



PRESS RELEASE

405th Army Field Support Brigade, Unit 23152, APO AE 09227-3152
DSN: 314-483-4099/Commercial: 0631-411-4099/E-mail: jennifer.leigh.king@us.army.mil

May 10, 2010

By Jennifer L. King, 405th Army Field Support Brigade Public Affairs Officer

2nd Bn., 405th AFSB conducts OPD at FedEx in Germany

FRANKFURT, Germany – Personnel from the 2nd Battalion, 405th Army Field Support Brigade visited the Federal Express Europe, Inc. facility at the Frankfurt International Airport here last month. The event was part of an Officer Professional Development program led by Lt. Col. Morris Hatcher, the commander of the 2nd Bn., 405th AFSB.

Hatcher, whose previous military assignments include a Training With Industry assignment in Virginia, is a firm believer that some private business strategies are very applicable to military processes.

“I learned a great deal during my TWI assignment that I truly believe made me a better Soldier and a better leader,” Hatcher said. “While obviously not all private business practices will work in a military environment, I do believe that Army personnel can benefit from experiencing the way things work in the private sector.”

Mark Stevens, a supply logistics assistance representative for the 173rd Brigade Logistics Support Team, agreed.

“Visits like this can help us develop new and better ideas on how a process can better enhance our product to assist the warfighters to do their job quicker, safer (and) with lower costs,” Stevens said. “Within industry, they have to be cost effective to make the company money. With new technology and an innovative way of doing business, we can adapt some of their methods to help the warfighters do theirs better and faster.”

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Richard Martin, the officer in charge of the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment BLST, also noted that generating income is a key issue for private companies.

“Private businesses have a bottom line, and money is a major concern,” Martin stated. “That is often lost in the military because we do not have to answer those tough questions from investors. In the military, people do not see that part of operations until money is cut off for their operation.”

John Hooker, who is assigned to the battalion’s headquarters, saw similarities between FedEx’s operations and the Army.

“I found their distribution processes and procedures fascinating in that they operated similar to a large warehouse or depot in the U.S. Army,” Hooker explained. “I think OPDs to private businesses are useful and help us get a better understanding of business. For example, during this OPD, we were able to learn how our packages and cargo are distributed from FedEx’s European hub in Frankfurt.”

Alexander Riesing, the district sales manager for FedEx, conducted the tour for the battalion and said this was the first time that he gave a tour to a military unit.

“This was the first time that I had a military unit on our facility tour in Frankfurt,” he said. “We do these kinds of tours for our commercial accounts on a regular basis...about two to three times per month.”

Riesing felt that while the tour was beneficial to the battalion, he also learned from the experience.

“I did enjoy presenting the U.S. military specific handling and customs clearance processes, which are different than our commercial accounts procedures,” he said. “Also, discussing the different aspects and requirements from the U.S. military side was very informative for me and gave me a broader scope and view on those movements.”

Stevens found that observing FedEx’s operations inspired him to think of different ways to approach his job.

“Getting to see operations through another perspective could help me see where we could possibly streamline our operations and tailor them to fit our needs,” he said. He was particularly impressed by the FedEx tracking system, which tracks each item from pickup continuously through to the point of delivery.

“When a customer can input their shipment into a computer and get the exact location of where their shipment is, that is pretty helpful to the customer,” Stevens continued.

Martin also admired FedEx’s efficiency and options in package delivery.

“FedEx has both urgent delivery and time-definite delivery,” Martin explained. “While urgent delivery gets packages delivered fast, time-definite delivery gets them there when the customer needs the item. These services are cost-based, but the impressive thing is that FedEx has a program to meet any requirement customers need.”

Riesing believes the visit gave the battalion some insight into logistics to which they are usually not exposed.

“I think that the military personnel benefit from this visit as it really provides them a clearer view ‘behind the scenes’ about how we operate in a closed loop system. This gave them first-hand information about our networks and abilities which will benefit them regarding future service, quality, transit times and reliability decisions,” he said.

In addition to exposing battalion members to industry and new ideas, Hatcher also sees a secondary benefit to these events.

“These types of visits aren’t just about exposing people to new ways of doing business,” Hatcher said. “It’s also a great time to get everyone together away from the office in an environment that naturally encourages the brainstorming of new ideas.”

Stevens concurred with that assessment, noting that “getting together with others in the battalion” was one of the things he enjoyed most about the visit.

-30-

CUTLINES:

Hatcher.jpg – Lt. Col. Morris Hatcher, the commander of the 2nd Battalion, 405th Army Field Support Brigade, sits in the cockpit of a FedEx aircraft during a tour of the company’s facilities in Frankfurt last month. (Photo provided by Lt. Col. Morris Hatcher, U.S. Army photo)