

The U.S. Military Textile- based Enterprise

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My Experience

- Textile education.
- Two Army & three DLA textile assignments.
- Five years textile industry.
- Fifteen years Clemson Apparel Research
(Focused on DoD problems and solutions)

The Military Textile-based “System”

- Research (Army Lab Command; Natick 1 of 25+ labs)
- Formal “Need” established (Infantry School +)
 - Funding applied in 7- year Budget Process
 - New product development (Army PEO Soldier +)
 - DoD acquisition managed staffing & funding!
- Fast-track “Need” established for combat
 - Rapid fielding
 - Special Operations = Special Acquisition

The Military Textile-based “System”

Continued

- Sustainment/replenishment – DLA
 - DLA Troop Support, **Clothing & Textiles Directorate**
 - Other DLA agencies and within the Services

Outside the “System”

- Independent commercial operations:
 - Anyone with a supply source and a web site.
 - Established end-item contractors selling directly.
 - Established third party companies making a market.
- Local procurement offices.
- Turn-key commercial operations on contract:
 - DLA total logistical services contracts. (*Avoids many of the performance barriers within the military execution system.*)

Historical Overview

- How to “fix” the system – 6 major studies
- No study last 10 years?
 - Army and Marine Corps strong initiatives. “We know the system is broken....”
 - Entrapenuers step up to the plate.
 - Industry “fix it” effort instead – Group of Six.
- DLA C&T performance very good to great vs. commercial apparel retail in-stock levels.
- **But**, too little and slow to support combat.

The Core Problems

- Military textile-based products are not commodities – unique fiber forward.
- DLA created to buy & manage commodities.
 - Virtually no supply chain management.
 - Few tools with which to sustain the industrial base.
 - Budget, procurement, & legal actions **gap the supply chains**. (Reverse auction example.)
 - Policies and systems prevent the use of standard and advanced commercial best practices.
 - Huge inventories and management resources are used to achieve current operational levels.

The Opportunity

- Many end-item and textile companies have survived very well over the years.
- This business will always be available as long as domestic manufacturers can find a way to survive.
- U.S. textile-based products set the standard and are in demand world-wide.
- Where needs and problems exist, opportunities are plentiful for manufacturers who can deliver new solutions along with good products.