

Enterprise Lifecycle Management at the Anniston Army Depot

Alabama's Anniston Army Depot (ANAD) provides the maintenance, repair and restoration of both heavy and light-tracked combat vehicles, including the M1 Abrams Tank. Due to the nation's engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan, the demand for services at ANAD on the M1 Abrams and the M60, M113, M577, AVLB, M728, M9ACE and M88 combat vehicles more than doubled in recent years, growing from 3 million labor hours in 2001 to more than 7 million hours in 2006. In the midst of this need for increased performance, ANAD was chronically plagued by the outdated practices and processes that were being used for cataloging and tracking vehicle and spare part inventories.

Due to inadequate information on the location, status and availability of spare and reclaimed parts that could be used in the repair and remanufacturing of damaged vehicles, new parts were often unnecessarily re-ordered at a substantial expense. Lacking appropriate information on the availability of spare parts, the assembly and repair lines were often halted until the new parts arrived, which also caused costly delays.

In 2005 Portal Dynamics began to develop and deploy a materiel management solution, known as the Visual Planner System, a component of the Depot Total Asset Visibility System (DTAVS), which has dramatically improved the "what is where" reclamation process involved in the disassembly and re-use of parts from equipment damaged beyond repair. Two years after this effort began the integrated asset tracking system that forms the backbone of DTAVS has been enhanced several times, now giving ANAD personnel the capability to identify type, number, and location of reclaimed parts from the point of their induction into the system to their use in the re-manufacturing process.

When equipment comes into ANAD it is now identified, batched, and then tagged with a barcode. As the equipment moves into the depot system through various stages of disassembly, the location and status of items are tracked by handheld barcode scanners that wirelessly report the information and all eventual updates into a central repository accessible through the Visual Planner System.

There are approximately 20 thousand parts on an Abrams M1 Tank and nearly all of these components have been itemized and entered into the DTAVS system. This affords managers a high degree of visualization granularity in their ability to track and view the status and availability of individual parts and overall inventory.

The Anniston Depot Total Asset Visibility System has contributed to dramatic improvements in the performance of Depot personnel, some of whom have been on the job for more than four decades, and until recently in some cases, their operational tasks and procedures had not changed in those 40 years. The integrated digital environment now in place at the ANAD has brought forth great benefits, both in the performance of those who work at the facility and in the delivery of equipment for those they support.