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NEWSBLAST

U.S. Army Contracting Command

"Providing global contracting support to war fighters."

Hutchison named deputy to the ACC commanding general

U.S. Army Contracting Command

"I'm pleased to announce that Mike Hutchison will become our new deputy here at Redstone Arsenal (Ala.)," stated Maj. Gen. Camille Nichols, commanding general of the U.S. Army Contracting Command.

She added: "I've known Mike a long time and am delighted to have him join our headquarters team. I look forward to working with him to provide our customers with world-class contracting support and to highlight the accomplishments of our exceptional family of professionals."

Hutchison currently serves as executive director of ACC-Rock Island, Ill., one of six major ACC contracting centers. He is responsible for almost 500 personnel and more than \$80 billion worth of contracts. His center supports six major Army commands and activities including chemical demilitarization,

ammunition, installations, the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program, Army Prepositioned Stocks and Reachback Contracting Support for Southwest Asia. Hutchison also serves as Executive Director of ACC-NCR, providing contracting support to numerous customers within the National Capital Region.

Commenting about his Rock Island Arsenal team, Hutchison said: "We have played a critical role in supporting our war fighters in Iraq and Afghanistan for the last 10 years. It's been an honor to serve with such professionals. Their dedication and commitment to excellence have been awe inspiring!"

Hutchison continued: "It is truly a privilege to be selected for this position and an even greater privilege to serve the entire ACC team. I welcome the opportunity of working with General Nichols to achieve her vision of making ACC the preeminent Department



Michael Hutchison

of Defense provider of decisive edge contracting solutions and practices."

Hutchison is expected to assume his new position in early November.

New tool helps guide contracting officials, analysts

By Ryan Mattox

MICC Public Affairs Office

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas - Contracting officers, specialists and procurement analysts throughout the Mission and Installation Contracting Command have a new resource at their disposal when making decisions during the contracting process.

After months of collaboration and preparation between the command's strategic operations and contracting operations directorates, the MICC Desk Book is now available on the command's

secure SharePoint site for personnel to use.

The desk book has been available since Aug. 27; however, on Oct. 1, all procurement actions both pending and initiated after that date are subject to the policies and procedures outlined in the desk book.

The desk book is designed to be a single document that provides a roadmap for reviewing and approving contracting documents to assist with the acquisition process. This one-stop shop for the acquisition process consolidates guidance previously issued by acquisition

instructions.

"My intent is for MICC contracting personnel to use this desk book in conjunction with prevailing regulations and sound business judgment to ensure a consistent, efficient and effective contracting process," said George Cabaniss, the deputy to the commanding general for the MICC. "Adherence will promote reduction of extended lead times, reduce successful challenges to procurements, and promote quality awards and effective contract administration in support of our customers."

See TOOLS, page 4.

AGILE

PROFICIENT

TRUSTED

Commanding general visits San Antonio units

By Ben Gonzales
MICC Public Affairs Office

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – The commanding general of Army Contracting Command visited members of the Fort Sam Houston community Sept. 6 and 7.

Maj. Gen. Camille Nichols spoke to officials from the Mission and Installation Contracting Command, 410th Contracting Support Brigade and 412th CSB.

She also visited leaders of Army North, Army South and Installation Management Command as well as taking time to talk to wounded warriors at the San Antonio Military Medical Center. While at the MICC, she visited with Brig. Gen. Kirk Vollmecke, MICC commanding general, and talked to the staff about the transfer of field offices from the MICC to the Expeditionary Contracting Command.

To be successful, she said the organizational transfer of offices and human capital planning requires buy-in at the point of the contracting spear from both the headquarters and contracting centers.

“Full integration should be seamless because it is a workforce that wears all kinds of suits,” Nichols said. “You

need to know where your pockets of brilliance are and leverage that to fill the gaps throughout the MICC. A talent management strategy will help you become a more integrated command,” she said.

She also discussed ACC’s efforts to develop a knowledge acceleration program. “You cannot buy time. Time is set,” said the native of Niagara Falls, N.Y. “Nothing I can do can help people migrate through a time-defying process of experiential learning except to bring them tools that give the ability to accelerate their learning. This can help us deal with (a) potentially inexperienced workforce.

“It is talking about taking your community of practice concept to the next level,” she said. “If we have a list of things we know we are weak in, let’s look at the list, prioritize it, find the best people, and then from every center and command - wherever the pocket of brilliance is - move it to work the issues and come up with a strategy for ACC.”

The ACC commanding general said her deputy’s top two priorities will be process improvement and knowledge acceleration.

Also discussed at the MICC was the realignment of field directorates, workload analysis, and end-of-fiscal-year contracting operations.

“The realignment looks all about the

customer, but it really is a restructure for process improvement, transparency and consistency,” she said. “Honing our craft and making us the premier contracting focus of all (the Department of Defense) is about process and talent management. Our output isn’t a contract. It is a capability. That is the struggle we have in trying to measure what we deliver.”

Nichols also addressed personnel issues during her visit as she reassured MICC members that everyone currently working for the ACC has a job.

“We need to get our manpower folks to adjust the (table of distribution and allowances) so we actually capture all our folks and not leave them in over-hire status. Before we cover any new positions, we need to cover what we already have. The MICC and ACC TDAs were never properly structured. As we reshape some things, you might see a gap as you finalize your strategy for headquarters and field realignment. If there really is a gap, I am willing to go fight for it even if I don’t have a resource for it.”



Maj. Gen. Camille Nichols and Brig. Gen. Kirk Vollmecke discuss activities during her visit to the Mission and Installation Contracting Command headquarters Sept. 7 at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.



U.S. Army Contracting Command

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The views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, the U.S. Army or this command.

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Learning to cope when suicide hits at home

Commentary

By Maj. Kelli Hooke

409th Contracting Support Brigade
Kaiserslautern, Germany

The last day of school of my freshman year in high school, I woke up to the phone ringing. It was very early and I heard my mom's voice talking to the person on the other end.

"No, he's not here. He should be there already. I'll go check the roads and see if his car broke down and get back with you. Thank you," she said.

She then came back to my room and explained that dad didn't make it to work so she was going to go drive his route and find him. She needed me to be up by the phone in case he called and then to get everyone ready for school if she was not back by then. So, I did just that. Mom did not get back in time, so we all got on the bus that morning unsure of where dad was.

The day was only half over when a voice on the intercom announced that my sisters and I needed to report to the school administrative office. My grandmother was there and was taking all of us home. It was the last day of school, so we really were not missing anything but it was very weird and now I was worried.

Long story made short: my dad had attempted suicide and his young family was left reeling. I was 15, and my sisters were 13 and 11 years old. He was the primary provider for our family. As we dealt with the aftermath of this serious and very public event, we also had to deal with all sorts of financial, social and emotional issues.

My dad was hospitalized for a week

and it was a while before he could work again. He was placed on medication and started attending a lot of counseling. Through the treatment, he slowly began to recover. It took a long time for him to look at the events and realize that he had made a poor decision. As he started to get a handle on the past and his emotions, he began to realize that there were all sorts of ways he could have received help; if he only had asked.

As a teenager dealing with all of the pain and distress of a suicidal dad, it was very hard. But through these circumstances I was able to learn important lessons.

I learned that I am responsible for my mental health. Specifically, I needed to pay attention to it and do things to keep me strong. In the Army today, we call it resilient.

Second, I learned to have more compassion for others. We do not know the extent of the burdens others are carrying and it is important to be there for people so they know that we can help.

Finally, I learned that there is no real shame in asking for help. It is far worse to cause tragedy for your family instead of seeking professional assistance. And there is a lot of help available. Today, my dad is doing great. After receiving extensive treatment, he was not only able to address past issues, but learn coping skills for future challenges. His example shows that no matter how bad things get, there is a path to a better way.

Needless to say, whenever I attend training on suicide prevention, I take it seriously. However, I have been hesitant to share my experiences. It is one thing to



Maj. Kelli Hooke

attend training, listen attentively and then resume normal life. It is a wholly different thing to actually tell people that your dad attempted suicide. Even as I volunteered to help this year, the thought went through my mind, what if they think my dad is crazy and then what if they think I might go crazy too?

Too many people have died this year alone for me to be silent and to allow my perception of a stigma to keep me from speaking up. I hope that by sharing this personal information about my past, those Soldiers who are struggling gain the strength to ask for help. Please do not wait until life is so overwhelming that death seems like the only answer. Your death will not solve any problems, just cause more. And your life can get better. No matter how desperate your circumstances are, someone wants to help.



Wilson receives Bronze Star

Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols, commanding general of the Army Contracting Command, presents Sgt. 1st Class Andre L. Wilson, 639th Senior Contingency Contracting Team, Fort Bragg N.C., with the Bronze Star for exceptionally meritorious service in support of Operation Enduring Freedom while deployed in Kandahar, Afghanistan. (U.S. Army Photo)



Spotlight on...

For Spotlight submissions, click on the icon.

Anita McLain

Anita McLain is a contracting officer/contract specialist with the 409th Contracting Support Brigade, Theater Contracting Center, in Kaiserslautern, Germany.

Describe your current position?

My responsibilities consist of reviewing contract documentation to ensure the actions meet all acquisition regulations and are legally sufficient. Along with those responsibilities of a contracting officer, my responsibilities are to mentor personnel on contractual procedures.

What are your hobbies/passions?

Nothing compares to spending time, watching movies and traveling with my 13-year-old son, Sam, a Ramstein Middle School student and a Ramstein Cadet Squadron-Civil Air Patrol cadet staff sergeant. I like to read books by Nora Roberts, J.D. Robb, Kathy Reichs and others. One of my passions was to go to Russia so I went on a three-and-a-half week trip with the Sierra Club in 1993 to Siberia where we pitched tents at different area parks and worked doing clean-up, helping the rangers build lean-tos, picnic tables and benches, digging fire pits surrounded by a circle of log seats, digging holes and putting out-houses in place.

What are some of your future goals?

I have a year left in Germany then I will exercise my return rights back to Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., where I hope to use the experience I've gained as a contracting officer. I will pursue other opportunities to further my contracting career. There are agencies worldwide with opportunities in contracting and I've learned that no matter how long I work in contracting, there is always



Anita McLain

something new so my experience will never stop growing as long as I keep working in my chosen career.

Why did you get into contracting?

Contracting allows me the opportunity to support our troops and their mission no matter where they are in the world. The workload is challenging and customer satisfaction is rewarding.

Any special accomplishments?

I had the opportunity to be a technical trainer for up to twenty-five military contingency contracting team members when they were all a part of the Kaiserslautern Military Community Division through workload assignments, training presentations, and providing guidance in support of their self-development and training as contract specialists.

TOOLS

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The desk book also provides an avenue for command leadership to establish acquisition and contracting procedures for the MICC. It provides procedures that implement federal, Department of Defense, and Department of the Army acquisition regulations as well as Army Contracting Command policies necessary to ensure certain practices are consistent throughout the MICC. It clarifies internal and workflow procedures while augmenting associated regulations and references for contracting personnel.

The new document is not only a reference tool for contracting professionals,

but also provides a new approach that fully incorporates MICC field directors into the acquisition cycle management process. Beginning Oct. 1, the new approach brings a change in procurement action authority for field directors. They will have their decision authority shift from \$250 million to \$50 million. The principal assistant responsible for contracting will generally be the decision authority for amounts greater than \$50 million but less than \$250 million. The shift in decision authority is a result of a change in Army policy to eventually move to a consolidated single head of contracting activity.

The desk book rescinds and replaces MICC acquisition instructions, contracting information letters, and regional information memorandums. The desk book implements the Federal Acquisition Regulation, the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement, and the Army Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement to establish uniform policies and procedures for all MICC contracting offices.

A MICC policy team will maintain the desk book to keep it current by providing quarterly updates.

ACC historian predicts Zombie Apocalypse in 2013

By **Larry D. McCaskill**

ACC Office of Public & Congressional Affairs

If you're trying to survive the latest zombie apocalypse, you might want to ask the Weitzel clan for a tip or two.

Inspired by his son, Mikhael Jr., and assisted by his wife, Faith, Mikhael Weitzel, Army Contracting Command historian, has developed a board game, *Zombie Apocalypse Survivor*, for those who are looking for ghoulish fun.

Weitzel said, like a lot of 7-year olds, his son enjoys anything that involves fighting zombies. After playing a few of the board games on the market, Weitzel said his son had a better idea than buying another game he didn't really enjoy.

"My son asked me to help him make a game and then went on to describe a zombie survival game that was part board game and part video game," Weitzel said. "He wanted different kinds of zombies and wanted survivors who were killed to be able to come back as a zombie. I told him I would see what I could do."

The next night, while driving home from a friend's house, Weitzel said ideas for the game began to creep into his head.

"I jotted down some notes when I got home and the next morning took them and started expanding them," said Weitzel, who has been playing and collecting board games and miniature games for 33 years. "I

sketched the board designs and talked about it with my wife and son. They shared their excitement, enthusiasm and ideas. Over the next week, my wife and I discussed what materials we would need and began making the components."

Making the game from scratch became a family affair while Weitzel developed most of the rules himself.

"It took about two weeks to make the first playable prototype and a total of five weeks to get to the third prototype," Weitzel said. "We originally used wooden cube beads for dice. My wife and I filled the holes through the beads with wood putty, sanded them flat, spray painted them and then numbered them by hand. We found we could make translucent green resin dice with glow-in-the-dark skull beads inside to represent special zombies."

The game has more than 650 dice, numerous bags and boards but the biggest challenge for Weitzel was ensuring the rules were balanced and the game would be fun.

"I want the game to be fun, but still challenging and something people would want to play again," Weitzel said.

In developing the rules, Weitzel had to be conscious of making the rules simple enough to understand but flexible enough to allow creative thinking.

"I had to write the rules in a way that someone could pick them up and learn how



Mikhael Weitzel Jr. demonstrates how to throw zombie bones.

to play. It is easy to tell someone how to play, but converting that into a rulebook was an unexpected challenge," Weitzel said after having a friend's 10-year-old son read them and try to play.

The game itself includes zombies, dice and strategic player placement, a combination Weitzel said he hasn't seen before.

"The game requires a player to make tough choices on what your survivors should do each day and finding the right balance for your strategy," Weitzel said. "It also requires each player to make moral choices. And, the game requires a little bit of luck as you roll the dice."

Over the next few months, Weitzel said he has two public play-tests scheduled and welcomes others who want to play the game to take a shot at it.

"I have already identified three board game publishers that are accepting designs. Then we will keep our fingers crossed. Right now we dream about seeing our game on shelves before Christmas 2013," he said.



(Photos by Larry D. McCaskill)

Mikhael Weitzel and his son, Mikhael Jr., hope 2013 is a good year for zombie enthusiasts.



(Photo by Jeanette Lau)

One-on-one with the general

Michele Santiago-Clark, Army Contracting Command-National Capital Region, talks with ACC Commanding General Maj. Gen. Camille Nichols during the general's recent visit there. During her visit to the ACC-NCR, Nichols held a town hall meeting and talked to numerous employees.



ACC in the News

These articles mention Army Contracting Command.

Money saved on Bradley reactive armor tile sets

By Ann Jensis-Dale

ACC Office of Public & Congressional Affairs

(Published Sept. 12, 2012 in the Redstone Rocket)

The Value Engineering Change Proposal program is a legacy cost saving program used in government contracting for many years and the Army Contracting Command-New Jersey and General Dynamics Armament and Technical Products have used it to save \$38 million with more savings to follow.

<http://www.theredstonerocket.com/content/money-saved-bradley-reactive-armor-tile-sets>

Contracting battalion gets new commander

915th Contracting Support Battalion

(Published Sept. 12, 2012 in the Redstone Rocket)

Lt. Col. Mark Moeller is the new commander of the 915th Contracting Support Battalion, the only contracting battalion in the Army Reserves.

<http://theredstonerocket.p2ionline.com/Flip/sitebase/index.aspx?adgroupid=135582&view=double&FH=535>

DoD Conference Expenses Under Scrutiny

By Marcus Weisgerber and Zachary Fryer-Biggs

(Published Sept. 16, 2012 in DefenseNews)

LAS VEGAS and WASHINGTON — In a mammoth convention hall at a Las Vegas resort and casino that could house nine American football fields, thousands of conference goers peruse exhibits featuring some of the latest advancements in robotic technology.

<http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120916/DEFREG02/309160002/DoD-Conference-Expenses-Under-Scrutiny?odyyssey=tab%7Ctopnews%7Ctext%7CFRONTPAGE>



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