

ACC TODAY

U.S. Army Contracting Command

Spring 2013



ACC JCRX at Fort Bliss

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View from the top

ACC Integration

Contracting and customers go hand in hand



VIEW FROM THE TOP

The customer – our reason to exist

By Harry Hallock,
Executive Director,
Army Contracting Command-Warren, Mich.

A rmy Contracting Command-Warren works hard to deserve its long-standing reputation for providing exceptional acquisition, contracting, and business advisory services to its customers and other stakeholders.

With more than 760 civilian and military personnel located at six sites, the center manages more than \$130 billion in active contracts for combat, armored security, route clearance, tactical and commercial vehicles, robotics and so much more. In fiscal year 2012, ACC-WRN awarded 17,600 contract actions, and obligated \$10.2 billion.

ACC-WRN serves the TACOM Life Cycle Management Command. TACOM LCMC provides more than 65 percent of Army equipment in support of brigade combat teams, and the technology for more than 90 percent of Army lethality; supporting our men and women in uniform at 100 worldwide locations.

The contracting center ensures Soldier readiness for a broad customer base that includes four program executive offices: ground combat systems, combat support & combat service support, Soldier, joint chemical biological defense and others.

We have earned our reputation for exceptional customer support by making it a top strategic priority. Customer service has been the first goal in the ACC-WRN strategic plan since the plan's development in the late 1990s. Goal objectives include a requirement for senior leaders, managers, team leaders and employees to meet regularly with our customers to exchange information and identify concerns to promote and improve business relationships. As part of a customer assessment process, we use a simple survey to obtain feedback from our customer base regarding timeliness, communication, teaming, quality, and responsiveness. We also ask our customers to identify individuals in ACC-WRN who have provided exceptional support to customer organizations and we recognize those individuals in a town hall forum. It is not uncommon to recognize 30 percent of the ACC-WRN workforce at these events.

ACC-WRN leadership and contracting personnel also actively participate in events designed to encourage private industry participation in defense contracting, as they, too, are considered to be center customers. ACC-WRN key procurement decision makers were speakers, presenters and attendees at various events such as the 2011 President Barack Obama Detroit Small Business Summit, the 2012 National Veteran's Small Business Conference, and the February 2013 Doing Business with the Department of the Army. ACC-WRN also co-chairs the TACOM LCMC advanced planning briefing for industry.

By working closely with our customers in a collaborative manner, we are able to bridge the knowledge gap that exists between the many different functional specialties and organizational goals, to allow us to be true "business advisors" to our customers, and create an environment for success within the Department of Defense acquisition, logistics and technology community. ♦

ACC TODAY



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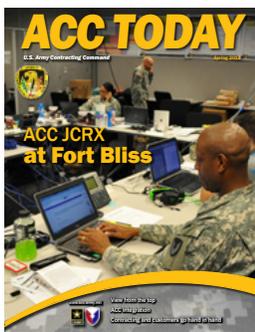
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Cover—Army Contracting Command Soldiers and civilians spent long hours in the operations center during the command's annual joint contracting readiness exercise at Fort Bliss, Texas, Jan. 14-31. (U.S. Army Photo by Larry D. McCaskill)

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Educated in the contracting school of hard knocks

By Larry D. McCaskill
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Ruth Anne Ijames (U.S. Army Photo by Larry McCaskill)

Armed with a doctorate degree in getting it done from the school of hard knocks, Ruth Anne Ijames has been a fixture in the contracting world since 1970.

A retired federal annuitant working out of her Billings, Mont., home, Ijames recently helped in the Army Contracting Command Control Cell during the command's joint contracting readiness exercise at Fort Bliss, Texas. Ijames came into contracting when contracting officers didn't need a college degree.

"Do I have a degree? Oh heavens no. I told you I'm from the school of hard knocks," Ijames said. "I started in a construction field office around construction contracting as an administrative assistant. I was always looking for something to help the engineers and always wanted to learn something new. I didn't care if it was in my job title or not. I was doing pay estimates and lots of stuff. Then I was an admin assistant.

Then I went to the district office as a purchase agent and the rest is history. I've been in contracting ever since."

Back then, Ijames said people came up through the ranks by doing the work.

"You might have started as a clerk and over the years you accumulated duties and eventually wind up as a contracting specialist. Now you have to have a degree to get in this career field," she said.

Ijames learned the intricacies of contracting by immersing herself in her work and staying up to date with all the changes as they occurred.

"Contracting is like any other profession; you have to stay current," she said. "What's so neat about contracting is that it is dynamic. The rules are always changing by executive order or, (Department of Defense) policy letters. When Congress makes changes to a law or passes an authorization act, it's going to be implemented in the Federal Acquisition Regulation and the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation. We serve at the pleasure of the law-making process because contracting is law."

To stay up to date Ijames does what she has been doing since the 1970s. She reads everything pertaining to contracting. She checks the Federal Register daily and the Government Accountability Office comptroller general's decision for changes and any possible protests, as well as particular court cases. She also purchases new copies of the FAR and the DFAR when they come out.

Ijames said those two documents might be the best thing that ever happened to military contracting.

Publishing the FAR in 1984, followed by DFAR, provided military contracting specialists

with over-arching government regulations that changed the way contracting specialists did competitive negotiations.

"It made it easier," she said. "The next big thing came along in the 1990s. The Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act gave professional status to contracting people. If you pardon the expression, I've grandmothers into that."

Working what she calls the night shift, Ijames supports the U.S. Central Command-Joint Theater Support Contracting Command.

"Working in the rear I can stay in the background and do a lot of the work, the reviews, keep up with the FAR and DFAR clauses for them," Ijames said. "I can answer questions from a lot of the newbie contracting officers going over there. I consider myself a resource for them to help them through tough issues, to help with policy and training presentations and suggestions."

Armed with two computers and a phone, Ijames provides the type of detailed, quality service that doesn't go unnoticed.

"I heard about her almost from my taking over the JCC-Iraq/Afghanistan command in December 2009," said Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols, ACC commanding general. "I would travel out to one of our remote contracting offices and the contracting officers would tell me about their advisor in the states - Ruth Ann. They shared amazing stories and only had the best to say about her sage advice and her timely responsiveness."

According to Nichols, Ijames professionalism, advice, and responsiveness are appreciated by almost everyone Ijames meets.

"She is an institution and a pocket of brilliance for all of the Department of Defense," Nichols said. "She mentored airmen, sailors, Marines and Soldiers for the last five years, giving folks

“She is an institution and a pocket of brilliance for all of the Department of Defense,” Nichols said.

answers on specific questions that provide knowledge for future efforts these contracting officers will experience in their careers.”

What can an individual do to have people praise them as institutions and a pocket of brilliance? According to Nichols, it's James' spirit and her dedication to her craft and to Soldiers.

“There was no office in either Iraq or Afghanistan that was

operating without her expert touch. She had been deployed in the early part of the war and now her reach was in rotation after rotation,” Nichols explained. “She not only answered their questions on contracts in the combat zone, but I have had contingency contracting officers that tell me they sometimes work with her even today on their issues on contracts in the states.

“Everyone appreciates her

professionalism, advice, and responsiveness. Everyone has great things to say about her and her work,” the general concluded. ◆

Quality assurance benefits MICC customers

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JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO–FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas
– Assuring Army customers receive what they pay for is the objective behind new quality assurance policy published by Mission and Installation Contracting Command officials in January.

The policy also marks a major milestone in helping correct the Army material weakness in contract administration and oversight. It follows the MICC's Quality Assurance Program roadmap to provide guidance on goals, expectations and functional requirements for quality assurance across the command leading to improved customer service. The roadmap includes three basic elements – policy and procedures, quality assurance workforce development and contracting officer's representative management.

“This policy is a major step in the MICC Quality Assurance Program,” said Joe Merry, a senior quality assurance specialist, MICC Strategic

Services Quality Assurance. “The Army has a material weakness in contract administration and oversight and documentation of that oversight. In many cases, we do not have documentation to support that the Army received acceptable services and supplies in accordance with the requirements of the contract to justify contractor payments. It demonstrates that we are committed to moving forward in addressing the Army material weakness with contract administration.”

MICC quality assurance specialists are acquisition professionals and members of the command's acquisition team. The policy defines their roles in conducting the quality assurance mission, which is critical to the success and efforts to hold contractors responsible and accountable for performance and quality control.

The command's overarching goal is to ensure it has an effective and independent government quality assurance program required by the Federal Acquisition Regulation. The program assures contracted

services or supplies conform to contract requirements, and contractors are “acceptably maintaining” their quality control systems to ensure they are providing acceptable services or supplies.

Merry said it is also important to understand that quality control is the responsibility of contractors, and the MICC Quality Assurance Program focus is determining that contractors are maintaining adequate quality control inspection systems congruent with the services performed and supplies furnished under contracts.

Merry pointed out that it is difficult to hold contractors responsible and accountable for performance and quality control if requirements have not been well defined with measurable outcomes. This is where quality assurance specialists can play a role in the pre-award process through assisting in determining if requirements are written with well-defined outcomes.

The new quality assurance program policy is available on the MICC SharePoint site. ◆

Contracting and customers work hand in hand for mission success

By Rachel Clark
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KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany—

The relationship between the 409th Contracting Support Brigade contracting offices and their customers represent a link that affects the successful completion of Army missions in Europe.

“We are a customer-focused organization and we measure our success on customer satisfaction,” said Col. William Bailey, commander, 409th CSB. “The 409th CSB is here to provide effective contracting support, and we will not fail.”

According to Bailey, the 409th CSB supports a large part of Army contracting in Europe and places value on supporting customers and ensuring their needs are met.

“Our customers rely on our responsiveness and effectiveness to get the best supply or service for their buck,” said Ulli Powell, contracting officer, 409th CSB Theater Contracting Center. “We support many military missions and if we don’t provide the best customer service for them and work hand-in-hand with them, it could affect their missions and their well-being.”

The organizational relationships the 409th develops are critical to mission success.

“I believe it is imperative to have a good working relationship with our contracting office and the people that support us and I believe we have this type of relationship (with the 409th),” said Valerie Daniel, Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

For the contracting team, the job does not end when a contract has been awarded. A tremendous amount of work goes into the follow up and maintenance of those contracts with management of some larger-scale

Soldiers and civilians line up for lunch at the Clock Tower Dining Facility on the Kleber Kaserne in Kaiserslautern, Germany. The dining facility is one of the contracts serviced by the 409th Contracting Support Brigade. (U.S. Army Photo by Rachel Clark)



theater contracts spanning years.

“I follow up with the requiring activity to ensure that the contract is running smoothly,” Powell said. “If it doesn’t, I ask why and get involved. I am 110 percent involved in everything that is going on.”

Contract management often requires the contracting officers to make site visits to their customers and reach out to contractors and vendors.

“Contracting plays a vital role due to our location overseas, said Maj. Roger Rodriguez, chaplain resource manager, U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart. “Regional Contracting Office Stuttgart has personally made two office visits, and they were very helpful and informative.”

Other customers agree.

“Our contracting officer has been key in making this contract work and put in long hours, went above and beyond to make the customer happy and work with us every step of the way,” said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Matthew Hurd, U.S. Africa Command Personnel Support Detachment.

Both customers and contracting officers believe good communication and working relationships are integral to the success.

“Certainly meeting customer

expectations is key. However, I also believe the key to customer satisfaction is customer education combined with open and constant communication,” said Daniel Jaques, 409th CSB procurement liaison.

“If we can tell the customer what it will take to create a successful acquisition and follow up with them through the process, the requirement development process will be improved and the acquisition will be successful.”

Early involvement of the contracting offices has equaled success toward the mission.

“If we didn’t support and work with our customer, the community would not be able to function,” Powell explained. “We take care of so many military units, organizations, and embassies as well as remote locations that we need to be right by their side to provide the supply and service needed. Every person working for the 409th impacts the outcome for a Soldier.” ♦

MICC-Fort Bliss delivers

for Army's second largest installation

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Providing the contracting needs for more than 35,000 Soldiers and their families at the Army's second-largest installation is no easy task, but members of the Mission and Installation Contracting Command-Fort Bliss, Texas, accomplish that every day.

The 56-member contracting office plans, integrates, awards and administers contracts for Army commands and units on the El Paso post that spreads across 992,000 acres.

Home to the Army's second-largest maneuver area as well as 1,500 square miles of virtually unrestricted airspace used for missile and artillery training and testing, Fort Bliss has the room to accommodate the 300-percent increase in its population over the last five years. Providing and sustaining the contract needs of the installation is where the MICC-Fort Bliss staff comes in.

In fiscal year 2012, the Soldiers

and civilians at MICC-Fort Bliss executed more than 2,100 contract actions valued at more than \$207 million. They take care of all of Fort Bliss' major units including the 1st Armored Division, Fort Bliss Garrison, 32nd Army Air and Missile Defense Command, Brigade Modernization Command, Joint Task Force-North, U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy and assist with the new William Beaumont Army Medical Center.

According to Lt. Col. Shawn Jenkins, the MICC-Fort Bliss associate director, the MICC-Fort Bliss staff partners with its customers to evaluate and determine the best course of action to achieve contract award, management and oversight. Such efforts include teaming with 1st AD officials to develop a contract action review board to assist the division in prioritizing its contract requirements

"We sit with the 1st AD's chief of staff and go through all the large requirements to make sure we procure only what is truly necessary for the customer," said Jenkins. "Since

fiscal year 2010, our staff helped the 1st AD with a 54 percent reduction in costs with no noticeable reduction in services through smart contracting and consolidation of requirements. They understand the value of contracting and how we can work together to save the Army money."

In addition to working with Fort Bliss units, support by the contracting office reaches beyond the post gates to local small businesses that perform many of the contracts required for the installation. In fiscal year 2012, more than \$69 million went to area small businesses through more than 1,300 contract actions. Leading the effort for Fort Bliss is Sue Jones, the small business specialist.

"We open our doors to meet with area small business representatives every Friday to educate local officials on what opportunities are available here, as well as provide the forecast for contracts to come," Jones said.

When Jones isn't working as the conduit for area businesses, she trains the MICC-Fort Bliss staff on market research for small businesses and how the programs benefit the Army and local economies.

According to Melissa Garcia, a contracting officer in the major acquisitions division, it takes a team effort to administer the installation's contracts.

"In a constantly changing environment, my job is to keep my team on track through mentoring while staying abreast of the current policies and changes in the dynamic contracting world," explained Garcia, who leads four contract specialists. ♦



(Left to right) Maj. Gen. Camille Nichols, ACC commanding general, talks to Karla Candelaria and Melissa Garcia during an office visit Jan. 25 at Fort Bliss, Texas. (U.S. Army photo by Ben Gonzales)

ROTC

outreach event well-received at NIU

By Liz Adrian
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ROCK ISLAND ARSENAL, III. – In the frigid, early hours of Feb. 20, four Army Contracting Command-Rock Island officers made their way into a van bound for DeKalb, III. Their mission: to meet 30 Northern Illinois University Reserve Officers' Training Corps Military Science III and Military Science IV cadets to discuss their potential futures in the Army.

Majors Jade Miller, Donald Smith and Dwayne Haigler, ACC-RI contract specialists, along with Capt. Timothy Godwin, ACC-RI executive officer, talked about their military backgrounds and took questions from the cadets about the transition from ROTC cadet to Army officer.

Lt. Col. David Dosier, department chair, Military Science, NIU, said the morning's outreach may have changed some of the cadets' perceptions of their upcoming transition from student to officer.

"It really gave the cadets a chance to see things from a different perspective," said Dosier. "Having this information come from someone other than me, who they've listened to for the past three years, is valuable. I think it may have changed some of the cadets' minds on what it will be like moving into their branches."

An hour-and-a-half question-and-answer session touched on many topics, but the overall theme centered on the relationships the cadets would have with the Soldiers they will lead as newly commissioned officers, as well as the relationship between peers and leadership.

In November, Miller and Smith conducted a similar outreach event



Maj. Jade Miller (standing) discusses his professional background with a class of Northern Illinois University ROTC cadets Feb. 20 as (left to right) Majors Donald Smith, Dwayne Haigler, and Capt. Timothy Godwin look on. (U.S. Army Photo by Liz Adrian)

at Western Illinois University as part of a local effort to recruit, train and retain the nation's future force. Miller said the questions cadets asked at NIU and WIU were largely similar. Several cadets stayed after the session to ask the officers additional questions.

"Once again the cadets posed some very good questions," said Miller. "We are trying to emphasize long-term thinking and not just what it means to get their commission. A unique opportunity for us is to be able to define functional areas, with particular focus on the acquisition corps."

The ACC-RI officers are hopeful they will be able to reach out to other ROTC cadets at schools such as Illinois State, University of Iowa, Northern Iowa and Iowa State.

Col. John Hannon, ACC-RI acting director, said the critical personal interaction and information the officers provided to the ROTC cadets will very likely be instrumental to many of their Army officer career choices, helping them to visualize the long-term big picture.

It is also an outstanding way for these officers to "pay it forward" with these cadets and soon-to-be commissioned officers, he said.

"This second outreach event by ACC-RI's officers was a great opportunity for them to make lasting impressions and provide their first-hand accounts of how they built a successful Army career with some potential future leaders of the Army," said Hannon. "I'm hopeful we are able to extend our reach to other ROTC programs in area colleges and universities. It is imperative that we help tell the Army story and keep ROTC recruiting Army strong." ♦

Deployable Cadre

Program mission evolves

By Giselle Lyons

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Management of the Army Contracting Command's Deployable Cadre Program has moved to the ACC Deputy Chief of Staff Human Capital G1.

The program is the command's primary source for identifying, assigning and deploying civilian volunteer personnel in support of contracting requirements around the globe, according to the ACC Deployment Cadre Program Handbook.

Beverly Johnson, ACC DCP coordinator, said ACC is called upon to provide contract management skills and expertise to support the war fighter in operations beyond the scope of the command's day-to-day mission. This includes support to overseas operations, training exercises, natural disasters within the U.S. and high-visibility priorities across the command.

Prior to being moved to the G1, the DPC was a stand-alone office operating at the ACC-National Capital Region offices in Alexandria, Va. The move comes at a time when the program is being revamped. The DPC is also developing a major initiative focusing on the well-being of the volunteers as they return from deployment, said Beverly Johnson.

Before civilians are deployed, they go to a unit deployment center where they receive initial training, uniforms and equipment. They return to the deployment center upon their redeployment and receive a medical review before returning to their home units.

Research has revealed that civilians face the same psychological difficulties as Soldiers upon returning from deployment, such as post traumatic stress disorder, but they tend to not follow up with additional medical treatment since it's not mandatory, according to Sandra Merritt, also an ACC DCP coordinator.

ACC is now taking steps to improve the medical and mental redeployment review by requiring a second medical review 90-120 days after the deployment, Merritt said.

"We are here for the deployed civilians when they return and we want to make sure they know that," Merritt said. "Whatever we can do to assist them, we do our best."

In addition to the physical and



Beverly Johnson (left), and Sandra Merritt, program coordinators, review personnel information. (U.S. Army Photo by Larry D. McCaskill)

mental reviews before and after deployment, the best assistance the DCP staff can provide to those deployed is to maintain constant communication during their deployment.

"Personal contact with them is an essential component of our jobs. Phone calls, emails, pictures... we want to communicate with them," Beverly Johnson stressed. "We want to make sure they feel stable and comfortable during their deployment."

Merritt said it's also critical for the DCP staff to communicate with the civilians at all times.

"We try to give them help before they deploy, while they are in the field, and when they come back," Merritt said. "We follow them the

whole way through and provide whatever assistance we can." Merritt explained.

The DCP pool consists of 118 volunteers from ACC headquarters, the Expeditionary Contracting Command, the Mission and Installation Contracting Command and all six contracting centers.

According to Bill Baxter, ACC deputy chief of staff Human Capital G1, upon redeployment, cadre members earn up to an additional 10 percent of their base salary for successfully completing their assignment.

Overseas deployments are typically six months and there are also opportunities for stateside temporary duty. Volunteers can sign up to be considered for either or both. Cadre members also have guaranteed return rights to their current assignments. Employees in the contracting and quality assurance career fields can apply, and those with knowledge of the Procurement Desktop-Defense Contracting System are preferred.

Valerie Johnson, a procurement analyst in the ACC Operations Group, is a DCP volunteer who recently returned from Iraq.

"Whenever I had a problem, they responded quickly," Valerie Johnson said. "If they didn't know the answer, they found out. They never left a question unanswered."

Cadre members like Valerie Johnson are exactly who the G1 office strives to assist, Merritt said.

"We have to communicate with them," said Beverly Johnson. "We can't assist them if we don't know what is going on."

"It's important to keep the communication going so we can tweak the program as we need to," Merritt added. "It not only helps them, but it helps us help the next group of cadre members who go out into the field." ♦

Hutchison: ACC ops tempo higher than envisioned



By Ed Worley
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REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala.— Shortly after becoming the Army Contracting Command deputy to the commanding general, Michael Hutchison learned that the ACC headquarters is busier than he thought it would be.

“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 became the deputy to Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols, ACC commanding general, on Jan. 14. He came to the headquarters after serving as executive director of the ACC-Rock Island, Ill., contracting center and was dual-hatted as the acting executive director, ACC-National Capital Region, Alexandria, Va.

“We weren’t nearly this busy,” he said, comparing ACC’s optempo to that of a previous assignment to Army Materiel Command headquarters. “Of course, it was a different time. We were not at war and we weren’t trying to resource a 6,000 to 7,000-person contracting operation.”

Hutchison said leaving Rock Island was “very hard for me to do. I love the mission and I love the people.

“I left because Gen. Nichols asked if I would be her deputy,” he explained. “I thought: when the boss asks, unless there is a compelling reason to say ‘no’, I need to say yes and serve where the Army needs me. When I said yes, I underestimated how hard it would be to leave.”

Nichols is happy Hutchison accepted her offer.

“I’ve known Mike for a long time and he is absolutely the right person to complete the ACC leadership team,” she said. “He is uniquely qualified, having served as the executive director of two of our contracting centers. He has already taken a lot of work off my plate, especially leading the command when I’m on the road. I trust his judgment and I value his counsel. It’s great to have him on the team. We welcome him and look forward to his assistance in getting us closer to our vision.”

Hutchison’s general focus as the deputy is on contracting issues and some of the initiatives under way in the ACC Operations Group, but he said his role is evolving. 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.

“My personal goal for the position is to be the best deputy I can be for Gen. Nichols,” he explained. “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.”

Hutchison sees some challenges for the command, 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.”

While serving as the acting director of ACC-NCR, Hutchison had to deal with the Army’s decision to close the center. In the end, he said, the decision came down to “dollars and cents.” The center is scheduled to close in July. It’s the human costs, though, that concern him most.

“ACC-NCR is full of great people who do a great job every day,” he said. “I felt very connected to them. You don’t want people to think they

are not valued. I still wrestle with, in the end, how do I handle the personal cost that we are laying on that workforce.”

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

“Sequestration will bump up the contracting workload,” he explained, saying every contract modification stimulated by 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 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.” ♦

Soldiers and DA civilians can go online for career development assistance

In an open letter to Soldiers and leaders, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III said personnel must be agile and adaptive to succeed in today’s complex and dynamic environment, and that requires Soldiers and Department of the Army civilians to continually develop knowledge, skills and abilities. Chandler said the Army Career Tracker portal, <https://actnow.army.mil>, supports career development with information technologies and other important tools. By using ACT, Soldiers and civilians have the ability to organize and schedule individual developmental opportunities into a plan that satisfies their individual goals and objectives over time.

ACT is an online tool for career and leadership development with an increasing number of resources to help Soldiers and leaders manage Army careers, said Chandler. This includes the ability to collaborate with leaders and mentors, and connections to up-to-date Army-wide and military occupational specialty-specific information to guide Soldier decision-making.

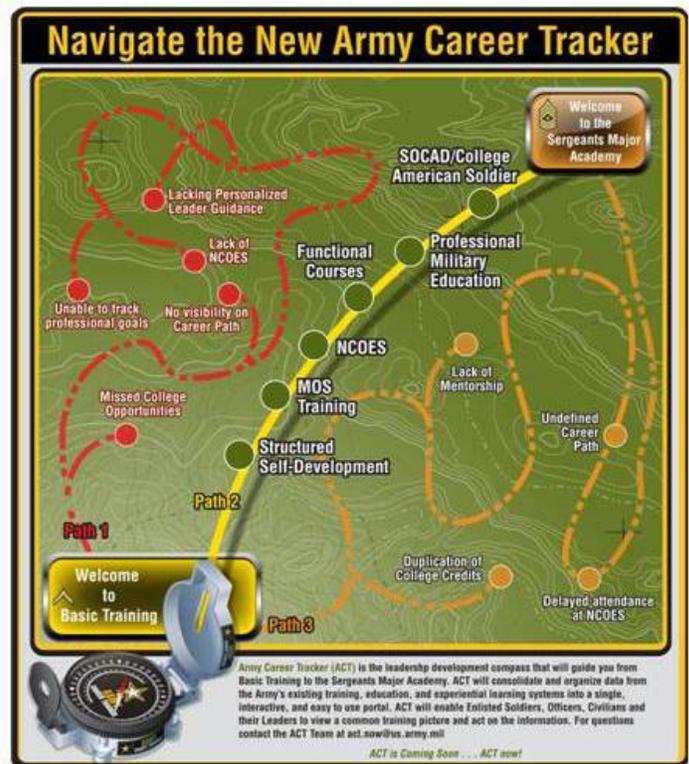
“The best manager of an individual’s career is themselves,” said Command Sgt. Maj. John L. Murray, command sergeant major, Army Contracting Command. “ACT will help individuals organize and manage their career along a proven path to success.”

Murray said it’s effective because it is a single site where an individual can go to find several online links for career development.

“We need to make it a sign-off requirement on all Soldier and Department of the Army civilian in-processing sheets,” he said. “ACC has been working with the Training and Doctrine Command and the Acquisition Support Center to make several improvements to the 51C and 1102 (military and civilian contracting professional specialties, respectively)

dashboards to include interfacing with the career acquisition management portal so the Soldiers and civilians will only have to create and manage one individual development plan.”

Murray said ACC has been granted a license to pull reports to identify the current training and development status of Soldiers and civilians assigned



Personnel can find all kinds of training aids and progression charts on the Army Career Tracker website. (U.S. Army Graphic)

to the command.

“Right now we can review the structured self-development, retention, and professional military education of the command,” Murray said. “We will continue to enhance the tool to make it more viable for the field.” ♦

Contracting readiness exercise a success

By Larry D. McCaskill
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FORT BLISS, Texas – Contracting professionals gathered here starting Jan. 14 for the fourth annual Army Contracting Command joint contracting readiness exercise, dubbed JCRX-13.

More than 300 Soldiers and civilians from military contracting offices worldwide participated this year, 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 was the lead organizer for the exercise.

Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols, ACC commanding general, commended Strange and his team for their dedication and hard work.

“I want to thank the 412th and everyone involved in putting this together,” she said. “They ensured that this was the most professional event that we could put on given our resources and our expertise. It was phenomenal.”

Nichols said the training was an opportunity for the participants

Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols, ACC commanding general, addresses JCRX-13 participants at Fort Bliss, Texas, on the importance of contingency contracting. (U.S. Army Photo by Larry D. McCaskill)



to hone their craft in a very low-threat, low-risk environment.

In addition to Nichols, Heidi Shyu, assistant secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistic and Technology); Kim Denver, deputy assistant secretary of the Army (Procurement); Lt. Gen. Patricia McQuiston, deputy commanding general, Army Materiel Command and Charlie E. Williams Jr., director, Defense Contract Management Agency, also observed JCRX activities.

“It’s absolutely important. The first thing we learned over the last two years is that preparation to go deploy and get the contracting mission done is critical and it’s absolutely

essential that we prepare to do it in a joint environment,” Williams said. “These kinds of exercises give you the opportunity to practice what you are going to face when you get into theater. We’re always talking about training like we fight. Well, this is allowing Soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines to do just that.”

According to Strange, the exercise leads to improved contract planning and execution in a joint environment and contributes to establishing expeditionary contracting as a core and enduring Army operational capability. Future military operations will continue to demand expeditionary contracting Soldiers who are trained and ready to meet Army service component command needs. This “work as we fight” strategy will prepare them to deploy and support Army operational forces anywhere in the world, he said.

The ACC team created the realistic live-training exercise to replicate the conditions that a contracting officer could face in Afghanistan and elsewhere, Strange added.

The live training is similar to the training that maneuver units receive at the training centers and according to Denver, it’s exactly the training that is needed.

“When you look at all the activities



During JCRX-13, Army Contracting Command Soldiers and civilians, in an early morning formation, await the start of a command run at Fort Bliss, Texas. (U.S. Army Photo by Larry D. McCaskill)



Professional Workforce

During JCRX-13, cadre members spent long hours within the operations center. Cadre for the exercise was comprised of personnel from Army Contracting Command organizations nationwide. (U.S. Army Photo by Larry D. McCaskill)

that are taking place here, they are truly preparing our 51Cs, our military contracting support, for operations across the globe,” said Denver. “So this is probably one of the best environments that we have to provide actual training with real-world scenarios to train our 51Cs.”

The exercise provides tools, techniques and procedures necessary to deploy with confidence and the ability to support deployed forces, he explained. The exercise included trainees and cadre members from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force.

“This contracting exercise has grown significantly in complexity,” said Lt. Col. Carol Tschida, Expeditionary Contracting

Command’s strategic plans officer and the officer-in-charge of the Senior Contracting Officers Control Cell. She has been at each of the previous exercises.

“The contracting scenarios and workload used in the exercise were 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,” Tschida said.

During the exercise, trainees - military and civilian - stayed in the barracks, ate in the dining facilities and car-pooled everywhere.

“I hope the Soldiers see we are trying to connect with them on their level,” said Kimberly Kilpatrick, Mission and Installation Contracting Command-Fort Bragg, N.C., who hadn’t slept in a barracks since 1991 when she was in the Air

Force. “I’ve participated in the warrior training and I have to say my legs are sore. It really gives you an appreciation for Soldiers.”

Warrior task training included convoy operations, medical training, vehicle rollover simulations and simulated weapons training.

“I was willing to experience exactly what (the military members) experienced during this exercise,” said Anna Walker, a contracting officer from MICC-Fort Bragg. “It builds morale between the military and civilians because, hopefully they saw that I am not just here to teach them, but also to go through all the same training they do.”

The three-week exercise wrapped up Jan. 31. Many of the approximately 200 trainees will return to home station and begin preparations for deployment. ♦



(Left to right) Staff Sgt. Jenny Martinez, Capt. Manuel Prado, Anna Walker and Marine Corps Capt. Elena Vallely practice various first aid techniques during the warrior skills training portion of the exercise. (U.S. Army Photo by Larry D. McCaskill)



Staff Sgt. Channel Pederson, 900th Contingency Contracting Battalion, Fort Bragg, N.C., instructs one of the JCRX-13 participants during training on escaping from rolled over vehicles. (U.S. Army Photo by Ben Gonzales)

ECC colonel works Academy Awards red carpet

By Beth E. Clemons
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When Col. Martha K. Brooks found out she was heading to California, she had no idea of the adventures she had in store.

Brooks, the Army Expeditionary Contracting Command public affairs officer, was asked to assist during the 85th Annual Academy Awards.

"I was contacted by a Soldier that used to work for me at Third Army," Brooks said. "He is now working at the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs Los Angeles and was in charge of the program this year. He said he needed someone that would not be intimidated by the stars or be star struck and he thought of me."

Originally, Brooks was headed to Tinsel Town as an official temporary duty with the Army covering the costs. Due to money constraints in a tight fiscal environment the Army decided not to fund the trip. Undeterred, Brooks volunteered to perform the mission and pay for the trip herself. "This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, Brooks said. "Not many people can say they were



Col Martha K. Brooks and her new friend, Oscar.

able to represent the military at the Oscars and on the red carpet."

The service members were on hand to gather photos, videos and sound bites to be used by the local mobile public affairs detachment and the Armed Forces Network.

Travelling with her sister, Lela, Brooks' adventures began on her plane ride to Los Angeles Feb. 23.

"I was getting on the plane and boys kept coming up to the man in front of me and asking for pictures with him. I wasn't sure who he was but later we chatted and it turns out he's some sort of football star," Brooks joked. That "football star" was none other than Terrell Suggs, linebacker for the recent Super Bowl champions, the Baltimore Ravens.

During their trip, the sisters stayed with their cousin, Corey Sales, who lives in California. On her first day in L.A., Brooks was at the Dolby Theatre, home of the Academy Awards ceremony, bright and early.

"Although I had press credentials, Lela and Corey had to be there really

early to get their seats in the fan box," recalled Brooks. She explained that getting there early ended up being a good thing.

"Before the show, the local and smaller press organizations were allowed to go behind the scenes inside the theater and get photos and videos before it got crazy."

Brooks said being on hand in her mess dress was quite the show-stopper.

"No one had ever seen the formal Army uniform, because we only wear it for special occasions and most Soldiers don't buy one," said Brooks. "The uniform presented the opportunity to explain the Army to civilians who had never been exposed to Soldiers before."

Once the program began, the press was sectioned off behind ropes. As the stars began to arrive on the red carpet, Brooks competed with much larger television and print media to get the passing celebrities on camera.

"I just grabbed folks," Brooks laughed. "Once I told them we were there to share their messages with the Soldiers they were happy to stop and chat with us."

When asked to recall her favorite interview, Brooks said it was a tie between Robin Roberts and Halle Berry.

"I was barely able to get Halle," Brooks recalls. "The red carpet was so crazy and the stars were being pulled in a million different directions. But once I told her what huge fans the Soldiers were of her movies she jumped right in and gave them a shout-out."

"Robin was probably the most moving. I didn't realize her father was one of the famous Tuskegee Airmen so that was really interesting to hear about," said Brooks.

After about two hours of working the red carpet, Brooks and her family went across the street to a theater where they ate and watched the awards show on a giant screen.

But her busy week didn't stop there.

Brooks went on to attend the Jimmy Kimmel, Ellen DeGeneres and



Col. Martha K. Brooks, center, worked the red carpet at this year's Academy Awards for the Army's Office of the Chief of Public Affairs. Brooks' mission was to engage celebrities and solicit encouraging words for the troops.



Actress Halle Berry poses for a picture with Col. Martha K. Brooks on the red carpet at the 85th Academy Awards Feb 24, in Los Angeles, Calif. (U.S. Army Photos by 302nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Jay Leno shows.

“Kimmel was neat because during commercial breaks they would ask the audience to give factoids or questions and the rest of the audience would try and get the correct answer. I got up every time to give facts about the Army and really got them interested. There were even a couple of other Soldiers in the audience so they jumped in as well. At the end of the show I was given a prize for having the best questions,” Brooks said.

“But Ellen was probably my favorite. They played music during the breaks and had a dance contest, which I won, and when the show was over Ellen invited the entire audience back for her special ‘12 days of Christmas’ show.”

After all the shows, Brooks decided to take in a few sites with

her family. During a bike ride along the beach they stopped to admire the multi-million dollar mansions. During one such stop she met one of the home owners, producer Paul Abbott. He invited Brooks and her family in for a tour and then had them back for a sunset dinner.

“Paul and his family were so generous, I couldn’t believe the hospitality. And of course his home was amazing,” said Brooks.

But that wasn’t the end of her chance meetings. Her last night in L.A. proved to be eventful as well.

“During the week I went to my cousin’s office, he’s an Air Force contractor, and they briefed me on their current projects. After the briefing they invited us to dinner. Since it was our last night in town they insisted we go to a famous, exclusive restaurant.”

Once at the restaurant, the group was met by another business

Professional Workforce

associate who looked strangely familiar.

“We were waiting for our table and my cousin’s co-worker came in and everyone started swarming him yelling ‘Kobe, Kobe’ but he was saying ‘I’m not Kobe’.”

Turns out, the co-worker was Kobe Bryant’s cousin and they bear a striking similarity. Soon, Kobe arrived and joined the table.

“The camera flashes and attention were insane,” recalled Brooks. “And I didn’t even think to get my camera out because there were so many people already bothering him. He couldn’t stay long but it was cool to meet him.”

With her whirlwind trip behind her, Brooks says she’s grateful for the opportunity.

“I will definitely go back for Ellen’s Christmas show, so this isn’t my last trip to California. But the access and red carpet experience was a lifetime memory that I’ll never forget. I’m just glad I got to represent the Army and help spread our message.” ♦

ACC receives five awards for contracting excellence

By Beth E. Clemons
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EL PASO, Texas – The U.S. Army Contracting Command collected five awards at the 2012 Secretary of the Army Awards for Excellence in Contracting ceremony.

The awards ceremony recognized teams and individuals in 11 categories and was held Jan. 28 at the El Paso Marriott in conjunction with the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics and Technology) Principal Assistant Responsible for Contracting Workshop.

ACC award winners are:

AbilityOne Program: Deborah A. Ault, Mission and Installation Contracting Command, Fort Knox, Ky.

Outstanding Contracting Officer - Systems, Research and Development, Logistics Support (Sustainment)
Contracting: James M. Owens, ACC-Redstone, Ala.

Outstanding Contracting Officer - Installation Level – Directorate of Contracting: Sandra E. Kim, 413th Contracting Support Brigade, Hawaii

Outstanding Unit/Team Award - Systems, Research and Development, Logistics Support (Sustainment)
Contracting: Fiscal Year 2013-2015 Stryker Life Cycle Requirements Contract Team, ACC-Warren, Mich.

Outstanding Unit/Team Award: Installation Level – Directorate of Contracting: Regional Contracting Office Hawaii, 413th Contracting Support Brigade.

The Secretary of the Army Awards for Excellence in Contracting were established in 1997 to recognize contracting and acquisition professionals that excel in timeliness, customer support and contracting innovation and led to process improvements and specific achievements in supporting the contracting mission worldwide. All military and civilian Army contracting professionals are eligible for these awards.

The awards were presented by Heidi Shyu, assistant secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistic and Technology) and Kim Denver, deputy assistant secretary of the Army (Procurement). ♦

Questions and Answers: Mr. Kim Denver

Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Procurement)



Robert DeVisser (left), chief, Regional Contracting Office – Bogota, Colombia greets Kim Denver during a recent visit to Columbia. (Photo by Lauren Schmidt)

What is the goal of the single Army Contract Writing and Management System and what are the benefits of having one system?

In response to the October 2011 mandate from the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, to discontinue the use of the current, joint Department of Defense contract writing system (the Standard Procurement System) by the end of fiscal year 2015, the Army now has an opportunity to transition to a single, enterprise, contract writing system which will increase business process efficiencies, support compliance with the Federal Financial Management Improvement Act of 1996, and better integrate with existing Army enterprise resource planning solutions.

The Army's proposed solution will decrease the number of complex interfaces and foster auditability while simultaneously promoting the Department of Defense's procure-to-pay acquisition focus area. The Army will streamline its current use of two independent contract writing solutions into a single enterprise approach that will be utilized in all facets of the Army contracting mission, such as installation support, contingency, construction, major weapons systems, grants and agreements, and secure environment contracting.

Who is managing and providing oversight of this effort?

With the approval of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology, we have established a formal product manager under the U.S. Army Program Executive Office Enterprise Information Systems as the material developer of the proposed system. In conjunction with that action, as the deputy assistant secretary of the Army for Procurement, I appointed the U.S. Army Contracting Command to act as my agent to establish and staff a contracting capabilities management office on behalf of the Army contracting enterprise.

The CMO will function as the capabilities developer to elicit, curate, and refine a set of unified functional requirements with the participation from each of our Army contracting activities and our stakeholder partners (e.g. finance, logistics). The CMO will present those requirements to our procurement systems governance board, chartered to oversee the orderly development and deployment of procurement systems across the Army contracting enterprise.

What are the biggest challenges in providing this type of system?

Without a doubt, our biggest challenge in the face of fiscal uncertainty is to identify the right set of functional contracting capabilities to meet our full spectrum contracting mission, and marrying those capabilities into an affordable, efficient software solution. Additionally, the Army

continues to have executive agency responsibility for all theater-based (operational) contracting, so the solution we identify must be readily deployable to any environment, to support any mission, anywhere.

Will the system be required and used Army-wide? DoD-wide?

There is no one-size-fits-all contract writing and management system. That being said, within the Army we must have a single solution. We are sharing the results of our market research and capabilities analysis with the other services/agencies so they can leverage our lessons learned. It is not the Army's intent, however, to develop a DOD-wide solution.

The mandate from the Honorable Mr. Frank Kendall, undersecretary of defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics) is actionable on each of the DOD services and agencies. Specifically, Mr. Kendall has said that "...as emerging technologies and contracting capabilities no longer require a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to system development and implementation, one contracting system for the whole department is not envisioned." Consequently, the Army's approach is to identify a single solution, based on a best value approach that will best meet the Army's full-range contracting mission needs. Once identified and deployed, the system will be mandatory for all Army contracting activities, both CONUS and OCONUS.

Kim Denver, is the deputy assistant secretary of the Army (Procurement) and manages the Army's procurement mission including development and dissemination of policies, processes and contracting business systems. He directs the evaluation, measurement and continuous improvement actions for more than 240 Army contracting offices worldwide.



“We envision a system that will assist the goals of improved financial management through increased emphasis on audit readiness and accountability.”

When do you think the new system will be ready for fielding?

The USD(ATL) mandate is to cease creating all contract actions with the legacy Standard Procurement System contract writing system by the end of September 2015, and to fully terminate the

use of SPS and decommission the software no later than the end of September 2017. With those goals in mind, and notwithstanding any unforeseeable roadblocks, we are striving to identify a sustainable solution, with a phased approach to deployment and training as early as the first quarter of fiscal year 2016.

How will this help the contracting workforce? Will it make contracting more efficient and effective?

We believe a single approach to contract writing, with an enterprise approach in mind, will result in significant process efficiencies since it will eliminate redundancies and establish a single process baseline, facilitating more efficient and timely training. Our initial analysis incorporated operational, management, usability and technical/functional requirements needed to meet or exceed our current capability.

There will be a degree of business process reengineering that will result in more effective contracting related business practices. By employing a solid business process reengineering process, we hope to gain significant efficiencies through adaptability and interoperability to external systems. In addition, our goal is to support the priorities of the DOD Financial Improvement and Audit Readiness Plan by ensuring the contract writing solution facilitates the financial community's requirement to derive auditable financial statements based on data derived from the contract document.

We envision a system that will assist the goals of improved financial management through increased emphasis on audit readiness and accountability. Overall, our goal is to streamline acquisition end-to-end business processes, reduce operating, maintenance and support costs, and to decrease and, where applicable, mitigate the number of existing and future interfaces. ♦

Kim Denver and Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols, commanding general, Army Contracting Command, discuss contracting initiatives during a recent meeting. (U.S. Army Photo)



ACC appointed lead for new contract writing system

By Larry D. McCaskill
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REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala. – Appointed by the deputy assistant secretary of the Army (Procurement) as the lead agent for the Army Contract Writing System, the Army Contracting Command has opened a capabilities management office to develop capabilities, elicit, curate, and refine a set of unified functional requirements. (See *Questions and Answers with Kim Denver* on page 16.)

According to Lt. Col. Michelle Sanner, ACC Capabilities Management Office lead, the office's bottom line is to act as the end-user's advocate.

"There are two primary tasks the CMO is working," Sanner said of the office that stood up in September. "The first primary task is completing the requirements

baseline, which is needed to issue a solicitation for the new ACWS. The second is to conduct business process reengineering to define and assess process weaknesses."

In doing so, Sanner said the CMO staff is looking to identify gaps and implement opportunities they discover that can streamline and improve the processes while creating a solid foundation for success in changes to the full spectrum of contracting operations. The staff consists of personnel from ACC-Redstone Arsenal, ACC-Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., and ACC headquarters.

"The intent is to use developmental assignments from the stakeholder community to support the office until the funding

is approved to officially grow the office. Although the team consists of only three people, a lot of progress has been made since September 12," Sanner said. "We began a deliberate process to identify the right set of functional contracting capabilities (requirements) for the new ACWS."

Sanner said one of the smaller tasks is to keep the field updated on the CMO's progress. The CMO briefs at different forums regularly and will soon provide quarterly updates to the field, she said. Go to <https://acc.aep.army.mil/G6/cmo/default.aspx> for more information. ♦

ACC integration on track

By Ed Worley
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Armey Contracting Command's initiative to integrate stateside contracting Soldiers into its contracting centers and smaller contracting offices is on track, according to the headquarters staff, even though the beginning of phase two was slipped by one month.

Phase two of the integration effort began March 20, explained Maj. Bjorn D. Johnson, Future Operations, ACC Operations Directorate.

"This delay allowed staff and subordinate commands further time to outline specific processes in support of the integration effort," Johnson explained.

Johnson said while the current federal government fiscal situation has affected hiring actions—the Army is in the midst

of a civilian hiring freeze—there are no show-stoppers.

"Affected commands and centers are conducting internal and cooperative staff exercises designed to test the new relationships and their associated administrative requirements," he said.

ACC began the process in January of attaching portions of its Expeditionary Contracting Command forces to several of ACC's stateside organizations in an effort to streamline command and control. The action reduces the ECC span of control from the day-to-day oversight of Soldiers executing their stateside contracting mission, allowing the ECC commander to focus on overseas installation and contingency support, explained Lt. Col. Kevin Nash, ACC Integration project officer.

It also gives the Mission and Installation Contracting Command

and ACC contracting centers direct supervision of Soldiers supporting stateside operations within their organizations, he said.

Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols, ACC commanding general, said her intent is to "streamline mission command, better manage our military contracting Soldiers' workloads and enhance contracting Soldier professional development.

"This action provides greater predictability for our civilian contracting leaders in assigning work to Soldiers in their offices," she said. "It also provides greater professional development opportunities for contracting Soldiers as they are offered increased contracting experiences."

Nichols said it also allows ECC to focus on the day-to-day overseas contracting mission and operational contract support tasks associated with

Army service component commands.

Brig. Gen. Ted Harrison, ECC commanding general, said the realignment will help 51C contingency contracting Soldiers develop their contracting skills.

“Future military operations will continue to demand expeditionary contracting Soldiers who are trained and ready to meet Army service component command needs,” Harrison said. “ACC integration

Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols, ACC commanding general, said her intent is to “streamline mission command, better manage our military contracting Soldiers’ workloads and enhance contracting Soldier professional development.”

allows the ECC’s 51Cs to hone their skills in day-to-day contracting missions in MICC installation contracting offices as they support the Army’s generating force. This ‘work as they fight’ strategy will prepare them to deploy and support Army operational forces anywhere in the world. ECC is confident that the MICC civilian contracting experts will equip our contracting Soldiers with technical knowledge and provide hands-on experience through coaching, teaching and mentoring.”

Brig. Gen. Kirk Vollmecke, MICC commanding general, said the integration improves both the civilian and military contracting workforce.

“The synchronization and integration of uniformed members across the MICC provides indispensable technical, hands-on contracting training and experience for Army contingency contracting Soldiers,” Vollmecke said. “Soldiers and contracting civilians working alongside one another drives positive change and brings balance, skill and depth to the acquisition workforce. This unified teamwork and collaboration with ACC and our Army customers is a key to continued success.”

Staffing continues to be a challenge with the current sequestration and possible furlough implementation, according to Bill Baxter, ACC deputy chief of staff Human Capital, G1.

He anticipates that the ACC centers and MICC field directorate offices will absorb military personnel administration responsibilities for the integrated forces with the existing civilian force structure.

“Military personnel centers and those locations with life cycle management commands will provide assistance to our forces with the centers taking the lead to

ensure adequate military personnel service support is available,” he explained. “As always, the ACC G1 is immediately available to assist the command with any and all military personnel administration actions.”

Nash said the integration will occur in four phases. It began in December with the realignment of MICC contracting offices under four field directorate offices. MICC FDOs are aligned at sites with their major customers, and the 34 MICC subordinate contracting offices are grouped by customer to bring consistency to operations and improve contract administration and oversight.

During phase two, MICC-associated contingency contracting battalions, senior contingency contracting teams and contingency contracting teams will be attached to the MICC. ACC contracting center-associated contingency contracting teams will also be attached to their corresponding contracting centers during phase two

“Attaching a unit to another unit means that, while the attached unit still ‘belongs’ to its higher headquarters, it takes its daily taskings from the unit to which it is attached,” Nash explained. “The units we’re attaching still ‘belong’ to ECC, but they are working directly for the organizations they are attached to.”

Phase three begins in April, he said. ECC will add two contracting



Valerie Tipton provides Staff Sgt. Wallace Newton some advice on a contract. Newton is a member of the 626th Contingency Contracting Team, Redstone Arsenal, Ala., and has been a contracting specialist for six months. Tipton is a contracting officer in the Base Operations Division, Army Contracting Command-Redstone Arsenal. (U.S. Army Photo by Ed Worley)

support brigades that will be attached to the MICC headquarters. The 418th Contracting Support Brigade will be headquartered at Fort Hood, Texas, and the 419th CSB will be headquartered at Fort Bragg, N.C.

The final phase calls for the 412th CSB, Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas, to be attached to the MICC headquarters on Oct. 1.

Nash said ECC will retain assignment of the CONUS-based CSBs and continue to be the ACC lead for operational contract support activities. In the event of a mission requiring CONUS-based ACC units attached to the MICC or centers, Nash said ACC will publish an operation order that detaches those selected units back to the ECC for execution of the
Continued on page 29

Military integration at ACC-APG

By Betsy Kozak-Howard
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The Army Contracting Command-Aberdeen Proving Ground began integrating military members into its organizational structure to optimize contingency contracting and to enhance the training opportunities for Soldiers in the contracting career field.

An operations order issued by ACC detailed a four-phase plan to attach contingency contracting teams to its stateside elements including ACC-APG. As a result, ACC-APG will assume the management of approximately 40 military personnel, according to Col. Michael J. Rogers, ACC-APG military deputy to the executive director.

“The end state of the ACC-APG military integration will be the activation of the 926th CCBn commander at APG with four subordinate CCTs,” Rogers said. “Currently, the Expeditionary Contracting Command is responsible for the contingency mission in addition to the workload management and professional development of assigned military members.

“Although, the ECC will retain responsibility for contingency operations, the day-to-day training and development of the teams will be ACC-APG’s responsibility. In the event that our Soldiers are called to support contingency mission requirements, the members will be detached from ACC-APG for the duration of the deployment.”

Phase one of the integration began in January and was mainly the planning and preparation for the attachment of the battalion and CCTs. The 712th CCT, 722nd CCT, and the 725th CCT, were attached



(Left to right) Army Contracting Command - Aberdeen Proving Ground’s Lt. Col. Derek Draper, chief, Garrison Contracting Division; Col. Michael J. Rogers, military deputy to the executive director; Maggie Combs, chief, Strategic Initiatives; and Frank Brigham, chief, Manpower/Management Branch, plan for the activation of the 926th Contingency Contracting Battalion with four subordinate contingency contracting teams. (U.S. Army Photo by Betsy Kozak-Howard)

to ACC-APG in March which marks the beginning of phase two. At this point, ACC-APG assumed the management of the teams to include personnel support, workload, training, and other logistical support. The five-member CCTs consist of two officers and three noncommissioned officers in the 51C acquisition career field. The official activation of the 926th CCBn and the fourth CCT, the 865th CCT, will take place in April during phase three. The military integration will be finalized by October with the attachment of any follow-on forces during phase four.

“The ACC-APG integration of military will be a win-win situation for both the organization and the Soldiers,” said Lt. Col. Derek Draper, chief, Garrison Contracting Division and slated 936th CCBN

commander. “The 51Cs will gain diverse contracting experience working alongside the seasoned civilian workforce and ACC-APG will benefit from the contribution of the military to the center’s workload. The military will also provide first-hand knowledge of contingency contracting operations to enhance ACC-APG’s expertise and customer support. The current focus of the integration is implementing a support structure to accommodate the military and ensure the well-being of our Soldiers.” ♦

Process improvements produce savings



Tobyhanna Army Depot, Pa., Contract Specialist Cheryl Saylock participated in a Lean Six Sigma project that was awarded an Army Lean Six Sigma Excellence Award (U.S. Army Photo by Tony Medici)

By Betsy Kozak-Howard
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ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md.— Customer support is a major component of contracting and one member of the Army Contracting Command – Aberdeen Proving Ground understands the rewards that come from this collaboration.

In support of Tobyhanna Army Depot, Pa., Contract Specialist Cheryl Saylock participated in a Lean Six

Sigma project that was awarded an Army Lean Six Sigma Excellence Award in January.

The project involved transforming the purchase request process which resulted in a cost avoidance of \$5.1 million in various contracts through fiscal year 2017, according to Saylock. The team began the project in January 2010 with a thorough analysis of purchases for equipment parts to identify inefficiencies and redundancies.

“The team found that a duplication of purchase requests for the same part created unnecessary workload for contracting employees and other members of Tobyhanna Army Depot,” said Saylock. “For example, a purchase for a particular part would be processed to support a division and the following week another division would submit a purchase request for the same part. With coordination, this purchase could have been consolidated, alleviating unnecessary workload.”

Saylock was selected for the project because of her experience. She has been in contracting since 1991 and has served as both a purchasing agent and contract specialist. Also supporting the project was co-worker Patsy Simpson, contract specialist, who has since retired.

One key role for Saylock was to review all purchase requests to evaluate the items requested for purchase.

“I tracked all purchase requests received each day and provided statistics on which requests could have been consolidated prior to submission to contracting. We spent about one to two hours a week during the initial stages of the project because of the in-depth analysis required. This tapered off to about an hour every two weeks and then monthly as we were closer to the end of the study.”

The statistics were tracked and provided to the team for further analysis. The team members evaluated the purchase requests for their respective divisions to investigate why purchase requests were processed separately versus consolidated.

“Reviewing the history of purchases was very instrumental in the process,” Saylock pointed out.

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Duncan deploys

in aftermath of Hurricane Sandy

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Christopher Duncan, a security officer with the Army Contracting Command - Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., had just completed his weekend drill with the New Jersey National Guard as Hurricane Sandy pushed toward the New Jersey coastline Oct. 29.

Weather reports warned that the storm would make landfall the next day. Duncan's status immediately changed to that of an activated National Guardsman providing support after the storm.

Duncan, a second lieutenant assigned to Company C, 1/114th Infantry Battalion, was tasked to lead a team of 40 guardsmen and manage the interior and exterior security of a shelter at Monmouth University, N.J.

"I was told to prepare resources to support the largest shelter established in New Jersey, consisting of more than

1,200 occupants," said Duncan, who served as the mission commander. "I didn't have a frame of reference to understand exactly what I needed and I wasn't sure how long I would need to support the shelter."

Duncan's team filled five vehicles with food, water, tents, and cots then made the 45-minute trip from the training site to the shelter. During their deployment they slept on a second-floor conference room floor.

"The main obstacle I had was the lack of electricity," recalled Duncan. "The university had a generator but it only controlled emergency lighting and didn't support the water pump for the 10 toilets and showers within the facility."

Duncan immediately placed an order for portable toilets but with the high demand during the storm aftermath, it took four days for them to arrive. In the meantime, toilets were flushed manually by pouring water in them.

Duncan's team worked 24-hour shifts and faced a multitude of issues such as looting, fist fights, medical emergencies and families that were separated by and during the storm. The guardsmen did not carry weapons and police officers were called to address hostile situations. Items such as coffee and cigarettes became high-value items due to the shortage of supplies, he said.

After a week of duty, the shelter was no longer needed and closed. Duncan was asked by his commanding officer to remain on duty and was assigned to secure Long Beach Island, N.J., approximately an hour's drive from the university. While there, the team slept on cots in an ambulance bay and used the local gym for showering.

During the day the team set up check points to ensure only residents were allowed access. Construction contractors were only allowed access if they were escorted by the homeowner since it was discovered that looters were dressing in contractor uniforms to gain entry into homes.

"At night we established patrol positions on the beach to guard against looting," Duncan explained. "Prior to our arrival, looters would steal vacant boats and use them for hauling stolen merchandise from the local homes. They stole items such as TVs, tools, appliances and anything of value."

Army National Guard 2nd Lt. Christopher Duncan, and Police Chief Nils R. Bergquist of Brick Township, N.J., worked together to maintain security after Hurricane Sandy. Duncan organized community day events to build camaraderie with the local police and residents. The first community day was attended by more than 200 Island residents, according to Duncan. (Photo courtesy of the Brick N.J. Police Department)





Army Contracting Command – Aberdeen Proving Ground employee and N.J. National Guardsman, 2nd Lt. Christopher Duncan, repositions a flag upright that was knocked over by sand and water from Hurricane Sandy. (New Jersey National Guard Photo)

“When we arrived, we used night vision and thermal vision technology to monitor the beach and notified the Coast Guard when we detected any looting in progress. The first night we caught five. In the beginning we detected an average of three per night but it tapered off when our presence became known.”

During Duncan’s three weeks guarding the island, he witnessed human behavior at its worst and at its best.

“We were sent here to secure properties against thieves, but the local community embraced our presence and supported us in many ways,” said the 31-year-old. “They donated food, coffee, and home-baked goods. One woman found out we didn’t have pillows for our cots so she donated 300. We used what we needed and donated the rest to the local community.”

After the team’s mission was complete in Long Beach, Duncan was asked one more time to remain on duty to assist with the security mission. The noncommissioned officer-in-charge asked Duncan if he would remain to lead the mission. He couldn’t leave the team and “let’s do it” was Duncan’s reply.

This time his commanding officer told Duncan to prepare himself for a leadership challenge and assigned him 130 personnel to guard the Barrier Island area of New Jersey. Duncan established a mission center in Brick, N.J., and controlled access to the island area, patrolled the beaches and worked closely with the local police to establish and maintain a safe environment for residents.

To build a good working relationship with the community and the local police force, Duncan organized community days and invited everyone on the island. A corner bagel vendor donated food for the events.

“The community days lifted our spirits after witnessing so much devastation that Hurricane Sandy left in her path,” Duncan pointed out. “There were house trailers that were uprooted, highways that were buried in sand, houses that were destroyed by wind, water or fire.”

As Christmas approached, the National Guard organized a gift drive and collected 14 pallets of toys and gifts, according to Duncan. Guardsmen delivered the gifts to a church for distribution to local families.

“Many families weren’t planning a Christmas,” Duncan said. “They lost their homes, some of them their businesses and insurance claims hadn’t been paid yet. The gifts that we collected were distributed within 24 hours.”

Duncan returned to work at ACC-APG on Jan. 7 after approximately three months of hurricane duty. When he left home in Pennsylvania, Duncan initially thought he was leaving for a weekend drill. When it was over he was exhausted.

“I slept for two days,” he recalled. “I learned a lot about management through the whole experience. I had to supervise a group of people, keep the mission functioning properly and deal with personal crises as they occurred. Many Soldiers were also dealing with home damage from the hurricane and one completely lost his house and his full-time job. If given the opportunity, I would do it all over again. But, the next time I would definitely pack better.” ♦

MICC-Fort Hood test program yields savings

Mission and Installation Contracting Command 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, the 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 \$83,000.

FedBid is a company that assists government agencies in purchasing commodities such as computer products, security gear and office supplies through reverse-auctions.

“The intent of the test was to explore potential cost saving and efficiency for GPC transactions,” said Barry Barnett, the director of contracting at MICC-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. General Services Administration contracts were also used when the items were not available through a local blanket purchase agreement. The test program did not affect Department of Public Work service or construction contracts or contracts issued by MICC-Fort Hood.

“Based on the initial success, the test program was expanded in October 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, MICC-Fort Hood GPC program coordinator.

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 or not. Barnett believes the FedBid process offers increased



Randy O'Brien and Trena Mueller are the Government Purchase Card Program coordinator and the account representative for the Mission and Installation Contracting Command-Fort Hood. (U.S. Army Photo by Leonard Mettlach)

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. It has been in use at MICC-Fort Hood for many years and 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 in the FedBid program can register at no cost as a seller at www.fedbid.com. ♦

ACC NCOs attend Inaugural Ball

By Larry D. McCaskill
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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. (Photos courtesy of Staff Sgt. Mario Thompson)

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.

"I am very excited to be a part of this historic event," said Harris. "I have never had



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. (Photo courtesy of Staff Sgt. Mario Thompson)

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 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." ♦

Sticky note, the 's' word and the wisdom of a seven-year-old

By Lt. Gen. Patricia D. Horoho
The Surgeon General & Commanding General, U. S. Army Medical Command

I recently received a beautiful letter from an Army family that dealt with a difficult theme - suicide. Seven-year-old, John Murray Jr. did not know what the word "suicide" meant and he implored his mother for an explanation. Not surprisingly, Ingrid Murray was reluctant to engage in this conversation but she mustered the strength to do just that.

The details are contained in her letter below:

"We were in the waiting room at Fox Army Health Center at Redstone Arsenal (Ala.) waiting to pick up a prescription. My son, John Jr., is in second grade and we use every opportunity to work on his reading. We were playing a game where he reads as many words from posters and flyers as he could see in the waiting room. We were walking by a display and John Jr. stopped and looked at it and asked me "Mama what is that word?" A huge lump formed in my throat. It was a display for Army Suicide Prevention. "Mama, I know the words Army and prevention but not the "s" word. What does it say?" He looked up at me and then tugged my arm. Mama did you hear me? I don't know that "s" word."

I was silent at first. That "s" word...suicide. I was about to reply "Oh, it's about Army things for Soldiers." and pull him away from the display and walk away as fast as I could. But then it hit me...the Army wants us to talk about it. Me, you, not just Soldiers but everyone in the Army family: spouses, Soldiers, co-workers, everyone need to talk about it.

In my husband's unit (Army Contracting Command) Maj. Gen. Camille Nichols had even given a heartfelt message about suicide prevention...to simply talk to your Soldier, family members, and reach out. Save a life! Even my husband tells me that before he walks out the door every day, he looks in the mirror and that you "check yourself as a Soldier and check your Soldiers."

So with these thoughts in mind I kneeled down, took a very deep breath and explained to John Jr. that the poster said Army Suicide Prevention. The "s" word was suicide. John Jr. asked, "What is suicide?" I swallowed and prayed I was using the right words and wishing I had a degree in psychology right about then. So I began to explain.

"John Jr., remember when Daddy went to Walter Reed, when his eye was hurt?"

John Jr. replied, "Yeah, his face was kind of black and yellow and you couldn't see his eyeballs and he was sewn up on his face. Like a monster but he wasn't because he was daddy?"

"Yes," I continued, "Remember, we saw lots of other Soldiers with injuries? Some Soldiers with missing arms, legs, and some Soldiers had burns?" John Jr. nodded. I went on, "Sometimes people are hurt and you can't see the injury. They may have arms, and legs, no marks or bruises but they are still hurt. Inside their head they are really sad and hurt. Sometimes they are so sad and hurt they end their lives. They end their life on purpose. That is what suicide means."

"They wanted to be dead?" John

Jr. asked solemnly.

"Yes.", I replied with a big lump in my throat.

"Mama, dead is forever." John Jr. stated.

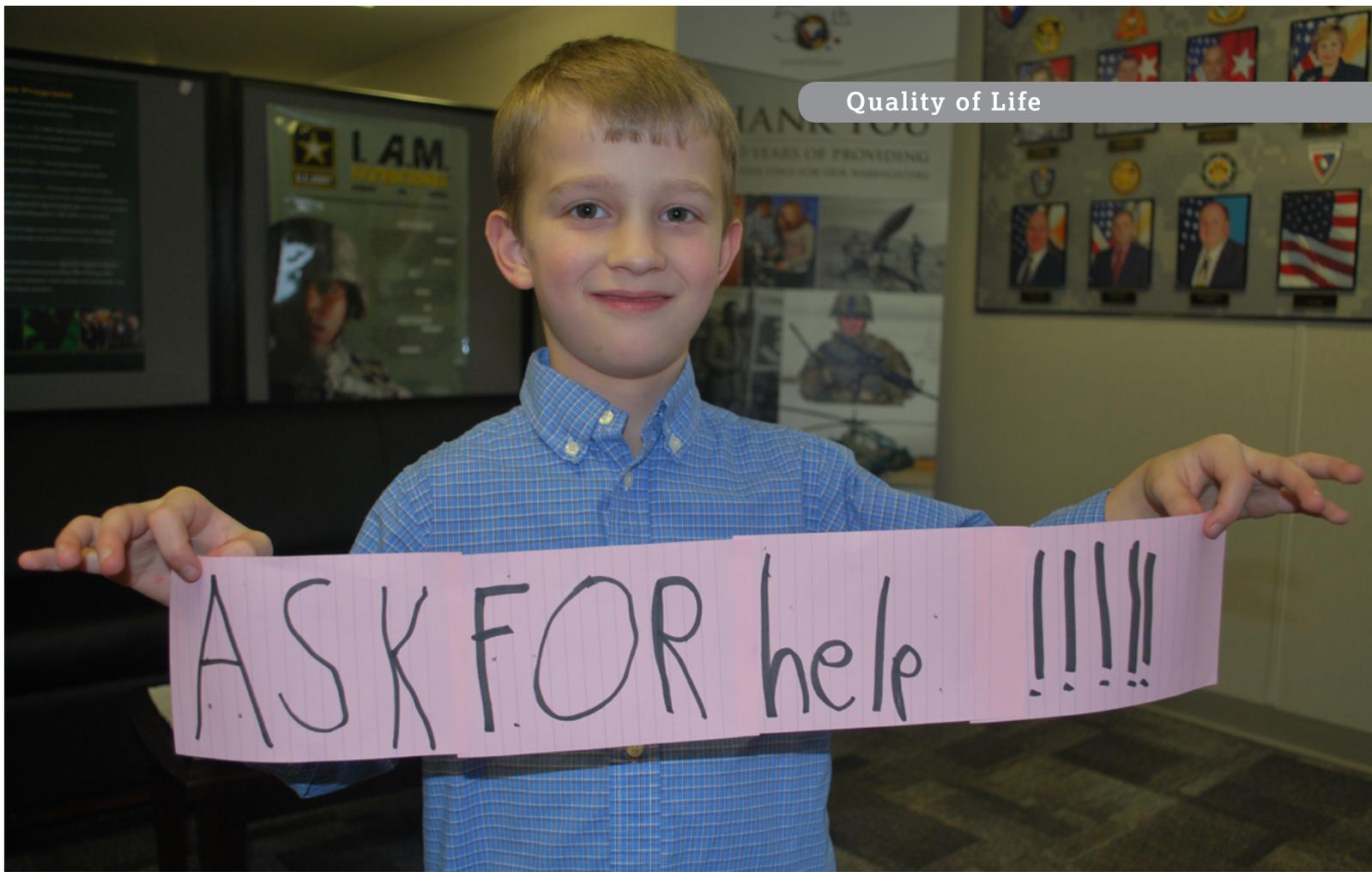
"But Mama, why don't they just go to the doctor and get better like Daddy did with his eyeball?"

Well, I explained that sometimes it is hard to ask for help. When you see someone bleeding or fall down you know they need help. You know you need to get them to a doctor. Like when Daddy was hurt someone took him straight to the hospital to see a doctor. But when you can't see any injuries like blood or scratches on the outside of a person, you may think everything is OK. People may be really sad on the inside and want to end their life. That person may feel that if there is no blood or injuries that people can see, if they ask for help, that someone may laugh at them, point at them, or say they are weak.

John Jr. was silent and then replied. "Ms. Fletcher in guidance at school (Endeavor Elementary) says that you are supposed to ask for help. That we are supposed to help not hurt each other. Like, if you can't tie your shoe, you ask a friend to help. That is part of being a good citizen and friend."

I explained that some people may laugh at people who can't tie their shoe and have to ask for help to tie their shoe. John Jr. looked at me and then said, "Well daddy says that Army people are helpers and if you are a helper you don't laugh, you just help. Especially if you are an Army person you want to help other Army people.

"John Jr. then said, "Mama, I know



John L. Murray Jr. provides simple advice for those who need assistance. (U.S. Army Photo by Larry D. McCaskill)

what to do.” He asked me for four sticky notes from my purse and a pen. I gave them to him. He knelt down next to a table and I watched him as he began to write one big word at a time on each sticky note ASK..... FOR..... HELP !!! He then stuck the notes on the table.

“Mama, you know how you have sticky notes to write down important things. Things that are the most really super important?”

“Yes.” I replied.

“Well, I wrote a reminder for Army people to ask for help and did five exclamation points because it is real important. My teacher, Ms. Hardiman, said an exclamation point is like yelling a sentence. I put five exclamation points so it would be really loud. Maybe the Army person who is hurt just forgot to ask for help. This will help remind them.” John Jr. stood up and put the

remaining sticky notes and pen back in my purse.

John Jr. then said, “Mama, they called our number. The medicine is ready.” We got up and walked to the pharmacy window to pick up the prescription.

Tears formed in my eyes as we walked off. I looked back at the table and saw the four green sticky notes in childish handwriting that proclaimed “ASK FOR HELP!!” and all I could think of was “Yes, please ask for help. Your life does matter, even if you think it does not. It does. Just ask a little seven- year-old Army kid at Redstone Arsenal and he will tell you. He took the time to leave you a message right on the table in the pharmacy waiting room for you to see. ASK FOR HELP!!!!!!”

Ingrid Murray

Proud Military Spouse

Suicide is a challenging topic to discuss even with a mature audience; let alone with an intellectually curious and compassionate child. The silence can be deafening and it reinforces a cultural message that says, “suicide is a deep, dark, unspoken topic”. In the absence of open dialogue- myths prevail and inappropriate judgments are made.

Championing the discussion in the manner the Murray Family did is a lesson for all of us. It is my expressed wish that all military families engage in this important discussion and possess the wisdom of John Jr. ♦

Employee returns to work after cancer battle

By Betsy Kozak-Howard
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What makes it better is that he is healthier and doing well, which wasn't the case in 2011 when Dixon was diagnosed with cancer. When he left, his responsibilities were distributed among his co-workers and Dixon focused on his health. After two years of battling head and neck cancer of the soft palate, Dixon returned to ACC-APG in February.

"I'm happy to be back," said Dixon. "I feel great and I'm truly blessed to have a job doing what I love."

The Army veteran recalled the day he was informed of his diagnosis.

"I was at work when I received the phone call from my doctor and he told me that I had an extremely rare cancer. Less than 400 cases of it had been reported across the U.S. and Europe in the last 30 years," he said. "Nothing could have prepared me for that phone call. I felt like I was just issued a death sentence. I was perplexed as to the cause since I had never been a smoker, dipped or chewed tobacco products. I was devastated and had no idea what I was facing."

Dixon first discovered the cancer himself when he noticed a lesion in his mouth. Not certain what it was, Dixon went for medical testing and the initial tests were negative. With follow-up analysis it was clear that he had a cancerous tumor within the fleshy soft palate in the top of his mouth.

"My surgery to remove the tumor was scheduled for May 2011," said Dixon. "While I waited for my surgery date, the tumor grew and it became difficult to breathe, talk

or eat. The tumor felt like the consistency of spaghetti in my mouth and it would fall back into my airway making it impossible to sleep. Concerned, my wife notified the doctor and the surgery was completed a month early."

With the baseball-sized tumor removed, Dixon began radiation and chemotherapy treatments at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill's Cancer Center.

"The treatments were difficult," recalled the father of five. "I couldn't talk very well due to the atrophy and burning from the radiation."

Dixon's radiation treatments ended in July 2011 and were followed by chemotherapy in October. He also had to endure a feeding tube from April 2011 until December 2012. In the process he lost a significant amount of weight, starting at 240 pounds and leveling off at 180 pounds when the treatment was over.

Dixon said the radiation and chemo caused immune system suppression to the point that his red and white blood cell counts were extremely impaired, making his ability to fight infections a challenge. Through numerous blood transfusions, multiple emergency room visits and a few trips to the intensive care unit due to infections, Dixon held on.

On the path to recovery, Dixon had some setbacks. "I was prescribed some powerful medication to help me through the pain," he pointed out. "As I recovered, I had to wean myself from the narcotics to detoxify my body. It was difficult and now I



Ernie Dixon (Photo by Betsy Kozak-Howard)

have a new appreciation for people with drug addictions. I suffered withdrawal symptoms such as cramps, sweats and delirium tremens for more than seven months and was just extremely uncomfortable."

During an emergency room visit, doctors misdiagnosed a problem with his appendix. Two days after the visit, the appendix ruptured, which required emergency surgery and a nine-day hospital stay.

Dixon acknowledges "the perfection of God's timing. If this had happened when my immune system was so suppressed, we would not be having this discussion right now."

Throughout his entire treatment, Dixon believed that the support of his family, friends, faith and co-workers was instrumental to his recovery. When he left his duties with the RTP Division, he initially took a medical leave of absence which exhausted all of his sick and annual leave. Dixon was approved for the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program, which gave government employees the ability to donate leave to support his medical emergency. After approximately six months on medical leave, Dixon resigned his position.

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ACC integration on track

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required mission. Upon completion of the mission, units would redeploy and be re-attached to the MICC or

centers as required, he explained. ECC will continue to be the ACC lead for all contingency

contracting Soldier individual and unit training functions, he said. ♦

Process improvements produce savings

Continued from page 21

“The review revealed which stock-numbered items were purchased often resulting in redundant purchase requests and increased workload for the purchasing agents. The metrics that were compiled made it apparent that most of the purchase requests could have been consolidated prior to submission to contracting.”

For the purpose of this project, the PR process began when the demand for a part was identified in the Logistics Modernization Program, an Army supply chain management system for inventory and depot repair operations. Within LMP, a purchase request was created and distributed to the ACC-APG for processing the purchasing transaction.

The goal of the project was to reduce the number of eligible purchase request actions by 50 percent through the consolidation of same-item requests, according to Saylock.

As a result of this Lean Six Sigma green belt project, the team recognized that by adding a step in the LMP input process it could avoid

the duplication of purchase requests. This step involved a review of LMP by the requestor to determine if a purchase request already existed for the part to be purchased. If so, the requestor would contact Saylock to increase the quantity of the open purchase request.

“By applying this process check for new purchase requests, the team achieved a reduction in duplicate purchase requisitions of 89 percent,” said Saylock. “Prior to this project, the number of duplicate purchase requests averaged 254 per month, but after improvements were implemented the number of duplicate purchase requests averaged 26 per month.

“This decrease in repetitive and duplicate purchase requests resulted in managing the workload more efficiently and a cost savings in the time spent on each purchase request. We are currently in the sustainment phase of the project and the metrics indicate that a majority of purchase requests are now being consolidated.”

The team also took other

improvement measures to ensure the accuracy of the new process. It recommended that the LMP master parts listing be corrected to eliminate duplicate entries for identical items that were labeled differently within the system. Another improvement implemented was ensuring that all current and new LMP users received proper training, desktop work instructions were also made available. As a result of the team’s efforts, it was awarded the Non-Enterprise Level (Green Belt) Project Team Award by Under Secretary of the Army Joseph W. Westphal during an awards ceremony at the Pentagon. Although the whole team didn’t attend the ceremony, “we were all pleasantly surprised and happy to see that our time and effort in this whole process was acknowledged,” Saylock said. ♦

Employee returns to work after cancer battle

Continued from page 28

“I hated leaving my job but felt truly blessed by the donations of leave,” Dixon recalled. “My utmost concern was taking care of my family and the donated leave helped ease some of this stress. I personally sent thank you email messages to each of the donors to express my gratitude for their generosity.”

Dixon is currently in remission and in December, he was given clearance to return to work.

“I wanted to return to work and was grateful for my chance to contribute. I applied for a procurement analyst position with ACC-APG and I feel fortunate to be back. I wanted so

much to return to the RTP Division that I would have accepted a position sweeping floors,” Dixon concluded. ♦



AROUND ACC



(Above) Col. James Lewis, U.S. Army Mission and Installation Contracting Command chief counsel, shares stories of the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with a puppet show to preschool and kindergarten students in Round Rock, Texas.

(Right) Staff Sgt. Brandon Carroll, contracting specialist from the 607th Senior Contingency Contracting Team, was named the Joint Base San Antonio Army Noncommissioned Officer of the Year 2012 during the Third Annual JBASA Award Ceremony March 8 at the Marriott RiverCenter Hotel in San Antonio, Texas.



(Left) Cleveland Crutcher, Army Contracting Command-Redstone, Ala., contracting intern, and Will Black, Redstone Test Center, discuss the workings of a Javelin missile's command launch unit. Crutcher and more than 30 other ACC-RSA interns visited RTC's Test Area 1 to witness the firing of a Javelin missile March 6. (U.S. Army photo by Larry D. McCaskill)



(Left) Staff Sgt. David Humfleet (grey hat center and Maj. Jong Lee (right), both members of the 903rd Contingency Contracting Battalion, lead the way with a WWII reenactor as members of the 903rd and 409th Contracting Support Brigade participate in a 15-mile hike Feb. 23 in Basse-Bodeux, Belgium, commemorating the 82nd Airborne's role in World War II's Battle of the Bulge.

(Right) Brig. Gen. Kirk Vollmecke (front center), Mission and Installation Contracting Command commanding general and Command Sgt. Maj. Rodney Rhoades (front far right), MICC command sergeant major, pose for a photo with members of the MICC-Fort Hood, Texas staff during a recent visit. (U.S. Army Photo)





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