



# DDHU increases on-the-ground medical capabilities for America's military with Deployable Medical Systems mission

By Emily Blubaugh, DDC Public Affairs

The mission of the Defense Distribution Center is Warfighter support, distributing the products that sustain America's Warfighters around the globe. When customers receive shipments from DDC depots, they are likely to contain a range of products, from construction materials to repair parts, electronics, or even food products and clothing. But how about hospitals? That is the unique mission of Defense Distribution Depot Hill, Utah, key to supporting Warfighter readiness and sustainment through the assembly, repair and shipment of deployable medical systems, or DEPMEDS.

These self-contained, portable units are capable of being

positioned quickly in an area of operations during war or a national emergency. DDHU assembles, modifies, repairs, rebuilds, certifies and stores the modular units that can contain operating rooms, x-ray equipment, blood labs and pharmacies. Once on the ground, a modular hospital can be created from these standard-sized containers and tents that can be linked together like blocks to make a field hospital of any size or layout.

"It is literally a hospital in a box, minus the physician, and can range in size from a single unit general-purpose lab to a 1,000-bed hospital containing 12,000 line items," said Vern Price, DDHU DEPMEDS division chief.

Customers provide a bill of

requirements for DEPMEDS, with possible outputs of operating rooms, central materials services, x-ray units, triage, post operation/ Intermediate Care Unit, physical therapy, pharmacy, ground ambulance, dental, mine resistant ambush protection, forward surgical, trauma field, sick call, OB/GYN, and chemical agent patient treatment.

"Customers identify the type of hospital to be built and enter their requirements into our Distribution Standard System. Very often, a hospital's configuration may change based on the customer's needs while it is still in progress, or their mission may be modified, moving up the required delivery date. The requirements are constantly changing," said Price.

Once the customer has depleted the supplies inside the hospital, they have the option of shipping the container back to DDHU to be refurbished and repaired, or a kit containing the additional needed supplies can be shipped to them on the ground.

If the hospitals are returned to DDHU to be refurbished, DDHU's DEPMEDS division employees, consisting of general mechanics/inspectors, fabric workers, tool and parts attendants, painters, container handlers, and electronic technicians, work to quickly renovate and repair the container in order to return it to the customer



**Defense Distribution Depot Hill, Utah has the specialized mission of Deployable Medical Systems, which is a self-contained, portable unit capable of being positioned quickly in an area of operations and can be linked with tents to form a modular hospital.**

as quickly as possible. The refurbishment of the container could be as simple as repainting and restocking, or a new equipment install, such as an X-Ray machine.

This tailored logistics service has significantly reduced costs, not only to customers, but also to DDC. Rather than purchasing new containers to replace damaged hospitals, DEPMEDS employees work to inspect, clean, weld, modify, patch, sand and paint to restore the containers for reuse. “The cost of a new container is approximately \$250,000, but our facility is able to repair an existing container for around \$40,000. If you consider that DDHU repaired nearly 80 containers in 2009, that’s a savings of approximately 17 million dollars, which is quite remarkable,” said Price.

Since 2005, DDHU DEPMEDS employees have assembled nearly 450,000 lines, with almost 40,000 assembled in FY2010. Hospital assemblies are provided mainly to the United States Army, but are also prepared for the United States Navy, National Guard and Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Deployable hospitals are only one part of DDHU’s DEPMEDS mission. DDHU also specializes in various kit assemblies to include combat lifesaver, first aid individual, general purpose, general purpose rigid, surgical instrument, first aid general, patient utility and first aid gun crew. DDHU

also assembles “made to order” kits, such as trauma sets, ground ambulance and chemical agent treatment.

The kits provide general medical supplies to the Warfighter, anything from gauze to surgical blades, resembling a medic’s kit. From FY2005 to date, DDHU has assembled nearly 320,000 kits consisting of more than 7 million lines. They average over 200 kits per day, and over 4,000 kits per month, with each kit containing an average of 23 line items.

DDHU’s DEPMEDS personnel also perform tent repair as well as the overhaul and repair of International Organization for Standard, or ISO, approved shelters.

“Every DDHU DEPMEDS employee is extremely dedicated to performing this mission, and it shows in the quality and quantity of the work. The Warfighter trusts us to get them the right medical supplies, in the right place,

in the right time, and our workers want them to know that DDHU is where they can turn when they have a DEPMED distribution-related need,” said Price.



**Above: From FY2005 to date, DDHU has assembled nearly 320,000 kits containing medical supplies, consisting of more than 7 million lines.**

**Below: A Defense Distribution Depot Hill, Utah employee repaints a Deployable Medical Systems container for customer reuse. In 2009, DDHU saved nearly 17 million dollars by refurbishing units, rather than purchasing new.**



# DEPMEDS