

# The OSD Logistics Fellows Program: A Glimpse From Above

The Office of the Secretary of Defense offers field-grade officers and civilian equivalents the opportunity to participate in a fellowship that explores logistics and policy at the national level.

■ By Bryan L. Jerkatis

Nearly 3 million men and women make up the Department of Defense (DOD), but not many are given the opportunity to learn the fundamentals of legislation, budget, policy, and oversight from the highest level of the DOD. The Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Logistics Fellows Program provides this opportunity and allows selected logisticians to broaden their perspectives of these critical fundamentals.

The OSD Logistics Fellows Program is open to officers in the ranks of O-4 and O-5 and DOD civilian logisticians in the grades of GS-13 and GS-14 or equivalent. This one-year, unit-funded fellowship is a developmental assignment with an atmosphere that fosters learning, growth, and experiential opportunities.

The program is administered by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Logistics and Materiel Readiness. Fellows have the unique opportunity to participate in policy formulation and DOD-wide oversight responsibilities.

## What the Fellowship Entails

During this program, fellows gain the experience of a one-year assignment as OSD Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics staff specialists. Throughout their time in the fellowship, fellows experience enrichment opportunities including travel and education that bolster the proficiency that participants gain from this invaluable experience.

Fellows travel and tour both the public and private sectors in order to observe firsthand private industry lo-

gistics operations and benchmark best practices. Through visits to Congress, fellows gain exposure and insight into legislative processes. They are also able to attend national-level forums and engage in collaborative efforts with industry partners.

Depending on their assignments, fellows may have the opportunity to visit and become familiar with other government agencies. Perhaps even more importantly, the fellowship affords participants opportunities to observe and interact with both appointed and career senior executives and flag officers. These interactions include one-on-one meetings with senior logistics leaders from the military departments, the Joint Staff, OSD, and other agencies.

The insights and big picture knowledge available through the fellowship are virtually endless. The fellows themselves determine much of their training and class agendas.

During my fellowship, I was tasked to resolve a long-standing logistics policy challenge within the DOD. I was given considerable leeway to gain needed expertise and formulate a recommendation. My work led to the publication of a new DOD directive.

Other fellows led financial accountability program initiatives, participated in DOD-level awards processes, led worldwide maintenance symposiums, and participated in source selection committees and other DOD-level initiatives.

## The Camaraderie of Fellows

The OSD Logistics Fellows Program has a long history and an important ca-

maraderie component. Fellows share a common bond, form a support structure, and face many diverse challenges together. Graduates become part of a legacy of OSD logistics fellows.

The OSD Logistics Fellows Program provides an opportunity to forge life-long bonds and friendships with other logistics professionals and to build networking abilities that will serve them for the remainder of their careers and beyond. Upon completion of the program, fellows return to their sponsoring organizations or follow-on assignments with increased management skills, technical expertise, and contacts across the DOD logistics network.

The OSD Logistics Fellows Program provides DOD logisticians with a rich experiential odyssey and the opportunity to obtain a deeper career understanding of OSD and how it affects the DOD enterprise. Interested individuals should look for fall program announcements each year. Additional information regarding program specifics and the nominations process can be found on the OSD Transportation Policy website.

Bryan L. Jerkatis is the deputy director of logistics for the 635th Supply Chain Operations Wing at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. He holds a bachelor's degree in business management from Southern Illinois University, a master's degree in national security studies, and a master's degree in public administration. He was a member of the OSD Logistics Fellows Class of 2015–2016.