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DEFENSE CONTRACT MANAGEMENT AGENCY

DCMA
DEFENSE CONTRACT MANAGEMENT AGENCY

COMMUNICATOR

DUTY TODAY IN DCMA

In this issue:
A special tribute to Anthony A. 'Tony' Acerra

ACQUISITION INSIGHT GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

DEFENSE CONTRACT MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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On the cover:
Parasha Vincent, a quality assurance specialist with Defense Contract Management Agency Dallas, inspects a Black Hawk aircraft assembly to ensure it meets all specification requirements prior to government acceptance. (Photo by Jo Adail Stephenson)

On the back cover:
(Top left) Gail Bennett, recently retired Defense Contract Management Agency property administrator, tours the Kennedy Space Center. After 35 years of service toward the space shuttle external tank program. (Courtesy Photo)

(Top middle) Dan Grimes and John Raniolo, Defense Contract Management Agency quality assurance specialists, inspect the top of a V-22 Osprey fuselage at Boeing's Ridley Park, Pa., plant. (Photo by Patrick Tremblay, DCMA Public Affairs)

(Top right) A Defense Contract Management Agency Boeing Mesa Apache Program technical lead inspects the motor mounts on an Apache Longbow AH-64D helicopter. (Photo by Matthew Montgomery, DCMA Public Affairs)

(Bottom left) Matt Stone, a quality assurance specialist with Defense Contract Management Agency Philadelphia, inspects hydraulic components on a Navy drilling rig at the Schramm factory in West Chester, Pa. (Photos by Patrick Tremblay, DCMA Public Affairs)

(Bottom right) Quality assurance specialist Damarys Mercado, Defense Contract Management Agency Central Regional Command, inspects the M137A2 panoramic telescope, the basic instrument used in laying the M119A2 howitzer in azimuth. (Photo by Jo Adail Stephenson, DCMA Public Affairs)

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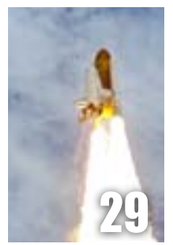
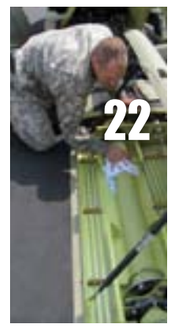




AGENCY NEWS

FOCUS

FEATURES

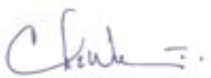
Recognizing our commitment in the workforce

This issue of the Communicator focuses on the people of Defense Contract Management Agency and some of the great things they do every day. From inspecting helicopters in Ridley Park, Pa., to overseeing AWACS in Seattle, Wash., our people perform a critical mission in support of our warfighters and provide valuable customer insight. These photos and stories capture the diverse, multifaceted work our DCMA employees accomplish throughout the nation and around the globe. Unfortunately, some of our work takes members of our DCMA family into dangerous parts of the world where they must risk their lives fulfilling critical missions.

This fall we suffered a tragic loss when one of our DCMA civilian heroes, Mr. Tony Acerra, was killed while deployed in Central Afghanistan. Tony was on his way to conduct an audit when his convoy was attacked. He served as a principal expert on contingency operations contractor/supplier quality assurance and risk, and performed quality assurance audits to monitor contract performance on numerous critical services under the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program. A loyal and dedicated worker, he had been with the agency for more than 16 years.

Tony will be missed by many. His loss saddens us all, but we will remember his dedication to this nation and the agency he served so well. At the end of the day we are an agency that is all about people, and it is people like Tony, who by placing service above self, inspire us to courageously face the future. I want to thank each of you for making sustained efforts to move our agency forward while at the same time dealing with today's challenges. You should know that I am proud of what you are doing, and I am confident we are making a difference.

Warmly,



Charlie E. Williams Jr.
Director

'A typical guy from Queens who loved his country'

Tony Acerra remembered for dedication to nation, family

By DCMA Public Affairs

Those who knew him well say Tony Acerra will be remembered most for his dedication — both to the nation and his family.

"Tony had no other agenda with his work. He just wanted things to be done right," said Dan Caterisano, Acerra's friend and former supervisor.

Acerra's passion for his work was only eclipsed by that for his family, including his wife and two children and extended family in his native Queens, N.Y., said Mike Taylor, Defense Contract Management Agency Syracuse director. "At work, he was all work. At home, he was all home."

"Tony had a strong family behind him," added Caterisano, DCMA Syracuse's quality assurance group leader. "I don't know how he would have done all that he did without their support."

A CIVILIAN HERO

Acerra was on his fifth deployment with DCMA when a convoy he was traveling in was attacked Oct. 29 in Kabul, Afghanistan.

"The loss of one of our own DCMA family members saddens us all, but we will remember Tony's dedication to this nation and the agency he served so well," said DCMA Director Charlie E. Williams, Jr., who called Acerra a civilian hero.

A Navy veteran, Acerra had more than 30 years of federal service, the last 16 as a quality assurance representative with the agency. Taylor said his experience and commitment to providing the best support for U.S. service members made him valued and effective at home and in Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan.

Taylor grew to know Acerra well, first working with him in Greenville, S.C., and later in New York. It was when inspecting aircraft together in Greenville that Taylor first took note of Acerra's dedication. "Sometimes we had to pry Tony off the aircraft. He had such high standards and was tenacious in his job."

This tenacity and dedication was a hallmark of Acerra's work. He deployed in July from DCMA Syracuse to DCMA Central Afghanistan as an emergency essential QAR. He was serving as a principal expert on contingency operations contractor/supplier quality assurance and risk. He performed quality assurance audits to monitor contract performance on numerous critical services under the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program.

On Oct. 29, Acerra was on the way to an audit. "Work was very important to Tony," said Taylor. "He was doing the audit to protect our troops, so to him it was important enough to put his own life on the line."

Acerra made an impression on most everyone he met. Staff members at the DCMA Combat Support Center said he always cared about his job, and was extremely passionate about Contingency Contract Administration Services.

UNCOMPROMISING

Prior to deploying, Acerra was stationed at SKF Aeroengine in Falconer, N.Y. There, his quality assurance assignments included reviewing the manufacturing of bearings for aircraft, aircraft engines and components. Caterisano said Acerra approached even the smallest tasks with the same dedication. "He had a reputation among the contractors as being tough."

Acerra's love for his work in various

A picture of Anthony A. "Tony" Acerra during his years of service in the U.S. Navy. (Photo courtesy of DCMA Syracuse)

locations in the U.S. was evident, but he viewed his work overseas to be the most critical.

"Tony wanted to be over there with the military. He thought so much of what they do, and wanted to support them," said Caterisano. "He was completely dedicated to the CCAS mission, 100 percent. He was intrepid about this stuff."

Acerra received numerous awards for his civilian service, including the Distinguished Civilian Service Award, Exceptional Civilian Service Award and the Meritorious Civilian Service Award, which he received for a 2010 deployment to DCMA Southern Afghanistan.

There he performed more than 160 quality audits in multiple locations. His MCSA citation said Acerra's "technical writing skills were amazing and his findings indisputable." The award recognized his "uncompromising audits", "exceptional performance" and "vigilance" for improving the quality of life of personnel and avoiding excess costs.

Acerra was motivated by a deep patriotism, and carried personal business cards showing the World Trade Center and an American flag. Caterisano said, "Tony was a typical guy from Queens who loved his country."

It was those in uniform, however, who most inspired Acerra. Of all the recognition he had received for his 2010 deployment, Caterisano said the one Acerra treasured most was a simple certificate of appreciation from an Army cavalry squadron. "His heart was with the troops and it meant everything for him to receive recognition from them."

REMEMBERED

Acerra endeared himself to those with whom he worked. An online remembrance page quickly filled with comments from those who knew him, at home and on deployment.

Acerra had an incessant smile and firm handshake, said Scott Shammo, DCMA Central Afghanistan chief of staff. "Tony and I worked closely, both at home and overseas, and his desire to accomplish DCMA's mission and to provide for the warfighter was second to no one."

He felt "like a lifelong friend" after just a few months, said Air Force Col. Michael Lund, DCMA Afghanistan theater counsel.

"Everybody knew Tony and couldn't help but like him. He made it seem so natural to be able to connect with people. He will be sorely missed."

Friends and coworkers in Afghanistan honored Acerra as part of a Nov. 2 Fallen Comrade Ceremony, attended by U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Ryan Crocker, Army Gen. John Allen, Army Lt. Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti, Army Maj. Gen. Daniel Allyn, Army Brig. Gen. John Hammond and Army Brig. Gen. Ross Ridge.

At home, DCMA employees, friends and family members attended a memorial service held Nov. 17 in Erie, Pa.

The American flag at the DCMA headquarters in Fort Lee, Va., was flown at half-staff in Acerra's honor on Nov. 8, the day he was laid to rest by his family in Queens, N.Y.

Chronology of Significant Awards

- Secretary of Defense Medal for the Defense of Freedom (pending approval)
- NATO Meritorious Service Medal (pending approval)
- Distinguished Civilian Service Award (awarded posthumously)
- NATO Medal and Certificate 2011
- DCMA Meritorious Civilian Service Award 2011
- Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) Medal and Certificate 2008
- DCMA Exceptional Civilian Service Award 2005

Boots stand out as a reminder of the four U.S. soldiers and Anthony A. "Tony" Acerra during a memorial ceremony in Afghanistan. Patriotic tributes to the fallen, ceremonies like these date back to the American Civil War. Today, it is a way for unit members to show respect for the fallen. (Photo courtesy of DCMA Afghanistan)

Special Programs – Improving operations

Cassandra Locke | DCMA Public Affairs

The Defense Contract Management Agency Special Programs South's performance improvement officer, John Moses, was recently recognized by the agency's Mission Review Team as having the best practice within the Management Internal Control Program.

"John's analytical abilities have improved the monthly program management review process and ensured data integrity," said Sandy McCarrie, Moses' supervisor. "He has been an asset to DCMA Special Programs South since transferring to us from DCMA International."

As PIO, Moses oversees, implements and executes the CMO's internal control program, as well as provides performance analysis and reporting, and ensures data integrity.

McCarrie said she appreciates Moses' ability to analyze research and provide accurate data.

"We were fortunate enough to fill a need when we selected John, as he quickly rose through the ranks and was eventually selected as our PIO," said Phil Yacovoni, DCMA Special Programs South director. "As a direct result of his leadership, we were recognized during our last MRT as having a best practice in our Management Internal Control Program."

Moses started with the agency in 2003 as a contracts management assistant in DCMA Northern Europe, in the United Kingdom.

"I loved my tour overseas, as one of my hobbies is traveling," said Moses. "I appreciate the opportunity to work in a different culture and opportunities to travel to other countries."

He said weekend trips to neighboring countries allowed him to speak the foreign languages he has studied.

Moses has an undergraduate degree in French and business studies, a graduate degree in French literature and holds a doctorate in French linguistics and pedagogy. He directed the French language instruction program at Indiana University from 1998 to 2000 and at the University of North Texas from 2000 to 2003, having oversight of the language curriculum articulation and instruction for all students studying French.

John Moses, Special Programs South performance improvement officer, was recently recognized by the agency's Mission Review Team as having a best practice within the Management Internal Control Program. Moses is responsible for the oversight, implementation and execution of the CMO's internal control program, as well as performance analysis and reporting, and data integrity. (Photo courtesy of DCMA Special Programs South)

Much of his life has been dedicated to studying French starting in the 6th grade when his family housed students as part of a foreign exchange program. These French exchange students introduced Moses to their language, sparking a lifelong interest in language learning.

"They motivated me by teaching me words and understanding there are other ways to communicate besides English," said Moses.

After starting French studies, he said other cultures began appealing to him. Moses also studied German in high school and has a working proficiency in the language. He has a "near native" proficiency in Portuguese after living in Brazil as a foreign exchange student in high school. Moses also attended university in Besançon, France.

Moses appreciates having had the opportunity to work for DCMA International and now to be a part of Special Programs because they operate in close-knit working groups.

"Foremost, I enjoy the people, their dedication, and their hard work. It is more than just a paycheck," said Moses. "A great working group starts from the top."

DCMA HQ officially opens on *Fort Lee*

By Mark Woodbury | DCMA Public Affairs

Frank Kendall, principal deputy under secretary of defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, (center) cuts the ribbon ceremonially opening the Defense Contract Management Agency's new headquarters building at Fort Lee, Va., Sept. 15. He is joined by Charlie E. Williams, Jr., DCMA director, (left) and Army Maj. Gen. James L. Hodge, U.S. Army Combined Arms Support Command and Fort Lee commander. (Photo by Mark Woodbury, DCMA Public Affairs)

The Defense Contract Management Agency marked the official opening and naming of its new headquarters building on Fort Lee, Va., with a ribbon cutting and building dedication ceremony Sept. 15.

The building was named Herbert Homer Hall in honor of DCMA employee Herb Homer, who was aboard United Airlines Flight 175 on Sept. 11, 2001, when the aircraft crashed into the World Trade Center.

Frank Kendall, principal deputy under secretary of defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, was the keynote speaker for the ceremony. He spoke about the importance of DCMA's mission within the Department of Defense.

"The synergy of bringing you together and combining the workforce in one place at the headquarters level is going to pay great dividends in the future," Kendall said. "I expect great things of you in the future just as we have in the past."

At the beginning of the ceremony, Army Maj. Gen. James L. Hodge, commanding general of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Support Command, the Sustainment Center of Excellence and the senior mission commander for Fort Lee, welcomed DCMA personnel as the newest tenants on the post.

"Today is a special day because this day provides the opportunity to acknowledge the Defense Contract Management Agency, its leadership and its dedicated employees and their families," said Hodge. "This day allows us to come together to witness and celebrate the ribbon cutting and dedication of your new headquarters. Hopefully, this day will also help you discover what makes Fort Lee such a tremendous place to live and work."

He added that DCMA's move to Fort Lee was just one of the many changes to the post as a result of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Act, which included 56 new buildings and the complete renovation of four buildings on post. The new DCMA headquarters building previously housed the Combined Arms Support Command and was substantially updated to support DCMA's personnel and mission.

More than 600 military and civilian personnel will occupy Herbert Homer Hall. DCMA personnel began relocating to the Fort Lee area in June 2007 from northern Virginia and other locations.

"DCMA is excited to be part of the Fort Lee team," said Charlie E. Williams, Jr., the agency's director. "Each day we find ourselves surrounded by the very customer we serve – the warfighters. Their service and dedication to country motivate us in our endeavor to consistently provide the highest quality contract administration to serve them."

The ceremony culminated with the unveiling of the Herbert Homer Hall plaque. Shay Assad, the director of Defense Pricing, spoke about Homer's dedication to his job and the American taxpayer whom he represented.

"There was never a doubt, in our minds, of whom he represented," said Assad, a former Raytheon executive who worked closely with Homer. "Herb was incredibly smart. Herb had great strength. When he thought the best interests of the United States government weren't being taken into account, he let us know about it in no uncertain terms."

Assad said Homer's greatest attribute was his humility to all he met. He said this made him the kind of person whom everyone loved. "He was everything DCMA should be all about – about the warfighter, about the taxpayer, caring and being extremely professional."

During his remarks, Williams said the best way to honor the memory of a great person is to do great work in his name. He described Homer as a truly dedicated public servant whose exceptional leadership and outstanding performance exemplify what DCMA is all about.

"DCMA will honor Herb's memory by continuing to provide outstanding support to our nation's warfighters around the world and right here in this building that will bear his name," Williams said.

Shay Assad, director of Defense Pricing, reveals a bronze plaque naming the new Defense Contract Management Agency headquarters building at Fort Lee, Va., Herbert Homer Hall. Homer was a DCMA employee who was aboard United Airlines Flight 175 when it crashed into the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001. Assad is joined by Charlie E. Williams, Jr., DCMA director, and Homer's wife Karen, mother Winifred and brother Stephen. (Photo by Mark Woodbury, DCMA Public Affairs)

A colorguard from the Fort Lee Noncommissioned Officer Academy parades in the U.S. flag to begin the ribbon cutting and dedication ceremony. (Photo by Patrick Tremblay, DCMA Public Affairs)

World leaders collaborate, ***refine process approaches***

Jo Adail Stephenson | DCMA Public Affairs

A Key senior acquisition and quality assurance executives from seven countries and the International Armaments Cooperation group in Hungary focused on forging an international collaborative senior management forum at the inaugural Oct. 18-19 Senior Leaders Workshop in Budapest, Hungary.

Hosted by Defense Contract Management Agency International with the support of the Hungarian Ministry of Defence Institute of Military Technology, the workshop provided the opportunity for attendees to lay the groundwork to share best practices, discuss national initiatives and develop common solutions to strategic issues and challenges at a senior level.

In his welcoming remarks, DCMA Director Charlie E. Williams, Jr., said, "It's a great opportunity to bring us together on a more strategic level to benchmark successes, share lessons-learned, to develop joint strategies and to determine how we can best leverage our resources for the future."

The workshop's objective was "to initiate new and enhance existing acquisition management senior executive collaboration and interaction," DCMA International Commander Navy Rear Adm. Robert Gilbeau said.

"It's all about relationships," Gilbeau said. He stressed the importance of having a forum for leaders in executive leadership roles to leverage "ways in which we can more efficiently and effectively provide quality and cost management and delivery schedule management and production management in support of our nations' forces."

Gilbeau told attendees, "We all learn from each other," adding that the forum could provide the opportunity to determine "how we can use the inter-relationship of our 'global' community to ensure we are delivering the right product at the right time at the right price with the right quality to protect our troops and make sure our nations' interests are maintained."

With economic downturn across the globe and nations facing some of the same challenges like reductions in resources and "doing more without more" in the midst of budget cuts, the workshop attendees noted the importance of a senior-level international collaboration forum.

It was a "very good idea to organize this workshop — a good way to strengthen relationships through communication, exchange of information and sharing experiences," according to one attendee.

Another indicated, "The workshop was a great opportunity to meet and discuss challenges with other nations. Overall a great first session, and now there is a way forward."

Williams thanked the representatives, saying the workshop provided the framework to strategically "think about things that are important to all of us and to think about how we move down the road to do better in this time when we are all faced with economic and budget challenges."

Within the next four to six months, the next step is organizing a follow-on meeting targeting attendance by senior executives, who can promote change. The objectives will be to validate the list of issues established during this first meeting, create agreed-upon objectives with leaders and outline proposed outputs and timelines.

Senior acquisition and quality assurance executives from seven countries and the International Armaments Cooperation group in Hungary attend the inaugural Oct. 18-19 Senior Leaders Workshop in Budapest, Hungary. The workshop was hosted by Defense Contract Management Agency International with the support of the Hungarian Ministry of Defence Institute of Military Technology. (Photos by Jo Adail Stephenson, DCMA Public Affairs)

Oversight around the globe:
DCMA employees provide multi-national support to AWACS

Matthew Montgomery | DCMA Public Affairs

"One Team in a Global Partnership" — This is the motto of the Airborne Warning and Control System suite of programs unifying multiple countries using surveillance aircraft around the world. Providing oversight for this multi-national program is the role of Defense Contract Management Agency personnel at the Boeing Seattle office.

"We have delegations all over the world supporting this program," said Gayla Alfredson, AWACS program integrator. "The vision is to keep these planes flying until at least 2035."

The first contract was awarded in 1970. Over the years, production of AWACS diminished but the DCMA mission remained robust. Production oversight was replaced with monitoring upgrades and modifications to the existing fleet of aircraft.

"The work we are doing now is bringing the AWACS up to current configurations by changing out analog instrumentation for digital, and making other necessary upgrades," said Lynda Fitzstephens, chief of the DCMA Manufacturing and Program Integration Team. "We do this not only for the U.S., but also for our NATO allies."

The AWACS is a Boeing 707/767 commercial airframe with a rotating radar dome used for surveillance. The dome is 30 feet across, six feet tall and contains the system the aircraft uses to monitor air and ground space. Combined with an identification friend or foe subsystem, the radar can detect, identify and track enemy and friendly low-flying aircraft by eliminating ground clutter returns.

Since the initial delivery, AWACS aircraft have supported countries around the world with numerous operations.

In 2010, the U.S. fleet alone flew 66 missions during the Winter Olympics in Vancouver and nine humanitarian missions over Haiti.

The aircraft have also flown more than 550 missions in Iraq and Afghanistan and continue to provide constant battlefield information for the military. These, along with similar missions around the world, are why the AWACS is such a valuable instrument for global defense.

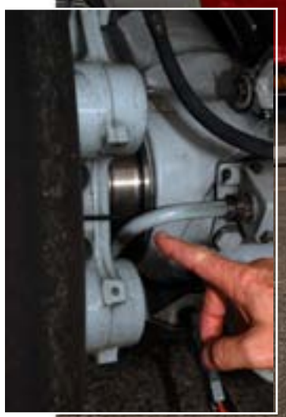
Alfredson said the continued success of the program would not be possible without the extremely qualified DCMA team overseeing six major AWACS programs, each in different phases with unique requirements. The program managers and delegated offices around the globe provide oversight to hundreds of contracts that support the mission.

"We are out there on the flightline monitoring what is going on with the aircraft, managing the contract actions and providing quality assurance oversight. We constantly inspect the work being done and ensure it is being done to contract specifications," said Eric Eckman, AWACS quality assurance specialist.

This level of oversight is a valuable tool to the customer and something our international partners appreciate, said Fitzstephens. "We work with partner countries and provide them the same level of oversight we would provide to any American customer."

Regardless of where the upgrades are being made, either at the Boeing Seattle office or locations around the globe, Eckman said DCMA employees are making sure the work is being done correctly.

"We are here and available to the customer to be their eyes and ears, to ensure they are getting what they pay for and that a quality product is getting out to the field," said Eckman. "Our ultimate goal is to make sure the operators are provided equipment that performs and operates the way it is supposed to."



Eric Eckman, Defense Contract Management Agency quality assurance specialist, inspects the landing gear of a Japanese Airborne Warning and Control System during a final inspection. DCMA personnel are responsible for monitoring upgrades and modifications to the AWACS for U.S. and NATO allies. (Photos by Matthew Montgomery, DCMA Public Affairs)

Defense Contract Management Agency Quality Assurance Specialist Eric Eckman (left) discusses the frame integrity of a Japanese Airborne Warning and Control System with a Boeing employee during a final inspection.

Eric Eckman, Defense Contract Management Agency quality assurance specialist, (right) inspects the landing gear of a Japanese Airborne Warning and Control System during a final inspection. DCMA personnel are responsible for monitoring upgrades and modifications to the AWACS for U.S. and NATO allies.

n target

Jo Adail Stephenson | DCMA Public Affairs

An Army soldier checks a compass during preparation for an M119 Howitzer live fire exercise. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Dallas Edwards)

Damarys Mercado, quality assurance specialist, Defense Contract Management Agency Central Regional Command, performs a final inspection on the M2A2 aiming circle, an elbow telescope mounted on orienting and elevating mechanisms contained within a main housing. The main housing, in turn, is mounted on a tripod and provides precise measurements of azimuth and elevation angles of a ground or aerial target through the use of azimuth and elevation scales. (Photo by Jo Adail Stephenson, DCMA Public Affairs)

The targets Damarys Mercado zeros in on each day are several key assemblies critical to the M119 howitzer, a lightweight artillery weapon that provides direct support fires to light, airborne and air assault forces.

As a Defense Contract Management Agency Central Regional Command team member, Mercado is a quality assurance specialist for the M187A1 telescope mount, the M137A2 panoramic telescope and the M2A2 aiming circle assemblies contracts.

The M187A1 telescope mount adapts the M137A2 panoramic telescope, or pantel, to the howitzer. The mount provides adjustments in elevation and cross-level for indirect fire for the weapon, according to the U.S. Army Tank-automotive and Armaments Command Life Cycle Management Command.

The M137A2 panoramic telescope is the basic instrument used in laying the M119A2 howitzer in azimuth, which is the angle of horizontal deviation, measured clockwise, of a bearing from a standard direction, as from north or south. It is a four-power, fixed-focus telescope mounted on the howitzer using the M187A1 telescope mount.

M2A2 aiming circle consists of an elbow telescope mounted on orienting and elevating mechanisms contained within a main housing. The main housing, in turn, is mounted on a tripod and provides precise measurements of azimuth and elevation angles of a ground or aerial target through the use of azimuth and elevation scales.

Mercado's oversight on the assemblies includes assuring contractual requirements are met and conducting mandatory inspection as required by letter of delegations or quality assurance letter of instruction. "I conduct investigative reviews on product quality deficiency reports received and support customer concerns," Mercado said.

When quality issues come up, Mercado

Quality assurance specialist Damarys Mercado, Defense Contract Management Agency Central Regional Command, inspects the M137A2 panoramic telescope, the basic instrument used in laying the M119A2 howitzer in azimuth. The M137A2 is a four-power, fixed-focus telescope mounted on the howitzer using the M187A1 telescope mount. (Photo by Jo Adail Stephenson, DCMA Public Affairs)

An Army soldier prepares an M119 Howitzer to fire during an exercise. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Dallas Edwards)

indicated it's a teaming effort with the contractor and customer in most cases. "I interface with the contractor via inspection visits, meetings, e-mails and phone calls. I support the customer visits whenever possible and I also communicate with them via e-mails or phone calls."

Mercado's aim has to be on target because the assemblies affect the howitzer's operation and functionality. The M119 is a versatile weapon. It can be towed by a Humvee, dropped by parachute, and airlifted by UH-60 Black Hawk and CH-47 Chinook helicopters or C-130 Hercules aircraft.

At the end of the day, it is evident Mercado has one thing clearly in her sights: supporting the warfighter.

FOCUS | WEST

Airspace safety:

Software QAs oversee post 9/11 initiatives

Matthew Montgomery | DCMA Public Affairs

Defense Contract Management Agency personnel at the Raytheon Los Angeles office discuss the Battle Control System — Fixed program capabilities. (Photo by Matthew Montgomery, DCMA Public Affairs)

Defense Contract Management Agency personnel in Los Angeles understand the importance of protecting U.S. airspace. This dedicated team works on the Battle Control System, a post 9/11 initiative, which provides enhanced airspace surveillance.

"There is a lot of pressure knowing you're working on a program this closely associated with the terrorist attacks," said Jason McNutt, DCMA Raytheon Los Angeles program integration specialist. "We have a constant reminder of those tragic events and I think it adds an additional layer of responsibility to an already important job."

The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, or 9/11 Commission, was established in 2002 to look into the attacks and prepare a full and complete account of what happened. The report looked at preparedness, response rates and other variables.

"One finding from the commission was that the nation needed to do a better job of monitoring domestic air space," said McNutt. "This meant upgrades in terms of how we monitor flights, and the tradeoff between the Federal Aviation Administration and the Air Force in matters of emergency."

The solution was the Battle Control System – Fixed, a bi-national program with Canada that provides surveillance over North American airspace to include Alaska and Hawaii. The system represents a significant increase over previous surveillance capabilities.

"When they developed the BCS-F system, they basically went from more than 40 domestic radars to several hundred now in use," said McNutt. "It is a very impressive system compared to what we had."

Prior to the new system, operators were able to track a couple hundred planes over domestic skies at any given time, said McNutt. "Now we have the ability to monitor more than 15,000 tracks — which can represent anything from commercial airliners or military aircraft to small personal planes."

Powering the BCS-F system is a robust computer software program developed by Thales-Raytheon Systems with a total acquisition value of more than $250 million. The DCMA Raytheon Los Angeles office has a satellite location in the contractor's facility where McNutt's program support team resides. They currently have personnel on site and additional staff that provide support from other local DCMA offices.

Due to the BCS-F system being a high visibility, computer-centric program, the team is staffed with a software engineer, software quality assurance specialist and systems engineer. Their mission is to ensure the software and hardware powering the system is operating correctly and meets the needs of the warfighter.

"As a software quality assurance specialist, I verify and witness lab testing, keep track of cost schedules for the program, handle risk management and analyze data for defects or problems," said Young Ko, a South Korean immigrant with a doctorate in computer programming. "I also check to make sure the contractor is following the right procedures."

"We're also the eyes and ears for the customers," added Bill Stokes, DCMA software engineer. "We have several weekly teleconferences with the customer where we share information and make sure that what the customer is asking for is what they are getting."

The many years of computer engineering and programming experience between the DCMA engineering team allows them to provide the right amount of oversight to the most complicated aspect of the contract – software acquisition management.

"The software component is extremely important because it makes the system work," said McNutt. "The software allows information from all the FAA radars, along with military radar, to be fed into one pipeline that feeds locations between the U.S. and Canada. It is then displayed for Air Force operators who have the ability to take actions and make quick decisions."

A government independent test team performs the actual product testing in the operational environment. However, DCMA personnel monitor the entire in-house contractor test schedule until the software leaves the contractor's facility.

"We watch and verify the contractor is performing tests as required, and work very closely with the independent test team," said McNutt. "They fly in periodically to do spot checks and witness certain tests that they have an interest in."

> **"As a team, we have the ability to give a lot more insight and help the program office by providing day-to-day updates that they otherwise would not get."**
>
> —Jason McNutt, DCMA Raytheon Los Angeles program integration specialist.

McNutt's team serves as a valuable resource for the test team because they are physically located with the contractor, said McNutt. "There have been many occasions where the test team has witnessed an anomaly at their facility and called us to check it out in the contractor facility – this helps them isolate problems more effectively."

Another in-plant team member, systems engineer David Do, ensures replacement hardware components are compatible and hardware obsolescence issues are tracked and resolved. Do has eight years of experience tracking the configuration management of large complex ship building projects for the Navy. He now uses his knowledge to ensure integrity of the BCS-F system.

"With such a robust commercial-off-the-shelf hardware baseline needed to support the operation of the software, there are many times that I am called on by the program office to assist with finding a suitable solution that meets the government's need and still preserves the operational life of the system," said Do.

In addition to the in-plant team, a support team of contract officers, price/cost analyst and an earned value management analyst review the money being spent and ensure the government isn't being overcharged.

"As a team, we have the ability to give a lot more insight and help the program office by providing day-to-day updates that they otherwise would not get," said McNutt. "My team knows that when they talk to the contractor they represent the Department of Defense, program manager and the U.S. Air Force."

QA checks for A Tight Fit

Jo Adail Stephenson | DCMA Public Affairs

The hands of B.L. Boyd, Defense Contract Management Agency Dallas quality assurance specialist, examine an entrenching tool pouch to ensure the tool going into it will fit correctly. (Photos by Jo Adail Stephenson, DCMA Public Affairs)

Personal face-to-face involvement with the contractor whenever possible is an important way of conducting business to B.L. Boyd. "This type of communication stresses to the contractor how concerned we are that the product they are providing to our troops is in fact contractually sound."

The Defense Contract Management Agency Dallas quality assurance specialist said it's important to personally convey to the contractor they are not alone in their endeavors and have avenues to take when contractual and technical questions or issues arise. "We want to provide answers in a timely manner to help avoid costly decisions from being made."

When a quality assurance issue comes up, he discusses it personally with the contractor. "I believe in always attempting to handle any and all issues on the spot when possible. Details tend to get forgotten when you don't."

Boyd also interacts with the customer any time there are additional requirements to the basic contract or if any questions arise that cannot be answered locally.

"I am a firm believer in picking up the phone when questions absolutely need to be addressed and answered and advise my contractors to do the same," he said. "A sense of frustration and desperate need for an answer can easily be lost via a slow moving electronic form."

Systemic or more serious deficiencies that cannot be handled on the spot get documented in the form of a corrective action request, or CAR. "I always convey to the contractor if they are upset or disagree with my stance on a matter, I do not take offense if they wish to contact the procuring contracting officer directly. It is always an option at their disposal. I stress the 'buying activity' is my customer too, and my job in total is to assure the contractor is fulfilling their contractual wishes."

At the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind facility, Boyd's quality assurance responsibilities involve performing both in-process and final inspections on both piece parts and final product and reviewing material certifications/test reports, in-process and final inspection records, packing/preservation/marking and invoices.

The Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind staffs a manufacturing and sewing facility with blind/visually impaired employees who produce products for both commercial customers and government agencies, including the U.S. military.

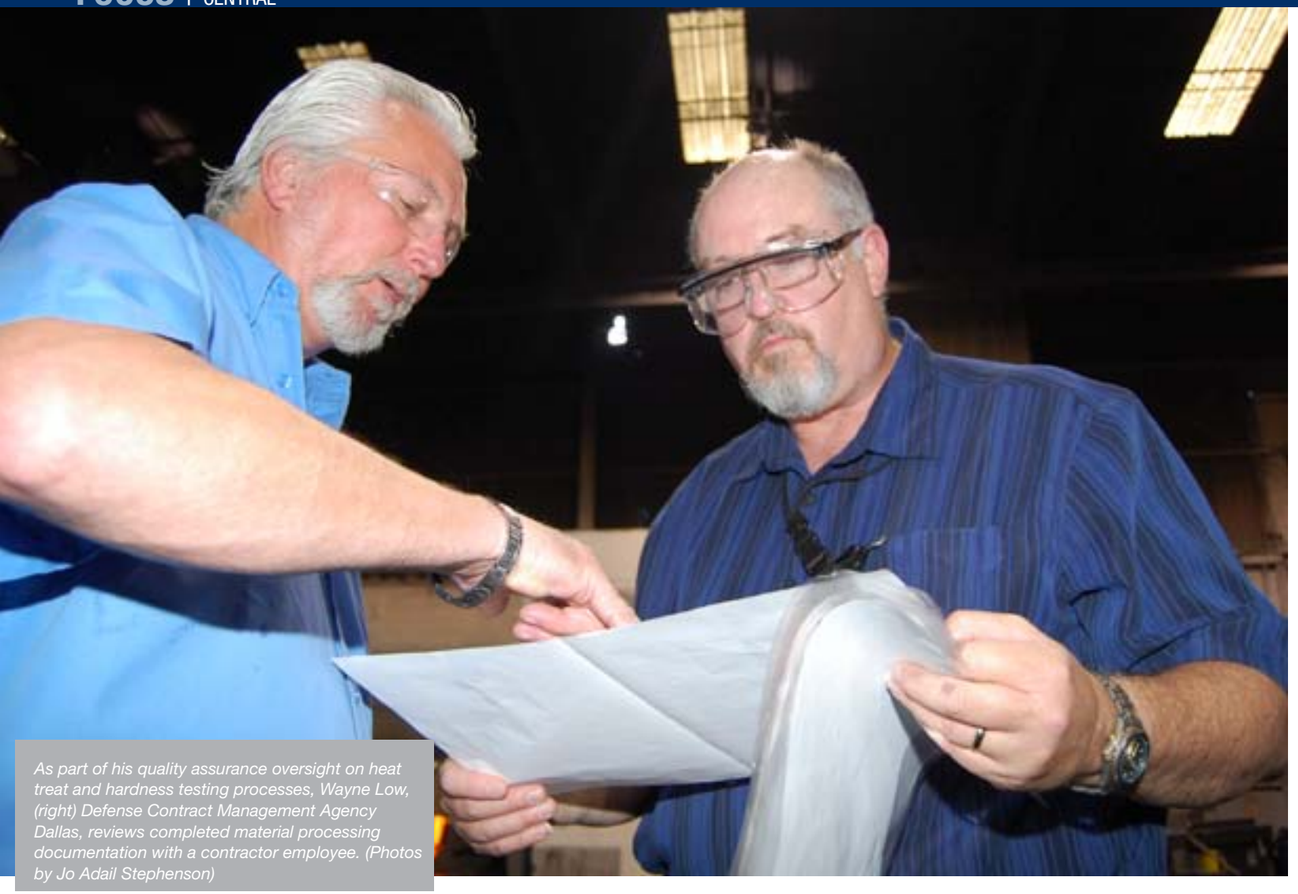
For this contract, the contractor's work involves planning, contract review, purchasing, spreading, cutting, sewing, hardware assembly, packing/preservation/marking, in-process and final inspection on the entrenching tool pouches, which hold the foldable entrenching tools.

The contractor manufactures approximately 5,000 pouches per month for the Army.

The end result is "the warfighters getting high quality and reliable products they can use to stay safe and healthy and succeed in whatever mission they may be engaged," he said. "To the warfighter, I'd say I am honored, even if in the smallest way, to have played any role in keeping you and our country safe. Thank you for all your efforts, stay safe and God bless."

Once the entrenching tool is inside the pouch, B. L. Boyd, Defense Contract Management Agency Dallas quality assurance specialist, checks the clearance for closing the pouch.

A close-up view of an entrenching tool pouch shows the area where B.L. Boyd checks to make sure an entrenching tool pouch fastens and closes properly.



As part of his quality assurance oversight on heat treat and hardness testing processes, Wayne Low, (right) Defense Contract Management Agency Dallas, reviews completed material processing documentation with a contractor employee. (Photos by Jo Adail Stephenson)

They can take the heat — validating heat treat processes

Jo Adail Stephenson | DCMA Public Affairs

When it comes to oversight on heat treat and hardness testing processes, Wayne Low takes the scorching, sweltering Texas summer heat and high heat index in stride as he performs his work in support of both the warfighter and the customer.

Paramount to the Defense Contract Management Agency Dallas quality assurance representative's work at the contractor site is assurance that heat treat processes are within required parameters because this can affect many items used on multiple ground, air and sea platforms which are critical to operation of systems upon which warfighters depend.

To warfighters, Low, a DCMA employee for 25 years, said he would like to say, "DCMA is here to assure the material and systems you receive to perform your mission meet or exceed the requirements necessary for you to succeed in that mission."

This contractor is used by multiple defense contractors in the United States to perform metal heat treat processing of material used in the manufacturing of defense products. Heat treat processing is a controlled process used to alter the microstructure of materials such as metals and alloys to impart properties which benefit the working life of components.

"DCMA is involved here because the product is either a critical safety item or a high risk product (affecting quality, cost and schedule)," he said.

The agency receives delegations to perform oversight on processing performed at this contractor facility. Low inspects, witnesses, verifies and validates heat treat and hardness testing processes. "DCMA acts as the eyes and ears for our customers. Customers (delegators) are informed of quality and schedule issues affecting the product."

For Low, it's all about the end-user. "Our warfighter is dependent on the successful processing of these products. It affects them, the companies that use them and the cities and communities where they are made. If there's a mistake, it can affect millions." C

Wayne Low, (right) Defense Contract Management Agency Dallas, quality assurance representative, checks the hardness testing being performed by a contractor employee.

Inspecting a sample of the processed metal microstructure under the microscope is one of the ways Wayne Low, Defense Contract Management Agency Dallas, verifies and validates the heat treat processes are within the required parameters.

Mesa team inspects Apaches

Matthew Montgomery | DCMA Public Affairs

A Defense Contract Management Agency Boeing Mesa Apache Program technical lead inspects the motor mounts on an Apache Longbow AH-64D helicopter. (Photos by Matthew Montgomery, DCMA Public Affairs)

A Defense Contract Management Agency Boeing Mesa quality assurance specialist inspects the tail rotor of an Apache Longbow AH-64D during the final stage of production at the Boeing Mesa plant.

Defense Contract Management Agency Boeing Mesa oversees more than 600 contracts at a face value of more than $15.5 billion. The majority of resources here are spent on the building and remanufacturing of the Apache helicopter.

The Apache program started in the 1970s as the Army looked to replace the AH-1 Cobra. The first Apache, an AH-64A model, was delivered to the Army in 1984. The Longbow version, an AH-64D model, was delivered in 1987 and is scheduled for production through 2013.

"Most of our oversight is focused on the production and remanufacturing process," said John Graham, DCMA Boeing Mesa program integrator. "We actually deliver directly to the Army and ensure aircraft meet contractual obligations, specification performance standards, and that everything operates safely during flight."

Graham said the office staff and quality assurance specialists in the plant make sure a quality product is delivered on time and at cost. Currently, that means overseeing the production and remanufacturing of about four aircraft monthly.

For the QA team, this means 24 product examinations, 13 mandatory government inspections and 34 Process Review Plus Inspections must be completed before a single Apache can leave the facility.

During each review or examination more than 120 individual characteristics must be verified, witnessed or checked. This equates to more than 2,200 individual actions that must be accomplished before DCMA will approve the aircraft for delivery.

"We monitor the entire process here at the plant," said Jeff Adams, DCMA Boeing Mesa Apache Program technical lead, "from the time the airframe comes in on one side, to them going out to paint and flight test on the other."

The plant operates on a system where each phase of work is completed over a six-day period. The aircraft then moves forward and the next phase begins. During the initial phase of this process, the QA team performs random inspections on the airframe to ensure quality.

"During the first phase, we mainly check things that are not routine like dents and minor damage to the airframe," said Adams, one of two technical leads who work in final assembly. The goal is to make sure that nothing is allowed to pass the initial stage that would compromise the overall integrity of the Apache.

Adams, who has been with DCMA for two and a half years, said the DCMA role becomes more involved as the airframe moves through the plant. DCMA QA specialists oversee Boeing employees as they perform modifications to the airframe, install hydraulics, wings and internal components; route wiring harnesses, and start hanging the engines as the airframe moves forward.

The Apache has two engines that produce more than 3,400 combined horsepower. Each cost approximately $1 million and allow the aircraft to reach speeds up to 150 miles per hour. Adams said that ensuring they are installed correctly is critical to the program.

"This is where we get more involved because it's part of our safety of flight inspection," said Adams. The mandated inspections entail overseeing the engine mounting as well as the installation of the drive trains, flight controls and other components.

"We do everything from checking the engine motor mounts to witnessing the torque of a drive shaft," he added.

DCMA employees also perform random inspections to ensure quality and compliance. These checks are in addition to the normal inspections, witnesses and verifications that must be performed.

A Defense Contract Management Agency Boeing Mesa Apache Program technical lead inspects the motor mounts on an Apache Longbow AH-64D helicopter.

"DCMA being a part of the process helps out immensely and having us here in the plant is a great thing," said Adams. "We know the process, we know the Boeing employees, and we are able to effectively monitor the program. I think it really improves the quality and final product to the customer."

After the Apache is assembled in the first plant, it moves to the next stage where it receives a coat of green paint, along with black numbers and lettering. After painting, the aircraft goes to the next phase of production where the main rotor blades, crew station doors and other final components are installed.

A separate group of DCMA quality assurance specialists work the final phase of production and perform acceptance and pre-flight inspections. However, this doesn't mean the team works solely in their respective buildings.

"We work very closely with our teams in other buildings and participate in their processes, which can be very beneficial," said Adams. "For example, we were helping perform an acceptance inspection and found an issue with a hanger bearing bracket. The next day we walked the line in my building and found a similar situation on an airframe, so we wrote a corrective action request for it to be fixed."

The pre-flight inspections are followed by test flights performed first by Boeing pilots first and then by DCMA government flight representatives. The DCMA Boeing Mesa office has a staff of three Army pilots who ensure the Apaches are ready for delivery.

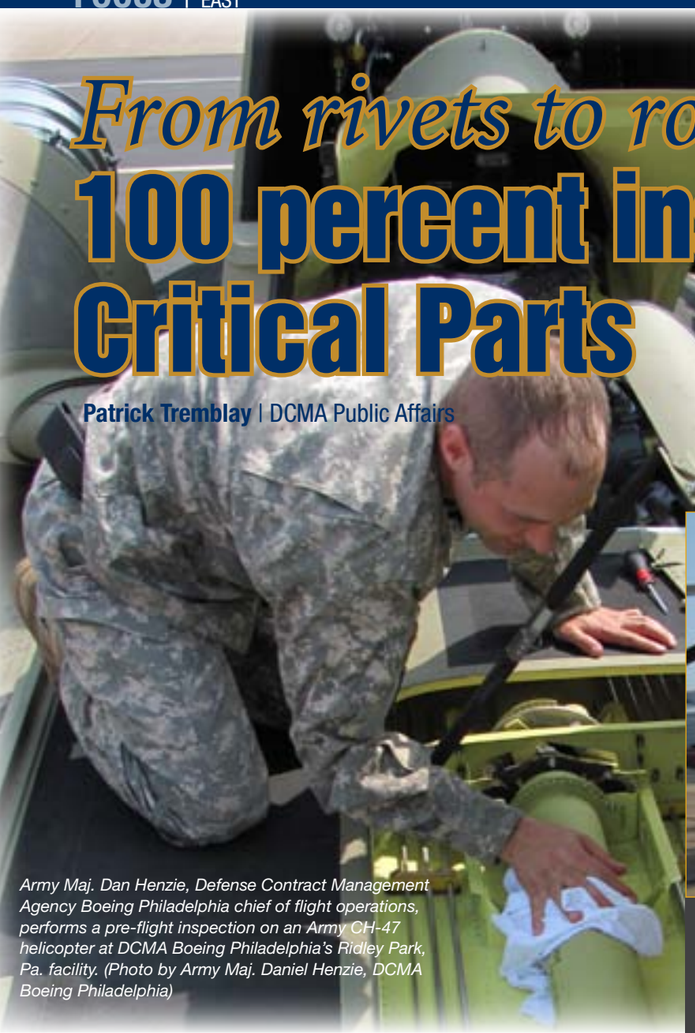
"We take out new aircraft and make sure they function as required by the contract," said Army Chief Warrant Officer 3 Sean Gilland, DCMA government flight representative and Army acceptance pilot. "We check the handling quality, make sure the auto rotations are good, engines are performing to specifications and all the electronics are functioning within contract parameters."

Gilland said the experience working at the DCMA Boeing Mesa plant serves a vital purpose in the process.

"It is a rewarding experience knowing I'm checking the Apaches out before they go to their respective units – but there is also a big sense of responsibility," said Gilland. "These are going to units I know and could be flying with in the future."

From rivets to rotors: 100 percent inspecting of Critical Parts

Patrick Tremblay | DCMA Public Affairs



Army Maj. Dan Henzie, Defense Contract Management Agency Boeing Philadelphia chief of flight operations, performs a pre-flight inspection on an Army CH-47 helicopter at DCMA Boeing Philadelphia's Ridley Park, Pa. facility. (Photo by Army Maj. Daniel Henzie, DCMA Boeing Philadelphia)

Army Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Carlson, CH-47F flight engineer and Defense Contract Management Agency government ground representative, performs a pre-flight inspection on an Army CH-47 helicopter at DCMA Boeing Philadelphia's Ridley Park, Pa., facility. Each aircraft will be flown by active duty flight crews assigned to DCMA prior to final delivery to the customer. (Photo by Army Maj. Daniel Henzie, DCMA Boeing Philadelphia)

Near Philadelphia, Defense Contract Management Agency personnel play a critical role in two of the most distinct military aircraft in the U.S. inventory: the Boeing CH-47 helicopter and the Bell-Boeing V-22 tilt-rotor aircraft.

More than 100 DCMA employees work at the sprawling Boeing campus in Ridley Park, Pa., on an industrial complex originally built to produce railroad locomotives. Since the 1960s the location has been involved with aircraft production. In addition, the DCMA contract management office oversees several personnel at Dover Air Force Base, Del., executing a quality delegation for modification work on Air Force C-5 Galaxy and C-17 Globemaster jets.

Rosemary Ormsby, DCMA Boeing Philadelphia deputy commander, said that understanding the corporate culture is one of the unique challenges of working with a large contractor. "In order to do our job right, there has to be a mutual respect," Ormsby said. "We have to be able to navigate Boeing, but at the same time keep them at arm's length so we can hold them accountable for their obligations to the customer."

Ormsby credited the office's seasoned professional workforce with deftly handling DCMA's vital role in the production process. She also mentioned two programs — Keystone and the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) — as successful in providing a "hands-on" opportunity to develop the next generation of acquisition professionals.

Carlos Hatchett, DCMA H-47 engineering team leader, supervises interns who work at the facility and said he is impressed with Keystone and SCEP personnel. "They make great additions to DCMA."

On Hatchett's team is Jeff McCampbell, a third-year Keystone out of the University of Pittsburgh. McCampbell enjoys the broad scope of work in which he's been involved. "It's an opportunity to see an aircraft being built from design to delivery," he said, "and to experience it from all aspects."

Osprey

DCMA's role in V-22 Osprey production spans the full gamut from contracting to delivery. The V-22 is a unique aircraft, produced jointly by Boeing and Bell Helicopters. The engines rotate so it takes off and lands similar to a helicopter, but once aloft flies like an airplane. DCMA quality assurance personnel inspect the aircraft at set points along the production line, no small task when Boeing is completing a V-22 every six days.

"We inspect 100 percent of critical components," said Dan Evans, a DCMA quality assurance group chief with more than 29 years of government service. "This includes things like flight controls, how fuselage pieces are spliced together and other components and processes." To ensure standards are met, quality assurance personnel monitor the production and testing of other components, such as paint and riveting.

Evans has spent the past 22 years working with DCMA, and is quick to remark on how effectively the DCMA Boeing Philadelphia team works. "It's DCMA employees, but it is really like a large family," Evans said.

Two variants of the Osprey are produced at the Boeing plant – the MV-22 for the Marine Corps and the CV-22 for the Air Force. After final inspections are performed in Pennsylvania, the aircraft have one more stop before being delivered to the customer. The Osprey are sent to Amarillo, Tex., where the DCMA Bell Helicopter team inspects the mating of the wings to the fuselage and conducts flight testing.

Chinook

For the CH-47, everything from production to test flights is done on-site at Ridley Park. Commonly called the Chinook, the CH-47 is the tandem-rotor, medium/heavy-lift helicopter used by the Army. There have been more than 1,000 produced since being developed by Boeing Vertol. It is the fastest helicopter in the Army's inventory. In September 2011, Boeing and defense leaders celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Chinook's first flight, making it the longest continuously operating program in Boeing's history.

Dan Grimes and John Raniolo, Defense Contract Management Agency quality assurance specialists, inspect the top of a V-22 Osprey fuselage at Boeing's Ridley Park, Pa., plant. Once the inspection is complete, the top of the aircraft will not be worked on again until the wings are mated to it in Amarillo, Tex. Together, Grimes and Raniolo have more than 57 years of experience working with the federal government – more than 30 of that with DCMA. (Photo by Patrick Tremblay, DCMA Public Affairs)

Karl Meixner, Defense Contract Management Agency quality assurance specialist, performs a "safety of flight" inspection on the rear section of an CH-47 helicopter at Boeing's Ridley Park, Pa., plant. (Photo by Patrick Tremblay, DCMA Public Affairs)

The Chinook is produced in an older part of the Boeing campus, separate from the Osprey line. Recent major renovations have increased helicopter production capability, reinforcing the need for DCMA and Boeing to have an effective working relationship. Pat Donnelly, Boeing's CH-47 program manager, said the ultimate goal of both organizations is the same – to get the best aircraft to the Army customer.

"Increasing the rate of production has required us to create initiatives to lean-out some processes," Donnelly said. "It's put some strain on both Boeing and DCMA, but through-out there has been great coordination between the two teams."

One of the central roles in the relationship with Boeing is held by Al Doreste, DCMA's Chinook program integrator. Doreste moves quickly among his program support team, ensuring that industrial specialists, engineers and quality assurance personnel are working together. Doreste is equally at home talking with Boeing production leads, acting as a liaison for the various functions of his team.

"We have to have a terrific working relationship with the contractor," said Doreste, "but still always knowing that our responsibility is to the customer, the Army, and by extension the American public."

For Army Maj. Dan Henzie, DCMA Boeing Philadelphia chief of CH-47 flight operations, the ability to affect the final product being delivered to the warfighter is very rewarding.

"I know a lot of the guys, the end-users around the world, who rely on these machines," said Henzie. "That really brings it home." C

Karl Meixner, Defense Contract Management Agency quality assurance specialist, performs flights. Meixner has more than 30 years experience working with aircraft, the past seven and a half with DCMA. (Photos by Patrick Tremblay, DCMA Public Affairs)

Army Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jason Franzen, CH-47F acceptance test pilot, performs a pre-flight inspection on an Army CH-47 helicopter at Defense Contract Management Agency Boeing Philadelphia's Ridley Park, Pa., facility. Each aircraft will be flown by active duty flight crews assigned to DCMA prior to final delivery to the customer. (Photo by Army Maj. Daniel Henzie, DCMA Boeing Philadelphia)

CH-47F Chinook (Army): *www.army.mil/factfiles/equipment/aircraft/chinook.html*

The Chinook's mission is to transport ground forces, supplies, ammunition and other battle-critical cargo in support of worldwide combat and contingency operations.

Max Gross Weight:	50,000 lbs
Empty Weight:	23,401 lbs
Max Speed:	170 knots / 184 mph
Normal Cruise Speed:	130 knots / 149 mph
Rate of Climb:	1,522 ft/min
Rotor System:	three manual-folding blades per hub (two hubs); 225 revolutions per minute; 60-ft rotor span
Troop Capacity:	36 (33 troops plus 3 crew members)
Litter Capacity:	24
Sling-load Capacity:	26,000 lb center hook; 17,000 lb forward/aft hook; 25,000 lb tandem
Minimum Crew:	3 (pilot, co-pilot, and flight engineer)

V-22 Osprey (Marine Corps): *www.navair.navy.mil/v22/?fuseaction=aircraft.main*

According to the Navy, the Osprey's tiltrotor combines the speed, range and fuel efficiency normally associated with turboprop aircraft with the vertical take-off/landing and hover capabilities of helicopters.

Empty Weight:	33,459 lbs
Max Speed:	257 knots / 296 mph
Rate of Climb:	3,200 ft/min
Proprotor System:	three graphite/fiberglass blades per hub; 38 feet diameter, 661.9 feet per second tip speed
Troop Capacity:	24
Litter Capacity:	12
Cargo Hook (dual) Capacity:	15,000 lbs
Mission Radius:	up to 267 nautical miles

Defense Contract Management Agency Dallas quality assurance specialist Parasha Vincent checks for nonconformities on a Black Hawk aircraft assembly. (Photo by Jo Adail Stephenson, DCMA Public Affairs)

A soldier exits a Black Hawk helicopter in Afghanistan. (Photo by Marine Sgt. Brian Kester))

Same commitment just different 'uniforms'

Jo Adail Stephenson | DCMA Public Affairs

Defense Contract Management Agency Dallas quality assurance specialist Parasha Vincent knows first-hand how warfighters are affected by the work he performs because he was one for 20 years.

Now, instead of donning an Army uniform, Vincent suits up in his protective coveralls to perform part of his quality assurance work on Black Hawk aircraft assemblies. "DCMA is committed to supporting our warfighters to ensure they get the products and services they need," he said.

Vincent also plans and executes contractor surveillance based on risk of manufacturing processes to complete total build of aircraft parts and assemblies.

"In addition, I ensure parts are built to specifications prior to acceptance of products, on behalf of the government, for government service organizations such as the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines," he said.

He performs his work at Triumph Aerostructures - Vought Aircraft Division, a contractor who manufactures aircraft parts and assemblies that are supplied to various government service organizations per government contracts and purchase orders. DCMA's role is to manage the contract and purchase orders to ensure delivery of quality products and services to the warfighter - on time and on cost. Vincent performs quality assurance as part of the Black Hawk program. DCMA has been involved with the program since 2005.

The Black Hawk is a utility tactical transport helicopter used by the Army. Its mission is to provide air assault, general support, aeromedical evacuation, command and control and special operations support to combat and stability and support operations.

"DCMA ensures the buying activities are getting the products in accordance with the buying activities' needs," Vincent said.

Parasha Vincent, a quality assurance specialist with Defense Contract Management Agency Dallas, inspects a Black Hawk aircraft assembly to ensure it meets all specification requirements prior to government acceptance. (Photo by Jo Adail Stephenson, DCMA Public Affairs)

"For example, DCMA ensures the product meets all specification requirements prior to government acceptance."

To ensure product requirements are met, Vincent performs inspections and witnesses and verifies tests. If quality issues come up, he said, "I work with my fellow DCMA colleagues and contractor QA personnel. We may conduct a meeting or teleconference. During this time, we identify the requirement and how to achieve that requirement in a safe and quality manner that yields positive results."

When it comes to commitment in support of the warfighter and the customer, Vincent's supervisor, Mary Deary, said, "Mr. Vincent and the DCMA quality assurance team devote countless hours, energy and support to ensure customer needs are identified and met. They have done an exceptional job in meeting the customer's and agency's objectives."

Vincent hasn't stopped serving his fellow warfighters; he's just changed his "uniform."

He said, "As a former soldier myself, I would like to say thank you all for your service and Godspeed!"

The sum of the parts: Non-destructive testing holds the Navy together

Patrick Tremblay | DCMA Public Affairs

David Reiner, a quality assurance representative with the Defense Contract Management Agency's Navy Special Emphasis Operations, uses special lighting to expose surface imperfections in a fastener at Laboratory Testing, Inc., in Hatfield, Pa. The part has been coated with a liquid then cleaned. The liquid remains in tiny cracks and glows under the lighting. (Photo by Patrick Tremblay, DCMA Public Affairs)

Submarine and surface ships are some of the most complex and costly systems in the U.S. military's inventory, and they face incredible pressures under the harshest conditions.

The Defense Contract Management Agency's Navy Special Emphasis Operations contract management office ensures that the parts used in these vessels are manufactured, tested and assembled to exacting contract specifications.

David Reiner, an NSEO non-destructive testing quality assurance representative, appreciates his role in validating the strength of our armed forces equipment. He also values the variety in his work.

"It's never the same job every day," said Reiner, who still enjoys his work after 30 years with DCMA. In fact, Reiner sees many parts and pieces of all types move through his primary work place, Laboratory Testing Inc., in Hatfield, Pa., midway between Allentown and Philadelphia.

The small items Reiner observes being tested leave the contractor to become parts of bigger components. These components will join others, ultimately forming some of the most complex machines in the military's inventory, including aircraft carriers and submarines. Reiner's decades of experience and his dedication to accuracy and consistency are crucial to the warfighter.

"My job," he said, "is to make sure the material that leaves this facility is 100 percent to spec, 100 percent of the time."

For Reiner, it's the structural requirements for the parts, often down to the micro-structure or chemical level, that are important. Some of the parts are tiny, but size doesn't matter, strength does. These are literally the nuts and bolts that hold the Navy together.

To ensure the customer's stringent requirements are met, Reiner observes inspections which test the limits of parts without destroying them. There are four types of non-destructive testing. Combined, they give a comprehensive picture of a part's surface and subsurface integrity. While the contractor examines the parts, Reiner witnesses the work and certifies the results on behalf of the customer.

Reiner's supervisor Don Landis appreciates the experience and attention to detail that Reiner brings to the job. "Non-destructive testing is important and significant work," said Landis, "and Dave also oversees the mechanical destructive inspection, and the chemical analysis lab for government work."

One type of non-destructive testing, liquid penetrant inspection, employs the

Checking the results of an ultrasonic inspection at Laboratory Testing, Inc., in Hatfield, Pa., David Reiner, a quality assurance representative with the Defense Contract Management Agency's Navy Special Emphasis Operations, utilizes a machine that uses sound waves to measure an item's structural consistency. (Photos by Patrick Tremblay, DCMA Public Affairs)

David Reiner examines a box of machined components prior to their testing at Laboratory Testing, Inc., in Hartfield, Pa.

use of dyes to identify cracks and other surface problems otherwise invisible to the naked eye. Non-porous materials such as metals, plastics, or ceramics are coated with a special dye, and then excess dye is removed. Another chemical or special lighting is used to show remaining dye, which collects in small cracks and surface imperfections.

Another inspection use is the magnetic particle inspection, which only works on magnetic metals. An electric current is passed through the part to be inspected, magnetizing it. Visible ferrous particles, which could be either dry or in a liquid solution, are applied to the part, and they become attracted to any surface imperfections.

While liquid penetrant and magnetic testing allow for the examination of a part's surface, other tests let Reiner and the contractor take a deeper look at the part's structure.

Ultrasonic inspection uses sound waves to measure the uniformity of a material, and can determine minor differences in a pipe's wall thickness or subsurface anomalies in a block of metal.

Radiography inspection uses x-rays to look inside a structure. A standard weld may look perfect on the outside, but radiography can find hidden cracks or even simple discrepancies in thickness or composition of material, both of which can compromise integrity.

Parts come and go at the testing facility, but NSEO and Reiner make sure that each one receives the consistent attention and meets the requirements demanded by the Navy.

Examining a box of machined components prior to their testing, David Reiner witnesses and verifies non-destructive testing of the parts that will become part of a critical component onboard a Navy ship.

The end of an era: *Space* flight honoree's *first, last* launch

Cassandra Locke | DCMA Public Affairs

Gail Bennett's dream came true recently when she witnessed the very last space shuttle launch and tour Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla.

After 35 years of service toward the space shuttle external tank program, Bennett, a Defense Contract Management Agency property administrator, who retired Sept. 30, reached the pinnacle of her career as she received the esteemed NASA Space Flight Awareness STS-134 Honoree Award for her dedication to quality work and flight safety.

Many thoughts crossed her mind as she prepared to view the STS-134 launch April 29. External tank 122 that was to fly with STS-134 is the tank Bennett affectionately calls "The Hurricane Tank," as it was damaged when Hurricane Katrina devastated the New Orleans area in 2005.

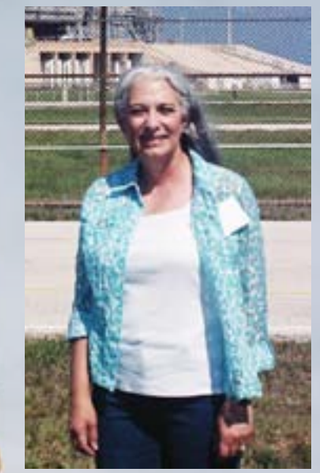
"The repair of the damage to this tank mirrors my own rebuilding of my home and life, like many others who lost everything during Katrina," said Bennett.

Painted on the intertank access door of this tank is an insignia which shows the restored ET-122 in flight with a shuttle on its back flying out of the eye of the hurricane.

Although the STS-134 launch was rescheduled for safety reasons, Bennett was able to watch the STS-135 take off July 8 and tour the space center.

It was absolutely amazing," said Bennett. The space center tour completed the external tank veteran's experience by capturing how the various parts of the program came together to create a successful launch.

"This is a dream come true, and I am proud to have been a part of such a prestigious program," said Bennett.



Gail Bennett, recently retired Defense Contract Management Agency property administrator, got a tour of the Kennedy Space Center. After 35 years of service toward the space shuttle external tank program, Bennett received the Space Flight Awareness STS-134 Honoree Award for her dedication to quality work and flight safety. (Courtesy photo)

Bennett was responsible for continuous evaluation and analysis of the property control system of the external tank production and facility contractor, while having oversight for $2.1 billion of NASA property located at the NASA Michoud assembly facility in New Orleans where the external tanks were manufactured. She and her team developed and implemented the bar code tags and scanner program, which provided an effective means of inventorying government property at the NASA Michoud facility.

According to Philip Heisler, DCMA property center supervisor, the entire facility was divided into zones. Each zone was given a discrete bar code tag which displayed a specific location when scanned. Heisler said any item of government property moved within the facility was easily located, along with the date, time and badge number of the individual who moved the item.

"The bar code tags and scanner program contributed to cost savings and cost avoidances by enabling government property to be located easier and faster thereby reducing overall inventory costs," said Heisler.

The NASA Michoud assembly facility is an 832-acre site. It is one of the largest manufacturing plants in the world and has 43 environmentally controlled acres under one roof.

"Working at this facility felt like a city within itself," said Bennett. "The fact that I can walk past an external tank every day is something not many people can say or do."

According to Heisler, over the course of the shuttle program and other programs located at Michoud, it is reasonable to estimate that a total life cycle cost reduction of $1 million has been achieved. This amount is based on the reduction in man hours to perform physical inventories, reduction in time for reconciliations efforts, and a reduction of time to perform the inventory.

The Space Flight Awareness program is highly competitive, and individuals must have contributed beyond their normal work requirements to achieve significant impact on attaining a particular human space flight program goal and been a key player in developing a beneficial process improvement.

Since retiring in September, Bennett said she is now focused on travelling.

Going out with a BLAST - Employees take pride in space shuttle main engine program

Matthew Montgomery | DCMA Public Affairs

History was made recently when Space Shuttle Atlantis launched into the 135th and final mission of the Space Shuttle Program from Kennedy Space Center, Fla. An estimated one million people were on hand for the momentous occasion, including Defense Contract Management Agency employees close to the program.

"It was quite an experience," said Beverly Compton, DCMA NASA Product Operations Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne technical group manager. "Standing with a swelling crowd of nearly one million people and watching for the final time as the three space shuttle main engines ignited and boosted the shuttle into orbit was awesome – the experience of a lifetime."

Compton and three other employees from the Canoga Park office made the trip to Florida as part of a scheduled program meeting. As part of the trip, they were able to witness the final launch.

When Atlantis landed at the Kennedy Space Center, the program officially ended. For more than 30 years, shuttles were powered by the Space Shuttle Main Engines, produced by Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne with oversight by DCMA NPO PWR personnel. To commemorate the event, Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne held a dedication ceremony to recognize those employees who had contributed to the program's overall success.

"It was truly rewarding to be honored at the ceremony, among the many colleagues, contractors, customers and subcontractors I've worked with over the last 20 years," said Compton, who has worked with the SSME program since 1992. "It was a moment of mixed emotions, both great pride and also sadness as the future at that time was still uncertain in regard to the next phase of space exploration."

Lucio Salvador, Defense Contract Management Agency NASA Product Operations Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne quality assurance technical lead, (front second from right) poses for a picture with colleagues working on the Space Shuttle Main Engine Program. (Contributed Photos)

Compton began working with the program as a team supervisor over the procurement quality assurance group. She said during the height of the program, the group had a significant workload managing a minimum of 25 suppliers, many of which had multimillion dollar contract values.

Over the years, DCMA NPO PWR employees had the opportunity to be part of history and help shape the future of space exploration. Al Pikes, DCMA NPO PWR deputy director, said the employees took great pride in being part of the program.

"The pride our employees have shown here working with the program is truly amazing," said Pikes. "Every time a shuttle landed it pointed directly to the people working here who were making sure the engines performed as designed."

"It's hard to adequately express the sense of national patriotism achieved from working on one of the greatest national achievements of a generation," said Compton. "I never hesitated to share with friends, family and the community the amazing experience I've had to personally make an impact on human space exploration."

Lucio Salvador, Defense Contract Management Agency NASA Product Operations Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne quality assurance technical lead, stands in front of an aircraft he worked on during his time in the Air Force.

Lucio Salvador, shown here in a 1968 photograph, was a member of the Air Force working on high profile programs like the SR-71 Blackbird spy plane prior to starting a career with the Defense Contract Management Agency

Lucio Salvador, DCMA NASA NPO PWR quality assurance technical lead, started working on the program in 1982, one year after the maiden voyage of the Space Shuttle Program. Since then, he has performed the final review on every main engine that has been produced at the plant. He is also the longest tenured SSME employee and remembers vividly his first assignment and day on the job.

"I was assigned to the engine final assembly line where they had four engines being built at the same time," said Salvador. "I was assigned to one engine and my job was to inspect, witness and verify every part that went into the engine."

Salvador, 64, has worked for the government his entire adult life. Before DCMA, he was a member of the Air Force working on high profile programs like the SR-71 Blackbird spy plane. Watching the space shuttle launch for the last time was something he'll never forget.

"I felt very lucky and proud to have been part NASA history and to have worked for the government for so many years," said Salvador. "It's all behind me now but I can share my experiences with my children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. I have NASA, DCMA and God to thank for letting me be part of this major program."

Now that the program has come to a close, it doesn't mean work has ended for the DCMA group. Compton said they will move on to other endeavors, but take with them the knowledge they helped make the program successful.

"There is always excitement at the onset of a national endeavor such as the SSME program," said Compton. "It is no wonder that when the program comes to a conclusion there is a sense of loss. Fortunately, we take with us the confidence that the program performed as designed and often exceeded expectations."

Many at PWR continue to support other significant programs like the International Space Station. "We look to the future with great expectations for space programs," concluded Compton.

Beverly Compton, Defense Contract Management Agency NASA Product Operations Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne technical group manager, stands in front of Space Shuttle Atlantis at Kennedy Space Center, Fla.

Recycle, Repurpose, Reuse
Making fire trucks new again

Jo Adail Stephenson | DCMA Public Affairs

Operational checks of fire suppression systems are performed during final government source inspection of rebuilt fire trucks. (Photos by Jo Adail Stephenson, DCMA Public Affairs)

Firefighters assigned to the 380th Civil Engineer Squadron participate in a joint-training exercise with firefighters from the 3rd Battalion, 4th Air Defense Artillery Regiment in Southwest Asia. (Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Patrick Mitchell)

The emergency call comes in. Firefighters quickly put on their firefighter suits, climb into the fire truck and rush to the scene.

Their minds are focused on responding to the emergency which can mean the difference between life and death.

They don't want to have to worry about whether the fire truck will get them there or whether the fire suppression systems will work. This is especially true when the fire truck and fire suppression systems have been rebuilt.

It's the same for Air Force firefighters.

That's why David Flowers, Defense Contract Management Agency Dallas, performs quality assurance on a contract where the rebuild process requires complete disassembly of the trucks for inspection, rebuild and reassembly of all the sub-components, including operational testing to ensure the trucks/equipment meet the original manufacturer's design specifications.

Firefighters rely on the equipment they use because their very lives, and the lives of others, depend on it.

"Both the contractor and DCMA understand that this equipment is for emergency support and … must be operational and ready to use at a moment's notice," Flowers said. "Therefore, every aspect of the rebuild process is done in a manner to deliver a reliable piece of equipment that can be supported in the field with standard OEM (original equipment manufacturer) manuals and parts."

The contract is a unique blend of government requirements incorporated into the rebuild process using industry best practices such as cell work stations, 100 percent replacement of high failure rate items and workmanship standards to enhance corrosion prevention.

Cell work stations are production work stations with all the special tooling and equipment and trained personnel to perform a particular task or component, making the process as efficient as possible, Flowers explained. At this site, the contractor disassembles the trucks into sub-assemblies which are worked in the cell work stations (i.e., frames, cabs, engines, fire suppression system, water tanks, etc.).

"These kinds of benefits shorten the rebuild turn-around time, eliminate or reduce rework and provide longer service life," said Flowers, who has worked for DCMA for two years and has more than 17 years of prior quality assurance experience with aircraft and aviation support equipment.

DCMA's role is to ensure the extensive details of the rebuild process are appropriately incorporated by the contractor, Crash Rescue Equipment Service, Inc., into the work instructions and the technicians follow the instructions, or obtain necessary authority, to deviate.

Flowers validates the workmanship of the technicians and the use of proper techniques for non-destructive inspections, correct hardware selection/installation and corrosion prevention. Non-destructive inspections, or NDI, are special inspection tests or techniques performed to discover cracks not visible to the unaided eye. For example, the frames of these trucks are prone to cracking in certain areas, so inspections are performed to ensure no cracks are beginning that will later propagate while in use, he explained.

Correct hardware selection/installation refers to the type of bolts and screws used to assemble the trucks. High stress locations on the engine and certain frame locations require a special grade of metal that won't shear easily, while other locations, prone to corrosion, will require stainless steel or special plating, Flowers said. Areas like the steering controls require locking features to keep from rattling loose.

When it comes to identifying and resolving quality assurance issues, the contractor uses internal processes to generate corrective actions, he said. "DCMA records the results of the final inspections for trend analysis of recurring/systemic weaknesses."

Part of the work is firm-fixed-price, but some work is subject to over-and-above negotiations, Flowers explained. DCMA validates the costs are appropriate.

"For me, quality assurance is a behind-the-scene activity that applies pressure to make a difference to the final output in a positive way," Flowers said. "My motivation comes from knowing I had a part in delivering a quality product or preventing a non-conforming product from being delivered."

Army Col. Calvin Bailey, Defense Contract Management Agency Dallas commander, and David Flowers, quality assurance specialist, check the side compartment of a fire truck during a receiving inspection. (Photos by Jo Adail Stephenson, DCMA Public Affairs)

David Flowers, Defense Contract Management Agency Dallas quality assurance specialist, checks the reassembly and installation of the fire hose in the side compartment of a rebuilt fire truck.

DCMA takes a deep look at drilling rigs

Patrick Tremblay | DCMA Public Affairs

Matt Stone, a quality assurance specialist with Defense Contract Management Agency Philadelphia, inspects hydraulic components on a Navy drilling rig at the Schramm factory in West Chester, Pa. The rig is one of twelve built by the contractor to meet the Navy's requirements for water well drilling in remote locations. (Photos by Patrick Tremblay, DCMA Public Affairs)

In the small town of West Chester, Pa., about 20 miles west of Philadelphia, Defense Contract Management Agency personnel worked for the past year in assisting the Navy in being a "Global Force for Good."

The Navy requested bids in early 2010 for a small fleet of truck mounted drilling rigs. The contract was ultimately won by Schramm, a long-standing Pennsylvania company, which was able to produce a modified version of an existing commercial model.

Because of the relatively quick deadlines and tight military requirements, the contract required the involvement of a cross-section of DCMA Philadelphia production and quality personnel.

The contract was solicited and awarded by Defense Logistics Agency Troop Support. Located in northeast Philadelphia, DLA Troop Support supplies America's armed forces with $14 billion annually of food, uniforms, protective equipment, medicine and medical supplies and construction equipment.

Stanley Brown, DCMA Philadelphia administrative contracting officer, was involved in the extensive post-award work between the agency, customer and contractor.

"The customer requested a post-award conference which gave the administrative contracting officer, industrial specialist and quality assurance representative from DCMA a chance to provide the necessary input to better define the contract requirements," said Brown. "Along with the Navy, we were able to define the corrective actions necessary to ensure the end user received exactly what was needed."

"DCMA contract professionals were essential in getting all the specifications down," said Fred Slack, Schramm's vice president for business development. "The process was good, and at the end of the day, the Navy got what it wanted, and we built what it needed."

Once the customer and contractor were comfortable with the terms of the contract and the specifications of the new rigs, DCMA quality assurance personnel made frequent trips to the facility to ensure the Navy's requirements were being met.

The Navy rigs weren't the company's first defense contract. It had produced winches for World War I aerial observation balloons and air compressors for World War II Navy divers earlier in its 111 year history. After the Vietnam-era, the company also produced smaller numbers of drill rigs for defense department clients. Technical details of modern defense contracting, however, were new to the company, and required extensive cooperation with DCMA to implement.

David Lyons, chief of DCMA Philadelphia's quality assurance technical team south, said Senior Quality Assurance Specialist Ronald Foster and Quality Assurance Specialist Andrew Jarosz made major contributions to the success of the contract.

"This included process proofing all manufacturing testing requirements, truck modifications, functional testing, accessory inventory control, first article requirements, wide area workflow set up and detailed instructions on each shipment," said Lyons.

"The contractor had little experience working with wide area workflow for payment," said Foster. "I worked with Schramm on how to input the information properly into WAWF and, at the same time, track the progress of line items in the system to assure the invoices would be processed for payment in a timely basis." Foster said the process required help from the buying command, the administrative contracting officer at DCMA Philadelphia and Defense Finance and Accounting Services Columbus.

After shipment to Port Hueneme, Calif., and Gulfport, La., these machines will ultimately be put to work by Navy construction battalions, the Seabees, drilling wells in remote locations overseas, providing much needed water for military and humanitarian missions. The ability for the rigs to be flown to remote sites became a hallmark of the project. One of Schramm's commercial rigs was close to the Navy's specification, but the footprint had to be altered, and size and weight had to be balanced.

Matt Stone, a quality assurance specialist who worked on the drilling rig project, said the contractor had to make changes in their stock rig designs to meet the customer's needs. "Many of these were necessary so the vehicles could be air-transportable by a C-17, something that's essential to the Navy."

Slack said 2010 was a big year for the company, which made international news when its drilling rigs were used to locate and rescue Chilean miners trapped following a mine collapse. The Navy contract was another positive for the company. "We're thrilled to be working with DCMA," said Slack, "and proud to be helping the U.S. military meet humanitarian needs."

Jeff Muse (front right), Defense Contract Management Agency industrial specialist, talks with John Little, Schramm sales manager, about Navy drilling rig requirements at the contractor's West Chester, Pa., plant. In the background, Stanley Brown (back right), DCMA administrative contracting officer talks with Schramm Vice President Fred Slack.

(Left to right) Stanley Brown, Defense Contract Management Agency administrative contracting officer; Matt Stone, DCMA quality assurance specialist; Fred Slack, Schramm vice president of business development; and Jeff Muse, DCMA industrial specialist; discuss the completion of the Navy's drilling rig contract at Schramm's West Chester, Pa., plant.

Engineer paints to illustrate science

Martha Bushong | Staff Writer

Students show off their artwork after being instructed by Michelle Rouch (back middle), Defense Contract Management Agency Ratheon Tucson engineer. Rouch teaches the students the complexities of math and science through painting. (Images courtesy of Michelle Rouch)

Engineers often use well-honed analytical skills, teamwork and collaboration to solve a wide array of problems. Michelle Rouch, an engineer at Defense Contract Management Agency Raytheon Tucson, Ariz., discovered unique applications for her systems engineering knowledge — she pairs it with her painting expertise. Rouch blends the seemingly disparate areas of interest creating original aviation art and encouraging elementary school children to explore the world of flight, math and science.

Whether working with DCMA engineers, family members who support her artwork or local schoolchildren, Rouch's main objectives are remarkably similar. In each endeavor, she strives to help the teams achieve and maintain a collaborative approach, resolve issues, share lessons learned and stay committed to continuous improvement.

Rouch began working for the Department of Defense in 1990, but she has been painting for much longer. "I started my first mural on a household wall at age 3 — until my mother took my crayons away," said Rouch. Later, her mother focused Rouch's artistic energy by enrolling her in Saturday afternoon art lessons in their hometown of Dayton, Ohio. When Rouch started college, she intended to major in art, but her studies veered toward science and higher math. "I kept hearing my father say, 'Find a job that puts food on the table,'" she said.

"In college, my brother asked me what I thought I would do after taking courses in algebra, trigonometry and calculus. I thought I might be a math teacher. Instead, he encouraged me to follow him in the field of engineering," she continued. Rouch graduated with a Bachelors of Science in electrical engineering in 1990 and later earned a Masters of Science in information systems engineering.

"Now when I start any project, I think like an engineer," she said. "I calculate the total cost, schedule and performance, much like a program manager."

When starting a painting, Rouch evaluates the project to see if she can stay within cost. She measures how long the piece will take and considers whether she can fit the work into her life. Being a full-time mom and engineer keeps her busy, so she plans carefully. After considering the cost and schedule constraints, she creates a rapid prototype to explore every possible scenario before executing the painting.

"Rapid prototyping is essential because it brings the final painting to a well-thought out plan," said Rouch. "My son plays an important role when I ask for his advice. He loves airplanes and hopes to learn to fly before he gets his driver's license. Once I have the artwork sketched in pencil, I request inspection by my quality manager, my husband (Fotios), to ensure all angles are correctly defined. He has a critical eye and can detect the slightest imperfections."

"A lot of people don't understand aviation art," said Rouch. "Some people will view my work and think, 'Nice landscape, but why did she put an airplane in there?' My whole philosophy is the airplane is not big enough!"

Fotios, an engineer assigned to DCMA Raytheon Tucson, designs one-of-a-kind resin airplane models. He convinced her to paint her first airplane in 2002.

"Thankfully, I listened to him," said Rouch. "The first painting, 'C-2 Greyhounds in Tandem,' was published on box tops for an airplane model company. My second painting, one of my son at the Pima Air & Space Museum, is sold on stationary at the museum's gift shop. The aviation art world got serious fast," said Rouch who now has more requests for paintings than she can handle.

The team approach she uses with her painting shows up in her work at DCMA, too. "We have a wonderful group of engineers synergizing with one another and collaborating in many different functions," said Rouch. "We work well as individuals, but we work better as a team. Our monthly leadership council meetings and engineering forums provide an environment to share knowledge and facilitate open discussions."

"One of the biggest challenges is communicating with other DCMA systems engineers. The Concurrent Engineering/Systems Engineering Cross Talk and Systems Engineering headquarters' monthly teleconferences offer insights on how the systems engineering workforce changes and provides opportunities to improve our surveillance tools and processes," she said.

DCMA Raytheon is a relative newcomer to Tuscon's aviation and aerospace traditions. The area's rich history of aviation, aerospace and astronomy date to the early 20th century. Seven years after the Wright Brothers flew on North Carolina sand dunes near Kitty Hawk, Arizona's desert provided a landing for Charles "the Birdman" Hamilton. Tucson houses America's first municipally-owned airport, the Pima Air & Space Museum, and is the site for Kitt Peak National Observatory, so opportunities abound to learn about aviation, aerospace and astronomy.

During one educational program at the Pima Air & Space Museum in 2007, Brian Ewenson, former director of education, introduced Rouch to Sara Falconer, lead organizer of the award-winning American Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics Kids Club.

"Sara asked me if I could create a three-hour program for 8-, 9- and 10-year-olds and I seized the opportunity. Since then, I donate my time once a year to support the club," she said. Her engineering/art projects teach team building and communication skills to resolve problems and create large, colorful art depicting the four forces of flight — lift, drag, thrust and weight. Twenty-two pieces from these programs are displayed at the Tucson Juvenile Justice Hall.

"I want to reach into the minds of kids and use art as a vehicle to communicate technology concepts," said Rouch. "In 2010, we fine tuned our engineering/art project by assigning roles and responsibilities to a program manager on each of the six teams."

The program manager chose a chief engineer and ensured project requirements were met. The program managers also explained why their team's design should be awarded first place.

"The kids' energy and enthusiasm helped them take off and fly with the project," said Rouch. "They all had the same requirements, materials and schedule constraints. The program managers and chief engineers asked interesting questions and made good decisions. Each team had an adult for assistance, but the kids pulled it all together. What I like best about this project is witnessing these kids understanding life skills that will support them in the future." C

"Greyhound C-2A" depicts two planes flying side-by-side above a patchwork of fields and farms. In this watercolor, Rouch demonstrates her keen eye for sharp detail on the airplanes' fuselages while evoking movement with blurred propeller blades.

This original watercolor by Michelle Rouch shows her son walking toward rows of airplanes at the Pima Air & Space Museum. This image is one of Rouch's first works as an aviation artist.

Celebrating

90 years of rich heritage

Matthew Montgomery | DCMA Public Affairs

Artifacts of the history of the Defense Contract Management Agency Boeing Seattle Office. These artifacts were displayed during the DCMA 90th anniversary event. (Photos by Matthew Montgomery, DCMA Public Affairs)

SEATTLE – Over the past nine decades, the civilian and military workforce at Defense Contract Management Agency Boeing Seattle has supported a full spectrum of aerospace power to include bombers, missiles, spacecraft and high energy airborne laser programs.

The office recently held a 90th anniversary event to pay tribute to the rich history of government in-plant service. Past commanders, former DCMA employees and the current workforce gathered to celebrate the momentous occasion.

"We have a unique heritage because this Boeing plant has delivered weapon systems to the Department of Defense for almost 100 years," said Air Force Lt. Col. Louis Orndorff, DCMA Boeing Seattle commander. This support has spanned World War II, the Korean Conflict, Vietnam, the Cold War, Desert Storm and current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The office is also unique because it symbolizes the beginning of representation for the government in contractor facilities. "The people here have always prided themselves on being the first in-plant office in the country," said Rnita Jacklin, retired DCMA Seattle commander's secretary.

"I worked on the 75th anniversary celebration and it gave me such a sense of pride to celebrate the history, accomplishments and dedication of the people of this office," continued Jacklin. "It's awesome to continue the tradition of celebrating these milestones."

Karen Crumley, DCMA administrative contracting officer, agreed. "It gives me great pride to be part of the oldest in-plant representative office. We have survived countless reorganizations yet our focus and dedication does not waver – we know our jobs and how to do them well."

The organization has changed many times over the 90-year history at Boeing Seattle. What started as the Army Air Service Office in 1921 changed to the Army Air Corps, then the Air Force Plant Representative Office, eventually the Defense Contract Management Command and currently DCMA.

During this time span, DCMA employees have provided contract support and oversight to a myriad of programs. Some of these include weapon systems like the B-52 and the KC-135, which are still in service today.

The Boeing plant was also responsible for the B-17, an iconic plane from World War II.

Through all the programs and changes, Orndorff said, "The mission has mostly remained the same. Our job is to make sure quality products are delivered to the warfighter and this is why we've been here all along."

"I think the basic idea of having a group of people in the plant who know how the contractor does business across the board is a core function," continued Orndorff. "Contract oversight is about making sure the government gets what it pays for and DCMA Boeing Seattle has focused on that for 90 years, and continues to do so today."

During the ceremony, a number of former employees were recognized for their contributions. The oldest attendee was Kermit Metcalf, a procurement inspector for 27 years. Metcalf, age 97, worked as a Boeing foreman on the B-17 bombers, and then as a government representative for the Navy. He finished out his career working for the Air Force Plant Representative Office in Seattle.

"Kermit is a prime example of the pride people take in the office," said Jacklin.

"From the day I started, I had the feeling the people weren't just employees, but they had a sense of family."

Jacklin and Metcalf are both members of the Boeing Air Force Plant Representative Office Retirees Club and were present at the 75th anniversary. The club is probably one of the most unique and well-kept secrets in DCMA, said Orndorff.

"In all, over 30 retired members attended the celebration," continued Orndorff. "The DCMA Boeing Seattle legacy has a continued reputation for excellence and in the room were people who had been at the core of that excellence for more than 50 years."

Having these individuals present made the event special to a number of employees. "As a relatively new DCMA employee, it was an awesome experience to be able to talk to retired employees and sort through old photos," said Emily

Kermit Metcalf, an Air Force Plant Representative Office procurement inspector for 27 years, poses for a picture following the 90th anniversary event. Metcalf, age 97, was the oldest employee present at the event. (Photo courtesy of DCMA Boeing Seattle)

Defense Contract Management Agency Boeing Seattle personnel, both past and present, pose for a picture following the 90th anniversary event. More than 80 attendees celebrated the momentous occasion.

David Degl Innocenti, Defense Contract Management Agency Lathrop deputy commander, looks through artifacts during the 90th anniversary event at DCMA Boeing Seattle.

Five former commanders sent notes and expressed their appreciation for the hard work and dedication DCMA employees symbolize on a regular basis. Excerpts from their messages below:

"Your dedication and commitment to excellence in getting the best weapon systems for the most fantastic warfighters of the mightiest military serving the greatest nation on Earth are awe-inspiring to say the least." ***- Dante Legaspi, Commander 2009-2010***

"We can continue to be proud in how you have served your country and done so with the highest level of professionalism and dedication. As I now travel the world on business with our services in Afghanistan, Russia, Asia and around the globe, I can sincerely say that what you do has, and does, make a critical difference and impact on our nation." ***- Gregg Hughes, Commander 1994-1998***

"You alone have stood watch in Boeing's factories, ensuring every contractual requirement has been met, every piece of government property accounted for, every industrial procedure completed within specifications, and every test completed safely. Your service has been honorable and heroic." ***- John Gilmour, Commander 2004-2006***

"What I remember most about my years was joining one of the most professional and dedicated groups of people I have ever worked with. Both military and civilian people found high-quality compatriots to work with, challenging jobs, an excellent company to work with and a great area to live and work in, so the people stayed on as long as they could. This resulted in an experienced, topnotch, extremely professional workforce who knew its business." ***– Robert Shipman, Jr., - Commander 1989-1990***

"I am very glad DCMA Boeing Seattle is still going strong and the service and expertise each one of you is currently providing in the defense of our great nation is in existence. You are doing a very important job within DCMA Boeing and what you do helps to strengthen the defense posture of the nation." ***– Rick Diehl, Commander 1991-1993***

Wanninger, DCMA Keystone intern. "I realized just as the planes have evolved over the past 90 years, so has DCMA as an agency."

"This celebration took all the collective years of hard work and made it personal to a large scale," continued Wanninger. "Even though many of the guests have been retired for a number of years, they still spoke of their programs with pride and excitement. The speeches and the presentations showed DCMA has played a critical role in the aviation industry and continues to do so."

Additional highlights of the ceremony included comments read from previous commanders, an artifact display table showcasing the office's history and a collage of pictures throughout the years for attendees to sign.

Orndorff said the turnout was exceptional. "I am very proud to be the leader of this outstanding organization," he said.

"One of the highlights for me is to come to work every day and walk down the hall with previous commander pictures dating back to 1921," continued Orndorff. "It is surreal to imagine the challenges they faced and the pressures they were under as they oversaw the production of thousands of aircraft during World War II."

"It is a great honor to have my chance to lead this organization," continued Orndorff. "I always feel a special sense of wanting to make sure I maintain the heritage they worked so hard to build."

"I think every employee here is proud of the long history we have as in-plant government representatives," said Orndorff. "On a daily basis, we find that the answers to many of today's problems lie in the past. We have employees who remember solutions and they help us focus on ways to approach current issues."

Jerry Smith, DCMA Boeing Seattle deputy commander, summarized the event. "Today was an outstanding event and it made me proud to be associated with DCMA, and prouder yet to be part of something much bigger than any one of us. After today the word heritage has a much clearer meaning for me." C

Defense Contract Management Agency Boeing Seattle current and former employees watch a presentation on the history of government service at the Boeing plant.

Bruce Ross, Air Force Plant Representative Office Boeing Seattle commander from 1985-1987, shares his memories during the 90th anniversary event held recently. (Photos courtesy of DCMA Boeing Seattle)

Boeing Seattle Milestones

- 1921: the first government representative office was established at Boeing. Charles Cresswell from McCook Field, Ohio, was the first representative.

- 1922: Lt. Frank Tyndall was assigned to the office as the first military Army Air Service representative to test the first Boeing pursuit airplanes, the MC-3As.

- World War II: employment increased to 38 officers and 347 civilians in the office.

- 1947: name is changed to the Air Force Plant Representative Office.

- Three years after the war, the jet and missile age began. AFPRO was reorganized. At the peak, the office had more than 400 employees.

- From AFPRO, the office transitioned to the Defense Contract Management Command and later Defense Contract Management Agency.

Moving the agency from good to *GREAT*

Jo Adail Stephenson | DCMA Public Affairs

Fred Kuhm
Defense Contract Management Agency
Office of Independent Assessment executive director

In his Aug. 21, 2008, On Point Memo, Defense Contract Management Agency Director Charlie E. Williams, Jr. talked about the direction he gave to the agency's Office of Independent Assessment Mission Review Team to expand the focus of mission reviews to "assess the effectiveness of our portfolio of management controls, our adherence to agency policy/instructions and how well we are meeting the requirements of all our customers."

The review cycle, which began with a HQ DCMA mission review in April 2009, is scheduled to culminate in 2012 when the MRT has completed conducting mission reviews of all the agency's contract management offices to baseline the agency's performance.

As part of the OIA's mission to assess agency-wide operations, performance, administrative processes and internal controls, the MRT conducts compliance and performance-based mission reviews of the agency's operational processes at CMOs, centers, divisions and HQ.

DCMA OIA Executive Director Fred Kuhm spoke in a recent interview about how the mission review assessment process is helping to improve the agency's overall performance, accomplish Williams' initiatives and move the agency from good to great.

Q. How does the mission review assessment process help to improve overall performance of the agency?

A. Mission reviews contribute to moving an organization from good to great. These reviews provide a focused, operational assessment of areas critical to the DCMA mission and vision. As one of the agency's assessment architecture tools, mission reviews are an integral part of the integrated management system health assessment. Selected organizational performance drivers across the DCMA management framework are addressed during mission reviews to determine if management controls are in place to ensure effectiveness and consistency of process execution. Additionally, the most critical contract administration service functions identified as the Director's Special Focus Items are assessed for compliance with regulatory and policy requirements.

Q. How does the agency ensure compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements, and why is this important to the agency's overall mission success and accomplishment?

A. Regulatory and statutory requirements are mandatory. We follow the Federal Acquisition Regulation and the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation and all the clauses that apply to the contract administration services we provide to our customers. For our effectiveness as an organization, it's very important to ensure we are uniformly providing the same services across the

Mission Review Summary Report Areas

Mission review summary reports provide different methods to improve overall performance and are addressed in the report as findings and opportunities for improvement, or OFIs.

- Findings are for areas non-compliant with a regulation or policy/instruction requirement or failure to adequately answer the director's questions. Findings are very specific, referencing the noncompliance and how the requirement is not met. This clarity allows the CMO to accomplish the necessary corrective actions. All findings have a recommendation associated with it.

- OFIs do not rise

agency in all of our CMOs. The mission review process checks our overall level of compliance, causes corrective actions to be made and enhances agency management controls.

Q. How does the corrective action process help improve the agency's performance?

A. Enhanced awareness of knowing how well we are performing not only as a CMO but also overall as an agency will help us improve. Corrective action should be developed as a result of noncompliance causes being identified. It includes the root cause analysis to determine the right corrective action. Through that, we can provide an understanding of why a problem has occurred and prevent the reoccurrence when we understand why it came into being. Leaders can use this information to improve their operations and enhance their management controls. By performing root cause analysis and developing and conducting effective management controls, permanent improvements to mission accomplishment can be made.

Q. How has the agency's MRT assessment process evolved over the past several years?

A. The scope has changed over the years from strict process compliance to performance-based management execution. Now, with the current scope, we are looking again at compliance but also looking at the entire acquisition enterprise along with the effectiveness of portfolio of management controls tied to the agency's strategic plan. The current scope has been broadened to include increased emphasis on key performance drivers, management controls and examining in detail the Director's Special Focus Items. The basic processes of data review, on-site interviews and validations have not really changed. We only perform one-week onsite reviews now where we used to do two-week reviews. We're able to perform some aspects of the review "virtually" through the use of technology.

Q. How do you share the mission review results with DCMA leaders? In turn, how can they use this information to determine areas for improvement?

A. We use the OIA website (https://home.dcma.mil/DCMAHQ/dcma_D/dcma_DM/index.cfm) to share the review results, related tools and templates and the MRT assessment guides, which explain the scope and methodology of the on-site reviews. Twice a year, our "Assessment Reporter", a summary of all the reviews conducted in the preceding six months, is generated and also posted to the website. Each Assessment Reporter addresses each Director's Special Focus Item such as Quality Assurance, Systems Engineering, etc., and provides a summary that allows CMOs to use this information when evaluating the health of their organizations and determine areas to focus on for continuous process improvement.

Q. How does the MRT process help the agency baseline its performance and set a path toward controlled continuous improvement?

A. We look at the same set of questions and assess to the same standards. Findings and policy gaps are identified and corrected. This process provides agency policy writers the ability to evaluate trends specific to their policy and determine if findings are a result of gaps in policy.

Mission review summary report results and Assessment Reporters are posted on the OIA website and shared across the agency so the potential is there to learn and to self-assess. Assessment results are briefed to the DCMA Council at agency performance reviews twice a year.

Q. Why is it important for there to be no surprises in the final mission review summary report?

A. The MRT does not have a hidden agenda. To go from good to great, organizations have to clearly understand all identified deficiencies up front. That's why we hold morning meetings during the onsite mission reviews so there's constant communication with the CMO director, deputy and group chiefs. Because we're up front and honest when we discuss issues, findings and opportunities for improvement, there shouldn't be any surprises in the final mission review summary report.

Q. How do MRT examiners foster positive two-way communication during mission reviews to combat the sometimes negative connotations regarding "findings"?

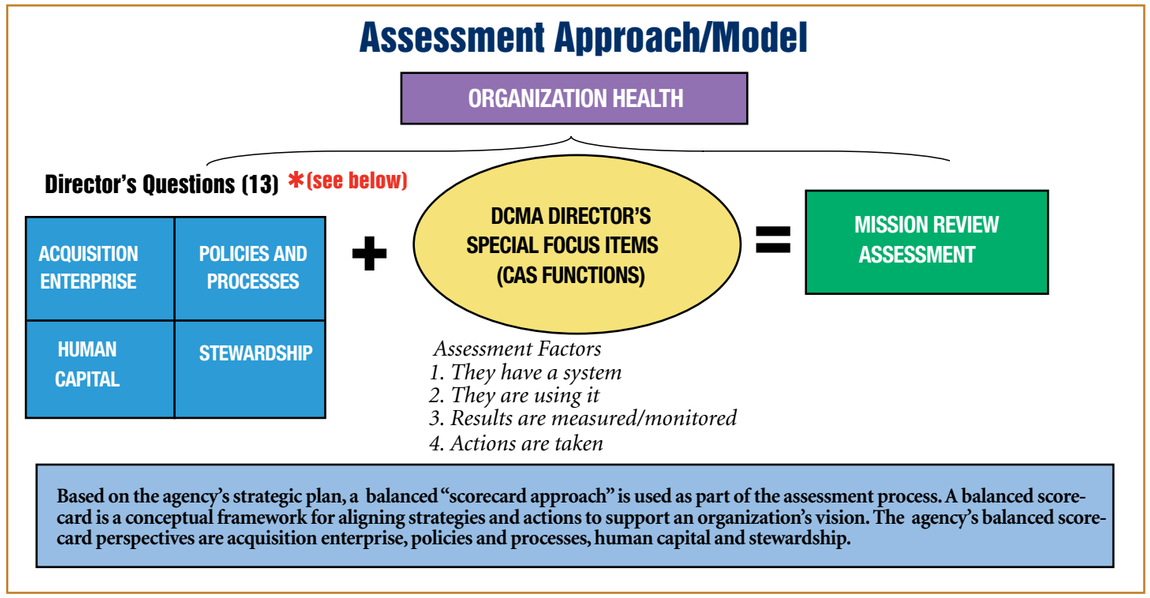
A. We don't want folks to feel like they can't open up to MRT examiners because they think whatever they say is going to be written up in the report. It's why we send out the framework and the questions in advance. As discussed earlier, it's also why we have morning meetings with CMO leadership. This process allows for more dialogue and discussion. In addition to discussing issues and concerns, MRT examiners share successes and examples of other organizations during their root cause analysis and corrective action plan implementation of like findings. Examiners share "real-life" examples of how they resolved the same type of concerns when they worked in CMOs. They also recommend strategies and techniques to be used as part of an organization's root cause and corrective action process.

Q. How does sharing Bright Spots and Best Practices impact all agency levels?

A. Bright Spots are successful efforts worth emulating. Following the DCMA Worldwide Training Conference in October 2010, a focus was placed on identifying Bright Spots in lieu of a single Best Practice. The term is used to highlight organization practices we believe are among the most effective or efficient methods of accomplishing a given task and are worthy of recommendation for sharing with other CMOs. Bright Spots are included in the summary reports.

Q. What are some of the key takeaways from onsite assessments?

A. Management controls – first level supervisor reviews - supervisors need to perform day-to-day checks. It's management by walking around. We've got to get out, see what our folks are doing and talk to them to identify and address those areas where we need to make improvements. You can't just get it all from reports. Getting that personal interaction, somebody explaining it, sometimes helps out considerably. The main reason for the mission reviews is continuous improvement. Corrective actions need the root cause analysis to be done. If we don't find the real reason for it, we're not going to know how we can best utilize our resources to improve. C



* Director's Questions?

I. ACQUISITION ENTERPRISE

1. DOES THE ORGANIZATION HAVE CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES? (ARE THEY TALKING TO THEIR CUSTOMERS?)

2. HAVE CUSTOMER OUTCOMES BEEN IDENTIFIED AND RELATED PERFORMANCE INDICATORS ESTABLISHED?

3. ARE CUSTOMER REQUIREMENTS BEING MET AND HOW DO YOU KNOW?

III. HUMAN CAPITAL

1. ARE PERSONNEL TRAINED AND CERTIFIED TO PERFORM THE FUNCTION?

2. ARE SKILL GAPS IDENTIFIED AND ADDRESSED?

3. ARE OTHER TRAINING REQUIREMENTS ADDRESSED AND ARE THEY EFFECTIVE (TIER II LEADERSHIP; IDPS; ORIENTATION; DIVERSITY; TEAMING; ETC.)?

II. POLICIES AND PROCESSES

1. WHAT MANAGEMENT PROCESSES ARE IN PLACE TO ENSURE THAT THE ORGANIZATION IS EFFECTIVE IN ACCOMPLISHING ITS MISSION?

2. HOW IS THE MANGERS INTERNAL CONTROL PROGRAM (MICP) INCLUDED IN THE MANAGEMENT PROCESS?

3. HOW DOES THE ORGANIZATION ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATORY & STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS?

4. WHAT PERFORMANCE MEASURES ARE IN PLACE TO ENSURE EFFECTIVENESS OF MISSION AND BUSINESS SUPPORT PROCESSES?

IV. STEWARDSHIP

1. HOW IS WORKLOAD PRIORITIZED AND DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT CMO?

2. ARE MANPOWER RESOURCES ALIGNED TO CUSTOMER REQUIREMENTS?

3. HOW IS FUNDS CONTROL PERFORMED?

The Mission Review Team meets daily at 4 p.m. during onsite mission reviews to summarize what was learned during the day. After all the interviews are completed and the data compiled, the MRT generates the mission review summary report. (Photo by Jo Adail Stephenson, DCMA Public Affairs)

No surprises – 'open-book' approach for mission assessment

Jo Adail Stephenson | DCMA Public Affairs

No surprises – that's what most people want when taking a test or going through a mission review.

That "no surprise" approach is the goal of the Defense Contract Management Agency Office of Independent Assessment Mission Review Team, or MRT, when they conduct the onsite assessments and generate the final mission review summary reports.

ONSITE

During mission reviews, morning meetings are part of the constant communication between the MRT and the leadership and key personnel of the directorate, center, or contract management office. The two-way dialogue ensures issues and concerns are identified up front and if any additional information needs to be reviewed.

The meetings are an important part of the assessment, according to DCMA Office of Independent Assessment Executive Director Fred Kuhm. "At the Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 8 a.m. meetings, we go over the previous day's findings and get it out in the open and explain it. "It gives everyone an opportunity, a second chance, to explain 'Hey, this is why we did this'. It allows more of a dialogue —a discussion on it."

After the 8 a.m. meetings, "we go into interviews for the whole day. At 4 p.m., we get the team together," Gary Jungwirth, MRT technical team supervisor, said. "Then at night, we look at the information we picked up during the day and compile the notes for the next morning's 8 a.m. meeting."

MISSION REVIEW SUMMARY REPORTS

After all the interviews are completed and the data compiled, the team generates the mission review summary report, which addresses findings, opportunities for improvement, policy gaps and Bright Spots.

Findings are written for noncompliance with a regulation, policy or instruction requirement regarding the most critical contract administration service functions identified as the Director's Special Focus Items.

OFIs are written for those areas in which the intent of a requirement is basically met but the effectiveness or efficiency of the process could be improved.

Policy gaps are identified and corrected. This process provides agency policy writers the ability to evaluate trends specific to their policy and determine if findings are a result of gaps in policy.

Bright Spots are used to highlight effective or efficient methods of accomplishing a given task and are worthy of recommendation for sharing with other CMOs.

OPEN BOOK TEST APPROACH

The principle of preparation is the same for an open-book test or a mission review — to be familiar with the questions and know where to look for the information related to the questions.

For a mission review, the questions are on the MRT website (https://home.dcma.mil/DCMAHQ/dcma_D/dcma_DM/index.cfm) where information and documents like the MRT assessment guides, review results, and related tools and templates, which explain the scope and methodology of the on-site reviews, are posted.

Twice a year, the Assessment Reporter, a summary of all the reviews conducted in the preceding six months, is generated and also posted to the MRT website.

"The AR doesn't name the CMOs we visited, but it does summarize what we saw in each of the areas we reviewed," Jungwirth explained.

"If someone is having an issue in a certain area, somebody else might have the same issue," he said. "From place to place, we often see of the same deficiencies – things that could be improved. The idea is to pass this information to other people so they can make sure their organization is performing these things in accordance with agency policy."

The information is useful in assisting CMOs to do their own evaluations.





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