

Employee Initiative Increases Productivity, Team Spirit “NOTHING IS PARTICULARLY HARD IF YOU DIVIDE IT INTO SMALL JOBS.”- HENRY FORD

By Abraham Molinares, DDSP Public Affairs

William Stover, Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, PA (DDSP) Lead Supply Technician, took the assembly line creator's words to heart when he saw an opportunity to make an improvement in the Active Item Bulk area of the Eastern Distribution Center (EDC). While others were plagued by the grueling game of catch up with backlog, Willie saw an opportunity to work smarter and not harder.

With the blessing and freedom to try his initiative from his supervisor, Gary Ziegler, Willie turned what was once an individual mission into a team mission. Incorporating the idea of Henry Ford's assembly line, Willie used two other employees,



The Original DK Team: (From left to right) *Valerie Dickerson, William Stover, Vickie Gingrich, Gary Ziegler*

Vicki Gingrich and Kendra Amrhein, to break down the work into organized separate steps. Receipt, stow, picking, packing, and shipping went from the burden of one individual to the

responsibility of three - and tripling productivity.

In doing so, the team concept saw productivity rise from 50-60 picks per person a night, to an outstanding 100-150

picks per person a night. After being implemented throughout the entire Bulk Area area, the backlog decreased over a three month period from 40,000 units to zero. When asked about where his idea came from, Willie replied "It just made sense."

"Working together, getting to know each other, you get to enjoy each other and have fun working. On your own, you just kind of go through the motions, but this helped the spirits. With the depth that we were and everyone coming together to work towards a common goal, Willie's idea proved essential," said Ziegler.

DDCO Establishes Safety Tenets

At the Defense Distribution Center (DDC), employee safety is an important concern both to ensure the health of our employees and also to ensure DDC's ability to meet the needs of America's Warfighters.

Defense Distribution Depot Columbus, OH (DDCO) recognizes this concern and has established five key principles to maintaining their perfect safety record (year to date).

DDCO's number one rule is to have a good safety representative. "Our safety representative is a person who also serves as our

facilities specialist, our security specialist and our storage specialist. Most accidents tend to involve these three areas, so we put them under one person's oversight," said DDCO Director Don Brown.

The second safety rule for DDCO is to limit employees' exposure to anything that may cause an accident. "We look at mechanization and ask if it is really necessary for completing the mission," Brown said. "This has not only reduced accident exposure, but it has also

increased DDCO's productivity and enabled us to better meet our mission requirements," said Brown.

Brown also believes in reporting safety-related incidents as soon as possible. "We insist on quick reporting so that potential safety problems can be corrected before another accident occurs," said Brown.

Rule number four at DDCO is to regularly reinforce the importance of working safely. According to Brown, "It's just like the shift meetings on the TV

show *Hill Street Blues* when the shift leader's last comment is, 'Remember, be careful out there.' "

The fifth safety rule at DDCO is to continue reinforcing the safety message. "We use monthly safety meetings and updates to raise safety awareness."

And the payoffs for all this hard work in creating a safe workplace at DDCO? "We have a healthier, more productive workforce, and that allows us to better support the Warfighter," said Brown.