Leaders discuss logistics modernization at FISC Yokosuka

By H. Sam Samuelson, FISC Yokosuka Office of Corporate Communication

Vice Commander of Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP) John Goodhart and Deputy Commander of Commander Fleet and Industrial Supply Centers (COMFISCS) Bill Bickert teamed up to talk logistics modernization at Fleet Industrial Supply Center (FISC) Yokosuka, Japan, Jan. 13.

"We at Navy Supply (Systems Command) have essentially reached two horizons," said Goodhart in a cultural nod to his presence in Japan. "The sun is setting on many of the ideas and systems we've relied on for decades; but it is rising in terms of modern opportunities, initiatives and processes that will ensure we successfully navigate our future through a challenging landscape of fiscal uncertainty.

"Right now, our leadership in Washington is scrutinizing funding for the military 'tooth to tail,'" Goodhart explained. "I think we can anticipate those cuts to be one-third 'tooth' – force structure – and two-thirds 'tail.' 'Tail' translates to infrastructure. And Navy Supply is infrastructure."

Goodhart's spotlight on the Navy fiscal picture helped underscore the current focus and strategic priorities of NAVSUP.

"Delivering basic business is 'job one,'" he said. "That's the message we want to send to our fleet and shore customers: our commitment to delivering quality products and services, to upgrade our systems and advance policies that help us continue quality logistics management and services while achieving the necessary efficiencies."

One initiative adopted by FISC Yokosuka – and of interest to NAVSUP and COMFISCS leadership – is the recent establishment of a headquarters logistics cell, to bring down port costs.

"When we hear from the customers in the fleet, we hear them loud and clear: port costs are too high," said Bickert.

"We're excited about what FISC Yokosuka is doing to explore regionalizing husbanding services in the 7th Feet region and performing analyses of the costs."

The dedicated logistics cell of FISC Yokosuka was established to provide both market and cost analysis and make fair and reasonable determinations to help rein in costs.

"It's a brilliant concept and one we intend to develop and roll out to our other FISCs," Bickert said.

Goodhart added that Navy Supply had already taken other steps to implement more efficient logistics across the board. For example, Navy Supply is deep into the second phase of adopting Enterprise Resource Planning, or ERP, to modernize Navy Supply chain management using commercial best business practices.

In a nutshell, ERP is based on commercially successful, German-engineered, all-in-one total business management software solution.

"Using ERP, we have and continue to replace multiple, disparate systems, some almost half-a-century old, with 21st century software used by the top Fortune 50 companies," Goodhart said. "We're finally bidding farewell to costly, antiquated legacy systems and welcoming next generation business software."

(Left) John Goodhart, Vice Commander of Naval Supply Systems Command; Cmdr. Karen Little, Fleet and Industrial Supply Center (FISC) Yokosuka regional services director; Bill Frazier, FISC regional services deputy director; and Bill Bickert, deputy commander of FISC, take part in a a Japanese New Year mochi-pounding welcome celebration Jan. 11. Goodhart and Bickert visited FISC Yokosuka to talk logistics modernization Jan. 13.

U.S. Navy photo

Both Goodhart and Bickert discussed near-future Navy fleet modernization that will continue to impact all FISCs.

"The Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) represents what we think will be a seismic sea change in how we support the fleet altogether," Bickert said. "Have you seen an LCS? They're almost the size of a frigate. But, where frigates had compliments of about 75 supply staff, only five will report aboard each LCS crew."

Currently the Navy operates two LCSs in its inventory, both sharing three rotating crews. Eventually, about 50 LCSs will compliment the Navy, comprising about 20 percent of the fleet. Each with a bare bones supply staff.

"You can see we're going to need to build a playbook that ensures we can quarterback the deployment of an LCS from its homeport to the supply support structure from its homeport to wherever it deploys," he said.

"And, when you consider the number of LCS hulls and the design-nature of the platform – to make excursions into the littorals – you can imagine some of the locations that will have a lighter support infrastructure."

According to Bickert, re-configuring logistics planning for LCS doesn't stop with the LCS.

"We'll be exploring the same kind of choreography with the next generation guided-missile destroyers (DDG 1000) and carriers (CVX)," he said. "The bottom line is, for these new platforms, we – Navy Supply or FISCs – will be their 'supply staff' providing services ashore."

The solutions to these near-future challenges, according to Goodhart and Bickert, lie with the full adoption of ERP and commitment to efficiency and affordability.

"Focus on efficiency and affordability as key among five priorities aligned with Chief of Naval Operations' (CNO) priorities to build the future force, maintain war-fighting readiness, and develop and support Sailors, civilian employees and their families," Goodhart said.

Bickert agreed and said FISC Yokosuka is on the leading edge of innovation to support tomorrow's fleet.

"I've been a customer of FISC Yokosuka before," said Bickert, who served on three ships in the 7th Fleet during his career. "FISC Yokosuka has always been an innovator. That remains especially true today as, quite frankly, your servicing an area roughly a third the area of the globe."

Goodhart said FISC Yokosuka's achievements are heralded across the international dateline.

"The good news of what you're doing out here does make its way to the East Coast (of the United States)," Goodhart said, referring to both NAVSUP headquarters in Mechanicsburg, Pa., and Washington, D.C. "What you do is truly 'non-fiction.' It's the real thing and – I think I speak for all the leadership at both NAVSUP and COMFISCS – has helped FISC Yokosuka establish a stellar reputation for service to the fleet."

FISC Yokosuka is one of seven supply centers under COMFISCS and is the Western Pacific region's largest Navy logistics command. The FISC Yokosuka enterprise is comprised of more than 20 detachments, fuel terminals and sites from Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean to Guam; from Misawa, Japan to Sydney, Australia.

COMFISCS is headquartered in San Diego. It is a component of NAVSUP, headquartered in Mechanicsburg, Pa., and part of NAVSUPs worldwide logistics network of more than 22,500 military and civilian personnel providing combat capability through logistics.

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Kemari Reynolds, also a fourth grader, served as a member of trial counsel and said she enjoyed working with the JAG officers and hoped to be able to do it again.

"This was really fun because you actually feel like you are in court at a real trial," she said. "I am happy we won our case, we knew the defendant was guilty and the jury got it right."

The members of the legal office who participated in the event said they were happy to host the children and said they look forward to the opportunity to do something like this again.

"Today was fantastic, the kids were great, I don't think we do enough of this," said Gerry Sauls, senior paralegal specialist for the legal office.

"Doing this event gives us an opportunity to interact with the children and gives us an opportunity to show them what we do. There are a lot of things involved with the law that students do not see first hand. They may hear about it from family or in the news, but to actually see it in a courtroom, it goes a long way and were very happy to show them," Sauls added.