



INSIGHT



ACQUISITION INSIGHT AT ALL LEVELS



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On the Cover

Air Force One departs Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. DCMA's Air Force One contract management requires a "no-fail" mindset, schedule-flexibility and a top secret security clearance with a White House-endorsed "YW" designation. It is the same clearance required to fly the aircraft. (Air Force photo by Donna Burnett)

Back cover: Tankers with 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, prepare to go hot on the range with their recently received M1A2 SEPv3 Abrams Main Battle Tanks at Fort Hood, Texas. DCMA team members provide contract management for the Abrams' program, and the entire Program Executive Office Ground Combat Systems portfolio. (Army photo by Sgt. Calab Franklin)



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Insight Today, a Vision for Tomorrow

By Army Lt. Gen. David Bassett,
DCMA director

Welcome to the Defense Contract Management Agency's INSIGHT magazine.

2022 is a year of action for DCMA. We kicked it off with an evolution of our Vision statement, recognizing the importance of our people in not only delivering on our mission every day but holding ourselves to an even higher professional standard. DCMA has to become even more a team of trusted professionals delivering value to our Warfighters throughout the acquisition lifecycle.

This agency has always been a strong team, and the difficult last couple of years have shown us just how strong our people are individually. From working remotely to embracing and leveraging a variety of new technologies, our workforce has excelled. We're now in a moment and environment rich with opportunities, with the tools and momentum needed to be more agile, innovative, efficient and effective in the future.

Over the coming years we'll redouble our efforts in support of the Department of Defense, the Services and our other customers to continue our unbroken line of exceptional support. For DCMA, that means enabling our people, and leveraging their incredible talent and experience.

We have learned important lessons during the COVID pandemic, one of which is that the future work



DCMA's new Vision 'a team of trusted professionals delivering value to our Warfighters throughout the acquisition lifecycle,' enhances its existing mission by featuring and empowering its greatest asset — its people. (DOD photo)

environment will include both a remote and in person workplace. We are working toward enabling a hybrid workplace and an empowered workforce of the future. To be an agency that delivers the most value to our customers, we have to embrace a culture and working environment that delivers value to our employees and empowers our employees to think critically and maximize the value they deliver to our customers.

That means that we provide more than just contract oversight, and deliver more than just products. DCMA's team offers our customers the actionable insight, data, and recommendations they need to make informed decisions at every stage of the acquisition and contracting

process. From pre-award through contract closeout, our customers know DCMA is a trusted partner, with tailored information, that can help them get the most out of their programs to deliver the right products, on time, and for the right price.

Evolving DCMA to achieve these goals in the future means initiating those changes today. Many of these will be outlined in our new Strategic Plan, which we'll launch this summer. The measurable goals of the plan and our overarching lines of effort will help modernize our capabilities in quality and delivery, contract administration and payment, and cost and pricing; and will allow us to organize our workforce to achieve true mission-first, people-always, success.



Army Lt. Gen. David Bassett, DCMA director: 'We provide more than just contract oversight, and deliver more than just products. DCMA's team offers our customers the actionable insight, data, and recommendations they need to make informed decisions at every stage of the acquisition and contracting process.' (DCMA photo by Colton Wood)

Perhaps most importantly, our Vision, Strategic Plan and emerging culture will keep us aligned with the new National Defense Strategy, and keep DCMA a critical, productive member of our national defense team. Together with our Services, DCMA and other supporting agencies provide the integrated deterrence necessary for our country's security, the assurance to our allies that we remain a trusted partner, and the assurance to all that we remain unbeatable on the battlefield.

The following pages will give you a brief look at the people and work of DCMA. You'll explore our contributions to the Navy's supply chain at — and under — the sea. You'll learn about the important work performed by our women and men on the ground in production facilities. You'll see some of our support to programs in the sky, including Air Force One and the F-35. And you'll learn what we do to enable U.S. exploration and deterrence in space.

Most of all, I hope you remember

the names and the faces of our team. These are the people who are shepherding your tax dollars, holding industry accountable, delivering quality products to our warfighters, authorizing payments that drive our economy, and maintaining the relationships needed to keep our nation strong.

It's an incredible privilege to lead this organization and guide its transformation. Together we'll meet the demands of our future operating environment and mission.

BY THE NUMBERS

FISCAL YEAR 2021

11,282

EMPLOYEES

OF WHICH

573

ARE

ASSIGNED MILITARY



SERVICE MEMBERS

53

MAIN OFFICES
OVERSEEING

1,000

LOCATIONS GLOBALLY

AUTHORIZING
\$880M & \$169.5B
IN CONTRACTOR PAYMENTS IN GOVERNMENT PROPERTY

MANAGING
232,166
ACTIVE CONTRACTS AT
13,335

CONTRACTOR FACILITIES
WITH A TOTAL VALUE OF

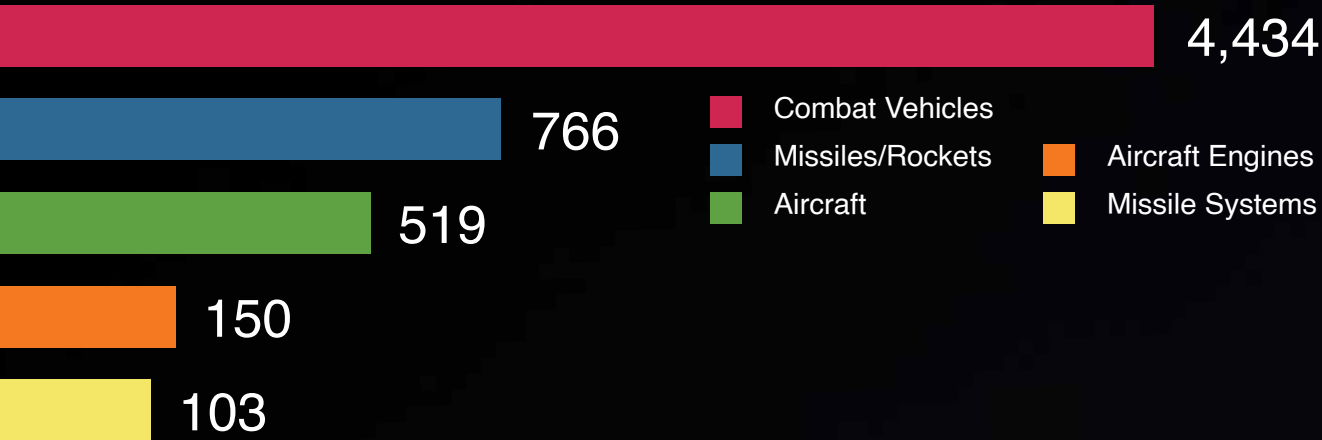
\$4.55
TRILLION

PROVIDING DIRECT SUPPORT TO DOD AND
OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES



Platform Deliveries

In fiscal year 2021, DCMA delivered 409.2 million items worth \$98.8 billion, with many valued at more than \$1 million per unit.



SHIPMENTS

TOTAL ITEMS
409.2M items shipped
\$98.8B total value

DLA CONTRACT ITEMS
43.5M items shipped
\$10.1B total value

In addition to the services, DCMA performs contract work on behalf of other Defense Department and federal organizations, from NASA to the Defense Logistics Agency. DLA is the agency's largest customer by contract count. DCMA administers 94,451 DLA contracts, totaling \$130 billion.

In fiscal year 2021, DCMA saved, recovered or cost avoided \$2.022 billion against an annual \$1.4 billion budget. The agency has produced a positive return for the past six years, averaging a return of \$2.55 for every dollar invested.

FY21 ROI
1.44 to 1



RECOVERED

\$516M

Contract litigation, cost accounting standards, fraud cost recoveries, incurred cost settlements and property claims



COST AVOIDED

\$1.463B

Commercial pricing, property and plant clearance, and surge support efforts (recommended)



SAVED

\$43.4M

Contract terminations



AIR FORCE / SPACE FORCE

→ 107 PROGRAMS, 34 ACAT I*
33,384 CONTRACTS TOTALING \$1.1 TRILLION
\$703B OBLIGATED • \$101B UNLIQUIDATED



ARMY

→ 93 PROGRAMS, 36 ACAT I*
22,470 CONTRACTS TOTALING \$905 BILLION
\$534B OBLIGATED • \$77B UNLIQUIDATED



NAVY / MARINES

→ 117 PROGRAMS, 45 ACAT I*
73,860 CONTRACTS TOTALING \$2.17 TRILLION
\$750B OBLIGATED • \$127B UNLIQUIDATED

*ACAT I, or acquisition category I, denotes a program that has either been designated by the undersecretary of defense for acquisition and sustainment as a major defense acquisition program, or is estimated to require an eventual expenditure for research, development, test and evaluation of a certain dollar value.

ARRIVALS: AIR FORCE ONE



AIMO San Antonio's Air Force One program-support helped deliver the president's aircraft 64 days early to overcome pandemic challenges

By Thomas Perry

Air Force One is an American icon.

The designation originated after some mid-air confusion and near-incident in 1954, which resulted from the president's plane and a commercial flight sharing identical call numbers.

Today, this technology-driven fortress functions as a mobile command center, maintains an operational medical suite with an ever-present "break-glass" doctor, stretches 4,000 square feet of floor space across three levels, and runs two galleys to serve 100 guests, according to the White House.

Air Force One officially refers to one of two customized Boeing 747-200B series aircraft, which carry the tail codes 28000 and 29000.

Aircraft Integrated Maintenance Operations Boeing San Antonio provides the Defense Contract Management Agency's primary heavy maintenance, modification and upgrade support for the Air Force One program, but this modern aviation

feat requires a team of Department of Defense and federal organizations to secure, produce, operate and maintain.

A team picture would require a panoramic view, however, as multiple stakeholders drive Air Force One's program success.

The Presidential Airlift Group, White House Management Office, DCMA Security, Centralized Adjudication Facility for security clearance support, Federal Aviation Administration, and DCMA's Boeing Seattle and Oklahoma City contract management offices form a diverse group of acquisition and aviation professionals.

At the program's pinnacle sits Air Force Life Cycle Management Center's Program Executive Office for Presidential and Executive Airlift. The PEO is responsible for the planning and execution of all life cycle activities related to the current Air Force One, known by the designation VC-25A, and its replacement,

a new variant of Boeing's 747-8, known as VC-25B.

The AFLCMC represents one of six centers reporting to the Air Force Materiel Command, which maintains seven operational locations to include the VC-25A Life Cycle Integration Team at Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma.

LCIT spearheaded an early 2020 effort to ensure both VC-25As were fully operational to meet election-cycle demands.

Stacy Cummings, the principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for acquisition, is performing the duties of the undersecretary of defense for acquisition and sustainment. She named the Tinker-based LCIT as a 2020 Secretary of Defense Performance-Based Logistics award recipient.

According to the award memorandum, LCIT received the award "as the government/industry partnership that best optimized product support solutions and demonstrated superior tradecraft. The LCIT maintains Air Force One

aircraft availability to support (the president's) missions and worldwide travel."

For the 2020 election, the White House Management Office required both aircraft operational. It is standard practice when a VC-25A requires heavy maintenance, modification or upgrade support to minimize rework and downtime, but the election-cycle and time frame presented unique challenges in March 2020.

"The team was required to develop a plan to maintain availability while conducting required maintenance and modernization efforts as well as meeting FAA requirements," read the award justification. "Through extensive efforts and superior management of the contract, the LCIT minimized the amount of downtime in heavy maintenance and delivered aircraft 28000 64 days ahead of the contracted schedule."

For DCMA's AIMO San Antonio team, whose current single-aircraft support involves inspecting

“Aircraft maintenance is a dangerous business.”

— Air Force Col. Frank Shifflett, AIMO Boeing San Antonio commander



approximately 6,800 items, 64 days early is astonishing.

“It doesn’t happen without every minute counting,” said Air Force Col. Frank Shifflett, DCMA’s AIMO Boeing San Antonio commander. “To deliver the aircraft 64 days early, many things must go right. Our role in evaluating and approving unplanned work order requests and responding when the contractor is ready for a repair to be accepted, etc., equate to many hours of work on the weekends and after normal duty hours.”

Air Force Col. Brian Bracy, AFLCMC senior materiel leader within the Commercial Derivative Aircraft Division, thanked DCMA for its contributions to the award-connected success.

“The all-hours dedication and support to ensure aircraft 28000 was delivered on-time and met presidential-quality standards to support the 2020 presidential election was an incredible feat,” wrote Bracy, in a congratulatory email. “Your team’s attention to detail and partnership with ours to ensure smooth communications at, to and from the depot site between program office, user and contractor is the definition of professionalism.”

Bracy further defined DCMA’s role to include time

and cost savings.

“First-pass quality is a critical focus area in order to minimize rework and additional downtime for the presidential fleet,” Bracy said. “The (program management office) worked with DCMA to establish a Quality Assurance Letter of Instruction, which outlined specific inspection areas that were over and above the normal DCMA scope of effort.”

The partnership embraced smarter-not-harder concepts to reduce labor hours through practical workload management.

“The program maintains extensive historical records on Over and Above hours and uses these records to move historical O&A to planned work in future heavy-maintenance inductions,” Bracy said. “This has reduced unforeseen and unbudgeted negative effects to the HM timeline. During HM 18-8, O&A hours were reduced by 56%, resulting in a \$5.5 million cost avoidance.”

Avoiding stress and pressure within one of Defense Department’s high-visibility acquisition programs can, at times, prove far more difficult.

Air Force One contract management requires a “no-fail” mindset, schedule-

flexibility to include holidays, weekends and swing shifts, and a top secret security clearance with a White House-endorsed “YW” designation, which is the same clearance required to fly the aircraft.

To an outsider, a typical day’s pressure might reach ocean-floor levels by 9 a.m.

For the commander responsible for the management and supervision of more than 145 civilian and military personnel, and 24/7 Joint Airlift, Tactical, Presidential Airlift, and Tanker aircraft maintenance operations, it is a weekday.

“Aircraft maintenance is a dangerous business,” said Shifflett. “DCMA represents the government and is here to help ensure the contractor is performing well and safely. Air Force One is a recognizable symbol of freedom, strength and hope to people around the world. As a team, we are always chasing perfection to maintain that image.”

Liana Lara, an AIMO Boeing San Antonio administrative contracting officer, believes the agency’s Air Force One support team used its strengths to thrive during the challenging year.

“The team has excelled because of the depth of knowledge, experience and

competency it possesses in aircraft maintenance and government contracting,” said Lara. “Each team member has also exhibited exceptional personal dedication and commitment to the mission.”

As an ACO, Lara’s responsibilities include ensuring contract compliance, while managing an active program with unplanned and urgent issues.

“I rely heavily on my team members who are skilled in overhaul and maintenance activities to help support me in understanding the concerns,” she said. “A comprehensive understanding of the issues is critical so that I may provide clear directions and effectively manage contract compliance.”

For Daniel Durant, AIMO Boeing San Antonio deputy commander and 25-year Air Force veteran, communication clarity while managing external partnerships is vital.

“Managing relationships with multiple stakeholders and executive branch direct reports is both challenging and rewarding, and while not unique to AIMO San Antonio, it is acutely felt here as the facility houses the current Air Force One Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul program, the new Air Force



President Joe Biden boards Air Force One, which officially refers to one of two technology-driven, fully-customized Boeing 747-200B series aircraft. The planes carry the tail codes 28000 and 29000. The president’s presence dictates the radio call sign Air Force One. AIMO Boeing San Antonio provides DCMA’s primary heavy maintenance, modification and upgrade support for the Air Force One program. (DOD photo)

One development and flight test program, and the E-4B National Airborne Operations Center,” said Durant.

“We are very proud of our employees,” he continued. “The challenges these programs present generate a special kind of cohesiveness and camaraderie on the teams that support them. Despite the persistent high-level performance demands, being a part of something special (like) being a part of the Air Force One program is rewarding for our employees.”

Brandy Gonzales, DCMA’s VC-25A program integrator, works with many of those employees within a multi-functional team consisting of engineers, industrial specialists, quality assurance specialists, contract administrators, administrative contracting officers, air

operations personnel and a property administrator.

“The program support team provides oversight of Boeing’s requirements to manage and execute Heavy Maintenance requirements, HM schedules, and their ability to act as schedule integrator for all HM activities to include other contractor requirements within the schedule,” Gonzales said. “I can assure you the entire DCMA team supporting the VC-25A program has contributed immensely throughout the term of this contract. I am merely the liaison between our (program support team) and the program office providing the information and insight our customers require. However, without our dedicated and knowledgeable functional professionals, the overall success of this program would

be jeopardized.”

As the agency’s VC-25B program integrator, Alviz Lacanilao’s focus is set on the future.

He and his PST from AIMO San Antonio along with other geographically separated offices work to support the next Air Force One. It carries historical significance, which is not lost on Lacanilao and his team.

“The best part of my job is knowing that my contributions to the efforts of building the new Air Force One is a step toward being a part of history (for) our nation and the world,” he said. “Thirty years from now, my kids will see the POTUS flying around in Air Force One, and they will remember that their dad was part of the team that helped build that national

monument. Because that is what it is, a national monument. The worst part of my job is having to wait four to five years to get to our goal of aircraft delivery, but I’m enjoying every day of the journey.”

Change is coming slowly to a program that demands perfection, sacrifice and repeatable excellence. The new VC-25B aircraft are expected to begin operations in 2024, and booming whispers of a supersonic Air Force One dot the horizon.

For now, however, Air Force One takes to the skies as a VC-25A, as it has since September 1990.

During 30-plus years of service, it took many hands to keep the aircraft presidential and many sacrifices to keep them operational — all for an audience of one. ▣

SEMPER FI SURVEILLANCE

MARINE VETERAN THRIVES AS QUALITY ASSURANCE SPECIALIST

By Tonya Johnson

Kelly Fender is experienced in environments with few women. She excels and inspires regardless.

Fender epitomizes the Marine Corps slogan Semper Fidelis, or always faithful.

She previously served in the Marine Corps, working in special projects and public relations before being promoted to a company-level executive officer. She served on active duty for three years.

As a “not-former,” out-of-uniform Marine, Fender is a quality assurance specialist at Defense Contract Management Agency Hampton, but she is based in Greensboro, North Carolina. Women comprise approximately 10% of the agency’s QAS workforce. A concerted effort is underway to encourage women to apply to available positions by increasing awareness of the career field (see Page 27).

“Kelly is a true professional,” said Todd Ice, a quality assurance supervisor at DCMA Hampton. “She’s excelled in researching and resolving complex issues and is regularly sought out by other QASs to receive training and guidance. She continues to learn new policy and the tools used to conduct quality oversight.”

Fender has been a QAS for approximately 2.5 years. She started her career at DCMA Atlanta. She chose the quality career field due to her prior military service.

“I chose to become a QAS because I have been on the other side of the equation as an active-duty Marine,” said Fender. “I know that getting the correct products on time can make or break a mission. Being a QAS helps me to serve



Kelly Fender is a Marine Corps veteran. She now serves as a quality assurance specialist with DCMA as a federal civilian. (Courtesy photo)

those who serve now. I enjoy that I still get to be involved with and support our troops in a very unique capacity.”

As a QAS, Fender plans and executes risk-based surveillance at two defense contractors. She visits contractors, conducts quality audits, and processes and provides product evaluations. Even during the pandemic, Fender has been able to do her job well virtually.

“During the current COVID-19 pandemic, I have been able to work with contractors to evaluate products and processes as diligently virtually as I would in person,” she said. “It was a

challenge at first finding methods to adequately still provide surveillance, but by working together we were able to still meet the needs of the warfighter.”

One of the items that Fender inspects is the Army’s Tank Rack Module. According to Fender, it is used to store, transport and issue fuel to warfighters in austere environments. Fender said her job is important, and she does it thoroughly.

“My job is vital to the DCMA mission because I am able to monitor and even eliminate risk involved in manufacturing, distributing and shipping products to the warfighter,” she said. “I am able to serve as an independent set of eyes and ears for the customer. I’m able to collaborate with the program offices and make sure they understand the capabilities of the contractor. I also directly give them unbiased information that I am able to gather while on site.”

Fender noted communication is key when doing her job. She also stays current with her job skills by taking a variety of technical training, including courses through the Defense Acquisition University. One of the courses that she recommends is on data collection and analysis, which honed her skills.

Fender encourages others to pursue a career in quality assurance because the agency needs more qualified personnel who can support our warfighters.

“DCMA ensures that we have more than enough training to accomplish the mission,” she said. “DCMA is a very team-oriented agency and you are never alone. There is always someone willing

to listen and help in any given situation. The agency has evolved immensely over the years and in the changes that have been made, we are truly serving as quality assurance, not quality control, when we are on-site.

“Some days are spent filing through paperwork to check documentation of personnel training, procedures, work instructions or even different business systems,” Fender continued. “Other days are spent accepting invoices on behalf of the contracting officer for items that have been inspected. The rest of the time, we are either emailing or calling the program offices to relay information in a timely manner or in the facility talking with line operators, quality managers, production managers and even CEOs. We have a unique experience with each contractor because they all have different business models, systems and processes. Anyone who enjoys learning and seeing new and interesting things would love being a QAS.”

In order to increase the number of women in the career field, Fender encourages more DCMA employees to become mentors.

“Mentoring is crucial for QASs because there will always be a new process or system that we are exposed to in the field,” she said. “Having a mentor with more experience helps provide a sounding board. Working with QASs who have decades of experience means there is a good chance that they have seen something similar in the past. We can use their experience to help better serve in the current situation.”

Fender said her mentors, who have included current and previous



Soldiers from E Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment train to utilize the Tank Rack Module of the Modular Fuel System to provide additional bulk fuel at a Forward Arming and Refueling Point on Fort Stewart, Ga. Kelly Fender’s responsibilities include inspecting the module prior to it reaching operational status. (Army photo by Capt. Chris Lancia)

supervisors, have helped her develop in her career and gave her advice to excel in her various positions.

While at DCMA Atlanta, she participated in the contract management office’s Tier II NexTIER Leadership Academy and then served as a board member for the incoming class. She also is an American Society of Quality-certified quality auditor. In addition, she currently serves on two integrated product teams for revising DCMA manuals — DCMA Manual 2501-01 Contract Receipt and Review, and DCMA Manual 2101-04 Delegate Surveillance.

“Getting to voice my concerns and have them validated and reflected in policy makes me feel like DCMA headquarters’ personnel are closing

the gap between the office and the field environment,” said Fender.

Fender hopes to have a long career at DCMA, and she is proud to be part of an agency that supports military personnel around the world. It reminds her of when she was on active duty. The skills she learned then help her now.

“I feel like I learn something new every day,” said Fender. “I get to positively influence contractors to reduce risks and that means that warfighters get the right product at the right time, which ultimately means they are able to accomplish their mission. The foundation I have of being a QAS is applicable to any future endeavor I encounter. I have learned to stay adaptable, creative and resilient, which I learned as a Marine.” □



LAUNCHING ARTEMIS

DCMA lands moon-mission support role

By Jason Kaneshiro

Humanity left its last small steps on the moon's surface in 1972. After nearly 50 years, America turns its astral gaze toward greater endeavors.

The Defense Contract Management Agency plays a critical role in taking humanity's next giant leap.

"We're going to Mars using Artemis program technology," said Brian McGinnis, director of DCMA-NASA Product Operations in San Antonio.

DCMA provides key technical and contract oversight of NASA's Artemis Program Core Stage Space Launch System, which is scheduled to take people and cargo beyond Earth's orbit and to the moon by 2024.

"The moon is an incremental step to develop the technologies to get to and survive on the Martian surface," McGinnis said.

A team of 30 DCMA employees at

Michoud Assembly Facility, or MAF, in East New Orleans, Louisiana, handled quality assurance oversight during the assembly and testing of the Core Stage Flight and all test articles prior to the Green Run testing at the Stennis Space Center, Mississippi, that occurred March 18, 2021.

"Several DCMA employees from MAF helped to support the preparations for the testing in the test stand," McGinnis said.

A Green Run test is conducted when all of the engine components for a rocket launch system are assembled into a single unit with the core stage for the first time and the rockets are fired at near-full power.

E.J. Brice, lead quality assurance specialist, worked on the components by providing quality oversight and said it was a proud moment for all of them when the rockets fired up.

"Our team has worked tirelessly for

hours to ensure the Core Stage 1 got to Kennedy Space Center," Brice said. "To witness the Green Run success is a great sense of accomplishment."

Ken Kennedy, a quality assurance first-line supervisor with DCMA West Region working at Michoud, echoed those sentiments.

"I am extremely proud of our DCMA Michoud team for their quality assurance work on the SLS program and their exceptional support for the successful Green Run testing of the Core Stage 1 vehicle," Kennedy said.

Kennedy was looking forward to a successful launch of the Core Stage 1 rocket, he said.

NASA's progress toward realizing their off-world mission is reliant upon DCMA's survey and liaison team's insight into the space agency's challenges, said Craig Bennet, a DCMA NASA subject matter expert.

"Our senior leadership team support

to NASA ensures mission success," Bennett said.

DCMA personnel have the training and certifications to directly support NASA's deep-space flight requirements, including technical expertise that ensures product conformity to unique design and mission specifications throughout NASA's innovative production process, Bennet said.

In addition to providing quality assurance expertise, DCMA also performed program integration to coordinate supply chain support for the large number of suppliers.

"There are 249 Tier I and Tier II material suppliers providing product to Boeing to build each Core Stage," said George Frey, director of DCMA NASA Product Operations.

The process starts as suppliers in

"The moon is an incremental step to develop the technologies to get to and survive on the Martian surface."

— Brian McGinnis, DCMA-NASA Product Operations San Antonio

southern California turn raw material into planks and ship them to Boeing at the MAF.

"The planks are welded together at MAF utilizing a vertical weld tool to form 'barrels,'" Frey explained. "The barrels are then stacked vertically in the Vertical Assembly Center, again at MAF, and welded circumferentially into 'tanks' for liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen."

A dome is welded onto each end of the tanks to complete the assembly, Frey said.

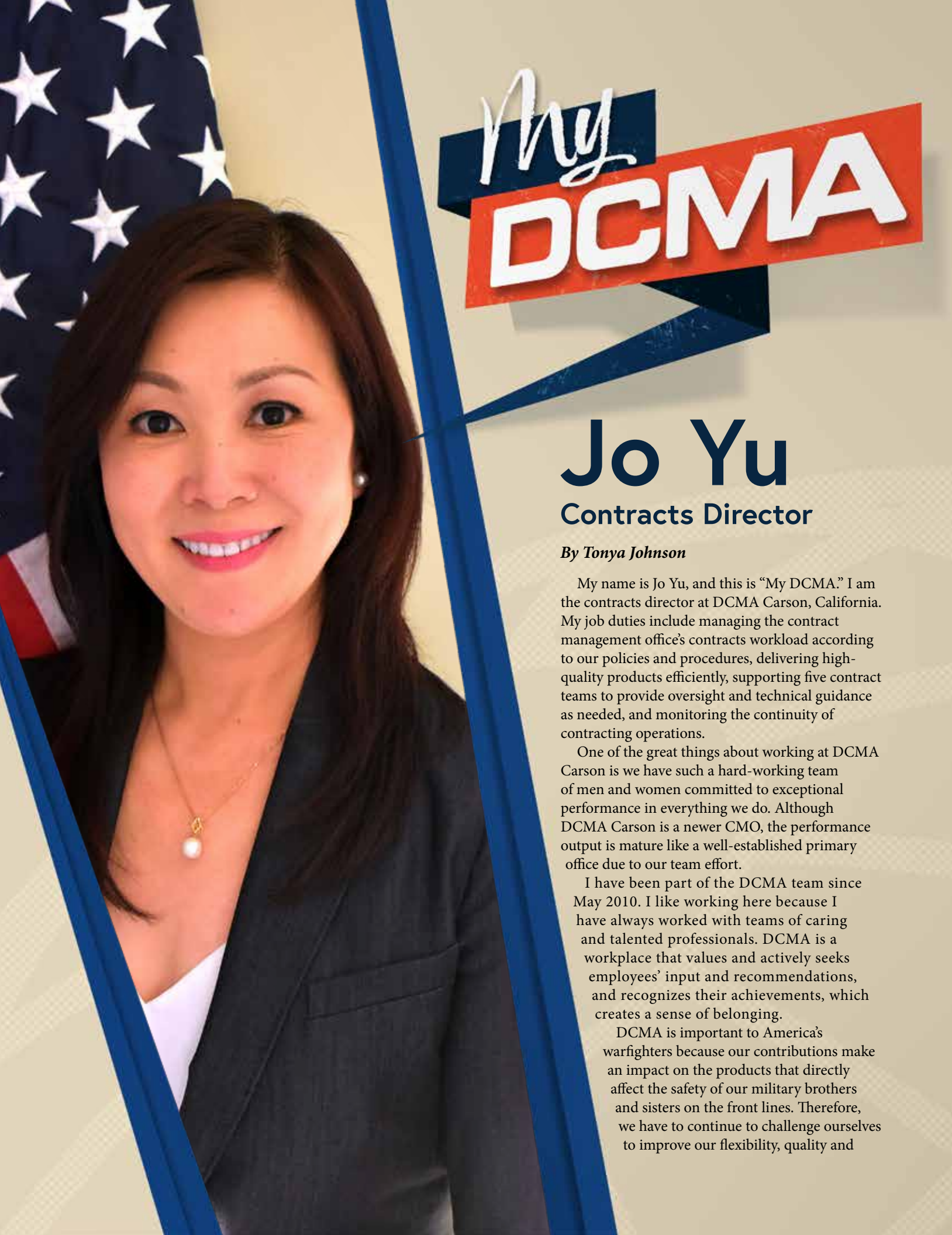
DCMA also oversaw key

manufacturing processes such as friction stir welding and nondestructive test validation of the weld integrity of key components using a phased array ultrasound method, McGinnis said.

According to a NASA fact sheet, their space launch system is the only rocket system capable of sending cargo and personnel to the moon on a single mission. The SLS is designed to evolve in its role and capabilities to accommodate future missions to Mars and the outer planets of the solar system. □



NASA's first Artemis rocket stage is moved from the Michoud Assembly Facility in East New Orleans, La., in preparation of the core stage Green Run test series. DCMA provided quality assurance and program integration expertise to coordinate supply chain support to NASA, ensuring a successful test. (NASA photo)



Jo Yu

Contracts Director

By Tonya Johnson

My name is Jo Yu, and this is “My DCMA.” I am the contracts director at DCMA Carson, California. My job duties include managing the contract management office’s contracts workload according to our policies and procedures, delivering high-quality products efficiently, supporting five contract teams to provide oversight and technical guidance as needed, and monitoring the continuity of contracting operations.

One of the great things about working at DCMA Carson is we have such a hard-working team of men and women committed to exceptional performance in everything we do. Although DCMA Carson is a newer CMO, the performance output is mature like a well-established primary office due to our team effort.

I have been part of the DCMA team since May 2010. I like working here because I have always worked with teams of caring and talented professionals. DCMA is a workplace that values and actively seeks employees’ input and recommendations, and recognizes their achievements, which creates a sense of belonging.

DCMA is important to America’s warfighters because our contributions make an impact on the products that directly affect the safety of our military brothers and sisters on the front lines. Therefore, we have to continue to challenge ourselves to improve our flexibility, quality and

My DCMA showcases the agency's driven, experienced and diverse workforce. It highlights what being a part of the national defense team means to them.

efficiencies on acquisition processes.

As we recognized our 20th anniversary, I am excited about DCMA’s future, especially its critical COVID-19 role. Since early 2020, DCMA has been a part of Countermeasures Acceleration Group, formerly known as Operation Warp Speed, and Joint Acquisition Task Force Group, supporting major customers such as the Air Force, Army, and Health and Human Services to manage urgent pre-award surveys.

DCMA employees have participated in the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program, COVID-19 testing production capability expansion contracts, N-95 and many other COVID-19 related high-visibility contracts. My goal in 2022 is continue to put in my best effort to support DCMA headquarters, the Western Regional Command and our CMO in these mission critical roles.

Twenty years ago, I received my Master of Business Administration, and I was working as a senior financial analyst. I was considering attending medical school but decided not to attend. Ten years later, I got this great opportunity to join DCMA.

There are so many positive changes that have happened at the agency in recent years. For example, the agency is getting ready to upgrade our tools to help our local CMOs manage the workload more affectively. Also, our headquarters’ contracts team has delivered a series of well-prepared meaningful trainings on several updated manuals and processes. In addition, the local resources developed and managed by the regions have significantly improved our way to track and standardize work progress. As a DCMA teammate, our everyday participation effort is influencing more and more positive changes throughout the agency. □



“DCMA is important to America’s warfighters because we are the eyes and ears for them. We are the first line of defense for the military. We ensure our customers receive quality products that assist them in defending our nation and accomplishing their missions.”

- Christopher Kirk, quality assurance specialist at DCMA New Orleans

“DCMA is important to America’s warfighters because the agency is crucial to ensuring that our warfighters receive the items they need to perform their mission when needed and within cost constraints.”

- Shannon Krimmer, quality assurance specialist at DCMA Milwaukee



“All of DCMA’s services ensure the warfighters are receiving weapons, equipment and tools that will meet quality standards. This ultimately puts our warfighters at an operational advantage.”

- Steven Arora, administrative contracting officer at DCMA Cleveland

“DCMA is important to America’s warfighters because we ensure that our (military) are properly equipped to protect the interests of the nation. As DCMA evolves, I am excited about the opportunities for agency personnel to provide acquisition support in regards to contract closeout.”

- Annie Green, supervisory contract specialist at Contract Life Cycle Management Center based in Houston



NSEO keeps Navy supply chain, local business afloat

By Jason Kaneshiro

When COVID-19 was declared a national emergency in March 2020, offices, schools and much of America's infrastructure shuttered.

Throughout the uncertainties mandated by the pandemic, Defense Contract Management Agency team members with Naval Special Emphasis Operations remained on the job to keep vital Navy components flowing through the supply chain. They also kept an economic valve open for local communities with Department of Defense manufacturers.

James Hewitt, a quality assurance specialist with DCMA NSEO contract management office and a mission partner at DCMA Twin Cities, continued his in-plant work inspections despite pandemic-related obstacles.

"Our CMO team has a very specialized and detailed mission to support our Navy customers' specialized requirements," said Hewitt, whose work ensured continual operation of the Navy's submarine and aircraft carrier programs. "Both of those weapons platforms are extremely critical as a deterrent to those countries that would do harm to the United States. As a veteran, I pride myself on personal responsibility, dedication and integrity to the men and women of all of our armed services."

Hewitt, who served eight years in the Air Force, said it was important to minimize supply chain disruption to the fleet.

"Navy shipbuilding and maintenance schedules are tight," he said. "It's very important that I do my part to ensure schedules are kept with very minimal delay."

"We have to keep America ready to defend against any enemies around the globe. If the supply chain breaks down, the nation's warfighting capability breaks down and that might cost lives."

— Ronald Mitchell, DCMA Naval Special Emphasis Operations quality assurance specialist

DCMA's adherence to the Navy's construction and maintenance schedules also impacted local economies during the pandemic.

"When a quality assurance specialist goes into a contractor facility, especially a small business — and we have many of them — they depend on the income generated from the contract," Hewitt said. "They can't afford to wait for payment the same way we can't afford to wait for the product."

Through timely payments to small businesses that were critical suppliers of parts, DCMA ensured those businesses could remain open and their employees could continue to be paid.

"When I go into a facility to accept product on behalf of the Department of Defense, it clearly helps the business

and the local economy," Hewitt said.

"They are able to get paid for their goods or services provided and that keeps the local economy going."

Ronald Mitchell, a QAS with DCMA NSEO, said his own experience in the military drives him to provide for the warfighter.

"We verify that the product is manufactured correctly to contract via part number or drawings," Mitchell said. "As a veteran, knowing that your life and those around you depend on the correct part to save the mission or a life, I know that I have always made sure the Navy will receive what they need, when they need it, and it is contractually correct."

Mitchell said it was of critical importance to keep local suppliers open and operating, and the agency could not risk allowing serious disruption to the supply chain.

"We have to keep America ready to defend against any enemies around the globe," Mitchell said. "If the supply chain breaks down, the nation's warfighting capability breaks down and that might cost lives."

While individual contributions by DCMA's quality assurance personnel were key in keeping operations functional, Hewitt attributed his success to his team and others within the agency who have continued to provide the support he needs to perform his job.

"I am a virtual team member six hours away from my team leader. Communication is key during these unique times," he said. "It would be very difficult to do my job without the help of the peers on my team, my team leader and the rest of the chain of command." α



(Above) A Virginia-class submarine undergoes construction at Huntington Ingalls Newport News Shipbuilding, Va. DCMA personnel ensured critical military supply chain manufacturing facilities could remain open during the pandemic, keeping Navy shipbuilding schedules and local economies afloat. (Navy photo) (Left) Newport News Shipbuilding contractors remove an arresting gear engine, aboard the aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis. NNS, NAVSEA and contractors conducted Refueling and Complex Overhaul as part of the mission to deliver the warship back in the fight in 2021. (Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Mitchell Banks)

NEW EYE IN THE SKY

Agency supports 5th SBIRS launch of infrared detection satellite worth \$830 million

DCMA LM Sunnyvale and DCMA LM Denver

The fifth satellite in the Space-Based Infrared System constellation achieved a major milestone in 2021, after it was successfully launched at Space Launch Complex 41 on Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Florida.

The successful launch of the \$830 million satellite atop the United Launch Alliance, or ULA, Atlas V 421 rocket launch vehicle completed a major milestone for the SBIRS program and marks another fully successful \$100 million mission for the National Security Space Launch program.

The SBIRS geosynchronous earth orbit 5 space vehicle, known as GEO-5, is an early warning defense satellite for Space Force operations conducted by Space Command.

“It really was a team effort over the last six years,” said Ronald Williams, DCMA SBIRS program integrator.

To bring GEO-5 to the launch milestone, California-based DCMA Lockheed Martin Sunnyvale’s program support team coordinated with several external organizations, including Space Force’s Space Systems Command, 5th Space Launch Squadron, and the Aerospace Corporation.

Internally, the DCMA Sunnyvale team operates as the lead for the program. Through these partnerships with other agency contracting offices like DCMA Northrop Grumman El Segundo, California; DCMA Lockheed Martin Denver; and DCMA NASA Product Operations, San Antonio; the agency conducts contract and technical operations oversight to ensure on-time delivery of GEO-5.

When challenges arise within multi-team contracts, strong working relationships forged by shared-program support often benefit the agency. Greg Adler, a program integrator, leads the NSSL program support team at DCMA LM Denver. His priorities often align with the SBIRS LM Sunnyvale team.

The NSSL team covers all ULA launch vehicles in support of a 100% success rate in 143 total missions, eight of which were for the Atlas V 421 configuration. Adler’s team consists of over 50 contracts and technical personnel — split between an engineering design facility in Centennial, Colorado, and a production facility in Decatur, Alabama.

Combined, the functional specialists at both facilities assure ULA’s compliance to government launch contracts by assessing adherence to manufacturing and production, hardware and software engineering, and quality assurance processes throughout the supply chain.

GEO-5 follows in the footsteps of GEO-4’s launch Jan. 20, 2017. The SBIRS program encompasses a constellation of GEO satellites, highly-elliptical earth orbit payloads hosted on other satellites, and ground processing control systems. This integrated system is

capable of providing long-range infrared surveillance for simultaneous missions along with target detection to support missions such as missile warning, missile defense, technical intelligence and battle-space awareness.

“I am proud to serve in such a pivotal program supporting our nation’s technological superiority,” said Air Force Capt. Keah Gee, DCMA deputy program integrator for SBIRS.

In 2014, Lockheed Martin was awarded a sole-source contract for two GEO satellites with planned launches in 2021 and 2022. Then in 2015, LM and Space Force SSC, an Air Force command at the time, reached an agreement to have future satellites undergo a technology refresh with an updated LM 2100 bus. Bus is a common industry term for a general model on which multiple satellites are based.

The effort focused on increasing

production speed, reducing costs, adding resiliency and building in more mission flexibility.

LM 2100 is the contractor’s largest satellite bus, providing structure, propulsion and power to GEO-5. The 2100 platform will be part of the following GEO-6, as well as future GEO space vehicles for the Global Positioning System and other programs.

Today, DCMA LM Sunnyvale and DCMA LM Denver deliver prime contract support to buying commands on more than 200 contracts awarded to LM Space, valued at over \$100 billion. With nearly 300 civilian and military professionals located across six separate locations, the offices support 11 major Department of Defense and NASA programs.

The GEO-5 was operationally accepted by Space Force Feb. 4, less than a year after being launched into orbit. □



(Top left) The GEO-5 satellite’s successful launch from Space Launch Complex 41 pad at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Florida. (Left) The SBIRS GEO-5 satellite enters a vacuum chamber at Lockheed Martin’s Sunnyvale, Calif., production facility to begin Thermal Vacuum testing. (Above) Also, in Sunnyvale, Lockheed Martin Space integrated the GEO-5 Space Vehicle. Space vehicles undergo acoustic testing, which verifies the satellite’s ability to withstand high levels of vibration in space. (Photos courtesy of Lockheed Martin and ULA)



LIGHTNING UNLEASHED

PST cracks F-35 logistics logjam

By Jason Kaneshiro

A supply chain bottleneck in 2021 for a critical component of the F-35 Lightning II's engine threatened to keep America's fleet of the advanced fighter jet grounded.

Pratt & Whitney, the manufacturer of the engine that powers the platform, informed the government there was an emerging situation with power modules out in the field for the F135 engine that powers the F-35 aircraft.

"When I first heard of this emerging issue, it was a bit daunting to read," said Wendy Naples, F135 program integrator with (Defense Contract Management Agency) Aircraft Propulsion Operations-Pratt & Whitney. "The contractor reported that available serviceable power modules were insufficient to meet the necessary mission capability target levels."

The contractor was forecasting a gap of 26 power modules in 2021 when comparing depot capacity versus the demand for the component, Naples said.

"After reviewing the data and consulting with the industrial specialists on the team, I understood this meant an additional nine to 10 months of work given the contractor's maximum capacity for power module production," she said.

For the end users, this meant that shortages were inevitable and aircraft were likely to be grounded as the backlog for modules awaiting maintenance grew and spares were depleted, Naples said.

As the program integrator, She serves as the lead and the main point of contact and voice of DCMA's F135 program

support team and works directly with the F135 Joint Program Office.

"The F135 JPO Propulsion lead approached our PST with three proposed courses of action and requested our support in assessing the risk for all three," Naples said.

She immediately established a core group within the program support team to execute the risk assessment, analyze the data and present their findings to program office.

Naples' leadership of the contract modification group solved the supply chain bottlenecks with the F135 power modules and prevented 15 F-35 aircraft from being without an engine, enabling \$1.05 billion worth of F-35 aircraft to remain operational and mission ready.

Her efforts supporting the F-35 JPO were appreciated by James Kocis, deputy program manager for JPO's F-35 Propulsion Systems.

"Wendy has been an instrumental liaison to the F-35 JPO Propulsion office on a wide range of programmatic, contractual and technical issues with the F135 Propulsion System," Kocis said.

Naples said her success is a result of the combined efforts of her team. She also credits the support her group received from other professionals throughout the agency.

"I attribute the team's success to the support we received from our DCMA counterparts at Lockheed Martin in Fort Worth, Texas," Naples said. "They provided us with the information we needed to fully understand the risk to the air vehicle production schedule." □

"After reviewing the data and consulting with the industrial specialists on the team, I understood this meant an additional nine to 10 months of work."

— Wendy Naples, DCMA F135 program integrator

CPSR team simplifies subcontract support

Stories By Matthew Montgomery

Contractor Purchasing Systems Reviews ensure suppliers have purchasing systems in place that contribute to effective subcontract management, but sometimes the process can be daunting and difficult for small contractors to navigate on first approach.

The Defense Contract Management Agency's CPSR group wants to improve this process.

"The CPSR group is working toward creating an environment where small contractors are eased into obtaining an approved purchasing system," said John Foley, CPSR group director. "We strive to lay out the process in a way that is relatable and achievable for those working toward their first CPSR."

The group's role is to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness with which contractors under review are spending government funds and complying with government policy when subcontracting. The team conducts a complete evaluation of a contractor's purchasing

and subcontract management from development of the requirement through completion of subcontract performance.

"Our ultimate goal is to provide a system assessment to the cognizant contracting officer, thus providing a basis for granting, withholding or withdrawing approval of the purchasing system," said Foley. "It is expected that suppliers create and maintain purchasing systems that contribute to effective subcontract management."

This includes the development of, as well as performance to, internal policy and procedures, or P&Ps, which should support regulations and public law as identified in the Federal Acquisition Regulation and Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement clauses of the contractor's prime and subcontract portfolio. The most common FAR and DFARS clauses:

- FAR 52.244-2 (Alternate 1 when applicable) — Subcontracts



- DFARS 252.242-7005 — Contractor Business Systems (Withholds)
- DFARS 252.244-7001 — Contractor Purchasing System Administration (Business Rules/24 Criteria)
- DFARS 252.246-7007/7008 — Counterfeit Parts/Sources of Supply
- DFARS 252.204-7012 — Cyber Security

"CPSR maintains records on roughly 500 approved contractor purchasing systems, and the total number of approved systems is constantly changing based on mergers, acquisitions, and business

realignments," said Kim Boucher, CPSR scheduler. "Many of these contractors have had approved systems for years, if not decades, and these systems should be continually compliant and are reviewed at roughly three-year intervals. For these contractors, the focus is on maintenance and staying abreast of regulatory changes, updating P&Ps as needed, and training their staff to implement accordingly."

The DCMA CPSR group is committed to supporting and working with contractors who are new to the process that are truly willing to work toward obtaining their purchasing system approval. □

Kim Boucher, DCMA procurement analyst and Contractor Purchasing Systems Review scheduler, works with John Foley, CPSR group director, at the DCMA office at Hanscom Air Force Base, Mass. They evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of how well contractors are spending government funds and complying with government policy when subcontracting. (DCMA photo)

New to defense contracting?

Contractors undergoing an initial contractor purchasing system review, or CPSR, can often find the process difficult.

The following scenario provides guidance. Elaine is the contracts manager for X-Bot Inc. Elaine's boss walks in one morning very agitated and is insistent the company needs an approved purchasing system. Elaine has good rapport with her DCMA administrative contracting officer, known as an ACO, and reaches out for more information about the approval process. The ACO provides Elaine with an assessment form designed to determine if X-Bot meets the current CPSR dollar threshold.

Eligible contractors are identified by either the ACO or the CPSR group based primarily on:

- \$50 million in qualifying sales (total prime contract and subcontract sales) excluding commercial, firm

fixed price competitive, and FFP with economic price adjustment

- A final rule amending the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement was issued by the Department of Defense, which established the DOD CPSR threshold at \$50M in DFARS 244.302, thus doubling the existing threshold found at FAR 44.302(a)

In addition to the established threshold, the ACO will consider:

- Subcontracting volume, complexity and dollar amount
- Contractor past performance
- ACO identification of risk

The ACO reviews the total government sales numbers from X-Bot and determines the company does not have sufficient government sales. X-Bot's eligible sales are currently \$39 million, and the contractor



An M1A2 Abrams Tank crew from 1st Infantry Division fires their M256 120mm gun at a target during night-fire qualification. Defense programs often use subcontractors for component production. DCMA's CPSR team conducts a complete evaluation of a contractor's purchasing and subcontract management from development of the requirement through completion of subcontract performance. The team works to improve the process for first-time contractors. (Army photo by Spc. Hedil Hernández)

does not pose any particular risk in terms of past performance or critical government program involvement. That aside, the required clauses are not in any of their current prime contracts.

As X-Bot does not yet have \$50 million in sales, the ACO holds off on a formal review and provides a link to the CPSR Guidebook.

Six months later, X-Bot wins a hard-fought contract. This new cost reimbursement contract puts X-Bot over the \$50 million threshold and contains the necessary FAR Clause 52.244-2, as well as DFARS business system clauses 252.244-7001 and 252.242-7005.

X-Bot is now eligible for a CPSR, and the inclusion of FAR Clause 52-244-2 requires written consent from the ACO before issuing certain subcontracts.

The consent process is as follows: the ACO coordinates with the CPSR group for a review of consent packages under this new prime contract, the CPSR group reviews X-Bot's completed subcontract submission and provides a recommendation on the subcontract request. In X-Bot's situation, this will facilitate a good learning and feedback process. The goal is not to reject requests, but rather to assure that X-Bot is conducting adequate price

analysis, justifying noncompetitive awards by making strong sole source determinations, and meeting established contractual requirements. Given the inherent risks of cost reimbursement contracts, the primary goal of this process is to protect the government's interests.

Elaine has a discussion with her ACO and decides to schedule the review. The standard process is to generate a review sample from a one-year performance period, so the CPSR scheduler recommends giving X-Bot a full year to develop a relevant sample.

Elaine estimates her company will prepare roughly 20 consent to subcontract packages over the next several months. The ACO tells Elaine the consent packages will mitigate the government's risk while X-Bot prepares for their purchasing system approval. Another benefit of the delay is the feedback received from the consent package reviews will become a good source of information for X-Bot regarding their processes and P&Ps.

Elaine reviews the CPSR Guidebook and reads the FAR and DFARS to understand the requirements. She determines which of the 30 guidebook elements are controlled by management

and which are in the realm of the buyers. She decides that the development of structured P&Ps, which are tailored to X-Bot's business, is a primary management responsibility. From research, she understands that the P&P manual should not just refer buyers to the FAR and DFARS, but should provide buyers with management's interpretation of requirements in terms of the X-Bot's specific business model.

Next, she strengthens the existing training program to train out the more robust P&Ps. The training program should be well-documented and supported by attendance rosters. In addition, Elaine develops a vendor rating methodology with measurable criteria. This assures that good quality subcontractors are utilized, and the performance of weaker subcontractors is monitored.

Although Elaine is ultimately responsible for the entire purchasing system, there are day-to-day duties that are handled by the buyers. She understands that a well-designed internal review process ensures that buyers are following X-Bot's P&Ps and provides the basis for the ongoing training as needed.

Nine months pass quickly, and

Elaine receives her first information request from the lead CPSR analyst about 90 days prior to the scheduled review. The analyst emails Elaine an initial information request that needs to be returned at different intervals prior to the review. A copy of X-Bot's P&P manual is provided to the CPSR team, and X-Bot fills out a P&P checklist provided by the lead analyst. The checklist will assist the CPSR team in efficiently reviewing the P&P manual prior to the review and will give the analysts insight into the purchasing practices as encountered during the file review.

For a smaller company like X-Bot, a CPSR is typically conducted by two analysts reviewing roughly 40 files randomly pulled from four established dollar value strata. The CPSR team lead informs Elaine that CPSR has been conducting 100% virtual reviews since April of 2020, and these reviews have been met with positive feedback. Although X-Bot does not have a fully electronic purchasing system, they utilize a hybrid electronic storage process and are able to provide the agency team with electronic subcontract award files for the review.

Elaine works with the CPSR lead analyst to set up a video conferencing call on the first morning of the review. This entrance briefing allows CPSR and X-Bot personnel to agree on expectations and assure responsibilities are established. The CPSR lead commits to providing X-Bot with daily updates which keep Elaine and the ACO informed as concerns and issues arise. While reviewing the files, the CPSR analysts provide Elaine and her team with written questions to assure everyone understands and to solicit a written response. The questions are documented by the agency team in a log and the complete list of questions is provided to Elaine for her records.

No later than three days after the conclusion of the file review, the CPSR lead conducts a formal exit briefing to explain the Level II Corrective Action Report, which outlines the identified deficiencies. This exit briefing and issuance of the CAR starts the clock ticking for X-Bot to provide a Corrective Action Plan. The initial CAP submittal is due to the lead analyst within 30 calendar days. The analyst then has 15 days to work with Elaine to obtain further clarification or ask for additional information before issuing the final report to the ACO.

Elaine has been made aware, through the daily discussions, that shortcomings in the system have been identified, so it comes as no surprise that the final out brief discussion details a Level II CAR

containing three deficient elements. Fortunately, Elaine's hard work and preparations along with the lessons learned through the consent to subcontract process assured X-Bot's buyers understood most of the standard purchasing requirements. However, there were still a few issues that slipped their notice.

Deficiency 1: Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act — buyers reported executive compensation properly but lost track of the subcontract reporting requirement for awards over \$30,000. This is a two-part requirement which trips up many contractors.

Deficiency 2: Procurement Authority — an approval hierarchy matrix was in place; however, buyers were not uniformly obtaining management approval for awards when required.

Deficiency 3: Policy and Procedure manual — the manual needed further clarification and augmentation to fully address seven of the review elements not fully developed.

Elaine conducts a root cause analysis and begins training her buyers to address the deficient elements. She provides the CPSR lead with a written CAP including training records and training plan. An existing checklist is modified to remind buyers to obtain higher level review when a subcontract or purchase order is above their procurement authority. Elaine updates the P&P manual and provides evidence that the new practices have been implemented. The CPSR analyst formally accepts X-Bot's CAP and finalizes the CPSR report for the ACO. The report shows that all three deficiencies have been adequately addressed. The final report released to the ACO contains a narrative summarizing the CAP and outlining the steps taken to resolve the deficiencies. The result is that the ACO has received enough information to make a quick decision and is able to issue a final determination of approval.

Elaine has finally achieved the desired purchasing system approval and satisfied a long-term goal of the company.

“Hopefully this scenario was helpful and provides good insight into the review process,” said John Foley, CPSR group director. “It's important to note that only a small percentage of contractors actually experience having their purchasing system disapproved. DCMA strives to reduce this number further by implementing measures to avoid unnecessary disapprovals when contractors are committed to working toward a positive result.” □

Quality Keystones

Women share path to QAS career



Aisha Glover graduated from DCMA's Keystone program to become one of its newest quality assurance specialists. The agency is actively encouraging more women to join the career field. (Courtesy photo)

By Jason Kaneshiro

Only around 10% of quality assurance specialists with the Defense Contract Management Agency are women — something the agency wants to change by encouraging more women to enter the career field.

Two recent graduates of DCMA's Keystone program, Aisha Glover and Myra Valentine, are among the newest women to join the ranks of the quality assurance workforce.

The Keystone program is a three-year entry-level developmental program that establishes an avenue to hire internal and external applicants using competitive and noncompetitive appointing authorities.

Glover, who now works at DCMA Hampton's Greensboro, North Carolina, office, started her career with DCMA in September 2015 as a procurement technician at a different agency location.

"I liked being a PT and working directly with the contracts folks," Glover said. "However, in 2018, my husband and I decided we were going to move to North Carolina. One day, as I was sitting at my desk, I saw an internal job announcement flash across my screen for a quality assurance Keystone position in Greensboro, North Carolina."

As luck would have it, that location was close to where the couple wanted to move.

"Knowing that I really wanted to stay with DCMA Hampton, I spoke with my

Contracts director, Matt Mullins, about the position and applied," she said. "A few weeks later, I found out I was hired. A couple of months after that, I started my QAS journey."

Glover said it had never crossed her mind to join quality assurance.

"I loved working on the contracts team, and I didn't think I had the right background experience," she said. "However, when the opportunity came knocking, I had to answer. I must admit, it was one of the best decisions I could've made."

Glover said she had not considered a career in quality assurance because she believed that some type of maintenance or technical experience would be required.

"I am prior Air Force, and my job was in logistics and supply," she said. "Although I may have issued aircraft parts, I certainly couldn't tell you what they did and why."

But after some time in her quality assurance position, she quickly realized that while it helps to have maintenance and technical knowledge, it is not necessary to be successful.

Valentine, who works at DCMA Lockheed Martin in Moorestown, New Jersey, had a different path to becoming a QAS. She started her journey as an electronic communications specialist when she served in the military, a career she carried to her civilian life.

"Prior to my position as a Keystone QAS, I worked for the Army as an electronics mechanic, repairing and maintaining tactical communications equipment as well as other electronic systems," Valentine said.

There was a QAS at her previous job that opened her eyes to the career field.

"We spent many hours developing processes for intake of communication equipment, repairs and preventive maintenance, and ultimately, returning repaired equipment to the customer," Valentine said. "We had many conversations about what quality assurance entailed as a profession. I have always been fascinated about the hows and whys. He suggested I explore the Keystone program at DCMA."

As luck would have it, they had a Keystone completing a rotation in logistics who convinced her to apply for the program as a QAS.

Valentine said the Keystone program is rigorous, with each new training criteria being a stepping-stone that depends on the previous step.

"You cannot blow through the online training, just trying to pass the class," Valentine said. "You must

take your time with each course and be your own advocate by putting in a submission for the follow-on in-residence course once you begin the class."

Graduating from the program, Valentine and Glover were placed in their new roles as QASs and immediately got to work ensuring quality standards.

Glover said she loves her teammates and working with a good team makes a big difference in the professional success of the individual and how they perceive their job.

"I also love that I'm not always trapped behind a computer all the time," she said. "As a QAS, I'm able to get out of the office to visit contractor facilities and interact with different people outside of DCMA on a regular basis."

The most rewarding part about the job is knowing that it contributes to the success of the warfighter by ensuring quality parts are sent to the field, she said.

Both Glover and Valentine expressed an appreciation of the role quality assurance and their agency play in supporting the overall National Defense Strategy.

"Part of DCMA's mission is to deliver quality products to the Department of Defense and its partners," Glover said. "As a QAS, it's our job to ensure a quality product is shipped. We are indeed the frontline eyes and ears of the organization."

Valentine said quality assurance is part of the final "400 feet" as the gap between the item being inspected and then delivered to customers.

"In other words, we're the last step before these things get in the hands of the warfighter, be it the Navy or any of the services," she said.

As two of the newest QASs with the agency and two of a growing number of women in their career field, Glover and Valentine encourage more women to follow their lead.

"Ladies, don't be intimidated by the mechanical and technical aspect of the position. The job doesn't require you to be an expert in all things mechanical and technical," Glover said. "You will learn that stuff as you go. Plus, I have yet to run into a QAS who isn't willing to assist."

Valentine shared a similar sentiment.

"Working with the vast amount of people to accomplish a common goal, each person plays a pivotal role in the mission there by building trust with people each step of the way," Valentine said. "I think women have unique qualities to bring to the table. Do not overthink it, just do it." ❧

"Working with the vast amount of people to accomplish a common goal, each person plays a pivotal role in the mission there by building trust with people each step of the way. I think women have unique qualities to bring to the table. Do not overthink it, just do it."

— Myra Valentine, a QAS at DCMA LM



BETTER

BALANCED TEAM OF ACQUISITION PROS DEVELOP KEY MANUAL

By Tonya Johnson

Defense Contract Management Agency acquisition employees have another resource to do their jobs more effectively and efficiently to support America's warfighters.

Approximately 40 employees from around the agency created the Workload Acceptance Manual 4502-02, which allows acquisition personnel and those from other functional areas to review set guidelines to see whether the agency can handle a work request. The group started working on the manual in May 2020, and it was completed a year later. The manual will be updated as necessary.

It was initiated by Patricia McMahon, the director of the Contracts and Pricing Policy Division in the Contracts Directorate at DCMA headquarters. She briefed several senior leaders in April 2020 with the concept of an agency manual outlining end-to-end DCMA events to include pre-contract administration services, and pre-contract receipt and review activities performed to enhance the execution of the contract life cycle. The manual was then championed by the Corporate Governance Capability Sponsor, Cory Rosenberger, who serves



Approximately 40 DCMA employees teamed to create the Workload Acceptance Manual 4502-02, which allows acquisition personnel and those from other functional areas to review set guidelines to see whether DCMA can handle a work request. The group began working in May 2020. It was completed a year later. (Courtesy graphic)

as DCMA's chief of staff.

"It is the culmination of more than a year of recent work to prepare and write the manual," said Rosenberger. "It also builds on more than 10 years of previous policy and business rules development. When we started this process, we knew that we had a big job on our hands. To get this project across the finish line, we recruited a large team of multi-functional professionals across headquarters, regions and operational units."

Employees in the Contracts and Pricing Policy Division, including Beth Brown, Bethany Rosser, Greg Stein, and Scott McDonald, along with members of the Portfolio Management and Business Integration Directorate, helped spearhead the developmental effort. Team co-leads Jed Smith, director of the Strategic Analysis and Planning Division, and McMahon maintained oversight of team functions and hosted weekly status meetings.

"The purpose of the manual is for multiple reasons," said Robert Loviska, the workload acceptance manual co-team lead who is also a supply chain manager in PMBI. "The manual consolidates the workload acceptance guidance into one manual, and it establishes a workload acceptance procedure for pre-award and other work

types. It also assigns responsibility for workload acceptance and declination, and it memorializes high value and high risk activities, which are now a part of our business model."

Loviska said the new manual is important because its purpose helps direct the functional performance of the agency's contract administration services in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulation Parts 42.002, 42.201, 42.202, 42.302 and the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement Part 242.302.

"DCMA's mission is to provide contract administration services to the Department of Defense and its partners," said Loviska. "Although DCMA is the primary provider of contract administration services, it cannot be assumed that all contract administration must be performed by the agency. There are resource constraints that prevent the agency from supporting all customers, contracts or requests. This manual allows us to focus intently on our mission in accordance with the Office of the Secretary of Defense guidelines."

In addition to evaluating pre-contract workload and contracts, the manual also provides a mechanism for employees to evaluate grants, cooperative agreements and other

transactions, also classified as non-procurement instruments. NPIs are different than traditional FAR-based contracts. They can foster new relationships and practices, to broaden the industrial base available to the government, and encourage flexible and innovative research, project design and execution.

As a result of the workload acceptance manual, agency employees are better equipped to decide which work can be accepted or declined and determine if the work should be accepted via a support agreement. The manual includes a workload acceptance process map, which helps employees understand how each business process should work within the estimated time frame of approximately 20 days.

"This manual helps employees to understand they are to only accept work that DCMA has the legal authority to perform, and it provides a mechanism to rapidly elevate contract requests to the appropriate decision authority," said Stein, a workload acceptance manual team member who is a contract price and cost analyst. "This manual clarifies DCMA's mission within the DOD to help us impact its mission."

There are three levels of workload acceptance. The initial workload

acceptance lead, also known as an initial WAL, reviews incoming work for conformance to DCMA acceptance criteria. The individual recommends acceptance or declination. The secondary WAL confirms the correct application of the criteria and reviews the information for a support agreement or to establish a lead for new reimbursable efforts.

“Support agreements are important because they establish the rules of engagement and the outline tailored

adjudication of workload acceptance issues between the regional commands.

Although the manual is geared toward acquisition personnel, other DCMA employees will find the product beneficial as it provides unique scenarios for Aircraft Integrated Maintenance Operations personnel and transportation functional specialists.

In 2021, the team held various virtual training sessions for the DCMA workforce that included targeted

asset for the contracting commands.”

McMahon said the “manual will set the stage for agency personnel when assessing future pre-contract and contract administration service work that requires tailoring of support from agency resources.”

“This is a necessary aspect of recognizing DCMA’s role in mitigating acquisition life-cycle risk and minimizing any amount of duplication of activities already performed by the buying commands,” she said. “These events will be critical going forward into even more constrained budget environments.”

Loviska said he is proud of the team who worked on the manual to ensure

“THIS MANUAL ALLOWS US TO FOCUS INTENTLY ON OUR MISSION IN ACCORDANCE TO THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE GUIDELINES.”

- ROBERT LOVISHKA, WORKLOAD ACCEPTANCE MANUAL CO-TEAM LEAD

customer support DCMA will provide,” said Loviska. “The DCMA director’s approval (or that of his designee) is required at this point, and the contract may or may not be on a reimbursable basis.”

If the customer wishes to pursue a new support agreement, the contract or request may be accepted on a provisional basis while the support agreement is being pursued. The secondary lead will notify the initial WAL and update the applicable tracker. If the customer does not want to pursue a new support agreement, the contract or request will be denied.

The secondary lead also issues letters of declination and coordinates any modifications with the contracting activity and the administrative contracting officer to change the contract administration office.

The last level of acceptance is the tertiary workload acceptance lead, who assures the consistent application of the workload acceptance criteria across the agency. The tertiary lead assists with the interpretation of the criteria and customer engagement for adjudication and facilitates

training for those assigned as initial and secondary workload acceptance leads as well as general overview training via “brown-bag sessions.”

Additionally, the team created specialized training for certain groups of employees, including those in customer engagement and in contracting.

According to Mark Schultz, who also participated on the workload acceptance manual team, DCMA senior leaders established an emphasis of this initiative in the agency’s strategic plan.

“The senior leadership team thought that workload acceptance was so important that they identified it as one of the agency’s priorities in the agency’s Strategic Plan for fiscal year 2021,” said Schultz, a performance advocate in PMBI. “Our senior leaders have been very clear that defined workload acceptance processes are needed to standardize how work is accepted by the agency.

“With alignment to the strategic plan, DCMA’s focus will be on the work that requires the level of expertise DCMA has to support the warfighters’ highest valued projects and those with the greatest risks. DCMA is effectively a risk mitigation

agency employees can continue to provide enhanced customer support to America’s warfighters.

“This manual allows us to prioritize our resources to support the National Defense Strategy and our nation’s warfighters,” he said. “We screen incoming work to ensure it aligns with DCMA’s mission, scope and budget authority.

“Workload acceptance needs to be a quick process,” Loviska continued. “The mission work needs to be identified and accepted quickly, so that the receipt and review can be done, and the work can begin. The non-mission work needs to be declined quickly, so that another activity may be assigned to perform the necessary administration. DCMA will no longer keep contracts in limbo while adjudication occurs.”

Rosenberger said the manual highlighted the flexibility of agency team members.

“The past year has shown us that we can bend without breaking and we can evolve to better meet the demands of our mission. I am excited to see how this manual continues to improve how we support the greatest warfighters the world has ever seen,” he said. ▢



DCMA Mentor-Protégé Program drives small-business growth

By Matthew Montgomery

Tucked away in the Defense Contract Management Agency’s Small Business Compliance Center is a group of individuals working to help small businesses grow through the Department of Defense Mentor-Protégé Program, known as DOD MPP. The team is responsible for the administration of the program in support of the department’s Office of Small Business Programs, as outlined in Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement 219-71 and DFARS Appendix I.

Angela Dokes is DCMA’s Mentor-Protégé Group team lead and is responsible for ensuring the approval of appropriate credit agreements in the MPP, and tracking the success of all agreements in the program.

“In the MPP a large contractor, the mentor, teams with a small contractor, the protégé, to help cultivate and enlarge their footprint in the defense industrial base, or DIB,” said Dokes. “This is a win-win-win for the mentor, protégé and DOD, as it creates a more established and capable pool of sub-contractors delivering cutting-edge technologies and services in benefit of the warfighter, while also assisting the mentor in meeting their small business development goals.”

There are three types of program agreements: direct reimbursable agreements, hybrid agreements and credit

agreements. Direct reimbursable agreements are approved by the Defense agency awarding the agreement or contract and administered by DCMA. Credit agreements are approved and administered by DCMA. Hybrid agreements are approved through collaboration of the Defense agency and DCMA and administered by DCMA.

Several Defense agencies participate in the DOD MPP direct reimbursable and hybrid portion of the program. However, the credit agreements approved and administered by DCMA are unique from the other agreements since the mentor expends their own funds and resources to support the development of the protégé.

According to the Defense Department Office of Small Business Programs, MPP is actually the oldest continuously operating federal mentor-protégé program in existence. It was originally established after the first Gulf War and has since helped hundreds of small businesses grow to fill unique niches within the DIB.

DCMA had 20 MPP credit agreements in place last year.

“In my opinion, one of the most amazing things about last year’s program participants is that they made accomplishments in the midst of COVID,” said Dokes. “Instead of drawing down operations and support to other companies during the pandemic, these companies ramped up

their operations and started doing even more dynamic things.”

Coming off a strong MPP year in 2020, Dokes’ team is tracking 12 credit agreements in place for 2021, with hopes of similar accomplishments coming from the current group.

“We are excited about the current agreements in place as they again represent a good selection of large known DIB companies, and some exciting up and coming pioneering small businesses,” said Dokes. “This year’s participants have some big shoes to fill as the list of accomplishments for the 2020 group was long.”

Each agreement is monitored by one of the five Small Business professionals on Dokes’ team: Walter Brown, Lisa Hostetler, Kendra Kinnie, Marilyn Messina and Shriva Morris. They conduct an annual review of the progress and accomplishments realized under the approved mentor-protégé agreements.

Here are summaries of a few outstanding credit agreements:

Agreements Jacobs Technology – Aerodyne Industries

Jacobs provides a wide range of services to the Defense Department, as well as other federal and state agencies. Jacobs is the prime contractor on the Missile Defense Agency’s Integrated Research and Development for Enterprise Solutions contract, with teammate and protégé, Aerodyne Industries, LLC serving as their subcontractor. The IRES contract supports MDA with network operations and security, information technology projects, property management, war-game and test support, and infrastructure engineering, maintenance and operations.

Aerodyne is a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business specializing in IT and engineering services and solutions. Their support on the MDA IRES contract has received numerous recognitions and awards since the agreement inception.

The Jacobs Technology – Aerodyne Industries agreement has helped Aerodyne grow and create jobs. Since the agreement went into place, the small business has increased their

employee count by 20% and annual gross revenue by 79%.

“These two companies are committed to improving and expanding not only the protégé’s capabilities, but the industrial base,” said Lisa Hostetler, DCMA SBP representative working with this agreement. “This type of collaboration is why the program exists. When companies like Aerodyne succeed, the (Defense Department) succeeds. Through MDA’s IRES contract, our warfighters can detect missiles launched from halfway around the world at incredible speed and in any weather.”

Boeing Company – King Aerospace Commercial Corp.

Boeing is the world’s largest aerospace company and a leading manufacturer of commercial jetliners and defense, space and security systems. A top exporter, the company supports airlines and U.S. and allied government customers in 150 countries.

King Aerospace Commercial Corporation, known as KACC, is a privately-owned certified Historically Underutilized Business Zone small business that is a Federal Aviation Administration part 145 Repair Station with the ability to support both corporate and commercial aircraft. KACC is one of the few, if not only, large aircraft Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul companies privately owned and operated by founding family members. In the aviation industry, the company is recognized as a leader in aircraft paint work, and Boeing uses the company to paint the Boeing C-32 aircraft. KACC provides aviation services to all branches of the military.

During, the MPP KACC increased their Defense Department prime contracts by 699.66%, employee count by 18% and their annual gross revenue by 89%.

“The Boeing and King Aerospace team was an exceptional pairing of capabilities and the agreement operated precisely how agreements are projected to perform,” said Dokes, who is directly responsible for the agreement. “Boeing is a known DIB leader with tremendous resources which KACC was able to use and capitalize on in their agreement. Due to KACC’s capabilities



and specialized expertise, Boeing has established a partner for future work.”

General Dynamics Mission Control – Carroll Comm.

General Dynamics Mission Systems provides mission-critical solutions.

GDMS is a technology integrator and original equipment manufacturer with domain expertise in land, sea, air, space and cyber.

Carroll Communications is an SBA certified Small-Disadvantaged, Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned and HUBZone small business. Their mission is to facilitate the communications and information technology demands of customers by providing a full range of technology products and services.

Originally the scope of the MPP was focused around tactical networks and the transfer of technological skills and technical knowledge in order to support the warfighter and the DIB. Upon the outbreak of COVID-19, Carroll Communications switched gears and responded to a GDMS TechScout (a sources sought call to industry) seeking personal protective equipment.

The company is in the process of implementing Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification and is offering CMMC compliance services to benefit the government by influencing the cybersecurity posture of their peers in the DIB supply chain.

Over the course of the MPP, Carroll Communications received numerous DOD and federal prime contracts and subcontracts. They increased their employee count by 100% and increased annual gross revenue by 1,275%.

Nunn-Perry Awards

Every year, DOD OSBP recognizes MPP achievements by presenting the Nunn-Perry Award to companies

whose mentor-protégé agreement excel in several areas of concern, including return on investment through annual gross revenue, new prime and subcontract awards, and employee count, as well as direct support of DOD or agency mission and challenges, value of technical assistance, protégé development and growth; and management and utilization of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Procurement Technical Assistance Centers, Small Business Development Centers, Minority Institutions, Manufacturing Extension Partners, and Women Business Centers.

The award is named for the contributions of Sen. Sam Nunn and former Secretary of Defense William Perry, who both played critical roles in the implementation of the Defense Department Mentor-Protégé Program.

It’s been five years, but DCMA has again been recognized for excellence in mentorship, thanks to the work of two of the partnerships; Jacobs Technology – Aerodyne Industries and General Dynamics Mission Systems – Carroll Communications. The program celebrated the accomplishments of the winners at a virtual award ceremony this summer.

“On behalf of the Office of Small Business Programs, I offer my sincerest congratulations to the winners of this year’s award,” said Kasey Diaz, director of the Mentor-Protégé Program within the Office of Small Business Programs. “The program remains focused on training, educating and preparing small businesses to become successful participants in the DIB. Our small business partners are resilient and innovative suppliers and form the backbone of the American economy. We look forward to seeing what this year’s Nunn-Perry Award winners accomplish in the future.” ☐

Aerodyne contributed to the Missile Defense Agency receiving a 2020 Laureate Award for the Ground-based Midcourse Defense successful FTG-11, Ground-based Interceptor Flight Test. (MDA photo by Lisa Simunaci) (Page 32) During their Mentor-Protégé Program pairing, King Aerospace Commercial Corporation and Boeing achieved a number of milestones, including: completing a rapid-response interior refurbishment of a USAF C-32 Boeing 757 aircraft. (Air Force photo by Senior Master Sgt. Kevin Wallace)

DCMA Americas enhance capabilities, collaboration

Army Maj. Micah Walker

In less than three years, one of Defense Contract Management Agency's newest international sites proved its capabilities through a gauntlet of challenges and became a case study for successful C-130 support-expansion across Canada.

Located nearly 2,000 miles from the next closest DCMA Americas' office, DCMA Americas Abbotsford overcame challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic and recent catastrophic levels of flooding throughout British Columbia since its establishment as a satellite office in 2019.

Despite these obstacles, DCMA Americas Abbotsford hit the ground running, successfully leading their industry counterpart, a contractor with limited experience working with the U.S. government, through contract and delivery hurdles to complete their first aircraft upgrade within months of contract award.

To date, nearly a dozen C-130 aircraft have rolled through the contractor's hangar doors for avionics upgrades or complete periodic-maintenance inspections. Army Col. Steven Gutierrez, DCMA Americas deputy director, said the accomplishment impressed the agency team.

"The induction of aircraft and stationing of personnel so quickly after contract award in a foreign country is nothing short of remarkable," he said. "It is a demonstration of the capability DCMA brings to ensure contract execution. We leveraged our strong alliance with our Canadian host-nation partners and interagency relationship with the Department of State to strategically expand our national technology and industrial base's aerospace maintenance, repair and overhaul sector."

The first steps of standing up a new satellite office routinely require support from other DCMA offices, but due to COVID-19 border restrictions,



DCMA Americas staff poses with the first U.S. Air Force avionics upgrade aircraft delivery at Cascade Aerospace in Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada. Pictured from left to right: Michael Sparks, Carol Stanley, Army Col. Steven Gutierrez, Air Force Maj. Peter Gac, Gunnery Sgt. Benjamin Morrison and Kenneth Lohle. (Photo courtesy of Carol Stanley)

Abbotsford was prevented from assistance by its nearest neighbors in Washington state. Instead, the standup began with support from the DCMA Americas headquarters, on the opposite side of the continent, in Ottawa, Ontario.

Nevertheless, the location received its site certification in the first six months, and inducted its first aircraft and assigned its first permanent DCMA employees within the year.

Air Force Reserve Lt. Col. Carol Stanley became Abbotsford's first quality assurance specialist due to her previous site-establishment experience and operational expertise as commander of the Air Force's 513th Maintenance Squadron.

"The opportunity to stand up a new facility was intriguing," Stanley said. "I also knew I had a unique perspective as a commander in the Reserve. Combined with my experience in standing up a facility in Montreal, I knew the position would be a good fit when I applied."

Stanley was joined by three more experts rounding out the skillsets needed to organize and build the office's core capabilities.

Selected from the DCMA Boeing Seattle office, Quality Assurance Specialist Kenneth Lohle looked forward to the opportunity as it served as a reunion to his prior Air Force service as an enlisted C-130 crew chief.

"I was excited to come up to Canada and work on the platform again," Lohle said. "My time in Abbotsford has been an extension of my service. We have a great team up here, and we truly complement each other well."

Given the complexity and duration of work, leadership determined a resident Aviation Program Team was needed to meet program demands.

Filling the role of government ground representative was U.S. Marine Gunnery Sgt. Benjamin Morrison, who brought significant experience as a former maintenance controller for the KC-130J fleet and as a member of the vice



presidential helicopter support unit.

Air Force Maj. Peter Gac was selected as the government flight representative for his previous experience at Lockheed Martin Marietta and knowledge of how to accelerate the contractor maturation process.

With the site's staff positions filled, one of their first projects was to identify resource constraints from the military services and to find innovative solutions to alleviate warfighter burdens.

The Abbotsford team streamlined the capabilities of their new office by leveraging Morrison's safe-for-flight expertise to reduce travel and document review requirements needed for Marine Corps customers and supported units.

DCMA Americas pivoted to meet the emerging new office workload by providing full contracting support from their London, Ontario, location until a permanent contracts administrator arrived in 2021.

The remote contracts team leveraged its expertise and connections by collaborating with host nation partners, contractors and program offices across the globe to help stakeholders navigate the unique contracting requirements encountered within Canada.

Ron Bauman, Contracts supervisor, praised the group effort.

"Considering the complexity of the work, the efforts of our team have been nothing short of astounding," Bauman said. "With the additional contracting support in Vancouver, we can successfully support the growing workload."

The successful inclusion of these programs to DCMA's growing portfolio of contract support in Canada established it a case study for building collaborative efforts between remote offices, said Bauman. DCMA Americas used lessons learned from the standup to answer a growing demand for

emerging services.

Abbotsford's main contractor and its sister company in Halifax, Nova Scotia, were recently selected to perform new C-130 work as a subcontractor supporting an avionics upgrade for the Marine Corps. The upgrade is nearly identical to current work performed for the Air Force in Abbotsford, but required the stand-up of a new facility in Halifax — an obstacle for which Abbotsford was prepared.

Drawing on support from across the agency, within three months of award notification, DCMA Americas facilitated compliance with the usually lengthy and resource-intensive compliance process ensuring contractors have the required air, ground and safety procedures in place.

Leveraging Abbotsford's certification lessons to streamline the process, DCMA Americas positioned itself with rotational support from across Canada to champion early efforts as the first two aircraft arrived in Halifax in January.

Michael Sparks, DCMA Americas' quality assurance supervisor, said "In standing up Abbotsford, we had a steep learning curve. However, the experience gained in British Columbia provided both (contractors) and DCMA Americas a road map to follow to certify on time. Another critical component to our success in Abbotsford has been the experience the new employees brought along with them when they arrived. We will also prioritize experience and the ability to be a self-starter should we need to establish a permanent office in Halifax."

Leaning forward, DCMA Americas is taking a proactive management approach in its air operations portfolio in Canada. Thanks to the lessons learned overcoming challenges in supporting multiple contracts and service branches in Abbotsford, DCMA Americas is working to facilitate open

communication between the Air Force and Marine Corps C-130 program offices to singularly mitigate risk stakeholders encounter when using the same contractors.

This support took shape as government only bi-weekly forums allowing DCMA Americas to provide updates on facilities and data while allowing the program offices to prioritize risk and brief decision points in anticipation of future requirements.

DCMA Americas' Technical Operations Director Susan Pierchala said, "DCMA Americas is challenged with the same resource constraints the rest of the government is. Then you add in the challenges of immigrating to a new country during a pandemic and our hiring process can take upwards of a year. Implementing this forum has enabled a shared understanding and flattened government communication."

In addition to ensuring consistent messaging, Pierchala hopes the forum facilitates educated business decisions for their customers in prioritizing their own collective risks, which will allow the DCMA team to efficiently allocate their limited resources in the future.

The initiative has drawn praise from each service's program office as Halifax's requirements for air operations continue to gain fidelity and momentum.

Looking back over the significant collaboration and success of the past few years, Sparks set Abbotsford's example as a positive representation of future prospects for DCMA Americas.

"We should know within months if we need a permanent presence in Halifax," said Sparks. "I am envious of the potential opportunities out there. It will be a great experience working with dedicated partners in an amazing location. For the right person, it is an opportunity of a lifetime."



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