



News Release

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DEFENSE DISTRIBUTION CENTER

For Immediate Release

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Reservists bring needed skills to disaster response

SEGUIN, TEXAS (Sept. 19, 2008) – The reservists attached to the Defense Distribution Center bring a variety of needed skills when they are activated in support of DDC missions.

When DDC's Deployable Distribution Center, or DDXX, deployed to Texas' Gulf Coast region after Hurricane Ike devastated the area Sept. 13, four reservists deployed with the center. According to the deployable center's leaders, the skills they brought with them were invaluable.

“Our reserves have been absolutely crucial to our ability to operate effectively mainly because they are able to quickly plug themselves into key positions where the depth of experience is isolated to a very few,” said Scot Seitz, deputy director of the deployable center. “Without the reserve component added to our organization, we would simply burn ourselves out in a very short period of time.”

The reservists who deployed with the deployable center were Navy Storekeepers 2nd Class Desiree King and Lance Tibbs, Navy Storekeeper Chief Peter Keys, and Marine Corps Chief Warrant Officer 4 Mark Bowen.

Each of the reservists brings a skill the deployable center needs to make sure they get the job done. Bowen is a ground supply officer with experience doing exactly the type of missions the DDXX was called on to perform in Texas. King is a supply specialist with more than 18 years of combined active duty and reserve experience, and her job was to track what came in and where it was sent.

Tibbs has been in the Naval Reserve for a little more than five years, but works in the grocery business in his civilian job and his experience in that area is important when delivering food, water and ice to those



Marine Corps Reserve Chief Warrant Officer 4 Mark Bowen discusses supply issues with a representative from FEMA Sept. 19. Bowen deployed to Texas with the Deployable Distribution Center to help with the recovery efforts after Hurricane Ike devastated the region Sept. 13.

in the region who have lost their homes and need basic necessities to get through the ordeal.

King and Bowen worked the day shift for the DDXX team at its operation in Seguin, Texas. Tibbs and Keys worked on night shift, with Keys acting as the supervisor for that shift.

Keys brings 19 years of Navy experience to DDXX. He believes the reservists bring versatility and leadership to DDXX.

“I came here expecting to be given the keys to a forklift,” Keys explained. “Here I am supervising 42 people on the night shift.”

He describes his job during the operation as making sure the trucks carrying relief supplies are processed safely and efficiently, but quickly moved further down the line to those that need the items. His enthusiasm for the job is evident as he talks about it.

“This has been one of the most satisfying experiences of my life,” Keys said. “Integrating with FEMA has been exciting and providing relief to those in need has been the most rewarding part.”

Bowen, who has more than 23 years of experience in the Marine Corps, brings a lot of logistical experience at the operational and tactical level to the table for DDXX. He was activated during the initial months of the Global War on Terror and served six months as a logistics watch officer at Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps. He uses that experience to help make DDXX’s operations more efficient.”

“I see pieces of the operation and suggest changes from a tactical sense,” he said.

Bowen also believes that having reservists on the team helps provide common experience for everyone to draw from. He feels that he’s learned from the experience too.

“I could take ideas I learned here and use them to set up a similar facility at 29 Palms,” said Bowen referring to the Marine Corps base in California. “Seeing how the FEMA experts did things was impressive.”

King and Tibbs have both deployed to Iraq and bring that experience to the table when they deploy with DDXX. But both are also motivated for this mission by one of the same reasons they serve in the military, a desire to help people. Both are proud of what they are doing, and see helping hurricane survivors as simply another opportunity to serve.

“We are here to help those who are in need,” said King, who completed a six-month tour in Iraq in June. “I’d want someone to do the same for me or my family if the situation was reversed.”

The Deployable Distribution Center was established in June 2006 in response to a need identified by the Department of Defense after Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans and the surrounding area in August 2005. It was funded through the Defense Logistics Agency's research and development program and was part of a larger program funded by the Undersecretary of Defense for Advanced Systems and Concepts.

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The Deployable Distribution Center is a capability of the Defense Distribution Center (DDC) headquartered in New Cumberland, Pa. DDC headquarters operates a network of 25 other fixed distribution sites around the world. By offering this deployable distribution capability, DDC headquarters provides the military and/or emergency responders with world-class support for the distribution of supplies anywhere in the world and on very short notice. DDC headquarters, established in 1997, is a field activity of the Defense Logistics Agency.