

Walking in the Customer's Shoes

DDJC Visits the National Training Center

By Doug Imberi, DDJC Public Affairs

In an effort to consistently provide responsive, best value distribution service that is tailored to the customer's needs and reduces customer wait time, Defense Distribution Depot San Joaquin, CA (DDJC) teammates make routine visits to customers. During the most recent visit to Ft Irwin, CA., DDJC Commander, Col. Edward Visker, USA, along with ten DDJC teammates including forklift drivers, packers, material handlers and the Traffic Manager made the trip to the National Training Center (NTC).

The team traveled via a Chinook helicopter courtesy of the California Army National Guard at the Stockton Army Aviation Support Facility. DDJC teammates took the opportunity to talk directly with the Ft Irwin Central Receiving Point personnel about the supplies shipped from the San Joaquin Center and see first hand how they fit into the supply pipeline.

Visits to customers provide valuable insight into specific needs and requirements while at the same time establishing professional face-to-face business relationships.

"There is nothing like walking the terrain with the customer," said Transportation Division deputy chief, Bill Handewith. "By walking their receiving floor you understand their mission and what their needs are and we can tailor our processes to better support them."

"Some customers, especially Navy customers, want their priority receipts segregated from the routines," said Fred Clary, DDJC's Customer Service Branch. "Other customers like Ft Hood, Ft Bliss and Ft Riley want everything in one box. It has to do with the way their receiving operations are set up."

According to Handewith, the most useful information comes from the person who works the receipts shipped from DDJC, not just managers or commanders.

One of the accomplishments was getting some of the Navy and Marine customers to start using the Army's Automated Manifest System cards. Demonstrating how the cards provide 100 percent accountability of the items on each shipment and automatic reports of any discrepancies makes it appealing to customers.

Another benefit of the visits is the dialogue that produces information on a wide variety of distribution topics.

"We will offer advice on how customers can enhance their operation using packing processes at DDJC or special equipment such as foam in place machines for special items," said Handewith.

DDJC tries to visit each customer at least every two years, many several times a year.

"Since the military change duty stations every two or three years, and requirements change," said Handewith, "we need to shake their hands and look them in the eye, to be on their team. To provide continuity with the warfighter we need to understand their business needs now and in the future."

Each visit always concludes with an invitation for the customer to visit DDJC.

"To be on the same team, they need to see how we support them and understand our end of the business," concluded Handewith.



Ten DDJC teammates visited Ft Irwin's National Training Center, to see the other side of the supply pipeline. Here they check out the items shipped from DDJC the previous night.