

Military Depot Speeds Up Maintenance Cycle Times with IUID.

Web-based software with mobile devices saves countless man-hours

Charlie Fargo, director of maintenance at one of the military's largest manufacturing depots, has been deeply involved with IUID since 2007 when he first sat down with A2B Tracking engineers to explore his options for compliance. "In the beginning we were simply concerned with MIL STD 130 compliance. But now, six years into the project, we have gone way beyond that," he says. "With the way we use IUID to streamline our production; we're the envy of all the other depots."

When Fargo first researched IUID technology he decided he wanted a turnkey system that would handle all the steps for compliance - create the UII, mark the item, verify and validate the mark and submit the information to the IUID Registry. "When we talked with people from other depots who had tried to design their own systems, they told us their efforts didn't work out. So we decided to save time by buying a turnkey system."

Charlie says his team selected A2B Tracking Solutions' UID Comply!® Software not only because it was the best IUID data management software product for their "legacy" environment, but also because of the knowledge and responsiveness of the company's staff. An A2B engineering team made several onsite visits to assess technical considerations including IUID plate design, marking options and the IUID registration process. "We knew the problems others had encountered when they just started marking, so we knew we had to do a lot of planning," he says.

The maintenance department creates vehicle data plates and data tags for numerous military vehicles that come in from the field for maintenance, repair and

and overhaul. In 2008 UID Comply! client server, data management software was installed to drive YAG and CO2 flatbed lasers as well as Metalphoto® and dot peen marking systems. At that time 40 discreet components, each requiring a UII, regularly passed through the maintenance facility. It should be noted that a wide variety of labels and plates were used to accommodate the material and environmental requirements of individual components.

Now, five years later, that number is over 100 discrete components, and growing, with an even greater range of label and plate options to satisfy component requirements. And the software has been transitioned to A2B's cloud-based UC! Web™ with integrated handheld computer technology. The result is mobility and efficiency. "UC! Web was a game changer," Fargo says. "Before, we only dreamed of being able to implement serialized item management in order to track all items through the re-build assembly process. Now that dream is taking shape. The main reason our program has grown so dramatically in five years is in the way we have been able to streamline our process."

Why is mobility important? Put quite simply, when technicians are able to walk about the production floor to access IUIDs in embedded relationships and to process that information in real time, bottlenecks are all but eliminated. Accuracy is no longer an issue now that scanners have completely eliminated pencil and paper. Production line efficiency has soared with hundreds of man-hours saved. Greater efficiency means faster turnaround time and the ability to handle more items from more commands. In the competitive manufacturing environment of the depot command, high throughput means more new programs, more activity and more

CASE HISTORY

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billable man-hours achieved. Because Fargo's team is also beginning to utilize A2B's UC! Web for asset tracking, they are able to locate many parts in real time simply by querying the web.

Let's take a look at how mobility and real time information are utilized on a single emergency support vehicle in from the battlefield. First that vehicle is completely broken down, cleaned and its parts assessed. Mobility affords complete access to each asset right on the line. Embedded items that are judged too old or damaged for reuse are scanned with UC! Web mobile devices and removed from the Registry. A variety of label and plate manufacturing options (laser-etching on aluminum, Metalphoto® and thermal transfer printers) also powered by UC! Web, are utilized to create marks for new items or those items previously unmarked.

Maintenance cycle times are cut dramatically. With as many as twelve production lines in operation at any one time, Fargo estimates that his line managers were spending up to 75% of their time tracking down missing parts. Those missing parts are often sub-assemblies, so after parts are located they require a UII. That data must be associated with the parent item and then uploaded to the Registry. His teams are saving hundreds of man hours each week simply because they have all but eliminated sterile time searching. Time is also saved because parent/child manipulation is completed on the line, without the need to return to the client server for scanning.

Once the serialized item management process is fully implemented, all replacement parts and misplaced parts will be readily located simply by querying UC! Web, from any web browser.

Perhaps most profoundly, Fargo understands that, because of IUID, the day is fast approaching when there will be visibility behind every wall and indeed inside every asset within the military's Wide Area Workflow. That granular visibility creates efficiencies unimagined in military history, and Charlie knows that he is at the cutting edge of something big.

As for A2B Tracking, Charlie has nothing but praise. "Anytime we need to change something, A2B is very responsive, and their support is really excellent. You can skip a lot of pitfalls when you have a streamlined system that was developed specifically for IUID."

This case study reports on an actual installation where UC! Web software is being used to facilitate IUID compliance, while creating efficiencies where workflow problems previously existed. A portion of the study describes planned solutions not yet implemented.

A2B Tracking is a recognized leader and innovator in IUID and RFID software, systems and services for accurately identifying, marking and tracking critical assets. As the largest IUID program partner for the Department of Defense and DoD contractors, A2B provides full lifecycle management systems that enable total asset visibility and facilitate best-practices and compliance with all quality, supply chain and logistics standards.



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