DDC Successfully Completes First End-to-End Passive RFID Test

By Jessica Walter, DDC Command Affairs

Partnering with aircraft manufacturer Boeing, the Defense Distribution Center (DDC) recently completed the first end-to-end receipt of materiel marked with passive radio frequency identification (RFID) tags.

Passive RFID tags contain a thin microchip attached to an antenna. Each microchip holds a unique identification number that provides a "license plate" for the container to which the tag is attached.

Boeing sent two tagged shipments of aircraft repair parts to each of DDC's strategic distribution platforms: Defense Distribution Depots San Joaquin, CA (DDJC), and Susquehanna, PA (DDSP).

Both sites received advance notification of the shipments through Wide Area Work Flow (WAWF), a web-based system that allows vendors and DoD organizations to exchange transaction information such as advance notice of incoming shipments, confirmation when the shipment is received and the transfer of electronic invoices.

Information from the advance shipping notification was held in the Distribution Standards System (DSS), the warehousing and transportation system used throughout DDC.

When the tagged items came into Receiving and traveled through the passive RFID portals at each site, the data stored on the chip inside the tag was transmitted to DSS where the information was married with what was already in the system as a result of the advance notification.

After the shipment was inspected, DSS was used to send a confirmation of receipt back to Boeing through WAWF.

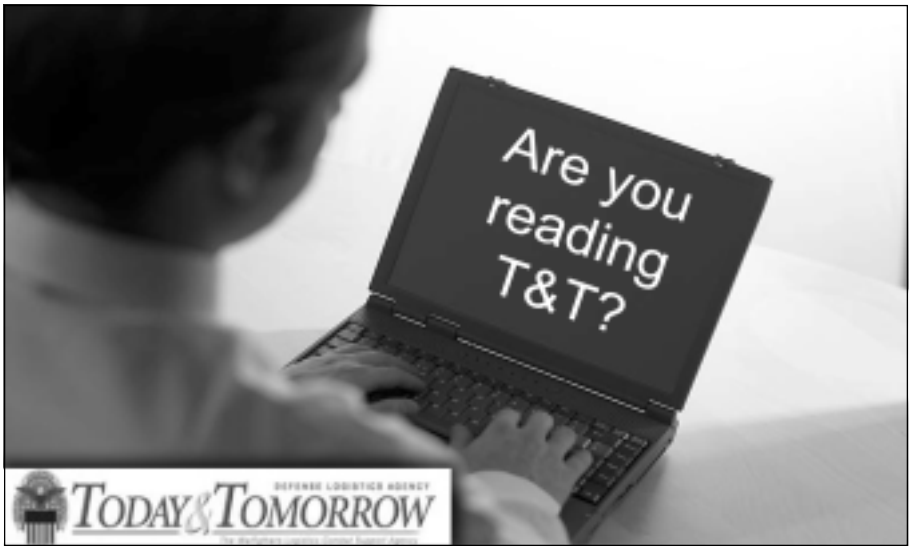
This was the first live test of the new passive RFID technology that the Department of Defense (DoD) requires all vendors to use on DoD shipments in the near future. Specific dates vary by vendor.

DDSP and DDJC are currently the only DDC distribution sites outfitted with passive RFID readers, but all of DDC's sites in the continental United States will be capable of reading passive tags by the end of this year.

By the end of 2006, all of DDC's 26 sites including those outside of the continental United States, will be able to receive materiel marked with passive RFID tags.

"The importance of this test was not only that the tags were read successfully, but that the data was exchanged successfully along the way," said Lieberman.

In addition to Boeing, Lockheed Martin and General Electric Engines are also planning to test the end-to-end process this summer. Any other vendors interested in testing can contact the DDC volunteer program by e-mail at ddc.rfid@dla.mil.



DDC Strategic Distribution Platforms Test Passive RFID

By Doug Imberi, DDJC Public Affairs

The Defense Distribution Center (DDC) continues to move forward with the implementation of passive Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) testing.

Most recently, DDC's two Strategic Distribution Platforms, Defense Distribution Depots San Joaquin, CA (DDJC) and Susquehanna, PA (DDSP), began testing hardware and connectivity as they ship Redistribution Orders (RDOs) to each other. The 30-day test will enable the two depots to see any flaws in the system prior to the beginning of receipts from vendors.

"DDSP will apply RFID tags to the RDOs they send us and e-mail the RFID tag numbers and associated Carton Control Numbers (CCNs) to look for," explained Luis Avila, Chief of DDJC's Systems Office. "We are doing the same to the RDOs we send to DDSP."

The items will pass through portals in DDJC Warehouse 10 and test the communication between the portal software and the Equipment Control System.

On the procurement side, vendors are currently applying RFID tags voluntarily. However, changes to the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulations will require vendors to apply tags and send the distribution centers an advance shipping notice, so the distribution center can associate the tag with the contents of the box they are receiving.

DDJC has received two RFID tagged shipments from Lockheed-Martin, who is a volunteer vendor in the RFID program. The shipment tags were successfully read when processed through the portals in Warehouse 10.

The testing will expand as more vendors come on-line with RFID tag requirements and portals are installed at the other DDC depots.