

Distribution network alignment strategies and support to U.S. Afghanistan forces; DDC deputy commander provides senior military logisticians an in-depth look at DLA and its leading distribution center

By Stacy L. Umstead, DDC Public Affairs

Senior Executive Service member, William H. Budden, deputy commander for the Defense Distribution Center, returned to the United States Air Force Institute of Technology, or AFIT, Dayton, Ohio, recently as a guest speaker providing Senior Distribution Executive Development Seminar attendees an overview of the Defense Logistics Agency's mission and highlighting DDC's support to the Warfighter as U.S. Forces increase in Afghanistan

Class attendees, senior logisticians from throughout the military services, learned first-hand DLA's mission of supplying critical resources to the nation's military services and civilian agencies. The briefing included DLA's focus areas, organizational alignment and scope of support.

"DLA is the Department of Defense's integrated end-to-end supply chain manager," said Budden as he addressed the class. "DLA works closely with the military services throughout the acquisition process, ensuring requirements are met."

"In addition, we also provide storage and warehouse management for items required by the Services. DDC coordinates movement of items directly with vendors or in partnership with the United States Transportation Command to ensure on time delivery," continued Budden. "To facilitate that end-to-end process, DLA's responsibilities continue with stock positioning at forward locations and tactical distribution to enable faster delivery to the customer --A short way to sum up the chain is that DLA is a key enabler to the 'Factory to Foxhole' concept."

As DDC's deputy commander for 25 distribution centers worldwide, Budden further explained DLA's lead center for distribution's role in supporting the Warfighter and its engagement with combatant commands, as well as outlining DDC's distribution network alignment strategies. "DDC is working with military components, ensuring correct balance of inventory levels, positioning of stock and the capabilities of the distribution pipeline," said Budden.

"Key to supporting the Warfighters around the world, DDC's distribution network has the ability to expand to meet surge requirements or to support distributed forces in an anti-access environment," added Budden.

The main topic of discussion with the logistician was DLA's support to the increasing number of forces in Afghanistan, "A key to DLA and DDC's success is early and continuous engagement," said Budden. "We worked months in advance to preposition items for troops deployed. DLA has had support teams on the ground in Afghanistan and at the United States Central Command working alongside the war planners to ensure we get the Warfighters what they need. We continue to work closely with CENTCOM and U.S. Forces Afghanistan as we prepare for increased presence."

Budden highlighted the capabilities of DDC's deployable distribution center, which will play a key role in supporting Afghanistan operations, "DDC is deploying our Distribution Expeditionary Depot to Kandahar this summer," said Budden, "This will improve access to parts and increase readiness support as the U.S. increases

its presence there. We will have the capability to receive, store and issue materiel needed by our Warfighters, right in country," concluded Budden.

Budden's return to AFIT and his discussion with senior logisticians was well received. The students enjoyed hearing a senior leader perspective about DLA and DDC and asked some challenging questions. The DDC deputy commander thoroughly enjoyed the interaction with the academic students, "They did, in fact, ask lots of challenging questions but it was a blast. I learned as much from them, as I am sure I gave them things to think about!"

DDC has participated in the AFIT's logistics curriculum for the last five years.

The AFIT Senior Distribution Executive Development Seminar provides senior distribution executives with the latest developments in national policies, management techniques, and the new technologies affecting the transportation and physical distribution disciplines. The seminar emphasizes national policies and their impact on Air Force distribution activities, current theories and techniques regarding human and physical resources management, state-of-the-art developments in the transportation field and new productivity improvement initiatives.

In addition, the seminar increases student's understanding of both military and commercial physical distribution systems and provides insight into the motivation and strategies employed by the commercial distribution industry. Teaching methods include discussions, guest lectures, and onsite tours of transportation and distribution facilities.