

DDC team links both ends of supply chain

By Jessica Walter, APR, DDC Public Affairs

Amid the din of ringing phones and collaborating co-workers, Eric Mueller takes a call from a supply center colleague. “I hear what you’re saying. We can help with that,” Mueller says to the caller who is a Weapon System Support Manager, or WSSM (pronounced “Whism”), from sister organization Defense Supply Center Columbus, Ohio.

Mueller’s hands work rapidly over the keyboard, accessing various systems used to track orders and delivery of military supplies all around the world.

The Weapon System Support Manager wants to make sure repair parts for a lightweight howitzer arrive successfully at the other end of the supply chain where Army units in Iraq and Afghanistan are waiting for them.

After conferring with several agencies involved in the purchasing and distribution of the parts, Mueller was able to provide information that would allow the parts manufacturer to package and label the shipments properly for a smooth ride through the supply chain.

This type of inquiry, in addition to questions about cargo status, is routine for Mueller and his co-workers in the Customer Support and Supplier Engagement area of the Defense Distribution Center headquarters in New Cumberland, Pa.

“Typically, we’re on the phone with support representatives from the supply centers or the [armed] services, researching the availability and status of shipments,” Mueller explained.

DDC is a field activity of the Defense Logistics Agency, so Mueller and his teammates work closely with customer account managers from DDC’s sister organizations – the supply centers in Columbus, Ohio; Richmond, Va.; and Philadelphia, Pa. – each day to get supplies where they need to be.

By accessing a variety of systems from his PC, Mueller can see the entire lifecycle of a Materiel Release Order, or MRO, that has been sent to request supplies.

According to Mueller, the ability to access a variety systems often comes in handy. “Sometimes a shipment isn’t even coming from a DDC location, but if someone calls, we want to be able to give them an answer. We’ll give them as much information as we can along with points of contact.”

DDC has about 40 employees working on customer support teams divided by Army, Marine Corps and Navy, Air Force, and Troop Support. In 2007, they handled about 210,000 inquiries.

General Supply Specialists like

Mueller also spend a lot of time collaborating with DLA customer support representatives, or CSRs, who are located with DLA’s military customers. “Talking with them helps us better understand the needs of customers at certain locations, and the CSRs can give us the intel we need to help us look ahead,” he continued.

Mueller, like nearly half of DDC’s workforce, was once on the other end of the supply chain himself. He says having prior military service has been very helpful in understanding the needs of DDC’s customers.

“I understand the development, operations, maintenance and sustainment of complex weapons systems, their components and the soldiers who



Eric Mueller, foreground, of the Defense Distribution Center’s support team for Army customers, assists with moving supplies through the supply chain. Team members also pictured are Tim Schaming, seated; team leader Sherry Amrhein, left; and Ygraine Adams. Not pictured: Darlene Davis, Maria Joseph, Cory J. Shover, Linda Norman, Tracy Coffee, and Doug Enders.

operate, maintain and repair them,” Mueller said.

Employees’ passion for the mission has become a key component in DDC’s strategic vision to become an expeditionary partner for America’s war fighters.

“I also have a son who is a second lieutenant in the Air Force and a nephew who is a captain in the Army, so this is very personal to me,” Mueller added.

For Mueller and his teammates, the payoffs of the job go far beyond the paycheck. “Of course we love what we do. Wouldn’t you? When you find a solution for our customers – especially our customers – you have a true sense of accomplishment.”

The Defense Distribution Center is the leading provider of distribution support to America’s military including receiving, storing and issuing supplies as well as other tailored services to increase war fighter readiness. Customer support is available 24 hours a day at 1-877-DLA-CALL.

DDAG builds boxes to ship armor for mine-resistant vehicles

By Scott Woosley, DDC Public Affairs

Employees at Defense Distribution Depot Albany, Ga., recently took on the task of building crates to ship armor upgrade kits for mine-resistant armored vehicles, or MRAPs, to Iraq for use by U.S. war fighters.

Al Lundy, one of DDAG’s woodworkers, designed the boxes and began building them Feb. 19. The total order was for 2,000 with the first 200 to be complete by Feb. 29, so initially he and his co-workers built 20 per day.

It’s a necessary but satisfying job for Lundy and Judy Knight, the DDAG program manager for the project. All of DDAG’s employees who were involved know how important it is to build crates that are easy to ship and sturdy enough to make sure the kits arrive intact.

“These kits save lives,” Knight said. “Our job is a key part of making sure the kits arrive quickly and in good condition.”

Lundy has experience designing these kinds of shipping crates. He helped design and build similar crates for the Marine Corps’ Frag 5 Armor program that shipped armor upgrade kits to Iraq in 2007. While those earlier kits were intended for different vehicles, Humvees for example, they served the same purpose—providing additional protection from improvised explosive devices for the men and women of the military serving in Iraq and other places around the world.

“Having the experience of building the Frag 5 crates gave us a starting point for designing these crates,” Lundy said.

Each crate took about four-and-a-half hours to build. The entire staff pitched in to make sure the initial goal of 20 per day was met.

“This is a good team,” Lundy said. “We all know how important this project is and everyone works together to get it done.”



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Al Lundy, left, and Alex Rockwell, right, discuss the construction of a crate that will hold armor upgrade kits for mine-resistant armored vehicles, or MRAPs. The kits are destined for Iraq. Lundy, Rockwell, and other woodworkers at Defense Distribution Depot Albany, Ga., built 20 crates per day from Feb. 19 to Feb. 29.