

Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Pennsylvania

RECEIVING DIVISION PUTS “HOT AIR” TO USE

By: Major Mark Rivers, Australian Regular Army

Employees assigned to Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Pennsylvania (DDSP) Receiving Division are always seeking improvement in their processes, productivity and customer support. Therefore, it shouldn't come as a surprise to find that the DDSP Surface Outbound area have found a way to enhance all three, through of all things, harnessing the power of air.

When John Price, DDSP Packing Specialist demonstrated a pneumatic pallet strapping machine to the first line supervisor, Rick Zeigler and his crew, they knew immediately that the new system offered significant benefits over the current hand strapping method. Not only is it less labor intensive, (around 50% quicker), it also reduces the exposure of employees to possible bodily injuries. As an added bonus, the plastic banding material is one-third the cost per foot of the current metal banding.

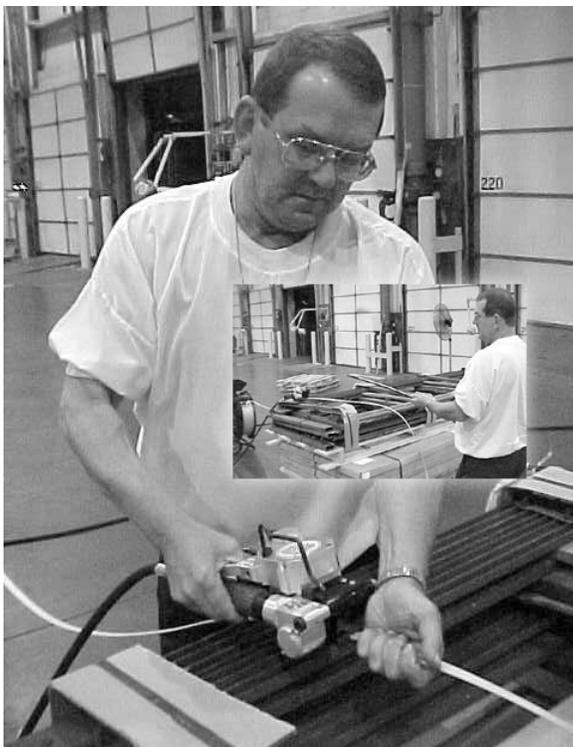
With the support of his branch chief, Dan Fink, they were able to get six air stations installed in between the truck bays in their area. This then allowed them to adopt the use of the pneumatic air system for the strapping machines as well as utilize airbags as loading support for seavans, instead of the current use of wooden pallets as dunnage, which can shift

in transit and allow loads to be damaged. The bags are inflated to 4 PSI to sustain the load in place, and reduce exposure of the commodities to damage while on their long journey across the seas. The airbags can be easily disposed of or reused by the customer, whereas the pallets have to be returned.

This new method of air bag utilization in OCONUS containerization will reduce a big challenge facing the Defense Distribution Center (DDC). DDC is required to prevent the introduction of a microscopic ellworm, the pinewood nematode into Europe. This European directive requires the treatment and marking of all coniferous non-manufactured wood packing material originating in the United States, Canada, China, or Japan beginning October 1, 2001.

“It all sort of came together at the right time,” Ziegler said, understating the effort involved by him and the DDSP, maintenance staff in bringing the project to completion. DDSP can now provide a better and cheaper service to its customers. DDSP employees are also able to take a higher level of pride in their work, operating the latest technology available and seeing that their ideas can make a difference.

Just goes to show that “hot air” can make a difference.



↩ *Jim Landis, DDSP, applies pneumatic banding to cargo for sea transport to Germany.*

↩ *Craig George, DDSP, adds air to bags ready for sea transport to Germany.*

