

QUIET MILITARY COLOSSUS

William Ernst Lorraine Netzko

Buying the right food, clothing, and medicines for your family may seem like taking care of an army.

But think again. Think about the Defense Personnel Support Center (DPSC), Philadelphia, PA. This activity does feed and clothe an Army, not to mention a Navy, an Air Force, Marines and a Coast Guard. In a city better known for the Liberty Bell, Benjamin Franklin and brotherly love, DPSC is a quiet military colossus.

With a \$3.5 billion annual budget, DPSC is a major force within the Department of Defense (DOD). It is also the primary reason why some 700,000 U.S. Army personnel worldwide and their eligible family members get the best possible food, clothing, equipment, medicines and medical supplies in a timely manner. Whatever DPSC buys has to be grown, made, or packaged in America.

According to DPSC's commander, U.S. Army Brigadier General (BG) John J. Cusick, DPSC employees take considerable pride in keeping its customers satisfied. "I want to continue supporting the DPSC mission," said BG Cusick, "which is to guarantee the combat readiness of America's fighting forces."

Keeping Warm or Cool

DPSC's clothing and textiles directorate buys clothing and equipment items for U.S. service personnel. Boots, shirts, tents, helmets, cold weather gear, body armor, waterproof garments, socks, insignia, flags, canteens, entrenching tools, and battle dress uniforms are just some of the 8,000 different items bought by DPSC. The U.S. Army is this directorate's largest customer.

Helping to keep soldiers combat ready is a top priority, according to DPSC's commander. He said the success of emergency supply shipments to Panama during America's contingency operations there was

just one example of the total team effort between the U.S. Army's Quartermaster supply team and the DPSC work force.

In support of U.S. troops in Panama, the DPSC processed 289 requisitions for a total of 270,140 items ranging from body armor to hot weather boots.

Buying Clothing

Management of the U.S. Army's wholesale clothing and textile supply needs consists of two important procurement functions. The cycle begins with supply personnel determining what is needed and in what quantities. Procurement contracting personnel at DPSC make sure the rules are followed in soliciting competitive bids or offers from a base of approximately 300 active contractors. During this process the contracting officer's objective is to get the best value considering quality, price, and delivery date to meet the Quartermaster needs.

After the contract is awarded, DPSC's contracting officers delegate the responsibility of contract administration to the Defense Contract Management Command (DCMC). DCMC ensures that the contractor performs according to the terms and conditions of the contract. DCMC also serves as the federal government's agency responsible for making payment to the contractor.

From the conceptional phase to troop issue, the introduction of a new item is a complex process requiring careful logistical coordination.

When DPSC's clothing directorate receives a supply request for a new clothing item, the specifications are checked very carefully for mass production potential, technical adequacy, and conformance with standardization guidelines.

DPSC is also responsible for deciding whether the fabric for the end item will be furnished by the

government or the contractor. Use of contractor-furnished material is the preferred source because it reduces the introduction period and DPSC's inventory investment.

After this issue has been decided, DPSC obtains stock numbers, estimates production lead times, and establishes a tentative supply date that the customer should be able to requisition the new item.

Before DPSC allows full production of a new item, the contractor must submit a first article for inspection to demonstrate capability to make the product according to the specification. With any new item, the clothing directorate has the option of choosing either a production test or an expanded first article contract.

The production test enables DPSC to split the award among three producers. This gives DPSC the ability to test the specification under production conditions and to judge the capability of the contractors. It also reduces the risk of failure.

Whether supplying peacetime or wartime needs, the U.S. Army Quartermaster soldier has a friend in Philadelphia. The DPSC keeps soldiers ready to fight with the right clothing, equipment, and food.

Feeding the Soldier

Napoleon once said that an army marches on its stomach.

These words are as true today as when Napoleon said them in the early 19th century. Even though today's sophisticated military hardware may be faster and more accurate, it is still food that fuels the soldier.

Aside from buying clothing and medical supplies, it is the responsibility of about 1,500 workers worldwide within DPSC's subsistence directorate to buy fresh, canned, frozen, dehydrated, or

freeze-dried food. This food is bought for approximately three million members of the U.S. armed forces for use in dining halls, commissaries, on aircraft carriers or submarines, or in the field.

This food-buying activity annually buys approximately \$2 billion worth of fresh fruit and vegetables. It spends another \$5 million annually buying food for troop issue and for resale in the commissaries. Philadelphia's food-buying operation is augmented by food buying regions in Alameda, CA, and Zweibruecken, West Germany, 27 subsistence offices, and four storage facilities. Its workers are located at terminal markets and growing sites worldwide.

Commissary Support

Food purchased by DPSC for resale in the commissaries is purchased by brand name. A perishable item is bought only if it meets certain specifications. Paper, canned goods, and other semi-perishable items for customers in the continental United States are bought directly from DPSC. Overseas customers


must submit requisitions for their semi-perishables.

When a customer orders brand name items, DPSC buys directly from the supplier. If the shipment is large enough, the center arranges to ship directly from the vendor to the commissary. The vendor sends smaller buys not large enough for a direct shipment to a defense depot for consolidation with other products destined for the same commissary.

A Taste of Home

The **Defense Subsistence Region Europe (DSRE)** food-buying activity, which is headquartered in Zweibruecken, West Germany, is another part of the subsistence directorate's worldwide food-buying operation. DSRE employs military, U.S. civilians, and local nationals to buy the freshest fruit and vegetables, dairy products, fish, poultry, and eggs at the best possible prices. Workers at DSRE make sure service personnel and their eligible family members can get the same quality food even though thousands of miles away from home.

This activity handles the storage and issuance of all perishable and semi-perishable food shipped from the U.S. to commissaries and soldiers throughout Europe. It has three defense subsistence storage facilities, seven terminal markets, three defense food-buying offices and five defense subsistence offices throughout Europe.

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SOLVING YOUR SUPPLY PIPELINE PROBLEMS

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One brigade commander recently asked, "Colonel Smith, your battalion's vehicle readiness rate is leading the brigade! What are your folks doing that the rest of the brigade is not?"

"Well sir," replied the 1st Infantry Battalion Commander, "when I went through the commander's course, I received an overview briefing about an organization called the Logistic Control Activity (LCA). I took some notes on what LCA could do to help me improve my unit's readiness. When the battalion started having problems getting repair parts, I contacted LCA. My supply and maintenance people now routinely use a number of the services and reports LCA makes available."

"LCA has really helped us improve the operational status of our vehicles. For example, we have an LCA password which allows us to check the Logistics Intelligence File (LIF) to determine the status of all our authorized stockage list (ASL) requisitions. On a number of occasions, after checking LIF status, we found that B Company, Forward Support Battalion (FSB), had acknowledged receipt of shipments containing our requisitions as much as 45 days before; yet, they still had not issued them to us. Those supplies were just sitting in B Company's holding area waiting to be processed."

LCA keeps track of the millions of requisitions for supplies and equipment that pass through the Army's

wholesale and retail supply and transportation networks. This organization, upon request or direction, can influence a change to the logistics pipeline. Located at the Presidio of San Francisco, CA, the LCA provides the logistical management tool to customers worldwide.

LCA maintains the only Department of Defense (DOD) data bases able to furnish total pipeline visibility with reconstitution capability for non-unit cargo while other data bases only provide partial supply or transportation visibility. The data bases at LCA combine both supply and transportation transactions into a single system designed to provide total visibility.

LCA currently operates six major data bases developed as tools to