

UNITY OF PURPOSE, UNITY OF EFFORT, UNITY OF THOUGHT – AN UPDATE FROM THE DLA DISTRIBUTION COMMANDER



Greetings from Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. As many of you know, I have been under Individual Augmentation orders as the Director of Central Command's Deployment and Distribution Operations Center. I left DLA Distribution Headquarters on the 31st of July and conducted a Transfer of Authority with Major General McMahon on the 2nd of August. Over the past six weeks, I have gained an appreciation for how dynamic the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility (AOR) is and the role DLA is playing to provide logistics support to our Warfighters. DLA Distribution, in particular, is playing a significant role both in terms of providing CLASS IX support from our Distribution Centers in Kuwait, Bahrain and now in Kandahar, Afghanistan as well as having a team of dedicated folks at Camp Taji, Iraq that are working with our Iraqi counterparts to assist with the standup of their national logistics facility. I was fortunate to be able to spend the better portion of a day

with our team and I believe each will tell you that they are having the experience of a lifetime. Their morale is high, camaraderie solid and their technical capability was truly appreciated by the Iraqi Army. They are making a very noticeable difference...their effort is well respected by the host nation, they are recognized as true professionals in their field and I am extremely proud of all they have done. When they return to their home station they should be greeted as the American Heroes they are. They have earned my deepest respect, BZ to all of them for volunteering to move forward and on a job well done.

I also want to recognize our team performing distribution at the Kandahar Air Facility; their efforts have significantly changed the logistics infrastructure in Afghanistan for the better. These 40 folks have hit the deck running and they haven't stopped yet. I have not had the opportunity to get to Kandahar to see them, but

by all accounts they too have high morale, have seized together as a team and are truly making a difference for the Warfighter. As many of you know, Kandahar is in the middle of perhaps the largest Taliban strong hold in Afghanistan and the base comes under frequent attacks. The Expeditionary unit has become a huge enabler for a number of reasons, most notably reduction in strategic air lift, providing parts support across the country and will be expanded in the very near future. BZ to the Kandahar team for all they are doing to support DLA's mission of being America's combat logistics provider of choice. *(Continued on next page.)*

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I would like to take a moment and recognize the families and significant others of our forward deployed teammates, they are the real unsung heroes that are minding the home front, day in and day, out while their loved ones are forward. Because of what they do our folks are able to focus on the mission at hand. It takes a real team effort on both fronts to ensure success of mission and to keep families and relationships strong over this period of separation. Let's not forget to reach out to those who are forward and to those who are left behind and remind them of our support.

I also had the opportunity to travel with Colonel Vern Beatty (DLA Distribution, Kuwait) to Bahrain to perform the ribbon cutting ceremony for DLA Distribution Kuwait, Bahrain Detachment. This is a wonderful facility with lots of capability and capacity; it was an honor and privilege for me to attend and participate. The real benefactors of this capability will be Naval Forces Central Command and our maritime forces along with the Army who have several weapon systems in Bahrain ensuring our safety.

Also, thanks to each of you who are serving in other overseas locations and throughout the United States who are keeping the industrial

bases fired up as well as supporting our effort from afar. Each of you is making a difference; the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines I talk to are very aware of your support and appreciate all that you are doing to make their life easier. We are making a difference.

Prior to my departure for Kuwait, I had the pleasure of visiting our distribution centers in Oklahoma City and Hill, Utah. In each case, I was able to hold town hall meetings and was impressed with the passion for the work that we do. I appreciated the open, honest dialogue and hearing about the topics we discussed; each is now being addressed to make working conditions better. Please know that my number one priority is the safety of our workforce, if you see something that isn't right please report it so we can get it fixed. I have asked each Director/Commander to transmit to me, in their weekly update, what is making their head hurt and I am getting exactly what I wanted; Mr. Brad Bellis is now onboard and is leading the headquarters effort to take these "head hurters" for action and correct them...he is off to a quick start. I will get out to see each of you over the course of the remainder of my tenure as the DLA Distribution Commander. I look forward to having the opportunity to see you all and learn about your operation.

We delivered our PLFA review to the Director of DLA, Vice Admiral

Thompson, on the 29th of July, it was definitely a three run homer. I suspect with a little effort across the breadth of the Distribution Enterprise, we can hit a grand slam next year. The review was really a summary of your efforts and all the hard work you accomplished over the last year. Thanks to each of you for all you have done. As many of you know the Secretary of Defense has asked us to look for savings that we can transfer out of the "tail" (support) and put into the "tooth" (war fighting capability). We need to focus on our processes to ensure we are as lean and efficient as we can be. As I mentioned in my welcome remarks back in June, we are very effective, but it is now time to enhance our effectiveness with efficiencies that allow us to continue our work at more affordable rates.

We are on track with our efforts to build a strategic plan to align our efforts with the Director's Strategic vision and annual guidance. Mr. Scott Rosbaugh has been leading this effort so if you have input, please pass it along. My intention is to brief our plan to the headquarters and then deliver it at a Commander's conference I will host in New Cumberland shortly after my return.

Thanks for all you do...keep charging

Stay Safe,
RDML Tom Traaen

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