



Smith & Nephew - Doing What It Takes

Smith & Nephew's Wound Management Division, headquartered in Largo, Florida, is one of three global business units of the UK health care giant. The Division offers a broad portfolio of products and services for wound, skin, IV and burn care. It has also carved out a robust niche in the educational and consulting fields, helping patients achieve full recoveries and supporting the efforts of the medical community that serves them.

The Division's logistics needs are as far-reaching as its line of products and solutions. About 40 per cent of its US-bound inventory originates in Hull, England, and is shipped either by sea through the Port of Charleston or by air through Atlanta. Once cleared into the US, they are trucked to the Division's primary warehouse in Atlanta for nationwide distribution to medical wholesalers.

Since 1999, DHL Danzas Air & Ocean has managed the Division's entire "ship-to-stock" supply chain into the US. DHL Danzas also manages the Division's export traffic from Atlanta to international points, as well as pallet load consignments moving within the

US (Approximately 40% of its US manufacturing takes place in Largo and is shipped to the Atlanta facility for distribution).

The Division focuses not on supply chain management issues but on saving, extending and enriching lives. Yet it also knows its goods need to be there when its customers need them. "We don't spend much time focusing on international logistics," said David Blythe, logistics manager for Smith & Nephew. "It essentially has to run itself, and that is why we rely so heavily on DHL Danzas. We use them for their unmatched global reach, the superior caliber of their people and keen understanding of the global supply chain."

Blythe also knows that his company, which is often called upon during emergencies to ship life-saving supplies, requires a logistics partner that will do whatever it takes to deliver the goods.

"We've found that when lives are on the line and a few hours can mean the difference between life and death, you really see what your logistics partner is made of. That is when we are truly grateful to have DHL Danzas on our side."



Put to the test

The relationship has been put to the test several times, most recently on February 20 when a late-night fire engulfed a crowded nightclub in East Warwick, Rhode Island. Nearly 100 people were killed, and dozens more suffered serious burns that required specialized wound and burn care equipment.

At the crack of dawn, the Smith & Nephew-DHL Danzas Air & Ocean team was on the job. Patricia Kersey, DHL Danzas' Atlanta-based Customer Service Manager, supported by Joel Wilder, Atlanta-based Domestic Supervisor, and Anthony Griffin, Detroit Operations Supervisor, spearheaded an extraordinary effort to rush shipments by air from Atlanta to Providence, using Delta Air Lines on a next-flight-out basis. From Providence, the shipments were expedited by truck to hospitals and burn centers throughout New England.

Patricia and the Atlanta domestic department stayed with the situation around the clock until they confirmed that each shipment had reached the proper recipient. In one instance, a DHL Danzas driver waited patiently at a burn centre for more than two hours until a nurse scheduled to receive a shipment can be located and can sign for its contents.

Blythe said DHL Danzas' response to the Rhode Island dis-

aster illustrates the challenge of delivering emergency shipments with speed and precision to multiple locations across several states.

“Even on a good day, the shipping and receiving capabilities of hospitals and medical care facilities is marginal at best. They are focused on saving lives, not on logistics,” he said. “It takes determination, persistence, superb communications and a phenomenal infrastructure to put our products in the hands of the professionals who need them. Those are the qualities that DHL Danzas possesses in spades.”

But the most severe test came on September 11, 2001.

Facing an unimaginable crisis, the two companies swung into action. Within hours on 9/11, bandages, gauzes, dressings and bio-engineered skin for grafts were picked-and-packed at Smith & Nephew distribution centers in Atlanta, Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Toronto. DHL Danzas assembled fleets of tractor-trailers at the three locations, and began preparing the necessary documentation to speed the processing and clearance of goods entering the US from Canada.

Working non-stop, DHL Danzas arranged for shipments of special wound dressings from Canada to “jump the queue” at the Detroit border crossing and be rushed to hospitals and burn centres in

the affected US cities. From the south, a team of professionals led by Joe Davis, Southeast Regional Sales Manager, built the first loads onto tractor-trailers bound for New York and Washington-area hospitals. In all, 50 tractor-trailers of Smith & Nephew supplies were shipped from the US and Canada to the two cities.

One driver, realizing road congestion in the Washington area could delay his deliveries by precious hours, pulled his rig to the shoulder of a highway south of the city, contacted the Virginia state police, and received an escort to The Washington Hospital Center, where many of the burn victims were taken.

By the early morning of September 12, every shipment had been delivered to the proper locations without exception. “DHL Danzas' swift response and attention to detail was unparalleled in all of my years in this business,” said Blythe, a 20-year logistics veteran. “It would be fair to say DHL Danzas' performance helped save lives that day, and also kept survivors from enduring more pain and disfigurement than they had already experienced.”

