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NEWSBLAST

U.S. Army Contracting Command

"Providing global contracting support to war fighters."

Automatic budget cuts to impact military, civilian workforce, family programs

By David Vergun
Army News Service

WASHINGTON – The Army projects a decrease in 10,000 to 14,000 recruits across the services this fiscal year as military entrance processing stations shut down one day per week.

Beginning next month, civilian MEPS employees will be furloughed, said the Army's deputy chief of staff, G-1, Lt. Gen. Howard B. Bromberg. He explained that the Army is the executive agent for MEPS, which processes entry-level personnel for all the armed forces.

Bromberg and the other service chiefs testified March 13 at a House Armed Services Committee hearing on the impact of the continuing resolution and sequestration and how it will affect military

personnel, their families and the operations and maintenance budget.

Budget shortfalls will also result in fewer Army recruiters, he said, thereby "limiting our ability to penetrate the market."

The officer corps will also take a hit, Bromberg said, as ROTC scholarships and training are reduced at universities across the country.

Another adverse impact will be fewer advertising and marketing dollars used to attract and recruit new Soldiers, he said.

Recruiting and retention will likely be affected "for years to come due to loss of confidence in the stability of the Army" as money for training and professional military education for officers and noncommissioned officers becomes scarce, he said.

See BUDGET CUTS, page 6.



(Photo by Ed Worley)

Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols, ACC commanding general, gives the workforce an update about budget cuts and pending civilian furloughs during a town hall meeting March 13.

Armyhire.com named Army's best website

By Ed Worley
ACC Office of Public & Congressional Affairs
Edward.g.worley@us.army.mil

Armyhire.com, Army Contracting Command's recruiting website, has been named the Army's best website, the Army announced March 19.

Armyhire.com is a collaborative effort involving the staffs of the ACC chief information officer G6, deputy chief of staff, Human Capital G1 and Public Affairs.

"This is awesome," exclaimed Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols, ACC commanding

general. "I'm especially proud because this award speaks volumes about the professionalism of our staffs and how they work together to produce amazing products in support of our mission. I couldn't be more thrilled."

The Armyhire.com team consists of Tracy Phillips and contractor Laura Lind, ACC G6, Chrissa Hall and Mary Woodard, ACC G1, and Beth Clemons, ACC Public and Congressional Affairs.

Armyhire.com will now compete in the Thomas Jefferson Award competition for Department of Defense military and civilian print and broadcast products. The

annual contest is sponsored by the Defense Media Activity and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs to stimulate and reward excellence and professionalism in DOD print and broadcast media.

The Maj. Gen. Keith L. Ware Public Affairs Awards communication competition recognizes Soldiers and Army civilian employees for excellence in furthering the objectives of the Army public affairs program. The Secretary of the Army sponsors this competition annually.

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Spotlight on...

For Spotlight submissions, click on the icon.

Jeannie W. Johnson Regional Contracting Office - Fort Wainwright, Alaska

Jeannie W. Johnson is a contract specialist and contracting officer assigned to the Regional Contracting Office at Fort Wainwright, Alaska.

Describe your current position:

I am a contract specialist and contracting officer for RCO-Fort Wainwright where I procure supplies and services in support of the Installation Management Command mission as well as for U.S. Army Alaska.

Describe your passion for the job:

I love the diversity of responsibilities that the contracting field offers. One of the things I've enjoyed about moving around is that I get a new job every few years.

In the contracting field, I don't need to change what I do because you are always learning.

Where do you call home? Tell us about your family.

Home is wherever my immediate family resides. So right now, Alaska is home.

My husband and I will be married 27 years this summer. I have two sons and two grandchildren. In my spare time, I like to read and sing. Right now, I am blessed to have my granddaughter living with us so I enjoy spending time with her.

How does your job support the Soldier?

My job ensures that war fighters have what they need to perform the mission. Whether it is a service or supplies, my colleagues and I will find what is required on time and at the best value to the government.

What would you like others to know about you?

I am retired from the U.S. Air Force where I served for 24 years (nine years active, the rest in the Reserve component). I began my contracting career with the U.S. Navy and have since worked in support of all the branches of service at one point or another.



Jeannie W. Johnson

U.S. Army Contracting Command

Commanding General
Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols

ACC Command Sergeant Major
Command Sgt. Maj. John L. Murray

The NewsBlast is a weekly newsletter authorized and produced by the U.S. Army Contracting Command's Office of Public and Congressional Affairs editorial staff in accordance with AR 360-1 (The Army Public Affairs Program) to inform, educate and entertain the ACC community on people, policies, operations, technical developments, trends and ideas of and about the Department of Defense, the Department of the Army and this command.

Director, Office of Public & Congressional Affairs
Art Forster

Public Affairs Team Chief
Ed Worley

Editor
David San Miguel

Public Affairs Team
Larry D. McCaskill, Giselle Lyons, Beth E. Clemons

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Send submissions and correspondence to the U.S. Army Contracting Command, Office of Public and Congressional Affairs, ATTN: Editor, NewsBlast, 3334A Wells Road, Redstone Arsenal, AL 35898-5000. Telephone: 256-955-7634, DSN 645-7634 or email at acc.pao@us.army.mil.



Plan guides Soldier contracting skills development

By Daniel P. Elkins
MICC Public Affairs Office
Daniel.p.elkins.civ@mail.mil

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – A Mission and Installation Contracting Command cross-functional team here has developed a planning guide to manage the professional development needs of more than 400 Soldiers who are being attached to the command over the next seven months.

Army Contracting Command officials announced in January the attachment of Soldiers in 62 units to MICC field offices across the country beginning March 20 to streamline the oversight of Expeditionary Contracting Command members stateside and enhance their contracting skills.

To help program that training, a team of MICC headquarters personnel at Fort Sam Houston have been meeting since October to develop the Contingency Contracting Officer Rotation Training Plan Guide that outlines a structured approach. Making up the team were military and civilian representatives from training and readiness, strategic operations, acquisition career program management, and contract policy and training.

“The plan defines training guidelines and participant responsibilities to ensure experiential learning opportunities are maximized and

streamlined throughout the MICC,” said Lydia Hardy, an operations officer with the MICC Training and Readiness Division who led the integrated process team.

The plan charts training, education and experience requirements on a rotational schedule alongside MICC civilian professionals to best develop Soldiers for future assignments. It will allow contracting Soldiers in an installation contracting office to gain experience with simplified and complex contracting procedures valuable in performing operational contract support during contingency operations.

“In essence, our journeyman contracting professionals are playing a major role in training future MICC, ECC and ACC commanding generals and command sergeants major,” said Col. Antonio Brown, the director of the MICC field directorate office at Fort Bragg, N.C., who will also command the 419th Contracting Support Brigade upon activation in April.

Although assigned to the ECC, Soldiers will be attached to the MICC and direct supervision over day-to-day assignments by Soldiers supporting stateside operations will fall on MICC leaders and supervisors.

On-the-job training and mentorship are at the core of the rotation training plan, according to Brig. Gen. Kirk Vollmecke, MICC commanding general. He said the command’s seasoned, knowledgeable and skilled leaders should use this rotation training plan as an opportunity to contribute to the long-term professional development of the contracting workforce.

The training plan is based on a 36-month timeline over two phases. The plan calls for an initial skills assessment between the Soldiers, who already have a basic level of contracting knowledge, and their supervisor. Soldiers will begin working with simple acquisitions and transactions before moving on to complex contracts. The plan lays out a path for Soldiers to become proficient with all procedures making up the contracting life cycle from pre-award and award to administration, including closeout.

See **GUIDE**, page 4.



(Photo by Rachel Clark)

Sgt. 1st Class Cathleen Stadler-Frazier, 409th Contracting Support Brigade, aims her weapon as part of the unit’s warrior tasks training held March 14 in Kaiserslautern, Germany.

Record accuracy vital to Soldiers' success

By David Vergun
Army News Service

WASHINGTON – As the Army draws down, it's important for Soldiers to keep their records up-to-date and accurate, personnel officials said.

Army leaders use Official Military Personnel Files for decisions on promotions, assignments, professional development and retention, explain officials from the Army's Human Resources Command.

It is ultimately the Soldiers' responsibility to review their records at least once a year, said Maj. Jonathan Holland, chief, Integration Branch, and Capt. Mike Skiff, promotions board recorder.

Now more than ever, records accuracy is important, said Holland. Soldiers whose records are not accurate are at risk for separation or early retirement.

Holland said that during the adjutant general's board of directors meeting last August, the topic of records accuracy was discussed and the senior Adjutant General Corps leadership decided to institute the Soldier Record Accuracy Campaign to elevate awareness and make this a priority within the chain of command.

Although records accuracy is primarily an individual responsibility, it is also the leaders' responsibility to ensure their Soldiers are monitoring their records, he said.

Holland emphasized the importance of getting Soldiers the right assistance if information needs to be updated or changed.

HRC has noticed routine errors in things like Soldiers' mailing addresses, awards, assignment history, overseas service, deployment history and dwell time back from deployment, Holland said.

Errors occur, he said, due to any number of factors, from missing supporting documents, incorrect or incomplete entries by personnel in S-1 or the installation's military personnel division, to inaccuracies introduced

by computers arising from glitches or time-lapse updates within the Interactive Personnel Electronic Records Management System.

He explained that time lapses vary from system to system with some computers updating information 24 hours after entry to maybe 72 hours. That is why Soldiers should double-check new data entries after a few days.

Maintaining accurate personnel records is also important because centralized promotion and selection boards review many of these records, said Skiff. Centralized promotion boards impact sergeants first class through sergeants major, chief warrant officers 3 through 5 and captains through major generals.

Skiff cited the "My Board File" system to review and update records. Individuals have the ability to view their board file and are encouraged to certify the accuracy of their board file prior to a centralized board. Since the board file is pulled from personnel records, Soldiers must ensure they are accurate, and make any necessary changes if they are not accurate.

Leaders also have the ability to track the board file certification status of Soldiers in their population who are going before a centralized selection board. The MBF Certification Report allows leaders to track whether Soldiers in their

formation have viewed and/or certified their board file prior to a centralized board.

The board file, drawn from personnel records, includes the Soldier's official photo, letters to the board from the Soldier, disciplinary or derogatory data, officer or NCO evaluation reports, academic evaluation reports, awards and decorations, military and civilian education and training records.

Holland added that accurate record keeping is also in the best interest of Soldiers transitioning to civilian life because opportunities can be enhanced by potential employers seeing duties performed, training and education completed and combat service.

Soldiers can also use information in their personnel records to build resumes, he said.

Soldiers can access their OMPF through AKO or at <https://iperms.hrc.army.mil/rms/record>. When using AKO, Soldiers can find their OMPF under the "Army Links" heading on the lower right-hand side of the AKO main screen.

The MBF Certification Report can be accessed on the HRC homepage at <http://www.hrc.army.mil> under Popular HRC Resources. The direct link is https://www.hrcapps.army.mil/IWS/?page_id=12928.

All links require a Common Access Card.

GUIDE

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During their first phase of training, Soldiers will have the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in simplified acquisitions, contract administration, minor construction, small business programs and the Government Purchase Card Program. The second phase includes practical experience in awarding and administering complex contracts, price analysis and source selection evaluation.

The plan also entails an assessment element for tracking Soldiers' progress, defines responsibilities for each individual involved in the training process, and lists Defense Acquisition Workforce

Improvement Act requirements for obtaining professional certifications.

The integration of Soldiers with the MICC is being accomplished in three phases. The first phase includes attaching approximately 200 military members, assigned to the ECC, to 19 MICC contracting offices where they are already collocated. The second phase calls for the April 16 activation of the 418th CSB headquartered at Fort Hood, Texas, and 419th CSB at Fort Bragg. The final phase includes the attachment of the 412th CSB at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, to the MICC in the fall of 2013.

NewsBlast readers now have a feedback tool to provide input about the weekly newsletter. Click on the mailbox icon to the right and submit your comments or suggestions. Responses will assist the editorial staff in producing a publication to better meet readers' expectations and information needs.



ACC subject matter experts examine standardizing contract oversight, surveillance

By Ed Worley

ACC Office of Public & Congressional Affairs

Edward.g.worley@us.army.mil

REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala.—

Two questions – how is a contractor performing and how does the government know – formed the basis for a study examining standardizing contract oversight and surveillance.

Led by members of the ACC Operations Group Contracts Administration Division, the Contractor Oversight/Surveillance Integrated Process Team formed in February and began process mapping and researching best practices, according to Greg Stefanovic, acting quality assurance branch chief, ACC Operations Group, and IPT coordinator.

Stefanovic said the team's goal is to develop a standard set of processes, checklists and templates for contracting officer representatives to use in performing their contractor surveillance program. CORs are responsible for monitoring contractor performance and reporting that performance to the contracting officer, he added.

Subject matter experts from the Defense Acquisition University, the Army Acquisition Center of Excellence, the Army Audit Agency, the Expeditionary Contracting Command, ACC-New Jersey, ACC-Redstone, ACC-Rock Island, Ill., ACC-Warren, Mich., the Redstone Test Center and ACC Operations Group safety and quality

assurance specialists make up the 19-member team. When participants from outside Redstone Arsenal are involved, they are participating via teleconferences and Defense Connect Online.

quality assurance process “always goes back to support of the war fighter.

“We want to get a product out there that’s on time and without defects,” he said. “That saves the Army money because defects cost money.”



(Photo by Ed Worley)

George Holland (standing), Contract Administration Division chief, ACC Operations Group, discusses contract oversight and surveillance processes with (bottom to top) Greg Stefanovic, ACC Quality Assurance manager; Floyd Hughes, Army Audit Agency; and Robert Burns, ACC Quality Assurance.

About 100 quality assurance specialists form the core of ACC’s quality assurance program, he said. They are involved monitoring high-risk contracts – high-dollar contracts or contracts with a high degree of complexity, high risk of mission failure or risk to people, he explained. CORs represent the bulk of the surveillance workforce.

“CORs are the contracting officer’s eyes and ears,” Stefanovic said. “They are the ones who ensure the contractor is delivering products or services according to the terms and conditions of the contract.”

Roy Branch, an ACC quality assurance specialist and IPT team member, said the

Regarding service contracts such as food services, Branch said the quality assurance focus is on keeping people healthy.

“When we ensure the contractor is delivering on time, meets requirements, without defects, we are a force multiplier,” he said.

That is why developing a standard set of policies, checklists and procedures is important for the surveillance mission, Stefanovic added.

“Our goal is to develop a standardized program that ACC organizations can use as a point of departure,” he said. “We realize that construction

contracts are handled differently than services contracts, but when performing surveillance, there are consistencies across contracts. We want to give the CORs a tool kit with checklists and templates that will help them know what to look for and how to report their findings back to the contracting officer.”

Branch pointed out several recent news articles that said money could have been saved on government contracts with better oversight.

“Any defect is a cost,” he said. “Either the product isn’t right or the service is deficient, and that costs everybody.”

Army's 'Ready and Resilient Campaign' kicks off

By C. Todd Lopez

Army News Service

WASHINGTON – The Army has made available to Soldiers a new online resource to complement the Ready and Resilient Campaign that launched March 12.

The campaign's website is available at www.army.mil/readyandresilient, and is designed as a "one-stop shop" for resources related to Soldier resilience and readiness. The new site includes sections for medical readiness, personal readiness and Soldier transition issues.

On the site's front page is a list of hotlines for Soldiers to call when "something bad happens," said Col. John Sims, Army's Office of the Chief of Public Affairs. Such an event could include sexual assault, suicide, traumatic brain injury or post-traumatic stress disorder.

Though the Army already has dozens of programs and websites that can help Soldiers deal with crises, Sims said the new website is meant to bring access to those

resources together in one place.

"You can find this information in 500 other different places. But this is supposed to be the one-stop shop for Soldiers," Sims said. "We wanted to make a place where leaders, Soldiers and family members could go and find information and quick resources, emergency hotlines and learn to improve their resiliency."

In the simplest terms, resilience is an individual's ability to bounce back when "something bad happens," said Sims. A Soldier's resilience can come from their upbringing, their life experiences and how they were trained.

Col. Theresa Gonzalez, Army Medical Command, said for an individual, not being ready could be the result of administrative, medical or mental health issues. Readiness, she said, means that a Soldier is resilient to the many stressors that all Soldiers face.

A more resilient Soldier is able to accept their allostatic load and continue to perform their mission, she said.

An "allostatic load," Gonzalez explained,

describes the physical consequences to one's body that result from repeated exposure to stressors. Those stressors could include, among other things, relationship issues or financial issues.

Such stressors can affect a Soldier's ability to concentrate, Sims added.

And long-term exposure to such stressors, and a Soldier's inability to adapt to them and deal with them can also affect his or her health, Gonzalez said.

Sims said this campaign offers "nothing new" in terms of programs, but instead aims to take an array of existing Army programs and optimize them, to make them all more effective. Additionally, he said some programs that were redundant have been eliminated to ensure resources are directed to other more effective programs.

"Really what we are doing is changing how we view these programs," he said. "No longer do we view suicide as unconnected to negative behavior, or sexual assault, or other things. We are now seeing them much more holistically."

BUDGET CUTS

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"Loss of training is not recoverable to untrained Soldiers and units," he said, meaning that combat readiness will be reduced well past this fiscal year even if a deal is struck later in the year.

Family programs hit

Family programs provide a comprehensive network of resources to help Soldiers and their families to successfully navigate their way through Army life and deployments, Bromberg said.

The Army will try to keep those programs that deliver the most benefits, but many will, nonetheless, still be cut, he said.

Programs which could be impacted include child abuse prevention, family advocacy, programs for children with special needs, resiliency training that assists Soldiers and families in building stronger relationships and post recreation programs.

Which programs will stay and which will cease will be determined by a comprehensive analysis, he said.

"We know there are some complementary programs and some that are redundant," he said, providing an example. "We know Strong Bonds, which works

on building family relationships during deployments and other stressors is a very, very popular and important program and that it has reduced domestic violence and divorce rates, but we haven't done the hard analysis on it yet."

Tuition assistance ends

More than 200,000 Soldiers across the active and reserve components use tuition assistance, Bromberg told lawmakers.

It's such a popular program, he continued, that when the Army gave 72-hours notice that the program would end, "we burned through \$500,000 an hour" with last-minute TA requests "so we did overspend" and will have to find money internally to cover that.

Soldiers still have other options, like the GI Bill and some states still have TA for their National Guard, he said, adding that it's still not a good substitute for the \$383 million program.

TA might not be completely terminated in the future, he said. "We'll go back and relook at the amount and how to prioritize it," he said. "Maybe we'll (adjust it) with \$115 million in savings

and turn some of it back on."

Bromberg concluded, warning lawmakers that "the magnitude of fiscal uncertainty will have grave consequences on our Soldiers, civilians and families if nothing is done to mitigate the effects of operations under the continuing resolution shortfalls, overseas contingency operations shortfalls and sequestration. The Army will be forced to make dramatic cuts to military personnel and family programs."

KLW continued from page 1

The Office of the Chief of Public Affairs conducts judging with a goal of ensuring the best internal information efforts receive recognition for professional excellence and outstanding achievement.

Ware, who as a lieutenant colonel was awarded the Medal of Honor in 1945 for combat action in Germany, served as the deputy chief and chief of Information for the Army – now the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs – from September 1964 through November 1967.

Acquisition Support Center announces MOS 51C reclassification board results

FORT BELVOIR, Va. –The Army Acquisition Support Center announced results of a 51C reclassification board held Feb. 26-27, 2013 at Fort Belvoir, Va.

“This was a very competitive board and we received the largest number of applications than ever before,” said Lt. Col. Anthony Maneri, 51C proponent officer. Out of 182 candidates, 44 noncommissioned officers were selected for reclassification.

The 51C acquisition, logistics and technology contracting NCOs deploy as contingency contracting officers and serve as members of the early entry module contingency contracting team. When not deployed, they will serve as contingency contracting officers in support of a headquarters; principal assistant responsible for contracting; contracting support brigades; contingency contracting battalions or installation contracting offices for training and mission support.

Selectees include: Sgts. 1st Class Chan D. Has, Megan A. Hobbs, Mary E. Matthews, Tamisha B. Patterson; Staff Sgts. Reginald D. Alexander, Jenny G. Alvarez, Lee J. Andrews, Alfredo Avila, Brandon L. Barber, Jesse A. Campos, Jenny A. Cisneros, Matthew F. Girard, Gregory M. Hamilton, Destin S. Howell, Young C. Jang, Shantae R. Jenkins, Adriane L. Lewis, Zandrea J. Landor, Ashly N. Martin, Enes Memic, Sabriya F. Mitchell, Darius T. Porter, Johnathan D. Robbins, Orlando R. Serna, Scott J. Smith, Richard J. Thorpe, Nicholas S. Tollett and Brian P. Williams; and Sgts. Ambrosio C. Alvarez, Cedric R. Belmont, James P. Bradshaw, Richard A. Burns, Jene A. Carter, Arthur J. Dominguez, Mark H. Fitzgerald, Francis S. Frenette, Kailey A. Good-Hallahan, Catherine-Tehila O. Johnson, Parquette J. Magee, Steven T. Schoening, Brandon K. Wilkinson, Tornita Williams, Ashley R. Woods and William J. Yongue.



(Photos by Erin A. Kirk-Cuomo)

Soldiers meet new Defense secretary

Staff Sgt. Darius Simpkins, 412th Contracting Support Brigade, (top) and Master Sgt. Jason Hughes, 410th CSB, (bottom) meet the new 24th Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel during his first visit to Afghanistan.



ACC in the News

This article mentions Army Contracting Command.

Army Materiel Command earns Major Gen. Keith Ware Public Affairs honors (with video)

By Leada Gore

(Posted on AL.com, March 19, 2013)

Army Materiel Command earned several honors in the Army's Major Gen. Keith L. Ware Public Affairs Competition. AMC's Eye on AMC was awarded a second place honor for weekly publications. Army Contracting Command earned first place honors for the website, www.ArmyHire.com. AMC also won first place for a television spot highlighting the command's social media platforms and second place for a televised information program.

http://www.al.com/business/index.ssf/2013/03/army_materiel_command_earns_ma.html#incart_flyout_business



Click on the image for ACC safety messages.



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