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VOICING
our **VISION**



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ON THE COVER
Read about how DCMA's new mission and vision statements were created and what those words mean to us as one team with one voice. (DCMA photo illustration by Stephen Hickok)

DEFENSE CONTRACT MANAGEMENT AGENCY COMMUNICATOR WINTER 2015



Looking back, but focusing ahead

A new year begins, and it's going to be a great one for DCMA. Fifteen years ago this agency was created, an evolution of organizations going back 50 years to the establishment of the Defense Supply Agency — and further back still to earlier initiatives meant to ensure quality products reach our people in uniform.

DCMA started strong, with a dedicated and experienced workforce already in place, many of whom are still with us today. And each year we've gotten better - increasingly focused on our mission, increasingly better trained in our functional areas, and increasingly recognized by our defense family as contracting subject matter experts.

We've done this by never accepting "good enough." Last year, agency leaders and I examined our agency's progress. We reassessed our stakeholders, examined Department of Defense guidance, and took an unsentimental look at what we need to do to provide the best customer service. This resulted in a renewed energy, communicated through renewed mission, vision and goals statements. The next time you read them I want

you to look closer, and understand that each word and phrase was carefully chosen, and each has meaning.

Independent. Actionable. Agile. Insight that matters. One team, one voice.

This magazine is dedicated to our vision, and over the next few months you'll be hearing a lot more about where the agency is headed. I'm excited that soon we'll be releasing a new strategic plan, a document to guide us in the coming years. These statements and plans are more than just words. They're essential to our success, and our work is critical.

Our nation's promise of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" depends on the DoD's mission "to protect and defend." And DoD components in turn rely on us, because we are the independent eyes and ears of DoD and its partners, delivering actionable acquisition insight from the factory floor to the front line ... around the world.

So let's begin this year together, stronger than we've ever been, as one team, one voice delivering global acquisition insight that matters.

Wendy M. Masiello, Lt. Gen., USAF
DCMA director



An airman inspects a bomb rack on an A-10 Thunderbolt at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan. (Air Force photo by Senior Airman Corey Hook)

Bomb racks and the future

Patrick Tremblay | DCMA Public Affairs

“I love this job.” Stanley Michaud is assertive, efficient and dedicated in everything he does, right down to the words he chooses. He’s also ardent about his mission as a quality assurance specialist at Defense Contract Management Agency Garden City.

Michaud sits at an Amityville, New York, contractor that produces weapons release systems for military aircraft, commonly called bomb racks. He enjoys the work for a variety of reasons. “I like the interaction out here. In quality it changes every day — every day is something different.” But like many in the agency, his real purpose is far away. “Most importantly, I’m in support of the biggest customer, which is the warfighter.”

When it comes to bomb racks, Michaud enjoys the variety of QA surveillance. “It’s a big facility,” he said, “and it shows almost all the disciplines.”



An inert Mark-84 bomb is released from a BRU-61 carriage system equipped F-16 during a test over the Gulf of Mexico. (Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Joely Santiago)

The QAS has been with the agency since 2008, when he left work at a private research facility — he has a bachelor’s in biomedical engineering — to pursue a federal career. It was a logical step for him. His father Jean Marie was also a QAS at Garden City. “I am following in his footsteps, I’m part of the family and part of the team.”

The systems Michaud performs surveillance on aren’t that large, and sitting alone on a table one would have a hard time guessing their intended use. But slap a bomb on one side and a fighter jet on the other and it all makes sense.

Despite their rather non-descript appearance, the devices are technologically advanced systems, employing hooks to hold the bombs, hydraulic pistons to push them away from the aircraft, and complex electronics to make it all happen.

“It’s unique because at other contractors you see piece-parts. They make a washer or a brace or a piston to go into an aircraft or into a bomb rack, and I think it’s fascinating to see the finished product.”

Heather Andersen
DCMA Garden City
quality assurance specialist



Several different racks are made at the contractor, meeting specific needs of the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps customers. As they leave the factory they’re destined for use on aircraft from P-8 Poseidons to F-22 Raptors, controlling the drops of bombs and sonobuoys — air launched sensors designed to pick up underwater sounds associated with ships and submarines.

The designs require Michaud to have Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act level II certification and additional certification in both mechanical and electronics commodities. He uses these elsewhere

on New York’s Long Island, too, as he spends much of his time outside of the contractor on an itinerant route.

“I like to go out to the field and see different contractors,” Michaud said, “and perform quality assurance work for a variety of customers including (Defense Logistics Agency) and the Army.” He estimates that about 50 to 60 percent of his time is spent in the field.

With all the work, Michaud has spent the past six years improving his personal process for time management. “You have to find ways to organize paperwork, set schedules, when to take care of product quality deficiency reports, when you

expect responses. You have to set all your dates and manage your time. I have everything organized using Microsoft Outlook calendars.” Michaud is efficient, and prepared, even in his planning “I also track everything in here,” he says, tapping a notebook. “It’s my second or third notebook, and it’s filling up.”

Joining Michaud most days is Heather Andersen, a QAS in her first year as a journeyman employee after completing the Keystone program.

“The Keystone program I loved, it was great to have so many young people around,” she said. “We have a lot of fresh ideas.”

“I like the interaction out here. In quality it changes every day — every day is something different. Most importantly, I’m in support of the biggest customer, which is the warfighter.”

Stanley Michaud
DCMA Garden City
quality assurance specialist





(Left) The Defense Contract Management Agency Garden City quality assurance team at an Amityville, New York, contractor that produces bomb racks for military aircraft. From left: Heather Andersen, John Clouse, Stanley Michaud and Malcolm Timoney. (DCMA photo by Patrick Tremblay) (Right) Airmen load a GBU-38 bomb at a base in Afghanistan. (Air Force photo by Senior Airman Scott Saldukas)

Andersen also has an itinerant route, but spends most of her time at the bomb rack manufacturer. “This is my main facility. Because this is my first year as a journeyman they gave me three other facilities, which are all in the area.”

Her primary location keeps her plenty busy. “I am responsible for the two biggest programs here, the (Joint Strike Fighter) and P-8 programs, so I spend the majority of my time on site. I’ve been here for two and a half years, but I love it — it’s a great facility for a QAS to work at.”

One of the more interesting facets of Andersen’s surveillance routine is the opportunity to watch the whole manufacturing process.

“It’s unique because at other contractors you see piece-parts,” she explained. “They make a washer or a brace or a piston to go into an aircraft or into a bomb rack, and I think it’s fascinating to see the finished product.”

“A big part of my job is when the contractor gets purchase orders for the detailed parts that go into the bomb

rack. I have to delegate (government source inspections) at the sub-contractor level before they come to this facility. It’s interesting to see them come in — the detailed pieces — then see them go into the whole bomb rack.”

The process ends with a bang, as an agency QAS, usually Andersen, witnesses the final test — or shot — of the finished product. Each system is mounted in a testing room, then loaded with a dummy bomb matching the weight and size of a real one. From behind a safety window Andersen watches as contractor personnel “fire” the rack. In a harsh instant, the hooks disengage from the bomb and a piston pushes it violently away from the device. The entire process is electronically measured, ensuring the timing, speed and angle of drop all meet contract requirements.

“And then it goes right from there, into the shipping area, and it’s sent to the field to go right onto the plane,” marveled Andersen. “I think it’s great that we’re right in the middle of it, right by the back door. We see the shipping trucks pull up right here.”

Her knowledge of DCMA, and fascination with supporting the

warfighter, are in her blood. Andersen first learned about the agency from her father, who as a Marine was stationed in Garden City — in the Marine Corps building that DCMA resides in. “My brother then joined the Marines and I thought ‘what better job to have than to make sure good products are going to them?’”

Andersen applied for the Keystone program, her first job out of college. “I got the QA job, and thought ‘this is perfect.’ I love to be hands-on and what’s better than making sure these products work properly because they could be going into an aircraft that supports my brother.”

Michaud and Andersen represent so much of what the agency stands for. They’re a tie between the past workforce and the present, the agency and the warfighter. They are committed to their work — and enjoy it.

Sitting at a contractor on Long Island, watching from behind thick glass as a bomb rack is tested, they’re also the future of DCMA. “I’d like to stay in DCMA,” said Andersen. “I like that there are opportunities for a long-term career.”

Rotating views

How a short rotation to a shipyard launched both end-user understanding and agency appreciation

Thomas Perry | DCMA Public Affairs

Within the course of a lifetime, two weeks can be insignificant. It is 336 hours. It is 13 days and a wake up. It is approximately 0.05 percent of the new U.S. life expectancy. For better or worse, two weeks is often a blip on the screen of the human experience.

On the rare occasion however, two weeks is something more. It can alter two organizations’ understanding of each other and build a foundation for future success — sometimes two weeks can last forever.

As a third-year Keystone, Joseph Roth, a general engineer at Defense Contract Management Agency Huntsville, had a rotational requirement to satisfy. His supervisor, Duane Jardine, Huntsville’s systems engineering team chief, was conducting a physical configuration audit, known as a PCA, with two representatives of Naval Air Systems Command when an idea for the perfect rotational assignment developed at Huntington Ingalls Industries shipyard in Newport News, Va.

Robert Puakea, NAVAIR 4.8.7.3 Carrier and Field Service Unit, known as CAFSU, on-site lead; and Byron Collins, NAVAIR 4.8.2.2 Advanced Arresting Gear-Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System on-site ships integration engineer, are both seasoned professionals with intimate knowledge of naval acquisition programs.

Throughout the PCA, Jardine, Puakea and Collins maintained an underlying conversation regarding acquisition insight, end-user challenges and rotational opportunities for young professionals such as Roth.

“Mr. Collins and I have participated

in many cradle-to-grave design projects and repair projects for the Department of the Navy,” said Puakea. “One of our biggest problems as primary end users was the condition of material and/or equipment we were receiving (at the shipyard) — i.e., on-fit, form or function, material selection, undocumented deviations, etc. This sparked an interest in Mr. Jardine.”

The three decided that both Roth and the agency as a whole could benefit from a firsthand understanding of existing challenges and end-user obstacles facing the shipyard, which is

commonly referred to as Newport News Shipbuilding or Newport News shipyard.

After the leadership of both organizations worked out the details, Roth began an unusual two-week rotational assignment to the government oversight offices at Newport News Shipbuilding.

“Since I have been a member of the



Read Heather’s thoughts on the new DCMA mission and vision statements on page 19.





The aircraft carrier Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) is shown under construction at Huntington Ingalls Industries-Newport News Shipbuilding. (Navy photo by Chris Oxley)

NAVAIR 4.8.7.3 and 4.8.2.2 team — seven years — there has never been a DCMA Keystone rotation,” said Puakea. “Normally all of our rotations are NAVAIR interns within the 4.8.X.X competencies.”

The NAVAIR CAFSU rotation was a particularly interesting assignment, since CAFSU works hand-in-hand with the Naval Sea Systems Command Supervisor of Shipbuilding command at Newport News. DCMA Keystones don’t typically serve rotational assignments within the Navy’s Supervisor of Shipbuilding commands, because SUPSHIP administers its own contracts and maintains a quality assurance department.

“DCMA has historically only had involvement to the extent of acceptance of government furnished equipment that gets installed shipboard, which typically occurs at the point of manufacture or receipt by the government,” said Collins.

Once Roth arrived at the shipyard, he

wasted little time and quickly became a contributing member of Puakea’s team.

“He was integrated into my shipboard 4.8.7.3 and 4.8.2.2 teams,” said Puakea. “Mr. Roth sat in system design reviews, problem solving sessions and project reviews. He was also required to perform on-site inspections, and even had the opportunity to engage in installation processes. His performance was outstanding. He engaged well with my personnel, and always asked questions to improve on his knowledge base of our requirements and tasks.”

Hoping to learn and experience as much as possible during his brief naval campaign, Roth also partook in material review boards.

“Mr. Roth participated in NAVAIR-General Atomics MRBs where discrepancies and issues with the production of various equipment are boarded and discussed among a joint team of NAVAIR and General Atomics engineers, quality assurance personnel,

logisticians and other technical experts.”

Roth said the knowledge he gained during his rotation will help him provide predictive analysis and recommendations when he observes similar risk or issues during DCMA engineering surveillance activities.

“My rotation at Newport News provided firsthand experience of the many diverse technical problems that can arise during integration of a large-scale government acquisition,” said Roth. “I learned about the risks present in shipping and the corresponding costs of packaging and shipping fixtures designed to mitigate those risks.”

He also gained a better understanding of the need for serialization and proper marking of parts, and for how much time, effort and money are required to manage large supply chains.

“Perhaps most interesting, I learned the complications and contractual processes involved in addressing the possibility that even conforming material may be found to be unsuitable

“Learning the functional expertise of those we encounter professionally can have a lasting impact on our performance and can help broaden the experience of those who have the opportunity to rotate through.”

Byron Collins

NAVAIR 4.8.2.2 Advanced Arresting Gear-Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System on-site ships integration engineer

at the point of use due to insufficient specifications or improper design,” said Roth. “All of this new experience and insight can be used to inform my engineering surveillance efforts for programs to which I am assigned throughout my career.”

While the original goal of both Roth and the agency receiving invaluable insight into end-user challenges, obstacles and protocol was accomplished, an ancillary benefit to shipyard personnel quickly became apparent.

“NAVAIR personnel at the shipyard were impressed by Mr. Roth’s contributions and the quality of DCMA support, and as a side benefit, the NAVAIR personnel working in Mr.

Collins’ and Mr. Puakea’s office now understand and have a better insight as to who we are here at DCMA, what we do and how we do it,” said India Wade, Huntsville’s engineering and analysis director.

Puakea echoed Wade’s sentiment, and further highlighted the symbiotic benefit to such rotations.

“(These rotational assignments) are beneficial because witnessing the fruits of your labor does make a difference,” said Puakea. “It also gives DCMA folks an appreciation for what we are trying to accomplish as end users. At the same time, it is an opportunity for us as end users to learn about DCMA’s capabilities and limitations as well.

This helps us to communicate better

with our program office and design teams, and the requirements they are providing in their procurement documents.”

Collins said that inter-organizational rotations can also help personnel understand and call upon the specific roles of peers from different agencies.

“Learning the functional expertise of those we encounter professionally can have a lasting impact on our performance and can help broaden the experience of those who have the opportunity to rotate through,” he said. “We welcome future Keystone rotations from DCMA and look forward to learning from them as well.”

Roth has long since returned from his two-week excursion to the coast, but the lessons he learned will benefit his professional career for years to come and the agency knowledge he bestowed to shipyard personnel will undoubtedly benefit future inter-agency communication. Additionally, because of the positive experience each organization enjoyed, future assignments are a real possibility.

“These rotational assignments would be very beneficial to any DCMA Keystone that will eventually be assigned to a program support team and be responsible for conducting surveillance of contractors’ design or production efforts,” said Roth. “The firsthand experience with the diverse types of problems that can arise in large-scale integration efforts, and the government’s options for addressing them, is very beneficial when applied within the context of surveillance and predictive analysis of other government acquisitions.”



Robert Puakea, Naval Air Systems Command 4.8.7.3 Carrier and Field Service Unit on-site lead and supervisor of shipbuilding; Byron Collins, NAVAIR 4.8.2.2 Advanced Arresting Gear-Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System on-site ships integration engineer, and Joseph Roth, general engineer Keystone at Defense Contract Management Agency Huntsville, take a brief time out during Roth’s two-week rotational assignment at a Virginia shipyard. (Photo courtesy of Navy)



Read Joseph’s thoughts on the new DCMA mission and vision statements on page 19.

Inside Inside DCMA

Patrick Tremblay | DCMA Public Affairs



special INTEREST
inside DCMA
ACCESS • ANYTIME • ANYPLACE

MAKING IT HAPPEN



NEWS highlights

UP CLOSE IN FOCUS



What “Inside DCMA” is a video communication product created by Defense Contract Management Agency Public Affairs with technical assistance from the Information Technology Directorate. New segments are produced regularly and made available on the agency intranet. Past segments are archived for easy viewing.

Where To find the show, log on to the agency’s internal homepage (<https://home.dcma.mil/>). Click on NEWS ROOM, then “Inside DCMA.” The intranet homepage features announcements and links when new segments are released.

Why In fall 2012, agency leaders were looking for ways to expand the reach of employee communication. Existing equipment and advances in technology provided a low-cost opportunity to incorporate routine, general information videos as a tool for relaying information. While video presentations aren’t new to the DCMA workforce, previous products tended to be topic-specific and created on an as-needed basis. With the combined efforts of Public Affairs and IT, the first “Inside DCMA” show aired in March 2013. More than 50 segments aired by the end of 2014.

How The show is captured in high-definition digital video using a variety of existing equipment. Multi-use cameras are employed in the agency headquarters’ Fort Lee, Virginia, studio, with smaller cameras used to capture stories “on location” in contract management offices, around the headquarters and in other locations. Video teleconferencing technology extends the shows reach, allowing for interviews between people in the studio and at CMOs.

In the studio, presenters are usually shot in front of a green background. This allows technicians to digitally replace the green color with a variety of virtual studio or location backgrounds.

The rough footage is pieced together and finished using professional non-linear video editing software. Graphic elements like opening animations and text are added. Finally, all segments are given a closed-captioning track.

What’s next “Inside DCMA” DCMA is designed to meet the needs of our workforce by communicating the agency’s policies, priorities, programs, goals and initiatives. The segments evolve based on feedback from viewers, so please if you have ideas for segments or things to cover, contact the producers at insidedcma@dcma.mil.



(Top) Matthew Montgomery, left, a Defense Contract Management Agency public affairs specialist, uses a small camera to record an interview outside of the studio. Montgomery honed his video journalism skills as a Marine Corps combat correspondent. (Second from top) Misha King, a public affairs specialist, talks with a production technician after recording an “Inside DCMA” segment at the agency’s headquarters. King was a print and broadcast journalist in the Army. (Third from top) The animated segments of DCMA Ray follow the misadventures of an employee at the fictional DCMA Middlesburg contract management office. The segments are designed to cover topics of ethical or legal importance to the workforce in a humorous manner. (Bottom) A production technician works on an “Inside DCMA” segment. (DCMA photos by Patrick Tremblay)



A quality veteran

Patience and perseverance pay off for Navy retiree and agency

Thomas Perry | DCMA Public Affairs

After serving 20 years in the military, returning to the civilian world can seem like entering an alien environment.

From reveille to retreat, life feels different. Marlow Bass, Sr., retired from the Navy in 2006. He expected to quickly join the federal civilian workforce and maintain a certain level of normalcy, but life often laughs in the face of expectancy. Unable to gain employment in the federal system, Bass spent years working for a healthcare recruiting firm using skills he developed in the service.

As the days and months slipped by, Bass remained determined to enter the federal workforce. Then in 2013, seven years after his military career ended, his persistence was rewarded. He joined Defense Contract Management Agency Lockheed Martin Dallas as a Keystone, and his professional

satisfaction levels returned to that of his Navy days — well, almost.

“I love it here. This is my second favorite job. Navy was first, this is second,” said Bass, a DCMA LM Dallas quality assurance specialist about to begin his third year in the Keystone program.

James Flowers, DCMA LM Dallas deputy director, said Bass came to the contract management office during a period of leadership transition. “He could have easily been lost in the shuffle, but his first supervisor recognized his potential early on. He was placed in a number of trial-by-fire situations, and he excelled.”

Misty Kadow, a LM Dallas QA team lead, is Bass’ current supervisor, and, according to Flowers, she has expertly continued the QAS’s development.

“Since Ms. Kadow has come on board, she has expanded his role within our team,” said Flowers, who attributes the success of the office’s Keystone program and its atmosphere of mission accomplishment to all of the CMO’s talented professionals.

In addition to his supervisors’ guidance, Bass was assigned two mentors upon joining the agency: Roland Dimery and Sandra Ratliff. Each has positively influenced his maturation as a QA professional.

“Keystones are not one size fits all,

Marlow Bass, Sr., a Defense Contract Management Agency Lockheed Martin Dallas Keystone quality assurance specialist, retired from the Navy in 2006 and spent seven years trying to enter the federal civilian workforce.



Marlow Bass, Sr., a Defense Contract Management Agency Lockheed Martin Dallas Keystone quality assurance specialist, ensures a coordinate measuring machine correctly measures a component so that it meets the tolerances of the drawing. (DCMA photos by Thomas Perry)

and the assignment of a mentor is a critical part of the program,” said Dimery, a DCMA LM Dallas QAS. “Each one comes with a different background and a different set of skills — and sometimes challenges. It is tough to take on quality assurance as an experienced ‘Q.’ I can’t imagine taking all the acquisition classes, Keystone courses, learning 31 policies, multiple (Federal Acquisition Regulations) and technical data packages while trying to become an expert on (Acquisition Category) I level programs.”

Based on his performance, Bass has begun to master the skills of a seasoned QA professional, and his contract management agency team members are noticing.

“Mr. Bass is an exceptional employee and individual,” said Ratliff, a DCMA LM Dallas QAS. “He not only engages and interacts with me as his mentor, but the entire QA team has experienced his team-player attitude. Marlow takes on assignments and follows through until

“Keystones are not one size fits all ... Each one comes with a different background and a different set of skills.”

Roland Dimery
DCMA LM Dallas quality assurance specialist

they are complete, and he constantly pursues new challenges on a daily basis.”

When asked why he works every day to challenge himself, Bass credits his upbringing and his father’s philosophy on measurable success.

“When my father first walked into a classroom during his college days, he would say ‘25 percent of you are going to drop out, five percent will get an A, and the rest of you will get whatever,’” said Bass, whose father was a college professor. “I have always

wanted to be that five percent. That is what I strive for every day.”

His upper echelon mentality has served him well in the Navy, during his master’s degree program and now in DCMA. Finally in the federal system, he hopes to always stay professionally hungry and never grow content.

“A lot of people get complacent. They get used to their daily routine. Go into work, do this, do this, do this and you’re done,” said Bass. “I want to learn more because this job just doesn’t focus on one area. Each area has another tie-in. Right now I am trying to learn the QA job the best I can, so I can then learn and understand the other functional areas so I know how they all interact and depend on each other.”

To an industry outsider his job may seem menial because he spends so much time ensuring small parts, all of which serve a vital purpose to its greater whole, meet mission standards and customer parameters, said Bass. “In the end, when you see the finished product,

you want to see this perfectly formed (component). That block of metal has now become a part that will go inside a missile.”

Bass himself is a puzzle, pieced together by years of fatherly advice, a constant drive to finish within the top five percent of life, and possibly most important, his military service.

“I think the foundation that he already had and now has brought to our agency influences his daily performance,” said Ratliff, speaking to Bass’ military mindset and its benefit to the agency. “I’ve gotten feedback from other professionals within the contractor teams of how focused Mr. Bass is and how they enjoy working with him.”

According to Dimery, Bass’ service mentality also invigorates his CMO team members.

“Not only does Mr. Bass’ military experience positively influence his performance it also rejuvenates the performance of others around him,” said Dimery. “Additionally, he brings a different perspective with his medical background. He has a communication skill set that you can only gain dealing with people and very intense situations. His ability to diffuse issues and stay on point is extremely valuable in our career field.”

The agency’s workforce consists of approximately 40 percent veterans, so Bass’ story is not as unique as it may be within some organizations, but in a world consumed with instant gratification, it is good to see patience and perseverance culminate in success — even if it takes seven years. 🌐



Read Marlow’s thoughts on the new DCMA mission and vision statements on page 19.

A world-wide team player

Patrick Tremblay | DCMA Public Affairs

Midway through her Keystone program, Christie Ong packed her bags and went to the Philippines. For three weeks she immersed herself in a new culture, one both different yet familiar to her at the same time. She came back to her desk at Defense Contract Management Agency Baltimore a better person and employee. “I’ve been deaf my entire life,” said Ong. “I’ve had an internal fire, a motivation, to get involved with the deaf community. The exchange program gave me the opportunity to learn and understand the community in the Philippines as it relates to deaf culture, advocacy and education.”

The EMPOWER Program was sponsored by the Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and led by a non-profit organization Discovering Deaf Worlds.

Filipino and American participants were linked in focusing on strengthening the capacity of Filipino leaders from the Philippine Federation of the Deaf and its 18 member organizations.

“It’s a cross-cultural exchange program for professionals,” explained Ong. “There were eight American participants and 11 Filipino participants.” From May 5 through 26, 2013, the Filipinos came to the U.S., and then the Americans traveled to the Philippines from November 14 through December 5.

“We went to three cities — Manila, Dumaguete City, and Bohol. We met with a variety of Philippine government officials and visited a number of cultural sites,” continued Ong. “During this time, we facilitated seven capacity building sessions, four with PFD and one each with (Deaf Empowerment Awareness Foundation), Inc.; Deaf

Boholanos Society; and the Philippine National Association of Sign Language Interpreters. In each of these we asked questions to learn about key issues the Filipino deaf community is facing.”

Ong said one significant issue is geography. “The Philippines have approximately 7,000 islands separated into three island groups. While the capital Manila is where the majority of PFD leaders reside, many other deaf leaders representing 18 member organizations live throughout the country, so they have to figure out how to collaborate and overcome challenges of being from different areas. We learned of a lot of intriguing and intricate challenges, to say the least.”

Communication is a common challenge among deaf people, but American Sign Language and technology have made things relatively standardized



(Left) Christie Ong, a contract administrator at Defense Contract Management Agency Baltimore meets with students from Tagbilaran for the Hearing Impaired in Tagbilaran City, Bohol, Philippines. (Right) American and Filipino participants in the EMPOWER program meet members of the Dumaguete Effata Association of the Deaf, Philippine Federation of the Deaf, and Discovering Deaf Worlds, at the Dumaguete City, Philippines, mayor’s office. The visit was part of a professional exchange program designed to build capacity among the Filipino deaf community. (Contributed photos) (Opposite) Ong signs the letters for DCMA. (DCMA photo illustration by Stephen Hickok)

in the U.S. In the Philippines, just basic communication can still be a hindrance.

“Many deaf Filipinos aren’t proficient orally or in written Tagalog, their native language, which makes it more difficult to communicate with others who are,” said Ong. “They are more familiar with Filipino Sign Language, English, American Sign Language, or Signing Exact English depending on whichever language their family, friends and educational institution uses,” she continued. “So how can Filipino deaf leaders communicate with politicians and educators to make effective changes for deaf Filipinos throughout the country?”

The Discovering Deaf Worlds contingent visited the Philippines at a tense time, just five days after Typhoon Haiyan tore the country apart, killing thousands and sending the island nation

into turmoil. For Ong and the delegates, the timing made the visit more poignant and valuable. One particular meeting in Bohol stands out.

“Bohol was recovering from earthquake tremors that followed Typhoon Haiyan,” explained Ong. “We were proceeding with our capacity building session and the lights went out for the last half of our meeting. Instead of wrapping up, we used our phones to project light onto the speakers so that we could continue communicating in the dark.”

“That really inspired us. It was really a unique experience, and something I brought back with me. For example, if we have power issues here, or a shutdown, we still have to support the war effort, maybe in innovative ways.”

A Seattle native, Ong completed her bachelor’s at the Rochester Institute

of Technology in New York. After graduating she received a Fulbright Grant to research early intervention efforts for parents raising deaf and hard of hearing children in Italy. It was on a visit back to RIT that she first learned of DCMA, and in October 2011 she moved to the East Coast for a contract administrator Keystone position at DCMA Baltimore and to be closer to her brother, a professional clarinetist for “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band stationed in Washington, D.C.

“Christie started as a Keystone that hit the ground running when she arrived at Baltimore,” said Charlene Ivey, DCMA Baltimore director. “She took every opportunity to use her maximum drive to fulfill her job responsibilities and complete her (Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act)

“I’ve had an internal fire, a motivation, to get involved with the deaf community. The exchange program gave me the opportunity to learn and understand the community in the Philippines as it relates to deaf culture, advocacy and education.”

Christie Ong
DCMA Baltimore contract administrator





“I think I appreciate Christie more because of what she went through in the Philippines, and it helped develop terrific characteristics she already had. And she brought those back to the (contract management office) — she’s a world-wide team player. I’m very proud of Christie.”

Marian McDonald
DCMA Baltimore
Contracts Group chief

certification and other training in short order. Christie displays an ability to learn rapidly and adapt quickly to changing situations.”

It wasn’t surprising, then, when Ivey heard that Ong was interested in the Discovering Deaf Worlds program.

“This was such a great opportunity for her, and I had every confidence in her judgment and professionalism to represent DCMA well,” Ivey said. “She had demonstrated that she is strongly motivated to achieve optimal results and displays a strong incentive to succeed in all her work.”

It was an ambitious move for a young Keystone, to pursue a program outside of the agency that would require nearly a month away from the office.

Marian McDonald, Baltimore’s Contracts Group chief, was instrumental in helping Ong get the agency permission required to participate in the program, and in putting together an application packet to become a participant.

“I think the program made a big difference for Christie, because it was a unique opportunity,” said McDonald. “It happened right after the typhoon, so not

only did she go for the program, but it was also a real humanitarian effort.

“I think I appreciate Christie more because of what she went through doing that, and it helped develop terrific characteristics she already had. And she brought those back to the (contract management office) — she’s a world-wide team player. I’m very proud of Christie.”

Tracy Williams agrees. She was Ong’s supervisor during the Philippines exchange. “When she told me about volunteering for the program I thought ‘how exciting for someone to go out and really experience something and bring it back to the agency.’ How we can better ourselves as people, but also show that as a federal organization we’re committed to helping others — that’s important.”

“She’s always been very mature, intelligent, professional,” continued Williams, “so I knew when she went over there she’d show ‘not only am I a DCMA employee, but I’m an individual who can make a positive impact.’”

Ong continues to be a strong employee at Baltimore, transitioning from ambitious Keystone to valued journeyman. She thinks often of her time with her Filipino counterparts, and the lessons of collaboration and innovation she learned then.

“I strongly support and encourage other professionals to look for opportunities to learn more outside of their comfort zone, and outside their organization. There’s so much you can learn from other people’s stories and situations that you can bring back with you,” said Ong.

Ong continues to stay in touch with the Discovering Deaf Worlds program through newsletters and on social media, and has been active in working within the Baltimore office to educate and increase awareness of the deaf culture and how to work with deaf individuals.

“While Ms. Ong is a part of the deaf and hard of hearing culture at DCMA Baltimore she epitomizes the belief that all employees can, and do, offer their full talents to the achievement of our mission,” Ivey said. “She and her leadership see no limitations in her ability to thrive and excel in our CMO. I believe she’s a future DCMA leader.”

BBP shifts focus to technical excellence

Misha King | DCMA Public Affairs

After months of focusing heavily on gauging feedback from the workforce, industry and think tanks, Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Frank Kendall is preparing to finalize the third version of his Better Buying Power initiatives.

Launched in 2010, BBP is the implementation of best practices to strengthen the Department of Defense’s buying power, improve industry productivity and provide an affordable, value-added military capability to the warfighter. It encompasses a set of fundamental acquisition principles to achieve greater efficiencies through affordability, cost control, elimination of unproductive processes and bureaucracy, and promotion of competition.

In short, BBP is about continuous improvement and evolutionary change. Kendall said it isn’t about throwing out one set of ideas and completely replacing them with another set. Rather, “it’s about finding ways to move forward in areas where you can make the most difference and continuously examining your progress to identify those areas and to understand the influence of the things that you are doing to see if they are the right things, need to be modified, or if there needs to be a different focus.”

There is an evolutionary progression to the three versions, which Kendall said is central to the whole BBP concept and AT&L mission. The original version focused mostly on cost consciousness and what could be done to control cost. The second one added professionalism to the list, because according to Kendall, “the professionalism of our people is the most important factor in terms of getting good results.” The drive of this

latest version is about achieving dominant capabilities through technical excellence and innovation.

“The thrust last time was about critical thinking and tools to help our people make better decisions as they made business deals, planned and executed programs, contracted for and acquired

“... it’s about finding ways to move forward in areas where you can make the most difference and continuously examining your progress ...”

Frank Kendall
undersecretary of defense for acquisition,
technology and logistics



services, and oversaw that work,” said Kendall. “It was about decision-making, better tools, critical thinking and professionalism.”

“BBP 2.0 isn’t dead; it’s alive and well,” Kendall added. “There’s an enormous amount of continuity between 2.0 and 3.0. This release doesn’t end our focus on controlling costs, critical thinking and sound professional management. It shifts our emphasis slightly toward the products we produce for our customers: the warfighters who depend on us to give them dominant capabilities on the battlefields of the future.”

The areas that haven’t changed from the previous version are: affordable programs, dominant capabilities while controlling life cycle costs, incentivizing productivity, incentivizing innovation, eliminating unproductive processes in bureaucracy, promoting effective competition, improving tradecraft in acquisition of

services, and improving professionalism within DoD’s total acquisition workforce.

Kendall said the need for BBP 3.0 arose as he became increasingly concerned about modernization around the world and what the more intense competition over the past 10-15 years is doing to our country.

“Our technological superiority is at risk, and it’s eroding because we’re not making the investments we should be making,” Kendall explained. “The threat of sequestration — even the cuts to the level we have already taken them — pose problems for us in terms of maintaining technological superiority. We have to figure out what’s going to make sense, and we have to do it. And, in some cases, we have to overcome some significant inertia. We need to work closely with

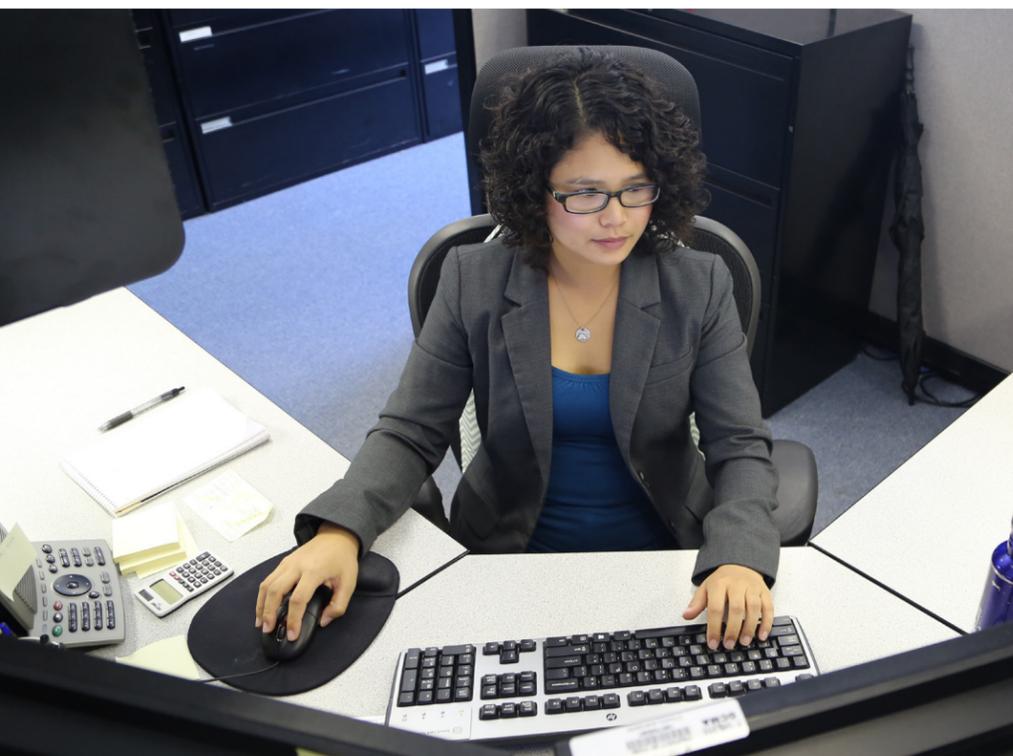
the requirements community and the intelligence community as we try to figure out the best way forward.”

During a June 2014 visit to agency headquarters, Kendall said DCMA is at the heart of BBP. “Your people are out there with industry partners making sure they fulfill their contracts, helping us with business practices, the quality of products and much more. I’m very grateful for the work you’ve done.”

The agency’s new mission statement reinforces Kendall’s assessment of the agency.

“This gets to the core of what DCMA does,” said DCMA Director Air Force Lt. Gen. Wendy Masiello. “With one team and one voice, we’ll support Mr. Kendall in taking BBP to the next level and do our part to ensure the warfighter gets the best product possible, on cost and on time.”

For the latest information about BBP initiatives, visit: <http://bbp.dau.mil/>.



Christie Ong at her workstation at Defense Contract Management Agency Baltimore. (DCMA photo by Stephen Hickok)



VOICING our VISION

On September 23, 2014, Air Force Lt. Gen. Wendy Masiello, Defense Contract Management Agency director, announced new mission and vision statements for the agency. Our mission is now:

We are the independent eyes and ears of (the Department of Defense) and its partners, delivering actionable acquisition insight from the factory floor to the front line ... around the world.

“Those words get to the heart of what DCMA is about,” said Masiello. “We are uniquely poised on the factory floor to front line continuum to provide insight to our program partners so they can make the best decisions about their contracts and the products and services that result.”

To craft these words, Masiello took input from the field into a strategic meeting with agency senior leaders. Together they poured over stakeholder analyses and discussed overarching DoD strategic guidance including the Quadrennial Defense Review; the DoD Strategic Management Plan; and the acquisition, technology and logistics Better Buying Power initiatives.

The meeting also produced a new vision: One team, one voice delivering global acquisition insight that matters.

Masiello said, “This vision means we will integrate our efforts, analyze our data, and provide one unified message that our customers can use to the benefit of today’s contracts and those in the future.”

Here are some more thoughts from others who helped put our mission and vision into words.



Marie Greening
DCMA chief operations officer

“The senior leadership team worked hard to best capture the agency’s contributions to the Department of Defense. While the old mission statement articulated our discrete lines of service, we came to the universal conclusion that we deliver so much more. Collectively these products represent our acquisition insight from the factory floor to the front lines. We also universally agreed that because of our unique position our insight really can’t be duplicated by anyone else. We really are the ‘eyes and ears’ of defense acquisition.”



Michael E. Shields, Jr., Quality Assurance Directorate executive director

“The new mission and vision statements show we’ve built up our functional expertise, and now it’s time to build bridges between the functional communities and the operational directorates that drive us to synergistic solutions we couldn’t achieve on our own. We’re moving forward with multifunctional teams that integrate the competencies we have in each area. We’re translating our data and findings into acquisition insight that’s useful to our customers. And we’re improving how we train the next generation so they understand where they fit in the overall process and why they’re important.”



Navy Capt. Michael B. Murphy
commander, DCMA Eastern Regional Command

“I was thrilled to have been invited to the planning meeting. It provided an opportunity to ensure that the field had a voice in the meeting that would shape the agency’s path forward. The new mission and vision statements posture the agency well for the future and bring a renewed focus to the Eastern Region workforce. Through them we posture ourselves as an indispensable partner to the buying activities within the department and a critical player as that last line of defense to our ultimate customer — the warfighter.”



George P. Braxton
special advisor for diversity and inclusion

“The ‘one team, one voice’ vision statement embraces the concept of a diverse group of individuals playing different roles and approaching those roles from different perspectives, but maintaining a goal consistent with the mission of the agency.”



Kathy Butera
Human Capital Directorate executive director

“The SLT worked as one team to develop these one-voice messages and carve a path forward for DCMA’s future. I believe every employee can relate to the mission and vision statements. This new perspective will mean something different to each member of the workforce as they connect the dots between their work and the mission.”



James W. Norris
Special Programs executive director

“The new mission and vision statement really resonates with me. Being a retired Army officer when I hear we are the independent eyes and ears, I immediately think of the Army cavalry scout. Cavalry scouts work to obtain, distribute and share vital information which the commander can use to develop plans and make informed decisions. DCMA is the cavalry scout for AT&L, providing actionable acquisition insight which can be used to make informed decisions.”



Karron Small, Engineering and Analysis Directorate executive director

“My directorate is definitely in sync with the mission and vision. We have continuously pursued collaborative efforts, integrated processes and innovation. The energy level is high. We are leaning forward to ensure the DCMA technical community is equipped with the right level of policy and training to prepare them for future agency engagements. With a strong focus on affordability, we want to leverage service program requirements and training opportunities across the DoD spectrum.”



Joseph E. Sweeney, Portfolio Management & Integration Directorate executive director

“Mr. Kendall, undersecretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics, counts on DCMA to help achieve his Better Buying Power goal of Achieve Affordable Programs. We do this every day by ensuring contract management issues are identified from the factory floor and that our independent Program Assessment Reports are supported by sound analysis backed up by appropriate data presented in a logical way that is compelling.”



One Team One Voice

DELIVERING GLOBAL ACQUISITION INSIGHT THAT MATTERS.



Marty Jakim, Corporate Support Directorate executive director

"Like some of our associate directorates, Corporate Support provides numerous supporting functions that ultimately enable Team DCMA. These new statements remind us to leave our directorate loyalties and perceptions at the door when we come together to discuss issues and solutions. To succeed in our 'one team, one voice' approach, we can't operate in functional siloes; rather, we must communicate and collaborate so we're being holistic and most effective in fulfilling the agency's requirements and objectives."



Navy Capt. Drew Swenson Aircraft Operations executive director

"The Aircraft Operations enterprise has always been on the cutting edge of agility; it's what airpower brings to the fight. It's our forte and it's been ingrained in our culture from day one of our careers. The new statements reinforce that the director values our strong suit, and this emboldens us to make even further strides in this area — breaking the status quo, bridging functional boundaries and guaranteeing DCMA's success to be the one voice honest brokers for DoD."



Navy Rear Adm. Deborah Haven DCMA International commander

"The new mission and vision statements are clear and actionable. They underline DCMA's impact on the defense of our nation and our fiduciary responsibility to our taxpayers. The off-site planning process gave the DCMA senior leadership team a great opportunity to reflect on all the great work the men and women of DCMA have carried out throughout the years as we refined the direction of DCMA to fit the current strategic objectives of the DoD."



Walter B. Eady, Portfolio Management & Integration Directorate deputy executive director

"It is crucial that the agency focus on independent and actionable insight. Through our day-to-day execution of our customer outreach mission, PM&I realizes the significance the acquisition community's decision makers place on DCMA's message. We encourage our Portfolio Division folks based in the National Capital Region and customer liaison representatives at AFMC, SMC, NAVSEA, NAVAIR, ACC and DLA to engage continuously with Pentagon and service acquisition executive officials and PEOs."



Pamela Conklin, Financial and Business Operations Directorate executive director

"DoD is facing significant financial challenges and constraints. Our new mission and vision statements articulate the value DCMA adds to the department and its partners in a way that everyone can understand. It makes my job as Comptroller — to develop and defend our budget to support that mission — so much easier."



Air Force Col. Glenn Graham Commander, DCMA Western Regional Command

"I was grateful for the opportunity to participate in the planning session. It was a unique opportunity to represent the men and women of the Western Region. Furthermore, it was the perfect forum to express some of the challenges the workforce has been facing and highlight some of its many accomplishments to the Senior Leadership Team."



Larry F. Ross Equal Employment Opportunity director

"Creativity and innovation is just one of the mechanisms that helps facilitate change in an organization. Using SWOT was a great approach to stir up conversations, but it also gave the SLT a chance to share, from their viewpoint DCMA's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats."



Timothy P. Callahan Contracts Directorate executive director

"DCMA's new mission and vision statements are powerful. They clearly communicate DCMA's unique and vital role in the acquisition process. No one else can provide the insight and perspective that we do. From a Contracts Directorate point of view, the statements provide a rallying point for all of our efforts. We are not a standalone functional component; we are a vital member of the integrated DCMA team."



Jacob Haynes, Information Technology Directorate executive director

"The Information Technology Directorate is a service organization. These new statements force us to remember why we exist — to make the mission statement a reality. This is something I reiterate to my staff all the time so it becomes not just words, not just a motto, but part of our culture, part of our DNA. When we say we're 'Making IT Happen,' that carries with it the innate reminder that everything we do matters — not just for IT, but for the whole DCMA team."

Voices from the field



Marlow Bass, DCMA Lockheed Martin Dallas quality assurance specialist

"The new mission and vision statements reinforce what the Navy and my upbringing instilled in me: always make good decisions; provide the warfighter with the best tools to keep them ready to complete their mission; ensure I am doing my part to do my job to the best of my ability; and if you have questions — ask."



Joseph Roth DCMA Huntsville general engineer

"The new mission statement highlights the agency's focus on engagement with both the customer and the contractor. In order to be actionable, the information DCMA provides must be timely. Team members must engage with their contractors frequently to ensure an awareness and understanding of contract execution challenges, risks, and opportunities as they develop."



Christie Ong DCMA Baltimore contract administrator

"It is an honor and privilege to support the warfighters as a unified team. DCMA's mission and vision speaks to the heart of what we aspire to do every day."



Heather Andersen DCMA Garden City quality assurance specialist

"The mission statement highlights our role in all parts of the contract, and shows how they're related. My work on the factory floor needs to be detailed and correct so that it is ready to go at a moment's notice. The warfighter is out there on the frontlines for us, and that means everything to me. It's teamwork, and we support one another in defending our country."

We are the independent eyes and ears of DoD and its partners, delivering actionable acquisition insight

from the **FACTORY FLOOR** to the **FRONT LINE** ... around the world.



Across all horizons

GMD intercepts hostile missiles

Matthew Montgomery | DCMA Public Affairs

The Ground-Based Midcourse Defense system is the element of the United States' Ballistic Missile Defense System that provides commanders the capability to engage and destroy intermediate and long-range ballistic missile threats in space. Defense Contract Management Agency personnel work closely with representatives from the Missile Defense Agency to ensure this system works as required.

GMD looks like a normal rocket but employs integrated communications networks, fire control systems, globally deployed sensors and ground-based interceptors, known as GBIs, to detect, track and destroy ballistic missile threats. It does this using an exo-atmospheric kill vehicle — a sensor/propulsion package that uses the kinetic energy from a direct hit to destroy incoming targets.

Until a year ago, the Air Force at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California handled the quality oversight of GMD. Due to budget cuts, the Air Force had to reduce the oversight of programs not directly related to their mission. MDA contacted DCMA representatives, and through a series of meetings, both agencies determined the GMD program was something DCMA could support.

In April 2013, the DCMA Los Angeles missile team, referred to as AVQM,

stood up at Vandenberg to assume responsibility for the government contract quality assurance workload. Through a combination of new hires and former Air Force quality personnel, the team was fully staffed just two months later.

“This is a huge success story for our contract management office and the agency,” said Eldon Davenport, DCMA Los Angeles Quality Assurance group chief. “DCMA LA had only a short timeframe to take over the MDA GMD program at Vandenberg, which required LA working with DCMA Huntsville, MDA and headquarters defining requirements and getting a business case approved to hire new QA personnel.”

Davenport said MDA identified and provided mandatory government inspections for AVQM operations,



The Ground-Based Midcourse Defense system team stands in front of the Ronald W. Reagan missile defense memorial at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. Gary Delgadillo, Defense Contract Management Agency quality assurance specialist; Alfonso Ramos, QAS; Ken Thissell, QAS; Roderick Tank, QAS; Matthew Hall, QA supervisor; Paul Haar, QA team lead; Fred Hofeldt, QAS; and Brad Snyder, QAS; ensure the GMD is delivered to the Missile Defense Agency. (DCMA photo by Matthew Montgomery) (Opposite) A ground-based interceptor is launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base. (Air Force photo by Michael Peterson)

communicated via a letter of delegation from DCMA Huntsville. The change from Air Force oversight to DCMA occurred in the middle of a critical test for the program — a major task for the newly-formed office.

“Because three of us were already working for the Air Force on the program, we had to determine at what point Air Force oversight would cease and DCMA would begin,” said Paul Haar, DCMA QA team lead. “The transition occurred toward the later stages of Flight Test Mission FTG07. At this point DCMA representatives began providing QA surveillance of key integration activities, as well as test and launch operations for the prime contractor and suppliers.”

The team was able to accomplish the mission, even without permanent office space and less-than ideal working conditions. Matthew Hall, DCMA GMD QA supervisor, put the working conditions into perspective saying, “at one point we had a contingency plan to work out of our government vehicles with air cards to continue oversight.”

Even with the difficulties, Haar said the transition was seamless and the program was able to remain unaltered even though a major shift in oversight occurred in a very short period. He

“I can say nothing but positive things about the team here. They oversee all the work taking place and their expertise is very unique ... it’s a very intense process and DCMA always shines.”

**Christopher Sniderhan
MDA Ground-Based Interceptor
Program Office liaison**

credits the successful and swift turnover to the expertise and flexibility of his seven-person team at Vandenberg.

“When we stood the office up in June, we were really the only ones within the agency that had the expertise to execute the QA surveillance required to support the MDA mission,” said Haar, a retired Air Force major. “There was a big learning curve for those of us who came from the Air Force quality team, and the timing didn’t leave much room for learning new systems.”

“The way we conduct QA and ensure contractors perform to the contract

was the same coming from the Air Force, like how we identify and write corrective actions and how we follow up,” continued Haar. “However, DCMA has an additional multitude of policies and processes that we were not familiar with and that we needed to come up to speed on. It made it even harder because we were right in the middle of a flight test for GMD.”

The fast-paced turnover coupled with another test, Flight Test Mission FTG06b, pushed the team to their limits, but Haar said it also served as a major milestone toward overall program success. “The DCMA team demonstrated its full capacity to provide customer support from booster integration to completion of flight test operations.”

During launch operations, the AVQM team takes on a completely unique role from normal DCMA activities. “Our team provides supplier oversight on contractor operations at the launch facility, launch control center and the range operations center,” said Haar. “We are considered an integral part of the flight test team, providing MDA enhanced contractor oversight during these activities.”

Not including launch operations, the total workload for the team amounts to more than 100 points of action requiring

DCMA personnel to inspect, witness or verify work performance. Major components of the GBI arrive from three different suppliers and integration of the components occurs at Vandenberg. Throughout this process, the team is required to witness mandatory testing and integration activities identified by their customer — MDA.

Since the components arriving receive DCMA oversight, Hall said there are additional benefits to MDA having the team perform quality oversight and witness test operations for the final evolution of the process.

“I think one of the biggest changes and value added to the customer is the uniformity of policy, process, and data they receive since all locations supporting GMD workload are now supported by DCMA,” said Hall. “Across the program, MDA now sees the same level of support

from beginning to end — it’s more of an integrated total picture.”

Proximity is also a benefit and provides value to the program. The local MDA office is across the street from DCMA, enabling quicker feedback and enhanced information flow.

“Communication with the local DCMA team is critical to success. If there is something happening, we always try to keep DCMA in the loop and informed at the local level,” said Christopher Sniderhan, MDA GBI Program Office liaison. “On the other side, we have a very open policy, and DCMA comes to us if they have concerns about something they’re seeing.”

“I can say nothing but positive things about the team here,” continued Sniderhan. “They oversee all the work taking place and their expertise is very unique. We’ve had times when DCMA

has been asked questions by MDA senior leadership and requested to validate the processes and the steps that occurred. We have requested statements and interviewed DCMA personnel at various stages to ensure oversight is being performed as required — it’s a very intense process and DCMA always shines. We want a very hands-on type of quality oversight and DCMA provides that. They are there watching every critical operation.”

The next phase for the team at Vandenberg is getting geared up to start what MDA is calling 44 by 17 — 44 rockets ready to go and emplaced by 2017. “It’s going to be a challenge and require a lot of flexibility among the team, but they’ve proven it’s something they can handle, and I’m not worried about our ability to accomplish the mission,” said Haar. ☺

ITAR training: Internally leveraging DCMA expertise

Nick D’Amario | DCMA Public Affairs

Defense Contract Management Agency’s International and Quality Assurance Directorates are deploying a strategy to train nearly 3,000 agency employees on the International Traffic in Arms Regulation.

The training is a combination of both short and long term strategies developed by DCMAI and QA in a collaborative response to a training gap identified across agency functional areas managing contracts with export control restrictions and compliance to U.S. international agreements.

“Leveraging the expertise of our front-line DCMA professionals to develop and conduct this training ensures we can formulate strategies to fit our ‘one team, one voice’ motto for mission success,” said Michael Shields, Quality Assurance

executive director.

According to Navy Rear Adm. Deborah Haven, International commander, the training’s objective is to keep U.S. defense items and technologies from getting into the wrong hands, thus helping to protect our nation’s technological edge.

“This training will result in an organization that’s more knowledgeable about ITAR and the Export Administration Regulations, helping us more effectively spread the word across the agency,” said Haven. “While this protects our Department of Defense technological edge, it ultimately protects the lives of our soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen.”

Shields, Haven and Jim Morris, International Quality Assurance director, met in June 2014 to develop and execute

an initiative to provide expanded ITAR training to all personnel issuing or receiving Letters of Delegation where ITAR restrictions could apply. The training would include anyone working with the export and import of defense-related articles and services on the U.S. Munitions List and/or Commercial Control List, such as front-line DCMA professionals working in contracting and quality assurance.

“To get a jumpstart on this process, we started a Lean Six Sigma project which reviewed data to see which of the agency’s (contract management offices) were cutting most of the letters of delegation going overseas,” said Shields. “Ultimately, everyone having a relationship with work either going overseas or coming from overseas needs basic knowledge in ITAR, but we knew we needed to quickly deploy the training first to those CMOs most heavily engaged in such actions.”

According to Morris, 10 U.S.-based CMOs were identified as the tip of the spear for ITAR training, with Molly Brown, International Host Nation Program manager, tagged as the subject matter expert to deliver the training needed starting in July.

By November, Brown and supporting instructors had trained nearly 800 agency personnel at five of the 10 CMOs, and anticipated all target CMOs will be trained by January 2015.

“Training workshops are two days,” said Brown. “One day ITAR training for multifunctional specialists, and the second day is AQAP 2070 (a NATO Mutual Government Quality Assurance Process) and INST 313 (DCMA policy on International Requests for Contract Administration Services) for quality assurance representatives and their supervisors.”



An unarmed Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile is launched during an operational test from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., in front of the Ronald W. Reagan missile defense memorial. (Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Yvonne Morales)



Michael Shields, Defense Contract Management Agency Quality Assurance director, emphasizes synergizing International Traffic in Arms Regulation training objectives to fit the agency’s “one team, one voice” vision. Shields, center, met with Kurt Stonerock, left, dean of the Defense Acquisition University’s College of Contract Management, and Jim Morris, International Quality Assurance director, to review the way ahead for a total training program that would impact up to 3,000 DCMA employees. (DCMA photo by Nick D’Amario)

“While this protects our Department of Defense technological edge, it ultimately protects the lives of our soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen.”

Navy Rear Adm. Deborah Haven
DCMA International commander



More than 60 Defense Contract Management Agency quality assurance professionals, agency attorneys and host nation coordinators attended International Traffic in Arms Regulations training held at Fort Lee, Va. (DCMA photo by Nick D’Amario)

Brown is also DCMA’s designated subject matter expert working with the Defense Acquisition University on a new continuous learning module on ITAR. That module is scheduled for fielding in February 2015 and might be designated as required training for DCMA personnel working ITAR-related contracts across multiple functional areas.

Kurt Stonerock, dean of the College of Contract Management, noted, “As desired, the College of Contract Management stands ready to partner with DCMA subject matter experts to put in place sustainable, long-term ITAR training for DCMA personnel.”

He elaborated that training might only need to encompass the upcoming DAU continuous learning module on ITAR, but it might also require a multi-functional CCM ITAR course that addresses more DCMA-specific ITAR responsibilities and processes.

“Or, any such DCMA-unique ITAR training needs might be more effectively addressed by incorporating additional content into certain functional-specific courses the College has fielded or will be fielding,” he said.

Frank Kendall, defense undersecretary for acquisition, technology and logistics, and Air Force Lt. Gen. Wendy Masiello, DCMA director, are very interested not only in better acquisition outcomes, but in ensuring the nation retains its technological edge, according to Shields.

“This is a key theme in Mr. Kendall’s Better Buying Power 3.0,” said Shields. “DCMA has a key role in safeguarding ITAR and EAR related information. The DoD is very concerned about maintaining its technological advantage, and Mr. Kendall is concerned with

improving our current position in maintaining a technological advantage over other countries. ITAR is critical toward ensuring we are not sharing new emerging technologies.”

Shields said the agency is confident of having collectively identified the problem, to include changing the way LODs are executed, and developed a rapid and effective integrated approach to solving training shortfalls.

“In collaboration with DCMAI and the agency’s chief operations officer, we identified the lack of understanding on ITAR restrictions within some CONUS locations, enabling us to move our total team to develop synergistic solutions for everyone.”

Shields said this entire training initiative has been modeled on the agency director’s strategic objective to: Create an agile learning organization and culture to support future customer requirements.

“In sum, we really needed to get people trained up in the short term, and this is being addressed by Brown and members of my staff,” said Shields. “In the long term, teaming with Dr. Stonerock and the College of Contract Management will leverage DAU to sustain such critical ITAR training within the agency.”

He added, “We have demonstrated how the agency’s operational commands and directorates can leverage expertise to rapidly develop and deploy training to address an important training gap.”

Adapting procedures for FMS

Matthew Montgomery | DCMA Public Affairs

Defense Contract Management Agency personnel across the globe support the Foreign Military Sales program as part of normal operations. The requirements for most FMS products follow the same contractual agreements as those produced for DCMA’s Department of Defense and other federal agency customers. On rare occasions, DCMA personnel must deviate from standard practices to support unique FMS requirements — something the DCMA Boeing Long Beach team in California is experiencing now.

“Our oversight on remaining FMS C-17 aircraft is going to deviate from our normal procedures because the planes won’t go on contract until almost at the end of production,” said Air Force Maj. Joshua Holland, C-17 Quality Assurance Group chief. “To complete the QA process we will have to review third-party activities to ensure the work was completed successfully by the Boeing Company.”

Holland said Boeing was in the process of producing C-17’s for sale to foreign military customers, but the contract negotiations took longer than expected. It would have been costly to shut down production awaiting contract finalization so Boeing, along with the Air Force Program Office and DCMA, began looking at alternative ways to ensure oversight after contracts were in place.

“Safety of flight policy is very specific and states that we cannot waive our surveillance,” said Jerry Shipp, C-17

production team leader, referring to DCMA Instruction 308, Safety of Flight — QA. It also states that any deviation from the surveillance plan must get approval through headquarters — specifically the Quality Assurance Executive Director, Mike Shields.

“Deviating from policy is something we take very serious and try to avoid whenever possible,” said Shields. “Limiting exceptions to policy ensures we’re speaking as one team, with one voice. We also know that every situation is unique, and on very rare occasions, we have to change our way of doing business, which is why we’re proud of the hard work completed at DCMA Boeing Long Beach and glad we could assist them with their challenging endeavor.”

With SOF and quality assurance in mind, the team sat down with the contractor and program office to determine what SOF characteristics could not be inspected postproduction. “We narrowed it down to eight critical areas, mainly bolts connecting the wings to the fuselage, which would induce structural risk if verified after production. Everything else could be accomplished by taking up liners, pulling off panels, removing parts in certain areas and reviewing work out of sequence,” said Shipp.

After the eight areas were identified, it was up to Boeing to come up with a unique solution to ensure production could continue. Holland said their solution was to bring in an unbiased third-party to conduct the oversight and digitally record all of the necessary work performance so it could be reviewed by DCMA once the contract was finalized.

“Once they had a plan in place, Boeing brought in DCMA and the



Art Butteling, Defense Contract Management Agency Boeing Long Beach C-17 quality assurance specialist, inspects a Kuwaiti C-17 prior to final delivery. (DCMA photo by Matthew Montgomery)



On contracting letters of delegation

Risk planning and key process identification are accomplished to determine our risk handling strategies. While the prime contractor is responsible for subcontractor oversight, in some cases direct DCMA surveillance at the subcontractor or remote prime location is appropriate. When issuing a Request for Supporting Contract Administration Delegation (also known as a letter of delegation), some areas to consider are customer directed surveillance, flight critical characteristics, Safety of Flight, key processes, product complexity, and known supplier performance issues.

Source: DCMA Subcontracting Management Guidebook, subchapter on Supporting Contract Administration Delegations

“As we continue to move from detection to prevention, we have to refocus on suppliers providing objective evidence of controls that demonstrate proper outcomes, namely contractual conformance.”

Mike Shields
Quality Assurance executive director



(Top) Art Butteling, Defense Contract Management Agency Boeing Long Beach C-17 quality assurance specialist, inspects the front landing gear of a Kuwaiti C-17 prior to final delivery. (Bottom) Art Butteling watches recordings with Bary Linture, C-17 QAS, and Jerry Shipp, C-17 production team leader, to verify torques and calibrations. (DCMA photos by Matthew Montgomery)

program office to explain what would be different about the oversight process and how they were going to mitigate risk so the customers would still get the same type of product oversight they would normally get,” said Holland.

Once all parties were comfortable with the solution, the DCMA Boeing Long Beach team began the process of gaining approval to deviate from policy. “A lot of people and polices were involved in making this step happen,” said Shipp. “The Operations and Quality Directorates put in a lot of effort to make sure this plan would work and fulfill the contract requirements. It required internal, external and coordinated efforts across the board to make it happen.”

The already challenging process increased due to changes in the program office leadership and location, as well as changing DCMA policy during the process. “To make it even more challenging, Boeing also went through an organizational restructure,” said Holland. “Through all the changes and challenges, the flexibility of the DCMA team enabled us to finish up the requirements and proceed with the program.”

The first C-17 approved for delivery under the new plan went to the Kuwaiti Air Force. Shipp said the deviated plan broke overall surveillance into two distinct parts.

“The cumbersome part was verifying the credentials of the third-party chosen to perform the oversight in lieu of DCMA, then watching hours of video showing them conducting the required oversight,” said Shipp. By watching the recordings, DCMA personnel were able to verify torques and calibrations to



Inside the C-17

The DCMA Long Beach team of industrial specialists, contract administrators, engineers, quality assurance specialists, government ground representatives and many other specialties are responsible for ensuring the C-17 Globemaster is delivered on-time and on-cost. The versatility of the C-17 allows

the aircraft to carry large equipment, supplies and troops to small airfields in harsh terrain, which also makes it a highly sought after product to NATO allies.

The C-17 measures 174 feet long with a wingspan of 169 feet, 10 inches. It is powered by four, fully reversible, Federal Aviation Administration-certified F117-PW-100 engines (the military designation for the commercial Pratt & Whitney PW2040), currently used on the Boeing 757. Each engine is rated at 40,440 pounds of thrust. The thrust reversers direct the flow of air upward and forward to avoid ingestion of dust and debris. Maximum use has been made of commercial off-the-shelf equipment, including Air Force-standardized avionics.

The aircraft is operated by a crew of

three (pilot, co-pilot and loadmaster), reducing manpower requirements, risk exposure and long-term operating costs. Cargo is loaded onto the C-17 through a large aft door that accommodates military vehicles and palletized cargo. The C-17 can carry virtually all of the Army’s air-transportable equipment.

Maximum payload capacity of the C-17 is 170,900 pounds and its maximum gross takeoff weight is 585,000 pounds. With a payload of 169,000 pounds and an initial cruise altitude of 28,000 feet, the C-17 has an unrefueled range of approximately 2,400 nautical miles. Its cruise speed is approximately 450 knots. The C-17 is designed to airdrop 102 paratroopers and equipment. 🌐

An Airman conducts backing procedures prior to a training flight onboard a C-17 Globemaster III at Joint Base Charleston, S.C. (Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Barry Loo)

fulfill the contract requirements.

“As we continue to move from detection to prevention, we have to refocus on suppliers providing objective evidence of controls that demonstrate proper outcomes, namely contractual conformance,” said Shields. “In this case, the videos served as the objective evidence necessary to for us to verify conformance and ensure confidence in the final product.”

The second part of the quality inspection followed a more standard quality approach.

“Considering we had to go in after production and conduct surveillance, I think everything came together really well,” said Barry Linture, a quality assurance specialist responsible for inspecting the Kuwaiti C-17. “In some cases it meant removing panels and parts of the plane so we could verify the work was accomplished, but the contractor was very responsive to all the requests and everyone was very clear on what we had to do. We have a really tight team here and I know that contributed greatly to the successful

inspection of the aircraft.”

Air Force Col. Dustin Ziegler, DCMA Boeing Huntington Beach commander, said his team’s creativity in dealing with challenges, and their efforts working with the program office, contributed to the aircrafts successful delivery.

“The primary role of the program office, in the context of ensuring the viability of the platform and delivering it to our mission partners, is making sure it is airworthy,” said Ziegler. “They have to preform that function with us as their proxy, here onsite doing the

work to validate for the government that this is an airworthy aircraft. They were very flexible with this process and one of the good news stories is our ability to alleviate their concerns about the process.

“It’s all about risk mitigation,” continued Ziegler. “Everything we would have been able to do from the beginning, we’ve been able to do afterward. I feel as confident and safe getting on the Kuwaiti aircraft as I would any of the other C-17s we’ve inspected.” 🌐

Task Force sustains overseas mission

Nick D’Amario | DCMA Public Affairs

Filling Defense Contract Management Agency International vacancies overseas can take a considerable amount of time, and with tours averaging three years the number of open-to-be-filled positions can be operationally staggering. Couple these revolving-door vacancies with the ongoing, high demand for personnel to augment and supplement surges in overseas operations supporting contracting activities and the effects can appear insurmountable.

To mitigate these potential shortfalls, DCMA International has stood up a Task Force Organization team, led by Mark Wolfe, International quality assurance deputy director, to bolster resources at their overseas contract management offices in the Americas, Middle East, Europe and Pacific.

“Our challenge is to ensure we sustain International’s capability of supporting contractors and suppliers providing services for Department of Defense throughout the world by filling gaps

in key positions and surges in contract performance,” said Wolfe. “We accomplish this with our TFO cadre of volunteers to ensure the agency can enjoy operational continuity during tough times.”

For example, Wolfe said that the Joint Strike Fighter program has had a significant increase in workload over the past year within DCMA Europe, and International was able to deploy a sufficient number of TFO volunteers to mitigate the personnel shortfall.

“We have nearly 200 TFO volunteers on file with International, of which more than half are quality assurance professionals,” said Wolfe. “While these number appears high, they rapidly diminish when an immediate need for a TFO volunteer is compounded by individuals’ leave plans, medical conditions, operational availability and a host of other factors that leave us with perhaps a handful of candidates when it comes down to the wire.”

Navy Rear Adm. Deborah Haven, International commander, said

supporting military personnel at locations throughout the world is an essential contribution toward safeguarding our freedom and way of life.

“We need the support of qualified agency professionals with Task Force Organization deployments of 30-120 days that directly support our warfighters,” said Haven. “We are indebted to those who have and will, in the future, support this vital program.”

The TFO team, however, isn’t simply reacting to overseas CMO requests. They are also planning for long-term foreseeable needs.

“Within the next 36 months, we foresee programs in Italy, Japan, Taiwan and Saudi Arabia needing amped-up TFO support for high-visibility programs,” said Wolfe. “For example, we expect contracting work in Taiwan to surge on the F-16, spanning three to four years, and could need volunteers for rotations that may last up to 120 days.”

Rosa Medina, International quality assurance specialist and the TFO team member responsible for mitigating gaps and surges for the Pacific CMO, said, “I am confident that our TFO program can deliver the right resources at the right time,” on the projected capability of meeting Taiwan’s long-term contracting surge.

DCMA’s International TFO team, comprised of quality assurance specialists, is broken down by overseas CMO areas of responsibility: Luis Latorre for the Middle East, Medina for the Americas and Pacific, and Daryl Hill for Europe.

Chris Summers, International management analyst and program manager for country clearances and deployment passports, is a mainstay asset of the TFO team. He assists each team member with ensuring employees selected for temporary duty to augment overseas CMOs receive the appropriate documentation and clearances.

“TFO volunteers cannot go outside of CONUS on official travel without country clearance which, in most cases, requires a 30-day lead time,” said Summers. “In every instance, an official passport is required, and, in some cases, a visa is needed. As needed, I defer TFO volunteers to International’s mission support personnel for their expedient and professional assistance in securing volunteers’ official passports and visas.”

TFO volunteers typically spend 60 days on average overseas on TDY status, and a maximum of up to 120 days is possible under the current program.

“TFO requests are usually submitted to field personnel with short notice,” said Daryl Hill, International quality assurance specialist and TFO team member. “TDYs are usually 60 days, and we prefer to select personnel that can arrive at the TDY location and hit the road running with minimal training. For example, a QAS with international experience understands how DCMA interacts and communicates with host nations, is aware of International Traffic in Arms Regulations restrictions and how those contracts must be administered.”

In order to prepare for any overseas

CMO contingency, the TFO team is looking to attract a broad spectrum of professionals from the agency.

“Most often, CMO requests are for quality assurance, engineering and property functional specialists, and occasionally administrative contracting officers,” said Wolfe. “If a volunteer is in the QA field and certified in a certain commodity, such as aircraft, there will likely be opportunities at overseas CMOs in the near future. Other sought-after specialists include the engineering field with Earned Value Management System expertise.”

While each TDY promises its share of long hours and roll-up-your-sleeves hard work, international travel does offer some unique benefits.

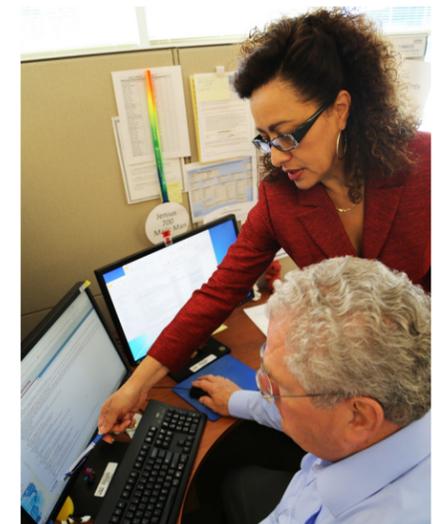
Wolfe recounted how a TFO volunteer was recently assigned to Wiesbaden, Germany, for 90 days to assist with EVMS requirements where a hiring fill gap existed.

The volunteer covered down for contracting activity in the Ukraine, Georgia and Moscow, with the possibility of additional job-related travel opportunities.

Overseas CMOs begin the process of requesting TFO volunteers by submitting a request to International leadership. Once Haven validates the need from her CMO, the TFO team will identify the best candidates from their database of registered volunteers.

“We have roughly an 80 percent success rate in filling position gaps and augmenting overseas operations from the TFO volunteers,” said Wolfe. “What cannot be filled from the TFO ranks is done from within International.”

Employees interested in joining the ranks of TFO volunteers must first secure their commander’s or deputy’s approval prior to completing the TFO



Rosa Medina, a Defense Contract Management Agency International quality assurance specialist, reviews country clearance requirements with Chris Summers, International management analyst and program manager for country clearances, at the Fort Lee, Va., agency headquarters. (DCMA photo by Stephen Hickok)

Volunteer Entry Form at

<https://360.dcms.mil/directorate/1/SitePages/TFO.aspx>.

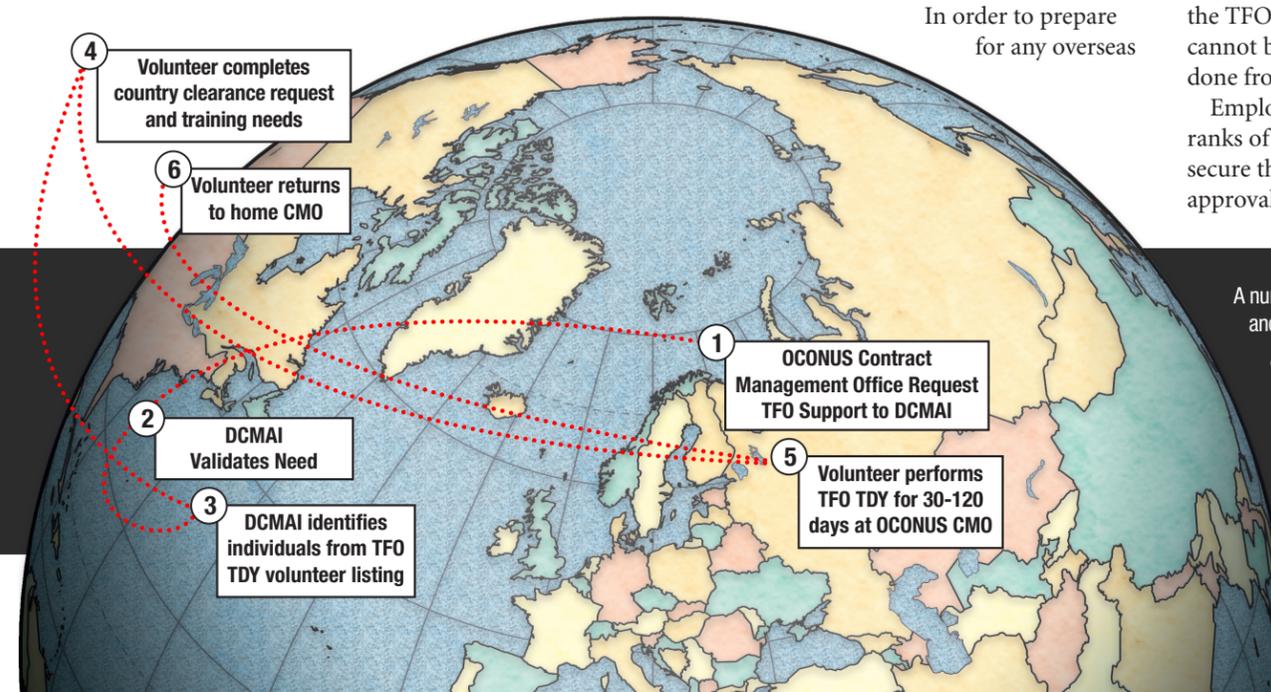
The TFO team would like to remind those who have volunteered and those planning to volunteer that it is important to update information in the database whenever there is a change of duty station, contact information, status of availability, etc.

“We are rigorously engaged in updating our TFO volunteer data base,” said Wolfe. “We want to ensure we can quickly and effectively match our cadre of volunteers with any gap or surge in the agency’s overseas mission requirements.”

If you would like more information on the TFO program prior to completing the online volunteer form, contact Mark Wolfe at 804-416-9219. 🌐



Defense Contract Management Agency Contracts quality assurance specialists Daryl Hill and Luis Latorre; and Mark Wolfe, deputy director for International quality assurance; review Task Force Organization requirements at their DCMA headquarters Rivers Bend office. (DCMA Photo by Nick D’Amario)



A number of criteria apply for those interested in the TFO volunteer program and must be met prior to acceptance:

- Volunteers must be at least DAWIA Level II certified for the applicable function.
- Quality assurance specialists must be certified in the applicable skill set(s).
- International must obtain the consent of the commander or deputy of the person volunteering.
- Employees in an emergency essential or Contingency Response Force position, on a Contingency Contract Administration Services deployment or assigned OCONUS will not be selected.
- An official passport is required as well as completion of applicable training courses.

Diversity and inclusion supports agency's mission, vision

Misha King | DCMA Public Affairs

The Defense Contract Management Agency is fully committed to leveraging diversity and inclusion best practices to identify and develop the best talent, create effective teams, achieve excellence and realize mission success," said DCMA Director Air Force Lt. Gen. Wendy Masiello. "I expect all employees to respect the value of diversity and inclusion."

Masiello expressed this commitment in a policy statement on D&I that went into effect Oct. 1. In the memorandum, she called upon all supervisors, managers and leaders to embrace D&I to ensure all civilian and military personnel understand that leadership supports and promotes differences within the agency, which increases the productivity of the workforce. She expects leadership to establish and support training, mentoring and developmental programs and approaches by teaming with the directors of Equal Employment Opportunity; Human Capital; the special advisor for diversity and inclusion; and the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Panel.

"By the nature of its mission, DCMA is a diverse agency," said George Braxton, the director's special advisor for diversity and inclusion. "It requires that people have various professional backgrounds and be stationed throughout the world."

Braxton said although DCMA lags behind other Department of Defense and federal government agencies in the percentages of women and minorities in its workforce, data shows there's more demographic diversity among the newer members of the agency, and there's no significant decline of women and minorities in the GS-13 to 15 levels. "Regardless, it still remains important to support Human Capital's effort in

taking advantage of new recruiting opportunities," he said.

Despite the percentage gaps with other federal agencies, Masiello emphasized diversity is much more than a check in the box for EEO compliance.

"In order to continue meeting our mission in supporting the warfighter, we must ensure that diversity and inclusion

"There is a world-wide competition for talent, which puts tremendous pressure on a DoD agency requiring security clearances and U.S. citizenship to compete for that talent ..."

strategies are integrated into our agency policies, practices and procedures as diversity drives innovation, creativity and competitive strength as well as employee productivity, engagement and retention," she said.

During a recent headquarters all-hands meeting, the director stressed how much she values diversity and inclusion and explained how it has shaped her career.

"I'm a product of diversity and inclusion," she said. "If you look historically at what my teams have looked like, you'll find I put my money where my mouth is. I encourage diversity and value it very much. In my decision-making, I reach out to the field because I have blind spots. I know I know some

things, I know I don't know some things. But, I also know there are some things that I don't know I don't know."

To prove this point, Masiello said regional commanders were invited to a senior leadership team off-site meeting in August where they collectively developed DCMA's new mission and vision statements.

"When we look at ourselves from a headquarters perspective, we become a self-licking ice cream cone — we just keep talking to ourselves. We have to bring people in from the outside to help paint a more realistic picture," said the director.

According to Braxton, it's important for the agency to have a D&I policy for reasons beyond the federal government requirement.

"There is a world-wide competition for talent, which puts tremendous pressure on a DoD agency requiring security clearances and U.S. citizenship to compete for that talent," he explained. "Our D&I policy codifies that we're to eliminate artificial barriers to recruiting,

Our D&I policy codifies that we're to eliminate artificial barriers to recruiting, retaining, training and engaging people from different backgrounds to be a part of our team."

George Braxton
special advisor
for diversity and
inclusion

retaining, training and engaging people from different backgrounds to be a part of our team."

One way the agency encourages this type of interaction is through special emphasis programs and employee resource groups, where people with common interests come together and support each other.

"I encourage employees to participate in SEPs and ERGs to promote mentoring and increase engagement and awareness in the workplace," Masiello said. "This

will ensure that all DCMA employees have the skills necessary to navigate successful career progressions."

Pier Poe, SEP and ERG manager with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, said DCMA's asset is its people, their energy and their experiences at the agency. "Membership in these groups yields extraordinary advantages to employees and the agency. One of the major benefits is the transfer of institutional knowledge to the next generation."

Steven Ollek, a program manager with the Engineering and Analysis Directorate, agrees with the director and Poe, and was a driving force in creating the agency's first ERG, NextGen@DCMA.

"We want to offer employees the ability to align their passions to their purpose and give anyone the ability to have their voice heard," said Ollek. "Then, we'll leverage the collective ideas of the NextGen community to overcome challenges together, as well as inspire positive changes to our organizational culture. Simply put: increased engagement. What better way to move the agency forward than to utilize the collective capabilities of like-minded people to further the agency's vision?"

Braxton said the agency's goal is to ensure prospective and current employees know they have the opportunity to reach their full potential at DCMA.

"Initiatives like ERGs, where like-minded employees come together to promote mentoring, personal and professional development, will not only eliminate the alienation some feel in the workplace, it will also promote their increased engagement in the agency's mission," he said.

Not only does D&I promote employee loyalty to DCMA's mission, it also fits right into the agency's new vision.

"A team comprises several individuals who contribute in various ways toward reaching a goal," Braxton continued. "D&I ensures all team members know their contributions are valued and affords them the opportunity to contribute more. D&I is aligned with the mission of the agency thus contributing to the 'one team, one voice' vision."

Visit the Office of Diversity and Inclusion website for information on starting an ERG or other D&I programs. 🌐

A wild ride

Lima Experience informs and entertains

Thomas Perry | DCMA Public Affairs

It is highly recommended that you wear steel-toed shoes.” This is the first line of the Joint Systems Manufacturing Center Lima Experience workshop schedule. This simple, yet foreboding, sentence provides Defense Contract Management Agency Detroit team members a foreshadowed glimpse into a world they don’t typically see.

The agency’s General Dynamics Land Systems Lima facility, a government-owned contractor-operated plant, is one of many satellite commands that fall under DCMA Detroit. Lima, however, produces the M1A2 Abrams Main Battle Tank, and it is the only contract management office Detroit installation that deals primarily with on-site production.

“The JSMC experience grew from a finding during a management resource review with the CMO that identified a need for familiarity training for Keystones, interns and new-hire employees with no

previous agency experience,” said Andy Yeaste, DCMA GDLS Lima production team leader.

Yeaste, who has developed and managed the JSMC Experience since its inception, said team members from the Detroit metro area; Grand Rapids, Michigan; and Ann Arbor, Michigan; offices deal almost exclusively with geographically dispersed contracts.

“A need to contrast and compare the DCMA core functions and operations of multiple geographically dispersed contracts with a large resident (Acquisition Category) I production program was specifically identified by the review,” he said.

A pilot program was created shortly after the review, and a positive participant response led to additional classes and “enlarged both the scope and scale of the workshop in order to fit within the multiple functional job skills that we have within the Detroit CMO,” said Yeaste. “The response from the students has been truly

outstanding. We engage with each participant and ask for feedback on how we can improve things for the follow-on classes. We are always looking to improve the program so that it continues to be relevant.”

Although the program began in response to a finding, its relevance is fueled by Detroit’s team members’ desire to fully understand and embrace their mission as well as the vital contributions they make each day toward its success.

“The commander and our senior leadership team strongly believe our people perform best when they understand the goal they are working to achieve,” said Cal Bailey, DCMA Detroit deputy commander. “The Lima experience provides our people the opportunity to not only get up close and personal to an awesome capability like the M1A2 Abrams Main Battle Tank, but also to climb inside and ride along with this marvelous capability.”

Bob McLaughlin, DCMA GDLS



“During this maneuver, the tank goes on a slope to where its center of gravity shifts slightly. It provides quite a thrill for participants in the program.”

Bob McLaughlin
DCMA GDLS Lima industrial specialist

Lima industrial specialist, described one particular movement that tends to excite participants. “They get to ride in a tank including where they do a ‘rock the cradle.’ During this maneuver, the tank goes on a slope to where its center of gravity shifts slightly. It provides quite a thrill for participants in the program.”

Many of the Lima initiative’s first students were Keystones. They all praise the experience in general as professionally beneficial, but their remarks are often highlighted by their personal experience in the battle tank.

“I really enjoyed the GDLS Lima Experience,” said Erica Murray, DCMA Detroit Keystone contract administrator. “My favorite part of the tour was being able to take a ride within the tank. Getting a chance to be inside the tank really heightened my appreciation for our troops. I can’t imagine being one of the soldiers inside the compact tank for hours ready for attack. Their dedication is

truly admired. I love when I get the opportunity to physically see and experience the products and services we administer here at DCMA.”

So far, 29 Detroit team members have undergone the workshops, and each rotation further enhances the experience for the next group of participants.

“We add a little something different for the next class based on our feedback,” said Yeaste. “The demand for the class has grown steadily, and we have plans to double the number of classes in 2015 and include additional students from neighboring CMOs within the central region.”

The comprehensive curriculum of the two-day course has proven vital to the program’s growing popularity among leadership as well as attendees.

“The JSMC Experience provides a resident production and contract management perspective to members who normally are geographically assigned,” said Army Lt. Col. Matthew Hodge, DCMA GDLS Lima commander.

“Within one location we conduct the full range of DCMA functions: property, industrial surveillance, safety, transportation, quality and contract administration, etc. Participants experience the full range of DCMA’s core responsibilities.”

Kelli Cummings, a DCMA Detroit Keystone, had never visited a large on-site production facility until her Lima experience. “I thought the experience was awesome and unique. As a contract administrator, I have not had the opportunity to visit a site of this magnitude,” said Cummings. “I feel I was able to really get an inside look at what an on-site looks like, and it was a privilege to see how some of the parts of the vehicles are made. I appreciate the experience.”

As the program continues to expand, more agency mission-makers, who normally would be far removed from a hands-on production environment, will have the opportunity to gain a true appreciation of why what they do matters to the American taxpayer and the warfighter.

“Detroit has had the great fortune to hire a good number of new team members who are new to the government,” said Bailey. “They add enormous talents to our already talented employee base. The Lima initiative helps orient them as to why DCMA exists, and why we believe what we do is more than just a job. Many have only seen an M1A2 Abrams tank on TV or heard a relative talk about it. We give them the chance to see and experience the real thing, and they are simply thrilled at the opportunity.”



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