



Meet the new DLA Distribution commander – United States Navy Supply Corps Rear Adm. Thomas C. Traaen

By Stacy L. Umstead, DLA Distribution Public Affairs

United States Navy Supply Corps Rear Adm. Thomas C. Traaen assumed command of DLA Distribution on June 25 and is responsible for a global storage and distribution network managing inventory valued in excess of \$98 billion through fixed and deployable infrastructure and expeditionary personnel. DLA Distribution operates 25 distribution facilities around the world to include deployable capability, with more than 10,000 civilian, military, reservists and contractors.

Traaen is a native of Gig Harbor, Wash. He earned his commission through the Navy ROTC program graduating from the University of Washington in 1982. He holds a Masters Degree in Business Administration from the University of Georgia and obtained an Executive Master of Business Administration from Duke.

His sea duty assignments include duty as supply officer, USS Lewis & Clark (SSBN 644) Blue crew homeported in Charleston, S.C.; stock control officer, USS Simon Lake (AS 33) forward deployed to Holy Loch, Scotland and supply officer USS Tarawa (LHA 1) where he led logistics efforts during Operation Determined Response and the recovery efforts of the USS Cole (DDG 67). He is qualified as both a Submarine Warfare and Aviation Supply Corps Officer.

Shore assignments include duty as the trident outfitting officer, priority requirements officer and database management officer, Polariss Material Office, US Atlantic Fleet, Charleston, S.C.; Flag aide and P-3

weapon systems manager, Naval Aviation Supply Office, Philadelphia, Pa.; Business and financial manager for the Tomahawk Cruise Missile Program, Command and Control Project Office PMA-281, commander, Naval Air Systems Command, Arlington, Va.; head shore detailer and director Detailing Division, Office of Supply Corps Personnel, Arlington, Va.; Executive officer, Fleet and Industrial Supply Center, Yokosuka, Japan; Director Fleet Supply, Commander U.S. Pacific Fleet, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; and deputy commander for Fleet Logistics Operations, Naval Supply Systems Command, Mechanicsburg, Pa.

His flag officer assignments include assignment as chief of staff, Logistics, Fleet Supply and Ordnance, Commander United States Pacific Fleet Pearl Harbor, Hawaii and vice director for Logistics The Joint Staff where he served as the Joint Staff liaison officer to USAID during Operation Unified Response.

His decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit (three awards), Meritorious Service Medal (five awards), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (four awards), Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (two awards), and various unit awards. He was the recipient of the 2005 Vice Adm. Stanley R. Arthur Award for Military Logistician of the Year.

With a stellar Naval resume, Traaen becomes the first Naval officer to command DLA Distribution. The following provides a little insight into the new commanding officer:

Q: Command tour at DLA Distribution is two years. In addition to commanding DLA Distribution,



the US Central Command selected you to deploy for six months to command the Central Command Deployment and Distribution Operations Center located at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. What are you looking forward to most while serving in this dual capacity?

A: Being both the DLA Distribution commander and the CDDOC commander provides me the unique opportunity to bring supply together with distribution which will allow me to work on optimizing the CENTCOM Supply Chain. It also allows me to talk directly with the three major stakeholders, CENTCOM, DLA and TRANSCOM to ensure we are positioning ourselves for future operations in the CENTCOM AOR. We need to ensure we are building our logistics systems to allow the Joint Force Commander Freedom in the battle space.

Q: While serving at the CDDOC, you will have your finger on the pulse of the movement of all materiel and personnel throughout the Middle East, what challenges do you foresee as the drawdown of Iraq and the buildup of Afghanistan continues?

A: First, we need to ensure that the draw down continues to progress

successfully. The theater has done a stellar job of moving both personnel and material out of Iraq. We can't solely focus on the draw down, we will still have Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines in this theater and we will need to remain vigilant about the support we provide. Additionally, the Department of State will commence deploying to Iraq and we need to ensure we are supporting them as required. In terms of our efforts in Afghanistan our Deployable Depot will be a force multiplier in supporting our forces, particularly given how fragile our ground lines of communication can become. We also need to think through how we reverse our supply chain to retrograde material given that, like Iraq, we will draw the force down at some point. Finally, we need to determine if DLA Distribution Kuwait, Southwest Asia is positioned properly to provide optimal distribution services in the future.

Q: Your most recent tour was as Vice Director of Logistics on the Joint Staff working for United States Army Lt. Gen. Kathleen Gainey who previously served as DDC Commander. What advice, or guidance, has she provided you?

A: Working on the Joint Staff was one of the most rewarding professional experiences I have had. Lieutenant General Gainey, as most of you know is a great leader, a terrific mentor and most of all a true educator...she taught me a lot about Joint Logistics. She told me that the workforce across the DLA Distribution Enterprise was the best, bar none, based on my very short time in command I couldn't agree with her more. I want to ensure we continue to develop our people as we look to become more efficient about our business...I think our people know how to do this, we need to give them the tools to continue to move forward. I took a trip to DLA Distribution Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and held a town hall which

was a great experience for me. The Oklahoma employees are working on several process improvement teams aimed at improving work flow that are not as efficient as they could be.

Q: How has your position at the Joint Staff prepared you for your assignment(s)?

A: Lieutenant General Gainey has written a Joint Logistics Concept, formally known as the Joint Logistics White Paper. It is a vision of what Joint logistics should look like in the period 8 to 20 years in the future. Since DLA has a major stake in how we deliver logistics support in the future, my participation in developing this concept gives me great insight into where we need to go in the future to meet the tenants of this concept.

Q. Earlier this year, the Secretary of Defense signed a Request for Forces requesting DLA send its expeditionary depot to Kandahar, Afghanistan – a historical moment for DLA. What will be the key to their success?

A: There is no doubt in my mind that from a DLA Distribution Enterprise perspective the team of our experts will perform admirably, they are in Kandahar and all reports indicate they are on track for a 31 July start-up. To measure success we need to go back to the tenants of Perfect Order Fulfillment...the right material, at the right place, at the right time. The key to success is stock positioning. If we can meet our POF goals and reduce customer wait time we will be successful. A secondary order of affect will be to reduce the requirement for Strategic airlift; the goal here is to reduce this requirement by 35%.

Q: Throughout your career, there's no doubt that you have seen and experienced changes in military logistics. What changes do you wish to see in the future in order to sustain our military readiness?

A: What differentiates us from

commercial industry is the ability to capture and analyze data. Industry has agile information systems that allow them to adjust quickly to market demand; we need to build our information systems in the same manner. Also, we need to be better at analyzing our logistics readiness and displaying it through a Common Operating Picture, something we were working on while I was on the Joint staff.

Q: Can you expand upon your philosophy...Common Purpose, Unity of Thinking, Unity of Effort?

A: The DLA Distribution enterprise is made up of thousands of people and millions of moving parts. We make a difference to the Warfighter and we need to be singularly focused on this mission. To get our Enterprise aligned, we need Common Purpose... Warfighter support. To provide unparalleled customer service we need unity of effort, and thought... everyone pulling on the oar at the same time and in the same direction. We should have open dialogue, but once we pick the preferred course of action we need to all align and move out.

Q: What would you like people to know about you?

A: We are a nation at war, our troops depend on us every day, whether we are providing parts to the industrial base for equipment reset, or delivering material to a Forward Operating Base, In CENTCOM or in PACOM or to the people in Haiti during a HA/DR mission. I take what we do seriously as I know each of you do...let's ensure we are providing the best service we possibly can

Q: Always a question when you take command in Central Pa., Steelers, Eagles or Ravens?

A: Seahawks