we all know the same devastation that occurred there could easily happen to the Hawaiian Islands."

To date, more than 21.5 million pounds of relief supplies have been delivered by the U.S. military to tsunami victims.

Managing these relief efforts is a massive job by itself. DDC employees are also helping with that work. Four DDC staff members from around the world have volunteered to help and are working at their new duty stations.

Walter Bosdorf, DDC Supply Specialist, and Greg Sims, DDC Traffic Management Specialist, left in early Jan. to work in the Pacific Distribution Operations Center (P-DOC), the operations center that DLA established to ensure the flow of material and enhance intransit visibility.

John Hankins, a Materials Handler at Defense Distribution Depot Europe (DDDE), and Willie Payne, a Distribution Processing Expediter at DDDE, left on Jan. 10, to support the Tactical Logistics Operation Center.

A three-man shore detachment from the USNS MERCY arrived Jan. 10 to augment the DDJC CCC and to identify materials needed to stock the hospital ship. Once the ship got underway from her homeport in San Diego, the shore detachment was coordinating shipping times to meet port calls in Pearl Harbor and Singapore. The detachment served as the link between DDJC and the USNS MERCY.

"I am tracking document numbers and letting the ship know on a constant basis the status," said SKC Leo Igualdo, USN, shore detachment leader. While the vast majority of the shipments are medical items, the ship also required general supplies like cleaners, galley equipment, furniture, and spare parts.

Also arriving with the shore detachment to coordinate over 200 lines of medical shipments to the USNS MERCY was MAJ Robert Brich, USAF of DSCP. "There is already a great process here at DDJC so things are operating fairly smooth," said Brich.

However, there were some issues concerning unit of issue that Brich needed to straighten out. "There are packaging differences in regards to unit of issue that are unique to medical items that are shipped Direct Vendor Delivery," he added.

Also making a contribution to the tsunami relief effort, the Defense Distribution Depot Columbus, OH (DDCO) fulfilled a requisition for 95 pairs of safety shoes to the Marine Corps Logistics Base in Albany, Ga.

The U.S. Pacific Command has established a web site on U.S. military assistance to tsunami disaster relief efforts in South East Asia.

www.pacom.mil/special/0412asia/index.shtml.

LT Deon Huff from NEPMU 6 says thanks.

Latest RFID Tag Sharpens Asset Visibility

Prototype "phones home" from any location in the world

By Jessica Walter-Groft, DDC Command Affairs

The next model in a long line of in-transit visibility enhancement technology, the "3G" radio frequency identification (RFID) prototype tag, was placed on four outbound pallets at Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, PA (DDSP) in January.

"The prototype tags function just as the current RFID tags but with one added benefit – they phone home from any position around the world," said Mark Lieberman, Defense Distribution Center (DDC) Supply Management Specialist.

Using the Iridium network of global satellites, the prototype is a combination unit that includes a traditional RFID tag along with global positioning system and satellite capabilities, giving defense transportation personnel access to the tag's location – exact to within feet.

As materiel release orders flowed in to DDSP, DoD's largest warehouse and the eastern strategic distribution platform for military supplies, a group of self-proclaimed "wire heads" from various federal agencies and private technology companies worked alongside DDSP information technology personnel to write shipment data onto the 3G prototype tags.

"With the 410 tag that we currently use, we know when it passes through a portal [or interrogator], and when it passes through another portal, but we need visibility of where that shipment is in the meantime and the 3G will give us that ability," Lieberman continued.

As DLA's lead center for distribution, DDC is committed to minimizing customers' uncertainty in the supply chain and ensuring that Warfighters receive the materiel they need, when they need it and with complete order status information from the time of order fulfillment until delivery.

"The prototype tags function just as the current RFID tags but with one added benefit – they phone home from any position around the world,"

"This new technology will further enhance our in-transit visibility capabilities on a global scale," said Logistics Management Specialist Jeff Fee of the Logistics Transformation Agency. The 3G RFID tag will allow the capability to pin-point the exact location of supplies at any given time anywhere in the world.

The infrastructure of RF readers and interrogators that read a tag when it passes by do not exist in many of the places that military supplies are currently being shipped – in countries like Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Africa. The 3G prototype can be programmed to communicate via satellite with the worldwide RF/in-transit visibility servers that send the data to several sources including the Global Transportation Network (GTN), providing its identification number (used to access information about the shipment), the date and time, as well as current position to within 3.5 feet even when it travels beyond the existing RF infrastructure.

Kevin Donati of Savi Technologies, Inc. and Rick Anderson of NAL Research Corporation attach the 3G prototype RFID tag to a pallet of vehicle parts kits being shipped to Kandahar, Afghanistan, from Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, PA.

This ability to operate in technologically austere environments will not only help with current military missions, but will also aid in expediting deployment in the future to any location in the world regardless of the presence of RF infrastructure or even electricity.

The prototype tags, along with the traditional 410 tags, were attached to four pallets at DDSP: Automobile engines going to Tikrit, Iraq; camouflage netting bound for Kuwait; mixed freight including HUMVEE components destined for Kosovo and Bosnia; and vehicle parts kits and HUMVEE radiators heading to Kandahar, Afghanistan.

"We've put two tags on each pallet, the 3G prototype and the 410, to validate that the prototype is being read. If we get six hits off of the current tag and only five off the prototype, then we know improvements are necessary," said Lieberman.

The prototype RFID tag was developed by a collaboration of three private industry companies. Working for the government's Logistics Transformation Agency (LTA), Ocean Systems Engineering Corporation (OSEC) was the lead contractor responsible for the tag's design and development. They worked with NAL Research Corporation to integrate the components of the device and with SAVI Technologies, Inc. for hardware and engineering support.

After the 3G tags arrive at their final destinations in Afghanistan, Kuwait, Iraq, Bosnia and Kosovo, Army Field Service Engineers will collect the tags and compare the data to that collected from the 410 to see if all the information was successfully transmitted and received.

Those four prototype tags will then be sent to DDC's other strategic distribution platform, Defense Distribution Depot San Joaquin, CA (DDJC), where the test will be performed again on shipments heading to the other side of the globe – Asia and the Pacific.

Full deployment of the 3G tag is not expected for several years. "We're still in the early stages of testing this prototype and we consider this the proof of concept phase," said DLA Supply Systems Analyst Gene Bransfield. "This technology may be particularly useful in tracking sensitive or critical shipments."

Once the 3G tags are fully implemented, they will allow transportation personnel to monitor shipments as they move through the supply chain to ensure that they are transported in a timely manner and along the correct route, an ability necessary for the new era of sense-and-respond logistics.

Sense-and-respond logistics is a concept that relies on sensors, communication networks, and the effective transfer of information and feedback to decide when supplies will be delivered, in what manner, and from where.

"This prototype RFID tag is another step toward sense-and-respond logistics," said LTA's Fee. "It gives the Warfighter, our customer, the ability to see their equipment so they can sense what is coming and when in order to respond accordingly."

Today, customers can access the RF/in-transit visibility or Global Transportation Network servers by computer to track their shipments throughout the supply pipeline. They will also have the capability to access the 3G tags by e-mail to modify reporting characteristics including reporting frequency.

Another feature being considered for the 3G is to add temperature and humidity sensors. When the tag encounters conditions that are too hot, too cold, too wet or too dry for the contents of the shipment, the unit will automatically activate itself and send a communication to the server notifying defense transportation personnel of the unfavorable conditions.

"We see this tag as an excellent resource for supporting today's lean, agile military by providing information that will further enhance asset visibility throughout the entire distribution process," said Lieberman.