



NEWSBLAST

U.S. Army Contracting Command

Vol. 3, No. 35
Sept. 5, 2012

"Providing global contracting support to war fighters."

Army-wide stand down to support suicide prevention

By David Vergun
Army News Service

WASHINGTON – Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III ordered an Army-wide suicide "stand down," scheduled for Sept. 27, as a way to empower leadership to prevent further loss of life due to suicide.

Due to end of fiscal year contracting close out requirements, ACC units will conduct their stand downs beginning Sept. 16 through Oct. 19.

The stand down is meant to familiarize all members of the Army family with the health promotion, risk reduction, suicide prevention, and comprehensive Soldier and family fitness resources available in the Army. It will also focus on how to improve the health and discipline of the force and reducing the stigma associated with seeking care for behavioral health issues.

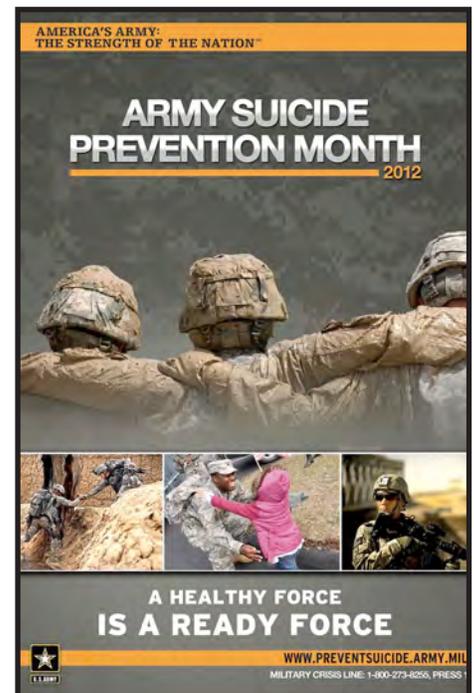
The stand down was issued after Austin visited installations around the Army and listened to Soldier feedback and suggestions, said Walter O. Morales, chief of the Army Suicide Prevention Program.

"He realized more work was needed to address the issue of suicides in the Army and to ensure the awareness and training momentum continues," Morales said.

The last Army-wide suicide prevention stand down took place in 2009. During that event, Morales said, the Army used the "chain teach" approach to push information down to Soldiers.

"For example, the Army required that specific training materials would be used and specific training requirements met, although some supplemental training was allowed, such as leader-led discussions," he said.

See **SUICIDE**, page 5.



ACC-APG employees compete, win Arizona Olympics

By Betsy Kozak
ACC-Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md.—Members of the Army Contracting Command – Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., proved they're not only winners in the acquisition arena, but are also winners on the sports field.

In July, a seven-member volleyball team won a medal in the Team APG Olympics here and in August, two Huachuca Division members won medals in a mini-triathlon held at Fort Huachuca, Ariz.

"The Olympic day provided ACC-APG members with the opportunity to strengthen teamwork within the contracting

center and build partnerships with other organizations," said Dana Dowell, ACC-APG Olympic representative. "It was a day set aside to build camaraderie and boost morale while participating in competitive sporting events."

The Team APG Olympics included participants from 16 APG organizations. Thirty six ACC-APG employees participated in events such as relay race, bowling, volleyball, basketball, softball and golf.

At the end of the competition, the volleyball team took home a bronze medal under the direction of team captain Brett Schwerin, a supervisory price/cost analyst. He is assigned to Division B with

teammate Thomas Campana, procurement program officer. The team included five members of the 722nd Contingency Contracting Team assigned to the Tenant Division of ACC-APG: Alan Zero Sean Kwoun, Andre Dooley, Kevin McClatchey Larin Harris.

"The team worked well together despite having only one practice session," Schwerin pointed out. "We made optimal use of this practice time by discussing strategy, court navigation, game fundamentals and getting to know teammates. Participating in the Olympics was an excellent opportunity to meet employees from other organizations across the Aberdeen community."

See **OLYMPICS**, page 2.

AGILE

PROFICIENT

TRUSTED



(Photo by Jason Chrisis)

Michael Levy, ACC-APG intern, runs the first leg of the relay race during the Team APG Olympics held in July.

Absentee ballots available online

REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala.—Army Contracting Command Soldiers and civilian employees worldwide can use the Federal Post Card Application online to secure absentee ballots for this year's elections.

According to Jamal Cummins, ACC voting assistance officer, the Federal Voting Assistance Program website, www.fvap.gov, walks voters through the application process step-by-step.

"The Web page is a great tool to use for military voting assistance," Cummins said. "At the home page simply click on the desired state and get started with

Register to Vote or Request Ballot, Get my Ballot Now or Track my Ballot."

For ACC staff at Redstone, there is a voter assistance table in Bldg 3334-H where voters can get a Voter's Assistance Guide and other information.

American voters will elect a president, vice president, every member of the U.S. House of Representatives, one-third of the U.S. Senate, and various state and local officials in November.

For more information, contact Cummins at 256-955-8575 or Sgt. Kwadwo Kyeremateng at 256-955-7707.

DOD launches mobile website for absentee voters

ALEXANDRIA, Va.—The Department of Defense's Federal Voting Assistance Program recently launched a mobile website for military service members, their voting-age dependents and overseas citizens.

The website provides an interface that quickly leads users to voting information in an easy-to-read, mobile-friendly format.

Accessible from any smartphone, the

site connects voters, wherever they may be, with the latest news alerts, absentee voting information, state election dates, key contact information and answers to frequently asked questions.

The new mobile website is found at: <http://www.fvap.gov/mobile/>.

Users will automatically be directed to the mobile website when they visit FVAP.gov from a mobile browser.

A week after the APG Olympics, five members of the Huachuca Division participated in the annual 1st Time Tri triathlon sponsored by the Fort Huachuca Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation. Scott Larsen and Douglas Kirby, both contracting specialists, won gold and silver medals respectively. Larsen grabbed the gold in the male age group 30-39 and Kirby captured silver in the male age group 40-49.

"The format of the triathlon was not distance-based like most," stated Donna Kimura-Long, contracting officer. "There were three time-based events to include a 15-minute swim, a 15-minute bike ride on stationary bikes, and a 15-minute run on the track. The winner was determined by who went the farthest in the given time."

Kirby completed six miles on

the bike, 485 meters during the swim and one-and-a-half miles in the run. He wants to experience a full triathlon and felt that the Time Tri would be good training toward his goal.

"Although it wasn't a full triathlon, it was no joke," explained Kirby. "The swimming was intense and exhausting."

This was Larsen's first time competing in a triathlon.

"It was a great experience," he said. "I have been training as a boxer so the running and bike events weren't much of a problem. At first I didn't think that I placed and was rather surprised to discover that I won the gold for my age group. It also served as a great team-building event. There were five of us who competed in the triathlon and several other division members came to show their support."



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The *NewsBlast* is a weekly newsletter authorized and produced by the U.S. Army Contracting Command's Office of Public and Congressional Affairs editorial staff in accordance with AR 360-1 (The Army Public Affairs Program) to inform, educate and entertain the ACC community on people, policies, operations, technical developments, trends and ideas of and about the Department of Defense, the Department of the Army and this command.

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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ACC now offers multi-level contracting training

By **Larry D. McCaskill**

ACC Office of Public & Congressional Affairs

REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala.— For contracting specialists, training is not an option. Contracting personnel are required to obtain Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act certification and an additional 80 hours of continuous learning points every two years. The Army Contracting Command instituted three tiers of training courses to help the new, the not-so new and the seasoned professionals obtain some of those hours.

According to William Baxter, deputy chief of staff, ACC-Human Resources G1, ACC offers a contracting boot camp, a contracting officer refresher course and a professional skills course. Participants will receive CLPs based on the number of instructional hours for each course.

“Some of the centers taught both contracting officer (KO) and boot camp courses, but the effort was not synchronized ACC-wide,” said Baxter. “The Professional Skills Course is a new concept, based on needs-based training.”

According to Beverly Hopkins, ACC workforce development specialist, the ACC Boot Camp training is a four-week course aimed at employees new to the command and the contracting field. It covers command structure, an overview of the acquisition process, basic contracting concepts and terminology.

“ACC’s number one strategic goal is to grow and maintain a highly proficient, agile, innovative and engaged workforce,” Hopkins said. “The command’s vision for the boot camp is for new employees to understand the command, what their jobs entail and how they fit into the acquisition process. In addition, they become familiar with the concepts and terminology associated with the contracting field before starting certification courses.”

Ideally, Hopkins said, the boot camp training should be taken within a few months of joining the command. In addition to introductory classes, the course has a threaded case study with exercises designed to give the students hands-on, real-world experience.

Hopkins said for those who have been in the contracting field for a while but still not at the senior level, the command has

developed a KO refresher course.

“ACC’s number one strategic goal is to grow and maintain a highly proficient, agile, innovative and engaged workforce.”

Beverly Hopkins
ACC workforce development specialist

“The KO Course is a one-week course for current and newly warranted contracting officers. The intent of this course is to reinforce current knowledge, ensure contracting officers remain up-to-date on current regulations, address common issues or weaknesses and develop

proposed solutions,” Hopkins said.

“The KO Course gives participants the opportunity to share experiences, identify problems and discover resolutions and best practices.”

Hopkins said the structure and frequency of course offerings will be driven by the number of newly assigned personnel and any changes that will be incorporated into the curriculum in the future. For newly assigned contracting officers, the course should be taken within six-months of receiving a warrant.

“The Professional Skills Course is designed to enhance critical thinking skills, business writing and analytics,” said Hopkins. “It is a one-week course available to both acquisition and non-acquisition personnel.”

See TRAINING, page 4.



MICC-Fort Carson teams up with Habitat For Humanity

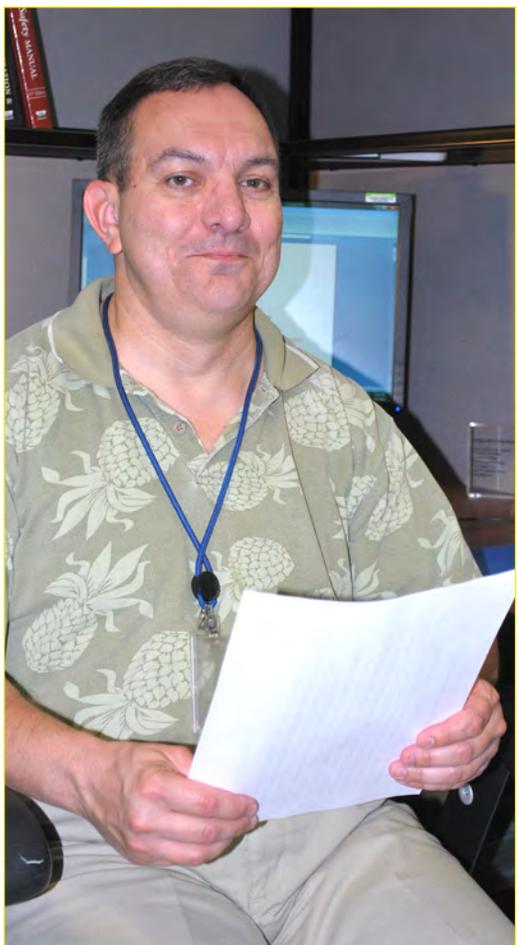
From left to right: Maj. Johnny Vuong, Sgt. 1st Class Terry Trent, Marty Orgeron, Kristin Heikkla, Capt. Jerrick Hunter, George Williams and Capt. Erica Chin volunteer their services to Habitat For Humanity. Their efforts are part of the Mission and Installation Contracting Command-Fort Carson, Colo.’s initiative to build teamwork and to give back to the local community.



Spotlight on...

For Spotlight submissions, click on the icon.

Safety intern grateful to serve war fighters



Andrew J. Cabral

Andrew J. Cabral is a safety and occupational health intern assigned to the Army Contracting Command at Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

Describe your current position:

I am a safety and occupational health intern currently assigned to the ACC Headquarters.

I recently received the Explosives Safety (Level-I) certification from the Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center. This certification identifies me as an explosives safety officer and qualifies me to review plans and operations that involve inherently dangerous materials. This work is usually performed at ammunition and explosives storage sites, manufacturing facilities, military training ranges, demilitarization sites, ports and railheads.

Describe your passion for your job:

My passion for my occupation is the health, safety, morale and well-being of the war fighter down range.

Where do you call home? Tell me about your family.

Originally, I am from a small town

called Tiverton, Rhode Island. After my career in the Navy, we settled in Jacksonville, Fla., and lived there for eight years until I accepted this assignment at Redstone in August 2011.

I am married and we have a ten-year-old son.

In my spare time, I enjoy spending as much quality time with my family. I also like spending time working with addicts in recovery.

How does your job support the Soldier?

By ensuring that the essential elements of environmental, safety and occupational health are integrated into the contracting process from idea-to-grave. We, as a combined team, ensure products are safe for use by the Soldier, not only on the battlefield, but in garrison as well.

What would you like others to know about you?

I am grateful for every day that I am able to serve.

My being the best husband and dad is my greatest aspiration in life. For me, there is no greater calling.

TRAINING

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“The Professional Skills Course may be taken by new employees to gain perspective into the command’s expectations or for those who want to keep their analytic, writing and math skills sharp,” Baxter said. “Subjects covered in the Professional Skills Course are essential for mission success as well as the professional success of all personnel, both acquisition and non-acquisition, regardless of grade, series or career program.”

Curriculum development has been a collective and collaborative effort, said

Baxter, who pointed to the boot camps at ACC-Warren, Mich., and ACC-Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., and ACC-Redstone Arsenal’s contracting officer course as the foundation of the command’s programs.

“Information and materials were gathered and synthesized. Modules and subject categories were created that could be taught collectively or independently,” Baxter said. “Subject matter experts and field representatives reviewed and provided feedback for each instructional module in all three courses. Representatives from the

centers and commands attended the pilot courses and provided feedback to ensure the curriculum was accurate and appropriate to meet their needs.”

Depending on the resources available, both local instructors and a mobile training team may be used, Baxter said. “ACC Human Resources will continue to coordinate and schedule future courses, depending on the needs of each location, as well as develop a fiscal year 2013 master calendar for all the courses.”

Merritt's morsels make many merry

By Giselle Lyons

ACC Office of Public & Congressional Affairs

REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala.— The Food Channel promotes Paula Deen, Rachel Ray and others as its well-known cooking personalities. The Army Contracting Command's answer is Sandy Merritt.

Merritt, a human resources specialist in the ACC Deputy Chief of Staff Human Capital G1, often volunteers her time by creating all types of delicacies for fundraisers and functions. She says cooking is a stress reliever and her passion for the culinary arts is evident in every bite.

Merritt says her family is where her love of cooking stems from, and where many of her recipes come from as well. She has never had any formal training; cooking with her family is how she learned. Her family holiday gatherings attract relatives from throughout the country and everyone seems to take part in the cooking.

"The kitchen is our family's focal point for the holidays," said Merritt, who enjoys baking the most because she is able to do it easily on a daily basis. "It always has been my whole life."

Merritt has three sons, all who grew up with her love of cooking. One became a professional chef while he was in the military, although he has since switched careers. Another has both the talent and the passion but wants to keep the cooking as a joy rather than a job.

Though most of her work is volunteer,



(Photo by Ed Worley)

Sandy Merritt and her two sons, (left to right) Stacy and Aaron, share their passion for cooking during this year's organization day.

Merritt has done a few side projects that have started her thinking about marketing her work in the future and a business name. For now, she said she would just have the cards written up with 'Sandy's Kitchen,' but each of her boys vetoed that.

"They said it was too boring!" she said.

Because she gets volunteered to make something by friends nearly every week, Merritt keeps her basic baking ingredients in stock. During the holidays, she also stocks her pantry with ingredients like pumpkin spice and cranberry filling.

"People always walk in and say it smells so good in my house," she said, "but I'm afraid I'm immune to the smell."

Merritt baked her popular cupcakes, cookies and other sweet treats for a back-to-school bash Aug. 12 supporting

community activities.

Merritt recognizes that people appreciate what she has to offer, but there is a downside to cooking in her own style.

"People ask me all the time for a recipe, and it's so hard to tell someone that I really can't give them anything. I know how to make it, but I really can't write it down," she said.

For now, cooking and baking remain mostly a hobby as Merritt continues her work at ACC. In the future though, she can see herself doing it professionally.

"Maybe when I am retired and I have more time, I'll work part-time. As long as it's still my stress relief, I'll do it," she said with a smile.

"Just let me think of a better name besides 'Sandy's Kitchen!'"

SUICIDE

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This time, Morales said, the stand down will be different.

"Activities and training will be less prescriptive," he said. "Commanders now have the flexibility to assess the needs of their units and customize the training and activities."

Morales said some commanders might opt for a "fun walk" or run to get Soldiers, civilians and their families involved. They might follow that with an afternoon town hall meeting. Others may conduct risk assessments to better inform their training requirements for the training and

sustainment portion of the stand down.

Although the stand down is just for one day, Morales said training and activities will be conducted throughout September, which is recognized in the Army as Suicide Prevention Month. Efforts will likely continue into October.

The theme this year for suicide prevention month — "A healthy force is a ready force" — reflects the Army's awareness that healthy people and mission go together, Morales said.

"We're not just worried about suicides, we're concerned with the overall fitness

and well-being of our Soldiers, Army civilians and family members," he said. "It is especially important that leaders lead the charge in changing the Army culture, wherever seeking help for suicide or other issues is stigmatized."

In addition to unit events, other suicide awareness activities are planned throughout September, including health fairs and resilience training. A special Suicide Prevention Month webpage has been established on the Army Suicide Prevention website, which explains more, at www.preventsuicide.army.mil.



ACC in the News

These articles mention Army Contracting Command.

Local employment doors open for veterans

Hiring Our Heroes job fair serves military community

By Megan Cotton

The Redstone Rocket (Aug. 29, 2012)

More than 100 veterans met with potential new employers Thursday.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce sponsored Hiring Our

https://amcom1.redstone.army.mil/portal/page/portal/PAO_Page_Group/PAO_Command_Publications_Page/PAO_Command_Pubs_Center_Portlet/C85A9604D79413A3E0440021287E6AFA

Heroes, a job fair open to veterans, active duty military, Guard and Reserve members and their spouses. More than 60 employers attended the job fair – from Northrop Grumman to Verizon Wireless – and more than 160 veterans pre-registered with other attendees and many walk-ins expected.

Quad-City Times In Service

Awards

Department of the Army civilian Melanie Johnson, director for field support contracting at the Army Contracting Command Rock Island, received an Army Contracting Excellence Award.

http://qctimes.com/lifestyles/announcements/in-service/article_2157f72a-f618-11e1-acfe-001a4bcf887a.html

She is the daughter of Elaine Dedecker, East Moline, and the mother of Vanessa Allardyce, Bettendorf, and Aaron Johnson, Moline. Her husband, Timothy, is the son of Ona Johnson, Moline. She is a 1981 graduate of United Township High School, East Moline, and received a bachelor's degree in 1995 from Western Illinois University. She also received a master's degree in 2000 from the University of Iowa.

Local children look to chaplain for answers

Information shared at Sunday school

By Larry D. McCaskill

ACC Office of Public & Congressional Affairs

Published in The Redstone Rocket (Aug. 29, 2012)

Not one to turn down an invite, Army Contracting Command's chaplain (Lt. Col.) Charles "Chip" Fields found himself fielding questions from a very inquisitive group of local children at the Grace United Methodist Church Sunday School.



(Photo by Ingrid Murray)

From left, Harper Rasmussen, Daniel Pizitz and Nicholas Marden explore the contents of the chaplain's field kit during Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Charles "Chip" Fields visit to the children's Sunday school at Grace United Methodist Church.

https://amcom1.redstone.army.mil/portal/page/portal/PAO_Page_Group/PAO_Command_Publications_Page/PAO_Command_Pubs_Center_Portlet/C85A9604D79413A3E0440021287E6AFA



(Photo by Ingrid Murray)

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Charles "Chip" Fields addresses youngsters at the Grace United Methodist Church Sunday School.



Click on the image for ACC safety messages.

