

# The end of an era – closing DDCO

Facing the closure of DDCO, teammates approached the disestablishment process with the same “Dedicated, Dependable, Customer Oriented” support that was prevalent during the Cold War, previous BRAC processes, and downsizing as a result of A-76 (a competition process).

From the installation’s beginnings during World War I in 1918, the floods of the 1920s, the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Shield, Desert Storm, and Operations Enduring Freedom/Iraqi Freedom, DDCO continually met the challenges by focusing on war fighter support, stewardship, growth and development, and leadership. DDCO personnel served with pride, during war and peace, supporting the war fighters and major customers, setting the standards for distribution center support.

Throughout the closure effort, 19 DDCO personnel processed more than 187,000 documents, which included about 52,000 low-demand mission documents, more than 115,000 Stock Transfer Orders, and more than 19,000 disposal documents. The closure process was accomplished by scheduling bulk materiel documents first to enable the vacating of the outlying buildings. Buildings 17, 18, and 19 were the first to be completed and returned for reuse by other activities.

In vacating Building 17 during July 2006, an era ended at DDCO. The last shipment of 22,000 pairs of Defense Logistic Agency “shoe-lasts” was made to the Texas Institute for the Blind in Austin, Texas. From a total quantity of over 2 million wood and plastic lasts stored and repaired by DDCO teammates, the inventory had steadily declined until the final shipment was made.

As this was completed, the processing of more than 87,000 documents for bin materiel began in June 2007. Assistance in picking and packing the bin materiel was provided by 20 Navy and Marine Corps DLA reservists. In August and September 2007, further assistance was provided by associates from the Defense Reutilization and Marketing Service and the U.S. Army’s Aviation and Missile Command in the disposal of specialized materiel in storage.

Also during this time, DDCO provided emergency support to the war fighters when requested. Even to the extent that DDCO did not seal containers that had redistribution orders until ready to ship. This was done so that DDCO could retrieve materiel to fulfill any high priority material release order shipments from those items already scheduled to be shipped to another distribution center for storage.

As DDCO vacated its buildings and transferred stock, pallet stacking frames were made available for redistribution. These frames were shipped to other distribution centers and Army activities as needed. In all, DDCO redistributed 15,290 frames valued at \$3.2 million. The transportation cost was \$255,000, resulting in a cost avoidance to the Defense Distribution Center of more than \$3 million.

At the end, DDCO had achieved its goal of vacating all warehouses of materiel by April 1, 2008. In doing so, DDCO teammates processed almost 34,000 shipments, weighing over 19 million pounds, with transportation costs of \$2.5 million.

The final shipment of materiel was made to sister site Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Pa., on March 28, 2008. Some

disposals were held in place until June 15 when they were finally shipped to the disposal contractor.

The remaining six months of operations for DDCO was to reduce and redistribute infrastructure. Although some infrastructure items were shipped to other distribution centers, the majority of the forklifts, scooters, sweepers, and supplies were transferred to Defense Distribution Depot Warner Robins, Ga., which has expanded their mission as a result of the same



*Don Brown, director of Defense Distribution Depot Columbus, Ohio, from 1997 to 2008. Brown was the first civilian to lead a distribution center within the Defense Logistics Agency.*

BRAC 2005 process which recommended the disestablishment of DDCO.

Another important mission in the remaining months of operations was to ensure that DDCO employees were given opportunities to continue careers if they wished. Of the 19 DDCO teammates who operated the distribution center through

the final BRAC process, eight elected to retire and 11 will continue their careers.

The closure of DDCO was accomplished one year ahead of the recommended closure date of September 2009. This would not have been possible without the highly motivated teammates of DDCO and their dedication to mission accomplishment.



*Top row, left to right: John Van Horn, Darrell Walton, Preston Yeager, Steve Miracle. Second row: Cecil Crockett, Forrest Wonderlen, Werner Nelson. Third row: Jeff Morgan, Gerald Duncan, Mark Stanley. Fourth row: Don Spencer, Bob Milligan, Ricky Newman. Fifth row: Ron Radford, Tom Thimmes, Linda Mandeville, Greg Floom, Lottie Skipper.*