



Defense Distribution Depot Yokosuka and the workforce behind the scenes

By Jonathan Lontoc, DDYJ

Celebrating more than 10 years as a distribution depot in the Far East, Defense Distribution Depot Yokosuka, Japan, has played a major role in the sustainment of military operations for forward deployed military forces since the start of the millennium.

As one of six depots that operate outside the United States, it stands as the largest Outside the Continental United States depot in the Defense Logistics Agency. DDYJ is primarily located on the U.S. Naval Base in Yokosuka, Japan, just 43 miles south of Tokyo. Its command office and largest operations are located in Yokosuka and it also manages supply functions in Sasebo, Yokohama, and the island of Okinawa, all with over 1.2 million square feet of storage space.

DDYJ Yokosuka supports the forward deployed Naval forces in the Western Pacific including the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS George Washington and 17 other ships of the Seventh Fleet. Other customers include the Ship Repair Facility and Japan Regional Maintenance Center Yokosuka, the Navy's largest ship repair facility in the Western Pacific. Approximately 85 percent of all requisitions are issued to U.S. Navy establishments.

Yokosuka's services include storage, handling, and transportation of DLA wholesale items, Navy retail material,

General Services Administration, hazardous material, ship store items such as candies and beverages, and repairable parts for the Navy's ships and aviation communities. Warehouses at Yokohama North Dock store many of the depot's bulk items.

DDYJ's detachment on the U.S. Naval Base in Sasebo is situated 600 miles to the South West of Yokosuka on the southern island of Kyushu. The detachment services the Naval amphibious forward deployed ships which include the USS Essex.

Located over 1000 miles further down the island chain, in the Southwestern-most part of Japan, is DDYJ detachment Okinawa, which began operations in May 2008. Okinawa provides support to combatant commands, military services, and other agencies located on the island. Top customers include the Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 36, the Third Marine Logistics Group, and the Air Force's 18th Logistics Readiness Squadron with 50 percent of the total requisitions going to the U.S. Marines and another 24 percent to the U.S. Air Force.

A major part of DDYJ's success is due to its mixture of military, U.S. Civil Service, and Japanese National workforce. The commitment and strong work ethic that the Japanese are known for is a key factor in accomplishing the depot's mission and constitutes the long term continuity and "backbone" of the organization.

Since its inception, DDYJ's support to forward deployed forces has grown in the Far East. Supply support has expanded due to the recent arrival of the USS George Washington. Plans have also been made for DDYJ to launch a Theater Consolidation and Shipping Point. The TSCP will provide consolidation and segregation of shipments from various sources and prepare them for shipment directly to customers. Lastly, the creation of DDYJ's detachment in Okinawa, one of the most important accomplishments of 2008, has enabled tremendous growth in material distribution service to support U.S. combatant commands, military services, and other agencies located on the island and worldwide.

Some unique functions of DDYJ include the Emergency Supply Operations Center, or ESOC. ESOC works closely with its supply chain partners in the area of operations which include the Navy's Fleet Industrial Support Center, Defense Supply Center Philadelphia, Yokota Air Base, the 836th Transportation Battalion, Defense Reutilization and Marketing Service and others. Operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week, ESOC will track, monitor, and expedite urgent requisitions for contingency operations and vital readiness requirements of its customers.

In an effort to ease supply operations aboard naval vessels, the Material Processing Center was created to provide customized material processing for ships and

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Employees at the Defense Distribution Depot Yokosuka, Japan. Photo by DDYJ.

military units stationed in or visiting the area. “MPC personnel understand how important it is to have a capable and ready fighting Force,” says United States Navy Lt. Juan Espiritusantu, who manages the military personnel at DDYJ. “We’ll do everything we can to make sure the material reaches the Warfighter as soon as possible.” MPC’s operations minimize material handling, saving time and money.

Another of the depot’s unique functions reflects recent global concerns over the spread of the H1N1 virus. Since the outbreak of the virus, DDYJ has been involved in storing and distributing the much needed vaccine. Strict handling and temperature control measures have provided customers with the assurance that the medical

supplies they receive from the depot are effectively managed and safe to use. DDYJ stands ready to provide support as the main distributor of over 1 million doses of H1N1 vaccine and other medical supplies for the 5th fleet in the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, and the 7th fleet in the Western Pacific.

On a lighter side, DDYJ employees seek out opportunities to connect with the community both on and off base. They actively participate in festive events from the traditional end of year rice or “mochi” pounding celebration to the annual Friendship Festival which draws thousands of visitors each year. According to DDYJ employee Kazuki Hayakawa, who coordinates many of the neighborhood events that the depot participates in, “The people

really like it. They like to come and experience different cultures and that’s why they come.” The depot’s involvement with the community has served to promote good will and friendship to the local inhabitants.

International cooperation between the U.S. and Japan’s military forces has been vital to the safety of the waters around Japan. For this reason, DDYJ contributes greatly by providing logistics training through briefs and tours of depot operations to their logistics counterparts from the Japanese Self Defense Forces and other logistics organizations.

DDYJ continues to support the Warfighter abroad through partnerships with the military services, federal agencies, and the nation’s allies and will continue to do so well into the future.