Efficient Logistics and Equipment Management

Camcode Global Helps UK MoD Identify and Track Equipment for Military Drawdown in Afghanistan

Background

During combat missions in Afghanistan, the United Kingdom Ministry of Defence's (UK MoD) main focus was providing warfighters with weapons and equipment as quickly as possible. Now that the war in Afghanistan is ending and the drawdown begins, the UK MoD's focus has shifted to more efficient logistics and equipment management.

To improve efficiencies in military asset management and visibility, the UK MoD developed a Unique Identification (UID) policy to uniquely mark and identify specific ranges of equipment within the defence inventory.

Under the UID policy, two-dimensional (2D) UID bar code labels and marks must be affixed on specific military assets. The data in the bar codes contains information such as the asset's serial number, part number and a unique item identifier (UII). Each item's unique information is then scanned and stored in an item registry database. The information collected in the database creates a number of significant benefits and efficiencies for the UK MoD, including automated receipting, issuing and stocktaking of marked items, reduced manpower, and the ability to access an item's status, history and configuration.

As the UK MoD's UID Enabling Contract holder, Camcode Global was charged with helping the UK MoD implement a strategy to identify, track and manage its military assets returning from Afghanistan.

Objective

In order to better manage military assets and ensure Proof of Good Order (POGO) during equipment returns from Afghanistan, the UK MoD established a goal to mark 300,000 items in a two-year Contractors on Deployed Operations (CONDO) contract prior to drawdown.
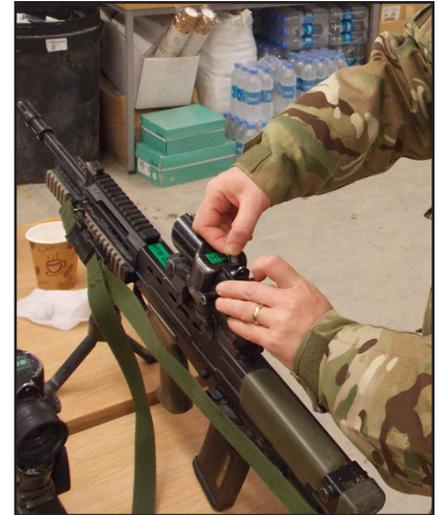
Challenges

There were numerous difficulties associated with marking military assets in Afghanistan. Primarily, standard label production and shipments could not meet lead times or accommodate the fast moving nature of assets in Afghanistan. Poor communication lines and time differences also made label production and installation nearly impossible.

Solutions

Camcode Global determined that data management, label production and label installation would have to be performed in-theatre in Afghanistan by a self sufficient team. Working with the UK MoD, Camcode Global established a UID marking facility in Camp Bastion, Afghanistan where UID labels were produced and installed for all combat locations in Afghanistan, including remote locations in Afghan villages. Five Camcode Global employees, consisting of former military veterans, were stationed at Camp Bastion to complete the UID project.

This type of marking program in an active conflict area had never been done before. As a result, Camcode Global had to develop a custom training environment. In order to train employees who would be stationed at Camp Bastion, Camcode Global worked closely with the UK MoD to create equivalent training conditions that the team would experience while in Afghanistan.

Training objectives were developed to ensure that new employees received instruction on Camcode Global

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mobile marking cart production processes and installation procedures. Employees were also trained on UID label substrates and adhesives, and how to detect and correct any issues that may arise. It was during this training that Camcode Global developed error-proofing and data reconciliation processes to perform quality control by distance.

Once in the field, trained employees relied on the systems and practices developed during the pre-deployment training. Even when lines of communication were unavailable, the Camcode Global Afghanistan Team executed a robust data

management system that ensured the marking schedule was continually met, while also allowing the UK MoD to maintain their combat effectiveness throughout the marking process.

Results

Through the development of data management and reconciliation processes, Camcode Global was able to improve the UK MoD's data accuracy from approximately 30% to 90% accurate. This improved the rate and numbers of assets marked, limiting the interruptions of normal military operations.

In addition, improvements in data management and asset identification led to the location of c£3.5m of dismounted close combat equipment that the UK MoD believed to be scrapped, lost or written off, all within the first month of the Afghanistan project. The success of Camcode Global's data management and reconciliation processes in Afghanistan have also significantly aided in the UK MoD's redeployment process and the UK Government's POGO initiative.

Through training procedures, quality systems, reporting tools, production and installation systems, the Camcode Global Afghanistan team created a successful UID program in-theatre in Afghanistan. With military assistance, this experienced and effective Camcode Global Afghanistan Team now regularly advances to Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) in the most remote military bases and installs UID labels successfully.