

Equipment upgrade at DDCN saves time, money

By Navy Lt. Ernesto Ureta, DDCN

In order to maintain the highest levels of customer service, Defense Distribution Depot Cherry Point, N.C., recently upgraded material handling equipment at some of its storage locations.

The recent upgrade, aimed to sustain DDCN's superior customer service, included removing rail-guided basket cranes that travel down each aisle of bins and replacing them with a new Z-rail stock selector system. The new system is both more flexible and less expensive than replacing the old cranes. The new stock selectors can also be used in DDCN's rack storage sections, an added benefit.

"The old system required one crane per aisle, but with only four new stock selectors we are able to do the same job faster, safer and cheaper," said DDCN Commanding Officer Navy Cmdr. Bryant Knox.

Because of the high volume of supplies ordered by DDCN's military customers, the distribution center continually conducts internal evaluations to ensure they are using the most efficient processes and equipment. That process includes considering the use of updated equipment and technology.

During a recent evaluation, the distribution center discovered that replacement parts for the older crane system were no longer available. Several options were researched before DDCN selected a battery-powered Z-rail system that can maneuver between aisles, has special stabilization features, and was available at a fraction of the cost of replacing the cranes with newer cranes.

Many of the supplies stored at DDCN are sorted by size. Items that are smaller than one square foot in size are usually stored in bin locations—organized rows of shelves similar to

those seen at a library. The new pieces of equipment can easily maneuver between those narrow aisles.

Assistance for the project was provided by engineer Tim Flynn of the

Defense Logistics Agency Enterprise Support organization serving the Defense Distribution Center, or DES-DDC. Flynn designed and oversaw installation of the new cranes.



To save time and money, older model cranes, pictured at left, were removed from bin storage areas at Defense Distribution Depot Cherry Point, N.C., and replaced with four new versatile stock selectors, shown below.

