

Semmler awarded Bronze Star

By Stacy L. Umstead, DDC Command Affairs Office

CDR Mark E. Semmler, SC, USN, Commander of Defense Distribution Depot Sigonella, Italy (DDSI), was recently awarded the Bronze Star for meritorious service in a combat zone from January 11 to June 17, 2006, during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Presenting this prestigious award on behalf of the Commanding General, Multi-National Security Transition Command, Iraq, was BG Lynn A. Collyar, USA, Commander, Defense Distribution Center (DDC).

CDR Semmler distinguished himself by exceptionally meritorious service to the United States as the Officer-in-Charge of the Military Transition Training Team for logistics and Senior Advisor to the Iraqi Commanding General of the Regional Support Unit at the Al Kasik Iraqi Army Base in northern Iraq. Embedded with the Iraqi Army, he and a small team of specialized Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen trained their counterparts in garrison management, materiel distribution, contract management, fuels management, facilities management, communications, and base security among other disciplines. In the course of his mission, CDR Semmler routinely exposed himself to both direct and indirect fires in some of the most perilous,



DDC Commander BG Lynn Collyar, USA, (right) awards DDSI Commander CDR Mark Semmler, SC, USN, the Bronze Star.

high-risk areas of Iraq as he conducted numerous ground combat patrols, air combat support missions, and civil affairs missions.

CDR Semmler's remarkable performance far exceeded standards and expectations of his command in both scope and quality. He generated significant momentum in setting up preconditions for the transition of Regional Support Unit Al Kasik to Iraqi lead. His drive played a significant role in accomplishing his intent for the regional logistic support concept and base management. This accomplishment directly enhanced combat readiness of more than 10,000 Iraqi soldiers in the Nineveh region of Northern Iraq.

Under his leadership, Al Kasik was the first Regional Support Unit, and the first of its kind in Iraq, to train and turn over an all Iraqi Army-operated military jail and certified detention facility.

Upon accepting the Bronze Star, CDR Semmler expressed his admiration for those he served with. "I'm honored and humbled to receive this recognition. Together, my unit and the Iraqi military made significant strides to help in the Iraqi liberation process.

"I'm certainly proud to have served alongside each and every person during my tour – this medal belongs to all of them!"



CDR Semmler in Iraq.

DDC's Cravener awarded Exceptional Civilian Service Award

By Polly Charbonneau, DDC Command Affairs

Janet Cravener, the Defense Distribution Center's Deputy Director for Logistics Operations, was awarded the Defense Logistics Agency Exceptional Civilian Service

Award by VADM Keith Lippert, SC, USN, former DLA Director, for her superior and exceptional work she has accomplished in improving Department of Defense inventory accuracy, in a ceremony held via video teleconference June 29, 2006.

VADM Lippert said that Cravener's innovative approaches led DDC to its best performance ever. DDC's inventory accuracy is at levels never seen before, VADM Lippert said. Cravener's commitment to excellence in training and performance have been the hallmarks of these successes.

Under Ms. Cravener's leadership, DDC put a concentrated focus on improving the accuracy of DLA and Service-owned inventory. One of the major characteristics of Cravener's inventory improvement regimen was the standardization of distribution center training that rolled out over the past eighteen months. More than 3,000 DDC employees were trained in policy and proper



During a VTC, Janet Cravener (2nd from left) was awarded the DLA Exceptional Civilian Service Award by VADM Keith Lippert, SC, USN, former DLA Director.



Pat McCormick, DDC's Logistics Operations Director, pins Janet Cravener with the DLA Exceptional Civilian Service Medal.

procedure for Receiving, Warehousing, Stock Readiness and Inventory Control.

The DDC program, called Swarm, began with the goal of reducing initial errors in daily receiving, warehousing, issuing, and other distribution areas to improve inventory accuracy. Cravener created a six-step process to execute the Swarm initiative and formed an Inventory Integrity Team to manage the DDC-wide inventory integrity program. She also put into place a team of trainers, which included two full-time trainers for each functional area. The Swarm training modules she created are comprehensive manuals that not only incorporate the technical piece, but also provide the operational and functional policy and procedures. The training focuses on the importance of performing distribution functions properly from the very beginning of the receiving process. She coordinated the training via

satellite through interactive video sessions or video teleconferencing, which was a substantial cost savings for the Agency.

The cornerstone of the Swarm training is four comprehensive formal modules—which include Policy, Functional and Distribution Standard System (DSS) training—in the areas that have direct impact on Inventory Accuracy. These areas include Stock Readiness, Inventory, Receiving, and Warehousing. To monitor inventory accuracy, Cravener also assigned an Accountable Officer at each distribution center who reports directly to the distribution center Commander. The Accountable Officer analyzes all the material adjustments that occur and works with operational managers to address processes that are causing the gains and losses. It is their job to ensure record integrity and to develop a monthly Inventory Accuracy metrics report.

Cravener also initiated major clean up of warehouses through re-warehousing, ensuring locations are marked correctly, conducting wall-to-wall inventories, correcting the erroneous records through enhancements in DSS, and marketing Swarm through posters and calendars sent to each depot to advertise the program and keep it on the employees' mind.

Swarm resulted in significant improvement in customer fulfillment and accuracy goals. Well below the DOD goal of 1 percent, the DDC denial rate has consistently been under 0.5 percent. A DDC goal for an Absolute Adjustment Rate, which is the measure of the financial integrity of the balance records, has declined from 19 percent to 4.7 percent under Cravener's leadership. These two metrics highlight the improvements that have been achieved over the past two years and show the value

that Cravener has placed on being a responsible steward when handling the supplies vital to our military forces.

These efforts have led to tremendous results. By February 2006, 15 distribution centers had met all accuracy goals, due to her efforts. When the initiative started in 2003, only 39 percent of the total inventory categories were within goal across the distribution centers. To date, 75 percent of the categories have met or exceeded the inventory performance standards.

Inventory Accuracy is a challenging goal—with 26 worldwide distribution centers, nearly four million different stock numbers, more than 327 million cubic feet of storage space, and more than 25 million transactions annually. Through aggressive Swarm processes and initiatives, Cravener has set the bar for inventory excellence across all 26 DDC distribution centers.

