



U.S. ARMY ENGINEERING AND SUPPORT CENTER, HUNTSVILLE



The Bulletin

September 2022

Supporting missile defense in the Last Frontier

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The U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, engineers adaptive, specialized solutions across a broad spectrum of global enterprise covering five main lines of effort: Energy, Operational Technology, Environmental, Medical, and Base Operations and Facilities



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**OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
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OF ENGINEERS,
U.S. ARMY ENGINEERING
AND SUPPORT CENTER,
HUNTSVILLE**



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Commander's Thoughts

“ The fantastic work in awarding these contract actions accomplish two major objectives – it enables our Nation’s warfighters to accomplish their mission, and it directly feeds the heart of our economy – the Small Business Community ”



Col. Sebastian Joly

Team,
With under a month to go before the end of the Fiscal Year 2022, Huntsville Center is once again driving the ball toward the goal line and another win.

As of Sept. 8, the Center has obligated more than 3,500 contract actions valued at \$1.5 billion. These actions are vital to support our national interests as our programs and projects improve infrastructure, readiness and quality of life for Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, their families, and our other Federal partners. The fantastic work in awarding these contract actions accomplishes two major objectives – it enables our Nation’s warfighters to accomplish their mission, and it directly feeds the heart of our economy – the Small Business Community. Achieving our assigned small business prime award goals and categories helps small businesses who are a vital part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers procurement process. In Fiscal Year 2021, Huntsville Center directed awards valued at more than \$700 million to small businesses, and through your dedication and hard work, I’m hopeful we will surpass that number this fiscal year.

On Aug. 26, we celebrated Women’s Equality Day, the 103rd anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the United

States Constitution, which granted women the right to vote — this was the culmination of a long struggle by women and their allies to have a greater voice in our democracy. Women make up 36% of the Army’s civilian workforce 18% of the regular Army, the Army National Guard and Army Reserve. While our military has made great strides eliminating barriers to service, we must remain dedicated to the idea that our nation is not complete until every American receives equal protection and opportunity under the law. Your hard work, creative problem-solving and commitment serves as a shining example of what we can accomplish.

Over the past two months, the Center received numerous accolades. Congratulations to: Ryan Strange for receiving the Order of Prometheus Medallion; Carolyn Harris for receiving the Team Award Civilian Service Commendation Medal; Kyle Shireman for receiving the Chief of Engineer Safety Award; Kellie Williams for receiving the Department of Defense Safety and Occupational Health Management System Individual Achievement Award; and Doug Hadley for receiving the 2022 USACE Excellence in Contracting Awards Program Procuring Contractor of the Year.

Congratulations also to the Center’s aviation program for their partnership with the University of Alabama-Huntsville in support of operational excellence in unmanned aircraft systems, and congratulations to the Business Practices Division team recognized as one of the five 2022 U.S. Army Corps of Engineer’s Innovation of the Year Award winners for building the “Welcome2IT” dashboard.

I want to thank everyone of you who participated in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. The information collected from these surveys allows us to continue to make the Huntsville Center an elite organization.

The survey is the number one tool we have for insight into what we are doing right and knowing where we can improve. Your feedback is a driving factor in implementing USACE workplace transformation initiatives. I look forward to receiving the results, developing a plan of action, and sharing that feedback with you next year.

Best of luck in your continued sprint to the finish line of this fiscal year. Rest assured that your hard work is recognized and valued.

None of us alone can achieve what all of us can achieve together. I’m immensely proud and honored to be a part of such a high performing team!

Center supports missile defense systems in strategic *Last Frontier*

By Kristen Bergeson
Public Affairs Office

What was once considered the foolish, costly act of a land-hungry politician is now considered to be one of the most profitable and strategic moves in U.S. history.

The U.S. purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867, a transaction negotiated by then Secretary of State William Seward, was initially ridiculed in the press as “Seward’s folly” because the arctic region was thought by many to be unusable and uninhabitable.

Fast forward more than 150 years to the present, and Alaska is not only one of the richest states in the nation but also a key part of America’s missile defense program.

Precisely because of its remote location and proximity to nearly all potential adversaries – Russia is just across the Bering Strait, while China, North Korea and Iran are all much closer to Alaska than any other point in the continental U.S. – military efforts in the region have expanded rapidly over the last ten years.

The Missile Defense Agency recently unveiled the new Long-Range Discrimination Radar at Clear Space Force Station, Alaska, and is currently working in collaboration with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Alaska District to construct a missile field housing anti-ballistic interceptor missiles and expand an existing field to house additional interceptor missiles at Fort Greely, Alaska.

The engineering experts at the Ballistic Missile Defense Mandatory Center of Expertise at Huntsville Center have provided critical technical support on both of these projects, said Bret Styers, senior program manager for the BMD-MCX.

“These are very complex projects



Cover photo and story photos by Kristen Bergeson

Jason Wilson, program manager for Alaska District, leads Bret Styers, senior program manager for the Ballistic Missile Defense Mandatory Center of Expertise senior program manager, and Col. Sebastien Joly, Huntsville Center commander, on a tour of the missile fields at Fort Greely, Alaska, in August.

requiring a tremendous amount of problem-solving and technical oversight,” he said.

“Huntsville Center has the experience and expertise to handle these types of challenges.”

In August, Styers and other members of the project delivery team, including representatives from USACE Alaska District and MDA, lead Col. Sebastien Joly, Huntsville Center commander, on a tour of these project sites to explain the challenges and share the lessons learned.

In addition to the remoteness, which can be a “logistical nightmare,” Styers explained, the project delivery team has to contend with a limited construction season. In Alaska, the typical construction season is June through September as the winter temperatures and precipitation are generally too extreme to ensure safety and quality work.

Even summer can present weather-related challenges in the Alaskan interior where Fort Greely and Clear Space Force Station are located. Fort Greely

is just 120 miles from the Arctic Circle, making it one of the coldest places in the United States. While temps in the summer months can rise to the upper 60s, the winds, which seem to come and go without warning, can make it feel much colder.

In July of this year, a random wind storm blew through Fort Greely, disrupting construction and damaging equipment, said Stephen Augustin, quality assurance representative for Alaska District.

“The temperatures were great, but the wind was moving through at 80 miles per hour,” he said.

“It picked up a tent that was tied down and secured with concrete and threw it 120 feet.”

These kinds of weather disruptions make it difficult to meet deadlines, making it even more important to have experts who know how to plan for and work around these challenges.

“When it comes to missile defense,

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Mike Doty, Alaska District electrical engineer, takes Col. Sebastien Joly, Huntsville Center commander, on a tour of the generator room in the Long Range Discrimination Radar power plant at Clear Space Force Station, Alaska. The power plant houses generators as a back up energy source to keep the radar active in case of power failure.

LAST FRONTIER

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there are very aggressive timelines driven by real-world threats,” Styers said.

“That pressure can make it difficult for a district to execute a project for the Missile Defense Agency, but it’s where we can be helpful.”

Alaska District is the executing district for all of the MDA construction at Clear SFS and Fort Greely, aside from the actual radar and missile system.

This includes the structures surrounding these vital components, the mechanical electrical buildings, power plants, communication centers and more. Each of these facilities has had unique requirements, and Huntsville Center has assisted the Alaska District with ensuring those requirements are met.

“This is a high seismic area with lots of earthquakes, so all of the facilities had to be designed with that in mind,” Styers said.

“And of course, when you have a building that houses a missile, you have to consider accidental explosions and design with those blast loads in mind.”

Another structural challenge was the

need for High-Altitude Electromagnetic Pulse (HEMP) shielding. HEMP, caused by a nuclear detonation in or above the earth’s atmosphere, can induce extremely high voltages and currents into electrical and electronic systems, destroying most unprotected power systems.

Because these missile defense systems are especially important in the case of a nuclear event, technical engineers incorporated various forms of HEMP shielding in the design of nearly all surrounding structures. Joly, who previously served as post engineer and later company commander of the C/84th Engineer Battalion at Fort Richardson outside Anchorage, Alaska, said his August visit and communication with the experts on the ground provided insight that will be helpful in the near future as Huntsville Center leverages this experience to better support the Air Force’s new Ground Based Strategic Deterrent, or LGM35A Sentinel, program.

“Huntsville Center not only provided expertise that aided in the success of these projects in Alaska, but we also gained additional expertise and

experience because of this work,” Joly said.

“The lessons learned will be invaluable to future support of missile-defense projects.”

The Air Force’s newest weapons system, a fully integrated launch, flight and infrastructure system with modern command and control features, will eventually replace the current ICBM fleet of Minuteman III missiles, which was developed in the 1970s.

The system will be housed at existing missile bases: F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming; Malmstrom AFB, Montana; and Minot AFB, North Dakota.

“These locations aren’t as challenging as Alaska, but they still present some difficulties related to climates, and we will be dealing with issues that we now have extensive experience with – blast design, HEMP shielding, very aggressive schedules,” Styers said.

“Huntsville Center has been providing innovative engineering solutions to these problems in Alaska, and we will continue to do so no matter where the mission takes us.”

Getting to Know Bret Styers... Center's 'Snowshoes on the Ground'

By Kristen Bergeson
Public Affairs Office

On my flight from Seattle to Fairbanks, Alaska, I sat next to a young soldier stationed at Fort Wainwright. He was on the second leg of his return to duty following a week of leave in his hometown of Brooklyn, N.Y., and he wasn't happy.

Used to the hustle and bustle of city life, he had not been won over by the beautiful mountain landscapes and outdoor activities Alaska has to offer, and he was dreading his remaining two years there.

Most of the people I talked to during my brief visit to Alaska agreed the state isn't for everyone but said those who have learned to embrace the unique environment can't imagine living anywhere else.

Proudly situated in the latter group is Bret Styers, the senior program manager for the Ballistic Missile Defense Center of Expertise at the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville.

Styers was born in Valencia, California, but moved to Alaska when he was a toddler. He now lives with his wife and four children in Anchorage and serves as the Center's lead on missile-defense projects across the state.

In August, he led Col. Sebastien Joly, Huntsville Center commander, on tours of the Long-Range Discrimination Radar facilities at Clear Space Force Station and the Missile Defense Complex at Fort Greely in Alaska.

When it comes to missile defense, Styers is clearly an expert. He began his U.S. Army Corps of Engineers career with the Alaska District in 2009 and spent nearly 12 years in their missile defense program before accepting his current position with Huntsville Center.

He knows the ins and outs of blast protection and high-altitude electromagnetic pulse (HEMP) shielding, how to meet stringent Missile Defense Agency requirements, and what it takes to oversee construction in a challenging arctic environment.

Living in Alaska allows him to visit project sites much more frequently than if he lived in Huntsville, providing opportunities to help solve problems on the ground and maintain connections with key figures.

For Styers, the Alaskan life isn't just a professional necessity; it's exactly where he and his family want to be.

"I just love, love the beauty of Alaska, and even more, I love sharing that with the kids now," he said. "There's just a real wildness to this kind of environment."



Courtesy photo

Bret Styers and his sons, Easton and Brecken, enjoy the beauty of the great outdoors in Alaska. Styers, senior program manager for Huntsville Center's Ballistic Missile Defense Mandatory Center of Expertise, lives in Anchorage with his wife, Britta, and their four kids, including daughters Remy and Paige.

Though his wife, Britta, is originally from Colorado, he said it wasn't difficult to convince her to move. She also loves the outdoors and quickly adjusted to life in Alaska.

"Of course, it's not easy being so far away from family, but we make it down to visit every year, and they come up to visit as well, so we make it work," said Styers.

"And Britta loves the outdoor stuff, too, so we go fishing, hiking, hunting, all of it. We love spending time up in the mountains, and we hunt sheep and mountain goats. It's all just incredibly beautiful."

Efforts of Huntsville Center's Missile Defense Division:

- **Balistic Missile Defense Mandatory Center of Expertise**
- **Conduct special studies and site surveys**
- **Develop facilities requirements and criteria**
- **Prepare facility designs and cost estimates**
- **Support engineering and design during construction**
- **Manage design and construction execution (with geographic district consent)**
- **Master Planning & Programming**
- **Foreign Military Sales support**



Center teams with UAH, identifies unmanned aircraft systems research areas

By Elizabeth Canfil
Public Affairs Office

Huntsville Center is partnering with University of Alabama Huntsville (UAH) to support research and operational excellence in unmanned aircraft systems (UAS).

The partnership allows both organizations to jointly identify key research areas in UAS technologies, applications, and operations.

Under the terms of the recently signed Memorandum of Agreement, Huntsville Center will assist UAH with federal grant projects by providing drone support and expertise.

The collaboration is already under way with Center aviators currently mapping out the entire UAH campus and producing a 3D model of the site.

This 3D model will aid UAH in research and assists Huntsville Center in conducting qualification and practice flights and image processing.

However, the partnership between Huntsville Center and UAH expands beyond the UAH campus as UAH was recently chosen as one of the sites for the Federal Aviation Administration's Airport UAS Detection and Mitigation Research Program.

Huntsville was one of only four locations in the United States that were selected to participate in the program, which aims to detect and mitigate safety issues that exist with unmanned aircraft.

Huntsville Center will be providing engineering and drone support for the building and development of the research and development site, located at Huntsville International Airport.

Throughout the duration of the project, Huntsville Center will assist UAH not only with the FAA program but with other federal grant projects by providing drone support and expertise. One of the federal grants that UAH is



Photo by Steve Lamas

Huntsville Center's George Wade releases an unmanned aircraft system at the University of Alabama–Huntsville campus. The Center is currently mapping the campus to produce a 3D model and is partnering with UAH to support research in unmanned aerial systems.

currently pursuing is developing forest fire software with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

If awarded, Huntsville Center would be used as the applied research and development component for the project.

"We are looking forward to joining forces with UAH on current and projected projects," said Joshua Mason, Huntsville Center senior civil design engineer.

The work on the various projects will be conducted by both Huntsville Center employees as well as students from UAH, offering students a unique opportunity to gain experience and an understanding of the work the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers does.

As the relationship grows, Huntsville Center expects to be able to expand the work with students and recruit talent into various internship and employment roles.

Munitions response programs improve with technological advancement, training

By William Farrow
Public Affairs Office

In August, Huntsville Center's Environmental and Munitions Center of Expertise hosted a technical training seminar for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers geophysicists focused on familiarization of simultaneous location and mapping, or SLAM, technology that will increase mapping production rates in thick vegetation where previously only tape measures or line-of-site robotic total station (RTS) technologies were available.

The EMCX is the USACE leader in the development and implementation of key technologies that improve safety, decrease cost, and attain Department of Defense Military Munitions Response Program cleanup goals.

The Military Munitions Response Program is a program category under Department of Defense's Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) establishing rules and guidelines for the purpose of identifying eligible properties and setting aside funding specifically to address properties posing human health and environmental risks due to the presence of military munitions.

The EMCX assists all DoD services and USACE organizational elements in performing their military munitions response related activities by maintaining state-of-the-art technical expertise for all aspects of response activities involving military munitions and providing MMRP specific training.

"Our focus was primarily to integrate SLAM technologies with MMRP geophysical equipment from vendors Kaarta and White River Technologies, Inc. to help integrate an alternative positioning system with advanced geophysical classification (AGC) technologies," said John Jackson, EMCX geophysicist.



Photo by Chris Putman

A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers geophysicist operates equipment used to detect and classify metal objects as potential targets of interest, such as a munition.

According to Jackson, AGC utilizes high resolution electromagnetic induction to classify metal objects in the subsurface as potentially a target of interest, such as a munition, or non-targets of interest such as scrap metal or fragmentation.

"The Kaarta technology utilizes the Stencil 2 and SLAM to create a LiDAR point cloud of the work area," Jackson explained. "Subsequently, the Stencil 2 is placed on a geophysical instrument in place of a GPS System and the Stencil 2 knows its location within the previously collected point cloud and provides the coordinates to the geophysical equipment."

Jackson said the technology presents an opportunity for improved production rates.

"Projects using this technology have shown increases from 4-10 times previous production rates that were implemented with tape measure or RTS," he said.

"Gaining an understanding of the technology will allow USACE personnel to perform work in forests where previously they could not, and an added bonus is that because there is a LiDAR point cloud as a final product, permanent structures and terrain features are also mapped and that information can also be used to inform the project."

Jackson said the EMCX identified the capability of transitioning to this technology after an in-house pilot study was conducted.

"We've known about this technology in use for other applications for more than a decade. Since then, the resolution and software capabilities finally progressed to a place where it was accurate enough for our geophysical needs. We were able to utilize the Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS) Innovative Technology Advocate (ITA) program to fund the effort."



Photo by Elizabeth Canfil

Safety is a top priority for the decontamination team working to clean any potentially contaminated Military Munitions Restoration Program personnel and equipment at the Redstone Arsenal restoration site.

Safety top priority at local restoration site

**By Elizabeth Canfil
Public Affairs Office**

Huntsville Center manages over 40 Military Munitions Response Program sites worldwide and at each of those sites, safety is the top concern.

Established under the Defense Environmental Restoration Program, the MMRP is a restoration program that cleans up contaminants, hazardous substances, pollutants, and military munitions that remain from past activities at active military installations.

To get an idea of the impact of safety plans at MMRP sites, look no further than the site at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama. For more than 75 years, various entities at the sprawling Army installation used portions of a site there to dispose of munitions produced during World War II. In addition, the site was historically a waste area where a variety of munitions containing chemical warfare materiel were dumped. Since Jan. 4, Huntsville Center technicians and contractors using geophysical instruments have identified more than 17,000 anomalies over two acres.

According to Heather McDonald, an environmental engineer serving as Huntsville Center's technical manager for the RSA project, a total of 961 munitions and explosives of concern have been removed. During the Phase I investigation at the site, two M70 chemical munitions were discovered.

However, she said it was determined both were empty with no chemical weapons materiel residue in them. While the mission of the MMRP is to "protect the lives and safety of citizens and soldiers by locating, removing, and disposing of munitions on past and current military installations," Huntsville Center places safety at the forefront of the job.

Ashley Roeske, site project manager, said over 50 personnel are working on the project and they all undergo extensive site-specific training to receive approval to start intrusive operations.

"The work plan they follow has been reviewed by government personnel for its adherence to USACE safety protocols," Roeske said.

John Lewis, safety chief for Huntsville Center's Chemical Warfare Materiel Design Center, said safety measures on site are taken very seriously.

According to Lewis, members of the field team receive health check-ups to ensure that they are physically fit to work the site and specially trained Emergency Medical Technicians monitor the health of the crews both prior to and after operations. He said air conditions on the site are measured in real time by air monitoring systems to protect personnel working downrange who may encounter chemical weapons material and the crew carry gas masks to don if hazardous materials are detected. Personnel Decontamination Stations are also used to assess personal protective equipment of crew prior to going downrange, Lewis said.

Upon completion of operations, the decontaminations stations are used to clean any potentially contaminated personnel and equipment. Prior to returning home, the field team must undergo a second health screening by the onsite EMTs. In the event of an accident or encounter with CWM, an ambulance remains on standby for the duration of operations.

"Knowing that munitions are present on site and may contain hazardous materiel, the safety of the field team is the number one priority," Roeske said. The completion of the Redstone project is expected to take several years.

Safety chief earns national award

By Kristen Bergeson
Public Affairs Office

Kellie Williams, Huntsville Center chief of safety, is good at many things.

Taking credit for a job well done isn't one of them. On Aug. 23, she received national recognition as a leader in workplace safety when she was awarded the Department of Defense Safety and Occupational Health Management System Individual Achievement Award during a safety conference in Washington, D.C.

An outside group of experts selected Williams from nominees across the Department of Defense for “developing and sustaining a world class safety culture” and leading Huntsville Center in its implementation of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Safety and Occupational Health System (CESOHMS), said Gilbert Cisneros, DoD's Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

“Williams's commitment to worker safety and health protection helped change the HNC culture, creating a shared understanding that ‘safety above all else’ is the number one imperative and is everyone's responsibility,” he said.

Because of her hard work and dedication, Williams helped the Center become the first USACE organization to earn recognition as an Army Safety and Occupational Health “Star” site, said Cisneros.

Williams worked tirelessly over the course of five years to fully implement the new guidelines set forth by CESOHMS. The massive undertaking required the Center to shift its focus from measuring safety compliance to measuring safety performance and effectiveness, which Williams did by improving employee and supervisor engagement through simple processes and education.

She led her team in the creation of automated digital tools to collect data



Photo by Liz Canfil

Kellie Williams, Huntsville Center chief of safety, addresses the crowd during the June 16 ceremony celebrating Huntsville Center as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' first organization recognized as an Army Safety and Occupational Health “Star” site. Williams was awarded the Department of Defense Safety and Occupational Health Management Systems Individual Achievement Award Aug. 23.

on the safety needs of employees and to identify and track hack hazards. They created an easily accessible SharePoint site with vital safety information and provided quality on-site training to educate employees.

These resources have been shared across the Corps of Engineers and, in many cases, are now considered best practices.

Williams said her team, not she, deserves the recognition.

“(They) provided a lot of enterprise solutions to the rest of USACE, which not only helped us posture our organization to have a better safety culture, but helped the entire USACE

community,” Williams said.

“I think that made us stand out for this award, but did I do that myself? No, I credit the rest of my office with making that happen.”

Perhaps that humility is what makes Williams such a successful leader.

Under her guidance, her team continues to provide innovative solutions that promote a safety culture in the workplace and educate employees on vital safety requirements.

Their latest innovation – a virtual reality game that allows users to tour a virtual construction site and identify potential hazards and safety measures – is set to be released this fall.



Hadley USACE Procuring Contractor of the Year

By Elizabeth Canfil
Public Affairs Office

A contract and grants officer with Huntsville Center's Environmental and Munitions Center of Expertise received the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Procuring Contractor of the Year Award for updating processes and procedures for the Native American Lands Environmental Mitigation Program (NALEMP) and Defense and State Memorandum of Agreement (DSMOA) programs.

Doug Hadley collaborated with the Offices of Counsel from the NALEMP and DSMOA programs to ensure proper funding for execution of DSMOA mods and created an overall program change that instituted a new overhead rate for the tribes. He advocated for the terms of a NALEMP change, which allows for a 10 percent overhead rate for the tribes.

He also developed the NALEMP cooperative agreement template in coordination with the Office of the Secretary of Defense Headquarters USACE and posted the template to the OSD website so that all tribes have access.

Hadley provided and presented lessons learned during the NALEMP program execution summary meeting to improve



Hadley

the program, receiving both verbal and written recognition for his efforts. He received the Meritorious Civilian Service Medal from Brig. Gen. Peter Helmlinger, Northwestern Division Commander, for support to USACE Omaha District in awarding \$4 billion in contract capacity.

While serving as a subject matter expert to identify best practices in using single award task order contracts for execution of environmental cleanup actions.

Working with the Army, USACE leadership and the State of California to resolve a formal dispute for Army Base Realignment and Closure, he was able to achieve resolution at Oakland Army Base, California and provide guidance on processes and procedures across different aspects of government.

In August 2021, Hadley completed a Defense Acquisitions University Grants Training course with a perfect score and provided additional insight to the class and has been requested by several class participants to provide continued career advice and mentoring. Hadley completed these efforts while executing 172 DSMOA actions valued at approximately \$25 million and seven NALEMP actions at approximately \$3.6 million. Jill Stiglich, Headquarters USACE Director of Contracting, congratulated Hadley for all he does to support the USACE.

"This is truly a big win, and it shows the type of commitment, sacrifice, and drive that he exemplifies," she said. "Doug should be justifiably proud of his accomplishments, and we consider ourselves very fortunate to have him on our team."



Photo by Kristen Bergeson

Intrigued

Arthur Martin, director of Huntsville Center's Installation Support and Programs Management Directorate, and Bill Craven, ISPM deputy director, provide an overview of ISPM Directorate capabilities, achievements and major projects to Reinhard Koenig, regional programs director for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers North Atlantic Division. During Koenig's visit, Huntsville Center staff also briefed him on energy, engineering and ordnance and explosives programs and other unique operations the Center performs around the world.

Harris receives Team Award Civilian Service Commendation Medal

By Elizabeth Canfil
Public Affairs Office

Carolyn Harris, Huntsville Center program improvement specialist, was recently recognized for delivering virtual blended learning while teaching students process improvement techniques during an Army Lean Six Sigma Green Belt class. For her efforts, Harris received the Team Award Civilian Service Commendation Medal for outstanding performance and support.

A week prior to the course, Harris and her fellow instructors hosted four, two-hour “Open Houses” ensuring students were familiar with MS Teams application, could access the online education platform “Blackboard” and were aware of their responsibility to complete the pre-work. Harris and her team applied several innovative methods using online services to ensure training success in a challenging virtual learning environment.

Multiple channels were created in MS Teams to ensure standard slides, templates, tools, and participant guides were available pre-course. The class plan called for instructing 54 hours of content containing 36 modules and nearly 2600 PowerPoint slides. However, rarely does anything unfold exactly as intended as Harris and her team realized as the class saw many network connectivity challenges.



Courtesy photo

Carolyn Harris, Huntsville Center program improvement specialist, receives the Team Award Civilian Service Commendation Medal, from Col. Sebastien Joly, Huntsville Center commander.

The team had to overcome the challenges by developing ad hoc methods on the fly.

“Fortunately, when we had challenges during the virtual training and certification course, we all jumped in and did what had to be done to ensure the students didn’t experience any down time and a delay in the curriculum,” Harris said.

As a result of Harris’ work, 30 students are now able to processes and improve their organization’s ability to finish quality projects, safely, on time, and within budget.



Courtesy photo

Diplomas in hand

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was well-represented as (from left holding diplomas) Frank Mulcahy, Sacramento District; Samantha Adato, David Hackler, Jennifer Kelley, Michael Duffy, Huntsville Center, and James Hills, Headquarters USACE, joined Terri Dilly, Defense Contract Audit Agency, after completing the Director’s Development Program in a ceremony at DCAA Headquarters, Fort Belvoir, Va., June 20. The executive-level program is based on ten specific competencies in the Department of Defense Civilian Leadership Development Continuum. In the program, students traveled to premier universities and military commands for seminars on each of the leadership competencies.



Innovative onboarding dashboard recognized

By William Farrow
Public Affairs Office

A process for bringing new employees into the fold at Huntsville Center has been recognized as one of the five 2022 U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's Innovation of the Year Awards.

Huntsville Center's Human Capital and Resource Management Business Management Division team built the first ever online "Welcome2IT" dashboard to simplify in-processing procedures by executing 100 percent digital onboarding, meeting all administrative and fiduciary requirements, and ensuring employees are set up for success from day one as a Huntsville Center employee.

This is the second consecutive year Huntsville Center's Business Practices Division has been recognized for innovation and a recipient of the USACE Innovation of the Year Award.

"A great engineering force requires a commitment to



Merriweather



Tachias

innovation, creativity, and forward thinking," said Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon, 55th Chief of Engineers and USACE Commanding General.

"The Innovation Awards allow us to recognize the leaders within the corps for doing something different and making an impact."

Russ Dunford, Huntsville Center business Management

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Safety specialist receives Chief of Engineers Safety Award for program improvements

By Elizabeth Canfil
Public Affairs Office

Huntsville Center safety specialist Kyle Shireman received the Chief of Engineers Safety Award for improvements to the Safety and Occupational Health (SOH) Program.

Shireman improved tracking, communication, the use of Hazard Reporting, and employee feedback through automated processes and standardization.

He simplified the process for employee Position Hazard Analysis (PHA) development, improving employee participation and providing information to tailor the SOH program based on workforce needs.

"I was excited to hear that Kyle is being recognized for his outstanding support to USACE by his selection for

the 2021 Chief of Engineers Safety Award," said Kellie Williams, Huntsville Center's safety manager for special projects. "Kyle has made an impact on the safety and occupational program not only in Huntsville Center but USACE-wide."

Shireman created several automated inspection reports, which are stored on SharePoint and include interface of the quarterly inspections with the hazard reporting system, email reminders and notification of reports and data mining in one location. The simplification and automation of these processes helped increase employee participation.

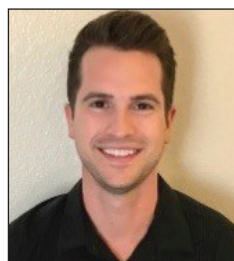
He also developed the Center's Safety Office SharePoint Page where employees can find "all things safety," helped CESO develop their Safety Office SharePoint site, and guided numerous USACE Districts and other programs in developing their SharePoint safety sites too.

As the lead instructor for the quarterly 10-hr Occupational Safety and

Health Administration construction safety course, Shireman participates as an instructor in the employee/supervisor safety course, is a certified first aid/CPR trainer and has provided briefings to contracting officer representatives and to small businesses. He engages in multiple outreach efforts, including post-award briefs, mentoring new contractors on Accident Prevention Plan requirements, and partnering with corporate safety officers in various venues.

Shireman supports many Headquarters, USACE initiatives benefiting the entire SOH Community of Practice and his systems have become enterprise solutions.

"Kyle has developed tools that have been shared across USACE, has been an integral part of Headquarters USACE working groups and has mentored and trained many safety professionals and contractors. He has made a difference and the impacts are wide-spread," Williams said.



Shireman



Photo by Chris Putman

Standing tall

Workers installed the first tilt-wall panel June 30 at Huntsville Center's new facility under construction on Redstone Arsenal. The concrete-and-steel panels are raised and secured together forming the outer shell of the purpose built, 205,000 square-foot, three story building. Set for occupation in 2024, the new facility allows the Center to eliminate its off-post leases, consolidate the Center's Huntsville workforce, and provide them with a secure environment.

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Division chief, said since all in-processing related action are now online with the new Welcome2IT dashboard, more than 250 labor hours per month are saved which equates to savings of about \$450,000 annually.

To develop the Welcome2IT dashboard, Dunford tapped Brian Tachias to lead the effort. Tachias, a recent college graduate, has only been with Huntsville Center a mere 60 days.

"I selected Brian because he had just experienced "in-processing," knew the challenges and commented, 'We can do better than this.' Never stifle initiative, so Brian was given the ball and told "run with it" and he did," Dunford said.

"In collaboration with Charmika Merriweather of human capital, Brian staffed, communicated, coordinated, process mapped, edited, revised and ultimately created the

"Welcome2IT" digital in-processing solution."

Dunford said Welcome2IT also benefits the new employees as they too save time.

"We don't have new personnel carrying a paper from office-to-office for signatures. We don't have supervisors pondering what status of in-processing someone is currently in, what has been completed or requires completion," he said.

Dunford said the Welcome2It innovation supports senior Army and USACE Leadership's mantra of caring for its number one asset – people – and making a positive first impression for its new employees on day one sets the tone.

"Welcome2IT has led to a paradigm shift of unprecedented magnitude in how Huntsville Center executes care for its people with a positive in-processing experience and revolutionizes readiness by transforming from analog to dynamic digital in-processing experience," Dunford said.



FOCUS ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Education as an investment

By Chaplain (Col.) Geoff Bailey
USACE command chaplain

While serving on brigade staff, an unwritten policy directed soldiers could not attend airborne school unless they re-enlisted for that option. Leaders focused on readiness were worried about losing soldiers to airborne assignments.

The negative impact on morale was immediate. It wasn't long before the Brigade Commander directed that no one would intentionally prevent a soldier from attending school unless it directly impacted readiness for a named deployment or exercise.

Deferments required a written memorandum or counseling packet outlining the plan for school attendance following the deployment or exercise.

The command's philosophy was that education demonstrates an investment in increased capabilities, future leaders, and team belonging. Army [Field Manual 6-22](#) captures this philosophy succinctly, and I think you'll agree that this philosophy applies to any workplace:

Each leader development plan has four mutually supporting purposes. The leader of each organization has a responsibility to 1) accomplish the mission, 2) improve the organization, 3) enable personnel to be prepared to perform their current duties, and 4) develop leaders for future responsibilities and other assignments.

Education invests in current and future required capabilities for individuals and the organization.

Leaders and managers know the skills and abilities needed for the current job and study anticipated future tasks. Leaders must develop personalized individual development



Chaplain (Col.) Bailey

plans (IDPs) that build current capacity and predict projected requirements and personnel transitions or progression. ([Higson et al.](#), 1995) As part of IDP execution, leaders must integrate IDP progress into annual evaluations while creating time inside the work schedule for employees to work on IDP-related tasks.

Any [concerns about lost time](#) are offset through improved efficiency with increasing expert knowledge and strategic knowledge across a team. With increased strategic knowledge, employees know when to apply specific knowledge or skills, unencumbering managers and leaders to focus energy elsewhere. ([Arguinis and Kraiger](#), 2009) Leaders and managers concerned with resistance to developmental behavior might find value in opening a conversation with followers about their short- and long-term goals within or outside the organization.

This conversation facilitates an understanding of followers' goals and an opportunity for self-assessment and openness to external assessment. ([Mayhan](#), 2017) As employees consider the skills and behaviors required for

success, they simultaneously assess their congruence with the core values, skills, and behaviors associated with continued progression in the organization.

They also tend to seek improved capabilities that align with their career goals. This leads to increased self-development behavior as individuals explore their potential within the organization. Raymond Noe posits that regular assessment coupled with "exploratory behavior is likely positively related to developmental behavior and willingness to participate in development activities.

Employees who are aware of their skill strengths and weaknesses are more likely to demonstrate behavior designed to improve skill weaknesses." ([Noe](#), 1996) Stated otherwise, a well-executed IDP with focused education and constructive feedback perpetuates a healthy learning environment where personal development is encouraged and facilitated.

The immediate focus of education is often the current requirement or anticipated requirements associated with the external adaptation of the organization. However, a proactive leader understands the life cycle of the organization and the requirement to mentor, assess, and promote new leaders from within the organization to perpetuate the organization's continued success. For this reason, comprehensive IDPs invest in and develop future leaders. The curriculum for this training is not technical but focused on critical thinking, strategic understanding, awareness of personalities and interests, and skills from the social sciences like conflict management and negotiation. At this point, the

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FOCUS ON LEADERSHIP

Lessons from Dad hold true today

By Michael Duffy
Contracting Directorate

Growing up, I wondered what I would be or what I would be doing, and as I have stated in the past, I never thought I would end up where I am today.

My path to eventually becoming one of the senior leaders at Huntsville Center was not clear, nor was it set, and definitely not a straight line upward. I came from a modest family and grew up in Northern California. My dad was an aircraft mechanic for the Air Force at McClellan Air Force Base in Sacramento, California, and my mother was a traditional stay-at-home mom.

We never ate out, and many of our vacations were spent tent camping (no complaints from me, as they are some of my favorite memories). Dad made extra money working different shifts and working overtime.

When not doing that, he worked on cars, generally finding one wrecked and rebuilding it from the ground up only to sell it, make a profit, and repeat. He would also spend a lot of time working odd jobs for people – like building shelves to hold video cassettes for a guy opening a Blockbuster video store (remember them?).

He did all these things to ensure they could afford to put my two sisters and me through private grade and high schools. My sisters and I were constantly required to “help” and “learn the correct way to do X, Y, or Z” so that we could do these things for ourselves when we were older and not have to pay someone else to do them.

After graduating high school, I ended up at a community college.

While my friends went away to school, I worked on my general



Duffy

requirements and got them out of the way, saving a lot of money on tuition costs. As others were enjoying the four-year college experience and all the bills that come with it, I took classes during the day and night while working at restaurants. I had no clue what I was going to major in and after three years of college, I had to choose something and decided to try architecture at Arizona State University. I quickly realized it was not for me.

I took a year off and went back to waiting tables to save money before settling on obtaining a chemistry degree from Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, thinking maybe I would go to medical school afterwards.

While working on my chemistry degree, I got a job with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Environmental Lab as a GS-3 student washing glassware, cleaning up the lab, and logging in samples. Once I graduated, I was hired permanently as a GS-5 chemist.

However, I wasn't sure I wanted to do lab work every day for the rest of my life. I went back to school at the University of Nebraska- Omaha to get a Master's in Business Administration and a second Master's in Management Information Systems.

The lab was transitioning to Vicksburg, Mississippi around the time I was finishing my MBA, and I was not willing to move – I wanted to finish school and stay in Nebraska.

The Omaha District Contracting Directorate had an opening for students, and I applied. Five months later I was hired on as a GS-7 Contract Specialist working on the largest Cost-Plus-Fixed-Fee Environmental Remediation Contract that the Corps had awarded at the time, a \$500 million contract and a new unique contract involving insurance to cover unknown costs at environmental sites on Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Over the years, I worked my way up through contracting, eventually reaching a GS-15 position.

I personally worked on numerous programs and challenging projects, sometimes working in a field office, deployed overseas to Iraq, or directly within a District, Center, or at the Headquarters USACE level.

These experiences helped me grow my technical, management, and leadership skills.

However, as I think back on everything over my last 50 years of life, I must go back to the beginning – I am truly grateful for what my father taught me. While he taught me many different trade skills, he also taught me life lessons that I appreciate now more than ever and apply those lessons daily.

The following has become part of my leadership philosophy.

Dad always said, “Take care of what is important, look beyond the noise, and everything else will fall into place.”

This is at the top of my list when it

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LESSONS

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comes to how I lead, and I mean it to be: Take care of the organization's greatest resource – Our People!

Much of my effort each day is spent working hard to clear roadblocks to enable my staff to execute their requirements successfully, while also challenging them and growing their technical, management, and leadership skills so they can reach their personal career goals.

If it was not for the employees within this organization that do the heavy lifting day in and day out, I would not be here.

Additionally, I believe in working to standardize as many business processes as possible, to enable people to be effective and efficient. Implementing systems like paperless contract files across the Center's Project Development Teams and within each USACE District to process requirements from start to end has enabled USACE to be successful and eliminate the use of duplicative systems that took time away from execution.

Leaders that look outside their domain for strategic solutions to problems are those that will enable the Center and USACE to continue to be successful and grow.

Dad also taught me to "Always do your best, no matter who may be looking," and to "Do it right the first time, as you waste more time and effort reworking it than had you just done it right the first time."

Working in the acquisition field, we have a lot of processes and procedures to follow, but these are the controls we have in place to ensure we produce consistently high-quality contracts that are compliant with regulations and policy.

Occasionally we get a customer wanting us to cut corners, especially as we come down to the wire at the end of the fiscal year. There is a high



Courtesy photo

Michael Duffy working as a chemist in the late 1990s.

probability that particular actions will be reviewed in a procurement management review or audited by the Department of Defense Inspector General. Losing your credibility by cutting corners and having that embarrassment published in an audit is one spanking I do not want to receive. I strive to lead through my commitment to performing at the highest levels of integrity, ethical behavior, and standards of conduct to ensure we are good stewards of the taxpayer.

Lastly, Dad said, "Hard work does not kill you; it makes you appreciate what you have accomplished."

Sometimes that sense of accomplishment may not be fully realized until years later, but when you see the pieces come together, it is truly rewarding. We all need to work hard in everything we do – be it our family life, or when we are at work.

Today I work hard doing what I can to make my family better and bring us closer, and when at work, making our mission successful. Sometimes that includes working long hours because people you may never meet or know

personally are counting on you.

We do a lot of impressive work within the Center – most of it is hard, and many of you may never see the end results of that work, but what you do truly matters! Feel proud of what you do!

I will leave you with this: in the 1102 career field or any other, working hard is not about working 12-hour days and weekends for months on end. Occasionally some projects may require some extra hours.

Working hard in my mind is putting your best foot forward and putting your heart and soul into what you do while having fun doing it. I grew up, both in life and in this career field, seeking out the work others did not want to do which allowed me to learn and grow my skills from each challenge, setback, or success.

I share what I learn with those around me, including my family, to help them grow and be successful, without having to go through all the struggles.

Take those opportunities to make an impact and put your mark on something bigger than you. We have a wonderful culture within the Center, with leaders that work hard to take care of you.

We all want to help you achieve your goals, while challenging you to go above and beyond as we execute the Center's mission.

Essayons! is at the heart of our Culture here at the Center. We can achieve more when we work together and support one another. I always have been willing to try anything and do what was needed of me.

I know many of you share the same characteristics and see that in how we operate daily.

My hope and goal as a leader within the Center is to leave it in a better position than when I started – that includes helping each of you reach your potential for without you, the Center would cease to exist.

FOCUS ON EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Employees reach out to local Korean community

By William Farrow
Public Affairs Office

Recognizing that diversity in the workplace yields substantial benefits for an organization's culture and employees, Huntsville Center employees took the stage at a North Alabama Korean Association event Aug. 13 to present their personal stories about working for the federal government and how their work not only benefits their livelihood, but also their nation and their Korean culture.

Angela Morton, Huntsville Center Equal Employment Opportunity office chief, began the presentation by explaining the importance of diversity within the federal workforce.

She said Huntsville Center leadership works through the EEO office to proactively enhance the employment of women, minorities, veterans, and people with disabilities through policy development, oversight, complaints prevention, outreach, education, and training programs.

Morton said since Asians and American Pacific Islanders only make up about six percent of the federal workforce, it's important to participate in events specific to target communities such as the NAKA.

The NAKA event saw more than 150 people gather at a church in Madison, Alabama, to celebrate Gwangbokjeol, also known as National Liberation Day in the Republic of South Korea. Gwangbokjeol is similar to Independence Day as Koreans and their Korean-American counterparts commemorate the liberation of Korea from the subjugation of Japanese colonial rule. After Morton's presentation and introduction, Huntsville Center employees Dang

Hoang and Moon Hemm stepped to the stage to tell their personal stories of how they chose careers with USACE and Huntsville Center.

Hoang, Huntsville Center EEO specialist, described how he began looking at federal employment as a student at the University of Alabama Huntsville. He said he never thought of a career with the federal government until he attended a job recruitment fair at UAH and began evaluating the benefits of working for the government as opposed to working in private industry.

"I looked at the economy and realized that even in economic downturns, the federal government keeps moving forward, and that stability and the benefits were something I strongly considered (while looking for employment)."

Hoang began his federal tenure as a student hire at Huntsville Center working for Morton in the EEO office. His status as a full-time employee began in 2020.

Hemm, a USACE employee for more than 12 years, relayed to the crowd her struggle immigrating to the U.S. and how daunting finding one's way in a new country can be. She said as an immigrant to the U.S. with limited understanding of American culture and poor command of the English language, she often felt out of place.

However, she said with her Korean work ethic and willingness to assimilate to her adopted country, she soon found success. "As an immigrant, coming to the United States was a grueling experience," Hemm said.

"I faced depression, language issues, and cultural barriers. In short, I had a hard time adjusting to a new life."



Photo by William S. Farrow

Moon Hemm, a USACE employee for more than 12 years, tells members of the North Alabama Korean Association her personal story of how she chose a career with Huntsville Center.

However, Hemm said she recognized at a certain point that she had to stop feeling sorry for and take matters into her own hand. After obtaining her bachelor's degree from Athens State University in 2007 and working in the private sector, she began learning more about working with the federal government. After applying through the USA Jobs website, Hemm joined the Army Corps of Engineers in 2009 taking a position as a GS-5 Secretary. From there, she worked her way up the ladder of success. Now, as a GS-13 senior project manager with the Center's Utility Monitoring and Control Systems program, Hemm said the importance of the work Huntsville Center does in support of national interests has never been clearer. As a senior Project Manager, one project Moon currently manages provides for facility upkeep and maintenance for U.S. Forces Korea. "As a project manager, I oversee a project that helps defend South Korea's security. Coming from that country; it means a lot."



FOCUS ON SAFETY

Tips to ensure safe, secure travel, lodging

Courtesy Huntsville Center Safety Office

Huntsville Center has projects scattered around the World and Temporary Duty (TDY) trips are inevitable. Whether travelling in the U.S. or to foreign nations, traveling for work (and pleasure) can be an exciting adventure. However, before travelling, there are security and safety considerations that should always be a top priority.

Research and plan ahead of time:

Know ahead of time where you need to be and lodge close by (if the area is safe). Ask coworkers and friends ahead of time for hotel recommendations. Some locations will have lodging available on military installations (which will add peace of mind for safety and security) or fall under the requirements to use Department of Defense's Integrated Lodging Program. Go through SATO or another reputable companies when booking a trip. A large part of staying safe while traveling is simply having a plan. While on the road, be sure to check in with someone daily, whether it be a friend, relative, coworker, or supervisor. Let others know where you plan to be and when. We never expect an emergency to happen to us, but if something does happen, at least people will know when you don't return on time and can

request assistance. Some situations to plan for include: What happens if your GSA vehicle or rental car breaks down? You missed your flight, now what? What would you do if you got injured while TDY?

While at the Hotel:

If possible, request a hotel room not on the main floor as ground Level rooms are statistically more susceptible to break ins. Also, hotels that require you to swipe a room key to utilize the elevator add an additional layer of safety to prevent individuals not staying at the hotel from accessing areas they shouldn't be. Lastly, once you access your room, be sure to lock the deadbolt and utilize the swing arm safety latch or door security chain. Mistakes have been known to happen where a hotel clerk will invertedly give out your room access key to an individual not staying in your room. Often, our leisure and TDY trips are completely safe and uneventful. However, it is important to keep safety as a top priority. Stay vigilant, keep in touch, trust your instincts, and always stay mindful of your surroundings.

For additional information on being safe while traveling, contact your program's safety manager or the Huntsville Center Safety Office.

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leader recognizes a requirement to transform a technical expert into a critical thinker adroit at navigating complex systems with external demands and internal adaptation requirements. Emerging leaders must monitor job performance, team and individual well-being, and stakeholder satisfaction.

The Israeli Defense Force recognized this and experimented with teaching transformational leadership to cadets.

Transformational leaders exhibit charismatic behaviors, are able to motivate and provide intellectual stimulation among followers, and treat followers with individual consideration. Results showed that transformational leadership training enhanced followers'

motivation (i.e., self-actualization needs and willingness to exert extra effort), morality (i.e., internationalization of their organization's moral values), and empowerment (i.e., critical-independent approach, active engagement in the task, and specific self-efficacy). ([Arguinis and Kraiger, 2009](#))

While education provides skills, competence, and confidence and develops leaders, it also creates a sense of belonging and fosters commitment.

Ensuring that employees are given the training they need and involving them in decisions that impact their work creates both competence and commitment...studies report that 40 percent of employees who report receiving poor training leave their positions within the first year.

The lack of skills training and

development was the determining factor cited in their leaving. ([Kouzes and Posner, 2017](#))

For this reason, developing IDPs requires transparent communication with time and funds aligned to support the process. As leaders and managers communicate this investment in team members across the enterprise, they create a sense of belonging through reciprocated commitment.

This investment creates a better organization through increased capabilities and commitment at the individual level.

The investment also creates an environment where learning and individual contributions are valued and rewarded.

About Huntsville Center

HNC

Unique to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

Huntsville Center provides innovative engineering solutions to complex, global missions. Our team of professionals engineer adaptive, specialized solutions across a broad spectrum of global enterprise covering five main lines of effort: Energy, Operational Technology, Environmental, Medical, and Base Operations and Facilities. Our portfolios comprise 43 program areas, as well as nine mandatory and six technical centers of expertise, and 17 centers of standardization. Through partnership with Department of Defense agencies, private industry and global stakeholders, we deliver leading edge engineering solutions in support of national interests around the globe.

FY2021 40+ Programs

8 Mandatory Centers of Expertise,
6 Technical Centers of Expertise
and 17 Centers of Standardization

\$ 1.9B

**“HNC Delivers
Innovation”**

In fiscal 2021, Huntsville Center awarded contract actions totaling more than \$1.9 billion in obligations for its stakeholders.



The U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, engineers adaptive, specialized solutions across a broad spectrum of global enterprise covering five main lines of effort: Energy, Operational Technology, Environmental, Medical, and Base Operations and Facilities