

to determine if radio frequency systems can be implemented to improve outbound operations, and studies are looking at the process of booking sea containers. Each project includes the ideas of employees who are ultimately instrumental in implementing the improvements.

DDSP's executive leadership is formulating ways that the PIT can branch out in the future and continue to improve service to our primary customer, the war fighter.



Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Pa.'s Hazardous Material Outloading area shows noticeable improvement as a result of a Lean Rapid Improvement Event. The RIE incorporated input from the employees who work in the area.

Units band together to defeat waste in shipping and receiving

By 1st Lt. Christopher Lundell, USAF, Warner Robins Air Force Base

Recently, the 402d Maintenance Wing and Defense Distribution Depot Warner Robins, Ga., worked together to create a plan for improving the process for receiving, storing, issuing, and shipping parts used and repaired by the avionics depot.

The event was led by the commander of the Warner Robins Air Force Base 402d Maintenance Wing, Air Force Brig. Gen. Andrew Busch, USAF. Team members included DDWG Commander Air Force Col. Elizabeth Moore, USAF, other members of the 402d Maintenance Wing and DDWG as well as representatives from the 542d Combat Sustainment Wing, the 330th Aircraft Sustainment Wing, and LESCO, the contractor that performs DDWG's mission work. Additionally, James Hiatt, an operations coordinator with the Logistics Division of Wal-Mart, was brought in to provide outside expertise.

After several planning meetings over the past few months, the team kicked off the Lean event on a Monday. They started by defining what they needed to do and why. On Tuesday, the group toured the major on-base DDWG warehouses and walked through the avionics depot. Later that night, the group traveled to LaGrange, Ga., and visited a Wal-Mart Regional Distribution Center to look at their operations.

The team closely analyzed the current process for parts shipping and receiving. After that, they determined the ideal process. They took into account roadblocks that couldn't be changed to come up with a realistic process and an action plan that will be implemented over the next 18 months.

The plan will speed up parts delivery by moving the storage locations for the parts closer to the avionics depot

and creating a mechanism for sending critical parts directly to the avionics depot without going through most of the processing that normally occurs when they arrive on the base. As a result, the number of days it takes the avionics depot to repair a part should be reduced from an average of 26 days to 21 days.

The team took away more than just a plan for shipping and receiving. The event helped the participants understand the challenges faced by other organizations. Moore noted, "Through this event, we were able to form a partnership between DDWG and the 402d Maintenance Wing. DDWG is an integral part of production and war fighter support. We were delighted to participate."

Brian Keeling, a Lean consultant and facilitator for this event, also believes the outcome of this event highlights the relationship between DDWG and the 402d Maintenance Wing. "This team is on the right track. With AFSO-21 [Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st Century] being implemented on the shop floor and the administrative areas, it was only a matter of time before DDWG was asked to examine the supply management processes that affect the maintenance wing."

