

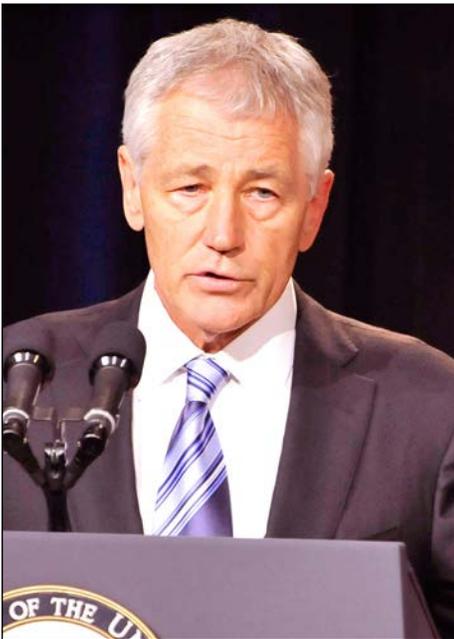


NEWSBLAST

U.S. Army Contracting Command

Vol. 4, No. 13
April 3, 2013

"Providing global contracting support to war fighters."



(Photo by Glenn Fawcett)

Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel announced a reduction of furlough days civilian employees may anticipate because of the budget sequester.

Defense secretary announces fewer furlough days for civilians

By Nick Simeone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – The Defense Department has revised from 22 to 14 the number of days hundreds of thousands of civilian employees could be furloughed this year because of the budget sequester, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel announced March 28.

In addition, a senior Defense Department official speaking on background, told reporters the start of the furloughs will be delayed until mid-to-late June, after more than 700,000 department employees receive furlough notices now set to go out in early May. Furloughs would happen over seven two-week pay periods until the end of September, when the current fiscal year ends, the senior official said, with employees likely to be told not to

come to work for two days during each of those pay periods.

Department officials say they are still working to determine which employees might be exempted.

Hagel characterized the reduced furloughs as well as a revised estimate of sequestration's impact on the defense budget as good news. The changes follow Congressional approval last week of a defense appropriations bill that prevented an additional \$6 billion dollars in cuts, ordered under sequestration, from taking effect.

"It reduces a shortfall at least in the operations budget," Hagel told reporters at a Pentagon news conference. "We came out better than we went in under the sequester, where it looks like our number is \$41 billion [in cuts] now versus the \$46 billion."

See FURLOUGH, page 3.

Brigade provides golden support during Thailand exercise

By Larry D. McCaskill
ACC Office of Public & Congressional Affairs
Larry.d.mccaskill.civ@mail.mil

Members of the 413th Contracting Support Brigade, Fort Shafter, Hawaii, augmented the U.S. Pacific Command's contingency command post with military contracting professionals during Cobra Gold 2013.

Into its 32nd iteration, the United States' largest multinational joint training exercise in the Asia-Pacific region was conducted throughout the Kingdom of Thailand Feb. 11-22. More than 21 countries demonstrated their commitment to enhancing

interoperability of military forces, strengthening of regional relationships, and the promotion of security and cooperation within the region.

Cobra Gold 2013 consisted of staff exercises, various senior leader engagements, a field training exercise, as well as humanitarian and civil assistance projects.

The 413th CSB's Matthew Mastick, Maj. William Griffin and Sgt. 1st Class Jamie Trice reinforced the exercise's joint contracting center established by the U.S. Marines in Bangkok.

"We train as we fight, so in my opinion this was not a challenge but a learning experience," Trice said. "I

learned that regardless of the service or branch, we carry the same dedication and steadfastness to a highly critical career field as contracting professionals. We must constantly be proactive and work cooperatively with our peers and comrades to understand and operate independently within our contracting arenas."

The center provided expeditionary theater contracting for logistical support. Griffin and Trice executed contract actions valued at more than \$580,000, saving the government more than \$320,000 compared with last year's exercise.

See COBRA GOLD, page 5.

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Spotlight on...

For Spotlight submissions, click on the icon.

Sgt. 1st Class Jerry K. Nkansah Army Contracting Command

Sgt. 1st Class Jerry K. Nkansah is the Army Contracting Command's equal opportunity advisor.

Describe your current position:

As the command's equal opportunity advisor, I assist the commanding general in maintaining a healthy equal opportunity climate which supports cultural diversity, dignity and respect for all.

The focus of the Equal Opportunity Program is to ensure fair treatment for all persons based solely on merit, fitness and capability in support of readiness.

Describe your passion for the job.

It is my greatest goal to help the organization educate all its members to be aware of each other's cultural differences, realize that these differences are force multipliers and to deter any unlawful discrimination based on race, color, religion, gender or national origin.

Where do you call home? Tell us about your family. What do you enjoy doing during your spare time?

I was raised all over, but I've mostly lived in the Virgin Islands and in Virginia. Most of my family, however, resides in Maryland.

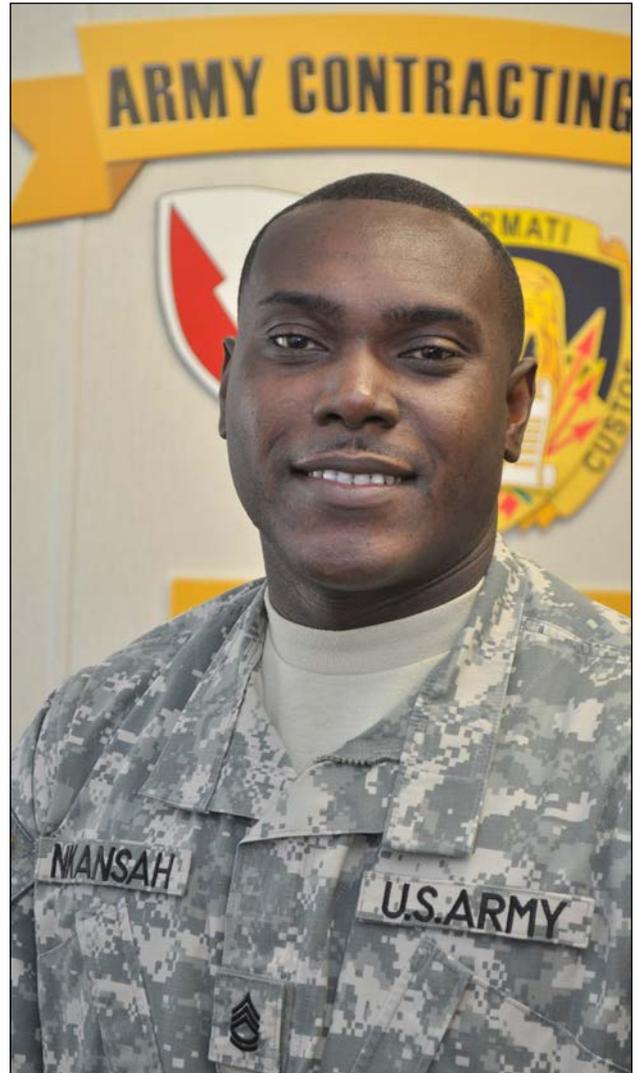
I have a wonderful 11-year-old daughter and I like to watch movies and read in my spare time.

How does your job support the Soldier?

My job supports Soldiers by providing them with an environment free from unlawful discrimination and ensuring that Soldiers are not assessed, trained, promoted, assigned or managed on the basis of their race, color, gender, religion or national origin but assessed on their merit, fitness and capability.

What would you like others to know about you?

I am here to help.



Sgt. 1st Class Jerry K. Nkansah

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.



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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Getting down-and-dirty

Unit uses local fund-raiser to build esprit de corps

Story courtesy of 413th Contracting Support Brigade

Soldiers and civilians in the 617th Contingency Contracting Team, Fort Shafter, Hawaii, got down and dirty during the second annual Makahiki Obstacle Course Race at Kualoa Ranch National Park, Kaneohe.

The 617th CCT is an element of the Expeditionary Contracting Command's 413th Contracting Support Brigade.

Unit members decided the locally sponsored fundraiser would be a good way to build esprit de corps while helping to save the park.

"There were ten challenging obstacles to overcome," said Capt. Kasandra B. Tharp, a contingency contracting officer with the 617th CCT, about the mud-laced 5-kilometer obstacle course.

According to Tharp, one challenge had participants climbing a rope over a 15-foot mud wall.

"The ropes and the walls were covered in mud," she said. "At another obstacle we had to low-crawl under wires and through mud. All the obstacles had mud as their variance. It was a good experience, because it was an opportunity to build team cohesion with our civilian counterparts. It was great to see the level of participation for this kind of event."

Tharp said there were more than 2,000 participants.

"While the race did track times to indicate the top three finishers, the emphasis was on participation and completion,"



(Left to right) Tae Kim, Bronson Abrigo, Ronnie Sakata, Capt. Kasandra Tharp and Staff Sgt. Charles Sykes participate in the annual Makahiki Obstacle Course Race at Kualoa Ranch National Park, Kaneohe.

she said. "Though the 413th did not come in first, all members completed the course together as a team and displayed the commitment and spirit intended for the challenge."

Fellow team member Staff Sgt. Charles Sykes agreed.

"It was a good bonding experience for civilian contracting and military staff," he said. "The event demonstrated the commitment and team spirit embraced by the entire 413th CSB."

FURLOUGH

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But despite a Congressional reprieve, the Defense secretary said the Pentagon is still going to be short at least \$22 billion for operations and maintenance, "and that means we are going to have to prioritize and make some cuts and do what we've got to do," including making sharp reductions in base operating support and training for non-deployed units.

More critical in the long run, Hagel said, is how budget cuts will affect readiness and the department's overall mission. Because of that concern, he said he has directed Deputy Defense Secretary Ash Carter and Gen. Martin E. Dempsey,

chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to conduct an intensive department-wide review of U.S. strategic interests including how to protect the nation with fewer resources.

"How do we prioritize the threats and then the capabilities required to deal with threats?" he said. "There will be some significant changes, there's no way around it."

Dempsey said the department has already exhausted 80 percent of its operating funds halfway through the fiscal year and characterized the current budget situation as "not the deepest, but the steepest decline in our budget

ever," and warned it will affect military readiness into the future.

"We will have to trade at some level and to some degree our future readiness for current operations," Dempsey said.

He called on elected leaders to give the Pentagon the budget flexibility it needs to carry out institutional reforms.

"We can't afford excess equipment," Dempsey said. "We can't afford excess facilities."

"We have to reform how we buy weapons and services," the chairman said. "We have to reduce redundancy. And we've got to change, at some level, our compensation structure."

ACC to host enterprise forum to discuss technology, tools, informational resources

Army Contracting Command employees are invited to participate in the Quarterly Chief Information Officer G6 Enterprise Forum, April 10 from 1- 2:30 p.m. CDT to learn, share best practices and ask questions about the latest improvements in technology, tools and informational resources.

A panel of information technology

experts will be on hand to address topics such as the role of information technology at ACC-Redstone Arsenal, the Expeditionary Contracting Command integration with ACC, an update on the Future Contract Writing System, and other subjects.

ACC personnel in Huntsville may attend on-site at building 3750 on

Redstone Arsenal. All others can access the Defense Connect Online discussion at <https://connect.dco.dod.mil/enterpriseforum>.

Visit <https://acc.aep.army.mil/G6/governance/sc/EnterpriseForum/default.aspx> for the latest information on forum topics or to submit questions in advance.

Black Hawk helicopters join Colombia's war on drugs

By **Kim C. Gillespie**

U.S. Army Security Assistance Command

The Army Security Assistance Command took another step in building partner capability when it completed a delivery of seven Black Hawk helicopters to Colombia on March 2.

Included in the delivery were three Black Hawks each for the Colombian National Police and the Colombian Army, and one Black Hawk medical evacuation aircraft for the Colombian Air Force.

The Colombia award of the UH-60L model Black Hawk helicopters was for more than \$98 million. Army Contracting Command-Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Ala., played a critical role in meeting the Army's mission to support Colombia through timely contract execution.

"The aircraft will provide advantages to the Colombians by enhancing their situational awareness and mission effectiveness in the war against drugs and terrorism through air operations," said Col. Steve Smith, U.S. Southern Command Regional Operations director. The aircraft are expected to improve results in the areas



(Courtesy photo)

Six Black Hawk helicopters await shipment from Savannah, Ga., to Santa Marta, Colombia, for delivery to the Colombian government for its Army and National Police. A seventh helicopter for the Air Force was delivered by ferry flight.

of counter-terrorism missions and training, and also in counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism operations.

"They (the aircraft) will also be used for search and rescue operations," Smith added.

While the equipment delivery directly

supports the needs of Colombia, it also supports the priorities of the combatant command, SOUTHCOM, which works with countries in its area of responsibility to promote regional security.

See BLACK HAWKS, page 5.

Defense Secretary to return part of salary during furloughs, spokesman says

By **Amaani Lyle**

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON— In solidarity with the Defense Department's 800,000 civilian employees facing furloughs, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said he will voluntarily return part of his salary to the U.S. Treasury, Pentagon Press Secretary George Little said here April 2.

Though furlough-exempt as a presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed official, Hagel will commit to partial forfeiture over the 14-week furlough period, Little said at a Pentagon news conference.

Little said he hopes the recent change reducing the projected furloughs from 22 to 14 days brings some relief to the workforce, and he added that employees will remain informed of any further changes.

"We are obliged to give adequate notice to our civilian employees. This is not something [in which] you get a notice one day and are furloughed the next," he said. "We understand that we need to take great care with our civilian workforce."

Little also reported that officials are reviewing analytics to assess the number of civilian employees they expect to have to furlough in the coming weeks.

Categories of exemption, he said, include civilians serving in a war zone, foreign nationals protected by the status of forces of agreement and other categories.

"This has been a troubling time for them and for our uniformed employees too, even though they're exempt from furlough," Little said.



(Photo by Sgt. Jon Heinrich)

The secretary of defense speaks to Soldiers with Combined Team Bastogne, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), March 9, at Forward Operating Base Fenty, Afghanistan.

BLACK HAWKS

continued from page 4

The delivery was made seven months ahead of schedule and enabled the Colombians to begin integrating the aircraft into their mission requirements earlier than expected. Smith credits Army Security Assistance Enterprise team members, which included the Aviation and Missile Command, Utility Helicopters Project Office, Security Assistance Management Directorate, ACC-Redstone and Sikorsky, the aircraft manufacturer, with increasing the speed of this foreign military sales case.

“USASAC is about people, processes and promises. This case is a great example of how our people in the ASAE execute the promises we’ve made to a country through the FMS process,” Smith said.

De-scoping tool provides helpful hints for cost avoidance, cost savings during times of budget uncertainties

REDSTONE ARESENAL, Ala. – Army Contracting Command has developed a tool to help contracting officers and requiring activities react to the automatic federal budget cuts known as sequestration.

“Helpful Hints for De-scoping Contracts” provides information for de-scoping contracts, explained Cassandra Maxwell, a procurement analyst in the ACC Operations Group Policy and Support Division. She is a member of the De-scoping Integrated Product Team that developed the tool.

Maxwell said Department of Defense requiring activities and contracting organizations have identified programs and contracts actions that are candidates for cost avoidance and cost savings as they deal with budget uncertainties.

“Many of these strategies reflect a proposed ‘de-scoping’ of supply and service

requirements,” she said. “The intent for this tool is to provide helpful hints, lessons learned and best practices from across the command on the process of de-scoping government contracts.”

Maxwell hopes that sharing information will help ensure continuity and compliance, adding that de-scoping a contract is a potentially complex and time-consuming process.

She said the operations group welcomes input from the field.

Suggestions should be emailed to the ACC Contracting Operations mailbox at usarmy.redstone.acc.mbx.hqacc-contractingops@mail.mil. Include “Helpful Hints for De-scoping Contracts” in the subject line.

The helpful hints tool is available on the Budget Uncertainty Guidance website on the ACC SharePoint home page.

COBRA GOLD

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Mastick said that while the other services provided contracting officers to award contracts, the Army was the only service that provided an operational contracting support planner.

“The challenge was helping the joint force identify the contracting requirements to support the mission early enough in the process so that we could determine the number and experience level of the contracting forces,” Mastick said. “That information helped us determine who had the required skills to provide timely and effective expeditionary contracting support.”

Mastick added that integration with the planners and constant communication with the various staff sections are critical in identifying the requirements process.

“We provided assistance identifying the operational staff’s responsibilities relating to the management and integration of contracted personnel during the mission,” Mastick said. “Working with the U. S. Pacific Command during their deliberate military decision-making process has enabled me to better understand how we, as operational contracting support planners, can ensure that we are value-

added members of the team.

“I learned that developing a plan to support a complex operation can be a very

time-intensive, deliberate process which requires collaboration and synchronization across the operational staff,” he said.



(Courtesy photo)

(Left to right) USPACOM Maj. Fely Andrada looks on while Matthew Mastick, 413th CSB, and USPACOM Maj. Johnny Woods review a requirement document during Cobra Gold 2013.



ACC in the News

These articles mention Army Contracting Command.

Army prepares to consolidate three contracting efforts

By Staff

Washington Business Journal (Posted on the WBJ FedBiz Daily, April 2, 2013)

The Army will develop a new program out of three contracting efforts that cover everything from vehicle maintenance to research and development work to consulting services, The Washington Post reports.

TACOM's Strategic Service Solutions, or TS3, could be worth as much as \$3.2 billion over five years. The contracting office is seeking to make it a five-year program with multiple awardees as well as a small-business component, said Terri Vaillancourt, group chief for service contracting at Army Contracting Command in Warren, Mich.

http://www.bizjournals.com/washington/blog/fedbiz_daily/2013/04/army-prepares-to-consolidate-three.html

Korea veterans foundation appreciates youth support

By Amy Guckeen Tolson

Staff writer (Published in the Redstone Rocket, March 27, 2013)

Cathy Dickens wouldn't be where she is today without the power of persistence and education.

Dickens, executive director of the Army Contracting Command-Redstone, spoke about the role of education and the importance it has played in her life at the Legacy 4 Korean War Veterans' luncheon for members of the 1st Patriot Support Group at The Summit March 20. Dickens' remarks to the group of teenagers were food for thought for the Tennessee Valley's next generation of patriots.

http://www.theredstonerocket.com/news/article_cc02829a-96e4-11e2-a3ec-001a4bcf887a.html

Security assistance enterprise benefits from partnership

By Paul J. Stevenson

U.S. Army Security Assistance Command (Posted on the www.Army.mil web page, March 27, 2013)

The U.S. Army Security Assistance Command co-leads the Army Security Assistance Enterprise, which is comprised of nearly 50 organizations, and oversees Security Assistance programs and the FMS process from start to finish.

The execution of Security Assistance programs and FMS cases requires the direct involvement of individuals across many different organizations. In coordinating the many actions that take place throughout the case lifecycle in areas such as contracting, acquisition, finance, logistics and training support, it is critical that these separate organizations work closely in order to effectively execute and manage FMS cases.

http://www.army.mil/article/99619/Security_assistance_enterprise_benefits_from_partnership/

Contract to Watch: Army readying consolidated services program

By Marjorie Censer

(Published in The Washington Post, April 1, 2013)

The Army is preparing to consolidate three contracting efforts dealing with various services into a single program that could be worth as much as \$3.2 billion over five years.

The new program, dubbed TACOM's Strategic Service Solutions or TS3 (TACOM is a shorthand for Tank Automotive Command), will cover everything from vehicle maintenance to research and development work to consulting services.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/capitalbusiness/contract-to-watch-army-readying-consolidated-services-program/2013/03/29/4a43e2da-96e9-11e2-814b-063623d80a60_story.html



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