

EXPEDITORS AVIATION

The Early Bird

Our global customer, one of the world's largest airplane manufacturers, has had long-standing ties with the military in India. Our customer approached Expeditors about handling three oversized pieces of equipment, which can only be shipped as break bulk by Ocean. Expeditors was able to complete this job a day earlier than the time frame given, despite a variety of challenges along the way, ending in a satisfied customer and successful project.

This project had very high visibility with our customer and the Indian military, and this job was entrusted to us, having previously displayed our expertise and capability in handling similar challenging moves for our customers.



OPPORTUNITY

As part of the broader relationship, the Indian Navy is setting up a training center with specialized mission-critical training equipment our global customer provides. This equipment is sensitive to handling and high value. On arrival, the challenges are starker as the final delivery location threads through thickly populated areas.

The project site required this equipment to be delivered by the first week of May to allow time for installation and testing before planned commissioning by senior dignitaries in the first week of June.

CHALLENGES

The magnitude of the challenge can be understood by reviewing the maximum width of the package as 18 feet and the maximum height of 16 feet. In addition, the vessel arrived later than scheduled (May 6th), and the client wished to have the material delivered by May 9th due to time constraints. As is the conventional practice, such large pieces can only traverse at night, must be escorted, and monitored consistently, and would need roughly three full days to cover the 143 km distance to the final site.

During the route, we had to clear height barricades on railway crossings, which were 16.7 feet, and this was only permitted in daylight hours under full visibility. During the final 15 Kms to the site, we encountered civil repair work to the road, which was only 15 feet wide, and our package was almost 18 feet. This needed coordination with City Police to allow the convoy to pass unhindered. It took the convoy three hours to clear this challenging stretch.

Upon reaching the site, we had to exercise caution as the hangar doors, where this cargo needed to be housed, were only 18 inches wider than our package. Our experienced hauler had to navigate this clearance very carefully. Once inside the hangar, we had to work with a reduced height due to cabling and wiring, which meant that the two cranes we had employed for offloading were challenged. This challenge was because not only was the physical space constrained, but they could not extend their booms fully for optimal performance.

Unfortunately, the offloading plan was also delayed by our customer, which meant we did not have much time to put together an action plan.

OUR SOLUTION

None of these events affected our experienced PES and Customs teams as they went about their job methodically and with a clear vision and plan. Even before the shipment departed, our teams had shared advisories with our client on how to break up the shipment into multiple house bills of lading to avoid delays in clearance as part of the shipment was under duty exemptions. Our customs team was also able to advise our client of customs checklists almost four weeks before arrival so that necessary duty exemption forms could be processed and received. This enabled the filing of the Bill of Entry, assessment, and payment of duties to be completed before the vessel took berth.

For the assessment of the final route, our PES team deployed a route surveyor a month before shipment arrival to assess the in-route challenges and propose an alternate route as a backup, if needed. Another route survey was done closer to the vessel's arrival to re-assess the routes and to ensure no structural changes had happened. This survey also revealed that we would need to trim tree branches at the site and remove the entry barrier gate as well as the 54 lane dividers leading to the entrance.

RESULTS

All necessary arrangements at the port in coordination with the vessel agents, our haulers, and permits and permissions to access restricted areas were arranged to ensure free passage of the convoy and manpower to the delivery location.

Despite all challenges, from the late arrival of the vessel to physical challenges in route, we were able to complete the delivery on May 8th, one day earlier than expected by the client. A delighted customer penned a heartwarming thank you note to the team for a job that exceeded all expectations.