



# DLA's Expeditionary unit, the first 100

*By Paul Plevich and Stacy Umstead, DLA Distribution*

For any organization, military or civilian, meeting the first 100-day milestone can be both monumental and historic. For DLA's Expeditionary unit it has been just that. The unit, currently serving in Kandahar, Afghanistan, deployed in July with a mission to stand up a distribution capability to receive, store and issue DLA materiel needed by U.S. military forces located in country.

DLA Distribution received the official order to establish expeditionary capability forward in Kandahar, Afghanistan in February 2010. "For this deployment to succeed many moving parts had to come together," said United States Army Reserve Lt. Col. William D. Stratton, DLA Distribution Expeditionary commander.

Soon after the order was received, plans for personnel, equipment, transportation, and construction of the in-country distribution capability began. Key to the evolution and planning was the ability of the expeditionary staff to cope with different modes of transportation and divergent timelines to move equipment overseas, account for personnel receiving pre-deployment training and medical clearances, and ultimately planning to provide for life support in Kandahar.

"Preparing to meet this challenge, meant close coordination with the Defense Logistics Agency Support Team-Afghanistan early on to determine how the team could identify the various entities and issues at Kandahar in order to pave the way to acquire the distribution facility site, work through the permit phase, enter the contracting arena, and identify life support options," said Stratton.

In preparation for their deployment, the 42-person team was identified and activated in early May. Civilians, from distribution centers in New Cumberland, Pa., Texarkana, Texas, and Tracy, Calif., attended intense training sessions at the Unit Deployment Center in Winchester, Va., operated by the Army Corps of Engineers. There, the employees completed pre-deployment certification and theater-specific training, met medical qualification requirements and received uniforms and equipment.

Heavy equipment, vehicles, shelters, Nestainers and pallets containing stock materiel for both air and surface modes of shipment were processed and subsequently shipped to the expeditionary unit's destination.

The team participated in a Rehearsal of Concept, or ROC, drill along with key senior DLA Distribution leaders and staff.

The ROC drill outlined the detailed plans for the incipient distribution capability.

Early May also found the initial liaison element of DLA Distribution Expeditionary deploying to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, ahead of the main body. There, they met with DLA Distribution Kuwait, Southwest Asia and DLA Support Team-Kuwait personnel, Army logistics and transportation personnel, and contractors who would be key players providing assistance in moving the air-shipped equipment from Kuwait to Afghanistan.

Additionally, meetings were conducted with DLA Disposition Services representatives to identify and requisition potential supplies for the arriving team which had been turned in by the military.

In late May, more Expeditionary liaison officers arrived in Afghanistan to begin the on-site preparations to establish the distribution capability. They met with North Atlantic Treaty Organization and U.S. military entities involved in Afghanistan operations, observed the contractor's work on the distribution facility site and ultimately welcomed the next three waves of Expeditionary unit team members.

The team began receiving and taking possession of their equipment moving into

# days—meeting the challenge

Afghanistan via air and truck.

By mid July, all Expeditionary personnel had arrived in theater. The Distribution Operations Center, communications suite, and Distribution Standard System, or DSS, support tents were put in place. Container loads of material had been received and processed into stock where it remains in shipping containers serving as warehouses.

Heavy equipment, Material Handling Equipment, light towers and generators were tested and put into operation. Force protection and life support were put in place to include, bunkers, housing, meals, laundry, fuel, bottled water, and latrines.

A significant milestone for DLA Distribution Expeditionary occurred on July 28 – the expeditionary unit received the first Materiel Release Orders, or MROs, and processed the requisitions for supplies needed by the warfighting forces.

Late August marked 100 days from the time of their initial deployment. The Expeditionary unit is currently performing all warehouse functions in a harsh austere environment; receiving, stowing, issuing, packing, and preparing materiel for transportation.

By positioning DLA Distribution Expeditionary in country, a

conservative estimate indicates a 33 percent in reduction in sustainment airlift in Afghanistan.

Long term plans call for a more permanent warehouse in Afghanistan. \$20 million in military construction has already been approved for the warehouse and award for the project expected in the near future.



**In Kandahar, Afghanistan, DLA's expeditionary disposition team loads cargo onto a host-nation truck for transport to warfighters.**



**DLA Distribution Expeditionary operates 24/7.**



**Equipment for DLA's expeditionary depot is loaded onto a plane for transport to Afghanistan.**