

Q&A with Naval Supply Systems Command

Seapower magazine interviews Vice Commander Kurt J. Wendelken

What are the roles of the Naval Supply Systems Command?

1. NAVSUP and the Supply Corps conduct and enable supply chain, acquisition, operational logistics and Sailor & family care activities with our mission partners to generate readiness and sustain naval forces worldwide to prevent and decisively win wars.

How is the era of great power competition affecting NAVSUP's roles and responsibilities?

1. As Navy's end-to-end supply chain integrator, NAVSUP is working hard to maximize efficiencies and effectiveness in Navy's supply chains. One major initiative is Naval Sustainment System-Supply (NSS-S). Naval Sustainment System (NSS) is a combination of commercial best practices, process improvements, governance and oversight to maximize efficiencies and effectiveness within available means. NSS-Supply embraces industry best practices tailored for specific Navy needs and fleet operations in order to reduce maintenance turnaround times, increase end-to-end velocity of spares, repairs, and reduce costs.

Why does the Navy's supply chain need the transformation of the Naval Sustainment System-Supply?

1. NSS-Supply seeks to strengthen Navy's supply chain in order to increase readiness, thus enhancing combat

capability and creating a model of sustainment that will allow the Navy to effectively generate readiness and sustain global navy power.

How does NAVSUP fit in the Navy's push for more distributed maritime operations and in the Marine Corps' expeditionary advance base operations?

1. Combined with the most robust, end-to-end logistics doctrine that the world has ever seen, NAVSUP provides uninterrupted (despite contested environment) supply chain management, bulk and aviation fueling capability, material handling equipment, contracting, hazardous material management, household goods and vehicle processing and postal operations to fleet, installation and other service components throughout every area of operations.

How will management of the supply chain be more integrated and streamlined with the warfighting commands?

1. By extension, NSS-Supply embraces industry best practices tailored for specific Navy needs and fleet operations in order to reduce maintenance turnaround times, increase end-to-end velocity of spares, repairs, and reduce costs.

What major segments of the supply chain are not owned by NAVSUP? How does the Defense Logistics Agency's roles compare with those of NAVSUP?

1. NAVSUP and the Supply Corps conduct and enable service specific supply chain, acquisition, operational logistics, and Sailor & family care activities with our mission partners to generate readiness and sustain naval

forces worldwide to prevent and decisively win wars. The Defense Logistics Agency is the DoD executive agent for specific classes of supply that are common across the military services like food, fuel, construction material, and medical supplies. They also provide extensive warehousing services across DoD.

What are the current challenges that NAVSUP faces with the defense industry in executing the supply chain?

1. Executing an effective naval supply chain is increasingly challenging, in part due to the Defense Department's pressure on industry to become lean. We now face raw material shortages, weapon systems obsolescence, a shrinking skilled labor pool, excessive acquisition lead times, and a dwindling sub vendor base with a heavy reliance on sole source vendors. Maintaining our current warfighting edge requires better collaboration and transparency with industry. We need to invest in sustainment up front, consider where prepositioning materials makes sense, and work better to reverse the current trends deteriorating material lead times.

What new technologies look promising in aiding NAVSUP in streamlining the supply chain?

1. NAVSUP manages Navy's globally distributed, highly complex, and increasingly digital supply chains. LOG IT and Supply Chain systems are critical enablers in generating and sustaining readiness. NAVSUP is proactively taking steps to deliver modern digital solutions that support real-time operations to include system modernization, leveraging internet of things (IOT) technology and machine learning/artificial intelligence to improve asset visibility.

What can be done to expand competition among suppliers?

1. NAVSUP contracting offices attempt to enhance competition through early outreach in an effort to identify as many potential sources as possible. The use of Industry Days is also a popular method among NAVSUP contracting offices for specific types of procurements, such as ship repair or husbanding. These are established days where potential sources are invited to attend and learn as NAVSUP provides guidance on doing business with the government. This is a way to ease private sector concerns and generate interest.

What can the defense industry do to help the Navy improve its supply chain?

1. Just as the Navy has incorporated a "Get Real, Get Better" mantra, so we ask industry to embrace the same. We are all working towards a collective goal of supporting national defense, and it is imperative to operate with transparency and honesty, not distrust. Short-term, be accurate with contract schedules and deliver on time in accordance with contractual commitments. Increase the number and scope of strategic contracts to help offset material, labor, and financial stressors. Long-term, deepen the partnership with the Navy to create a more effective sustainment environment earlier in weapons system development. With more agility and cooperation, we can identify, plan, and overcome supply chain barriers to better support our fleet, which is the ultimate goal.