

operations extending beyond the Mediterranean, stretching further east and south into Europe and Africa. Although initially developed to support naval operations and afloat units in the Sixth Fleet Area of Responsibility, DLA Distribution Sigonella, Italy,

takes advantage of its strategic location and unique capabilities to support and sustain all Department of Defense agencies in a joint environment.

“At DLA Distribution Sigonella, Italy, we constantly strive to

improve logistical support to Warfighters worldwide,” said Gill. “I look forward to continuing to build valuable relationships with customers in the EUCOM and AFRICOM AORs and evolving our support.”

DLA Distribution Europe Surface Optimization supporting Warfighter Support Enhancement and Stewardship Excellence

By *Thomas Brame and Charles Crumb, DLA Distribution Europe*

The Distribution Process Owner Strategic Opportunities, or DSO, team, consisting of the United States Transportation Command, Defense Logistics Agency, and U.S. General Services Administration, is working collaboratively with DLA Distribution Europe’s partners and customers to drive significant, tangible improvements in distribution performance to the Warfighter. One specific improvement included in the DSO effort is Strategic Surface Optimization, which focuses on the DLA Director’s focus areas of Warfighter Support Enhancement and Stewardship Excellence.

Working to that end, DLA Distribution Europe recently added an additional capability to handle 40 ft. containers, made possible through new container handling equipment, or CHE. The new CHE has the capability of handling 20 and 40 ft. containers and can lift up to 45 metric tons, or 99,000 pounds.

Prior to receiving the CHE, DLA Distribution Europe shipped only 20 ft. containers to customers in Afghanistan, accommodating approximately 20,000 lbs. The ability to ship 40 ft. containers now allows for approximately 44,000 ft. of transport. This constitutes a significant improvement for the distribution center, considering that the majority of freight being sent is construction materiel. One truck hauling two 20 ft. containers can accommodate eight bundles of 16 ft. lumber, whereas one truck with a 40 ft. container can hold not only the eight bundles of lumber, but also an additional four bundles of plywood. As a result, the container shipped is now fully utilized and the Warfighter now receives more freight per shipment.

Additionally, the capability included cost efficiencies. It was determined that the average cost to ship 20 ft. containers via the Northern Distribution Network, or NDN, is approximately \$32,000 per



truck; however, a 40 ft. container saves approximately \$11,000 per shipment.

DLA Distribution Europe began shipment of 40 ft. containers on a regular basis utilizing the new CHE in early Aug. 2010. Since August, there have been 381 40 ft. containers shipped via the NDN, equating to a savings of approximately \$4.2 million, or a return on investment of nearly \$3.5 million.

DLA Distribution Europe’s added capability is just another fine example of how the agency, as a whole, continues to look for ways to reduce cost while preserving or enhancing support to the Warfighter.