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DLA Disposition Services

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Logistics information activity celebrates its golden anniversary

By Public Affairs

Fifty years ago, just over a tenth of the Armed Forces Supply Support Center's 469 employees made the move from our nation's capital to America's cereal capital after the Defense Logistics Agency created the forerunner of the DLA Logistics Information Service known as the Defense Logistics Services Center.

News accounts related that the rest of AFSSC's employees had failed to see the opportunity offered by the transition.

"Some men swore and a few women wept in Washington ... when word broke out that their office was moving to Battle Creek and their lives might be disrupted." The Battle Creek City Commission tried to help accentuate the positive aspects through "Operation Welcome" as commissioners travelled to Washington in an effort to allay fears and help people transition to the Midwest.

Advance elements arrived in mid-1962, and soon many local citizens applied for the opportunity to work for the new center. Special classes in data processing work were arranged at Kellogg Community College to train the applicants in skills they would need. The original mission of DLSC was to manage the Federal Catalog System and standardize the item names among the military services. The command has continuously pursued ways to harness logistics information, making it easier for customers to access and use as well as enhancing its accuracy. Each new wave of technology has been exploited to make Federal Catalog System data more readily available through new mediums and item names easier to create and disseminate. From the 1960s through today, DLA employees in Battle Creek have led a continuing evolution that began with the transition from paper-based item information guides to microfilm and on to digital information systems.

Additionally, there was also a mission to manage the Defense Department's surplus sales program and a program to recycle usable equipment called the utilization program. In 1971, a congressional commission recommended that all aspects of military property disposal should be centralized in order to improve accountability. The Defense Property Disposal Service was created in 1972, assuming the surplus sales and utilization missions. DPDS also assumed management of more than 300 U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force property disposal offices at installations around the world. The service was renamed the Defense Reutilization and Marketing Service (now known as DLA Disposition Services) in 1985. It is a separate DLA field activity today, but it still receives support from DLA Logistics Information Service in its field communications, information systems and the review and updating of demilitarization codes essential to the proper disposal of dangerous or sensitive equipment.

During 1998, the center was renamed the Defense Logistics Information Service to reflect the command's increased use of information technology to help customers manage their logistics needs. The year also saw the beginning of the Defense Department's streamlining process to consolidate most defense-related cataloging operations in Battle Creek. The Air Force was the first to consolidate its cataloging functions with DLIS. Gradually, the rest of the services followed suit until the consolidation was completed in fiscal 2000.

The organization had more than doubled in size to employ about 900 people and managed logistics information for supply items used by the U.S. government, NATO, and other foreign governments. The role DLIS plays in administering the Federal Catalog System was ideal for working with other countries since the NATO Codification System strives to mirror the FCS as a single cataloging system with a uniform identification for all military supplies, providing economical, efficient and effective supply management for millions of supply items.

Long before continuous process improvement became popular, the workforce has used its talents to continually find ways to offer innovative products and services like FED LOG to take a popular disc-based, logistics data product online. They also created new ways to track requisitions that led to today's Asset Visibility program. They have steadily been transforming the Federal Logistics Information Service and are about to unveil a new look for DOD EMALL that will make it even more comparable to private sector sites.

With the announcement of the "We Are DLA" initiative, the last name change occurred in July 2010 as the DLA Logistics Information Service title became official. The last few years have seen the employees here continue their legacy of providing help and information to DLA customers as a top priority. While managed by the DLA Logistics Information Service, the Customer Interaction Center



Defense Supply Agency Director Army Lt. Gen. Andrew McNamara visits during February 1963 for the official dedication ceremony of the Defense Logistics Services Center.

has been answering questions about all DLA services since 2007.

"The members of our Customer Operations Directorate take their responsibilities very seriously," said Randy Young, Customer Operations director. Our employees know that they are representing the whole agency and that warfighters and other DLA customers depend on them for the right information."

During 2012, they added to that mission with the introduction of an Enterprise Help Desk that will soon be managing all information technology user requests for help across the agency. They are also assisting DLA Disposition Services as it completes the modernization of its information systems through the Reutilization Business Integration initiative. Through RBI, older legacy systems like the DRMS Automated Information System, better known as "DAISY," have been replaced with current DLA Enterprise Business System applications.

For more information on today's DLA Logistics Information Service products and services, please visit <http://www.logisticsinformationservice.dla.mil/>