



NEWSBLAST

U.S. Army Contracting Command

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"Providing global contracting support to war fighters."

Nichols addresses JCRX audience, recognizes exercise planners

By **Larry D. McCaskill**

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FORT BLISS, Texas – The more than 380 cadre and trainees at the Army Contracting Command Joint Contracting Readiness Exercise 2013 were all eyes and ears as Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols, ACC commanding general, spoke Jan. 24 on the merits and importance of the JCRX training.

After passing out JCRX Gold Eagle Hero of the Day awards, Nichols thanked the exercise planners.

"I just want to thank the 412th Contracting Support Brigade and everyone involved in putting this together," she said. "They have ensured that this will be the most professional event that we could put on given our resources and our expertise and I have to tell you it's phenomenal."



(Photo by Larry D. McCaskill)

Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols, ACC commanding general, addresses JCRX-13 participants at Fort Bliss, Texas, on the importance of contingency contracting.

Not to be left out, the general also thanked and provided advice to the almost 200 trainees in the audience.

"Thank you for being here. This is real stuff in a very low threat, low risk environment," Nichols said. "It's an

opportunity to hone your craft a little bit. It's an opportunity to look to your left and to your right and meet a new contract buddy, a contract warrior as I would say."

See **NICHOLS**, page 3.



ACC-New Jersey Staff Sgts. Mario Thompson (left) and Christopher Mackie accompanied by his date, Megan Clark, pose next to signage for the Commander In Chief's Inaugural Ball.

ACC NCOs attend Inaugural Ball

By **Larry D. McCaskill**

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Five Army Contracting Command noncommissioned officers and their guests tripped the light fantastic while attending the Commander In Chief's Inaugural Ball Jan. 22 at the Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C.

Staff Sergeants Christopher Mackie and Mario Thompson with ACC-New Jersey, Picatinny Arsenal N.J.; Roberto Zepeda and Larin Harris of the 722nd Contingency Contracting Team, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.; and Jean Paul, 864th Contingency Contracting Team, Fort Belvoir, Va., were selected to attend the gala.

See **INAUGURAL BALL**, page 3.

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Spotlight on...

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Lt. Col. Carol Tschida Expeditionary Contracting Command

By Larry D. McCaskill
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Lt. Col. Carol Tschida

FORT BLISS, Texas—With five contracting readiness exercises under her belt, Lt. Col. Carol Tschida has been an important figure in the growth of military and civilian contracting professionals.

Tschida has been an integral part of the last five major contracting exercises conducted by the Army Contracting Command, the Army's lead contracting agency.

She is the Expeditionary Contracting Command's strategic plans officer and the officer-in-charge of the Senior Contracting Official's Control Cell during this year's ACC Joint Contracting Readiness Exercise here. ECC is one of ACC's two subordinate commands.

She first participated as a cadre member in a contracting readiness exercise at Fort Bragg, N.C., in November 2008. Next, she served as a coach/mentor/assessor during Bold Impact in January 2010 at Fort Riley, Kan. Bold Impact was the first contingency contracting readiness exercise conducted by ECC.

Next, she served as the exercise officer-in-charge during Joint Dawn 2011 at Fort Campbell, Ky., and as the U.S. Central Command-Joint Theater Support Contracting Command Operations exercise observer during Joint Dawn 2012 here.

"This contracting exercise has grown significantly in complexity," Tschida said.

"The contracting scenarios and workload used in the exercise have been modified and improved to include current policies, processes, and procedures used in the U.S. Central Command's area of responsibility where the majority of our personnel are deployed and we gain a vast amount of contingency contracting experience."

This year, the exercise has grown to include 18 regional contracting centers and two senior contracting official staffs.

"We also have a cell observing and capturing our doctrine gaps so that we can address them and make improvements," said Tschida.

See SPOTLIGHT, page 4.



U.S. Army Contracting Command

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NewsBlast readers now have a tool to provide feedback about the weekly newsletter. To access the feedback tool, click on the mailbox icon to the right. The questionnaire is brief and will only take a few minutes to complete. Responses, however, will assist the editorial staff in producing a publication to better meet readers' expectations and information needs.



The commanding general said that relationships created in training environments go a long way toward mission accomplishment when deployed.

“When you see them again, you’ll know some of what training they received, their background and their focus,” she said. “Then you can have an immediate comfort in that they are in the same zone as you are because they have been through some of the same training and background.”

Nichols said she believes that during the training sessions, the contracting officers will benefit the most from hearing

directly from the person or organization they will be supporting.

“The experience here today will help you get your arms around it,” she said. “During the training, the kinds of contract actions you will work on are literally happening by the hundreds in Afghanistan each and every day.”

Nichols said the civilians attending the training as mentors will benefit by gaining an understanding of how important they are in their careers as military contracting professionals.

“As we get more and more Soldiers

integrated across our command, whether it’s in a contracting center or in a Mission and Installation Contracting Command office, it is important that these seasoned civilians ask what do they need to know in order to adequately mentor the Soldiers in their offices and how can I help them be more successful,” Nichols said.

“Part of the answer is to focus on their training, certainly their initial entry training and then their maturation and competency level as they grow,” she said. “This is a win-win for everyone involved.”

ACC forum to discuss information technology, share best practices

The Army Contracting Command workforce is invited to join the quarterly Chief Information Office/G6 Enterprise Forum, Feb. 5 from 9-10:30 a.m. Central Standard Time. Edward Siomacco, Army Materiel Command CIO, is scheduled as the guest speaker.

The forum is a quarterly town hall in which ACC customers, partners and leadership can learn about CIO/G6 initiatives, accomplishments and upcoming events and ask questions to panelists about the latest improvements in technology, tools and informational resources available. Some of the topics that the forum will address include the future contract writing system, the Enterprise Lifecycle Management mid-year buy and questions from the field.

ACC employees can attend the G6 forum in Huntsville, Ala., on-line through DCO or via the ACC conference line. Attendees can also submit questions to panelists in advance at usarmy.redstone.acc.mbx.hqacc-g6-events@mail.mil.

For more information and to RSVP, visit <https://acc.aep.army.mil/G6/governance/sc/EnterpriseForum/default.aspx>.

INAUGURAL BALL continued from page 1

“I am very excited to be a part of this historic event,” said Harris. “I have never had the opportunity to be a part of something even remotely like this.”

“When I was told I was going to be able to attend I was on leave back in my hometown in Idaho,” Harris said. “I was able to tell most of my family face-to-face and see their reactions. They were all very happy and excited for my wife and me. No one in my family has ever been to something historic like this, so this will be an honor for them as well, having a family member be a part of this ceremony.”

According to Command Sgt. Maj. John L. Murray, the ACC command sergeant major, each major command was allotted tickets with ACC initially being provided two.

“We received more names than the requirement asked for, but all of our personnel were selected to fill unfilled requirements from other units,” he said. “The presidential inaugural ball is a special occasion and a once-in-a-lifetime event for the average citizen and Soldier. For this occasion, we wanted someone that would represent the unit and the Army well and who also deserved to attend.”

Mackie said he was “very excited to be picked to attend. When I asked my date (Megan Clark) if she would like to go she had a huge smile on her face and instantly said yes. She then started talking about what gown she wanted to buy and then the following day we went to Lord and Taylor and bought a beautiful gown for



During the Inaugural Ball, Staff Sgt. Mario Thompson, ACC-N.J. (right), met up with Medal of Honor recipient, Sgt. 1st Class Leroy A. Petry.

the event.”

Thompson looked at the opportunity to attend as a special privilege.

“I feel honored that I was selected to attend such a historical event.

Words can’t describe how grateful and blessed I am,” he said. “My date was more excited than I was. She said she couldn’t sleep and she immediately started looking for dresses and planning everything she needed to do in order to be ready.

“This will be the biggest event in my life thus far. I can’t think of anything I have done that could match this,” Thompson added. “I really would like to take a picture with the president so I can give it to my son.”

Contracting interns join ACC–New Jersey ranks

JOINT BASE MCGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST, N.J. – Army Contracting Command-New Jersey welcomed its inaugural class of 24 interns into its ranks during a swearing-in ceremony earlier this month.

They took the oath of office for civil service employees Jan. 14. Federal employees take the same oath of office as members of Congress, according to Donna McCallum, career management specialist, ACC-NJ.

Wendella Baptiste, Anthony Barker, Paul Batrony, Steven Baum, Joseph Bisignano, Michael Bush, Zemirah Courtney, Ryan Cunard, Bethlaynette Elder, Chante Fredrick, Ashley Gesicki, Charles Gill, Joseph Henrius, Matthew Kasperavicius, Jared Kiser, Katie Lyons, Robert MacFarlane, Akiba Muldrow, Anthony Pavese, Daniel Schlisserman, Edward Sherwood, Thomas Sullivan, Andrew Ulrich and Paul Yatsco took the oath of office and became contract specialists.

Participants in ACC's training program ensure continuity of a professional, world-class, contracting and acquisition workforce, explained Kathleen Davis, chief, Mission Execution Office, ACC-NJ. This program provides highly qualified, talented and motivated individuals the opportunity for accelerated promotions, career-broadening assignments and



(Photo courtesy of ACC–New Jersey)

ACC - New Jersey welcomed 24 new contracting interns at a swearing-in ceremony conducted Jan. 14. As part of the intern program, participants will receive on-the-job training and skill-broadening assignments to more fully understand their contracting mission and associated business processes.

specified training, she added.

Davis said program participants receive a combination of standardized formal and informal education. This education features on-the-job training and skill-broadening assignments with the world's largest acquisition organization. The robust and flexible training schedule allows program participants to develop

the fundamental skills and knowledge needed through all stages of career development and progression. Working with ACC customers to understand their mission and business processes, ACC contract specialists employ sound business strategies to acquire the best in equipment and services for our war fighters at a fair price.

SPOTLIGHT

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“The doctrine gap cell consists of personnel from the Department of the Army G4 (Logistics), the Joint Staff J4, the Acquisition, Logistics and Technology Integration Office, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Procurement), ACC and ECC,” she said. “Next year, we anticipate exercising a Joint Theater Support Contracting Command cell in the event.”

The 26-year veteran, who has nearly six years as an enlisted Soldier and has been selected for promotion to colonel, said the relationships cultivated during exercises like this add a tremendous amount of value to the training because participants are able to learn from their joint partners and have an additional source to reach out

to for help during deployments.

“Networking in our field is extremely important since we end up working with contracting officers of other services in most of our deployment areas,” she said. “This environment helps our contingency contracting officers to train as they will deploy and employ their skills. It allows them to meet and build friendships and learn contracting techniques used in the other services as well as share information about current contracting policies and mechanisms in place in contingency and garrison environments.

“By training together, Army contingency contracting officers may learn how the Navy uses husbandry contracts extensively in port locations to resupply

their ships moving in and out of ports all over the world or how the Air Force has a wide range of contracts for supporting aircraft and getting airfield operations up and running in a contingency.

“My hope is that this training continues to expand and becomes a contracting milestone event used for training and deployment validation similar to war fighter training conducted at Fort Irwin's National Training Center in California,” said Tschida. “I also anticipate the exercise becoming even more joint, starting with the planning of the exercise, to incorporate ideas and scenarios from all services to grow the exercise into an even greater success in the joint contracting community.”

JCRX 2013

MICC goes extra mile to support readiness exercise, helps provide participants full contingency contracting experience

By Ben Gonzales
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FORT BLISS, Texas – From trainees to cadre and all positions in between, Mission and Installation Contracting Command employees are supporting the Joint Contracting Readiness Exercise 2013 here today.

Of the 377 trainees and cadre in the exercise, 129 are Soldiers in MICC offices and 37 are MICC civilian employees supporting JCRX-13 as teachers, mentors or coaches for the event.

The exercise, which began Jan. 13 and runs through Jan. 31, is the Army Contracting Command's annual contracting readiness exercise that trains military and deployable civilian contracting officers in warrior and contracting specific tasks.

One of those coaches, Anna Walker, a contracting officer from MICC-Fort

Bragg, N.C., went the extra mile in not only providing contracting guidance but also participated in the warrior training tasks alongside the military members she mentors. The warrior training included convoy operations, medical training, vehicle rollover simulations and simulated weapons training.

"I'm willing to experience exactly what (the military members) are experiencing," Walker said. "It builds morale between the military and civilians because they see I am not just here to teach them, but also to go through all the same training they do."

Another mentor is Ben Rush, a quality assurance specialist from the MICC Contracting Operations Directorate at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Rush educates JCRX trainees about the need for quality assurance professionals.

"My role is to help these trainees learn to take ambiguity out of contracts and to have measurable performance outcomes," Rush said.

It is important for the trainees to learn how to appoint contracting officer representatives and develop quality assurance surveillance plans to specify what a contractor needs to do, how to do it, and when to do it, and this should be written clearly in the performance worksheet, he said.

"With specific performance standards identifying acceptable quality levels, we can hold contractors' feet to the fire in the event standards are not met," Rush added.

Bringing realism to the exercise is Michael Walker. As a role player for the exercise, he draws on his profession as a quality assurance specialist at MICC-A.P. Hill, Va., to give JCRX participants a chance to work with fictitious CORs and contractors so trainees learn how to work with many different customers. Walker role plays as a COR to bring realism to the exercise and gives trainees the chance to work with actual contracts as well as individuals fulfilling certain roles involved in the acquisition process.

See MICC, page 6.



(Photo by Ben Gonzales)

Anna Walker, contracting officer, MICC-Fort Bragg, N.C., talks with El Paso, Texas, media following her run through the vehicle rollover simulator during JCRX-13 at Fort Bliss, Texas.



(Photo by Ben Gonzales)

(Left to right) Maj. Sean Donovan, Staff Sgts. Seung Choi and Derrick Reynolds work on a contract during JCRX-13 at Fort Bliss, Texas. Donovan is a contracting officer from MICC-Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., Choi is a contracting specialist from MICC-Fort Knox, Ky., and Reynolds is a contracting specialist from MICC-JBLM.



(Photo by Larry D. McCaskill)

Sgt. 1st Class Carlet Clark, contracting specialist, MICC-Fort Irwin, Calif., learns how to apply a tourniquet and other lifesaving skills during the JCRX-13 at Fort Bliss, Texas.

MICC continued from page 5

“We all work together to correct any weaknesses of the past to ensure what our contracts call for is done based on the contract,” Walker said. “We are the watchdogs and stewards of the American taxpayers.”

Training the next generation of acquisition professionals is the goal of JCRX-13, and part of that generation is Staff Sgt. Jerill Cotton from MICC-Fort Campbell. As a 51C with only five months experience as a contracting specialist, he is one of many trainees new to the career field who require ramped-up training to prepare for worldwide contingency operations.

For the exercise, trainees formed 18 regional contracting centers with approximately 10 members in each. Embedded in each RCC are a military and

civilian coach and mentor to guide them.

“I did not know what to expect from all of the classroom training we went through. Plus it was great to go through warrior task training as a refresher since I haven’t done that since 2007,” Cotton said. “I’ve learned there is so much involved in establishing a contingency contracting office.”

Coaches also are learning from trainees.

Joshua Kaufmann, a coach for RCC-Mobile from MICC-Fort Drum, N.Y., is participating in the exercise for the second year. This was his first opportunity to go through warrior task training, which not only taught valuable life-saving skills but also brought camaraderie to the RCC teams.

“As coaches and mentors, we are being honest with trainees on their strengths and weaknesses,” Kaufmann said. “I am learning just as much as trainees, because as a MICC employee I do not work on weapon system or military construction contracts.”

The MICC has more than just mentor-coaches and students at the JCRX. Brenda Clark is the deputy director of MICC-Fort Benning, Ga., who as the MICC liaison officer oversees all ACC civilian timekeeping throughout the JCRX. Lee Mossolle provides information technology support so all 377 participants can access acquisition programs and so coach-mentors can oversee student performance.

Without these programs, contracting professionals cannot do their job, Mossolle said. “This is a great environment for trainees to enhance skills required to do joint contracting overseas and become intimately familiar with the tools of the trade.”

Comprised of 35 contracting offices across the United States and Puerto Rico, MICC provides Army commands, installations and activities responsive contracting solutions and oversight.

The ACC exercise brings together contracting professionals from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines to polish contracting skills, share knowledge and practice all policy, procedures and regulations associated with their craft.



ACC in the News

These articles mention Army Contracting Command.

Military Training: Ready! Aim! Procure!

By Mark Thompson

(Posted in *Time* magazine, Jan. 25, 2013)

You know you’ve been at war too long when you send 300 troops to sunny Fort Bliss, Texas, for more than two weeks to take part in JCRX 2013.

JCRX 2013? What kind of war game is that?

Well, it’s not actually a war game, in the way most folks think of a war game.

<http://nation.time.com/2013/01/25/ready-aim-procure/>

Army research eyes next-generation SiC military high-voltage switching devices

Posted by John Keller

(Posted in *Military & Aerospace Electronics*, Jan. 29, 2013)

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, N.C., 29 Jan. 2013. U.S. Army researchers are asking for industry’s help in pushing the state of the art in silicon carbide (SiC) semiconductor power electronics technology for next-generation high-voltage switching devices for military and commercial applications.

<http://www.militaryaerospace.com/articles/2013/01/Army-SiC-power.html>



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