



NEWSBLAST

U.S. Army Contracting Command

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"Providing global contracting support to war fighters."

Back in the fight:

Contracting officer returns to help Soldiers

By Ben Gonzales

Mission and Installation Contracting
Command Public Affairs Office

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas - A trip to today's military hospitals reveals American warriors afflicted with many different ailments, including battle injuries, missing limbs and severe scars. Time and medical care eventually heals all physical wounds, but some wounds leave no physical scars.

Stress and anxiety can take its toll on even the strongest Soldiers. Being under the constant barrage of mortar attack and sniper fire while fighting around the world with the fear of encountering improvised explosive devices or ambush attacks on the road every time you leave the base can wear a person down. The anguish of not being able to share the intensity of wartime experiences with your family and loved ones in an attempt to shield them from the harsh reality only adds to a warrior's anxiety.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a severe anxiety disorder that can develop after exposure to any event that results in psychological trauma, which can overwhelm an individual's ability to cope. Symptoms -- such as flashbacks, disturbing nightmares, increased anger and hyper vigilance -- can cause significant impairment in social, emotional occupational, or other important areas of daily functioning.

Today's American Soldiers are in their 11th year of combat operations. For junior noncommissioned officers and officers, a



U.S. Army Photo by Ryan Mattox

Lt. Col. Rick Skeen is a contracting officer for the Mission and Installation Contracting Command-Fort Sam Houston, Texas, who manages pre- and post-award procurement actions, conducts market research, and develops acquisition strategies and plans that directly support Soldiers and their families.

war environment is all they know about service. They face tremendous hardships that can be extremely difficult to deal with alone, but there is help. Assistance is always available for Soldiers when they need it; whether they are in the thick of battle, just back from a deployment, or even years after traumatic events have affected those who have worn the nation's battle uniform during conflicts.

Lt. Col. Rick Skeen, a contracting officer for the Mission and Installation Contracting Command-Fort Sam Houston office in Texas, struggled with

PTSD and has marched a long road of recovery to conquer his battle wounds.

"PTSD is something people are not aware of how significantly it can affect someone," Skeen said. "Coming forward with the fear of ruining a person's career by seeking mental health assistance is very difficult."

Skeen, the MICC-Fort Sam Houston branch chief for the Installation Management Command support division, manages pre- and post-award procurement actions, conducts market research, and develops acquisition strategies and plans

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Agile

Proficient

Trusted

Spotlight on...

Capt. Jeremy P. Brown

Describe your current position.

I serve as Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichol's aide-de-camp, otherwise known as the commanding general's shadow. I try to maximize the CG's available productive time allowing her to focus on the command and control of the organization.

Finally, with the assistance of the executive assistant and executive officer, I coordinate, manage and execute professional and personal affairs for the CG.

What was your previous assignment?

I served as the battery commander of an artillery firing battery in 1st Battalion, 9th Field Artillery and, later, as the Headquarters and Headquarters Company Commander within the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Stewart, Ga.

How were you selected to become the general's aid-de-camp?

I was nominated to fulfill the position by my branch manager. It wasn't until about 48 to 72 hours before the video teleconference interview with Maj. Gen. Nichols that I even learned what the position was. Maj. Gen. Nichols called me a couple of weeks later to inform me that she chose me to execute the duties as her aide. I appreciate whomever put in the good word for me.



U.S. Army Photo by Larry D. McCaskill

Describe your military background.

I attended a senior military college, North Georgia and graduated in 2004. I have deployed to Iraq with both the 2nd Infantry Division from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., as a platoon leader and the 3rd Infantry Division from Fort Stewart, as a battery commander. My best experiences in the military have involved being around or leading Soldiers.

Where do you call home?

I'm originally from Newnan, Ga., but own a home in the Savannah, Ga., area.

Are you married? Children? Pets?

I am married to a wonderful lady named Stacey and we have a miniature schnauzer named Maverick.

What do you do with your spare time?

I am a big proponent of the CrossFit program and am CF Level 1 certified. I am a gamer...XBox 360 rules much of my free time and I am a huge Southeastern Conference college football fan.

Anything else you'd like to add?

Go DAWGS...SIC 'EM!

In Memoriam

REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala.—Army Contracting Command is mourning the loss of one of its teammates.

Derrick Weaver, 57, a logistics management specialist assigned to the ACC Deputy Chief of Staff, G4, Installations and Logistics, died July 17. He was recently diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

"Unfortunately the cancer was one that was unrecoverable and subsequently led to his passing," said Col. Jerry Jones, Expeditionary Contracting Command chief of staff, who had visited Weaver earlier in the day.

A Chicago native, Weaver truly believed that his service to the nation as a Soldier for more than 12 years and as a Department of Defense civilian since 1998 in support of Army Contracting Command and the National Support Element, Kosovo Force, were by far his greatest accomplishments, said Lt. Col. Monica Robinson, ACC deputy G4.

He is survived by his children, Nehemiah and Soliana Weaver, and a sister, Tamara Daugherty.



G1 function streamlined at ACC/ECC headquarters



U.S. Army Photo by Larry D. McCaskill

Katherine L. Brown and Donna Taylor, (left to right) formerly with the Expeditionary Contracting Command's Human Resources G1, talk with Julie Lumpkins, ACC Human Resources G1, about the recent merger of the two directorates.

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

REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala. - Streamlining functions within the headquarters of the Army Contracting Command and the Expeditionary Contracting Command continues here as their Human Resources G1 directorates have combined to provide specialized services to meet employee needs.

Col. Jeffrey Gabbert, ACC chief of staff, said the changes resulted from ongoing reviews looking for efficiencies to make ACC the most effective and efficient organization possible. He said the changes would not result in any loss of jobs or reduction of pay grades.

"Our leadership, driven by the reality of shrinking budgets, has been involved in an ongoing review of our command looking for organizational efficiencies without making us ineffective," he said.

According to William Baxter, director, ACC Human Resources, G1, the new organization will have four divisions: civilian policy and programs, operations, talent management and military personnel.

"We will provide consolidated human capital services to the enterprise," Baxter said.

The restructuring opens up resources to provide ACC more specialized services

to meet the needs of its employees, said Baxter.

"We are moving from a generalist approach (in performing functions) to having individuals specialize in their core competency areas," Baxter said. "Both commands had employees performing similar functions and no one specialized in any particular area because we were spread too thin. This new structure allows us to combine services and focus on specific functions, roles and responsibilities.

"Prior to this, our human resource generalists did it all," Baxter said. "The new structure allows us to allocate resources to ensure human resource employees know their roles and responsibility, ensure there is a focus on all human resource areas and look to the future to meet our emerging needs as well."

According to Gabbert, organizational reviews are continual processes.

"These reviews are on-going across other staff elements," Gabbert explained. "We will be providing follow-on updates as any additional organizational efficiency decisions are approved. The command is going to implement these changes in a transparent and deliberate fashion, ensuring we treat each employee with dignity and respect each step of the way."



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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that directly support Soldiers and their families at Army installations throughout the continental United States, Alaska and Puerto Rico. He holds a master's degree in management from Webster University and is Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act certified Level III in contracting, but like other warriors, he is a Soldier first. Skeen's first nine years in the Army were in infantry. His first experience with conflict was in Bosnia in 1995 with the 1st Armored Division.

He joined the acquisition corps in 2002, and deployed to Iraq three times, each lasting one year. In 2003 at the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom, he stood up a contracting office at Baghdad International Airport. He and his troops worked out of a shed with no power or computers requiring him and his unit to write contracts out by hand. Skeen's second tour in Iraq was at Camp Victory in the directorate of contracting in 2006. His third yearlong tour was at Al Asad for the Defense Contract Management Agency-Iraq in 2007.

While deployed to Afghanistan in 2010, he was in charge of contracting and provided everything the Soldiers needed at Forward Operating Base Fenty. His command position required him to go outside the FOB gate to check the status of local construction projects

and work with Afghan contractors. It was there that Skeen realized things were becoming too much to bear. Under frequent attack by mortar and sniper fire, along with being alone, the symptoms of PTSD overwhelmed Skeen. He had to be medically evacuated and was transported to the Warrior Transition Unit of San Antonio Military Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston.

"There was a period where I was so ashamed and felt like I let my fellow Soldiers down," said the 19-year Army veteran. "But if I had not come forward and asked for help, I would not be here today. The only way I knew how to deal with things was to rehab myself and get back into the fight."

Skeen credits the staff and professional counselors at the SAMMC with helping him understand PTSD and working with him to overcome the negative effects of the disorder.

"They got me through therapy, and to the point where I have the desire to get back to work and get back into the fight," said the San Antonio native. "It is very satisfying to do my job now. I may be far from the battlefield today, but (contracting) is so important to the support of Soldiers, and that's important to me. As a 51C, you can see an immediate impact of what we do every day. If a

Soldier needs something to help win the fight, I can get it for him right away."

Working with the MICC for the past year, Skeen has been making a difference for Soldiers.

"Lieutenant Colonel Skeen is making a significant impact for our Soldiers, our command and the Army," said Col. Shane Dietrich, the MICC chief of staff. "If IMCOM officials need something, he develops contracts to provide the goods and services that directly affect Soldiers and their families."

Next for Skeen is an assignment to South Korea this summer as he will lead a contingency contracting team. His wife, Shelagh Skeen, and their daughters, Amanda and Elisabeth, will remain stateside.

"I'm thankful for the opportunity to come back to work and contribute to the Army any way I can," Skeen said. "I'm looking forward to doing bigger and better things in contracting."

Skeen believes there are still a lot of Soldiers affected by PTSD who should step forward and seek assistance.

"More people need to come forward and ask for help if they need it," he said. "The medical professionals really helped me, and they can help others in need. I don't regret asking for help at all. Now, I'm back in the fight and ready to go."

Army leaders to conduct 'health of the force' visits at 6 installations

By Lt. Col. Sophie Gainey
Army News Service

WASHINGTON - Army senior leaders, led by Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, will tour several Army installations this week to assess the health of the force.

During the week-long tour, Austin, along with Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III; Surgeon General of the Army Lt. Gen. Patricia Horoho; and Lt. Gen. Michael Ferriter, commander, U.S. Army Installation Management Command and assistant chief of staff for installation management, will look at programs, services, resources and best practices pertaining to the health of the force.

"The health of the force remains our top priority," Austin said. "We are continuing to make progress in many areas and that is largely a reflection of leader involvement. That said, we recognize that we still have a lot of work to do and we must keep getting better."

The week-long trip, Austin said, is an effort to see firsthand the

impact of Army best practices, and to also see where the Army may need to apply more resources or affect policy changes.

During the trip, the group will take a look at the Integrated Disability Evaluation System process, installation-level programs and services specific to suicide prevention, Wounded Warrior care efforts, sexual assault and harassment programs, and additional health and discipline-related issues.

The tour of Army installations includes Fort Bragg, N.C.; Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Riley, Kan.; Fort Benning, Ga.; Fort Stewart, Ga.; and Fort Gordon, Ga.

"We're visiting these six installations because they represent a good mix of reserve component, corps, division and (U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command) units and they are home to large populations of Soldiers," Austin said. "As such, we believe we can have the greatest impact in the shortest amount of time at these locations. Ultimately, the goal is to make our Army better and to ensure we're providing quality care and support to our troops and families."



ACC in the News

These articles mention Army Contracting Command.

Improvements to the SPS-A in time for end of year activity

Targeted News Service

Redstone Arsenal, Ala., Posted July 18, 2012

The fourth quarter is a busy time of each fiscal year for Army contracting professionals and the challenge for many is a combination of the sheer volume of contracts, the complexity of each transaction, and also accessing and using the Standard Procurement System-Army to process the transactions.

<http://www.equities.com/news/headline-story?dt=2012-07-18&val=285260&cat=tech>

413th CSB welcomes new leadership

Hawaii Army Weekly, Posted July 17, 2012

By Crista Mary Mack

311th Signal Command (Theater) Public Affairs

PEARL HARBOR — Hawaiian tradewinds blew favorably across the deck of the USS Missouri, here, June 28, as Col. Michael Hoskin relinquished command to Col. Martin Zybura at the first change of command ceremony for the 413th Contracting Support Brigade.

<http://www.hawaiiarmyweekly.com/2012/07/17/413th-csb-welcomes-new-leadership/>

Contracting excellence nets award for YPG intern

YumaSun.Com

By Yolie Canales, Posted July 22, 2012

Although Kimberly Ross feels she did not do anything special to win the FY2011 Outstanding Intern of the Year Award, her supervisor and higher headquarters believe otherwise.

<http://www.yumasun.com/articles/contracting-80545-ross-work.html>

Communities of Practice: ACC gathers expertise, experience to solve business problems in four complex areas of contracting

Army AL&T Magazine

By Virginia Mitchell, Army Contracting Command

The U.S. Army Contracting Command has established communities of practice to help standardize its business processes and practices in critical, complex areas of interest across the enterprise. Page 72

<http://armyalt.va.newsmemory.com/>

