe

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has forced the U.S. and NATO allies to confront the hard truth that the European continent is no longer a secure, uncontested environment for military logistics, according to "Contested Logistics in Europe: Beyond the Tactical," published by the Logistics Officer Association.

Written by Air Force Maj. Gen. David Sanford, the Defense Logistics Agency's director of logistics, the paper notes that the intensity and pace of the conflict have exposed weaknesses in how the U.S. sources, produces and moves essential goods. America's ability to sustain a military campaign in Europe could be undermined by vulnerabilities in its global supply chains and industrial base with reduced readiness stemming from such issues as ammunition shortages and critical component delays.

In 2023, trade between the U.S. and European

Union topped \$1.3 trillion and included vital defense materials like semiconductors, pharmaceuticals and fuel. Disruptions to that flow could cripple military operations, Sanford writes. Adversaries may also increasingly aim to erode "national will" by targeting consumer markets and critical infrastructure, he adds.

Sanford calls for a strategic overhaul in logistics planning that looks beyond the battlespace to include raw material sourcing, manufacturing dependencies and coordination with allies. As global tensions rise and industrial capacity is tested, U.S. planners should also adopt a more holistic, forwardlooking approach to sustaining the joint force. The stakes, he writes, are not just about readiness, but about the ability to win a protracted, modern war in a contested global landscape.

- DLA Public Affairs

DIGITAL INTEROPERABILITY

Digital interoperability key to decision advantage

Imagine a battlefield where systems can't "speak" the same language. Data silos, communication barriers and inefficiencies hinder mission success. Two Defense Logistics Agency leaders point to digital interoperability, or DI, as the solution to gaining decision advantage on the battlefield and beyond in "DLA's Focus on Digital Interoperability," published in the National Defense Magazine.

DLA Director Army Lt. Gen. Mark Simerly and DLA Chief Information Officer Adarryl Roberts illustrate how merging real-time data and situational awareness will help U.S. and allied forces make smart choices in supply chain management.

DI is fundamental to DLA maintaining a responsive, efficient and secure logistics network that supports global military operations, they write. It embraces real-time visibility of inventory levels, shipping statuses and supply chain disruptions while also lowering operational costs and minimizing redundancy and errors.

According to the paper, DI allows DLA to quickly scale operations up or down as missions change. This flexibility is crucial for responding to emergencies, humanitarian missions and rapid deployments, Simerly and Roberts write. It also helps DLA better anticipate and respond to disruptions like supply shortages and transportation delays, improving the resilience of the defense supply chain and reducing risks associated with mission-critical operations.

DI even enhances cybersecurity, they add. Standardized protocols and cybersecurity measures help protect sensitive information and ensure the integrity of defense logistics operations, providing a unified security posture with improved threat detection and response.

- DLA Information Operations Communications



DLA WARFIGHTER TALKS

Marine Corps deputy commandant: Deter, set the theater for potential conflicts

The Defense Logistics Agency is a strategic enabler in posturing military forces to prevail, the Marine Corps deputy commandant for installations and logistics told employees in March.

Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Stephen Sklenka described the agency's employees as "strategic doers" who help centralize logistics and stimulate the industrial base.

"You guys have established yourselves as the key linkage to modernize and mobilize our national industrial base, to make our forces stronger and to get them the materials needed to accomplish the mission when called upon," Sklenka said.

Despite DLA's expertise in logistics and distribution, it can still take days or weeks for the U.S. to move things around to support global warfighters. The Chinese can do it just hours, he said.

"Over the past couple of decades, the Chinese military and their overall industrial base have

grown at an unprecedented rate, faster than any other nation since World War II," he continued.

The general described the U.S. military as being contested in all warfighting capabilities, although it previously had unfettered access to the world, without threats to strategic and operational movements.

"We need to do all we can to deter [and] prevent this fight from happening by setting the theater now," Sklenka said. "We must work together to ensure goods and services are supplied further forward on the battlefield, advance and standardize logistics information technology infrastructure, and advocate for advanced manufacturing with industry to overcome inventory management and distribution challenges."

> – Alexandria Brimage-Gray DLA Public Affairs

Former JCS vice chairman: The next war requires a new strategy

War strategies and groundwork of United States adversaries in the Pacific have set conditions for a battle unlike any in the past, the former vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff told Defense Logistics Agency employees in_ January.

"The closest analog would be the effort that was required to win World War II. None of us has an experience base that allows us to imagine what that looks like. We can read the history, we can watch the movies, and we can wish it

weren't so, but the Chinese have systematically built a military to counter ours," retired Air Force Gen. Paul Selva said.

The U.S. must protect what it's good at, he continued, citing progress in areas like advanced bioscience and advanced material engineering.

"We need to protect those things, and that means wrapping them up in cyber protection. It means we wrap them in legal protection," he said, adding that countries that

violate intellectual property rules should be held accountable.

In areas where the nation can't produce as quickly as its adversaries, it must simply be smarter by creating good strategies and careful, thoughtful deterrence, Selva continued. The alternative, he said, could be a war in which the U.S. runs out of beans, bullets and people before the adversary.

Beyond strategy, American forces and logisticians must also harness the power of data.

> He suggested that warfighters and support elements use AI for operational planning, training exercises and understanding possible environments for future battles. If they don't, they're not thinking like adversaries whose forces may outnumber America's and whose equipment might be as advanced as American aircraft and ships, Selva added.

> > – Beth Reece **DLA Public Affairs**



WAREHOUSE NODERNIZATION EFFICIENCY AND RESILIENCE THROUGH INNOVATION

By Thomas Zimmerman DLA Distribution Public Affairs

efense Logistics Agency Distribution is progressing on a comprehensive modernization program that increases efficiency, accuracy and responsiveness in its storage and delivery missions.

"Our modernization efforts are key to the future of DLA Distribution," said Navy Rear Adm. Michael York, DLA Distribution commander. "Through the Warehouse Management System, we will achieve better audit readiness. Modernized information technology will enable us to create the environment we need to be successful, and our network optimization will ensure the right material is in the right place to get to the warfighter as rapidly and effectively as possible."

For decades, DLA Distribution relied on a reactive "break-fix" approach to maintaining its digital infrastructure and automation systems, many of which were inherited from the military services during Base Realignment and Closure initiatives. Now, the agency is proactively investing in technologies and strategic network optimization to create a more agile and resilient logistics system.

Optimizing the Network for a Contested Future

A cornerstone of the modernization effort is network optimization. Recent global Network optimization across DLA Distribution warehouses will create a more agile and resilient logistics system that supports storage and delivery missions.

events, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. military withdrawal from Afghanistan and the conflict in Ukraine, have exposed vulnerabilities in global supply chains and highlighted the need for a more adaptable and robust distribution network. DLA Distribution is responding with a 2030 network vision that prioritizes efficiency and responsiveness.

"This vision involves strategically repositioning inventory across the DLA Distribution network," York said. "Inactive materiel will be consolidated at DLA Distribution San Joaquin, California, while active materiel will be positioned at DLA Distribution Susquehanna, Pennsylvania, maximizing the benefits of modernization investments at these locations."

Overseas locations will focus on crossdocking and readiness drivers, streamlining the flow of critical supplies. The consolidation of hazardous materials and generalpurpose inventory at DLA Distribution San Joaquin will further enhance efficiency and reduce costs.

"This network optimization is not only about efficiency; it's also about preparing for a future with contested logistics," York said. "With a global presence and billions of dollars of inventory supporting thousands of weapons systems, DLA Distribution must be ready to operate in challenging environments."

To enhance resilience and readiness, DLA Distribution is also exploring the Cold Site Concept, a strategy that establishes a network of smaller, geographically dispersed storage locations to mitigate risks associated with potential disruptions to primary distribution centers or strategic lift capabilities.



A Dematic Modular Conveyor System, installed in late 2022 at DLA Distribution Susquehanna, Pennsylvania, helps streamline material flow and improve efficiency.

Transforming Business Processes with the Warehouse Management System

A key element of the modernization program is implementing a new Warehouse Management System, a modern, off-the-shelf system that replaces the Distribution Standard System. WMS aligns DLA Distribution with industry best practices, facilitates cloud computing and seamlessly integrates with DLA's Enterprise Business System.

"As of April, we will have implemented WMS at 19 sites, with five more to go across DLA Distribution," York said.

Upon implementation, DLA Distribution's WMS team provides three weeks of dedicated support, then analyzes data and collects user feedback and best practices to apply to future WMS fielding.

"We want each of our sites to return to normal levels of output as soon as possible after implementation because each of our sites provides invaluable support to the warfighter," York added.

DLA Distribution also uses the data and feedback to implement retrofits, which are done as needed to improve or add capabilities that weren't part of the original programming. Retrofits lead to more

Employees at DLA Distribution Susquehanna, Pennsylvania, use voice-enabled workflow technology that demonstrates substantial productivity gains in picking operations Jan. 24, 2020.





An automated storage and retrieval system at DLA Distribution Susquehanna, Pennsylvania, optimizes storage density and retrieval efficiency March 12, 2025. This is just one of the advanced technologies being implemented across the DLA Distribution network to enhance warfighter support.

efficient processing and provide a solution for an audit finding in the offload and receiving area. They're executed as mini-implementations with employees being trained on new capabilities before going live. The retrofit team includes experts from human resources, network process management and information operations who are onsite for two weeks to coach employees and repair defects encountered during initial use.

Modernizing Equipment and Infrastructure

DLA Distribution is also investing heavily in modernizing its equipment and infrastructure. An upgrade at the Eastern Distribution Center at DLA Distribution Susquehanna is transforming the traditional storage and distribution center to a stateof-the-art fulfillment facility. York said. The effort includes integrating robotic arms for small parcel handling, replacing outdated towline systems with automated guided vehicles, and adopting a "goods-to-person" approach that minimizes manual handling and improves accuracy.

Beyond the EDC, DLA Distribution is implementing advanced technologies, including:

• Warehouse Execution System:

This middleware software facilitates the integration of new technology by enabling communication between the WMS and automated material handling equipment.

• Automated Storage and Retrieval System

This modular system optimizes storage density and retrieval efficiency.

• Vertical Lift Modules

These enclosed systems maximize storage space and minimize retrieval time.

• Very Narrow Aisle Racking

This system, combined with automated guided forklifts, optimizes warehouse space utilization.

• Embracing Wireless and Mobile Technologies

Mobile technology is already enhancing productivity throughout DLA Distribution sites. Tablets and mobile printers deployed across the network have helped improve inventory management and stock readiness. Voice-enabled workflow technology has also demonstrated productivity gains in picking operations.

• Research and Development

DLA Distribution is engaged in research and development to explore how emerging technologies might further transform operations. These initiatives include:

• 5G/Smart Warehouse

A proving ground for testing and refining 5G-enabled technologies.

• Automated Inventory

Using autonomous drones, robots and Bluetooth tags to enhance inventory visibility.

• Augmented Reality with Optical Character Recognition

Exploring the use of augmented reality and optical character recognition to improve warehouse operations and serial number recognition.

Modernization initiatives are strategic cornerstones of DLA's broader mission, York said, adding that DLA Distribution aims to be more responsive and agile in today's complex global landscape. Implementing modern systems like WMS and investing in automation streamlines operations, reinforces financial responsibility and improves auditability while supporting datadriven decision-making, especially in tomorrow's contested environments.

"DLA DISTRIBUTION MUST BE READY TO OPERATE IN CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENTS."

- NAVY REAR ADM. MICHAEL YORK

HISTORY SPOTLIGHT

THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF **REPAIR PART MANAGEMENT** AT DLA

By Colin J. Williams, DLA Historian

oday the Defense Logistics Agency provides logistics services, commodities and repair parts to the Defense Department and other entities. Logistics services and commodities were in the agency's original charter, repair parts weren't. Although DLA accepted responsibility for some items used to return equipment to a functional state after forming as the Defense Supply Agency in 1961, it rejected others and even returned some to the services. When the agency began to amass repair parts through consumable item transfers, however, it devised new methods for managing them. Today, three agency supply chains across two major subordinate commands use these methods to save the services time and money.

The need to provide military forces with repair parts goes back

to the Revolutionary War. When a wagon in George Washington's army lost a wheel, the driver attached a spare or a wheelwright fashioned a new one. Similarly, sailors replaced rigging and masts at sea. Even so, replacements were infrequent enough that neither service identified repair parts as requiring special management during its years as an independent department. In World War II, for example, the Army's fiveclass supply system covered food and water, items issued to individuals and units, petroleum products, items without allowances, and ammunition.

Little changed when Congress created DOD in 1947. DOD adopted the Army's classification system but used it more for marking containers than determining requirements or planning operations. DOD structured its single managers using organizational approaches to create commands operated by individual services to procure items Civilian employees conduct depot-level maintenance on an F-16 Fighting Falcon at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, during the 1990s. The Defense Logistics Agency supports this maintenance with reparable parts.

for the entire department. The first assignments were based on broad commodity definitions. Later assignments shifted to using federal supply classes. Only in the last three assignments did the department group items based on their relation to complex systems. DSA assumed single manager responsibilities for construction and automotive supplies, and it established an electronics supply center. Most items procured by the automotive and electronics centers were repair parts.

With DSA already providing cataloging, reutilization and other logistics services, it appeared to be on its way to its present-day mission. However, DSA's focus on repair parts lost momentum almost immediately. DOD had never established a single manager for aviation parts. Unlike trucks and radios, aircraft flown by the Air Force, Navy and Army had few common items. Nonetheless, the Government Accountability Office (then called the General Accounting Office), whose analysts thought an aviation parts supply center would standardize systems, and Representative Gerald Ford of Michigan, who thought aircraft spares had grown too expensive, demanded something be done.

Asked by the assistant secretary of defense for installations and logistics if an aviation-focused supply center was viable, DSA examined 150,000 aeronautical parts in 11 federal supply classes. When results indicated that integration wasn't economical, a board led by the secretary asked the agency to expand the study. Adding 17 FSCs, DSA confirmed that parts for aircraft engines, engine components, instruments and propellors were "technical in nature," "subject to numerous engineering changes," dependent on "reparable programming and maintenance scheduling," and "not susceptible to stock fund budgeting." The only exception was FSC 2620, aircraft tires and tubes, which the assistant secretary consolidated under agency management.

By the time DSA had completed its second aviation study in 1964, it had stopped managing most automotive parts. The agency closed the Defense Automative Supply Center a year and a half after taking over the Detroit activity, transferring wholesale responsibilities to the Defense Construction Supply Center in Columbus, Ohio, and retail ones to the newly established Army Materiel Command. While every service used trucks, most orders came from the Army.

With DASC's closure, the Defense Electronics Supply Center was DSA's only activity providing parts. DESC parts supported communication systems. Since the military focused more intently on weapons systems, DSA established a weapons systems support program. Starting May 7, 1964, it covered 17 weapons and registered consistent stock availability above 95%.

While DSA's weapons systems support program increased availability, it didn't decrease costs or expand the defense industrial base. In 1967, Paul R. Ignatius, then assistant secretary of defense for installations and logistics, asked the agency to review aeronautical parts a third time. The GAO had just reported that 69% of repair part purchases for aircraft were uncompetitive, and Ignatius thought DSA could convert existing management efforts into a consolidated supply center. The agency pushed back, stating that it

Class of Supply	Items Covered	DLA Responsibility
t	Subsistence	DLA provides both food and water
ll .	Clothing, electronics, individual weapons	DLA provides textiles and clothing only
10	Petroleum, oil, and lubricants	DLA provides both bulk (B) and packaged (P)
IV	Barrier and construction materiel	DLA provides
V	Ammunition	
VI	Personal demand items (e.g., hygiene products)	
VII	Major-end items (e.g., trucks, ships, planes)	
VIII	Medical materiel (e.g., blood, drugs, x-ray machines)	DLA provides
IX	Repair Parts	DLA provides
х	Non-military items (e.g., fertilizer)	

CLASSES OF SUPPLY

This graph depicts Defense Logistics Agency responsibilities for military classes of supply.

was already managing the aviation parts that could be integrated.

Ignatius didn't stop there. He also expanded DOD's supply system from five to 10 classes. While still used for marking containers, classes were now also used for determining how many days of supply each unit needed for an operation. Other benefits included storage segregation and cataloging accuracy.

Repair parts received special attention because equipment was growing increasingly complex. Systems had components, some that were consumable and replaceable, others that required maintenance rather than replacement. In 1967, DSA provided few of the former and even fewer of the latter.

Change came as a consequence of DOD directing the agency to examine all military consumables. Assignments from the assistant secretary of defense for installations and logistics increased the agency's share of these items from 37% in 1962 to 56% two decades later. Because many consumables were repair parts, the newly renamed Defense Logistics Agency sought to involve itself in equipment design. One project was the Army's new tank. DLA drew on its good standing with service leaders to become involved in the M1 Abrams's design long enough before production to influence parts selection. Another project was the F-16 Fighting Falcon. DLA entered the design phase a year and a half before production and was providing parts for the plane upon its fielding in the late 1970s. The agency that had thrice argued against an aviation supply center was now providing aviation repair parts.

DLA didn't participate in system designs in the 1980s and 1990s despite considerable consumable item growth. In 1982, after directing the services to transfer management responsibilities for 206,000 consumables to the agency, DOD centered the agency on established

HISTORY SPOTLIGHT

systems and the services on new ones. With Defense Management Review Decision 926 in 1989, nearly all consumables not provided by original equipment manufacturers fell under agency management.

A consumable item focus made DLA's weapons system support program increasingly popular. By February 1984, the Army had 216 systems in the program. By December 1990, it had 417. Other services were using the program as well, with Navy entrants numbering 205, Air Force 214 and Marine Corps 248. Overall, DLA provided 1,028,787 items for 1,084 systems, which represented 52% of everything it managed.

To adapt to its expanded role, DLA focused field activities in Richmond and Columbus on weapons systems and its field activity in Philadelphia on troop and general support. Although a DLA decision, this reorientation was driven by the 1993 Base Realignment and Closure round merging the Defense Electronics Supply Center with the Defense Construction Supply Center and the Defense Personnel Support Center with the Defense Industrial Supply Center. DLA used the BRAC to reorganize commands around the weapons systems they supported, not the items they managed.

Reforming supply centers meant overcoming or avoiding concerns about managing items with different characteristics. The agency overcame these concerns in Ohio by capable acquisition professionals and prior DESC efficiency measures. It avoided them in Philadelphia by managing industrial hardware as a self-contained unit.

The 2005 BRAC then introduced DLA to depot-level reparables, parts that leave units for overhaul, upgrading or rebuilding. DLRs were not repair parts but often had the same suppliers and could therefore be covered by the same contracts. This also made repair part management



The Defense Supply Center Columbus Readiness Office reengineers an M113 armored personnel carrier to find cost savings, Sept. 17, 1997.

at Defense Supply Center Columbus and Defense Supply Center Richmond more efficient.

The 2010 "We Are DLA" campaign cemented these orientations. Initiated by Navy Vice Adm. Alan Thompson, the agency's 16th director, the campaign aligned components to an agency identity. As part of the process, supply centers were renamed for the supply chains they supported. Thus, Defense Supply Center Columbus became DLA Land and Maritime, and Defense Supply Center Richmond became DLA Aviation. Defense Supply Center Philadelphia, which managed repair parts in its industrial hardware supply chain, became DLA Troop Support.

Thompson launched the We Are DLA campaign during operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom as repair parts became increasingly important. They became especially so when the Army and Marine Corps started using mineresistant, ambush-protected vehicles. DLA Land and Maritime bought parts for these commercial systems early and en masse.

Managing repair parts still poses some challenges. One problem

harkens back to system design. Success with the Abrams tank and F-16 in the late 1970s was not repeated a quarter century later when DOD began designing the joint strike fighter. It took three decades for DLA to assume roles in F-35 Lightning II cataloging and distribution, and the agency is beginning to assume provision responsibilities for the aircraft. Forecasting can also be an exacting task. Current DLA Director Army Lt. Gen. Mark Simerly has challenged his service counterparts to increase their repair part predictability to 80%.

Repair part management at DLA is a story of change and adaptability. Although the agency once believed items that return equipment to readiness couldn't be integrated, it nevertheless continued searching for ways to make their procurement efficient. By reorientating supply centers in the 1960s and 1990s, involving the agency in weapons system design, devising a weapons system support program, and renaming subordinate commands after the supply chains they supported, DLA has continuously taken proactive measures to ensure warfighter readiness.

DLA NewsWire

SENIOR MILITARY LEADERS DISCUSS CHALLENGES, FUTURE SUSTAINMENT IN INDO-PACOM

The United States has enjoyed flexibility to sustain the fleet, but that's no longer guaranteed, the deputy chief of Naval Operations for Installations and Logistics <u>said during</u> <u>a panel discussion</u> on contested logistics in the Pacific at the Sea-Air-Space 2025 Expo in April.

"We are operating on a justin-time, pull-supply system that is efficient. Instead, we need a just-in-case, push-supply system that is effective," Navy Vice Adm. Jeff Jablon said. "To do this, we must change the Navy's logistics enterprise and execute our Maritime Sustainment Strategy to ensure we can sustain the fleet and the joint force in a contested environment."

The Navy's chief of legislative

affairs, Rear Adm. Marc Miguez, highlighted sustainment success during naval operations in the Red Sea. As a carrier strike force group commander during the Hamas attack on Israel in October 2023, Miguez faced several unintended logistics challenges when adversaries targeted maritime traffic and warships. His team had to set up and sustain logistics operations in a contested operational environment for eight months.

With help from the Navy's joint partners and combatant commanders, Miquez said, his team developed the necessary aviation and ground sustainment network to provide fuel, missiles, ordnance and subsistence to his sailors.

"The State Department weighed in, giving us the agility to do ordnance reloads in the Red Sea," he said. "This was a game changer, reducing the time I needed to reload ships and sustain the fight from roughly two weeks to five days."

DLA Director Army Lt. Gen. Mark Simerly said contested logistics requires DLA to project and protect capability at the same time. He also stressed the importance of working with the agency's strategic partners, the joint force and industry to accelerate integration.

"Our partners are essential for capability that we might require or we may be able to offer," he said. "All of our capability emanates from industry."

> – Alexandria Brimage-Gray, DLA Public Affairs

DLA HELPS ARMY DIVEST EQUIPMENT IN 'LIGHTNING PURGE'

Defense Logistics Agency employees in Hawaii recently helped the 25th Infantry Division complete a two-month property divestiture effort dubbed "Lightning Purge."

Nearly 5,000 items were added into the Army's Modernization Displacement and Repair Site at Schofield Barracks, and more than 1,500 were turned over to DLA Disposition Services at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

The Lightning Purge operation required a full team effort from the entire sustainment community across the island," said Walter Kramer, deputy to the commander of Army Field Support Battalion-Hawaii. "We absolutely would not have been able to maintain the necessary velocity for inductions without close partnership with DLA."

The Army's <u>Rapid Removal</u> of <u>Excess</u>, or R2E, began in late 2023 to expedite equipment modernization and readiness by allowing soldiers to turn in property as is at one of 14 MDRS. Lightning Purge was the first R2E in the Indo-Pacific region, and like the preceding campaigns, DLA Disposition Services was closely tied into the effort from the beginning.

Property disposal specialists Abel Castaneda, Melchor Bontog and Brett Fabre worked with the MDRS and units to prepare property for turn-in, and John Obuta and Randy Grigsby spearheaded DLA's material examining and receipt effort. The team took in hundreds of rolling stock items like Light Medium Tactical Vehicles and Humvees, plus mobile command centers, 20- and 40-foot shipping containers, drones, and varied electronics like desktop and laptop computers.

Sims said about 20% of the items turned in by the Army were destroyed through a mandatory demilitarization process. More than 100 items originally valued at about \$360,000 were requested by qualified reuse customers through DLA's Reutilization, Transfer and Donation program. Another roughly 100 line items originally valued at just over \$7 million cycled through DLA's RTD program and went toward commercial sales contracts that put money back in Defense Department coffers to help cover property and hazardous waste disposal costs.

"The Defense Logistics Agency at Pearl Harbor provided incomparable customer service throughout the equipment turn-in process for R2E," said Army Chief Warrant Officer 3 Patricia Washington, the material management officer-in-charge for the 25th Division Sustainment Brigade. "The site manager's coordination of crucial site visits was instrumental to our success, and their flexibility in rearranging their schedules to be able to accept our turn-ins for the following week were greatly appreciated."

> – Jake Joy, DLA Disposition Servicess Public Affairs

DLA NewsWire

AVIATION TEAM IMPROVES SUPPORT FOR MAINTENANCE DEPOTS

In the high-stakes world of aircraft maintenance, a missing part can mean the difference between a successful mission and a grounded aircraft. To combat this critical issue, the Defense Logistics Agency Aviation's Business Process Support Directorate's Industrial Support branch rolled out a revamped Retail SKU Supportability Tool.

The tool measures the overall health of DLA Aviation's retail Stock Keeping Units, prioritizing National Item Identification Numbers with gaps based on their impact on maintenance depots. Intended to serve as an independent validation of the supply chain planning parameters – developed through the industrial support lens – the RSST will be used to evaluate monthly demand planning outputs and ultimately eliminate empty shelves for planned items.

"Think of it as a crystal ball. But instead of predicting the future, it predicts potential part shortages and establishes a smoother workflow for maintenance depots," said senior analyst Joe Bloodworth.

While the previous system, called the RO Fill Rate, aimed to ensure part availability, complexities sometimes led to inaccuracies, resulting in parts not being available when needed. Recognizing the need for a more robust solution, the industrial support team refreshed its existing tool to become more predictive.

The enhanced version incorporates a new algorithm that analyzes historical data and service requirements to predict future part needs more accurately. This allows the RSST to function as an early warning system, alerting planners to potential shortages.

"The RSST goes beyond simply

identifying potential shortages. It delves into the root causes. This allows for targeted corrective action, addressing the issue at its source rather than simply reacting to its symptoms," Bloodworth said, adding that the RSST directly contributes to increased aircraft readiness and mission success.

The tool represents a significant step forward in DLA Aviation's mission to provide superior logistical support, Bloodworth added.

"The RSST is a decisionsupport capability," he said. "Insights obtained from this tool will serve the planning community and help them make data-driven decisions to improve the supply chain and anticipate [Industrial Support Activity and Air Logistics Center] requirements."

> – Dominique J. Shelton, DLA Aviation Public Affairs

AI TO BOOST EFFICIENCY, OPTIMIZE LOGISTICS SUPPORT AS DLA STANDARDIZES USE OF NEW TECH

Artificial intelligence is already empowering decisions across the Defense Logistics Agency, with over 55 models in various stages of production, testing and use in areas like demand planning and supply chain risk management, as of mid-March. Over 200 use cases are also exploring the power of AI to increase efficiency and analyze agency data.

AI adoption is expected to continue growing as DLA Information Operations' AI Center of Excellence provides oversight and governance for exploring how AI tools and technologies can improve processes, said Ruksana Lodi, DLA's AI officer. In addition to tracking all AI inventory throughout DLA, her team is establishing AI guidance, prioritizing use cases that further DLA's strategic goals, standardizing processes and more.

Ensuring AI systems and processes throughout DLA are

interoperable is key, Lodi said, especially when it comes to tasks like applying predictive analytics across multiple supply chains.

Tools like predictive analytics are expected to help the agency deliver better results and outcomes. They can also help employees plan smarter, faster logistics support by eliminating guesswork, she added.

In business-decision analytics, the agency is using a collection of models that perform tasks like assessing supplier risks. One tool automates the identification of vendors that could potentially supply counterfeit or overpriced items by looking at supplier behaviors, past performance and fraudulent activity patterns. Such assessments help DLA avoid unreliable vendors and reduce the chances of defective parts being used on critical defense systems, Lodi added.

Another AI model that focuses on long-term contracts at DLA

Aviation identifies where the agency can take more risks by ordering higher quantities, thereby increasing suppliers' interest in working with the government and strengthening the nation's defense industrial base.

The agency also <u>awarded three</u> contracts in November to support exploration of AI tools that will create reporting mechanisms for demand planning use cases, a customized chatbot app and virtual agents for acquisition business systems. Incorporating AI assets in business practices shows the agency is in lockstep with the private sector in harnessing emerging technology, Lodi said.

"Our director's focus is on ensuring we're ready, proactive and agile in this contested logistics environment, and the way to do that is to stay on par with industry and our competitors in terms of technology," she said. "If we don't, we'll be left behind."

> – Beth Reece, DLA Public Affairs

HOLISTIC HEALTH AND FITNESS STREAMLINING ACCESS TO EQUIPMENT



By Christian DeLuca DLA Troop Support Public Affairs

he Defense Logistics Agency Troop Support's construction and equipment supply chain is contributing to military readiness through the Holistic Health and Fitness program, or H2F, by streamlining access to commercial fitness supplies that support physical and mental preparedness across the services.

Customers can receive everything from astroturf to ice baths directly from vendors through DLA's long-term Army Combat Fitness Test contract.

"H2F allows our customers to order commercial, non-National Stock Numbered, fitness-related supplies via customer direct-delivery orders," contracting officer Matthew Eckenrode said, adding that vendors can fulfill a wide range of fitness needs. A turf floor purchased and installed in early 2025 through DLA Troop Support's Holistic Health and Fitness program displays the Army's 17th Artillery Field Brigade logo in a gym at Joint Base Lewis McChord, Washington. DLA's H2F program offers fitness supplies and equipment at competitive prices to military and federal organizations.

Although initially created to support warfighters, any federal agency can take advantage of this DLA contract.

Origins

In 2020, the Army began modernizing its approach to individual readiness and fitness, modeling its new program after the Special Forces and professional and collegiate athletic training programs.

The goal is to maximize individual performance on and off the battlefield by providing soldiers with the proper resources and education regarding their health and fitness. The H2F program focuses on five readiness domains: physical, mental, nutrition, sleep and spiritual.

"H2F is helping us change the culture of fitness in the United States Army. We've seen improvements to soldier readiness and overall health because of H2F," Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Weimer said on the H2F website.

This aligns with Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth's push to improve physical fitness, body composition and grooming throughout the military branches. In a March 12 news release, Hegseth spoke about the importance of having a fit and healthy fighting force.

"High standards are what made the United States military the greatest fighting force on the planet. The strength of our military is our unity and our shared purpose," he said. "We must remain vigilant in maintaining the standards that enable the men and women of our military to protect the American people and our homeland as the world's most lethal and effective fighting force."

Built for Warfighters

Launched in June 2024, DLA's H2F program falls under the already established ACFT contract, which supports the Army's annual physical fitness testing. Eckenrode said the program is a perfect fit for the construction and equipment supply chain.

"The DLA H2F Program came to be from the C&E director of supplier operations, Tom Page," Eckenrode said. "He saw that our warfighter customers have a critical need to remain in top physical and mental condition. After careful consideration, it was determined that C&E would be best suited to run a program dedicated to health and wellness."

More than 30 orders have been processed for customers worldwide since August 2024. The vendor stays in contact with customers and DLA Troop Support throughout the process and until delivery. Eckenrode said anything with a part number that falls under the fitness umbrella is available, from saunas and treadmills to weights and gym flooring. Customers can also customize equipment by adding logos, crests or other unique branding to items.

How It Works

"We designed the process to be as easy as possible for customers," said Kate Turner, chief of construction and equipment's customer operations branch. "The customer simply sends a request for [a price] quote. From there, we confirm scope, connect the customer to the vendor, a quote is issued, funding is provided to DLA, the award is made, and the vendor delivers the product."

The vendor uses its buying power and contracts to give the customer competitive prices, Eckenrode added. "Working with the vendor, they get better pricing than is commercially available," he said. "All the negotiations and contracting work is done beforehand, so the customer can say this is what I want and here is the money for it."

A Resounding "Yes"

Customers have given positive feedback.

"Our experience ordering with the vendor and the DLA H2F contract was extremely easy and very professional," said Susanne Koch Craig, holistic health and fitness director for the Army's 17th Field Artillery Brigade. "Within just a few months, we had a high-quality performance training floor installed in our facility. We got the product we wanted within our price range."

Editor's Note: For more information on the program or to request a price quote, email trpspt_hr2fitness@dla.mil.



A hip press machine purchased March 2025 through the Defense Logistics Agency's Holistic Health Fitness program sits ready to be used at an Army Special Operations Command gym. DLA's H2F program offers commercial, part-numbered fitness supplies and equipment at competitive prices to military and federal organizations.

I AN DLA

My name is:

Terrance Taylor

I am:

A customer support representative for DLA Land and Maritime at Norfolk Naval Station, Virginia.

Describe your job in a sentence:

I serve as an on-site representative for DLA Land and Maritime Naval Customer Operations, supporting our East Coast customers. I provide logistics assistance, technical expertise and training to U.S. military and civilian agencies receiving logistics support and services from DLA.

How long have you worked at DLA?

I began working at DLA in June 2008.

What is your favorite thing about working for DLA?

As a retired Navy sailor and former customer of DLA myself, I love the fact that I can still be an integral part of the team. Supporting the very customers who directly impact the freedoms we enjoy every day is an incredible feeling. My customers are on the front lines making things happen every day. It's an awesome feeling knowing that DLA has afforded this retired sailor the opportunity to play a role in impacting the mission and preserving freedom.

What are your best memories of working here?

My best memories are visiting the ships and speaking with sailors. Hosting employees from Columbus, Ohio, during visits at customer sites provides them an opportunity to visit the ships and shore commands in Norfolk to get a better idea of what a sailor's life is like, how they live and what their customers do daily. Seeing an aircraft carrier, submarine, amphibious assault ship, guided missile destroyer or an F/A-18 Super Hornet fighter jet for the first time up close is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Our teammates go back home better prepared and equipped having had that experience.

How do you make a difference?

I view myself as a mosaic of all the experiences that I have accumulated during my career. Using my good and bad experiences as a sailor has shaped me into the best customer service representative my customers have or will ever come across. What my customers do is very important, and giving them anything less than my very best would be letting the team down.



TerranceTaylor

Terrance Taylor, a Defense Logistics Agency customer support representative for DLA Land and Maritime, left, checks food quality with Chanita Darville, a DLA customer logistics site specialist at Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia, April 30, 2024.

