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NEWSBLAST

U.S. Army Contracting Command

"Providing global contracting support to war fighters."

51C NCOs train as the Army fights



(Photo by Larry D. McCaskill)

Sgt. 1st Class Clarlet A. Clark, contracting NCO, 679th Contingency Contracting Team, MICC-Fort Irwin, Calif., administers a tourniquet on a wounded "Soldier" during the JCRX-13 warrior skills training.

By Larry D. McCaskill

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According to the Army Contracting Command's senior noncommissioned officer, the Joint Contracting Readiness Exercise conducted Jan. 14-Feb. 1 at Fort Bliss, Texas, is the type of training that will help 51C contracting NCOs advance their skills and achieve the level of expertise needed during deployment operations.

"Training is what the Army does every day," said Command Sgt. Maj. John L. Murray, ACC command sergeant major. "For 51C NCOs, their training is actually executing the procurements that the Army requires to sustain and execute its daily mission and operations."

Murray cited how the Army trains its medical professionals to illustrate how the same training process applies to 51C personnel.

The doctors and technicians in the hospitals and clinics across the Army don't train on Soldiers every day. They perform medical treatment, he said. "They do, however, come out of the hospitals to train or hone their skills and techniques in a deployed or operational environment. The same process is needed for the contracting professional. The Joint Contracting Readiness Exercise is preparing military contracting professionals to deploy and support the missions that the ACC is tasked to perform."

Murray said the training exercise falls into the operational domain and is an integral part of increasing and developing the 51C NCO's contracting proficiency.

"NCOs attend institutional training and structured self development," he said. "As with all military occupation skills, this exercise is a critical part of the development model to achieve the goal of trained and proficient contracting NCOs."

According to ACC's senior NCO, proficiency can only be achieved by constantly challenging oneself, and that means constant training.

"Training builds confidence and competence, while providing essential skills and knowledge," Murray said. "Leader development is the deliberate, continuous, sequential and progressive process - grounded in Army values - that develops Soldiers and Army civilians into competent and confident leaders capable of decisive action, mission accomplishment, and taking care of Soldiers and their families.

"All training and leader development actions occur within the Army culture - a culture that embraces values and ethics, the warrior ethos, standards, and enduring principles and imperatives," he said.

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Sgt. 1st Class Ranada Lowe

Sgt. 1st Class Ranada Lowe 723rd Contingency Contracting Team, ACC-N.J.

By Larry D. McCaskill
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When Sgt. 1st Class Ranada Lowe left Cape Girardeau, Mo., she took with her blessings from her mother and grandmother as she started a new life in the U.S. Army.

“I have to give thanks to my mother and grandmother for making me the person I am today,” said Lowe, the noncommissioned officer-in-charge at Army Contracting Command – New Jersey’s Team Picatinny and a contracting NCO with the 723rd Contingency Contracting Team supporting the Combat Ammunition Center. “I didn’t have a lot growing up, but they taught me how to be strong.”

Growing up in a small town, Lowe’s elders knew there weren’t many opportunities so when she approached them about joining the military, she was pleasantly surprised by their reaction.

“They were happy because the town I grew up in, it was difficult to grow up and be somebody so they were very happy that I decided to do something positive,” said Lowe, who enjoys basketball and football and follows the Philadelphia Eagles and the Miami Heat. “Now when I go home, my mother’s and grandmother’s friends are always thanking me for my service and I have to thank them just as much for their support.

“I received my master’s degree in

acquisition and procurement management from Webster University and hopefully I’ll get my Level 3 (Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act) certification in June when I apply,” said the single mother of Shamar, 14, and Rayana, 10. “My kids are so special and I love them with all my heart. They understand when I have to deploy, for which I am so thankful and grateful.”

Lowe’s goals for the future have at least two endings.

“I’d like to stay around and become a command sergeant major,” said Lowe, who has two-and-a-half years in military contracting. “I love to help Soldiers and to make a difference in a person’s life. As a command sergeant major you can definitely make an impact on someone’s life.”

Once her military career has run its course Lowe has set her sight on becoming a teacher.

“I see the trouble young men get into and I want to help guide children in the right direction,” said Lowe. “I can be both firm and understanding and provide them with the support and discipline they need.”

Lowe said every day is a highlight because each day there’s something different.

“I learned that from my mentor at ACC- N.J., Therese Grimm. She’s very knowledgeable and understands me both as a contracting professional and as a Soldier, so I couldn’t ask for a better mentor,” she said.

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.

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Hutchison: ACC headquarters optempo higher than envisioned

By Ed Worley

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REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala. –

A month after becoming the Army Contracting Command deputy to the commanding general, Michael Hutchison has learned that the ACC headquarters here is a busy place.

“There is a whole lot more going on at the headquarters than I had anticipated,” he said. “The operations tempo here is a whole lot higher than what I had envisioned.”

Hutchison compared ACC’s optempo to a previous assignment at Army Materiel Command headquarters.

“We weren’t nearly this busy,” he said. “Of course, it was a different time. We were not at war and we weren’t trying to resource a 6 to 7,000-person contracting operation.”

The dual-hatted former executive director of the ACC-Rock Island, Ill., contracting center, and former acting executive director of the ACC-National Capital Region, Alexandria, Va., said his role here is evolving.

His goal for the position is “to be the best deputy I can be for (Maj. Gen. Camille

M. Nichols, ACC commanding general). I really want to make her life easier. I hope she will view me as a partner and a key advisor in the leadership of ACC.”

His general focus is on contracting issues and some of the initiatives under way in the ACC Operations Group’s portfolio. He is also maintaining his position as the principal assistant responsible for contracting for ACC-RI and ACC-NCR.

“If you think about it, one of the things that ACC was created to do was to improve the quality of the work that’s being done, to standardize processes and procedures across ACC, to create an enterprise approach to contracting,” he explained. “Key to that are the initiatives that are being worked out of contracting operations. Ensuring that those initiatives continue to make forward momentum is really fundamental to ACC bringing real value to what’s being done in the (contracting) centers.”

In addition to the high optempo, Hutchison sees some challenges, including what he called “significant” money and manpower resource challenges.

“Money equals capability. Money equals manpower. Money equals training.

Money equals personnel. Money equals travel.”

ACC’s resource shortfall is also contributing to the contracting workload, he said.

“Sequestration would bump up the contracting workload,” he explained, saying every contract modification stimulated by the possibility of sequestration generates additional workload on the contracting officers.

He acknowledged the extra workload will add to the stress already experienced by contracting officers and others who directly support the contracting mission.

“With respect to the workload, the contracting officers will need to do some serious prioritization with the customer,” said Hutchison, who relieves stress by visiting historical sites and museums.

“What do they need, what can be slipped? And they have many customers, so the process will have to be repeated with each customer,” he said. “They and the customer also have to realize that some things just aren’t going to get done.

“Personally, you can get frustrated and angry, but you have no control over it,” Hutchison said. “My advice is to let it go and do the best you can.”



“The operations tempo here is a whole lot higher than what I had envisioned.”



“Sequestration would bump up the contracting workload.”



“My advice is to let it go and do the best you can.”

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.





(Photo by Rachel Clark)

USAREUR sergeant major visits 409th NCOs

Command Sgt. Maj. David Davenport, center, U.S. Army Europe command sergeant major, meets with the NCO leadership of the 409th Contracting Support Brigade in Kaiserslautern, Germany, to discuss his mission and vision for NCOs in Europe.



(Photo by Steven Stanfill)

ASC CG meets with 409th leadership

During a command visit Feb. 7 to the 405th Army Field Support Brigade, Brig. Gen. John Wharton, commanding general, Army Sustainment Command, met with Tony Baumann, deputy director, 409th CSB, in Kaiserslautern, Germany.



ACC in the News

These articles mention Army Contracting Command.

Final preparations for Central Accord 13 ensure US, African partners ready for success

By Sgt. Amy Wieser-Wilson
North Dakota National Guard Public Affairs
(Posted on the Defense Video & Imagery Distribution System, Feb. 16, 2013)

DOUALA, Cameroon - Months of long-distance planning and meetings evolved in recent weeks into an in-person partnership that will launch Central Accord 13. Activity peaked in Douala, Cameroon, during the past week as American and Cameroonian military partners completed final steps for welcoming about 750 U.S. and Cameroon service members, as well as neighboring country observers, for the Feb. 20 opening ceremony.

<http://www.dvidshub.net/news/102176/final-preparations-central-accord-13-ensure-us-african-partners-ready-success#.USOQ5avMK70#ixzz2LMJo8vEL>

Buying the best for war fighters

By Kari Hawkins
Assistant editor, The Redstone Rocket
(Published in The Redstone Rocket, Feb. 20, 2013)

Expeditionary Contracting Command uses local suppliers to stretch dollars. Brig. Gen. Ted Harrison's acquisition career has literary followed the Army's "better buying power" all over the world. During his 23 years as an Army acquisition officer, he has been part of the evolution of the Army's contracting initiatives as it's moved from a minor role in the overall Army strategy to being a major player alongside combatant commanders in theater. He has assisted in implementing initiatives for improving the management of acquisition programs, incentivizing competition, eliminating redundancy and achieving the maximum amount of savings for the Army.

http://www.theredstonerocket.com/around_town/article_343b92ea-7b6d-11e2-b3a4-001a4bcf887a.html



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