



NEWSBLAST

U.S. Army Contracting Command

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"Providing global contracting support to war fighters."

Contracting command's NCO of the Year competition under way

By **Larry D. McCaskill**
ACC Office of Public & Congressional Affairs

REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala.—

The challenge has begun for six noncommissioned officers who will give it their all in this year's Army Contracting Command NCO of the Year competition here June 6-8.

The NCO of the Year competition is a series of tasks and events for the top NCOs from each contracting support brigade worldwide to see who will best represent the Army Contracting Command for 2012, said ACC Command Sgt. Maj. John Murray. "The winner will compete at the Army Materiel Command level. Each of the brigade representatives

has already demonstrated that they are the best within their units for their technical and tactical knowledge, competence and execution of Army tasks."

The AMC NCOY competition is scheduled for July 15-20 at Rock Island Arsenal, Ill.

Murray said that it is a great honor to be selected to represent the command and it's an opportunity the NCOs do not take lightly.

"They are not just representing themselves during the competition but their entire units," he said. "It is great to watch the competition and see the warrior spirit not only in the competitors but from their unit sergeants major and other unit members watching the events.

"Competition is a part of the Army and one of the attributes that makes it so great," Murray added. "Everyone strives to be the best and competitions like the NCOY are one of the ways that individuals can demonstrate their mettle."

This year's competitors are Sgt. 1st Class Lachad Jefferson, 408th Contracting Support Brigade; Staff Sgt. Booker Jordan, 409th CSB; Staff Sgt. Desmond Culler, 410th CSB; Staff Sgt. Deaquennet Thomas, 411th CSB; Staff Sgt. Brandon Carroll, 412th CSB; and, Staff Sgt. Jeremiah Scheil, 413th CSB.



(Photo by Larry D. McCaskill)

Staff Sgt. Deaquennet Thomas, 411th Contracting Support Brigade, gives Staff Sgt. Desmond Culler, 410th CSB, a uniform check prior to his NCO of the Year board appearance. They are competing for the Army Contracting Command NCOY title.

Alabama communities to host Armed Forces celebrations

Next week, June 11-16, is Armed Forces Celebration Week, a series of events allowing the Huntsville, Ala., and Madison county communities to show support for the military.

Events include a proclamation signing; a military-themed concert in the park; U.S.

Army Soldier Show performances; and the U.S. Army 237th birthday celebration.

The public is invited to the birthday celebration June 12 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Redstone Arsenal parade field pavilion.

A special event this year is the

Wounded Warrior Amputee Softball Game against Team Redstone leaders. Col. Jerry Jones, Expeditionary Contracting Command chief of staff, will play while Army Contracting Command Chap. (Lt. Col.) Charles "Chip" Fields will present the invocation.

Expeditionary

Responsive

Innovative

Spotlight on...

Proud to help Soldiers, families

Michelle Kelley is assigned to the Mission and Installation Contracting Command - Fort Bliss, Texas.

Describe your current position:

I am a contract specialist who supports the procurement of major acquisitions for the war fighter.

Describe your professional/ education background:

I have a Master of Business Administration - Management from Strayer University and a Level III contract certification.

Where do you call home? Are you married? Do you have children/ grandchildren/pets?

I am originally from Georgia. My husband, Sgt. 1st Class Randy Kelley and I have two sons, Rex, 20, who is a National Guardsman attending the University of Kentucky, and, Blake, 15, who is a student at Chapin High School. I also have two boxers, Bo and Bubbles.

How does your job support the Soldier?

I am a military spouse, so I have the Soldiers' needs dear to my heart. Any time something crosses my desk that I know the Soldiers need for training or deployment, I am proud to make my small contribution to helping them meet their mission and be safe! I am proud of the construction projects that benefit the families, as well.



Michelle Kelley

U.S. Army Contracting Command

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The views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, the U.S. Army or this command.

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Cracked up on my kid's bike

By Sgt. 1st Class Brian Moss
439th Quartermaster Co., U.S. Army Reserve
New Haven, Conn.

How often do fathers play with their children's toys and get hurt in the process? For years, I have provided my children small dirt bikes and gone riding with them. I never let them ride without wearing their personal protective equipment and always set the example by wearing my own. That is, until I made an exception one day.

It was late on a Sunday afternoon, the kids had gotten bored and went looking for something more exciting to do. They found their dirt bikes and dragged them out. Sitting in storage for a while, the bikes were difficult to start, so I helped get them running. Once they were running, they rode them up and down our 900-foot-long dirt driveway a couple of times. My son complained his bike wasn't running correctly, so I decided to give it a quick check ride. I ignored my own rules and failed to put on my PPE. After all, I was only going up and down the driveway.

What could happen, right? About two-thirds of the way down the driveway, the engine started to over-rev. I could not get the bike to downshift, so I tried to slow it down by using the rear brake. Well, that didn't work and I was fast approaching the end of the driveway, which opened onto a busy state road. Instead of going for the shut-off valve, I grabbed the front brake handle, locked up the front tire and spun to the left.

This maneuver launched me over the handle bars onto my left shoulder where I then flipped and slid face-down for at least 25 feet. Altogether, I suffered a broken collar bone, leg burns, torn up knees and elbows, road rash on my arm and stitches on my face.

Had I worn my PPE, I probably would have only sustained a fractured collar bone. I'm glad it was me on the bike and not one of the children when the engine malfunctioned. However, at least they were wearing their safety equipment - which reinforced a lesson for me. There is no situation so safe or "harmless" that you don't need to wear your PPE.



Click on the image for ACC safety messages.

Program improves contract administration

By Daniel P. Elkins
 MICC Public Affairs Office

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas — Officials from the Mission and Installation Contracting Command here continue to implement phases of its Quality Assurance Program aimed at improving contract administration and oversight to help ensure Army organizations are getting what they pay for.

The program builds upon steps already being taken by the Army to address deficiencies identified in various reports from the 2007 Gansler Commission, Government Accountability Office and Army Audit Agency.

Focused primarily on expeditionary contracting operations, leaders with the MICC took lessons learned from the reports' findings to strengthen the compliance of contracts let in the continental United States with federally established quality control standards and requirements.

"The reports identified the Army had a material weakness in contract administration and oversight and documentation of that oversight," said Joe Merry, a senior quality assurance specialist with the MICC here. "In many cases, we didn't have a lot of documentation to support what we've paid contractors."

While previously assigned to the Defense Contract Management Agency, Merry often found that when a contract was written, the government "didn't do a very good job of defining requirements, which made it difficult to hold a contractor accountable for performance or defined outcomes."

To address that, the Quality Assurance Program calls for the placement of quality assurance specialists at MICC subordinate units to team with contracting officers and specialists to assist in pre- and post-award contract management and oversight as well as a more robust training calendar for contracting officer representatives who, in

many cases, are the face of contracting to contractors.

MICC quality assurance specialists are acquisition professionals who serve as functional experts in contract quality assurance and oversight and provide valuable insight into the development of measurable contract requirements to hold contractors accountable for performance and responsible for quality control, said Pat Hogston, the director of contracting operations for the MICC.

In 2011, positions were created to add quality assurance specialists to MICC subordinate units. Forty-nine individuals were hired to fill QA positions throughout the command before a hiring freeze went into effect. That number includes 10 interns, which also entails a training element. Quality assurance specialists are

in place at a little more than 60 percent of the organization's 40-plus sites as officials here await an ease in hiring restrictions.

Merry said the program's effectiveness relies on a teaming approach between MICC acquisition members and a bit of a culture change.

"The MICC is a contracting officer-centric organization. They are ultimately responsible for everything in the Federal Acquisition Regulation, which allows for the use of other specialists," he said. "Turning over the oversight piece of contracting to quality assurance specialists is a hard thing to do."

David Garrett, a quality assurance specialist at the MICC headquarters, said the teaming of acquisitions professionals in contracting and quality assurance ultimately leads to the customers' needs being met in a more effective manner.

"Before, we had to be reactive because the contract had already been let," Garrett said. "Now we're working with mission customers to identify requirements in such a way that contractors are accountable."

See **QUALITY**, page 4.



(Photo by Laramie Johnston)

Christopher Rinard, quality assurance specialist, Mission and Installation Contracting Command at Fort Drum, N.Y., teaches a module of the MICC Enhanced Contracting Officer Representative Class as part of his training to become an instructor.

QUALITY continued from page 3

That accountability is often accomplished through the efforts of contracting officer representatives who can be responsible for the surveillance of several contractors as an additional duty to their primary job. As part of the Quality Assurance Program, Garrett said quality assurance specialists are responsible for training, mentoring and performing oversight of CORs. The MICC's 12 certified instructors have ramped up the number of training classes for CORs from 23 in 2011 to more than 75 thus far in 2012 and have trained more than 650 individuals this year alone.

"We focus the classroom training on tasks we're asking the contracting officer representatives to perform for us such as surveillance as well as other areas of instruction they may not get from online training," Garrett said. "What gets watched gets done."

Merry added that the concentrated effort in face-to-face training with CORs and resulting payback in improved contractor performance ensures that the needs of Soldiers and their families are being met.

"By working with our customers to develop requirements with measurable outcomes up front before a contract is awarded, it's easier to hold a contractor accountable later," he said. "Quality assurance specialists don't own the entire process, but they certainly add value and will influence a better outcome."

ACC forum to discuss information technology, share best practices

The Army Contracting Command work force is invited to join Col. Jeffrey Gabbert, ACC chief of staff, for the quarterly Chief Information Office/G6 Enterprise Forum, June 28 from 8:30-9:30 a.m. Central Standard Time.

A panel of information technology experts will address topics such as the future of CIO/G6, SPS-A and fourth quarter support, G6 field support and more. This is an opportunity to learn, share best practices and ask questions about the latest improvements in technology, tools and informational resources available to all ACC employees.

Huntsville participants can attend on-site at the Redstone Morale Welfare Recreation building, located at 1500 Weeden Mountain Road on Redstone Arsenal.

All others can access the DCO discussion from their desktop at <https://connect.dco.dod.mil/g6enterpriseforum>.

For more information and to RSVP, visit <https://acc.aep.army.mil/G6/events/EnterpriseForum/default.aspx>.



(Photo by Ian McSpadden)

Federal employers honored

Carol Lowman, Army Contracting Command deputy to the commanding general, accepts the 2011 NISH National Achievement Customer Award (Government Award for Services - Military) for U.S. Army Garrison-Redstone from Bob Chamberlin, NISH president and chief executive officer, as Bill Coleman, chairman, NISH board of directors, looks on during the NISH Training and Achievement Conference held at Indianapolis, Ind., May 21-23. NISH is an organization that creates job opportunities for people with significant disabilities.



ACC in the News

These articles mention Army Contracting Command.

Generals changing at Redstone Arsenal commands 'routine' and no cause for concern, say observers

By Kenneth Kesner
The Huntsville Times
 (Published June 4, 2012)

HUNTSVILLE, Alabama – There have been at least three major changes of generals at commands behind the gates of Redstone Arsenal already this year, and more are to come. But the movement of these stars is pretty much business as usual for the Army and no cause for concern, according to Maj. Gen. Lynn Collyar.

http://blog.al.com/breaking/2012/06/generals_changing_at_redstone.html

