

Training prepares reservists for deployment

By Jose Abreu, DDC Reserve Mobilization Office

Training people to be Defense Logistics Agency Contingency Support Team, or DCST, personnel is essential to mission success.

The Defense Distribution Center Reserve and Mobilization Office assembled a comprehensive pre-deployment training package to give participants an overview of their pending assignment and the opportunity to practice the skills they will use while deployed.

“I believe it is most important to assure that these reservists, some who have never worked full-time in logistics, receive the most beneficial training to help them better understand the process and the environment they are about to endure,” said Navy Store Keeper 2nd Class Donnie Thompson. “I believe this training better prepares them and puts their minds at ease by just knowing the type of job they will be doing downrange.”

Thompson, the instructor of the newly created DDC DCST pre-deployment training, is a veteran of two tours to Iraq, where he served as a DCST member. During his first tour he served as the contracting officer representative for hazardous waste and during his second tour he served as the DLA customer support representative for the U.S. Army’s 4th Infantry Division.

DLA Contingency Support Teams are DLA personnel who are embedded with the war fighter. Their mission is to provide wholesale logistical support for all U.S. and Coalition forces in the region.

Store Keeper Chiefs Carl Anderson and Kurt Parent and Store Keeper 1st Class Ted Stradford recently attended the course. The three Naval reservists will soon be deployed to support to Iraq or Kuwait to support war fighters in the region and the training helped prepare them.

The training introduced the trio to DLA and the Defense Distribution

Center, provided an overview of Army Logistics, including the requisition order number and document order number process, a look at live requests for damaged or inoperable vehicle in Iraq and Afghanistan, and a refresher on the supply tools used in theater to expedite and track critical high priority requisitions to the war fighter. Effectively managing the reports about damaged vehicles is important because quicker the parts are delivered to the customer, the sooner those vehicles can get back into the fight.

“It was great to learn about what to expect getting into theater and how to prepare for pre-deployment and deployment,” Parent said.

Anderson, Parent and Stradford also got to meet the staff of the DDC Reserve and Mobilization Office—the people they will contact if they have any concerns or issues while they are deployed. Stradford was especially appreciative of that support.

“This will certainly assist and arm personnel headed down range,” he said. “The overall (training) was very good and most helpful.”

Thompson is a DDC Reservist with the A106 Detachment, the DDC’s dedicated reserve unit, and is on his third activation which began in October 2006. This time he will serve his entire activation with



Navy Store Keeper 2nd Class Donnie Thompson, center, trains activated reservists on their responsibilities as Defense Logistics Agency Contingency Support Team, or DCST, members. The training prepares DCST personnel for deployments to Iraq and Kuwait.

the DDC headquarters training activated reservists. In addition to preparing personnel for deployment, he coordinates workloads with various distribution centers and plans annual training and inactive duty training for DDC’s 181 reservists. He also maintains contact with those reservists who are deployed.

Anyone interested in participating in a contingency mission can contact the Defense Distribution Center Reserve and Mobilization Office at 717-770-6166 or by e-mail at DDC.Mobilization@dla.mil. Committed and enthusiastic civilians, reservists or active duty military will be well trained and ready to deploy around the world.

Reservists commended by DDRV for support

By Jessica Walter, APR, DDC Command Affairs

Navy reservists from Defense Distribution Center Reserve Unit Detachment A-106 out of New Cumberland, Pa., recently assisted Defense Distribution Depot Richmond, Va., with A-76 preparation efforts.

The group of reservists helped to relocate tens of thousands of items, including hazardous material, closer to shipping areas so it could be issued more rapidly.

They also sorted and labeled stock so it could be placed on the shelf and ready for issue to the war fighter.

“They finished a job in two weeks that would otherwise take months to complete,” said DDRV Site Manager Steve Thien.

Thien was also impressed with the crew’s expertise and efficiency. “They were so capable and skilled – as if they had been working here for years.”

The reservists from A-106 are no strangers to distribution operations. Their drills are typically held at Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Pa., in New Cumberland, Pa., the largest distribution center in the Department of Defense.

“They were really a great group and made a significant contribution to our efforts to prepare for the A-76 decision,” praised DDRV Director Jerri Taylor.

The A-76 process includes a competition

that determines the best value for the taxpayer by examining the benefits of retaining distribution mission work in-house or contracting the work out to a private sector source.

Thanks to the reservists from A-106, the distribution center will be in great shape no matter who takes over operations.

DDRV has been through A-76 in the past, competing in the second round of A-76 in 1999. At that time, the government's proposal for operations, called the "most efficient organization," came out on top when the contract was awarded in 2002.

The results of the current study are scheduled to be announced Aug. 17.



Navy reservists from Defense Distribution Center Detachment A-106 with employees of Defense Distribution Depot Richmond, Va. The reservists assisted DDRV with a re-warehousing project.

Deputy's view of DDSP's mission

Ed Visker, deputy commander, Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Pa., spoke recently to staff at the Defense Distribution Center headquarters. "Our goal is to be the best distribution center in DDC, not just the fastest. We also want to be the safest and have the best environment for our employees."

DDSP is the largest of the 26 distribution centers DDC manages.

Situated at a transportation hub, DDSP is fortunate, Visker said, that "the Army got it right back in 1917 when it bought this land and built the New Cumberland Army Depot." DDSP is located in South Central Pennsylvania and is less than a one-day truck drive from more than 75 percent of the American population.

DDSP processes on average more than 650,000 issues each month. In fiscal year 2006, DDSP shipped more than \$10 billion worth of product to America's war fighters and peacekeepers around the world. All this work adds up to an economic impact to the local area of more than \$300 million annually.

DDSP's operations span the distribution process from picking,

packing, shipping and storage to set assembly, Visker said. For example, members of the DDSP medical team build everything from first aid kits to operating rooms.

According to Visker, improving the DDSP culture is an important part of maintaining the massive operation. Recent employee surveys showed concerns with communications, leadership, and teamwork. To address these concerns, DDSP, and most of DDC, have added more scrutiny to the way they hire supervisors and now require each supervisor to attend a leadership academy.

For the operation to survive, it must also seek continuous improvement, Visker said. To that end, DDSP has adopted many Lean principles (a program for continuous process improvement), and the DDSP workforce has embraced the opportunities to share their knowledge and suggestions. Visker said this is leading DDSP to quality through standardization.

Visker served as the Chief of Staff at DDC headquarters prior to becoming DDSP's deputy commander in 2006. He also commanded two of DDC's distribution centers, Defense Distribution Depots San Joaquin, Calif., and Anniston, Ala.



According to Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Pa., Deputy Commander Ed Visker, the Army made a wise decision in 1917 when it purchased the property currently occupied by DDSP. The location allows access to more than 75 percent of the American population within a one-day drive.



Today, Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Pa., is the largest distribution center in the Department of Defense.