



NEWSBLAST

U.S. Army Contracting Command

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"Providing global contracting support to war fighters."

AMC commanding general visits ACC and ECC headquarters

By Larry D. McCaskill

ACC Office of Public & Congressional Affairs

REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala.—Gen. Dennis L. Via, commanding general, U.S. Army Materiel Command, visited the U.S. Army Contracting Command and the Expeditionary Contracting Command headquarters here Sept. 25.

This was his first visit to the ACC and ECC headquarters since assuming command of AMC Aug. 7.

Via toured the campus and received briefings from Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols, ACC commanding general, Brig. Gen. Theodore Harrison, ECC commanding general, and other staff members on the 51C acquisition noncommissioned officer career development model, the status of expeditionary contracting and the state of Army contracting.



Lt. Col. Monica Y. Robinson welcomes Gen. Dennis L. Via, Army Materiel Command commanding general, to the Army Contracting Command Deputy Chief of Staff, Installations and Logistics G4 offices. Via visited the Army Contracting Command and the Expeditionary Contracting Command headquarters Sept. 25. (U.S. Army Photo by Ed Worley) To view more photos, go to the ACC Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/armycontractingcommand/sets/72157631623350823/>



Gen. Dennis L. Via, Army Materiel Command commanding general, answered questions during a Sept. 25 town hall meeting with members of the Army Contracting Command and Expeditionary Contracting Command. Via discussed the importance of contracting during his visit with the staffs. (U.S. Army Photo by Ed Worley)

After touring the facilities and meeting ACC and ECC Soldiers and civilians, Via conducted a mini-town hall where he addressed members of the commands.

"I wanted to make sure I came out to visit with you," Via said. "Thank you for what you do every day. Your reputation across the Army is tremendous.

"I know this is a busy time of year for you as you work to close out contracts at the end of the fiscal year. By the time you're finished, you will have successfully closed out more than \$75 billion. That's a

lot of hours and a lot of work. But you do it every day. The expeditionary capabilities you possess cannot be found anywhere else in the Department of Defense."

In addition to discussing the contracting mission, Via told the town hall participants of his desire to help the command move into better facilities.

"We are working to get you into better facilities while we renovate the final facility," he said. "A quality work environment is what we want to achieve."

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Contingency contracting exercise preparations begin

By **Larry D. McCaskill**

ACC Office of Public and Congressional Affairs

For the fourth consecutive year, the Army Contracting Command will conduct the premier Department of Defense contracting readiness exercise for military and civilian personnel.

Formerly called Joint Dawn, the military readiness exercise is called ACC MRX-2013 and will be conducted at Fort Bliss, Texas Jan. 15-31.

"We're expanding the scope of this year's training," said Col. Timothy Strange, MRX-13 officer-in-charge and commander, 412th Contracting Support Brigade, Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas. "Participants can look forward to working on more than 100 contracting actions each, not to mention some hard-to-handle situational scenarios."

The number of exercise participants has increased each year. In 2010, 34 contingency contracting officers attended the training held at Fort Riley, Kan. In

2011 at Fort Campbell, Ky., the training attracted 115 participants and in 2012 at Fort Bliss, Texas it had 159 military and civilian trainees. Exercise coordinators expect more than 200 participants at the coming exercise.

The last exercise had a real joint flavor as Soldiers, Marines, sailors, airmen and civilians worked and trained beside one another.

"We're coordinating with the Air Force and all the other services to see if they want to participate in either a cadre or trainee status. When deployed we tend to work in a joint environment and we want to make this training as close to what a person would experience in theater," Strange said.

Currently in the planning stages, Lt. Col. Joshua Burris, commander, 905th Contingency Contracting Battalion and the exercise coordinator said they have three goals at this stage.

"We're forming and preparing the cadre organization to support the training of 204 participants. Second, we're making



Master Sgt. Emily Toomey, California National Guard, participated in Joint Dawn 2012. (U.S. Army Photo by Kristin Duus)

sure our list of scenarios reflect the current Afghanistan mission and contracting priorities and we want to ensure our plan reflects the proper warrior training tasks to prepare our trainees to survive on the battlefield," Burris said.

Personnel with a common access card interested in attending the MRX-13 training can go to <https://ecc.aep.army.mil/412th/ACCMRX13/default.aspx> for more information.

ACC-NJ activity supports the local community

By **Wendy M. Lopez**

Army Contracting Command-New Jersey

PICATINNY ARSENAL, N.J.-Army Contracting Command-New Jersey's New Associate Development Group here is teaching its interns it's more important to give than it is to receive.

The NADG charity committee raises money and collects donations during the year in support of several charities.

"Last year we established a Thanksgiving food drive and pot luck fundraiser in support of the Salvation Army of Dover, N.J.," said Jason Kenlan, contract specialist and NADG charity committee chairperson. "ACC-NJ collected more than 200 food donations and purchased a \$300 gift card. We're already planning efforts for a Thanksgiving food drive and fundraiser for this year."

This spring, the NADG teamed up with a local company to conduct a clothing drive during May and June. The committee collected more than 3,700 pounds of gently-used clothing. In turn for the donations, the company provided the



Peter Gerhard (left), Trish Kleiman and Janson Kenlan have started collecting donations for Thanksgiving. (U.S. Army Photo by Trisha Fitton)

NADG with \$200 for each month of the clothing drive. The result of their efforts was a \$400 donation presented to the Veterans Affairs New Jersey Health Care System, East Orange.

Recently, the committee collected and donated back-to-school supplies to the Salvation Army of Dover. The Salvation Army prepares backpacks loaded with school supplies for local students ranging from 6-17 years old.

The NADG has plans for other events next year including spring and fall clothing drives.



U.S. Army Contracting Command

Commanding General
Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols

Office of Public & Congressional Affairs
Director
Art Forster

Public Affairs Team Chief
Ed Worley

Acting Editor
Larry D. McCaskill

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Send submissions and correspondence to the Office of Public and Congressional Affairs, ATTN: Editor, *NewsBlast*, 3334A Wells Road, Redstone Arsenal, AL 35898-5000. Telephone: (256) 955-7634, DSN 645-7634 or email at acc.pao@us.army.mil.



Spotlight on...

For Spotlight submissions, click on the icon.

Van Heest departs ACC

By David San Miguel

ACC Office of Public & Congressional Affairs

One thing was certain, Deborah Van Heest's passion to see the world could not be contained in small-town America.

Growing up in Chapin, Ill., with a population of a little more than 400 citizens, the Army Contracting Command executive assistant to the commanding general initially pursued a college education in biology from Graceland University at Lamoni, Iowa. Two years into her studies, however, the then 19-year-old could no longer resist the urge to spread her wings and she enlisted into the Army as a military police officer.

Her objective, she said, was to travel and see the world. And for the next five years, the Army fulfilled that dream and sent Van Heest to assignments in Korea, Germany and Bosnia-Herzegovina before she settled stateside at Fort Stewart, Ga., married and became a mother of two.

"My parents (retired Army Sgt. 1st Class Ray and Darlene Sills) have always been an inspiration to me," Van Heest said. "They are happily married, actively engaged in our church – world travelers. When I was growing up, they would show slides of all the places they had traveled. It was probably this seed that planted my ambition and drive to go out and do the things I've done."

After a succession of life-changing events... marriage then divorce, a three-year custody battle and the constant coming to terms with her roots, her adoption and being raised by non-Native Americans, Van Heest fought back and renewed her quest to travel.

"Out of four kids, I'm the only one that has left the state," she said. "My other siblings are still in the area with my parents. I always loved to travel."

Her quest took her to Florida, Texas and Michigan where she even worked at an equestrian center before settling at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., where she entered civil service as a secretary with the 58th Transportation Battalion. A temporary duty assignment to support a subordinate unit introduced her to



Deborah Van Heest

Fort Belvoir, Va., where she immediately fell in love with the area and its proximity to Washington, D.C.

Van Heest accepted an assignment with ACC headquarters, Redstone Arsenal, Ala., to be nearer to her children during the custody battle, but she admits her desire was always to return to Virginia.

Finally, after two years with ACC, her dreams were realized.

"I set my sights on Virginia and now I get my chance," she said. "I will work for a three-star at Headquarters, Department of the Army, G1."

Maj. Gen. Camille Nichols, ACC commanding general, admitted that it is difficult to see good employees leave, but that she nonetheless is happy that Van Heest is pursuing her dream of traveling.

Van Heest adds that though this next move takes her farther away from home, it will bring her one step closer to realizing her dream and maybe the success her parents achieved through their hard work, faith and dedication.

ACC forum to discuss information technology, share best practices

Army Contracting Command employees are invited to participate in the quarterly Chief Information Officer/G6 Enterprise Forum, Oct. 9 from 1–2:30 p.m. Central Standard Time to learn, share best practices and ask questions about the latest improvements in technology, tools and informational resources.

A panel of information technology experts will be available to address topics such as the Future Contract Writing System, Standard Procurement System–Army fiscal year 2012 fourth quarter lessons learned and fiscal year 2013 first quarter upgrades

and experiences from the field, and more.

Huntsville, Ala. participants can attend onsite at the Morale Welfare and Recreation building located at 1500 Weeden Mountain Road on Redstone Arsenal. All others can access the Defense Connect Online discussion during the forum at <https://connect.dco.dod.mil/enterpriseforum>. Visit <https://acc.aep.army.mil/G6/sc/EnterpriseForum/default.aspx> for the latest information on G6 Enterprise Forum topics and to ask questions in advance.

Raising cancer awareness one mile at a time

By Liz Adrian

ACC – Rock Island Public Affairs

ROCK ISLAND, Ill.— On Sept. 23, Army Contracting Command–Rock Island procurement analyst Chris Calhoun joined thousands of other runners challenging themselves during the 2012 Quad Cities Marathon.

Calhoun finished the 26.2-mile trek in 4 hours, 30 minutes, 18 seconds, which was in line with what he anticipated before the race.

“In the first half of the marathon, I was moving along pretty well and thought I was going to finish better and maybe even break 4 hours,” said Calhoun. “The last half was so brutal. My body was not used to that mileage. At the 18-mile mark everything started hurting – my feet, legs, and parts of my body that never hurt before.”

Finishing the marathon has special meaning for Calhoun, who, at the beginning of September, was planning on running the half marathon. His father, Harry Calhoun, was diagnosed with prostate cancer just before Labor Day. With less than a month to go, Calhoun decided to double his mileage.

“I decided to run this marathon in honor of my father’s cancer fight,” he said. “The plan, originally, was to run the half, but his cancer diagnosis kind of sped up the timeline to run a marathon.”

Training began this spring when one day Calhoun was climbing the stairs to the third floor of his building and found himself out of breath.

“It was a real wake-up call,” said Calhoun. “Since then, I’ve been working out and have lost 40 pounds.”

Calhoun said he prepared for the race by eating healthfully, not pushing himself too hard and doing extra stretching. The extra care he took paid off, as his recovery has been mainly stretching, soaking, icing and drinking a lot of water.

“I did see a chiro(practor) to get everything put back into place and had some massage therapy,” said Calhoun. “Overall, the chiropractor and massage therapist were both surprised what good shape I was in. They were expecting worse.”

Calhoun said the support from his family was a major factor in his finish.



Chris Calhoun nears the finish line during Sunday’s Quad Cities Marathon. His son, Lawson Calhoun, nicknamed “Cowbell” during the race and Calhoun’s niece, Morgan Meyer, ran with him as he completed the race. (Photo by Angela Calhoun)

Several members of the Calhoun family participated in the Quad Cities Marathon’s sub-event, the One-Mile Walk for Prostate Cancer.

The Quad Cities Marathon supports the Quad Cities Prostate Cancer Initiative and Us TOO International Prostate Cancer Education & Support Network, according to the Quad Cities Marathon website. The Quad Cities Marathon has raised more than \$40,000 for education and awareness in the Quad Cities area.

“The fire inside of us was telling us we needed to do something to support this and deal with this the best way we can,” said Calhoun. “There’s a lot of support in the family as a way to wrap our arms around what’s going on and do our part, too.”

After finishing the walk, the family drove around to various areas of the course to support and cheer him on.

He acknowledged what he called his awesome support group.

“My son has cuts on his hands from

ringing a cowbell as I ran along and he kind of got the nickname Cowbell. Toward the end of the race, I was in the same group of people and a couple of guys just ahead of me were looking around for him saying, ‘Where’s Cowbell? I need him again.’”

Calhoun’s father and mother also made it out to the course to support their son – they camped out at the 3-mile and 9-mile marks.

Calhoun said he wants to do another marathon, and said he will definitely do the Quad Cities half-marathon, but he doesn’t think he will run the full course again.

“I didn’t like the last six miles of course,” said Calhoun. “You run off of the Rock Island Arsenal and to the right is the finish line. However, you have to go left for three miles and then double back to the finish. Watching the people ahead of you run in to finish while you are running out is a little depressing at the end.”

Couples' efforts are a "smoking silly" success

By Larry D. McCaskill

ACC Office of Public & Congressional Affairs

Grilling more than 50 pounds of beef, chicken and pork for a group of six people seems like a lot, but for the husband and wife team of Robert Vanderipe and Lex Vanegas, it's a typical event.

Vanegas and Vanderipe are fairly new in the world of competitive barbecuing but are beginning to build up quite a reputation.

"We've been competing in the Kansas City Barbeque Society professional division since March," said Vanegas, a contractor working with the Army Contracting Command Chief information Office, G6. "So far, we've competed in 13 professional contests including the Decatur (Ala.) Riverfest and the Whistlestop barbecue competition in Huntsville (Ala.)."

Known as the Smoke Me Silly BBQ Team, the duo has captured three first-

place and three second-place finishes, as well as 17 top-10 calls in the various categories. The competitive barbecue season is between March and November. Their best showing was at the Stand By Your Grill Competition in Fulton, Miss., where their pork scored a perfect 180. The team was recently ranked as the third-best professional barbecue team in the state of Alabama, on the Alabama Barbecue Trail, by the Alabama Barbecue Association.

"We have done really well in our first year in competition," Vanegas said. "We've finished overall in the top 10 in six of the contests that we have entered, and have never finished lower than 19th place in a contest."

"We don't do any grilling for competition. All the cooking is done indirectly on the smoker," Vanderipe said. "We normally cook 18 pieces of chicken, 4 racks of ribs, 4 pork butts, and one brisket."



Robert Vanderipe (left) and Lex Vanegas. (U.S. Army Photo by Larry D. McCaskill)

"We see many of the same teams at the competitions we have done throughout the year, and it's amazing how willing the other teams are to help the new teams out," Vanegas said. "Barbecue teams refer to other teams routinely seen on the barbecue trail as their extended barbecue family."

To read the full story, Click here: www.army.mil/article/87951/.



ACC in the News

These articles mention Army Contracting Command.

Military expects to spend less with local contractors next fiscal year

By Chad Halcom

(Published Sept. 18, 2012 in Crain's Detroit Business News)

Local defense contracting companies can expect the military's procurement budget to stabilize at its lowest level in 10 years, a senior procurement official said today — and that's if Congress can avoid sequestration and the resulting budget cuts.

<http://www.crainsdetroit.com/article/20120918/FREE/120919854/military-expects-to-spend-less-with-local-contractors-next-fiscal-year> Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Army Inspector General's Report on Arlington National Cemetery Finds Continued Progress

(Published Sept 19., 2012 on www.hsgac.senate.gov)

A new report by the Army Inspector General, which was required under legislation introduced by Chairman McCaskill, finds continued improvements in management, oversight, and accountability at the Cemetery. The Inspector General noted continuing deficiencies in contract management and oversight by the Army Contracting Command and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Inspector General also found that the contracting support provided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Norfolk District is "high risk" due to the failure to comply with federal law and regulations.

<http://www.hsgac.senate.gov/subcommittees/contracting-oversight/majority-media/army-inspector-generals-report-on-arlington-national-cemetery-finds-continued-progress>



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