

Cooperative Lean event increases efficiency of equipment delivery

By Anthony Ricchiazzi, Editor, Tobyhanna Reporter

A Lean event by Tobyhanna Army Depot and its largest tenant promises to improve equipment delivery flow and reduce incidences of wrong equipment delivery.

Tobyhanna Army Depot and the Defense Distribution Depot Tobyhanna, Pa., or DDTP, work together to ensure delivery of communications-electronics equipment to the proper divisions for repair and testing.

The cooperative Lean event, held April 9-12, addressed the recurring problem of inaccurate delivery of F-stock equipment and reducing unneeded steps in delivery. F-stock is equipment delivered from the field.

The DDTP/American Federation of Government Employees (Union)

Local 1647/Tobyhanna Partnership Council identified the need for a Lean event to address the number of Supply Discrepancy Reports being initiated, said Michael Moran, a process improvement specialist in the Army Depot's Productivity Improvement and Innovation Directorate's Process Improvement Division.

"The Lean event showed that moving the location of a part of the Tobyhanna Army Depot central receiving function from the depot's Work in Process Control Area to a consolidation staging area in DDTP eliminates a leg of the trip," says Mike Henry, chief of the Army Depot's Materiel Management Division, Production Management Directorate. "Tobyhanna Army Depot will now pick up the equipment there and move it directly to the appropriate (repair and test) shop."

Moran says another benefit is a decrease in equipment delivery trips per day. "Four to six DDTP trips will be eliminated, saving up to 1,107 miles per year of travel," he noted.

The delivery vehicles, called mules, were dropping materiel off and returning empty. Now they drop equipment off and return with other equipment, Henry said.

"We will also maximize the backhaul capabilities of the DDTP internal transportation system, and reutilize 2,375 square feet of (building) space by relocating the F-stock receiving area to the DDTP staging area," Moran added.

Moran and Henry worked with George Frye, chief of the Army Depot's Mission Materiel Staging Branch; John Heuberger, DDTP deputy commander; Nathan Thomas, Jeff Wood and members of the American Federation of Government Employees Local 1647 to develop the solution.

The changes were implemented as soon as the logistics were in place (power drops, Local Area Network, phone lines, physical relocation of personnel and support equipment). Within 10 days of the event, the operation was up and running, Moran said.

"This started with a recommendation from Tobyhanna Army Depot Commander Col. Alberto in September," Heuberger said. "Our inventory process is good, but we still generate Supply Discrepancy Reports, or SDRs. Our goal is to give the customers the right materiel at the right time and at the right cost all the time, so we've been trying to eliminate SDRs for years. Colonel Alberto recommended applying Lean solutions."

"It's a long process to correct an SDR," Wood commented. "It generates paperwork and requires several hours of coordination to get the equipment back on track." Wood is a quality assurance specialist in the Productivity Improvement and Innovation Directorate's Quality Management Division at Tobyhanna Army Depot.

Heuberger said they discussed solutions, but Thomas' idea to physically move this portion of the receiving function to a consolidation point in DDTP was the best answer.

"Neither side completely understood the other's entire process," said Thomas, an industrial engineer in the Army Depot's Productivity Improvement and Innovation Directorate's Industrial Modernization Division. "We mapped out the F-stock process from inception to completion to allow greater visibility for both Tobyhanna and DDTP to see what happens to equipment as it flows through different operations."

"Nate's idea was the paradigm shift which enabled the team to discover greater opportunities for waste reduction and savings," Moran said. "Every member of the team contributed their experience and creativity to the event which resulted in the outstanding results which were achieved."

Thomas explained his idea was inspired from looking at the two operations as a



Frank Mihalich of Tobyhanna Army Depot moves equipment destined for a repair shop to where it can be picked up by a delivery vehicle. A Lean event by Tobyhanna and the Defense Distribution Depot Tobyhanna established the area to improve the accuracy of equipment delivery to repair shops.

whole and seeing the floor-space aspect as a means to solve the problem.

Wood said the solution also improves safety because it reduces the number of mules and forklifts operating in the area.

“It was a fantastic idea,” Heuberger said. “Nobody was thinking of physically combining the locations of our processes in the way Nathan described. We’re capitalizing on both organizations’ ability to provide best support to the war fighter.

“We had a really good team,” Heuberger added. “When we had the meetings, everybody participated, the union input was great. DDTP has participated in other Lean events, but this one had the most impact for us.”

“This team had the right mix of discipline, experience and creative thinking to objectively focus on the problem, avoid any parochialism and develop an ‘out of the box’ solution,” Moran said. “The presence of John Heuberger as the team leader and Michael Henry reinforced the importance and commitment to resolving this issue.”

For his efforts, Thomas received a DDTP Commander’s Coin.

DDYJ aims to enhance work environment

By Jonathan R. Lontoc, DDYJ Public Affairs

Following the establishment of the Defense Distribution Depot Yokosuka, Japan, Climate/Culture Improvement Team last year, DDYJ continues to raise the bar with the formation of the DDYJ Climate/Culture Advisory Group.

In August 2006, the improvement team was chartered to find what was needed to improve the climate and culture of the command. They generated, developed, and presented an actionable plan to implement improvements over the next two years and beyond.

The advisory group picks up where the improvement team left off. Their



Members of the DDYJ Climate/Culture Advisory Group discuss improvement objectives. Left to right, Petty Officer First Class Alan Florez, Mai Yamada, Michiyo Aoyama, Masatoshi Takano, Hideki Furuyama, and Tanya Maclay. Not pictured: Shigehiro Honda.

mission is to assist the command in designing the culture and climate improvement roadmap. “There was a tremendous amount of hard work done by the improvement team to capture recommendations for how to make our organization healthier, and we want to build on that foundation,” says Navy Cmdr. Will Clarke, commander of DDYJ.

Based on the team’s recommendations, the advisory group will develop a proposed strategy for making improvements and interface with the DDYJ’s executive board to determine what actions they will take.

“Past experience has shown us that

it takes an initial time investment to get things off the ground,” said Clarke.

“We are in the process of building a plan of action with milestones. It will be posted for everyone to see,” said Tanya Maclay, DDYJ’s training coordinator. “We are also looking at implementing an employee handbook, customer directory handbook, and customer handbook.”

Dubbed the “Magnificent Seven,” DDYJ personnel await the contributions of the group and look forward to an environment that will serve to make work even more productive and rewarding.



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