

ACC TODAY

U.S. Army Contracting Command

Summer 2013



Government and industry: Two sides of the contracting coin

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View from the top
ACC NCO of the Year
GPC efficiencies



VIEW FROM THE TOP

Government and industry

By Bruce B. Berinato
Executive Director
Army Contracting Command-New Jersey

Established in October 2011, Army Contracting Command- New Jersey was created as a result of combining ACC personnel stationed at Fort Dix, N.J., under various ACC organizational elements with the then-existing ACC-Picatinny. ACC-N.J. is the newest contracting center in the ACC family.

Our organization is comprised of nine customer-focused contracting centers located at either our Picatinny Arsenal or Joint Base McGuire-Lakehurst-Dix operating locations. We support weapons, armaments, ammunition and information technology contracting requirements in all phases of research and development, as well as initial and follow-on production.

Key customers we support include: Program Executive Office Ammunition, PEO Soldier and PEO Enterprise Information Systems; Research Development and Engineering Command, Office of the Secretary of Defense - Land Warfare Office and the U.S. Army Reserve, among others.

ACC-N.J. is fully engaged in supporting all four fronts of ACC thrusts: contracting workforce; contracting process; customers; and industry. Of these, industry collaboration and partnership pose unique challenges as they require the contracting professional to utilize a balanced approach between partnering with industry in a collaborative environment while maintaining the ability to ensure effective stewardship of Army contract dollars. Notwithstanding these challenges, there are several examples of successful partnerships with industry that have been to the benefit of Army contracting.

I would like to highlight two initiatives within ACC that are directly involved in, and contribute to, collaboration with industry. The first is the Industry Executive Council championed by ACC headquarters. (See article on page 19) The objectives of the IEC are to address the effectiveness of contracting and acquisition processes and identify any areas of challenge which require development and implementation of solution sets, as well as to promote contracting innovations and initiatives that will enhance the business environment between government and industry. These objectives are achieved through regularly scheduled meetings and discussions which address both industry and government perspectives on issues that are both meaningful and beneficial. ACC command leadership as well as leadership from ACC's Mission and Installation Contracting Command, Expeditionary Contracting Command and ACC's major contracting centers participate in these meetings and discussions.

The second initiative is the Industrial Committee of Ammunition Producers, a committee comprised of executives from defense industry producers of ammunition and ammunition components. The ICAP is focused to provide a forum for the open exchange of government and industry views related to Department of Defense ammunition requirements. Leadership of both ACC-N.J., and ACC-Rock Island, Ill., are participants in these sessions which have served as the basis for the forging of successful partnerships with several ammunition producers in support of these requirements.

The overarching objective for any ACC organizational element when collaborating with industry is to establish and maintain an environment where communications can be conducted open and honestly along with an understanding and appreciation of each other's processes, issues and concerns. In this manner, both government and industry can work jointly toward a mutual win/win outcome that ultimately supports the war fighter. ♦

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WHAT'S INSIDE

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Cover—(U.S. Army illustration)

Customer Focus

- 2 View from the top - Government and Industry
- 4 Fort Benning holds first MCoE industry day
- 5 Industry partnerships provide forums for discussions
- 5 409th CSB hosts first European contracting board
- 6 Deployable Cadre Program helps fill the void
- 7 Cadre program places Robinson closer to Soldiers
- 8 Helping small business find contracting opportunities with industry

Professional Workforce

- 9 Pilot training with industry program
- 10 Martinez named ACC NCO of the Year
- 12 Educational partnership helps contracting professionals reach their goals
- 13 Contracting specialists complete 2-year Smart Buyer training program
- 13 Nichols receives communication award
- 14 Questions and Answers: Mr. Michael Fischetti, NCMA
- 15 NCMA leader meets with ACC-RI employees
- 16 Parker praised for a job well done
- 17 NDIA hosts contracting symposium

Business Processes

- 18 Tomorrow's technology for today's workforce
- 19 Council works behind the scenes to improve business practices

Resources

- 20 GPC efficiencies may yield greater savings

Quality of Life

- 22 Reaching great heights: MICC director climbs Mount Kilimanjaro
- 23 Hendrix hobby is a proven classic
- 24 Rock Island employees set to perform in Les Miserables
- 28 Around ACC

Fort Benning holds first MCoE industry day

By Daniel P. Elkins
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More than 65 industry representatives from throughout the country took part in the first industry day conducted by contracting officials at Fort Benning, Ga., March 28 in support of the Maneuver Center of Excellence and installation operations.

The event brought together representatives from 13 of the 14 prime contractors as well as contracting officer representatives, Soldiers and federal employees teaming together to execute a multiple award task order contract valued at more than \$400 million and administered by the Mission and Installation Contracting Command-Fort Benning.

A multiple award task order contract is awarded following a single solicitation to two or more prime contractors to provide the government similar

services or products. Those prime contractors then compete for future requirements, or tasks orders, the government places against the MATOC throughout the contract period. This approach results in an expedited acquisition process.

Steve Sullivan, the director of MICC-Fort Benning, said the contract supports the center and garrison operations community in areas such as training development, doctrine development, capability development, training instruction, and simulations and analysis.

The director credits the collaborative planning efforts between his staff and the MCoE for the success of the business outreach event. Despite having no budget with which to work, he said the 14 civilians and Soldiers from MICC-Fort Benning played an instrumental role in the execution of the event.

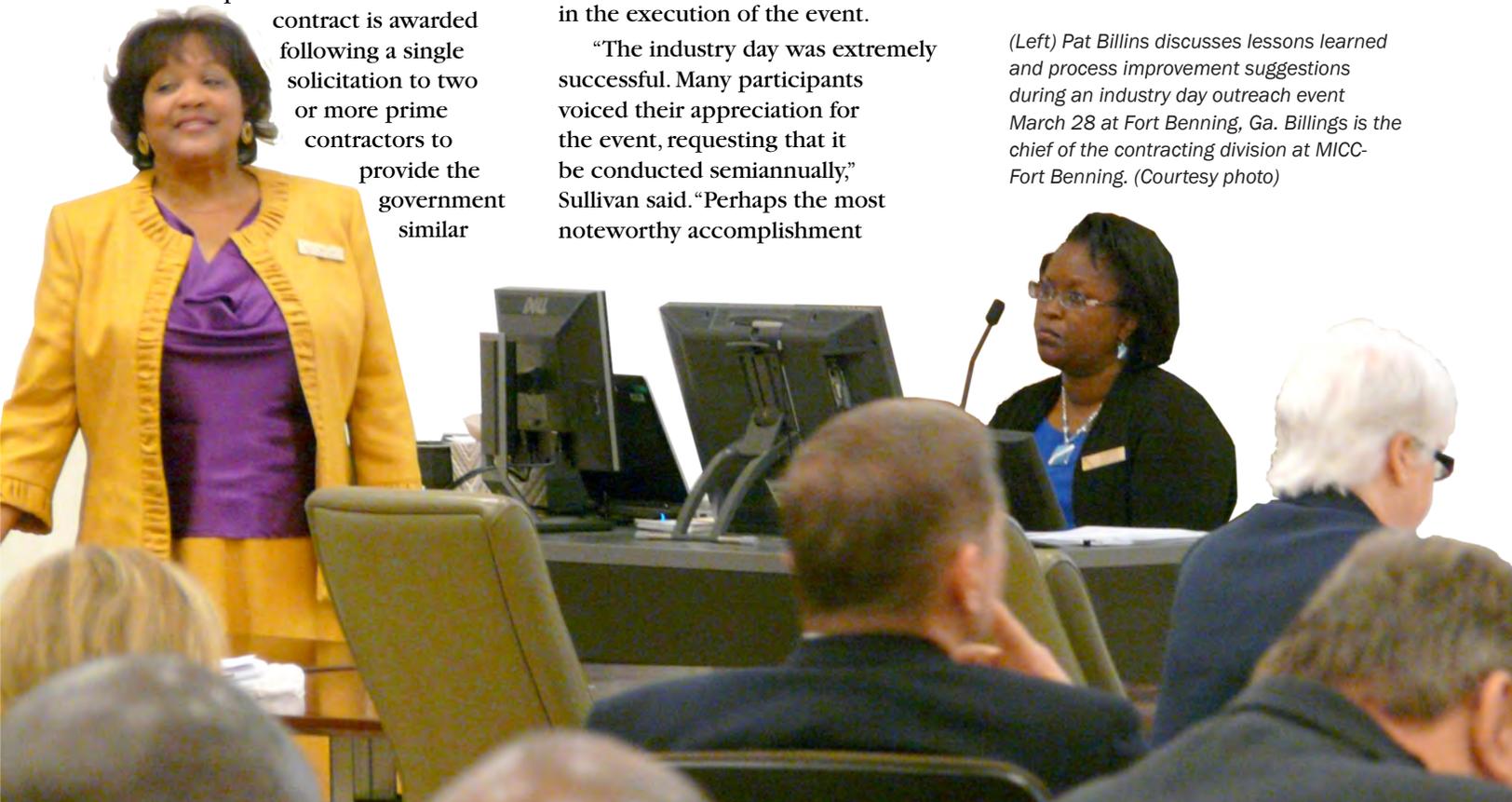
“The industry day was extremely successful. Many participants voiced their appreciation for the event, requesting that it be conducted semiannually,” Sullivan said. “Perhaps the most noteworthy accomplishment

of the day was the fact that we improved communications between industry and government concerning procedures and what the future holds when considering sequestration.”

The Maneuver Center of Excellence is responsible for the training and leader development of every infantry and armor Soldier from private to colonel. It provides NCOs and officers in those career branches initial, mid-level and senior-level Army professional development training.

Center officials estimate Fort Benning’s average daily student training load at approximately 12,000 service members receiving instruction in more than 180 courses. They anticipate training approximately 96,000 service members this year. ◆

(Left) Pat Billings discusses lessons learned and process improvement suggestions during an industry day outreach event March 28 at Fort Benning, Ga. Billings is the chief of the contracting division at MICC-Fort Benning. (Courtesy photo)



Industry partnerships provides forums for discussions

By Wendy Weissner
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Army Contracting Command-New Jersey contracting personnel work with their customers and industry members to make sure everyone is moving toward the same goal.

ACC-N.J. supports the Program Executive Office - Ammunition and its program managers. All are members of the Industrial Committee of Ammunition Producers. ICAP is chartered by the National Defense Industrial Association and consists of corporate members from various segments of the ammunition industry.

According to Lawrence A. Visconti Jr., ACC-N.J.'s associate director, the

objective of the ICAP is to provide a forum for the open exchange of government and industry views related to the Department of Defense ammunition area.

Visconti's role is to represent ACC-N.J. in discussions on government ammunition acquisition policies, procedures, and actions both in general terms as well as specific contract issues or questions.

"Industry needs to understand our roles as the government and to understand how their actions can cause a procurement to be delayed," said Visconti. "While the program managers and program executive offices are quite capable of discussing the program aspects of requirements, it is important that contracting have representation to

ensure this crucial area is clearly and fully explained."

Additionally, Visconti said ACC-N.J. supports the Department of Defense Land Warfare and Munitions Office within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology by execution of an Other Transaction Agreement with the National Warheads and Energetics Consortium providing prototype project solutions for warheads, energetics and munitions development.

NWEC has a membership of more than 170 traditional and non-traditional defense companies and academia. ACC-N.J. has been delegated the authority to award other transaction prototype

Continued on page 26

409th CSB hosts first European contracting board

By Rachel Clark
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KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany - The 409th Contracting Support Brigade hosted the first European contracting coordination board March 29 in Wiesbaden, Germany.

According to Col. William Bailey, 409th CSB commander, the board set the framework for strategic collaboration on contracting business across Europe.

"We can accomplish so much more as a collective, in regards to coordination, resources and support. We need to be talking to each other and this is a great step in the right direction," said Bailey.

More than 30 attendees representing 13 different acquisition and contracting organizations in the medical, finance, logistics and



(Center) Peter Lichtenberger, U. S. Army Europe assistant deputy of Logistics G-4, talks with peers about contracting and logistics at the European Contracting Coordination Board in Wiesbaden, Germany. (U.S. Army photo)

engineering communities attended.

Each organization presented its mission, structure and capabilities which increased everyone's situational awareness.

"With the current fiscal limitations, this board provides the opportunity to identify and eliminate redundancies. The response was overwhelmingly positive about the need for and the opportunity provided by this forum for value-

added change," said Bailey.

The board was established by direction of Kim Denver, former deputy assistant secretary of the Army (procurement), in an effort to synchronize contracting support, leverage organizational expertise and to resolve common issues across the European theater. ♦

Deployable Cadre Program helps fill the void

By Larry D. McCaskill
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The Army Contracting Command's Deployable Cadre Program may be able to help military contracting organizations overseas with staffing shortages.

Managed by the ACC Deputy Chief of Staff Human Capital G-1, the program assists in identifying and deploying civilian contracting and quality assurance volunteers in support of contracting requirements around the globe. Deploying cadre members provide contract management skills and expertise in operations beyond the scope of the command's day-to-day mission including training exercises, natural disasters and high-visibility priorities across the command.

"Filling those positions can sometimes be a difficult task," said Sandra Merritt, ACC DCP coordinator. "We have lots of people that sign up, but due to different circumstances they are not always available to deploy when they're needed. They might be dealing with family or health issues or school when we'd like for them to deploy. We have to find the right fit for the cadre member in order for it to be a win-win situation."

According to Merritt, cadre members have many questions they need answered prior to signing up.

"They want to know things like what happens when I get to the deployment center. Who'll meet me when I get there or what happens if I have an emergency at home," Merritt said. "Some even wonder if they have the skills to do the job."

To ease some of the tension, she and fellow DCP coordinators Beverly Johnson and Matthew Troxell spend a lot of time communicating with



Volunteers in the Deployable Cadre Program come from various Army Contracting Command offices to support the command's overseas missions. (U.S. Army Photos)

cadre members before, during and after deployments.

"This is the first deployment for many of them and sometimes the first trip overseas, so there are questions about passports, visas and what they should take or send before going," she said. "We try to provide as many answers as we can to help them transition to the environment they are going into."

Cadre volunteers are Department of the Army civilians from ACC units worldwide and their desire to take on these missions is supported by their local leadership.

"Encouraging employees to volunteer for the program is very important," said Harry Hallock, executive director, ACC-Warren, Mich. "Our contracting experts gain valuable experience working in deployable contracting environments on programs they would not

ordinarily be exposed to at their normal duty command. The program helps them develop unique skill sets they then bring back to the home office.

"In addition, contracting specialists often get to work up close and personal with Soldiers and are then better able to understand their needs and the ramifications of our not doing our best in the contracting process to provide them with the support they need for success."

Hallock said the exposure helps contracting specialists become well-rounded and ultimately better decision makers.

"Not only do they bring back best practices in contracting processes and procedures they've learned during their deployments, but they gain experience working with different contract mechanisms

Continued on page 26

Cadre program places Robinson closer to Soldiers

By Larry D. McCaskill
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For Undra Robinson II, the Army Contracting Command's Deployable Cadre Program has been a window of opportunity both professionally and personally.

Prior to his deployment in October, Robinson, a contract specialist at the ACC-National Capital Region in Alexandria, Va., decided he wanted to serve closer to Soldiers. So when he was able to deploy with them, he jumped at the chance.

"I have always wanted to support the war fighter in a contingency location and this job gives me the ability to do that," said the George Washington University graduate. "I am currently a contract specialist with a limited warrant with ACC-Qatar procuring services for Camp As Sayliyah, other bases and contracting missions throughout the Middle East.

Applying for the program in February 2012, Robinson got his wish in October and soon found himself in a whole new world.

"The type of contracting I do here is different than back at ACC-NCR,"

said the 28-year-old who calls the Northern Virginia area home. "At ACC-NCR I work on information technology services contracts mostly. In theater I've been working on construction projects."

Robinson is working side-by-side with the Soldiers he has supported from afar and is gaining a better appreciation on how contracting supports their needs.

"I work with a lot more Soldiers here than I did back at home. My work here in-theater directly supports the war fighter just as it does back home. The thing is, there I can't see that; here I have the opportunity to see it for myself," said Robinson, who enjoys travelling as well as singing in the church choir back in Virginia.

Robinson said the experience has allowed him to learn about contracting as a whole.

"I am learning a lot about base operations contracting. I'm also learning how to work with Soldiers as customers, not as contracting

officer's representatives, which is totally different," he said.

Robinson said the DCP is something every junior contracting specialist should consider.

"You gain experience in contracting that will be satisfying career-wise and personally. Being a member of the DCP you learn and do things not every civilian military contracting specialist can say they have done. You meet great people that could potentially help your career in the future," said Robinson. "On a personal note, working beside Soldiers makes me feel like I'm actively doing something to assist the defense of my country." ♦

Helping small business find contracting opportunities



Members of the Army Contracting Command Small Business Office, (left to right) Darlene Brakefield, Christopher Evans, Alice Williams, Constance Jones-Hambrick, and Dawn Robinson pose with Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology Heidi Shyu (center). (U.S. Army Photo by Larry D. McCaskill)

By Beth Clemons
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With more than 100 years of collective contracting and acquisition experience, the U.S. Army Contracting Command's Office of Small Business Programs staff spends its days matching small businesses with contracting opportunities around the world.

According to Associate Director Alice Williams, the OSBP was very busy in fiscal year 2012 monitoring contract awards and advising small business specialists in the field. Across the U.S. Army Materiel Command more than \$51 billion in eligible contracts were awarded, out of that more than \$19 billion was awarded to small businesses.

"We're a small office but we're dedicated and give 110 percent," said

Williams, who oversees more than 60 small business advisors across the command's more than 100 locations worldwide.

Christopher Evans, ACC OSBP deputy associate director, says the purpose of their office is to assist small businesses in finding and attaining procurement opportunities with the U.S. Army.

"Small businesses are essential to the success of our nation. They strengthen our economy and keep our nation strong, agile and resourceful," said Evans. "Small businesses bring special capabilities with a solid sense of commitment and innovation. To that end, Army small business offices do our best to ensure that a fair portion of contract

awards are placed in the hands of small businesses."

The OSBP staff estimates it trained more than 75 Huntsville, Ala., small businesses through four workshops and attended or facilitated at more than 125 small business outreach events and workshops. According to Evans, businesses seek their guidance on a range of issues from getting started to writing a business plan and developing marketing tactics. He said the staff also trains members of the acquisition workforce on various issues affecting small businesses throughout the year.

"The advice and recommendations we offer are available to anyone wanting to do business with ACC. We're here as a resource to small businesses to help them obtain government contracts. It's our job to make sure we get as many small businesses involved in the procurement process as we can," said Evans. "And that can only be accomplished with a hard-working and experienced staff."

According to Dawn Robinson, Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business program manager, several of the 2013 small business initiatives were created in direct response to emails and phone calls identifying specific needs. In fiscal year 2012 AMC awarded contracts of more than \$1 billion to SDVOSBs.

Managed by Darlene Brakefield, the intent of the Women Owned Small Business program is to provide contracting officers with a tool to meet the WOSB goal, level the playing field for WOSBs to compete for and win federal contracts, and ultimately, help create and retain more jobs for WOSB.

"I serve as an advocate and program manager for WOSB concerns," explained Brakefield. "I monitor ACC's progress in meeting its assigned WOSB goals and work closely with our small business specialists in the field to identify opportunities for WOSB."

Continued on page 26

Pilot training with industry program deemed a success

By Betsy Kozak-Howard
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Three members of the Army Contracting Command – Aberdeen Proving Ground left their government cubicles and relocated to defense contractor business offices as part of ACC's Training with Industry program.

Robert Perry and Nikeena Troy, both with ACC-APG's Division B, Aberdeen, Md., along with John Conlin, Natick Contracting Division, Natick, Mass., were competitively selected for the approximately 16-week pilot program.

"TWI is an excellent career development program designed to improve technical and professional competencies of each participant and provide career-enhancing experiences," said Dana Dowell, procurement analyst, ACC-APG Enterprise Resources Division, Workforce Development Branch. "By studying the best practices of industry, our employees are able to infuse their newly gained knowledge and experiences into their daily work assignments within ACC-APG."

According to Dowell, prior to the start of the program, industry partners were identified and each employee was assigned to work with one of them. The employees and industry partners jointly prepared work plans, which consisted of learning objectives throughout the TWI program.

The idea of a TWI program has been bouncing around ACC since early 2012 as part of the ACC Civilian Workforce Workgroup.

"The TWI pilot program was addressed at ACC's Executive Industry Council, a forum designed to build partnerships



Professional Workforce

Nikeena Troy, contract specialist from the Army Contracting Command – Aberdeen Proving Ground (center), discusses her accomplishments with her mentoring team from Booz Allen Hamilton, Inc. during the Training With Industry Program. The team, Nicole A. Funk, senior vice president, and John Gerbracht, contracts manager, gave Troy the opportunity to experience work within an industry environment. (Photo by Betsy Kozak-Howard)

between industry and government," said Bryon J. Young, ACC-APG executive director and lead for the ACC CWW, who was tasked with developing the program. "During the council meeting, three industry members volunteered to participate in the program: Booz Allen Hamilton, Inc.; ManTech International Corp.; and Raytheon Co."

BAH recognized the value of the TWI program and wanted to do its part, said Nicole A. Funk, BAH senior vice president.

Transparency was the key to make the TWI learning experience meaningful for Troy, according to Funk.

"We wanted Nikeena to hear real discussions and witness the interworking of real decision making. She attended staff meetings and received a holistic exposure to the business and cost management discussions," said Funk.

"What a great opportunity," said Troy, who was assigned to work with BAH in Belcamp, Md. "Shortly

after I submitted my nomination I received the acceptance email. My first day mainly consisted of administrative procedures, company orientation and I was assigned an office. My mentor also worked with me to develop a work plan."

John Gerbracht, BAH contracts manager, said the TWI program industry participants found that the learning opportunities were a two-way street.

"We learned as much from Nikeena as she learned from us," Gerbracht said. "It's a great program."

For Conlin, the TWI program provided a glimpse into the work of a contractor.

"I witnessed active discussions that led to business decisions and I also observed proposal strategy sessions," Conlin said. "These pricing and approach discussions were often centered on finding an appropriate balance between meeting internal business objectives and maintaining the

Continued on page 27

Martinez named ACC NCO of the year

By David San Miguel
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In what may be the first time the Army has conducted any kind of Soldier's competition by video teleconference, the Army Contracting Command has set a new precedent.

According to Master Sgt. Michael C. Bonds, ACC G-3 operations NCO, this year's NCO of the Year competition, held May 6-10, was conducted virtually in light of current budget constraints.

"This year was a unique experience as far as planning the event on the same line as a traditional competition," he said. "Of course, we had those who wanted the competition here at Redstone, but understanding the funding constraints we were under, they eventually jumped on board and provided top-quality noncommissioned

officers to compete."

Rising to the top was Staff Sgt. Miguel Martinez of the Mission and Installation Contracting Command Field Directorate Office-Fort Knox, Ky. He beat out 11 other acquisition, logistics and technology contracting NCOs who hailed from as far away as Italy, Germany, Korea, Hawaii and various stateside installations to become this year's title-bearer.

He now will represent ACC in the Army Materiel Command's Best Warrior Competition at Rock Island, Ill., Aug. 19-22.

A native of Menifee, Calif., Martinez had only reclassified into the 51C career field in June 2012. Previously, he served as a dental assistant, then NCO-in-charge of a dental clinic in Germany.

It was a fellow NCO who had reclassified as a 51C that prompted him to first research, then eventually reclassify into the career field.



Staff Sgt. Miguel Martinez was named this year's Army Contracting Command Noncommissioned Officer of the Year.

In a few months, Martinez will deploy to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

"This will be my first deployment as a contingency



Staff Sgt. Booker Jordan stands before the virtual ACC NCO of the Year board while in Kaiserslautern, Germany. Board members viewed candidates via teleconferences during the competition. (U.S. Army Photo by Rachel Clark)

contracting NCO,” he said. “I’m excited about the mission and applying what I have learned at FDO-Fort Knox and at the JCRX (Joint Contracting Readiness Exercise) training exercise. Supporting Soldiers is our mission and I’m ready to become proficient in my craft as a contingency contracting NCO.”

Though this deployment will mean a separation from his family, Martinez is thankful for the support his wife of nine years, Nashua, has given him during a previous deployment to Iraq and throughout his military service.

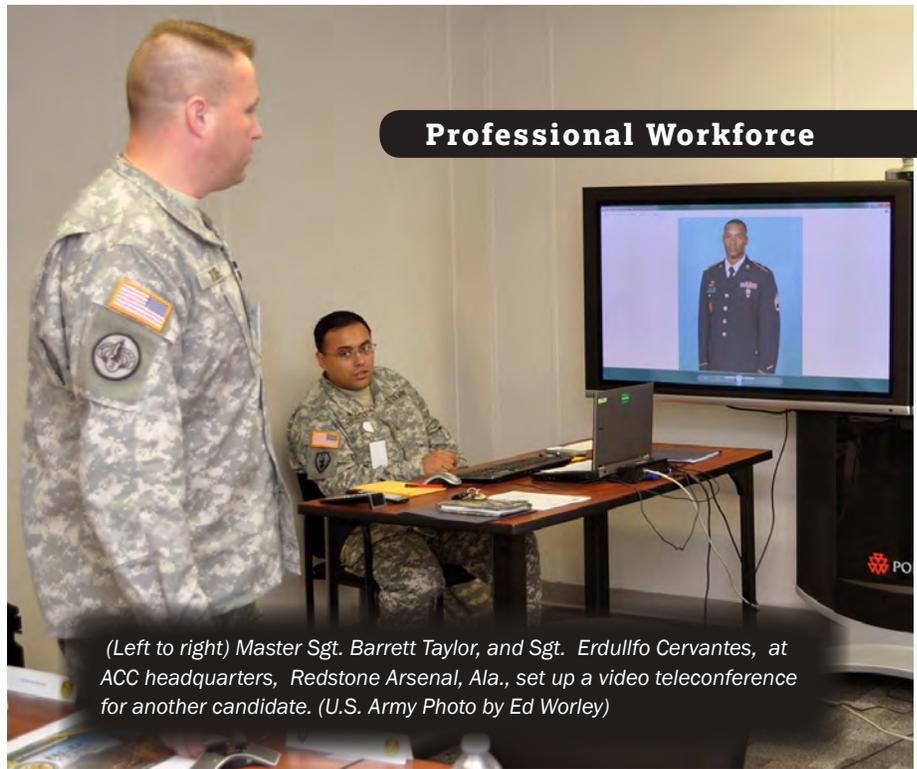
“She really understands the military and the sacrifices we have to make as Soldiers,” he said. “My wife has supported me in every decision I have made. She was especially excited about my new career field because of all the opportunities it offered. This also included competing for the NCO of the Year. She told me I could do it.”

The California native admits that he wouldn’t have been able to accomplish NCOY without the support of all the military and civilians at FDO-Fort Knox.

“The NCOs provided mock boards once a week to help me identify my weaknesses,” he said. “I also prepared by creating flash cards and dedicating four hours a night to studying. I am very thankful and humbled by the enormous support they (FDO-Fort Knox) and the entire Army Contracting Command have given me.”

During this year’s competition, contestants were required to complete the physical fitness test and 12-mile road march at their home stations and to forward the results to the graders at ACC headquarters. The formal boards and exams were evaluated through video teleconferences.

First-time competitor and native of Fayetteville, N.C., Staff Sgt. Lucinda S. Archer of the 414th



(Left to right) Master Sgt. Barrett Taylor, and Sgt. Erdulfo Cervantes, at ACC headquarters, Redstone Arsenal, Ala., set up a video teleconference for another candidate. (U.S. Army Photo by Ed Worley)

Contracting Support Brigade, Vicenza, Italy, said the “NCO of the Year competition was one of the most challenging military events” she had ever encountered in the 14 years she’s been in the Army.

“The toughest part of the competition by far was the road march,” she said. “I had many from my unit out there supporting me. My battle buddy even got hurt but after all that was said and done, it showed me how to persevere and just keep going.”

Archer admitted that though there were some disadvantages to competing by VTC, overall she said it was a great alternative to sending everyone to Redstone.

“The experience to me was very real and I was nervous every time I had to get in front of the camera,” she said. “For those who want to participate in next year’s event, my advice would be to please prepare yourself, physically train up for the road march and, as with any military board, make sure your uniform is squared away.”

Staff Sgt. Gregory M. Graham, a native of Somerset, N.J., had only recently reported for duty with the 411st CSB, Osan Air Base,

Korea, when he “jumped into the competition.”

“Fortunately, I had just gotten done with the NCO of the Quarter boards with my previous unit, so I had already retained quite a bit of information,” he said. “Competing via VTC, however, was extremely different, especially when the system was delayed or went down. I personally like to see the board members’ reactions to better assess my situation and how I am doing. This made it a lot tougher.”

Nonetheless, Graham encourages anyone to compete.

“I challenge anyone to compete at these boards,” he said. “They are a great way to put yourself out there and meet with senior leadership that you may not get to meet until later on. I did it within two weeks of becoming a contracting NCO, no one in the field knew me before. They will know me now, though.”

The NCOY runner-up was Staff Sgt. Booker L. Jordan Jr., of the 409th CSB, Kaiserslautern, Germany; and third was Staff Sgt. Billy J. Carrillo of MICC-Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. ♦

Educational partnership helps contracting professionals reach their goals

By Larry D. McCaskill
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The Army has reached a formal agreement that will enable 51C noncommissioned officers to receive academic credit for completion of various military courses necessary for certification in the contracting career field.

The agreement between Excelsior College, Albany, N.Y., and the Army will allow 51C NCOs to receive college-level credit for the following Army Acquisition Center of Excellence courses: the Army Acquisition Foundation Course, the Army Intermediate Program Management Course, the Army Acquisition Intermediate Contracting Course, and the Army Basic Contracting Course. The military occupational specialty 51C is designated for acquisition, logistics, and technology contracting NCOs.

“Excelsior College is a non-profit school with a Defense Acquisition University partnership already, plus they are actively involved in the School of the American Soldier and Sergeants Major Academy,” said Master Sgt. Jason Pitts, 51C proponent NCO, U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center, Fort Belvoir, Va. “It was a perfect blend between contracting and staying in line with ongoing Army initiatives.”

According to Pitts, the USAASC, AACoE and Excelsior College worked on the agreement and curriculum review. The Army

Contracting Command provided NCOs to participate in the military occupational skill interview and review process. This ensured the college understood the complex business interactions/experiences the officers and NCOs receive in their daily duties.

“Ninety eight percent of all the NCOs in career management field 51C are assigned to the Army Contracting Command,” said Command Sgt. Maj. John L. Murray, command sergeant major, ACC. “The 51C military occupational specialty requires NCOs to have a bachelor’s degree in order to obtain contracting certification. NCOs should receive bachelor and graduate level business credits for the military contracting education they attend. In order to ensure they get the maximum credit they deserve, we partnered with Excelsior College to get them a solid foundation towards completing their education.”

Upon completion of the four military courses, the college will award 51C NCOs 43 semester credits toward a bachelor’s degree in one of its business degree programs.

The program, which was

created six months ago, is open to officers, noncommissioned officers and civilians who have graduated from the AACoE.

According to Pitts, individuals who want to take advantage of this program should visit their installation Excelsior College representative and bring with them college transcripts, their service school academic report and other pertinent information for evaluation. The school will conduct a review, award credits and set the individual on the path to receive a bachelor’s degree in professional studies in business management.

Excelsior waived the initial evaluation and sign-up fee, but it participates in the ‘Go Army Ed’ program and standard rates apply. It is the only bachelor degree-level program offering this service but there is a partnership with Webster University for a procurement and acquisitions management master’s degree. ♦



Contracting specialists complete 2-year Smart Buyer training program

By Wendy M. Weissner
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Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols, commanding general, Army Contracting Command, presided over an award ceremony during her visit to ACC-New Jersey, Picatinny Arsenal, April 8.

During the ceremony, Nichols recognized Gherin Fracasso, John Swift, Vincent Turco, Mark Bobitka, Jason Melofchik, John Vince Fox and Thomas Howes for completing the center's two-year Ammunition Enterprise Smart Buyer Program training.

"These individuals form a present and future cadre of contracting officers and leaders of

ACC-N.J.," said Paul Milenkowic, deputy director ACC-N.J.

Milkenkovic said this program combines formal training and on-the-job experiences in a comprehensive manner to further develop highly qualified contract specialists into becoming smarter buyers. Participants are assigned for one year working to support an assigned program manager in the acquisition process. The second year they receive specialized training and hands-on assignments in cost and pricing, source selection and in the office of the Principal Assistant Responsible for Contracting. This is the center's initial rotation of trainees and its first graduating class.

He said the training provides ACC-N.J. personnel with a better understanding of the user, requirements, markets, proposals, cost and price principles, competition and the role of small business while also building relationships and enhancing career development.

Nichols, along with Brig. Gen. John J. McGuinness, program executive officer, Ammunition and senior commander, Picatinny Arsenal, N.J., presented the graduating class with their certificates of completion.

Milkenkovic said Nichols has been aware of this program since her last visit and is very supportive of continuing it. ♦

Nichols receives communication award

By Giselle Lyons
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The Toastmasters International Club, District 77 presented Maj. Gen. Camille Nichols with its Toastmasters Communication and Leadership Award during the organization's spring conference May 18 in Huntsville, Ala.

Nichols, Army Contracting Command commanding general, was unable to attend the event but sent a video message thanking the organization for the award and sharing her thoughts on natural-born leaders and developing communicators.

"The things you do in your organization and your scholarship program can help the whole nation get back to some very basic things that I believe we're losing—and that is the art form of communication," Nichols said in reference to Toastmasters.

Lillian Cooke, Expeditionary Contracting Command, and District 77 assistant division governor of Education and Training, nominated Nichols for the honor.

"I nominated Maj. Gen. Nichols for this award because as a commander of an organization that has installations all over the world (that) provides service to the war fighter in even more places, I thought she would be a great person to talk about the importance of communication and leadership," Cooke said.

Nichols acknowledged the wide scope of communication lines she must channel as a commander and mentioned how important it is for everyone to contribute to the two-way street of communication.

"As a leader, it's very important for me to know that I have a consistent message that resonates not only in my ears, but also out to the workforce," she said. "I want to get messages back from them and a sense for the command as we work (together) through difficult times."

Brig. Gen. Theodore "Ted"

Harrison, ECC, commanding general, accepted the award on behalf of Nichols. Harrison gave the audience an explanation of how the ACC and ECC provide essential contracting support to the Army and other defense organizations outside of the continental United States.

Nichols provided insight about the importance of communication not only in her role at ACC but in various positions she has held throughout her Army career.

She also spoke about how being a leader in any professional environment requires an extreme amount of communication and how communication is the key to success in all relationships on a daily basis.

Nichols summarized the content of her speech by saying, "As a leader, I need to make sure I am in fact communicating when I am talking."

Toastmasters International Club helps professionals develop, shape, and discover what talent they were born with and what they can learn. District 77 consists of Alabama, Northwest Florida, and Southeast Mississippi. ♦

Questions and Answers: **Mr. Michael Fischetti** Executive director, National Contracting Management Association

What is the mission of NCMA?

The National Contract Management Association mission actually falls under the Department of Defense Better Buying Power 2.0 in advancing the contract management profession. With more than 22,000 members, NCMA is dedicated to the professional growth and educational advancement of procurement and acquisition personnel worldwide. We strive to serve and inform the profession and offer opportunities for the open exchange of ideas in neutral forums. Our vision is for contract management to be viewed by all organizations — public and private — as a challenging and rewarding profession and essential business management function that directly contributes to organizational success, so that people will recognize, prepare for, and seek out positions; and universities will provide undergraduate and graduate degree programs and courses designed to prepare students for entry into it. NCMA defines the standards and body of knowledge for the profession, including tools that enable entry, development, and advancement, and a model recognized for innovation, effective operations, and agile responsible governance.

Your members include both industry and government contracting professionals – how does NCMA meet both of their needs?

The strength of NCMA lies in its diversity and providing the means to communicate with each other to better understand the other's perspective. The more that government and industry both

understand each other, the better requirements are understood, solicitations structured, proposals responsive, but most importantly, the more effectively the Army and federal government meet their missions. Training needs of contracting professionals are universal and many professionals will work in both sectors at some time in their careers. Thus, NCMA offers a wide variety of programs with all of our content geared to specific competencies within our contract management body of knowledge and Defense Acquisition University.

What advice do you have for young contracting professionals about their futures?

Our profession is a highly demanding, complex, and responsible one that manages the flow of goods and services across our economy. The federal government and the Army specifically are dependent on industry to meet their obligations to their citizens. Contracting managers are the ones overseeing this process. Their education and training requirements continue to grow. Statutes, laws, and policies are always increasing. The skills required to be effective include knowledge of global, geo-political, and industry trends all the way down to the latest regulatory or office policy changes. There is always more work than there are available, professional contracting managers to handle it. The difficulties of the current budget and political environment make things even more difficult. However, it is in challenging circumstances like this when the opportunities are the best. Government and industry executives, technical experts and program managers depend on and desire contracting

professionals as never before. This is a great time to be entering into or advancing within the field!

How has contracting changed over the last 10 years?

The complexity of the contracting profession has grown. Whether it is local guidance or various statutes, there is more to know and the bar in terms of education, knowledge, and experience for entry into and staying within the field has been raised. However, the profession has matured. The stature of NCMA, its leaders, and the certifications, education, and other programs it offers has gone up as a reflection of this increased level of recognition and realization of how vital acquisition and contracting are to meeting the nation's needs, particularly our defense and national security.

What are the biggest challenges for contracting professionals?

There is usually a movement at any given time either toward more streamlining, such as getting things done faster and with less review, or toward building more oversight and quality into the process. Today, it's a little of both. Our customers want things done faster and more cost effectively, while at the same time they want the process to be fair, more competition between prospective suppliers, rigorous analysis, proper oversight, and an improved outcome. In other words, we need to do it all. Contracting will be the focus in the near future as hiring freezes and greater retirements place greater responsibilities on those remaining. However, our contracting workforce is second to none and we will once again demonstrate our prowess in delivering value to the American people. ♦



Michael Fischetti became the executive director of the National Contract Management Association in July 2012 after retiring from the federal government as a member of the Senior Executive Service. For more information about the NCMA go to: <http://www.ncmahq.org>



NCMA
NATIONAL CONTRACT MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

NCMA leader meets with ACC-RI employees

By Liz Adrian
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ROCK ISLAND ARSENAL, III. -

Michael P. Fischetti, executive director, National Contract Management Association, met with approximately 50 Army Contracting Command-Rock Island employees April 23 to discuss NCMA's role in advocating for the contracting profession.

"We are very excited that Mr. Fischetti could come speak," said Gerry Haan, NCMA Quad Cities chapter president. "We appreciate that a speaker of his caliber came to Rock Island."

Haan said Fischetti's 30 years of diverse acquisition experience, including leadership, management, policy and contracting officer positions provides him with a unique perspective. Prior to coming to NCMA, he was in the Senior Executive Service as the component acquisition executive and head of contracting within the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs)/TRICARE Management Activity, managing more than \$55 billion per year for DOD's military healthcare system.

"As executive director of NCMA, he meets regularly with senior leaders in both government and industry which allows him to



Left to right: Col. John P. Hannon, acting executive director, ACC-RI; Michael P. Fischetti, executive director, NCMA; and NCMA Quad Cities Chapter representatives Gerry Haan, president; Joan F. S. Wysoske, treasurer; Michelle Breitbach, vice president; and Chioma Ezeugwu, secretary. (U.S. Army Photo by Liz Adrian)

have great insight into the current happenings of contracting," Haan said. "It was an honor that he shared many of those insights with us here at Rock Island."

During his speech, Fischetti discussed the challenges facing contracting professionals during austere times. He believes that there is an impression among contracting professionals that the drawdown of the wars and the sequester are affecting the budget situation much "faster and harder" than in the past.

Fischetti believes that government contracting has been through similar situations and that, in the long-term, the need for high-quality government contracting will probably increase, particularly in the services area, due to fewer federal workers and increased reliance on contractors.

He said creating and fostering professional relationships can be

valuable not only for a person's career, but the profession at large. Fischetti said NCMA has the interest and support from entry-level employees through senior leaders, which is helping to enhance communications that lead to effective contracting solutions.

"We are the interface between the government and the contractors and almost nothing gets done in the government anymore that isn't done through contracting," said Fischetti. "We are the ones making those relationships effective. We can talk all day about our problems and difficulties, but at the end of the day, when we, as contracting professionals, act in concert on whatever issue it is that we are working, (it) will raise the stature of our profession." ♦

Parker praised for a job well done

By Betsy Kozak-Howard
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Kevin Parker received more than just a pat-on-the-back for a job well done.

Parker, a contract specialist with the Army Contracting Command – Aberdeen Proving Ground's Natick Division in Natick, Mass., received a letter of appreciation and commander's coin from Navy Adm. James A. Winnefeld, Jr., vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, for his contracting work on the Navy Working Uniform.

"Thank you very much for your outstanding support," Winnefeld wrote in the letter. "You consistently perform in an exemplary manner."

Parker has been providing support to the NWU program for more than two years. The program initiated more than 30 contracts valued at more than \$100 million, according to Parker.

"The NWU contracting activities consisted of several components and there were many working parts to the design and quality of the Type II and Type III uniforms," said Parker. "These uniforms are considered tactical uniforms for expeditionary sailors, with the Type II for desert wear and Type III for a woodland environment."

Parker, a four-year Army veteran, said it was important that the military received a top-quality product.

"One of the difficulties for this contracting effort was the coordination between numerous

vendors," said Parker. "It was difficult to manage the delivery schedules and complex logistical requirements while ensuring quality objectives were met. There was also extensive collaboration amongst the government team with the added pressure of a very aggressive timeline. We overcame many obstacles."

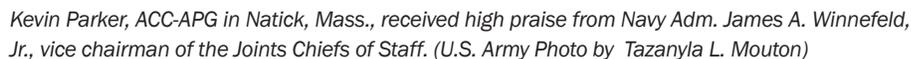
The biggest hurdle for this program was "nailing down the final requirements and specifications," stated the Boston native. "There were inputs from many sources that had to be considered."

Parker said the team analyzed the pockets, waistband, parka design, fleece liner and headgear, just to mention a few of the uniform components addressed by the team. Many of the uniform components were produced separately by different contractors. The NWU program issued contracts to small, disadvantaged businesses; AbilityOne vendors

for people with disabilities; the Federal Prison Industries; Native American and Alaskan Native suppliers.

"There were a lot of moving parts with this program and many contracts were issued including three indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity contracts," Parker said.

Parker started his contracting career in 2004 when he joined the Natick Division and today he works as an acquisition level III contracting officer. Prior to 2004, he attended Boston College Law School where he received his juris doctor degree to compliment his bachelor's degree in Business Administration. "The benefit of working in the contracting career field is it provides me the opportunity to use each discipline, business and law," he said. ♦



Kevin Parker, ACC-APG in Natick, Mass., received high praise from Navy Adm. James A. Winnefeld, Jr., vice chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff. (U.S. Army Photo by Tazanyla L. Mouton)

NDIA hosts contracting symposium

By Liz Adrian
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Army Contracting Command leadership played a large role in the sixth annual National Defense Industrial Association Midwest Small Business Government Contracting Symposium, held May 22-23 at the iWireless Center, Moline, Ill.

During the symposium Michael R. Hutchison, ACC deputy to the commanding general and principal assistant responsible for contracting for ACC-Rock Island, provided an overview of ACC and shared his thoughts on how ACC will continue to provide premier contracting support to America's war fighters.

"Where do we go from here?" Hutchison asked. "That's really our big challenge. Fiscal year 2013 is a monumental challenge for us, and going beyond that, will continue to be a huge challenge."

Hutchison said that many factors, including budget uncertainties, a hiring freeze and the automatic budget cuts known as sequestration could make it difficult for ACC to meet many of its small business goals.

"Oddly enough, the one small business goal that I've heard we will likely do much better on this year is the Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business goal, which is a good thing," said Hutchison. "Those guys have given their all and they need a chance to sit at the table and get some of these contracts."

Despite the challenges, Hutchison discussed small business initiatives that ACC is actively working, and determining the best methods for communicating and training small business partners.

"We have an industry executive council that is comprised of our major large businesses and some small businesses as well because we want those frank and direct exchanges with industry about how well we are doing and what we can do better," said Hutchison. "We also want them to know what our concerns are."

Later in the symposium, Hutchison joined Melanie Johnson, ACC-RI, director, Field Support Contracting; Scott Welker, Army Sustainment Command deputy to the commanding general; and Col. Dan Reilly, ASC, director, Installation Logistics, for a briefing and question-and-answer session regarding the directorates of logistics and the Enhanced Army Global Logistics Enterprise program.

Welker provided a short background on EAGLE, a

Professional Workforce

contracting tool the government uses to compete and award task orders to qualified basic ordering agreement holder companies for supply, maintenance and transportation services, for work performed primarily at the DOL. The program is intended to find efficiencies and standardize contracting processes in order save the government money, increase competition and expand the role of small business.

Hutchison said that industry interest in the EAGLE program is notable. There are significantly more BOA holders than originally anticipated. BOA holders have submitted a larger-than-expected number of proposals under the task order competitions, and there have been many industry questions that require extensive technical research.

"The biggest challenge that we have had in executing task orders is we have received maximum competition," said Hutchison. "We are getting a huge volume of proposals in response to these task order requests. The real challenge with this is we have a finite-sized evaluation board that is reviewing these proposals, and we have to ensure consistency in how we evaluate each proposal." ♦



(Left to right) Melanie Johnson, ACC-RI, director, Field Support Contracting; Col. Dan Reilly, ASC, director, Installation Logistics; Michael R. Hutchison, ACC deputy to the commanding general and principal assistant responsible for contracting for ACC-RI; and Scott Welker, ASC deputy to the commanding general discuss the EAGLE Program with attendees of the NDIA Midwest Small Business Government Contracting Symposium in Moline, Ill., May 23. (U.S. Army Photo)

TOMORROW'S TECHNOLOGY FOR TODAY'S WORKFORCE

By Larry D. McCaskill
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When buying and using new information technology equipment, it's difficult to keep up with changes as today's innovations can be tomorrow's old gadgets.

The Army Contracting Command Chief Information Officer G-6 monitors technological advances seeking opportunities to leverage the latest innovations within the military contracting community.

"Industry creates new technology capabilities on a daily basis that have benefited our mission objectives and helped save the lives of Soldiers," said Gino Magnifico, ACC chief information officer. "Commercial industries have helped us disseminate accurate information worldwide. This has increased the productivity of our workforce while realizing long-term cost savings."

Magnifico said his office leverages available technologies to determine their value and how they can solve the unique business needs of the organization.

"The implementation of commercially developed collaboration and knowledge sharing tools has greatly enhanced productivity across the enterprise, allowing the command to interact and share information without regard to geographical location," he said. "Previously, document sharing was limited to email and serial processing efforts. Today, ACC benefits from the ability to



Gino Magnifico

share contract documents and other critical information across the globe in near-real time.

According to Magnifico, commercial industry monitors how the Army uses its technologies to help them better understand the Army's global capabilities.

"The commercial industry is interested in how we deliver global mission command networks and system capabilities using an enterprise-wide approach to reduce costs and overhead," he said. "They are also interested in how we have increased efficiency and security associated with the contract writing process and how we are implementing the Army-wide contract writing system."

Developing relationships, face-to-face and virtually, is something Magnifico said is very important in the IT community. Aligning with groups and understanding advancements in IT have helped ACC maintain relevance in the user community.

"We regularly participate in webinars and watch for new developments in journals and white papers developed by both

governmental and commercial industries," he said. "It's also important for us to belong to local, national and international groups that help us advance in our mission. In the government, we align and coordinate to support the initiatives of federal CIO groups, Department of Defense CIO, Army CIO and others."

According to Magnifico, Web-based platforms, such as the ACC Enterprise Portal, leverage industry-standard best practices and have helped ACC modernize business processes that were once paper-based and labor-intensive.

"These platforms provide user-centric portals that streamline workflows and increase productivity," he said. "The ACC Enterprise Portal is used internally to facilitate information sharing, improve workflows, and increase productivity by providing users with a central place to easily exchange information and perform key business processes."

Magnifico said his staff actively promotes a culture of program management that uses proven and practical IT best practices to attain excellence in all projects and programs

"The entire organization is committed to using proven, practical industry best practices to ensure that all IT investments provide measureable improvements in mission performance," he said. "The keys to successful program management activities are coordination, communication, standardization and measurement." ♦

Council works behind the scenes to improve business practices

By Ed Worley
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REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala.-

Chartered with the intent to build partnerships and improve processes, Army Contracting Command's Industry Executive Council has been working quietly behind the scenes for more than three years to foster a win-win business environment between government and industry.

According to the council's charter, it exists to improve business processes so that war fighters will get the "most rapid and cost-effective delivery of the highest quality premier

weapon systems, equipment and service."

Both government and industry attendees have been very pleased with the council's results, said Gene Duncan, chief, Operations Division, ACC Operations Group. The division manages the IEC.

Duncan said the council's meetings include about a 50 percent mix of industry and government representatives. Industry executives represent both large and small businesses. ACC participants include the ACC, Expeditionary Contracting Command and Mission and Installation Contracting Command commanding generals and the contracting center executive directors. Senior representatives from the Defense Contract

Management Agency, Defense Contract Audit Agency, the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Procurement and the Army Audit Agency also attend.

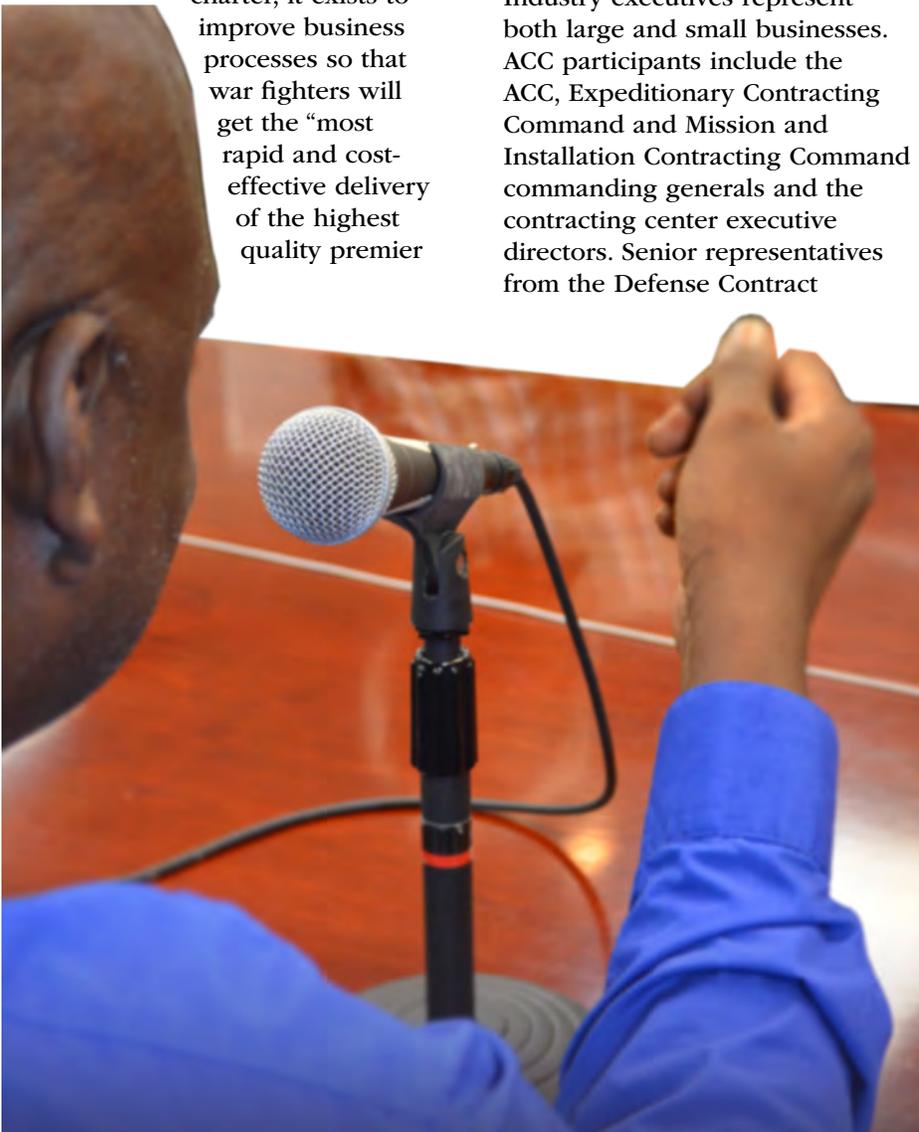
Discussions are conducted in a non-attribution environment to encourage open dialogue between industry and government participants, he said. Actions raised in the session are worked through normal processes and may be brought up for updates in future sessions.

"Both government and industry attendees have been very pleased with the results," he said. "Recent examples of discussions that attendees thought were productive include commerciality determinations, debriefings, government civilians training with industry, low price technically acceptable source selections and protest trends."

Duncan said ACC's response to the fiscal year 2013 automatic budget cuts known as sequestration would be the subject of the next meeting.

"Maj. Gen. (Camille M.) Nichols (ACC commanding general) is eager to have another meeting to get industry's perspective on how ACC is implementing risk mitigations to cope with the fiscal uncertainty and sequestration," he said.

Under normal circumstances the IEC meets three times a year, but the Army's current budget tightening has forced ACC to postpone the council's next meeting. It last met in January. Duncan said he is planning the next session for sometime later this year. ♦



GPC efficiencies may yield greater savings

By Daniel P. Elkins
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JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas –

As installation garrison leaders continue to search for cost savings in today's uncertain fiscal environment, more are finding it in an unlikely source – their Government Purchase Card program administration.

Mission and Installation Contracting Command GPC program officials are helping ensure Army and federal customers across the country are capitalizing on available rebates through diligent administration of their GPC accounts.

“Rebates are paid quarterly based on the volume of transactions for that quarter and timely payment,” said Guy Hunneyman, a business manager with the MICC Oversight and Assessment Branch. “So the faster billing officials certify accounts and the bank is paid, the higher the rebate.”

The GPC program allows individuals at the lowest level of government organizations and agencies greater efficiency in the procurement of commercial goods and services from merchants. With a single purchase limit of less than \$3,000, Hunneyman said accounts typically generate rebates of 1 to 1.3 percent. Accounts that are delinquent get little or no rebate.

In fiscal year 2012, the MICC managed more than 1.2 million GPC transactions valued at \$1.3 billion, said Gary Pinion, who leads a group of four business managers at the MICC headquarters. To date, GPC cardholders have made more than



525,000 transactions totaling more than \$575 million this fiscal year.

“When you consider the number of accounts to manage and installations across the continental United States, we're the largest Army GPC program,” he said.

Through the second quarter of this fiscal year, MICC GPC administrators have helped return more than \$6 million to their military and federal customers through rebates. This amount is trailing an annual trend of between \$15 and \$19 million in rebates.

“Rebates are down because we're spending less; the sequestration is impacting everybody,” Pinion said. “So what we're getting back in rebates and transactions is based on what's being spent by the customers. As money is released, we'll see spending go up and rebates increase if managed in a timely manner.”

In fiscal year 2012, \$15 million was returned in GPC rebates. Although savings this year lag those from the previous year due

to decreased spending, today's budgetary conditions underscore a critical importance of realizing every potential savings opportunity and developing responsive contracting solutions, Pinion said.

The amount of rebates represents a little more than 75 percent of what is available, according to Pinion. He said if you do the math, approximately \$4 million in rebates go uncollected each year. Bringing greater emphasis to this oversight is a new approach of using big data.

GPC business managers at the MICC took a closer look across all of their account activities. They found that about half of the GPC card accounts were not necessary and instead posed an administration burden.

“We've been reducing the number of cardholders the last couple of years to make it lean by eliminating accounts that were excessive, duplicate and inactive,” Pinion said. “The fewer number of

cards also make for less risk.”

An initial review of the program identified more than 30,000 cardholders and 15,000 billing officials, all administered by slightly more than 100 MICC personnel responsible for managing the day-to-day GPC operations. Following a scrub, Hunneyman said the number of active cardholders and billing officials were each reduced by 43 percent to less than 13,000 and about 6,500, respectively, with a negligible change in the spending activity.

During this process, they teamed with the MICC Knowledge Management Branch to create the Card Transaction Analysis Tool, or CATALYST, to analyze activity across the GPC program.

“I saw the amount of data that was available to the GPC team and the possibility of creating such a tool,” said Harry Staley Jr., a procurement systems analyst with the knowledge management branch. We brought our skills together to develop this tool, because it was taking several weeks to conduct surveillance on GPC accounts.”

Staley added the no-cost, Microsoft Excel-based tool pulls information and reporting data at the U.S. Bank billing official level and applies MICC codes to yield more than a dozen reports that break down data to the major command, installation and cardholder levels, which proves vital in decision making. Due to its effectiveness and value in analyzing data at the installation level, he said the tool will be fielded to MICC contracting offices in the coming months.

“It identifies the types of business the transactions fall into as well as provides analysis breaking down the data - outlining delinquent accounts, inactive accounts, rebates, fraudulent, suspended, possible split purchases, contract opportunities, span of control, questionable

spend patterns, top merchants and other reports giving the analyst the ability to uncover trends previously concealed,” Staley said.

GPC business managers apply this data when engaging resource management personnel at the major command level to identify areas requiring attention. Their analysis is also communicated at the leadership level when the MICC commanding general meets with leaders throughout the Army.

“We can calculate best-case scenarios on the amount of potential rebates a major command could have received and the amount they have lost,” Hunneyman said. “Now that we can break everything out, we’ve got a better set of data to analyze and can provide more accurate information to resolve challenges all the while building better relationships with major commands.”

MICC leaders can also capitalize on the data analytics by gaining insight valuable in managing their GPC workforce at a time of declining resources. Following the activation of the MICC in 2009, the number of agency or organization program coordinators at the headquarters and across the command has grown in order to keep pace with administering the expanding number of accounts fixed to the program.

The MICC’s primary supported activities include the U.S. Army Installation Management Command, U.S. Army Forces Command, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, U.S. Army North, U.S. Army Reserve Command and the U.S. Army Medical Command. GPC program administrators also support university Army ROTC detachments, recruiting centers and Military Entrance Processing Stations across the country.

“In order to fully manage our manpower, having the right number of cards out there allows

us to have the right number of people out there,” Pinion said. “All of the inactive cards were giving a false manpower review.”

Most of the MICC program managers are dedicated to the GPC program full time, but often must rely on the assistance of analysts or other contracting personnel when the number of accounts they manage exceed a regulatory 300-to-1 ratio. Thus, larger installations that call for larger programs also require a greater number of billing officials and alternates.

A reduction in the number of cardholders can lead to a reduced workload and shift of manpower resources to other contracting priorities.

By leveraging the efficiencies gained through increased oversight and innovative tools, MICC officials hope to achieve 85 percent or more of all available GPC program rebates. That command benchmark takes into account that some challenges leading to delays are beyond their control. Chief among those are hurdles with the General Fund Enterprise Business System which shares financial data across the Army; and a constant need for training resulting from personnel rotations.

“Training is critical not only for cardholders and billing officials, but also for our program coordinators as this process becomes more complicated and systems driven.” Pinion said. “Agency or organization program coordinators require a skill set of program management and oversight to manage those programs. That’s why it’s important that we get the right people at the right locations.” ♦

REACHING GREAT HEIGHTS:

MICC director climbs Mount Kilimanjaro

By Daniel P. Elkins
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The contracting director at White Sands Missile Range recently achieved one of the greatest physical challenges only a relative few can ever say they've accomplished.

Finding the time to squeeze in vacation plans in a contracting environment might lend most to consider a tranquil beach where the BlackBerry is replaced with a fruity cocktail. For Bev Stotz, those plans took her to Africa where she climbed Mount Kilimanjaro.

Already active in Pilates, cycling and hiking, Stotz was contacted

last summer by a friend whose cousin was planning to climb Kilimanjaro but didn't want to go alone. Knowing Stotz as being adventurous and with a current passport, her friend recommended she join her cousin on the once-in-a-lifetime excursion.

"I thought it sounded like fun, and I always wanted to go to the 'real' Africa," said Stotz, referring to her several trips to Egypt. "So I figured, why not?"

They were part of a group of eight that brought together climbers from Cleveland, Canada and Hong Kong on a guided climb, which covered 42 miles with a 12,000-foot elevation change. Their climbing skill levels were as varied as the group

itself, which included adventurers in their 20s, 30s and 40s.

"I fit right in. Some of these folks run marathons, so suffice it to say I wasn't as fast," Stotz said, adding that she was the oldest in the group at fifty-something. "The guides do a very good job of pacing the group; they don't let you go crazy."

The 29-year contracting professional lives at an elevation of 4,000 feet in Las Cruces, N.M., and has hiked many elevations, but can't recall hiking anything higher than 10,000 feet.

"I was a bit apprehensive as my choosing to rely on a fellow church member from Tanzania who has completed four climbs



Bev Stotz pauses for a photo with Mount Kilimanjaro behind her. (Photo courtesy of Bev Stotz)

to help alleviate my worries. He put my mind at ease that I was certainly able to do this.”

Arriving in Tanzania in mid-January, she started her eight-day trek of scaling the highest free-standing mountain in the world two days later. Her final ascent to the summit of Kilimanjaro began at midnight in the light of a full moon and took six hours, 40 minutes. She describes it as surreal.

“It was like, what did I just do and why?” Stotz said. “Then thinking the tallest mountain in Africa, the highest free-standing mountain in the world and I’m standing at the top of it; OMG!” Stotz said. “It is still weird to hear the words ‘I climbed Mount Kilimanjaro’ come out of my mouth. In the grand scheme of things, not many people can say that, nor do they know people who can.”

Along the way, she admits to experiencing emotional highs and

lows. Having lost her father in 2010, she is confident she felt his presence at many points throughout the climb.

“He was with me up there,” she said. “Everyone I talked to that did this has had that same surreal feeling, like you were somehow detached and watching from somewhere else. It’s hard to describe.”

The toughest part of the climb was the descent. The MICC-WSMR director has had one knee replacement surgery and suffers from the degeneration of cartilage in the other knee, leading to bone-on-bone pain.

“Nothing prepared me for that. It was excruciating. One stretch (of the descent) was nothing but large rocks and stream bed,” Stotz recalled. “It took most people about three-and-a-half hours to go down that stretch. It took me over six hours and two meltdowns. At the end of summit day, I was exhausted.”

Despite the pain, she most treasures the bonding between complete strangers throughout her entire experience.

“It was amazing to see people from all over the world and from different cultures, religions and backgrounds find one common thread to bind them together. Not just our little group of eight plus guides and porters, but everyone on the mountain at that time.

“All of us with one goal to reach the summit proved that differences can most certainly be overcome, and people really can be kind to each other,” she continued. “We all cheered for each other as we climbed and prayed for those being taken down. The humanity was the greatest part of the whole adventure.” ♦

Hendrix hobby is a proven **CLASSIC**



Ann Hendrix, an administrative assistant with the Army Contracting Command – Aberdeen Proving Ground, displays her award-winning 1978 Ford Ranchero GT. She fully restored the red car-truck combination as a classic show car. (Photos by Betsy Kozak-Howard)

By Betsy Kozak-Howard
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Styling down the street in a sleek two-door, red car-truck combination is a regular occurrence for Ann Hendrix. The 1978 Ford Ranchero GT was fully

restored by Hendrix as a classic show car.

Hendrix’s ride recently won first place in the 1970-79 class during a May car show held in Fawn Grove, Penn. Hendrix is an administrative assistant with the

Army Contracting Command – Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., in the Enterprise Resources Division

The Ford Ranchero, unlike a pickup truck, was adapted from a two-door station wagon platform

Continued on page 25

Rock Island employees set to perform in **LES MISERABLES**

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ROCK ISLAND ARSENAL, III. -

The first showing of Countryside Community Theater's production of *Les Miserables* won't hit the stage until the first week of July, but the cast and crew – including Army Contracting Command-Rock Island employees Michelle Blocker-Rosebrough and Steven Jessen – have been preparing for months.

Although Jessen and Blocker-Rosebrough are both involved in

been on the board for 15 years and is currently the theater's vice president.

On the other hand, this is Blocker-Rosebrough's first production with CCT, and she will be onstage as a member of the chorus. Blocker-Rosebrough is a procurement analyst and policy team leader

She auditioned for the production on a whim. After providing her 11-year-old daughter with some constructive feedback

old guys that played in several venues in Manhattan, Kan. She was also a karaoke jockey for three years in graduate school.

"I ran a karaoke show three times a week at three different bars," said Blocker-Rosebrough. "I had to sing when no one else wanted to and also sing requests. I would get tips, sometimes as much as \$20 to sing one song."

Armed with an extensive musical background, but without the required photo and resumé, Blocker-Rosebrough didn't expect to be cast. Nonetheless, she had set her sights set on the role of Madame Thenardier – a main villain in the production.

"I play a good raunchy old broad," said Blocker-Rosebrough.

After a few call-backs, she was assigned as the understudy for Madame Thenardier, as well as a member of the ensemble.

"As a member of the ensemble, I also have particular roles with solos," said Blocker-Rosebrough. "I love singing; I used to sing in the high school choir. Having the experience of singing in a group as a part of something bigger is a lot of fun."

As a veteran member of CCT, Jessen knows that Blocker-Rosebrough making it onto the cast is quite an achievement.

"More than 200 people tried out for the show, but only around 50 were actually cast," said Jessen. "It was an accomplishment to get into the show because it was very well-auditioned with double the number of people compared to what we normally see."

As the cast prepares for the show, Blocker-Rosebrough is focused on preparing for her role.

"It has been challenging because of my lack of time," said Blocker-Rosebrough. "I have three kids and two jobs, so I had to learn ways of fitting in time to memorize the songs because the chorus is in most of the play. I downloaded all of the songs and I sing them all day long, and at



Michelle Blocker-Rosebrough, ACC-RI procurement analyst/Policy team lead (third from left), practices with members of the cast of the upcoming production of *Les Miserables*. (Courtesy Photo)

the show, their experiences with this production – and CCT in general – are largely divergent.

Jessen, an ACC-RI procurement analyst, has been involved with the theater on and off since its creation in 1983, always as technical crew or board member, never as an actor. He has

during her preparation for the *Les Miserables* audition, her daughter dared her to try out.

She took her daughter up on the dare, in part because of her musical background. In graduate school, she was the lead singer of a country and classic rock band with a group of 40-something-year-

lunch, I look at the music and practice my parts.”

While Blocker-Rosebrough prepares herself for the show, Jessen is focusing on making sure there is solid support behind the scenes. As vice president of the board, he is responsible for tasks such as securing the space, setting schedules and setting up auditions. For this show, he was on the committee that selected the director, music director and other production staff and crew.

“For the production staff, it was a very long process to find the right people to fit the right roles and it was tough because we had a lot of good options,” said Jessen.

The crew is in the process of designing a large metal revolving stage that will spin around in order to shift the cast and stage into three different scenes.

“Having this type of stage

will really help move the production along,” said Jessen. “It will help reduce downtime between scene changes, which all directors like to keep to a minimum.”

In addition to a high-quality set, the costumes are all being custom-made by a costumer from the University of Iowa.

Just getting permission to perform the show is a big deal for CCT, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary season.

“This is the first time *Les Miserables* has ever been offered to amateur theaters,” said Jessen. “Our 2013 season originally consisted of ‘Whistle Down the Wind’ and ‘Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat’, which will now be pushed to CCT’s 2014 season. When CCT was notified we could get *Les Miserables*, we changed gears very quickly and

Quality of Life

made the decision to make the investment and put the show on as it should be done. Our show budget is about double the amount what we normally do.”

Soon after CCT and another amateur theater in Cedar Rapids were granted the rights to perform the show by the licensing authorities, no further contracts were released because the licensing company was no longer going to offer the rights in foreseeable future. Jessen said he heard *Les Miserables* is headed back to Broadway and once a production is on Broadway or on tour, they don’t offer it to amateur theaters.

“If you want to see it live, this might be your only chance for awhile, unless you want to go to Broadway or catch one of the tours,” said Blocker-Rosebrough. ♦

Hendrix

Continued from page 23

that integrated the cab and cargo bed into the body.

“I have a showcase full of trophies,” boasted Hendrix. “I’ve been showing this car for 12 years and I enjoyed every minute of it.”

The Rancho first caught Hendrix’s attention while driving home one day in 1992. It was sitting beside the road with a for sale sign and “it looked sharp,” recalled the self-proclaimed tomboy. “I’ve always liked old cars and knew I had to have it.”

After a \$1,200 purchase, Hendrix drove the car home and began assessing the restoration project.

“At that time, the Rancho was in rough shape. There was a lot of surface rust on the body and holes in the quarter panels,” she said. “It also had a junk engine that needed to be replaced. Despite the condition, it was a smooth ride.”

Hendrix was experienced with repairing cars, but she knew this job was going to require the help

of specialists.

“I learned a lot about fixing cars working with my dad,” said the 5-foot 8-inch Hendrix. “I used to help him rebuild engines, carburetors and do other mechanical repairs. I hired professionals for both the Rancho’s body and mechanical work. This car is my expensive toy.”

The motor was replaced and other mechanical work was completed before starting the body work. The vehicle was stripped down to the bare metal and a new coat of russet metallic paint was added, restoring the classic to its original color. The interior was also refurbished with new carpeting, headliner and dash pad. With the car fully restored, “I was in Rancho heaven,” exclaimed the Maryland native.

Hendrix eventually started showing the car at various events.

“I love going to car shows. When I was younger, I used to

attend a car show held twice a year at a local drive-in. I had to wipe the drool from my mouth as I admired all the cars,” Hendrix jokingly recalled with a chuckle.

Annie, as Hendrix is referred to by other car enthusiasts, attends car shows on a regular basis but said she was considered a rarity in the beginning.

“There weren’t a lot of women with their own cars in the early days but now there are several. One of my favorite car shows to attend is the All Ford Nationals held every year in Carlisle, Pa. I took first place there in the Rancho Class in 2009,” she said.

Hendrix said the Rancho will never be finished as she continues to add enhancements to her classic. She performs regular maintenance to safeguard her investment, “which is now worth much more than I paid for it,” concluded Hendrix. ♦

Industry partnerships

Continued from page 5

agreements relevant to weapons or weapons systems proposed to be acquired or developed by the DOD. The NWEC operates in conjunction with the Defense Ordnance Technology Consortium which is a

collaborative partnership with the DOD. DOTC was commissioned by the USD (ALT) as a DOD initiative. The enterprise was established by the under secretary to facilitate collaborative government, industry,

and academic ordnance technology development and prototyping. DOTC operates under an OTA between the government and the NWEC that ACC-N.J. administers. ♦

Deployable Cadre Program

Continued from page 6

and in environments they hadn't been exposed to previously," he said. "As a result, employees tend to return with a more positive and self-sufficient frame of mind. They also bring specific knowledge of the performance of our weapon systems and contracted service support to assist us in working with our supported activities to fashion better scopes of work and performance work statements. In addition, they bring back a variety of skill sets such as working under difficult conditions, teamwork, team building, working toward a common goal, direct support to the mission and the Soldier, workload management, time management, flexibility and innovation."

Several ACC-Rock Island, Ill., employees have volunteered to serve as cadre members, providing a benefit to the center while serving as contracting officers forward deployed in Southwest Asia.

"I believe it's important for our personnel here to know they are supported in their decision to volunteer for the DCP," said Col. John P. Hannon, acting executive

director, ACC-RI. "I let them know we truly appreciate the fact that they are voluntarily leaving behind their families, homes, and stepping up to a challenge that few DOD civilians take on. I want them to feel that we will do all we can to support them while deployed and certainly welcome them back when they return."

While there are occasions where cadre members are mobilized within the states, the majority of the deployment locations are overseas.

"The deployable cadre program leverages the technical strengths of the civilians and enables them to go forward to use those strengths on the ground where the contracting mission is taking place," said Col. William J. Bailey, commander, 409th Contracting Support Brigade, Kaiserslautern, Germany. "The program gives them the opportunity to see their contracts make an immediate difference for the Soldiers they are supporting."

The 408th CSB, Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, uses the program to help fill its positions on a regular basis. "The program is absolutely critical to our

mission. With the current manning/hiring situation, it would be very challenging to operate effectively without it," said Sgt. Major Ricky C. Orange, 408th CSB senior enlisted advisor. "These volunteers are ready to support the mission from day one of their deployment. We have been pleased with their motivation, eagerness to support and learn."

Orange said the number of deployable cadre members the unit needs depends on its current on-hand authorized strength. The 408th has an average of eight cadre members at any time split between its two battalions.

"These professionals bring experience and the knowledge required to ensure commodities and services are procured in a timely manner," Orange said. "While here, they get first-hand experience in supporting war fighters in a contingency environment. In most cases, it's significantly different from what they were doing (stateside). The contracts directly impact the war fighter. Customer interaction is constant, but very rewarding." ♦

Small business

Continued from page 8

In fiscal year 2012 AMC awarded \$1.6 billion in contracts to WOSB.

The ACC Historically Underutilized Business Zones program is managed by Constance Jones-Hambrick.

"The purpose of the program is to provide federal contracting assistance for qualified small business concerns located in historically underutilized business zones in

an effort to increase employment opportunities, investment and economic development in those areas," said Jones-Hambrick. "We help small businesses find opportunities by making sure that they know about resources that are available to them. We make sure that they have all available information and know how to contact the appropriate government personnel."

According to Jones-Hambrick,

more than \$735 million of eligible contracts awarded across AMC went to HUBZones businesses.

Providing a conduit from small businesses to Army contracting opportunities, the ACC OSBP is available to assist both contracting professionals and small business owners. To contact the office or for more information, visit www.acc.army.mil/smallbusiness. ♦

government's performance and cost objectives."

Conlin worked with Raytheon Space and Airborne Systems in Massachusetts, a short distance from his office in Natick.

"I was nervous my first day and didn't know what to expect," Conlin said. "It was the end of the fiscal year for Raytheon and it was a good time to see things happen. On my first day I attended a video teleconference with the vice president for contracts and it was interesting to see the interaction within the organization."

Conlin worked with Scott Downer, Raytheon senior contracts manager.

"John was considered a full member of my team and I made it a point not to sugar coat what John was exposed to in the work environment," Downer explained. "John was given the opportunity to broaden his knowledge by looking at procurements through a contractor's lens, and Raytheon benefitted by having a true contracting professional work with us while sharing the government's perspective."

Perry's TWI experience provided industry's perspective on contract administration, he pointed out.

"I observed the interaction between the contracting officer representative and the contractor, which taught me the value of clear and open communication."

Perry worked with ManTech's senior contracts manager Bob Hill.

"It was clear that Rob came to us with a good knowledge base of contracts and business," Hill said. "To maximize the mutual benefits of Perry's engagement with ManTech, Rob partnered with our program management team to evaluate and advise on mission execution challenges for balancing performance



(Left to right) Robert Perry, Army Contracting Command - Aberdeen Proving Ground procurement analyst, spent much of his time with ManTech International Corp. employees Bob Hill and Jon Sirkis. (Photo by Betsy Kozak-Howard)

demands and resource constraints in geographically dispersed worldwide, challenging circumstances with a particular focus on the presentation of contract deliverables for cost management."

Perry also described the impact of his TWI experience.

"It was a very eye-opening experience. I observed the financial reporting process in preparation for a program execution review to provide the program status to the government customer," said Perry. "Then, the same reporting data was repackaged with a different focus to brief the internal ManTech leadership."

Throughout their TWI participation, the three ACC-APG employees said they experienced a mindset shift.

"I had to adjust and analyze contracting actions from a business point of view where profit margins and risk analysis influence decisions," said Troy. "All costs were considered for each

decision and it was interesting hearing the business discussions. I was amazed by discussions that resulted in several hours of analysis that were summed up to the contracting officer with a simple we concur."

The three ACC-APG members are back in their cubicles and have the responsibility of writing a TWI research paper and slide presentation to document lessons learned from the program.

"I learned a lot from the TWI Program and I think it would be beneficial for all contracting professionals," Troy concluded. ♦

AROUND ACC



902nd Contingency Contracting Battalion's Staff Sgt. Marisol Rodríguez gets in her weekend physical fitness training hiking Mount Si in North Bend, Washington. (Courtesy Photo)

Shirley Watson, U.S. Army Mission and Installation Contracting Command Fort Benning, Ga., industrial property administrator, saved the government more than \$460,000 by acquiring five full track dozers for the Fort Benning Department of Public Works through the Installation Management Command redistribution program. (U.S. Army Photo)



Army Contracting Command Soldiers and civilians watch a movie on sexual assault during ACC's Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program Stand-Down Day June 10. A standing-room-only audience of more than 700 people from ACC, Expeditionary Contracting Command and ACC-Redstone packed the Missile Defense Agency auditorium, Redstone Arsenal, Ala., for training. (U.S. Army Photo by Ed Worley)



Brig. Gen. Ted Harrison, commanding general, Expeditionary Contracting Command, reads to students at the Blossomwood Elementary School, Huntsville, Ala., during the school's Family Reading Night event April 9. Blossomwood administrators often seek out local dignitaries to spend time with students. (Photo by Lt. Col. Michelle Sanner)



Members of the Army Contracting Command-Redstone Arsenal, Ala., Armed Scout Helicopter Contract Division pose in front of a prototype OH-58F Kiowa Warrior delivered for the KW Cockpit and Sensor Upgrade Program. The team has been an integral member supporting the KW CASUP development efforts led by the ASH Program Office as the lead systems integrator. Peggy Hunt, chief of the ASH Contract Division, and her staff executed critical contract actions with several contractors providing design efforts which directly supported the first flight of the OH-58F KW CASUP aircraft. Her team continues to support development contractual efforts and is also on the forefront of preparing awards for advanced procurement parts in support of the transition to production. The government's role as lead systems integrator will result in significant cost avoidance during the production phase. Top row, left to right: Elaine Cameron, Lisa Bridges, Kathy Ray, Peggy Hunt, Tiffany Rogers and Derek Fussell. Bottom row: Jim Ganoe, Hanford Jones, Matt Copeland and Trent Steadman. (U.S. Army Photo by Larry D. McCaskill)





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