

ACC TODAY

U.S. Army Contracting Command

Fall 2012



Army Contracting Command's Global Mission

Worldwide contracting support for Soldiers

14

www.acc.army.mil



View from the Top

Q&A: Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols

SPS-A Improvements



Call to action: training, mentorship key to mission success

By Brig. Gen. Kirk Vollmecke
Commanding General
Mission and Installation Contracting Command

The Army continues to address numerous challenges in an environment characterized by diminishing resources. This also holds true for Army contracting. Army contracting continues to maintain a large standing mission without a comparable enhanced workforce. In order to mitigate these challenges, Army contracting must continue to retain and leverage its experienced military and civilian contracting workforce while enabling the development of the journeymen workforce through training and mentorship. Implementing contract training and mentorship programs ensures contracting professionals remain the best trained, the best led, and capable of executing complex contracting requirements.

“Leader development is the best means to ensure the Army can adapt to whatever an uncertain future may bring,” said Gen. Raymond Odierno, the Army chief of staff, in the Army 2012 Strategic Planning Guidance. “Leadership development and training must inculcate the ideals of the profession of arms, while preparing Soldiers and civilians to operate independently in more dynamic environments. We must continue to recognize that people are the centerpiece of the Army and that responsible, agile and adaptable human capital management is essential to building and sustaining the all-volunteer Army.”

Becoming the best contracting professionals requires more than just obtaining the proper certification in our respective craft. Certification alone may not give us the skills and proficiency needed to accomplish our mission. Each of us has a role in making the Army Contracting Command the Department of Defense’s preeminent provider of decisive edge contracting solutions and practices. Junior contracting professionals should continue to learn from seasoned contracting officers, whether the contracting officer is military or civilian. Whatever our role—supervisor or employee, mentor or protégé—we all play a part in improving our processes and keeping the Army the most respected land force in the world.

Training is about gaining knowledge, understanding, skill, proficiency and depth, which is nested with mentorship. Old fashioned on-the-job training continues to be a great way to develop our workforce. Starting OJT can be as easy as returning to the fundamentals. Revisit specific technical guidance, DOD instructions and Army regulations. Contracting professionals need to be well versed in advanced planning, requirements generation, strategy development, contract award, and contract management and oversight. Sometimes the best OJT can be accomplished while sharing a brown bag lunch, where leaders can have in-depth discussions with junior staff members to share insights as well as educate our team.

OJT and mentorship go hand in hand. Whether you are in ACC headquarters or one of its centers, in the MICC or even if you are deployed forward with the Expeditionary Contracting Command, everyone should be leveraging a mentor. We have enough leaders who are seasoned, knowledgeable, skilled and proficient across all areas of contracting. We are all a part of ACC; therefore, I encourage each of you to contact someone in our command who can help fill in the gaps in areas where we may be lacking proficiency. None of us should hesitate to make a call for assistance because we all have the same goal: providing the best possible contracting solutions for Soldiers and their families.

For our mid- and senior-level staff members, developmental, informed rotational assignments help the command merge us with our customers. This is a win-win situation where our staff gains invaluable experience while the supported command or requiring activity understands how crucial the contracting role is to the mission. Leaders, I challenge you to look at our published quarterly training plans and our gap assessments to synch the areas that need the most attention.

Through training and mentorship, we can mature our command into seasoned contracting officers and professionals. With cultivating guidance from senior leaders, our team will flourish into talented staff members with boundless potential to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Army Strong!

ACC TODAY



COMMAND STAFF

Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols
Commanding General

Command Sgt. Maj. John L. Murray
Command Sergeant Major

Art Forster
Director, Public and Congressional Affairs

Ed Worley
Public Affairs Team Chief

EDITORIAL STAFF

EDITOR

Larry D. McCaskill

CONTRIBUTORS

Lt. Col. Martha Brooks
Beth Clemons
Ann Jensis-Dale
Giselle Lyons
David San Miguel
Ed Worley

WRITE TO THE EDITOR

ACC Today welcomes letters to the editor. Letters must be under 200 words and include your name, address and telephone number. To submit a letter, e-mail it directly to acc.pao@us.army.mil, (256) 955-7655.

FIND BREAKING NEWS ONLINE

Find today’s top news, breaking news and links to electronic versions of *ACC Today* at www.acc.army.mil/news. *ACC Today* is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. Army. Contents of *ACC Today* are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or Army Contracting Command. *ACC Today* is a quarterly publication produced by the Army Contracting Command Public and Congressional Affairs Office. All editorial content of *ACC Today* is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the Army Contracting Command Public and Congressional Affairs Office.

ADDRESS

The editorial office is located at:

Army Contracting Command
3334-A Wells Road
Redstone Arsenal, AL 35898-5000



WHAT'S INSIDE

www.acc.army.mil



Cover Story

ACC's Global Mission

14



6



17



Cover—A big part of the Army Contracting Command mission is providing expeditionary contracting support. Story and photos on page 14. (U.S. Army Photo)

Customer Focus

- 4 Quality assurance intern program pushed throughout the 409th
- 6 Non-Complex Team identifies many successes
- 8 Questions and Answers: Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols

Professional Workforce

- 11 414th CSB deploys to support Southern Accord 2012
- 12 Multi-level contracting training available within ACC
- 13 Contracting Officer going to work at Google with Army Training with Industry Program
- 14 Providing global contracting support when and wherever needed
- 16 411th Contracting Support Brigade: Contracting support in the land of the morning calm
- 17 Greening tour introduces contracting specialist to their customers

Business Processes

- 18 VECP — Saving Money through innovation for end of year activity
- 19 Getting a grip on government property
- 20 Governance process aligns IT requirements
- 22 Improvements to the Standard Procurement System—Army in time for end of year activity

Resources

- 24 Contracting office saves Army nearly \$22 million
- 25 Acquisition Corps seeks qualified Soldiers

Quality of Life

- 26 ACC Historian predicts Zombie Apocalypse in 2013
- 27 Merritt's morsels make many merry
- 28 Local children look to chaplain for answers

Quality assurance intern program pushed throughout the 409th

By Rachel Clark
409th Contracting Support Brigade
Kaiserslautern, Germany

KAISERSLAUTERN, GERMANY—The 409th Contracting Support Brigade here is sponsoring a number of Expeditionary Contracting Command quality assurance specialist interns as part of a two-year program providing on-the-job experience.

“Having QA specialists within the 409th CSB helps us provide better assistance to customers in framing measurable performance standards,” said Tony Baumann, 409th CSB deputy to the commander.

The QA interns must first complete a training boot camp that provides instruction on basic quality concepts like measurement techniques, and data capture techniques.

“Once an intern is selected for the program, they’re hired on by the sponsoring command/organization. In my case, it was the Expeditionary Contracting Command,” said Mary Smith, a QA intern at the 409th.

Quality assurance interns go through their initial training at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J. Once completed, they report to their designated duty stations.

According to David Yelton, director, Army Contracting Command/ECC Quality Assurance Program, hiring the QA interns was a part of an ACC initiative to strengthen the quality assurance workforce in the area of contract oversight.

“The QA intern program provides

“The QA intern program provides the hands-on training and mentorship needed for the new employees to be successful in their path toward the quality assurance journeyman level.”

the hands-on training and mentorship needed for the new employees to be successful in their path toward the quality assurance journeyman level,” said Yelton. “ACC currently has 25 QA interns, all at varying stages in the program. These individuals have truly stepped up to the challenge and are successfully contributing to the command’s goal of positively influencing the ACC role in the area of contract oversight.”

Baumann said while contract specialists are trained in the art of drafting and administering contract terms from a general business perspective, they are not necessarily proficient in drafting and administering terms related to the technical performance of the work being placed under contract. Quality assurance specialists deliver the capability to focus in more detail on setting and measuring technical performance aspects.

As part of the program, the interns learn the core competencies of quality assurance, such as life-cycle management and auditing skills, and are then matched up with a mentor to help facilitate their success.

Karl Fischer, a seasoned quality assurance specialist with the 409th, has developed an extensive system to help the QA interns.

“Part of my job is to train and mentor the QA interns. Through on-the-job training and regional contracting office field support, we provide the QA interns with the capability and knowledge to perform as journeyman quality assurance specialists,” said Fischer.

“In contracting, it’s quality assurance that provides oversight, surveillance and additional training to the contracting officer representative. Quality assurance ensures that the contracts that are written are be-



(Left to right) Karl Fischer, quality assurance specialist, 409th Contracting Support Brigade, reviews a contracting officer representative checklist with Mary Easley, quality assurance specialist, 409th CSB, and Mary Smith, quality assurance intern, 409th CSB, as part of the quality assurance intern program initiated by Army Contracting Command. (U.S. Army Photo by Rachel Clark, 409th CSB)

ing executed properly. Another key component of QA is working with contracting officer representatives,” Fischer said.

“CORs are the eyes and ears of the contracting officer on all technical aspects of the contract,” said Fischer.

Part of QA’s responsibility is to visit CORs and customers and provide contract management reviews, surveillance and training at off-site locations.

All of which is one of the best parts about the job, according to a few of the QA interns.

“One of my favorite things about QA is going out to see and work with CORs and contractors, and be-

ing able to see how these contracts affect the well-being of our military personnel,” said Smith.

“This is where our job really makes an impact,” said John Workman, QA intern. “The interaction allows us to collect data, make connections and enhance understanding up and down the chain on all levels.”

According to Baumann, over the last few years the Army was not doing a good job policing the CORs and contractors due to not having enough quality assurance specialists and there was a lot of waste.

“The QA program is a good thing because it fills a competency gap that has previously hampered our ability to design and manage the

most effective service contracts possible,” said Baumann.

Upon successful completion of the two-year portion, the new quality assurance specialists are assigned positions within the organization.

“The 409th CSB’s intent is to eventually place QA specialists in each of our regional contracting offices where they can be readily available to integrate with and assist contract specialists and customers,” said Baumann.

Interns from the 409th CSB will graduate from their internships between October 2012 and March 2013. ♦



Air Force Maj. Lee Dent (left), Maj. Tangela Robinson, and ACC-RI civilian Hans Jacobson review contract information. (U.S. Army Photo)

Non-Complex Team identifies many successes

By Liz Adrian
 Army Contracting Command-Rock Island Public Affairs
 Rock Island, Ill.

ROCK ISLAND, ILL.—Initially established as a six-person Air Force team, the Army Contracting Command-Rock Island Non-Complex Reachback Branch has grown to 18 temporary duty personnel, augmented by an additional two civilians and seven Army permanent party personnel stationed here.

The ACC-RI's Non-Complex Reachback Branch now consists of the six-person Air Force team; the Air Force's Enterprise Sourcing Group; deployed Soldiers from the 412th Contracting Support Brigade, Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas; ACC-RI contract specialists and the seven additional Soldiers.

Since its inception in February 2010, the Non-Complex Branch has completed approximately 8,000 actions valued at more than \$250 million.

The six-person Air Force team is part of the U.S. Central Command and is in its sixth six-month rotation. Team members work on simplified acquisitions for commodities, with the requests coming from the field via the theater contracting center in Qatar.

According to Air Force Maj. Lee Dent, Langley Air Force Base, Va., the cell's chief during its fifth rotation, the cell was established in coordination with Headquarters CENT-

COM Joint Contracting Command as a process improvement initiative.

Previously, many commodities supporting operations in Afghanistan and Iraq were bought through regional contracting centers in Southwest Asia from vendors in the United States. With the establishment of the Non-Complex Reachback Cell, the Army is able to realize a more efficient buying process and minimize the number of contracting personnel required in forward areas.

Members of the Expeditionary Contracting Command's 412th CSB began their third six-month rotation to ACC-RI in April where they are gaining contracting experience.

"The primary reason for most of us is to help reduce the workload of commodity buys from Afghanistan regional contracting centers by making these non-complex purchases from CONUS," said Maj. Tangela Robinson, 611th Contingency Contracting Team, Fort Stewart, Ga. "In

“Because the team has jelled so well here, Rock Island has become the place where everyone comes to, even for unique requirements. We have the reputation that we will get it done, no matter what it takes.”

addition, it's a great on-the-job training opportunity.”

“On average, our current rotation team has a minimum of two years of contracting experience,” Robinson said. “So every opportunity to support our customer, the war fighter, and write more contracts is a good one.”

The Air Force ESG, which was established at ACC-RI in December 2011 via memorandum of agreement, is on its fourth four-month rotation. Air Force Master Sgt. Deric Harris, 772nd Enterprise Sourcing Squadron, Joint Base San Antonio, Texas, led the team during the ESG's third rotation. He said that instead of supporting just the installations on which they are stationed, members of the ESG conduct research and award strategic sourcing contracts that support multiple bases throughout the Air Force.

Like the 412th, ESG personnel are here for training in order to get certified on their core tasks, which is an essential career component.

“One of the original intents in bringing the ESG folks here was to get them experience in foundational contracting,” said Dent. “Because they work with such high-level strategic source contracts, they don't always have an opportunity to do the more foundational type of contracting.”

Rounding out the military presence at ACC-RI are seven ACC Soldiers. The Soldiers stationed at ACC-RI work in various divisions throughout ACC and work occasionally with the non-complex cell.

In addition to the military teams, there is a civilian team assigned to the Non-Complex Branch which provides the continuity as military teams rotate in and out. The civilians also support buying and handling the backlog of challenging contract closeouts.

“They have closed out more than 300 contracts that were backlogged for about a year and they continue to work the problematic closeout contracts for us,” said Dent. “They also work the long hours alongside us in order to support the war fighters.”

Though the Army, Air Force and civilians are divided among separate teams, they work closely together. This was not always the case.

“When the 412th folks first got here, we were two separate teams - an Army team and an Air Force team,” said Dent. “In the fourth rotation, there was the idea of integrating the teams, so now we have Army sitting next to Air Force. We work together to support the war fighter and we are all learning from each other.”

Under the current configuration, the Air Force members serve as contracting officers and the Soldiers as contracting specialists, but this does not mean Air Force personnel aren't learning from their Army colleagues. Dent says the Air Force ESG personnel have learned about paperless contract files, reverse auctioning, and computer hardware enterprise software and solutions from the Army. The Army team also brings a vital perspective of the Soldier on the ground in Afghanistan, and some of them have been there as the customer in their previous career fields.

“We're really busy with, on average, 150-plus requirements a week,” said Air Force Capt. Terence Balcameda, Los Angeles Air Force Base, Calif. “We turn these around really fast for the guys down range and I know they appreciate it because usually when it gets to us, they needed it yesterday.”

Janet Burgett-Jackson, former ACC-RI Non-Complex Branch chief, said she is impressed by the response time.

“Many times they get the requirements ordered and on contract within three days but most of the time it's the same day,” said Burgett-Jackson. “Even for the more complex stuff, they are really turning it around.”

Dent said the success of the Non-Complex Branch would not be possible without the support of ACC-RI's strong leadership, solid policy and legal reviews, and responsive administrative support.

All in all, the members of the non-complex branch say the arrangement is working well for all.

“Because the team has jelled so well here, Rock Island has become the place where everyone comes to, even for unique requirements,” said Burgett-Jackson. “We have the reputation that we will get it done, no matter what it takes.” ♦

Questions and Answers: Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols

Commanding General, U.S. Army Contracting Command



When you left ECC, did you think that you might be back at ACC as the commander?

I've been very fortunate and blessed that the advances I've been able to make in my career have gotten me to where I am. When I left the Expeditionary Contracting Command to go out to command and combat, I felt I'd go do that and come back to some staff job and that would be the end. I think it's a great testament to Mr. (Jeff) Parsons (former Army Contracting Command executive director), Dr. (Carol) Lowman (former ACC executive director and deputy to the commanding general) and the great men and women of the ECC and ACC at the time I was here to really be as successful as I was and am honored to come back here.

What's your impression of the command?

I'm really blown away at the progress our men and women have made in this organization. I wouldn't say we're perfect yet and we still have some growing pains to make the ACC into what I see as an extraordinary, preeminent Department of Defense organization. To get there we still have some work to do. The men and women, who are out in the front of our spear, the contracting officers on our front line, are doing incredible things. All that positive energy enables us to do the other things we need to do.

What would you say is the strength of the organization?

It really is the men and women in our contracting offices who are the foundation for getting the Army what it needs each and every day. They are our bedrock. Their commitment, their passion allows us to excel. We just need to get them

some more experience to be able to make more advanced business decisions and get them the resources they need to do their jobs and more customer involvement in the contracting process.

Where do you think there are challenges and how will they be addressed?

ACC is only four years old. When it was stood up, there were some compromises made in the structure of the ACC, ECC and Mission and Installation Contracting Command headquarters. We are still learning how the operation of an integrated headquarters is going to run. That means we need to keep looking for opportunities to leverage the organization's strengths and to realign and streamline processes as we go forward. Some of that manifests itself in the tweaking of staff directorates. From a headquarters standpoint, we're working on some of those modifications now and then we will

look to see how we can make sure our contracting centers and subordinate elements are getting the things they need and that interaction from above and below are working well. So we're not making dramatic changes, we're talking about refining things that have been put in place to be a better, more efficient organization.

What's the driving factor for any organizational changes on the horizon?

The nation is still in a recession. Just like the rest of the Army and the DOD, we're dealing with the global environment as well as the economic environment we're in. That means things will have to change. Combat operations drawing down will affect the amount of resources DOD gets and that directly affects the workload we get.

The interesting thing is whether you're buying one tank or a thousand tanks, there is a certain minimum level of complexity that has to get done. So when people say "well the budget is going down, therefore you don't need any more contracting people" or "maybe you need

less,” we say well no you don’t because the contracting lifecycle has a lot of functions in it. Only some are about pre-award and getting things obligated. The post-award activities have always been a weakness in our Army and that’s something we must get hard after. We need to focus on contract life cycle much more holistically.

It’s especially important when we do less buying that those decisions on what to buy become much more involved and much more complicated. Then after we decide what to buy, our post-award management activities are then to ensure that our government, our war fighters and our taxpayers are getting absolutely everything we are paying for, maximizing our purchasing power. Those tensions and challenges reflect, in a certain way, in our manpower and the workload that we get. So we need to be able to show our viability, show the value of the contribution our workforce brings, both military and civilian, and then work with the resource folks so that if we have to take any cuts, they are done judiciously and done with great foresight. The challenges will really come as the dramatic impact of the budget comes out.

Watching our workforce, watching our workload, making sure our people are gainfully focused on the whole life cycle management of the contract will show our contribution. We will fight to retain our resources for the good of the Army and all of our customers.

Will ACC still be able to grow or sustain its force as planned?

The civilian growth will continue until the end of fiscal year 2013 and so we are working to make sure that is positioned in our organizations. Our military growth continues.

“The nation is still in a recession. Just like the rest of the Army and the DOD, we’re dealing with the global environment as well as the economic environment we’re in. That means things will have to change.”

It’s only one of a handful of military force structures growing in the Department of the Army right now. We are in the throes of working on the fiscal year 2014 justification for the military growth in the officer and NCO ranks. We feel very comfortable that the story we tell is resonating within the Army staff—as did the vision of the Gansler Commission (the 2007 report on Army acquisition and program management in Expeditionary operations). The Army’s involvement in global operations and missions means there is a demand for contracting. We just need to communicate what that means and how we manage that. We are working that.

Any plans to formalize mentoring programs within the 1102 career field?

Time, like a fine wine, is what it takes to mature into excellence. The problem is we don’t necessarily have the all the time in the world to take our mentors and our protégés and place them in a talent management work environment where we can assign good, sophisticated, experienced contracting officers to a

mentoring program. We are looking at other opportunities to do something like that. We’re also looking at possibly using some information technology and avatar-type work where we are partnering with others and getting some of our true experts in different elements of the contracting process. We are also trying to possibly capture them as avatars where we can have virtual mentors and sponsors as we work through this next few years of our aging workforce and our newbies. It’s very important that as we bring new military into the career field, we ensure they have someone who can mentor and tutor them. It’s a work in progress and we need to make sure that our senior folks understand that this is essential for the lifeblood of our future. We’re working on that now and are excited about those opportunities. We are working on strategies to create knowledge acceleration through the use of technology tools and video recordings of our contracting experts and capturing them in key roles/interactions with contractors.

“We have enormously talented professional people doing amazing things each and every day and we are trying to expose that to our Army and the world.”

How important is it for ACC to “get it right” for the Army?

There’s always that one thing. You can have years of incredible work and accomplishments and then there’s that one thing that distracts from the enormous professionalism of the folks we have. It’s like in the Olympics where they have the best athletes in the world. And you can have a person who misses the time of their heat and gets eliminated because of a simple mistake and then that tarnishes or taints their reputation. We have enormously talented professional people doing amazing things each and every day and we are trying to expose that to our Army and the world. Knowing a little bit about them is important so that the stigma might be not as great when there is something that isn’t done quite on time or perfect. So yes, it’s important that we get it right. We get it more right each and every day. It is essential that we grow an exemplary organization that is postured for the needs of the Army. We’re getting after it a little bit but we’re never going to stop

that one person. You can’t legislate ethics and morals. We will continue to do our role in proper oversight and training and snuffing out those opportunities that could possibly weaken the contracting work that we do. The image the command has as trusted, professional, competent cadre that gets the mission done must be protected.

What do you see in the future for the command?

I see us being an integral part of the Army’s ability to shape and manage the resources that it gets into the best viable capability for our men and women and their families as we look to take each and every dollar and have our purchasing power be as powerful and contribute as much as possible on each buy. I think that we, as business advisers, as experts, as partners with industry, are going to be an essential part in doing that so that we can maximize each and every dollar we get to shepherd it into the right things.

What do you do in your spare time to unwind?

I like to ride my bike. I’ve been biking up Monte Sano Mountain here in Huntsville (Ala.) and that’s quite a challenge. I also read a lot. Trying to get inculcated into the job, there’s a lot of background reading and other things I need to keep up with, professional development, shaping where the Army is going, a lot of new doctrine coming out. That is my passion.

It’s been great getting out a little bit to see the folks in the field. They excite and energize me. We’ve got some shortfalls and we still have a ways to go with communicating across the command and making sure people understand where we are going. With their incredible passion and commitment to the mission all I need to do is help get the resources and provide the guidance. We have opportunities and challenges ahead and the folks in the field really want ACC to be successful. It’s a great place to be in for me personally and for the command and a future I know our Army is embracing. ♦

414th CSB deploys to support Southern Accord 2012

By Larry D. McCaskill
Headquarters, U.S. Army Contracting
Command, Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

As training for Southern Accord 2012 commenced, members of the 414th Contracting Support Brigade deployed and provided contracting support to the U.S. Africa Command joint exercise.

Southern Accord is a U.S. Africa Command-sponsored, U.S. Army Africa-led combined joint exercise bringing together U.S. military and Republic of Botswana defense forces to conduct humanitarian and peace-keeping exercises to enhance military capabilities and interoperability.

“The 414th has conducted four missions in support of U.S. Army Africa this year,” said Col. Paul Pardew, 414th commander, Vicenza, Italy. “This includes Southern Accord 2012. During fiscal year 2013 we have nine planned missions with the potential for involvement in other non-planned events including support to potential non-combatant evacuation or humanitarian relief operations.”

The unit currently has two contracting officers deployed to Thebehatshwa Air Base, Botswana, in support of Southern Accord.

“We’re at a very remote location in Africa with limited capabilities,” explained Maj. Guillermo J. Santiago, 414th CSB contracting officer. “Meetings with the local hardware store manager help in providing information to potential vendors. In this part of the world, personal relationships matter. Visiting a contractor and taking the time to talk with them produces results.”



Maj. Michael A. Sansone, 414th CSB contracting officer, poses with Republic of Botswana security forces during Southern Accord 2012 activities. (U.S. Army Photo)

Santiago said one thing he didn’t have to worry about was translators since English is the official language in Botswana. However, across Africa there are more than 2,000 languages and dialects.

“Since our arrival, most of our challenges have been directly related to logistic situations on the ground,” Santiago said.

AFRICOM and USARAF rely heavily on National Guard and Reserve component units and Soldiers to conduct exercises and training in Africa, according to Pardew. This increases the level of coordination between Army units in Italy, the United States and Africa. Santiago and Maj. Michael A. Sansone, a contracting officer also with the 414th, met this challenge by coordinating the contracting support and requirements as well as the training of contracting officer representatives and field ordering officers.



Maj. Guillermo J. Santiago, 414th CSB contracting officer, keeps in constant communications with area vendors and those supported military forces. (U.S. Army Photo)

Contract support planning and customer education remain a focal point across the 414th CSB as the brigade reaches its initial operational capability in October. Pardew said Santiago and Sansone exemplify how the 414th has brought operational contracting support planning and execution to the forefront of USARAF’s considerations as it conducts Southern Accord 12 and prepares for fiscal year 2013 exercises and missions. ♦

Multi-level contracting training available within ACC

By Larry D. McCaskill
Headquarters, U.S. Army Contracting Command
Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

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 professional obtain some of those hours.

According to William Baxter, deputy chief of staff, ACC-Human Capital 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



Beverly Hopkins, Army Contracting Command (blue blouse center), poses with recent graduates of the ACC contracting intern Boot Camp. (U.S. Army Photo)

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.

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

“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-Red-

(continued on page 13)

Contracting Officer going to work at Google with Army Training with Industry Program

By Rachel Clark
409th Contracting Support Brigade
Kaiserslautern, Germany

KAISERSLAUTERN, GERMANY—Accustomed to working within the structure and discipline of a military environment, Maj. Matthew Bisswurm is stepping into new territory after his selection for a position at Google, Inc., as part of the Army's Training with Industry Program.

Bisswurm, plans and operations officer with the 903rd Contingency Contracting Battalion, 409th Contracting Support Brigade here is the first Army acquisition officer to fill a TWI position with Google. He began his one-year internship with the Fortune 100 company in August and will bring back to the Army any lessons learned.

"I'm looking to bring some of the innovative processes and successful techniques that Google has used, and help integrate them into the Army," said Bisswurm.

The Army, as well as the acquisition career field, has prepared Bisswurm for this opportunity.

"I love the expeditionary side of contingency contracting," Bisswurm said. "I love doing missions and I love being on a team." All these are skills he will utilize at Google.

One of the objectives of the TWI is to provide Soldiers' hands-on experience in top defense, infor-

mation technology and pioneering commercial companies.

The program helps improve communication between commercial industry and the Army. Working with major corporations helps the Army speak the same language as its industry partners. Selected officers, warrant officers and noncommissioned officers are placed in jobs with industry partners and exposed to innovative industrial management tactics, techniques and procedures that can benefit the Army. After completing the training, participants are immediately placed in a mandatory follow-on Army assignment to improve the Army's ability to interact and conduct business with industry.

"We want our guys to benchmark lessons learned and affect positive change in the Army Acquisition Corps," said Scott Green, acquisition education and training branch chief, U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center.

Bisswurm has been in the Army since 2000 and made the transition into contracting in 2008 following a



Maj. Matthew Bisswurm, a plans and operations officer with the 903rd Contingency Contracting Battalion, 409th Contracting Support Brigade in Kaiserslautern Germany, prepares for his assignment with Google Inc. as part of the Army Training with Industry program. (U.S. Photo - 409th Contracting Support Brigade)

second combat deployment in Iraq.

"I wanted to broaden my skills," he said. "Being in a combat deployment, I saw the direct impact contracting had on the war fighter."

Bisswurm added that he wants to use the skills he learns at Google and take them back with him to his next assignment.

"I want to have a different perspective on decision making, theory, manufacturing, and problem solving," he said. "I think the Army gains tenfold on this program. The experience and insight are immeasurable." ♦

(continued from page 12)

stone 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 repre-

sentatives 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." ♦

Providing global contracting support when and wherever needed

By Larry D. McCaskill
Headquarters, U.S. Army Contracting Command
Restone Arsenal, Ala.

Two Ukraine soldiers (left) discuss the military contracting mission with (center) Sgt. 1st Class Fred Warren, 170th Brigade Combat Team, and Capt. Kelley Smith, 649th Contingency Contracting Team contracting specialist. Smith and members of the 649th CCT were in the Ukraine in support of Rapid Trident 2012, a Joint Chiefs of Staff exercise conducted July 16-28.

There is no such thing as a typical day for the members of the U.S. Army Contracting Command.

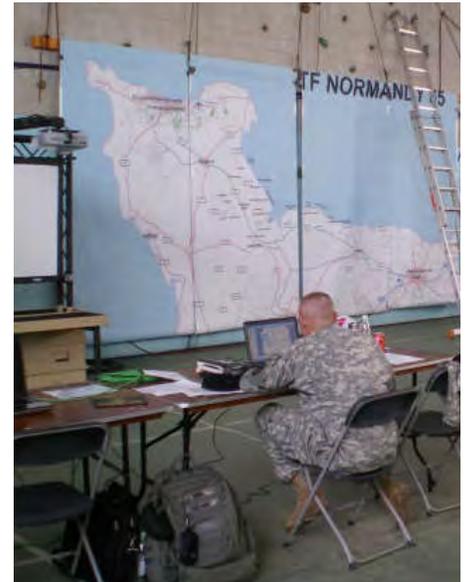
Whether it's educating small business vendors in Djibouti, Africa; developing contracts that save millions of dollars in devices and services or testifying on Capitol Hill, ACC members are supporting and educating customers and critics on the importance of military contracting.

"ACC is involved in every aspect of military operations during both peacetime and wartime. We provide contracting support whenever and wherever contracting support is required," said Col. D. D. Mayfield, ACC deputy chief of staff, Operations G3. "Whether it's directly supporting combatant commanders, humanitarian missions or installation projects, we are out front working and tracking the requirements."

Supporting missions across the globe, Soldiers with ACC's Expedi-

tionary Contracting Command often find themselves in locations they never dreamed of visiting as they support U.S. and foreign military exercise and operations worldwide.

"One of the biggest challenges for contracting officers is providing support to some challenging logistical requirements," said Col. William J. Bailey, commander, 409th Contracting Support Brigade, Kaiserslautern, Germany, and the principal assistant responsible for contracting – Europe. "This is true while providing sustainment contracting services in our garrison environment or contingency contracting in a deployed environment. Whether we are contracting for mules to cross the mountains of Afghanistan, camels in the Middle East or trains, planes and cars in Europe, we have to do so in a fashion that will ensure we meet our customers' requirements



In Normandy, in support of the 68th Normandy Commemoration, a Solider works on site providing contracting support to more than 200 military members on temporary duty to to Normandy to commemorate the World War II D-Day Invasion. (U.S. Army Photo - 409th Contracting Support Brigade)

and enable them to accomplish their mission on time.”

In Latvia supporting Saber Strike 2012, 409th CSB contracting officers Maj. Paul Tomcik and Staff Sgt. John Manurs work multiple contracts for fuel, life support, rental vehicles, bus transportation, and material and handling equipment.

“Support to exercises such as Saber Strike provides contingency contracting officers the opportunity to work in a dynamic environment where we can offer contracting solutions from cradle-to-grave in a short span of time,” Tomcik said. “This exercise allows us to leverage the contracting assets from Latvian and Estonian defense forces as well as the U.S. Embassies in the two countries to provide our customer with the necessary support to conduct the exercise successfully.”

Not to be outdone, Soldiers from the 411th CSB, Camp Red Cloud, South Korea, recently deployed to Malang, Indonesia in support of Tendon Valient 2012, an annual multi-national medical training exercise intended to bring free medical treatment and education to local communities and villages.

“The contracting team executed the procurement/contracting process from beginning to the end in an operational environment,” said Capt. Ji H. Oh, 411th CSB contracting management officer. “Each team member was involved in all aspects of the contracting process including everything from conducting market

research to assisting in developing the requirements to creating solicitations, and awarding and modifying contracts to accommodate the medical treatment teams’ needs.”

As busy as command employees are, it’s not always dollars and cents or paperwork that occupies their time.

The Soldiers and civilians from the ACC Redstone Arsenal - Colorado Springs, Colo., Contracting Directorate recently conducted a team-building exercise that resulted in more than an increase in esprit de corps. It created a home.

Members of the directorate volunteered their services to help the Habitat for Humanity organization. Team members helped build a home in a development that offers affordable housing to low-income families.

Building homes is admirable; saving millions of dollars doesn’t sound bad either.

Personnel at the Mission and Installation Contracting Command - Fort Knox, Ky., saved almost \$22 million with the contract with the award at the end of June of a contract for wireless devices and services supporting more than 8,500-member Army recruiting force around the world.

“The contract was previously managed through the General Services Administration, which had charged a 1.5 percent fee for the cost of the contract it administered,” said Lucy Vessels, the MICC-Fort Knox procuring contracting officer. “As a



Habitat for Humanity construction supervisor Tim McAteer (left to right) observes Jessica Janicek, ACC-RSA Colorado Springs, using a power saw to cut a fence post as her co-workers, Jennifer Baker, Laura Clinger look on and Jacqueline Greene assists.

result of using the MICC-Fort Knox to process the contract action, non-DOD contract fees were avoided.”

As many members of ACC conduct the day-to-day business of contract support, its leadership sometimes receives invitations to address members of Congress on military contracting issues.

“ACC’s senior leaders participate in a number of congressional engagements each year including Redstone site visits, Capitol Hill office calls, congressional hearings, and requests at the various ACC sites across the country,” said Todd Waltemyer, ACC congressional affairs team chief. “We receive and respond to several hundred congressional inquiries annually that are driven by constituent contractor concerns.”

Providing support to Soldiers everywhere, Mayfield said the command is ready to deploy when and where needed.

“Contracting is a cradle-to-grave process. It starts with helping to develop the requirements and continues through writing/monitoring the contract and concludes with closing the contract out,” Mayfield said. “ACC is and will remain the lead for supplying our war fighters with the right equipment at the right time, allowing leaders the flexibility to fight and win wars and conflicts. ACC personnel always work at a high operation tempo.” ♦



(Left to right) Federal Republic of Germany exchange officer Maj. Steffen Runge, U.S. Army Europe logistics exercise planner; Sgt. 1st Class Mitchell Call, USAREUR training and exercise planner; Staff Sgt. Patty Troutman, contracting specialist, 675th Contingency Contracting Team; Maj. Phuong Nguyen, contracting officer, 675th CCT; meet with Irena Banjsak-Vukelic, operation manager, Pleter-Usluge, to oversee the payment for services provided in support of Immediate Response 2012. (U.S. Army Photo)



The 411th Contract Support Brigade's Staff Sgt. Elvon Dixon (right) and Shu Song Yi review a procurement request for printers.

411th Contracting Support Brigade: Contracting support in the land of the morning calm

By Larry D. McCaskill
Headquarters, U.S. Army Contracting Command
Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

Providing the stability necessary to maintain a transient workforce, the 411th Contracting Support Brigade's Korean-national workforce is the cornerstone of the brigade's success, according to the unit's senior leadership.

"Our Korean-national workforce is a very important part of our ability to provide contracting support to U.S. Forces Korea," said Michael A. Cooper, principal deputy, 411th CSB, Camp Red Cloud, South Korea. "They are the backbone of our contract specialist workforce. Some are warranted contracting officers and team leaders in our construction and services divisions where they are a critical part of our command. We

could not accomplish our contract mission without their assistance."

According to Cooper, Korean-national contract specialists execute a majority of the daily contracting workload in the brigade contracting center and its four regional contracting offices.

"They provide continuity in a duty station where a large part of the workforce comes and goes every two years," Cooper said. "They also provide important language and cultural skills enabling the brigade to conduct business in Korea and to effectively communicate with supported units largely composed of Korean nationals."

According to the 411th CSB com-

mander, their hard work and work ethic have not gone unnoticed.

"Our Korean-national workforce plays an important role in training and mentoring the 51C (acquisition, logistics and technology contracting uniform service) members assigned to the 411th CSB," said Col. Fredrick A. Puthoff, 411th CSB commander. "Many of these individuals are newly assessed into the contracting field and the Korean-national contract specialists provide them the nuts and bolts of the contracting profession. Many members of our Korean-national contracting workforce are designated military essential and remain in place to provide contingency contracting support in the event U.S. Forces Korea transitions to hostilities."

In some countries, standard business ethics are different from that of U.S. practices. Puthoff doesn't see that as a problem for his team of professionals.

"The ethical conduct of every member of the 411th CSB is continually reinforced and monitored," the colonel said. "Not only does each member of the workforce complete all Army and Department of Defense ethical training requirements, the checks and balances implemented through our policies, procedures and business practices ensure our contracting program is executed with a high degree of integrity consistent with all rules, regulations and laws."

In addition to providing professional contracting support, the local workforce also assists in the information technology, budget and policy and government purchase card arenas.

"There is no doubt that without their highly trained skills, we would have a very, very difficult time accomplishing the mission," Cooper said. ♦

Greening tour introduces contracting specialist to their customers

LT COL JACQUELINE WILSON
314 MOS COMMANDER

U.S. AIR FORCE C-130E
A.F. SERIAL NO. 68-0948
SERVICE THIS AIRCRAFT
WITH JP-8 GRADE FUEL

8948

Contract Specialist William Mebane, Edgewood Division, peers through the window of a C-130 military transport aircraft during a recent customer site visit as part of the a new training program within the Army Contracting Command - Aberdeen Proving Ground. The purpose of the greening tour was to help ACC-APG employees better understand the customer's mission. (Photo by Nicole McKew)

By Betsy Kozak
Army Contracting Command-Aberdeen Proving Ground
Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md.—The Army Contracting Command-Aberdeen Proving Ground here kicked off a series of site visits with its customer organizations, a greening tour helped strengthen, as a learning tool for employees.

The first tour was to the Army Research Laboratory in May followed by a visit to the Edgewood Chemical Biological Center in July.

“The purpose of the greening tours is to give our employees a broad perspective of the customer’s mission and this insight helps them to better understand each unique contracting requirement,” said Jeff Ralls, ACC-APG professional development coordinator/counselor. “APG has a multitude of organizations with varying missions which allows for great learning opportuni-

ties for our contracting employees.”

Forty employees participated in the APG tours. Gregory Faulcon, contracting specialist, ACC-APG Edgewood Division, participated in the ECBC tour.

“I signed up for the tour because I support this customer and I wanted a glimpse into their world,” said Faulcon. “It helped me understand and appreciate the impact that contracting has on our customers.”

The ECBC tour began with a welcome presentation explaining the mission highlighting the center’s significant functions and tasks. Next, the group visited ECBC laboratory sites to include a visit to the Environmental Monitoring Lab, EML mobile labs, and the Advanced Chemistry Lab.

Faulcon recently graduated from

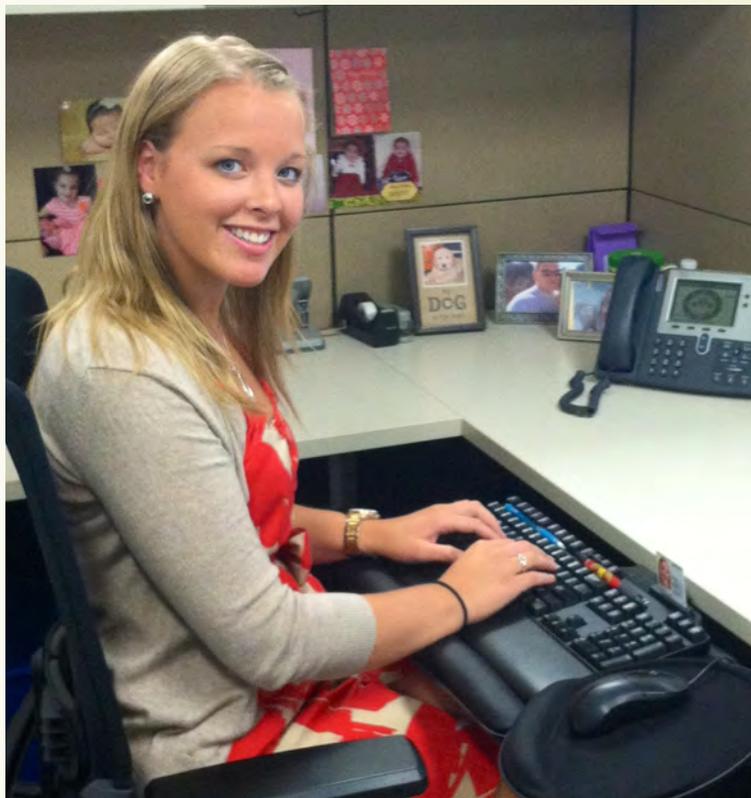
the ACC contracting intern program and said that the tour helped strengthen his partnership with ECBC and helped him see the bigger picture.

“The presenters explained the importance of their interface with ACC-APG and how this collaboration enables their mission,” Faulcon said. “Throughout the tour, ECBC representatives pointed out various functions made possible through contracting such as lab maintenance, specialized equipment purchases and research activities.”

The ACC-APG Workforce Development Group is preparing for the next greening tour with the Communication-Electronics Research, Development and Engineering Center’s Prototyping, Integration and Testing Division. ♦

VECP – Saving Money

through Innovation for end of year activity



Mariah Hazlett, contract specialist, Army Contracting Command-New Jersey, helped save the Army more than \$38 million. (U.S. Army Photo)

*By Ann Jensis-Dale
Headquarters, U.S. Army Contracting Command
Redstone Arsenal, Ala.*

The Value Engineering Change Proposal program is a legacy cost saving program used in government contracting for many years and the Army Contracting Command-New Jersey and General Dynamics Armament and Technical Products have used it to save \$38 million with additional saving to follow.

Mariah Hazlett, contract specialist, ACC-NJ, Picatinny Arsenal, N.J., learned about VECP when she was assigned as an intern for the Bradley Reactive Armor Tile Program.

“The initial VECP proposal from GDATP was submitted to us in 2009. However, a final valid proposal that we used to negotiate the

VECP action was submitted in June 2011,” said Hazlett.

According to Hazlett, the VECP proposal submitted by GDATP requested to change the tile box material from titanium to aluminum for more than 800 reactive armor tile sets for the Bradley armored fighting vehicle. This change would decrease the production cost substantially and cut the lead time required to produce the tile kits. More importantly, she said the aluminum must perform just as well or better than titanium to support the demands of the Soldier.

She said a technical team that included contracting officers,

engineers and personnel from the requiring activity performed an extensive analysis of the proposal and continued to work with GDATP to determine if the material switch serves the form, fit and function specified in the technical data package. Prototypes were developed by GDATP and samples were provided to the technical team for analysis and testing to determine if the initiative was worth pursuing.

“Through implementing the VECP, we were able to keep the performance of the Bradley reactive armor tiles the same while reducing the overall production cost and lead time. By switching the material from titanium to aluminum, we were able to reduce production time and field the systems quicker to the Soldiers,” Hazlett said.

After extensive audits and negotiations with GDATP, a savings of \$38 million was achieved for this firm fixed price contract—\$19 million for both the government and GDATP. This is the biggest cost saving VECP achieved by ACC-New Jersey.

According to Hazlett, this may have been a long process but it was a very rewarding one.

“With budgets being reduced, there has been a push to reduce cost and pursue more competitive actions. VECP gives us another tool to reduce costs for the government and taxpayers,” said Hazlett. ♦

Getting a grip on government property

By Virginia Mitchell
Headquarters, U.S. Army Contracting Command, Contracting Operations
Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

The Army Contracting Command's Government Furnished Property Community of Practice is working diligently to develop its members as a ready resource to property managers, and contracting practitioners across the command and the Army, according to David Groell, ACC GFP WG CoP lead, Contracting Operations.

"A key factor central to responsible and successful execution of Department of Defense contracts is positive control of government furnished property," Groell said. "Team members' experience assisting commanders and their staffs with property issues globally has provided the understanding and appreciation of the magnitude of GFP and the on-the-ground issues in identifying and tracking it. The advantages presented by subject matter experts as focal points for the GFP CoP are a benefit in addition to the collaborative aspects for problem solving."

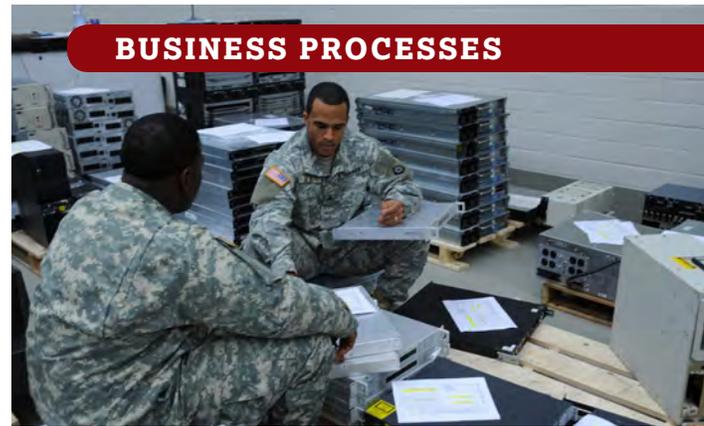
Groell said getting a grip on GFP is of critical importance in terms of sustaining the gains made via government contracts while ensuring good stewardship and accountability of tax payer dollars

"While GFP represents a significant monetary investment to support the work efforts under a myriad of contracts, we could stand to do a much better job in terms of continuous focus on management of these resources," he said. "The truth is maintaining clear line-of-sight and positive control over GFP has always been a real challenge and failure to do so has proven to be a persistent area of risk of potential loss, both physical and financial."

According to Groell, a confluence of events has led to increased vulnerability in accountability of GFP, including the sheer numbers of contracts (and complex logistics efforts) awarded in support of overseas contingency operations, multilateral pressures of mission execution under combat or austere conditions, lack of continuity in personnel resources, and knowledge/training levels of personnel assigned to provide on-the-ground oversight.

"DOD did not have in place the needed integrated, interoperable, net-centric and electronic data-driven capabilities to effectively manage its personal property used on contracts," Groell said. "A number of solutions to address this are now in play forming the cornerstone of GFP reporting including: strong internal controls and oversight practices; interoperable, open architecture that enables a single-face to industry and a DOD Item Unique Identification Registry and GFP Hub, forming the cornerstone of GFP reporting."

In addition, Groell said the Army formed an enterprise resource called the Government Furnished Property Working Group to address and meet these new mandates. To date, the GFP WG has met the first mandate to submit a detailed plan and financial improvement plan. As part of the plan, two contingency contracts were identified as best suitable to test the effectiveness of the policies and procedures developed—the Kuwait Base Operations and Security Support Services contract, and Logistics Civil Augmentation Plan IV in Afghanistan. The major lesson learned and recurrent



BUSINESS PROCESSES

Sgt. Wayne D. Salas, a supply sergeant with the Special Troops Battalion, V Corps reviews his turn-in paperwork before handing it to the Spc. William J. Lewis, an automated logistics specialist with the 21st Theater Sustainment Command in Kaiserslautern, Germany (U.S. Army Photo)

theme of these experiences is the critical importance of maintaining accountability and visibility of GFP to enable commanders in theater to see their assets and enable planning for the movement in and out of the area of operations.

"GFP CoP team members' experiences assisting commanders and their staffs with property issues globally has provided the understanding and appreciation of the magnitude of GFP and the on-the-ground issues in identifying and tracking it," Groell said. "The advantages presented by subject matter experts as focal points for the GFP CoP are a benefit in addition to the collaborative aspects for problem solving."

While ACC is well on its way to addressing many of the issues in order to get a grip on GFP, Groell said there are many challenges that remain.

"It's clear that now more than ever, contracting professionals must be highly transparent and responsible with tax payer dollars in this environment of shrinking resources," Groell said. "Based upon this collective approach, ACC is on the right path toward real accountability of GFP and is gathering the folks with the right experience, expertise, and skill sets to do just that." ♦

(Left to right) Adrienne Day discusses the way forward with Monica Harriger, Laura Lind and other members of her iterated processing team. (U.S. Army Photo by Larry D. McCaskill)



Governance process aligns IT requirements

By Larry D. McCaskill
Headquarters, U.S. Army Contracting Command
Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

In a command as vast and loaded with such a huge variety of information technology, the Army Contracting Command's Chief Information Office G6 has the task of corralling the various information tools to ensure they are aligned with the command's tasks and missions.

"Information technology governance is a method of ensuring that you have a requirement, the necessary funding to build or buy it, and to ensure it aligns with the overall plan and structure," said Adrienne Day, ACC CIO G6, chief, IT Governance, Program Management Office and Business Management. "It's like deciding if you need a new washing machine and dryer.

Do you have a requirement, the need or desire, to replace the old or broken ones? What is actually wrong with what you have? What is the cost to replace them or fix them? Do you even have the budget to do either?"

Day said the requirement has to be aligned with priorities in funding as well as need.

"The IT governance process is a necessary function within any organization and it is not strictly a G6 process. This process serves all of ACC and its subordinates—it doesn't replace any other process, but it does enhance the ad hoc method of capturing requirements, providing visibility into our current architecture being used today and fielding solutions to be used tomorrow," she said.

"Introducing a standardized process to capture IT requirements helps an organization align to its strategic plan and helps an organization rack and stack IT requirements and fund the most critical ones first," Day said. "Essentially, IT governance is a way of providing visibility into the acquisition, use and disposal of IT equipment across the command."

As funding is reduced across the Department of Defense, Day said the process will assist decision makers on how they need to spend their IT dollars on systems that have the most impact on ensuring their mission continues unhampered.

"This process provides ACC leadership the ability to obtain insight and inject foresight into the acquisi-

“Ultimately, this process will ensure customers receive a solution for their requirement.”

tion, use and disposal of IT systems. Additionally, it gives ACC IT users a liaison or advocate for having their needs addressed at an enterprise level,” she said. “The process incorporates all the ad hoc processes and encapsulates them into one main process that allows a structure for capturing IT requirements and if approved, a solution that can be delivered to the end user.”

The IT governance process is in effect now and Day said the word needs to get out to the ACC workforce as socialization and utilization of the initiative is the priority.

“The IT Governance process consists of four boards that each requirement must go through to ensure the requirement ultimately aligns with the ACC strategic plan. It has a start and completion where it is then handed off to a team that will either extend, build or buy a solution and then deliver that solution to the customer,” she said.

The IT governance process is driven by the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996, a federal law designed to improve the way the federal government acquires, uses and disposes of information technology, as well as recent Office of Management and Budget, Government Accountability Office and other federal mandates.

“G6 is responsible for the IT governance process, but all of ACC will participate if they have IT requirements. The governance process is based upon a three-tier structure that optimizes business across all ranks,” Day said.

Those tiers are: executive leadership, G6 and users.

“The executive leadership is the mechanism to gain insight and inject foresight into the acquisition, use and disposal of IT. The G6 generates, integrates, communicates and controls the IT life cycle management process and data, to include program financial management. Users have a voice

for their IT needs and the process is their liaison and advocate into

the G6,” Day said. “Additionally, the governance board leverages the roles and relationships of ACC’s parent and subordinate commands as well. Each provides specific services to drive IT governance efficiency and effectiveness.”

According to Day, the process streamlines the IT requirements processes helping ACC leadership to assess the current portfolio for business standardization and optimization opportunities.

“It also helps us recognize and manage the risks, constraints and return of investment of other IT service strategies, implements a centralized, enterprise-wide IT forecasting capability and capital investment decision framework to needs.” Day said. “It allows us to inject innovation into the business of acquisition for the Army and provide a strategic alignment of IT investments with ACC’s business objectives and the Army’s strategic vision for IT.”

“Ultimately, this process will ensure customers receive a solution for their requirement,” Day said. “It’s important to understand that governance drives and affects every IT project across ACC. It is the key to fielding, satisfying and enhancing all IT solutions to needs.” ♦



The Army Contracting Command Information Technology Enterprise Service Model provides ACC a bird’s eye view into the cyclical, standardized lifecycle the G6 utilizes to field and govern the products and services provided to the ACC Enterprise. From conception, through implementation, to optimization, the ACC IT Enterprise Service Model is the mechanism the G6 depends on to take the requirements of ACC and evolve those requirements into enterprise capabilities.

Improvements to the Standard Procurement System-Army in time for end of year activity

By Larry D. McCaskill
Headquarters, U.S. Army Contracting Command
Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

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

“There is a mad rush at the end of every fiscal year to get requirements on contract in order to serve our customers and ensure the Army meets its mission successfully,” explained Gino Magnifico, Army Contracting Command chief information officer G6. “This year ACC has implemented technology improvements that will help SPS-A users reach SPS-A faster and move more data more quickly across the system.”

With more than 6,000 end users in the Army worldwide, SPS-A processed more than 244,000 actions worth \$88 billion in goods and services last year. Keeping the system running smoothly, while implementing upgrades and onboarding new users, is a challenge but one that G6

team has well under control, according to Ed Stayton, chief, G6 Enterprise Operations.

“We anticipated the fourth quarter will be a time of intense usage and we made some significant changes to the system so users can be assured they’ll have access and responsiveness from SPS-A,” explained Stayton.

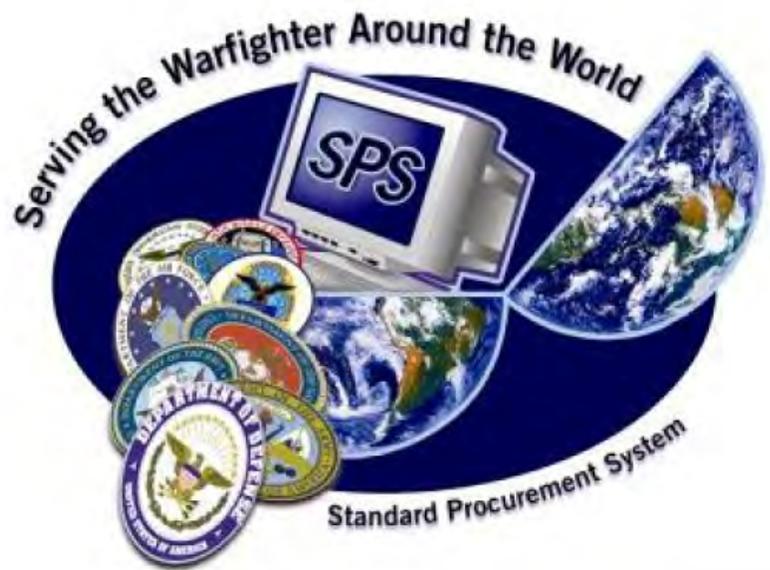
ACC G6 recently completed moving all physical servers into a consolidated, virtual environment, and Stayton said that allows G6 to make changes and adjustments quickly. As a result, users will see a marked improvement in SPS-A performance over previous years.

“Virtualization allows us to add more processors, memory or even more servers to meet requirements in hours versus days,” Stayton said.

The consolidation also allows maintenance and updates to all be done from one location, eliminating the need individual sites to perform system administration and annual upgrades, thus saving time, money and resources.

G6 also installed new interfaces to help optimize connection to the system, addressing the two biggest problems users have experienced: time delays and disconnects.

“The new interfaces have already reduced latency time delay and



“This year ACC has implemented technology improvements that will help SPS-A users reach SPS-A faster and move more data more quickly across the system.”

improved connectivity across the command,” said Stayton. “We’ll continue to improve. While we can’t control what happens on a network, we are working to ensure that users can reestablish their session without losing the work they’ve already completed.”

In the meantime, SPS-A users can help make the fourth quarter contracts rush go more smoothly on their end by following three easy suggestions. The first is to get to know their local functional administrator. If users don’t know who this is, users are encouraged to contact Stayton (email: ed.stayton@us.army.mil; phone: (256) 955-8610).

The second thing users can do to help make the fourth quarter a little easier is to ensure their system has the most current approved plug-ins. The latest version of CITRIX is version 12.1. If users’ plug-ins are not

up-to-date, they should contact their local functional administrator to get the latest versions installed.

Finally, SPS-A users should consider reducing their time using the COGNOS reporting tool during the fourth quarter. COGNOS is processor-intensive and, as a result, slows down the database that runs SPS-A for all users. Instead, users are encouraged to use the Army Contacting Business Intelligence System for reports. To support this, the ACBIS interface at SPS-A has been updated to run hourly to provide the most up to date reporting possible.

“By following these top three tips, along with the virtualization and other improvements we’ve made on our end, users should have a much smoother experience with SPS-A during the fourth quarter,” predicted Stayton. ♦

3 Helpful Q4 Tips for SPS-A Users:

1. Get to know your local functional administrator
2. Ensure your system has the current approved plug-ins
3. Reduce your use of the COGNOS reporting tool



Lucy Vessels and her fellow staff members helped save the Army almost \$22 million as part of the procurement of wireless communications services in support of recruiting. Vessels is a contracting officer with the Mission and Installation Contracting Command at Fort Knox, Ky.

Contracting office saves Army nearly \$22 million

*By Daniel P. Elkins
Mission and Installation Contracting Command
Joint Base San Antonio-
Fort Sam Houston, Texas*

FORT SAM HOUSTON, TEXAS—A Mission and Installation Contracting Command contracting office at Fort Knox, Ky., saved almost \$22 million with the award of a contract for wireless devices and services supporting the Army's more than 8,500-member recruiting force around the world.

MICC-Fort Knox officials awarded the contract at the end of June to Sprint Communications for \$31,240,200.

It provides a full range of wireless devices and associated services to include both voice and data for the Army Human Resource Command and other elements it supports. The USAHRC provides information technology support to the Army Recruiting Command, which is primarily responsible for recruiting young men and women to serve in the Army's all-volunteer force.

"Cell phones and BlackBerrys have

been provided to recruiters for several years to better enable them to attract and communicate with prospective recruits throughout the United States as well as overseas installations," said Dale Williams, chief, MICC-Fort Knox Human Resource Center of Excellence Division.

"We started discussing the requirement with the customer in January when we learned the package would be coming our way," said Lucy Vessels, the MICC-Fort Knox procuring contracting officer.

The acquisition package arrived at MICC-Fort Knox in March and contracting officials quickly discovered that a potential for significant savings was possible. The requirement was identical in technical terms and its government estimate was based on present and historical pricing, Vessels said.

Vessels explained that much of the savings were realized as a result

of a competitive contract process that led to substantially lower monthly fees.

"Additionally, the contract was previously managed through the Government Services Administration, which had charged a 1.5 percent fee for the cost of the contract it administered," said Vessels. "As a result of using the MICC-Fort Knox to process the contract action, non-DOD contract fees were avoided."

The firm fixed priced contract includes a 10-month base period and four one-year option periods. An estimated contract savings of \$21,957,210 is anticipated over the base and option periods.

"We knew we'd save money on the contract, but had no idea we'd save that kind of money," Williams said.

Devices in the contract will include commercial off-the-shelf cellular phones, BlackBerrys and related accessories on the Army's approved products list. Services include voice, data, international roaming and dialing, text messaging, multimedia, secure voice and directory assistance.

The contracting staff took a proactive role in this acquisition as part of the Acquisition Milestone Agreement planning process implemented across the MICC in January 2012 as a strategic approach to improve communication, standardize the development of milestones and increase accountability between contracting offices and their customers. The teaming process between contracting staff, requiring activities and Army leaders affords a more active role earlier in the acquisition process to ensure efficient and effective acquisition strategies are executed to meet the mission. ♦

Acquisition Corps seeks qualified Soldiers

Soldiers from Fort Campbell, Ky., received briefings on reclassifying into the 51C military occupational specialty. (U.S. Army Photo)

By Capt. Mathis F. Wright, III
621st Contingency Contracting Team
Mission and Installation Contracting Command-Fort Campbell, Ky.

FORT CAMPBELL, Ky.—As the Army reduces in size, the Army Acquisition Corps is growing.

The U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center expects military contracting positions to increase by 50 percent by the end of fiscal year 2013. ASC has already begun an active recruiting effort to bring eligible sergeants through sergeants first class, and second lieutenants through majors into the workforce responsible for managing contracts for the military industrial base.

In mid-July, personnel from ASC, MICC-Fort Campbell, and the 904th Contingency Contracting Battalion, Fort Knox, Ky., gathered for a one-day recruiting drive here. The band of contracting professionals ventured out in small teams to reach out to Soldiers at various locations across the installation. At each location, Soldiers received take-home information and a formal brief followed by a very informal question and answer session. More than 350 Soldiers attended the briefings.

“Everyone here is probably familiar with Peyton Manning and knows about his new contract with the Denver Broncos,” explained Master Sgt. Jason Pitts, ASC senior enlisted advisor, 51C Proponent Office, “Your job will be sort of like Manning’s agent, who helped to put the terms and conditions of that contract together; that’s what you’ll do for the Army.”

In addition to learning about the daily duties of a contracting officer, attendees received information on retention benefits, bonuses, promotion opportunities, advanced civilian schooling, degree completion, training with industry and other professional and personal advantages of joining the acquisition corps.

MICC-Fort Campbell led the effort in spreading the word to interested Soldiers prior to the event.

“The biggest bang for our buck was through the flyers distributed to units, retention noncommissioned officers and career counselors; then the Campbell Courier (the

post newspaper),” said Lt. Col. Ed Gosline, officer-in-charge, MICC-Fort Campbell.

“I am very impressed with everything I learned in the briefing,” said Sgt. Tarcus K. Box, a Fort Campbell Soldier interested in reclassifying. “I had no idea of the impact that 51Cs have in our military as well as outside of the Army. The promotion and educational opportunities sound excellent. I definitely plan on pursuing a place in this MOS.”

According to Pitts, 51C Soldiers need to be physically fit, intelligent, motivated and self-starting personnel who can operate independently. They should have excellent written and verbal communication skills and have solid computer skills. In terms of education, they should have an inclination for business or business administration fields. For more information regarding the Army Acquisition Corps or 51C reclassification opportunities, visit the U. S. Army Acquisition Support Center website at <http://asc.army.mil/> or call (703) 805-1048. ♦

ACC Historian predicts Zombie Apocalypse in 2013

By Larry D. McCaskill
Headquarters, U.S. Army Contracting Command
Redstone Arsenal, Ala.



Mikhael Weitzel and his son, Mikhael Jr., hope 2013 is a good year for zombie enthusiasts. (U.S. Army Photos by Larry D. McCaskill)

If you're trying to survive the latest zombie apocalypse, you might want to ask the Weitzel clan for a tip or two.

Inspired by his son, Mikhael Jr., and assisted by his wife, Faith, Mikhael Weitzel, Army Contracting Command historian, has developed a board game, *Zombie Apocalypse Survivor*, for those who are looking for ghoulish fun.

Weitzel said, like a lot of 7-year-olds, his son enjoys anything that involves fighting zombies. After playing a few of the board games on the market, Weitzel said his son had a better idea than buying another game he didn't really enjoy.

"My son asked me to help him make a game and then went on to describe a zombie survival game that was part board game and part

video game," Weitzel said. "He wanted different kinds of zombies and wanted survivors who were killed to be able to come back as a zombie. I told him I would see what I could do."

The next night, while driving home from a friend's house, Weitzel said ideas for the game began to creep into his head.

"I jotted down some notes when I got home and the next morning took them and started expanding them," said Weitzel, who has been playing and collecting board games and miniature games for 33 years. "I sketched the board designs and talked about it with my wife and son. They shared their excitement, enthusiasm and ideas. Over the next week, my wife and I discussed what materials we would need and began making the components."

Making the game from scratch became a family affair while Weitzel developed most of the rules himself.

"It took about two weeks to make the first playable prototype and a total of five weeks to get to the third prototype," Weitzel said. "We originally used wooden cube beads for dice. My wife and I filled the holes through the beads with wood putty, sanded them flat, spray

painted them and then numbered them by hand. We found we could make translucent green resin dice with glow-in-the-dark skull beads inside to represent special zombies."

The game has more than 650 dice, numerous bags and boards but the biggest challenge for Weitzel was ensuring the rules were balanced and the game would be fun.

"I want the game to be fun, but still challenging and something people would want to play again," Weitzel said.

In developing the rules, Weitzel had to be conscious of making the rules simple enough to understand but flexible enough to allow creative thinking.

"I had to write the rules in a way that someone could pick them up and learn how to play. It is easy to tell someone how to play, but converting that into a rulebook was an unexpected challenge," Weitzel said after having a friend's ten-year-old son read them and try to play.

The game itself includes zombies, dice and strategic player placement, a combination Weitzel said he hasn't seen before.

"The game requires a player to make tough choices on what your survivors should do each day and finding the right balance for your strategy," Weitzel said. "It also requires each player to make moral choices. And, the game requires a little bit of luck as you roll the dice."

Over the next few months, Weitzel said he has two public play-tests scheduled and welcomes others who want to play the game to take a shot at it.

"I have already identified three board game publishers that are accepting designs. Then we will keep our fingers crossed. Right now we dream about seeing our game on shelves before Christmas 2013," he said" ♦



A family that cooks together: (Left to right) Stacy, Sandra and Aaron Merritt did a majority of the cooking at this year's Army Contracting Command Organization Day festivities in Decatur, Ala. Sandra is a human resources specialist in the ACC Deputy Chief of Staff Human Capital G1 and often volunteers her culinary talents for command events. (U.S. Army Photo by Ed Worley)

Merritt's morsels make many merry

By Giselle Lyons
Headquarters, U.S. Army Contracting Command
Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

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, 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 on them, but each of her boys vetoed that.

"They all 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!" ♦

Local children look to chaplain for answers

By Larry D. McCaskill
U.S. Army Contracting Command
Office of Public and Congressional
Affairs, Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Charles "Chip" Fields displays some of the items he uses when he conducts religious services in the field.
(Photos by Ingrid Murray)



HUNTSVILLE, ALA.—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 here.

Ingrid Murray, wife of Command Sgt. Maj. John L. Murray, ACC command sergeant major, was talking to a group of children, kindergarten to fifth grade, when one talked about his dad serving in the Army and is

presently deployed.

"One of the other kids said 'well he doesn't get to go to church then,'" Murray said. "I knew right then that this was an opportunity to help them understand a little more about the Army."

Soon after, she mentioned the conversation to Fields who immediately wanted to set up a visit with the children.

"It was very important to him to let the children know that the Soldiers' spiritual needs were be-

ing met no matter where the Army sends them," Murray said.

The meeting with the children generated a lot of interest in the chaplain and his role in the Army.

"They were inquisitive and excited about the chaplain's kit. Sunday school ends at 10:30 a.m., but they didn't leave until 10:45 a.m.," Murray said.

According to Fields, the riveting conversation included answers to why the Army has chaplains, the equipment chaplains use in the field

“One of the other kids said ‘well he doesn’t get to go to church then,’” Murray said. “I knew right then that this was an opportunity to help them understand a little more about the Army.”

and how those tools correspond to what they knew about church.

“They wanted to handle everything,” Fields said after showing the children everything from his field altar setup to altar cloths as well as his combat uniform to include his helmet and protective vest.

“A famous preacher (Harry Ironside) once said, ‘Put the cookies on the bottom shelf, so the children can get to them,’” Fields said. “One of the hardest things for a theologian to do is refrain from speaking like a theologian when talking to people,

even more important when talking to children.

“I learned how to take deep spiritual truth and make it understandable to even the youngest of students there,” he said.

The chaplain said he hoped the children left understanding that the assembling of believers is an important aspect in an individual’s overall spiritual growth and this is made available no matter where people congregate.

Murray said the chaplain’s visit exposed the children to a whole new world.

“The following Sunday, one of the children said that they liked the Army preacher and told their mom about the experience,” Murray said. “I’ve also had several parents tell me how much their child talked about Army people going to church anywhere in the world. Now the children have seen firsthand how



Harper Rasmussen has fun trying on a helmet and protective vest.

church is conducted by the Army even if it is in the desert. One parent admitted she had never really thought about Soldiers in the field and going to church.” ♦



(Left to right): Harper Rasmussen, Daniel Pizitz, and Nicholas Marden explore the contents of the chaplain’s field kit during Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Charles “Chip” Fields recent visit to the children’s Sunday School at the Grace United Methodist Church.



Stay connected to
ACC 24/7 through our
social media sites.

Click on the icons to connect.



www.acc.army.mil

