

“Strategically Speaking”

**Thomas Henry, general supply specialist,
DLA Distribution Distribution Operations**

Warfighter Support Enhancement

Alongside my team, I provide specialized support to the Warfighter in Afghanistan for the Afghanistan Bill of Materiel, or BOM, Project. A BOM consists of electrical and plumbing supplies, well drilling kits, bags of dry concrete, paint, air conditioners, and anything that is used to build and develop shelters, offering basic accommodations for troops deployed in country. The materiel required for this project needs to be ordered quickly, shipped expeditiously, and tracked until delivered in theater. The responsibility of procuring the materiel falls to DLA Troop Support.

The shipping and tracking is completed by the Afghan BOM team at DLA Distribution, with the support of DLA Distribution Susquehanna, Pa. The materiel arriving at DLA Distribution Susquehanna, Pa., has no Military Shipping Labels, or Transportation Control Numbers, or TCNs, available to receive or track. Every skid arriving at DLA Distribution Susquehanna, Pa., is assigned a TCN and the materiel is then recorded into a spreadsheet by a member of the team. The materiel is expedited on pure air pallets, containing only that BOM's materiel. Additionally, the customer is provided additional value-added services, such as colored placards on the skids, placed on the outside of the air pallet, and double bagging of the air pallet for additional reinforcement. I am in charge of creating the placards, based on information provided by the Warfighter.

On a daily basis, I coordinate with DLA Distribution Susquehanna, Pa., DLA Troop Support, prime vendors, and the Warfighter. Any given day we are working/tracking 20-30 BOMs, coordinating the flow of materiel into DLA Distribution Susquehanna, Pa., with up to five prime vendors, and working any and all issues for the Warfighter. We all understand that this project is of utmost importance, as this materiel is being constructed to house troops in theater.

Key to Success

The key to the success of this project to this point has been the ability of all the DLA areas to adapt to the change in focus and needs of the customer, from the procurement of the materiel, to the shipping/tracking of the pallets.

Workforce Development

I strive to do better, know more, and outperform the person I was yesterday, a week earlier, and so on, much like the Pittsburgh Steelers organization. The atmosphere that Art Rooney, Sr., instilled, not only in the football team, but in the organization as a whole and the community, cultures a sense of individual responsibility and treating others with respect. This is the same attitude I carry with me and try to inspire in others as we do our part to support our troops overseas.

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