



Vol. 4, No. 6  
Feb. 13, 2013

# NEWS BLAST

U.S. Army Contracting Command

*"Providing global contracting support to war fighters."*

## Nichols outlines ACC's fiscal risk plan

By Ed Worley

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REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala.—

Members of the Army Contracting Command must do everything they can to minimize the effect of the nation's budget uncertainty on the war fighter, ACC's commanding general said Feb. 7.

Addressing a standing-room-only ACC Town Hall audience of more than 800 in the Bob Jones Auditorium here and a worldwide audience via video teleconferencing, Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols outlined steps the command is

taking as the Army faces fiscal uncertainty in the fiscal year 2013 budget.

"I felt it was essential that we have this session as soon as we got some guidance from the Department of the Army and Army Materiel Command to assuage your fears about what's happening," she said. "There is a perfect storm going on affecting things that are absolutely outside of our control."

To underscore the topic's importance, Nichols quoted Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, Army Chief of Staff: "Today, the greatest threat to our national security is fiscal uncertainty. The situation is serious. If we do not have a legislative solution that

provides our leaders with the time and the flexibility to shape our forces for the future, we will create a hollow force."

The Army must find ways to cut expenses by \$12 billion, Nichols said, in order to cope with the current continuing resolution budget authority and possible sequester. She said the savings are needed to minimize risk for Soldiers in combat, emphasizing that the Army will not compromise on that effort.

"That dilemma falls to you and to me," she said, pointing out the increased burden the contracting workforce will have in helping the Army deal with this challenge.

See NICHOLS, page 3.

## Former Army sergeant awarded Medal of Honor

By C. Todd Lopez

Army News Service

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama awarded the Medal of Honor to former Army Staff Sgt. Clinton Romesha during a ceremony Feb. 11 in the East Room of the White House.

Romesha is the fourth living service member to receive the medal for service in Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom. The former Soldier earned the medal for actions Oct. 3, 2009, at Combat Outpost Keating, Kamdesh District, Nuristan Province, Afghanistan.

On that morning, COP Keating, manned by only 53 Soldiers and situated at the bottom of a steep valley, came under attack by as many as 300 Taliban fighters.

During the fight, its perimeter was

breached by the enemy. Romesha, who was injured in the battle, led the fight to protect the bodies of fallen Soldiers, provide cover to those Soldiers seeking medical assistance, and reclaim the American outpost that would later be deemed "tactically indefensible."

"Throughout history, the question has often been asked, why? Why do those in uniform take such extraordinary risks? And what compels them to such courage?" the president said. "You ask Clint and any of these Soldiers who are here today, and they'll tell you. Yes, they fight for their country, and they fight for our freedom. Yes, they fight to come home to their families. But most of all, they fight for each other, to keep each other safe and to have each other's backs."

See MEDAL OF HONOR, page 6.



(U.S. Army photo)

President Barrack Obama awards Staff Sgt. Clinton Romesha the Medal of Honor at a White House ceremony Feb. 11.

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# Spotlight on...

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## Kim Tycer

### Army Contracting Command Chief Counsel

*Kim Tycer joined the Army Contracting Command as its new chief counsel and was appointed to the Senior Executive Service on Jan. 28, 2013. Her previous assignment was as associate counsel in the Army Materiel Command Office of Command Counsel's Business Law Division.*

#### Describe your current position:

It's a real honor to serve as the command's chief counsel. My job will be to serve the command, Maj. Gen. (Camille) Nichols - her mission and her vision. From a legal perspective my goal will be to develop and implement policies that will help increase the efficiencies and consistency of acquisitions across the command.

My staff and I will focus on providing services to all the stakeholders we impact across the command. With that in mind, we'd like feedback. We really want to engage people so that all the stakeholders understand what we can provide and how we can help them achieve their mission.

#### Describe your passion for the job:

I have two daughters and two sons. When one of my sons graduated from high school, he went into the Army.

I thought that if we're willing to watch him put on a uniform, fight for our country and our rights as well as for other people around the world that don't have the advantages that we do, then I should put my education and experience to work to help keep him and all his fellow Soldiers safe.

#### What would you like others to know about you?

As an attorney coming from private practice, it's another world. You have adversaries, not necessarily fighting each other, but strategizing against each other. There's always a winner and a loser. In government contracting, everyone is on the same page working toward the same goal.

My experience, from the technical and contracting perspective, is that the military draws good people that are dedicated and hard-working and who are the best at what they do. I enjoy the camaraderie.

I can litigate with the best of them but it's really nice to have such good people on your team.

Government service was an opportunity to serve my country and to get back into a team environment. It is one of the best decisions I've made in my career.

#### Tell us about your family. What do you enjoy during your spare time?

I grew up in rural Virginia - horse country - in a small town called Remington. We're farm people. We used to be big fox hunters but now we're trail riders.

My husband is from New Orleans and volunteers to cook Mardi Gras dishes in support of our church. He is also a member of the Kansas City Barbecue Society. We're big cooks and we like to entertain.

We love it here in Huntsville. It's a great mix of cultures.



Kim Tycer



### U.S. Army Contracting Command

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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.

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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.**



# MICC-Fort Hood test program yields savings

By MICC Public Affairs Office

## JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas

– A test program with the Government Purchase Card Program by the Mission and Installation Contracting Command-Fort Hood is yielding success through cost savings for military customers in a fiscally challenging environment while also identifying efficiencies in the program.

Beginning in June 2012, MICC-Fort Hood, in conjunction with FedBid, entered into a test program with the installation's Directorate of Public Works and its GPC holders. To date, the program has saved the Army more than \$83,800.

“The intent of the test was to explore potential cost saving and efficiency for GPC transactions,” said Barry Barnett, the director of contracting at Fort Hood. “On average, items purchased have shown a savings of 13.21 percent with an average of 2.2 vendors summing 4.9 bids.”

The test was limited to GPC purchases in the \$3,000 to \$25,000 price range for supplies, equipment and repair parts that were available from local small businesses on existing blanket purchase agreements issued by MICC-Fort Hood. Government Service Agency contracts were also used when the items were not available through

a local blanket purchase agreement. The test program did not affect DPW service or construction contracts or contracts issued by MICC-Fort Hood.

“Based on the initial success, the test program was expanded in October 2012 to include \$1,000 to \$3,000 dollar GPC purchases,” Barnett said. “Business rules have been developed and adjusted based on suggestions from DPW and small businesses who sell these items to DPW.”

The director said FedBid provides a fully automated reverse auction process for DPW GPC holders to purchase items, eliminating the need for GPC holders to call individual vendors for items.

“FedBid’s system allows more vendors to be contacted electronically, and thus generates more competition and lower bid prices, which saves the government money,” he said.

“As an added benefit, FedBid’s system also provides documentation for the GPC holder’s files, which improves the efficiency of the documentation process and annual inspections of those files,” said Randy O’Brien, the GPC Program coordinator at MICC-Fort Hood.

After the GPC holder enters the supply requirement into FedBid, an email notice is sent to small businesses in the local community who are both registered in

FedBid and are on the appropriate blanket purchase agreement for the item being purchased.

O’Brien added if the item is not available locally, GSA vendors nationwide can be notified. Vendors can submit bids until the reverse auction is closed, which is normally five business days, but can be quicker for high priority request.

Vendors know only if their bid is winning, called lead, or not, called lagging. Barnett believes the FedBid process offers increased security and integrity to the GPC procurement process by not informing vendors of the names of individuals purchasing items, how many vendors are competing or the amount of the lead bid.

FedBid has an Army-wide contract managed by ACC-Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., and it has been used at MICC-Fort Hood for years. It provides a reverse auction process for purchasing supplies and some services. The online marketplace provides free customer help desk support and assistance. Vendors interested in participating can register as a seller at [www.fedbid.com](http://www.fedbid.com) free of charge.

Small businesses interested in a blanket purchase agreement with MICC-Fort Hood should contact the contracting office’s GPC program coordinator at 254-287-5340.

## NICHOLS

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Acknowledging the specter of a potential civilian workforce furlough, Nichols reiterated the Army position that a furlough is a tool of last resort and that it requires Secretary of the Army approval.

“It will crush us if we have to furlough anybody in the command – anybody,” she said emphatically.

This is a time for the contracting community to “make lemonade,” Nichols said, predicting that ACC’s customers will be coming back to the negotiating table looking for ways to modify contracts. The general encouraged contracting officers to use this as an opportunity to re-engage their customers about the value of bringing their contracting officers into the acquisition strategy early. The Army has about \$184 billion in contracts open right now, Nichols said.

ACC – like the rest of the Army – is under a civilian personnel hiring freeze. In the short term, the command will also release 17 non-contracting temporary employees and re-employed annuitants command-wide. Contracts for term employees will expire at the end of the current term and will not be extended. As additional cost-savings measures, ACC has stopped the accrual of non-mission essential overtime and compensatory time. All ACC organizational purchases will be made by exception. All ACC-funded travel and training will be by exception and reviewed at the ACC headquarters.

Budget uncertainty guidance, including a link to the town hall video and slides, is available on the ACC SharePoint website at <https://acc.aep.army.mil/BUG/Pages/BUG.aspx>.



(Photo by David San Miguel)

**Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols, ACC commanding general, hosted the town hall meeting to discuss how the command plans to minimize the effect of the nation’s budget uncertainty on the war fighter.**

# JCRX-13

## Coaches, mentors help participants stay on track

By Larry D. McCaskill

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### Part 2 of a three-part series.

**FORT BLISS, Texas**-During the Army Contracting Command's Joint Contracting Readiness Exercise 2013 here, contracting trainees in simulated regional contracting centers were able to depend on coaches, mentors and assessors for help as they worked their way through four days of military contracting training.

In her first year in the roll of a coach, mentor or assessor, Master Sgt. Cynthia Perryman, Mission and Installation Contracting Command-Fort Carson, Colo., says her duty was to ensure teamwork was part of the equation as the contingency contracting officers performed their tasks.

"I'm looking at the noncommissioned officers-in-charge of team members to see how they react to dealing with new contracting experiences and daily operations," she said. "The three NCOICs I'm assessing are very strong and knowledgeable leaders. They are really motivated and they keep their teams pumped up."

Also the senior enlisted advisor with the 918th Contingency Contracting Battalion at Fort Carson, Perryman said her exercise role as a CMA afforded her the opportunity to share her experiences and to learn something new as well.

"I get to see some of what not to do and a lot of what to do," said the 23-year-veteran who has been in contracting for four years. "I've gone down range and sharing my experience with those who have not is an honor. I can see (in their actions) how I reacted to things when I was deployed and I am able to help them avoid some of the pitfalls."

Perryman said operations on day one tended to be tiring, but ran smoothly; it was after day two that the real challenges began.

"People will change from the stress of heavy workloads and you will see how things really get done down range," she said.



(Photo by Larry D. McCaskill)

**Members of a notional regional contracting center discovered that sometimes the group's senior-ranking member was not always the most knowledgeable. At his laptop, Staff Sgt. Samuel L. Curry, 414th Contracting Support Brigade, Vicenza, Italy, guides the group through the Procurement Desktop-Defense System.**

Anna Walker, MICC-Fort Bragg, N.C., said she likes observing the trainees in her notional regional contracting center and assisting them before they lose too much time and get off track. That means advising them on how to work with the contracting software.

"Most are not familiar with what the contracting officer can do on (the Procurement Desktop-Defense System) because normally they don't have the administrative rights to do a lot of things required here," said Walker.

Nonetheless, she liked their enthusiasm.

"They are not afraid to ask questions and they listen to each other," she said.

Though the trainees first rallied around the highest-ranking person in the group, Walker said, that changed quickly.

A veteran with more than 10 years of experience in military contracting, she explained why.

"A staff sergeant who's been around may have more knowledge of the system and how things operate because they've been there doing it," Walker said. "So now

they are asking questions and feeding off each other. You see them all congregating to one area where someone is explaining something that the group might not know. I'm really impressed by that."

Lt. Col. Alejandro Ayala, ACC-Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., liked the trainees' diverse level of experience.

"It's a good mix, we have folks who've been deployed, not necessarily in a contracting role but who are familiar with deployments," he said. "We also have civilians that have been deployed and some that haven't. The energy within the teams has things flowing really well."

"They are sharing what they know and are remaining flexible, and flexibility is what makes the exercise flow," Ayala said. "You have to be willing to learn and deal with challenges you normally don't come across in a stateside contracting office. Some of the civilians and Soldiers new to contracting are learning from the challenges faced in a contingency environment."

**See CMAs, page 6.**

# ACC supports Presidential Inaugural activities

By Ed Worley

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When millions of people around the world watched President Barack Obama take the oath of office on the steps of the U.S. Capitol Building Jan. 21, little did they know that Army Contracting Command contracting officers had worked behind the scenes for months to help make the event a success.

Harold E. Williams, ACC liaison officer to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Procurement), Crystal City, Va., led the contracting trio assigned to the Inauguration Joint Task Force-National Capital Region.

Contracting specialists Rick Torres, MICC-Fort Knox, Ky., and Les Pagano, Jr., ACC-Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., were assigned to the Inaugural Joint Task Force-National Capital Region, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C., under the ACC Developmental Assignment Program. Julie Lumpkins, human resources specialist, ACC Deputy Chief of Staff, Human Capital G1, emailed the developmental assignment opportunity to senior leaders and career managers in July, seeking two volunteers. She said seven candidates applied.

Lt. Col. Maria D. Schneider, MICC-Fort Belvoir, Va., director of Contracting, and her teams at Fort Belvoir and Fort Myer, Va., provided additional support.

"It was a great feeling to know that we had contributed in a small way, on that day, at that moment, as the world was watching democracy at work in America," Williams said. "I was reflective of the last inauguration as I stood at the corner of 14th (Street) and Pennsylvania Avenue to witness history next to an elderly (in her 80s) African-American woman wearing her finest, I remind you it was 5 degrees, who said, 'Today I smile, because tomorrow we have more work to do.'"

Torres said attending the Inauguration "was an experience I'll never forget. Seeing some of the planning that went into it was very rewarding knowing I contributed to the success of the Inauguration.

"This developmental assignment was far more challenging than what I thought," he continued. "Not only working on the



(U.S. Army photo)

**Les Pagano, Jr., (left) ACC-Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., and Rick Torres, MICC-Fort Knox, Ky., were assigned to support the Presidential Inaugural requirements.**

57th Presidential Inaugural requirements from the ground floor, but being able to contribute to the Fort Myer office mission helped expand my knowledge of the acquisition process."

Williams said the contracting team executed 15 contract actions valued at approximately \$1 million.

"This was the easy part," he said. "The real challenge was providing a consistent level of contracting support to the JTF during several periods of organizational change and realignment."

Williams said the JTF-NCR planning began in August. The JTF started with about 65 members, but grew to about 600 people in December. He said contracting officers from other government agencies were also involved. The team reviewed contractual arrangements from the General Services Administration, Federal Protective Service, National Parks Service and other federal entities to ensure the task force was entering good business agreements.

"All of the contract actions were unique and required quite a bit of ingenuity," Williams added. "The biggest challenge was being flexible enough to work through continual changes in requirements right up to the point of award. That's the real value of having highly skilled contracting personnel on the team."

He said changes were common right up

to actual delivery.

"There were several contracting actions that really required tremendous research to ensure final recommendations were legal and proper in accordance with current regulations to ensure the JTF was compliant with current acquisition rules,"

But it wasn't all work. To relieve stress, Torres trained on the National Mall after work. He completed the 2012 Army 10-Miler on his 50th birthday, finishing 295th overall from among more than 40,000 runners, placing eighth in the 50-54 age group with a time of 1:01:05.

The Inaugural task force was Williams' last mission for ACC. He is moving to DASA(P).

"I am grateful to have had this wonderful opportunity to support the 57th Presidential Inauguration and work with Joint Force Headquarters-National Capital Region and the MICC," he said. "My hope is the Army will continue to recognize the importance and capabilities of the ACC, and continue to call upon us to provide business advice and guidance as Army organizations grapple with the complex procurement process, reductions and realignments of forces, and constrained fiscal environment."

He said MICC-Fort Belvoir will continue to support the JFHQ-NCR after the trio of contracting officers return to their home stations by the end of February.

# MEDAL OF HONOR

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The White House ceremony was attended by several hundred, including lawmakers, defense leaders, Romesha's family, and team members from Romesha's own Bravo Troop, 3rd Squadron, 61st Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division. Also there was Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta, Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Ray Odierno and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III.

The president said that upon learning he would receive the Medal of Honor, Romesha displayed the brand of humbleness typical of many Soldiers.

"When I called Clint to tell him that he would receive this medal, he said he was honored, but he also said, 'it wasn't just me out there, it was a team effort,'" the president said. "And so today we also honor this American team, including those who made the ultimate sacrifice."

Included among those who died in the fighting that day in Afghanistan were, Staff Sgt. Justin Gallegos, Sgt. Christopher Griffin, Sgt. Joshua Hardt, Sgt. Joshua

Kirk, Spc. Stephan Mace, Staff Sgt. Vernon Martin, Sgt. Michael Scusa, and Pfc. Kevin Thomson.

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*The president said that upon learning he would receive the Medal of Honor, Romesha displayed the brand of humbleness typical of many Soldiers.*

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"Each of these patriots gave their lives looking out for each other," Obama said. "In a battle that raged all day, that brand of selflessness was displayed again and again and again, Soldiers exposing themselves to enemy fire to pull a comrade to safety, tending to each

other's wounds, (and) performing 'buddy transfusions,' giving each other their own blood."

The president said on that day, it wasn't just Romesha who earned recognition for his actions, it was dozens of Soldiers. From that battle, Soldiers earned 37 Army Commendation Medals, 27 Purple Hearts, 18 Bronze Stars and nine Silver Stars, the president said.

"These men were outnumbered, outgunned and almost overrun," Obama said. "Looking back, one of them said, 'I'm surprised any of us made it out.' But they are here today. And I would ask these Soldiers, this band of brothers, to stand and accept the gratitude of our entire nation."

"God bless you, Clint Romesha, and all of your team," the president said. "God bless all who serve. And God bless the United States of America."

The president then asked that the Medal of Honor Citation be read, and following that, he placed the medal around Romesha's neck.

# CMAs

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Some CMAs see the lack of experience as a possible road block, not to operating in a deployed environment, but to learning the basics of contracting.

"The biggest challenge is that some of them are expecting to learn contracting here and they probably are not going to get that in this environment," said Army Reserve Maj. Donald Leath, 915th CCBN, Baltimore, Md.

Leath who also serves as a civilian contracting officer with ACC-National Capital Region, Alexandria, Va., admitted that the exercise did pose some challenges for the trainees because of their inexperience.

"I think about 80 percent of this RCC has less than a year of experience, so for them this is the first time they've had hands-on contracting experience working as a team," he said,

Despite their inexperience and after overcoming the initial shock of learning what was expected of them to

execute a heavy workload in a "deployed" environment, Leath said, the trainees started to "jell."

I saw them start to think, start to jell and become more accustomed to the environment, he said. They started to perform.

It's training, Leath added, that teaches them how to work as a team in a deployed environment.

Kimberly Kilpatrick, chief, Pre-Award Division, MICC-Fort Bragg, and a 13-year veteran of contracting, agreed but added that some of their training should be conducted at home station.

"A big concern among some of the coaches, mentors and assessors is that the contingency contracting officers need to work more on the basic fundamentals at their home bases," she said. "We can teach them aspects of the exercise and we can teach them how to set up an RCC forward, but we can only prepare them so much in a six-day exercise."

"Early in their careers we need to make sure they have the basics," Kilpatrick said. "When they are at home station they do a lot of (proficiency guide) assessments which are contingency related. They do all types of training with their supervisors and division chiefs. They need to continue with that training and learn as much as possible."

She hopes that next year they can help the trainees even more by providing examples of well-written contracts to take with them once the exercise is over.

"This exercise is all about training future CCOs," Kilpatrick said. "I plan on submitting a suggestion requesting we show them what right looks like by providing perfect examples of requirements packages, what a perfect commodities contract looks like - a contract with all the 'i's dotted and 't's crossed so they can see and have one to look back on in their database."

# Contracting team continues Kosovo mission support

By Rachel Clark

409th Contracting Support Brigade  
Kaiserslautern, Germany

In Kosovo, the contingency contracting office, which is under operational control of the 409th Contracting Support Brigade, continues as an integral part of the sustainment to Camp Bondsteel, as well as to the U.S. forces stationed in the Balkans.

“With Camp Bondsteel scaling down, it’s more important than ever to have an effective contracting office out here to support this area where there are few resources,” said Col. William Bailey, commander, 409th CSB.

The 409th leadership recently visited the contracting office at Bondsteel to meet with customers and sync with the 1938th Senior Contingency Contracting Team of the Indiana National Guard unit currently running the contracting operations.

*“We are an experienced team getting out meeting our customers and contractors, keeping them focused on ... the contract requirements.”*

Lt. Col. Randy Singleton  
1938th SCCT team leader

“The national guard team we currently have in this office is very experienced. They have been very forward with their contracting initiatives and continue to execute effective contracts all while keeping a watchful eye on resources to best serve the mission,” said Bailey.

The 1938th SCCT currently supports the mission by writing and executing contracts for a variety of support functions including maintenance and repair of dental and medical equipment,

custodial services and transportation.

“We are an experienced team getting out meeting our customers and contractors, keeping them focused on the same sheet of music - the contract requirements. That’s just the way we do it here,” said Lt. Col. Randy Singleton, 1938th SCCT team leader.

Established soon after Kosovo achieved independence from Serbia in 1999, Camp Bondsteel continues to house and support American and NATO peacekeeping forces as well as resident contractors through a forward operation cell headquartered in Sarajevo.

While elements of Camp Bondsteel scale back and military forces pull out, contracting continues to play a major role in the sustainment of the community.

“We couldn’t feed people, we couldn’t house them,” said Della Hodges, director, Area Support Team Balkans. “We would be broke without contracting.”



## ACC in the News

These articles mention Army Contracting Command.

### Contracting readiness exercise a success

By Larry D. McCaskill, Army Contracting Command

(Published in the Fort Bliss Monitor, Feb. 7, 2013)

Contracting professionals gathered here for the Army Contracting Command’s fourth annual Joint Contracting Readiness Exercise, starting Jan. 14. More than 300 participants from military contracting offices worldwide participated. This is the second consecutive year it was conducted at Fort Bliss.

“We expanded the scope of this year’s training,” said Col. Timothy Strange, commander, 412th Contracting Support Brigade, Joint Base San Antonio, Fort Sam Houston, Texas. The 412th is the lead organizer for the exercise.

<http://fbmonitor.com/2013/02/06/contracting-readiness-exercise-a-success/>

### 7-year-old to troubled soldiers: ‘Ask for help’

(Aired on NBC Today, Feb. 7, 2013)

Statistics released this week put the number of suicides by active and veteran soldiers at an alarming rate of 22 per day. Seven-year-old John Murray, Jr., inspired to lower that number, sent a special message to troubled soldiers by writing “ask for help” on Post-It notes. NBC’s Charles Molineaux reports.

[http://todaynews.today.com/\\_news/2013/02/07/16884933-boy-7-spreads-message-for-suicidal-soldiers-ask-for-help?lite](http://todaynews.today.com/_news/2013/02/07/16884933-boy-7-spreads-message-for-suicidal-soldiers-ask-for-help?lite)



Click on the image for  
ACC safety messages.



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