

# Pure Pallets Save Lives, Reduce Warriors' Wait Time for Shipments

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*DDJC employees ready pure pallet for shipment overseas.*

Defense Distribution Depot San Joaquin, CA (DDJC) Distribution Process Worker Karl Daniels applies web nets to a Pure Pallet destined for Iraq. The air pallets are trucked to aerial ports in Dover and Charleston, where they are airlifted to Southwest Asia.

In October, the DDC Commander, BG Kathleen Gainey, USA, received an email from a customer in Iraq. The commander of the 71st Corps Support Battalion in Balad, Iraq thanked BG Gainey for building pure pallets, meaning the pallet contained items for one customer only and were not mixed with other customers requisitions. Those changes in the way DDJC shipped items to the 71st CSB reduced the manpower required on the receiving end and saved lives when the Corps Distribution Center was attacked. The following are excerpts from that message.

“Last night was the longest night as a Battalion Commander. The Corps Distribution Center (CDC) came under heavy mortar attack. Thank God no one was hurt....I want to thank your folks personally for making pure pallets, this has allowed me to reduce the number of soldiers working in the CDC, especially at night.”

“Instead of using all the available Soldiers to rebuild pallets, I can give them time off, use them to help guard the base, or remove them from harms way. I want all your folks to know that... if we had more Soldiers working down here we may not have been so lucky.”

Currently DDJC is building pure pallets for 34 customers in Southwest Asia (SWA). These are the top 34 customers and the list is being reviewed and updated constantly. “When other units get to Iraq and put in big orders, they go on the Pure Pallet program,” said DDJC Consolidation and Containerization Point (CCP) Branch Chief, Bob Mahan.

At first, the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) identified 11 customers they wanted to get Pure Pallets. Traffic management specialists like Wendy Granados continuously run statistical analysis to determine additional high volume customers based on weight, lines and cube.

Before Pure Pallets were instituted, pallets contained supplies for several customers at a single location. The pallets would go

to a Break Bulk Point and get separated out. Mahan figures it has cut at least one day off the receiving process in SWA. “We also thought it would cost us more on our end, but it doesn’t,” said Mahan. “Material is segregated out and it makes it easier to estimate pallet loads and takes steps off the process.”

Additionally, the Pure Pallets have cut down on the screening previously required since the material is segregated by location. “It gives us improved visibility,” Mahan adds. “Now you can see it better on the floor.”

Pure Pallets are part of an effort to help reduce the immense workload at Defense Distribution Center Susquehanna, PA (DDSP) for SWA customers. DDJC developed a team to find ways to speed throughput to SWA and decrease customer wait time. This team came up with steps to eliminate time consuming tasks like building air pallets at the aerial ports and reduce overall pipeline time for these shipments. It started with certain commodities like track pads, engines, bullet proof vests, tires, sand bags, boots and tow bars.

These items were put on air pallets, covered with plastic and nets, ready for loading onto cargo planes. The items were trucked directly to Air Force aerial ports at Dover and Charleston for delivery to SWA, bypassing the DDSP CCP. Then in July, five customers were designated by DDSP for the SP Bypass regardless of commodity.

“Port personnel were delighted the material arrived on appropriately configured pallets with the required nets and radio frequency tracking tags,” explained Transportation Division Chief, Dennis Barnum. “It saved them from performing this time consuming step and enabled them to focus on high priority cargo that is constantly arriving. Our coordination also assisted in their aircraft load planning, enabling them to better utilize aircraft space.

From July through mid-December, DDJC built and shipped 1,584 air pallets, averaging 5,000 pounds each to CENTCOM customers. In September an extra swing shift was instituted to handle the SP Bypass mission. “We identified that it takes 19 employees to work just the SP Bypass,” said Mahan.

The SP Bypass has cut customer wait time for troops in SWA by approximately 8 days said Mahan.

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