Albany team designs, builds shipping crates to support war fighting needs

By Scott Woosley, DDC Command Affairs

When war fighters on the front lines have a need for additional equipment or upgraded armor, the average citizen assumes the solution is simply a matter of finding the material that satisfies the need and getting it to the men and women on the front lines.

However, new items often require new shipping containers to ensure the new material arrives intact at its destination.

When the Marines in Iraq needed additional armor upgrades for their High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicles, or Humvees, it was relatively easy to order the necessary items. Shipping them to Iraq was another matter.

"There are several thousand parts included in the Frag 5 project which was the project to upgrade the armor on Humvees," said Master Sgt. Frederick "Tony" Brooks, the Joint Logistics Operations Chief for Defense Distribution Depot Albany, Ga. "We had to develop a way to pack all the items in one unit and deliver them to the Marines."

Defense Distribution Depot Albany, Ga. employees designed and constructed shipping crates for Frag 5 armor upgrade kits that allow the kits to be shipped in one container.

The Marines and civilian employees at the Albany distribution center put their collective knowledge and experience together and designed a packing crate that would do the job.

Once they designed a suitable crate, 3,000 had to be built. While construction of 2,375 crates was outsourced, DDAG employees built the remaining 625. Designing and building that many crates is not easily achieved, but the Albany staff accomplished the mission.

"We completed major production on Dec. 22, 2006," Brooks said. "To date we've shipped 2,203 Frag 5 kits. The remaining kits are being stored for future shipping."

Despite the time and effort involved in designing, building and shipping the crates over the last few months, DDAG never missed a requirement.

"It's a testament to the dedication and professionalism of the entire work force here at DDAG," Brooks said.

DDYJ lieutenant supports logistics operations in Kuwait

By Jonathan R. Lontoc, DDYJ Public Affairs Office

With the U.S. focus on global terrorism, you would be hard pressed to find a service member who hasn't contributed in some way to support U. S. operations in the Middle East since 9/11. Lt. Chad Gagnon is no different in his desire to support his country and the men and women who fight to protect it.

Serving at Defense Distribution Depot Yokosuka, Japan, in numerous positions since April

Navy Lt. Chad Gagnon stands near an M1 Abrams Main Battle Tank during a deployment to the Defense Logistics Agency Contingency Support Team - Kuwait.

2003, Gagnon departed in May 2006 for a six-month tour in Kuwait. At the Defense Logistics Agency Contingency Support Team in Kuwait, he was assigned as the Officer in Charge of Class IX components. Gagnon managed a team of material expediters who procured, tracked, and shipped critical repair parts within the theater of operations.

DLA maintains a stock of these repair parts and components that are what the U.S. military calls Class IX material. These can include items as small as batteries and spark plugs to expensive high-end parts for tanks, hummers, and helicopters.

DCST's mission is to use their supply expertise to anticipate the needs of the war fighter and quickly move critical supplies to its customers. These parts are essential to all U.S. and coalition forces that operate in the joint operations area.

"Typically, we worked 80-hour work weeks," says Gagnon. "Sometimes my team and I worked more, depending upon the needs of our customers." Operating in an environment proved to be rigorous and exhausting for the Lieutenant and his team.

Despite the long hours and tiring work, he found the experience to be extremely rewarding. "I not only had the opportunity to liaison with key players throughout the DLA enterprise, I also had the distinct privilege of working together with logisticians across all other services." Gagnon expresses that the professional knowledge acquired during his deployment will carry him throughout his career in the Supply Corps. More importantly, he leaves Kuwait with the assurance that his efforts contributed to helping U.S. servicemen stay alive in the Middle East.

Gagnon's next tour of duty is in San Diego at Amphibious Construction Battalion ONE.

DDC Customer Support Operations collaborating as Air Force transforms maintenance

The Defense Distribution Center Air Force Customer Support Team is engaging with Air Force and other Defense Logistics Agency field activities to improve understanding as the Air Force transforms its maintenance operations.

The Air Force, like the rest of the Department of Defense, is committed to improving war-fighting capabilities through transformation. The Air Force was conceived as an organization to take advantage of new technology of flight to support the goals of national security.

DDC's Customer Support staff hosted a recent gathering of Air Force and Defense Supply Center Richmond representatives to discuss maintenance transformation at Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center, or OC-ALC. Discussions centered around Air Force transformation, Distribution Planning and Management, Distribution Reengineering, and Customer Support.

"This type of communication is critical to improving understanding between DDC and a customer who is making important changes to their business," said Denise Parker-Kanelos, DDC customer operations support chief.

DDC's Defense Distribution Depot Oklahoma City, Okla., or DDOO, is also engaged with OC-ALC, its largest customer, and meets weekly to discuss supply chain management and is a fulltime member of the OC-ALC Transformation cellular design team.

"DDOO and the OC-ALC are forging an excellent working relationship." said Dennis Goodnight, DDOO's BRAC and Transformation Project Officer. "By learning their processes and helping them redesign the ALC, it gives us some insight to their unique needs and enables us to provide better support. We are excited about the opportunity to partner with our biggest customer as we transform together."

The first business unit Air Force is transforming at OC-ALC is the repair and overhaul of the F100 Aircraft Engine, part of OC-ALC's 76th Maintenance Wing. The F100 transformation is expected to take 27 months and result in a 30 percent reduction in time and 14 percent reduction in unit cost. Work began in May 2005.

The Air Force selected Battelle to execute their Maintenance Transformation Program Contract at the OC-ALC. Battelle will collaborate with OC-ALC's 76th Maintenance Wing to implement an effective transformation.

The F100 transformation efforts incorporate Lean manufacturing techniques, and will affect supply chain management and facilities.

Lean is a program for continuous process improvement and is widely used throughout DOD and commercial industry.

Dialog is crucial in understanding how DDC contributes to the overall Air Force enterprise effort, Parker said. DDC's Customer Support staff continues to engage the Air Force Supply Chain Management IPT on a bi-weekly basis.

In one instance, the DDC Business Planning Office processed a request for 310 different items in support of the F100 Lean efforts at OC-ALC. Of these items, DDC enabled 270 of the items to be stocked directly at DDOO based on the demand history. Furthermore, DDC processed numerous redistribution orders moving material based on availability to DDOO. DDC Business Planning continues to apply hands-on attention to these and other Lean efforts.

Additionally, in collaboration with Battelle, DDOO proposed an improved Maintenance Turn-in Process and the repositioning of fast moving DLA items next to the maintenance shops. As a result, extra space was made available for the positioning of faster moving items along side the maintenance operations.

DDOO support time to Maintenance was reduced from 18 hours to 18 minutes on some items. Turn-in points were streamlined to two locations and are now moved to transportation several times per day.

DDOO continues to work in conjunction with future transformation planning and partners with Air Force.