

DOD Grants ODIN \$14.6 Million Contract

ODIN is tasked with outfitting all the military's Defense Distribution Centers with RFID hardware to collect data from RFID-tagged military consignments.

By Mary Catherine O'Connor

May 25, 2006—RFID systems integrator and RFID testing services provider ODIN technologies has won a \$7 million contract from the DOD's Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) to outfit all 26 Defense Distribution Centers worldwide with passive RFID interrogators and other supporting equipment, such as antennas, by the end of 2007. ODIN will also supply RFID printer-encoders to the distribution centers.

However, ODIN says, the agency wants it 19 U.S. distribution centers —formerly referred to as depots—equipped by the end of 2006. The contract allows for two one-year renewals, each valued at \$3.8 million. Patrick Sweeney, ODIN's president and CEO, says these will allow for "expansion and additional deployments," bringing the total value of the contract to \$14.6 million over three years.

According to Sweeney, ODIN has already begun performing a site assessment of the Defense Distribution Center Susquehanna, located in New Cumberland, Pa. The company hopes to begin installing an RFID hardware infrastructure there within the month.

"The DLA team was concerned with getting an RFID system up quickly and accurately," Sweeney says, "and because we have tools that allow us to set up an RFID system quickly, that gave us an advantage" over the other 11 vendors that vied for the contract. He says this group included IBM and SAIC, a San Diego, Calif., engineering firm that holds a number of DOD contracts. The tools to which Sweeney refers are packaged in one of its product offerings, Easy Reader, which includes a specialized RF radiation monitor and interrogator configuration software to help end users establish banks of readers within a single facility.

Sweeney says ODIN will install EPC UHF Gen 2 interrogators exclusively, but does not yet know which make or model of interrogators, antennas or other goods it will choose. "The hardware we pick will be dependent on use case and environment at each facility," he says, adding that ODIN might choose different manufacturers' interrogators for different locations.

ODIN will be replacing the Gen 1 hardware currently installed at two of the DLA busiest supply depots: the Defense Distribution Center Susquehanna and the Defense Distribution Center San Joaquin in Tracy, Calif. These are the only two DLA facilities currently accepting RFID-tagged cases and pallets of tagged goods from suppliers required to apply the tags. According to Sweeney, the DOD will mandate that labels only with UHF EPC Gen 2 inlays be attached to goods received by the DOD starting Oct. 1, 2006, but DOD representatives have not returned calls seeking confirmation of this by press time.

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