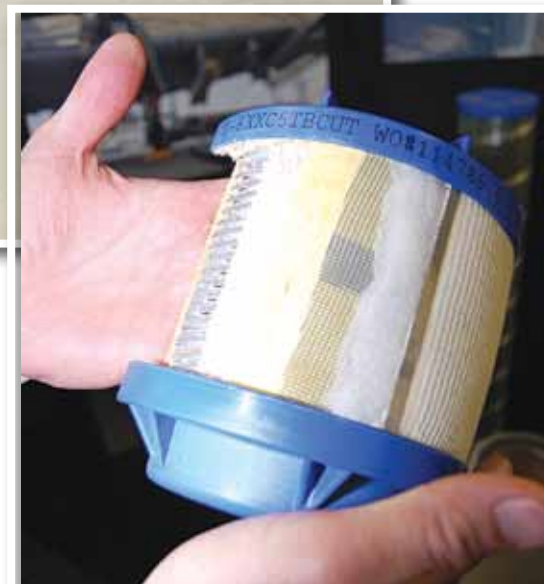


Fresh perspectives keep quality *high*

Matthew Montgomery | DCMA Public Affairs



An F-16CJ Fighting Falcon approaches a KC-135 Stratotanker for refueling over Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. (Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Michael B. Keller)



A fuel filter used for military applications. (Photos by Matthew Montgomery, DCMA Public Affairs)

Maintenance is vital to the longevity of government equipment, especially

when located in harsh environments like Iraq and Afghanistan. The Defense Contract Management Agency plays a vital role in this process as the quality assurance oversight authority for fuel filters — a very important component to any maintenance program.

“Most of the military customers are buying 350 (gallon-per-minute) fuel filter assemblies for overseas operations, though 100 and 50 GPM units are also utilized,” said David Peterson, DCMA Denver quality assurance specialist. “The product produced here helps protect and extend the life of military equipment — mainly aviation applications.”

A faulty fuel filter in an aviation application has serious implications, explained Peterson. “You can have engine damage, aircraft loss, but most important, loss of life. That’s why our main focus

is making sure the contractor’s quality management system is healthy and functioning properly.”

This is done on a regular basis. DCMA performs monthly reviews of records pertaining to shipments, builds records, certificates of performance and treatment of parts, as well as product examinations conducted prior to each shipment. “We make sure everything is correctly configured and assembled as required by the contract,” said Peterson.

“We also perform process reviews on steps such as hydrostatic pressure testing which assesses all filter assemblies for small leaks,” continued Peterson. “Other inspections look at part conformity and other tests associated with the manufacturing process.”

The company understands the importance of the program and has implemented internal checks to help ensure their quality management system is effective. Ron Kolakowski, quality

assurance and production manager, said one of the things the company does internally is rotate people through all assembly and inspection processes.

“We know our people get used to looking at things over time and it becomes easier to overlook them,” said Kolakowski. The company maintains the rotation of people to keep fresh perspectives in their quality system.


This is an area where DCMA adds value to the contract through routine inspections. “DCMA serves as an extra set

of eyes and that fresh perspective we try for internally. There have been times when DCMA has pointed out issues we were just overlooking. Once they were identified, they were corrected and then added to our inspection list as a required check,” said Kolaowski.

Peterson said DCMA uses a similar method in this facility for performing inspections. “We try to rotate agency personnel through the facility, much like

the contractor does,” said Peterson. “You could have the same person here for a year, or two, or five, but it is of no benefit to anyone because there is no value added. When we change the personnel out regularly, it keeps a fresh perspective

and ultimately a better product for the end user.”

The end goal on both sides of the production system is the same — ensuring the warfighter gets a high quality, dependable product, said Peterson. 



David Peterson, Defense Contract Management Agency Denver quality assurance specialist, inspects a 50 gallon-per-minute fuel filter assembly along with team members. This product helps protect and extend the life of military equipment — mainly aviation applications.