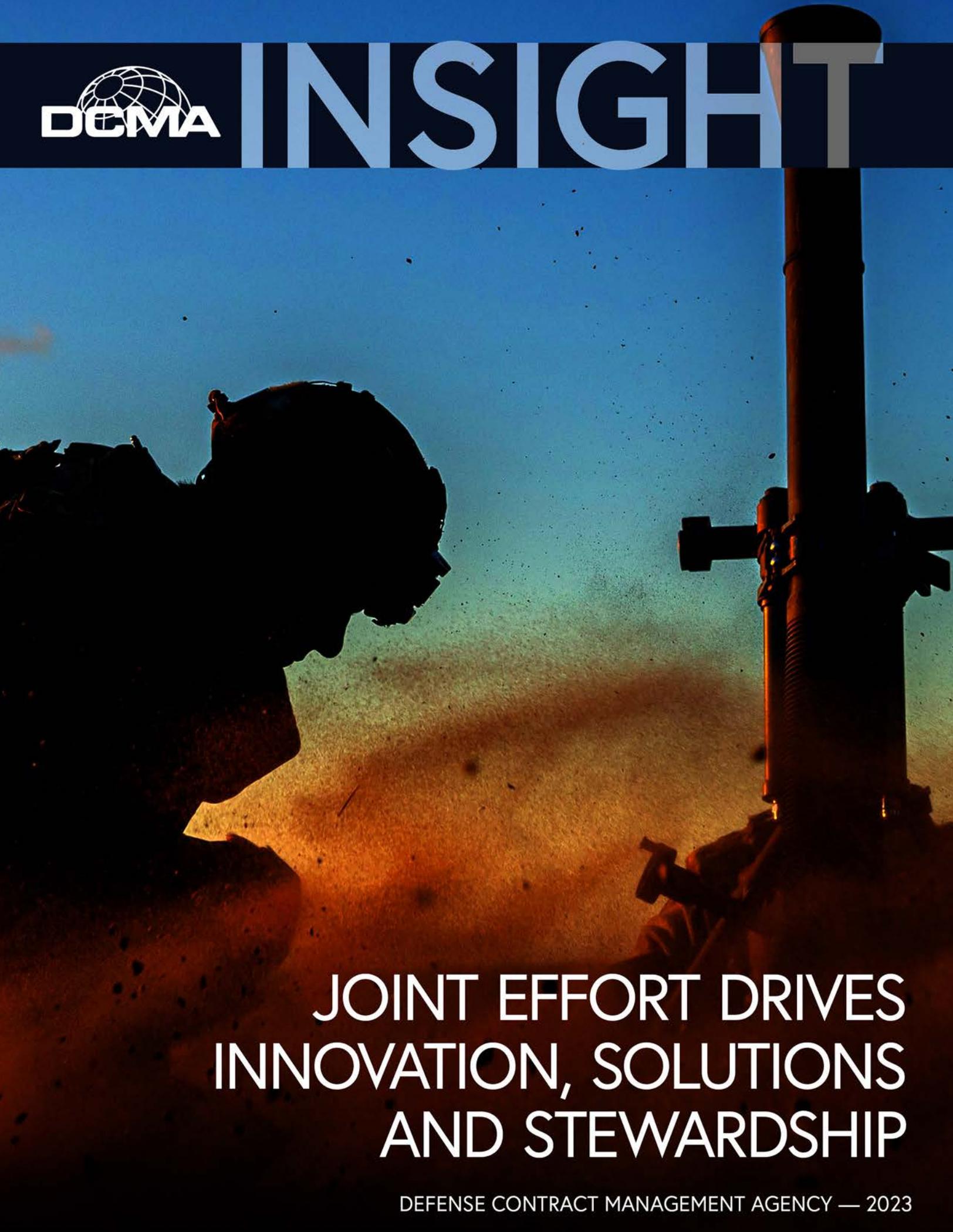




# INSIGHT

The background of the cover is a photograph showing the silhouette of a soldier wearing a helmet on the left and a piece of military equipment, possibly a tripod-mounted device, on the right. The scene is set against a sky transitioning from a deep blue at the top to a warm orange and yellow glow near the horizon, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is contemplative and focused.

JOINT EFFORT DRIVES  
INNOVATION, SOLUTIONS  
AND STEWARDSHIP

## On the Cover

**Cover:** A Soldier conducts platoon live-fire training during Rock Dawn, a readiness exercise, in Latvia, May 16, 2022. (Army photo by Sgt. Luke Michalski)

**Back cover:** Air Force Capt. Travis Hunt skijors along the Denali Highway in Alaska during Operation Agipen 2, Jan. 29, 2023. The operation is designed to test the capabilities of the airmen and equipment in extreme cold. (Air Force photo by Alejandro Peña)

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# Strategic Vision Propels Real-Time DOD Support

By Army Lt. Gen. David Bassett, DCMA Director

Welcome to the Defense Contract Management Agency's INSIGHT magazine. These pages provide a look at DCMA's place on our national defense team, and a snapshot of where the agency is at the start of 2023. Most importantly, it introduces some of the team members — our trusted professionals — that form DCMA.

We began last year with a new Vision and an updated Strategic Plan to guide our Mission and workplace into the future. Over the course of the past fiscal year, we delivered more than 440 million items worth more than \$96 billion to our services. That's 1.2 million items we've signed for and put into our warfighters' hands every day. The most advanced combat equipment ever, from aircraft to ground vehicles and satellite systems, is in the field right now due to the dedicated professionals of DCMA.

We keep the Department of Defense's acquisition programs moving, and we help keep our defense industrial base and economy moving as well. Every business day we authorize more than \$1 billion in payments to the defense industrial base, and the DCMA team is there to ensure our warfighters and the nation's taxpayers get what they pay for.

A year after Russia invaded its sovereign neighbor, the U.S. and our allies and partners around the world remain in lockstep to support Ukraine, hold Russia accountable and deter Russian aggression against NATO. The U.S. has provided more than \$35 billion in security assistance to Ukraine since the invasion began. While the initial response to Ukraine largely involved providing supplies and equipment out of existing U.S. inventory, DCMA is already an essential part of rebuilding those stocks and surging to meet future demand.

DOD's response to Ukraine is just one example of DCMA's critical support through professional acquisition services. Every day our people team with the services, buying commands and program offices to help acquire essential equipment and systems. Our professionals are on factory floors and online ensuring our defense industrial base is quickly replenishing our stockpiles, as well as executing contracts to sustain legacy equipment and to build the systems of the future. From the Army's new rifle to the Air Force's next bomber, DCMA is on the team.

Even as our workload is increasing on some of the department's most critical modernization priorities, the resources provided to the agency to execute that workload has remained flat and even declined. We must continue to transform the agency to meet these demands with a deft mix of flexibility and specialization. We're now evolving internally and planning comprehensive structural changes to get in step with the pace and direction of our customers. Some of these are already in place. We've geographically consolidated select offices for efficiency and best use of our functional experts, and, significantly, we are realigning all of our Space-focused services into one office later this year. These efforts are forerunners to other planned geographic, product and systems-aligned changes that will make DCMA even more valuable and accessible to the services and program offices across the department.

Defense contract management has been evolving for generations. Threats, capabilities, manufacturing processes, technology and economics all push and pull the DOD requirements that drive DCMA's work. Our mission, however, remains the same, and just as critical as ever. Our warfighters operate in the real world, and they require the real time support of dedicated professionals across DOD.

DCMA and our predecessors have always been a part of our national defense team, and we look forward to contributing to warfighter success long into the future.



An M1A2 Abrams tank fires during the Sullivan Cup at the Army Armor School at Fort Benning, Ga., in 2022. The Abrams program is one of many supported by DCMA's global team of acquisition professionals. Over the course of the past fiscal year, the agency delivered more than 440 million items worth more than \$96 billion to the services. (Army photo by Spc. Joshua Taeckens)

# BY THE NUMBERS

Numbers updated as of first quarter, fiscal year 2023.



**10,902**  
TOTAL EMPLOYEES

AUTHORIZING  
**\$1.4B**



IN CONTRACTOR  
PAYMENTS EACH  
BUSINESS DAY

MANAGING

**229,079**



ACTIVE CONTRACTS

OVERSEEING

**\$169.5B**



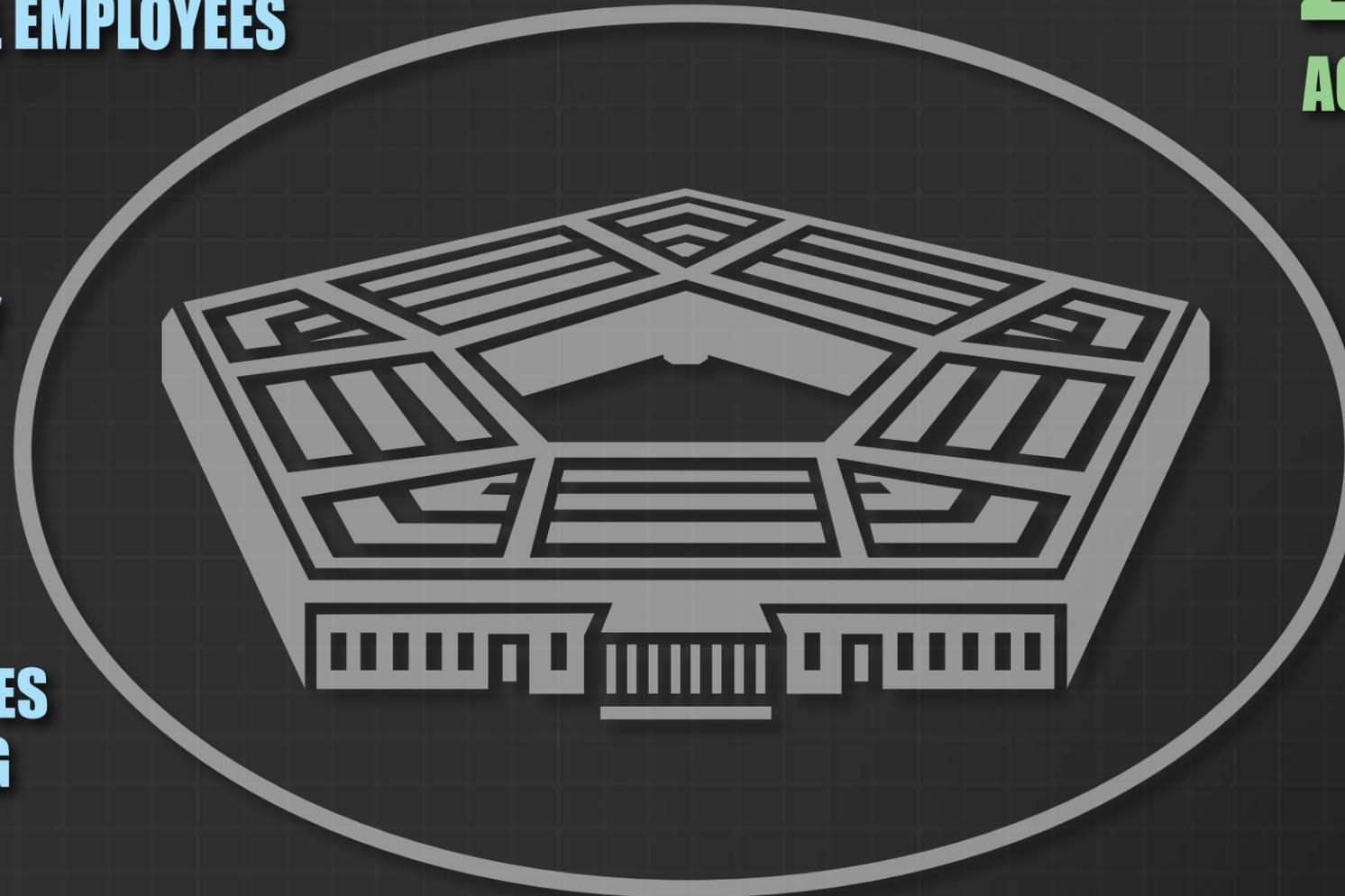
IN GOV PROPERTY

SERVING

**12,208**



CONTRACTOR LOCATIONS



**576**

ASSIGNED MILITARY  
SERVICE MEMBERS



**53**

MAIN OFFICES  
OVERSEEING



**1,000**

GLOBAL  
LOCATIONS

WITH A TOTAL VALUE OF

**\$3.72T**

PROVIDING DIRECT  
SUPPORT TO DOD AND  
OTHER GOV AGENCIES

# PLATFORM DELIVERIES

In fiscal year 2022, Defense Contract Management Agency delivered 440.3 million items worth \$96.2 billion, with many valued at more than \$1 million per unit.

In fiscal year 2022, DCMA saved, recovered or cost avoided \$5.82 billion against an annual \$1.4 billion budget. The agency has produced a positive return for the past seven years, averaging a return of \$2.83 for every dollar invested.

**FY22 ROI**  
**4.16 to 1**



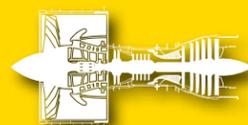
**3,759**  
COMBAT VEHICLES



**799**  
MISSILES/ROCKETS



**476**  
AIRCRAFT



**152**  
AIRCRAFT ENGINES



**90**  
MISSILE SYSTEMS



**RECOVERED**  
**\$351M**

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



**COST AVOIDED**  
**\$5.32B**

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



**SAVED**  
**\$148M**

Cost savings from contract terminations



## SHIPMENTS

**TOTAL ITEMS**  
440.3M items shipped  
\$96.2B 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 98,200 DLA contracts, totaling \$96 billion.

**DLA CONTRACT ITEMS**  
46.4M items shipped  
\$8.1B total value



# **AIR FORCE**

# **SPACE FORCE**

**102 PROGRAMS**

**35 ACAT I\***

**31,716 CONTRACTS**

**TOTALING \$983B**

**\$729B OBLIGATED**

**\$92B 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, and test and evaluation of a certain dollar value.



# NAVY MARINE CORPS

**111 PROGRAMS**  
**43 ACAT I**  
**69,477 CONTRACTS**  
**TOTALING \$1.39T**  
**\$792B OBLIGATED**  
**\$129B UNLIQUIDATED**





# ARMY



**85 PROGRAMS**  
**34 ACAT I**  
**21,182 CONTRACTS**  
**TOTALING \$812B**  
**\$553B OBLIGATED**  
**\$73B UNLIQUIDATED**

# EXPLORING THE FUTURE OF WORK

**The pandemic expedited tech-driven change across global workplaces and DCMA hopes to lead the transition**

By DCMA Leadership

In March 2020, the world shut down as COVID-19 ravaged the global population. Considered at the time to be a temporary measure, much of the workforce transitioned to a work-from-home environment.

As weeks transitioned to months, the Defense Contract Management Agency adapted to its new reality by expanding our online collaborative capabilities. Our mission remained the same, but we became more agile in meeting its demands.

In preparation for an increased office presence, we were determined to listen to our people and capture the vital lessons learned from more than a year in a maximum telework environment. Since then, our nation has endured several significant surges of COVID-19 variants that set back hopes of normalizing our lifestyles and routines. Nevertheless, our workforce continued to prove its resiliency in the execution of our mission.

Now that these waves have passed, restrictions have eased and our personal lives are returning to pre-pandemic activities. But what did we learn about work-life and our ability to accomplish our mission?

The pandemic mandated change in the execution of federal government work. The why, what, where, when, who, and how of our work-life experience is in transformation. While there will always be a need for an in-person work component, developing hybrid flexibilities is essential to optimizing mission and work-life balance.

## Promising Opportunity

In 2021, we conducted listening sessions with a broad spectrum of civilian and military personnel from across the agency. Functional specialists, supervisors, bargaining unit representatives, directors and commanders participated.

Key takeaways included:

- Consensus emerged among employees that maximum telework has enhanced mission effectiveness since the pre-pandemic mode of operations.
- The work paradigm has shifted.

Previously, location, facility, and office space were considered the nexus of mission effectiveness, but employees believed it limited flexibility to achieve mission objectives. Mission, function and task are now the focal point of work-life.

- Work has become fully integrated into the continuum of daily life. Constructs that previously defined the workday have evolved. Now, people attend meetings, make collaborative contributions, and keep commitments as required because they can flex their time throughout the day.

- The federal workforce is likely to see a rapid and aggressive turnover of employees as some agencies adopt virtual work environments ahead of others. Workplace flexibilities are more desirable, facilitate work-life balance, and will attract candidates from a broader pool of talent.

- Working in the virtual environment exposed the proficiency gaps in technology utilization; it also identified the need to develop application and leadership skills in the hybrid work environment.

## Leadership Listened

In his "Memorandum to Agency Leadership," DCMA Director Army Lt.

Gen. David Bassett stated: "I do not expect that our approach to in-person work will simply return to what we had prior to the pandemic. We have learned valuable lessons over the past two years about how to get our job done without requiring the level of physical presence that we had before ... Our future will be a hybrid workplace that balances necessary in-person office presence with flexible telework and other workforce alternatives. Finding the optimal mix will be of benefit to both our mission and our employees."

In this effort, Cory Rosenberger, DCMA chief of staff, leads a strategic Line of Effort: Transitioning to a Workplace of the Future. This line of effort captures lessons learned from our collective experience, enabling mission execution and the recruitment and retention of the top talent we showcase daily.

"We are looking at what kind of workforce we will need in 2, 3, 4, 5 years from now," said Rosenberger. "The acquisition workforce is a professional workforce, and we are not the only acquisition professionals in the global marketplace of talent. We think we are, but we're not. All of the service branches have their own. And many other (Department of Defense) agencies are part of the acquisition workforce. So the future will be considering who our competition for talent is both in the government, in the acquisition workforce and in the global marketplace of talent. Because out of



COVID, we know that many reputable, well-respected corporations (and) businesses are recruiting and hiring people from anywhere on planet earth when they can.”

Until the transition to the hybrid workplace is complete, DCMA office presence will be governed with the following intent:

- Determine office presence and work location by mission, function, and task.
- Fully leverage federal and DOD workplace flexibilities to maximize telework and alternative work schedules to support mission and work-life balance.
- Maximize the use of virtual tools, training, and performance measurement.
- Identify positions for potential remote work or optimized telework arrangements.
- Review facility and resource utilization for cost-saving opportunities to include desk-sharing, hoteling and hot desks.

We have an unprecedented opportunity to shape a culture and hybrid workplace that is better by most measures than what we had before the pandemic.

Our workforce has repeatedly proven itself to be a team of trusted professionals. Many of our people have excelled while working away from the office, just as others have continued to work on-site at offices and production facilities because their function requires it. There is a way to harness the best of both of these approaches and make DCMA stronger for years to come.

DCMA's future of work concept modernizes our approach to the traditional workplace. It will enable us to hire and develop diverse, world-class talent in ways never previously possible.

Imagine a military spouse maintaining a fulfilling DCMA career over multiple relocations and work assignments. Our future of work concept will evolve as we do, providing a set of guiding principles that allow us the flexibility for implementation at the lowest level in the agency and the agility necessary to tackle any challenge the future brings.

Imagine an office as a destination for team building, collaboration, creativity, networking and transferring knowledge to one another, providing opportunities to develop peer connections and where career development will be equitable for all remote, hybrid and on-site employees. The future of work concept will drive the cultural adaptation necessary to acquire, develop and retain the diverse talent necessary to deliver the next generation of the agency's mission.

Imagine the work moving to the employee and developing career paths that move across functional and organizational lines. These aspirations are achievable and, to some extent, have been realized by our

mutual experience. We all have a share in the investment of the future of work vision.

## Time to Transition

Supporting and facilitating effective hybrid work will require deliberate effort to create a supportive culture that values transparency, trust, communication, use of technology and results-oriented performance management so employees can successfully meet agency mission and operational requirements.

Our purpose as an agency or our mission essential functions include:

One, we enable the acquisition of warfighter equipment, supplies and services, including urgent, critical and unique needs.

Two, we conduct mission assurance for the defense industrial base and support our mission essential functions through our mission essential tasks, including:

- Pay suppliers
- Inspect and accept product
- Modify urgent and critical contracts
- Expedite crucial customer requests
- Deliver urgent and critical products
- Price urgent and critical contracts
- Supplier prioritization based on needs
- Operational contract support
- Provide crucial contractor information
- Monitor and report on prioritized defense industry assets
- Support DIB risk management

## Shaping Opportunities, Enhancing Flexibility

Historically, our work was performed primarily at assigned duty locations. Moving forward: We will be driven by the concept of enabling our agency, our teams and our people to work where they are most productive in support of mission requirements.

Where we execute our mission will differ based on components, skill sets, locations, priorities and contractual requirements. Affording flexibility where we work aligns with the range of preferences identified by a significant portion of our workforce and our experience during the pandemic.

These changes will have a significant impact on our infrastructure over time. As where we work shifts, the design and purpose of our workspaces will also change. Our physical infrastructure will need to continue to accommodate specialized requirements and provide shared space to enable open, adaptable collaboration, even with reduced floor space.

The time spent working is also changing. Based on past practices, logistical considerations of primary duty locations, infrastructure, and a traditional view of

# MISSION

**We are the independent eyes and ears of DOD and its partners, enhancing warfighter lethality by ensuring timely delivery of quality products, and providing relevant acquisition insight supporting affordability and readiness.**

# VISION

**A team of trusted professionals delivering value to our warfighters throughout the acquisition lifecycle.**

# VALUES

**Integrity: Committed to the highest standards of ethical and moral behavior at all times.**

**Service: Working for the benefit of our nation and putting professional responsibilities before self-interests.**

**Excellence: Committed to exceptional performance in everything we do.**

managing a workforce, our default for time management has been agency-wide “core hours” and a synchronous work environment. In the future, we will expect our workforce to work when they are most productive in support of mission requirements. They will include team and organizational requirements while supporting asynchronous work. Such an approach allow our workforce to manage their time while increasing productivity.

Who will execute the work? We intend to embrace a future of work concept that ensures we remain competitive in attracting and retaining the best talent. In the past, our ability to attract talent was restricted to those willing to physically come work for us at prescribed duty locations.

Embracing a range of hybrid work opportunities will enable us to expand our existing talent pool to new potential sources of talent. In addition, we will focus on recruiting and retaining the best talent available anywhere.



As Defense Department programs evolve and technology accelerates, DCMA's team of trusted professionals are shaping a hybrid workplace to better support customers and deliver improved value to warfighters throughout the acquisition lifecycle. (Above) Personnel prepare a Hexa aircraft before its first flight at a military airfield at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., in July 2022. The unmanned electric aircraft, piloted via remote control, used 18 motors and propellers to fly for approximately 10 minutes and reach a height of about 50 feet. (Air Force photo by Samuel King Jr.)

There will be new opportunities to take our work and compelling challenges to the best talent. It will also enable us to be more broadly inclusive, integrating a more diverse set of talent into the DCMA team.

Reactively filling vacancies should become a thing of the past as we work to proactively implement effective outreach to recruit, retain and promote diverse competency-based talent pools.

The foundation of talent management is to define who we need to execute our mission. Therefore, position descriptions will have to define not only the knowledge, skills and behaviors but will also need to account for the ability to work remotely, develop and contribute as a member of adaptive, highly collaborative, cross-competency teams.

Implementing talent management in our leadership must continue to account for the critical skills needed to lead effectively in a dynamic, complex and virtual context. This will include managing a workforce with varying degrees of remote working while leveraging cross-organization coalitions. It will require us to hone leadership skills and provide training to address proficiency gaps.

As we develop competency-based talent pools, we must expose alternative career paths and provide a range of career development opportunities to meet future demands. This shift parallels current general workforce trends of employees increasingly pursuing diverse work experiences and desiring portability of skills. Our future of work must promote employee movement within our system.

How the work gets done is evolving, but the quality of work delivered will remain the same. In some respects, how we work will not change, specifically, as it relates directly to our activities in carrying out the “what” of our work. We will still have to engage contractors, make site visits, and employ engineering disciplines and professional business practices.

In other respects, how we work will evolve to even more effectively meet new challenges, operate at the speed of relevance, and deliver increasingly integrated capabilities. How we have worked has been historically performed by local, discrete teams operating primarily within organizational boundaries.

As we implement the future of work concept, we will facilitate agile, cross-competency and cross-organizational teams,

formed rapidly to deliver increasingly integrated solutions. While some will be working remotely, others will continue to support our mission in the field to deliver the most technically advanced equipment, systems and platforms to our warfighters.

Regardless of mission, function or task, our workforce will require collaboration tools and virtual environments that support geographically dispersed mission requirements. Given a premium on knowledge-sharing, we will need to rely on virtual protection as much as, if not more than, physical protection of our data, network and devices. In a highly mobile hybrid work environment, we will employ enabling capabilities that enhance future operations.

The pandemic has been a catalyst for change in the execution of federal government work. The why, what, where, when, who and how of our work-life experience is in metamorphosis. This future of work vision will set us on a course that will boldly transform the culture of our work environment necessary to do our jobs in new and better ways, attract and retain the talent we need for the future, and enable our team members to deliver greater contributions to our warfighters and the Defense Department.



# Heather Roberts-Wrenn

## DEI program manager

By Thomas Perry

My DCMA showcases the Defense Contract Management Agency's experienced and diverse workforce and highlights what being part of the national defense team means to them.

Heather Roberts-Wrenn, the agency's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion program manager, shares her story below. In a previous article highlighting the agency-wide benefits of the DEI program, she defined inclusion as "the act of creating an environment in which every person feels welcomed, respected, valued, supported and safe. Inclusive environments celebrate differences and value the unique perspectives, thoughts, ideas, knowledge, skills and abilities we bring to the organization."

### WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO WORK AT DCMA? WHY DID YOU CHOOSE FEDERAL SERVICE?

I joined DCMA in October 2021 after working as a Department of the Army civilian. I chose federal service because I believe that making positive changes and progress in our government will impact the entire nation. When the federal government moves forward on something, the whole country, from businesses to academia to individual citizens, will follow suit.

Working for the federal government makes even more sense as a military spouse as it allows me the ability to stay with the same employer even while moving across the nation. My wife, Army Master Sgt. Stephanie Roberts-Wrenn, is an active-duty Soldier who recently attended the Sergeant Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas. I began my federal service while we were stationed at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. Moving around and supporting her service was an easy choice, made even easier now that we both work for the federal government, and we can each advance our careers.

### WHY DO YOU ENJOY WORKING AT DCMA?

I appreciate the diversity built into the agency from the geographically dispersed nature of our mission. While this geographic dispersion has its challenges, there is beauty and significant advantages in being able to work with folks across the globe. Diverse teams with diverse perspectives, ideas, experiences and opinions make better decisions and enhance nearly all measures of success for an organization. The inherent diversity in our workforce is one of our greatest assets, in my opinion. Not every agency, organization or company has it.

### WHAT MOTIVATES YOU PROFESSIONALLY?

People. Taking care of people, improving their work lives, engaging them, and unleashing their full potential and creativity [makes me] devoted to moving the needle on the mission. I chose a career in human resources because of my passion for people and the desire to



help them in the workplace. I merged my interest in psychology and human behavior with my aptitude for business to select this career field.

### WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO WORK WITHIN THE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION FIELD?

Diversity and inclusion have been lifelong passions borne out of my background, enhanced through my education and honed by my experience. I was born in Hawaii, which is a highly diverse and inclusive culture to begin with. My grandma used to call her grandchildren her "League of Nations" because we were so racially diverse: Portuguese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, German, Hawaiian, Chinese and Italian.

Out of nine grandchildren, five of us were adopted. I not only have racial diversity in my family but also neurodiversity and diversity in terms of gender identity and sexual orientation. Growing up, most of my friends were diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, national origin and sexual orientation. In college, I sought out courses tied to diversity and inclusion. During my career, I have pursued various roles and responsibilities on a multitude of Diversity and Inclusion Councils. Diversity and inclusion are things I am inherently passionate about and believe to be of value. From a business perspective, I understand the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in terms of employee engagement and business outcomes.

### WHAT IS YOUR PROFESSIONAL MINDSET AND LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY?

I believe in taking care of people, ensuring they have a work environment that enables their best work, engages them, empowers them to reach their greatest potential and allows them to bring their whole selves to work every day.

### WHAT ARE THE MAJOR CHALLENGES OF YOUR JOB?

DEI work is inherently nuanced. Although the science and research behind the work are solid, conducting the work itself requires addressing numerous aspects of the workplace. Additionally, in my time at DCMA, I've already encountered numerous people who are passionate about DEI and making our agency a better, more equitable place for all. They have shared so many great ideas that I want to work toward. The challenge is incorporating all of them.

### WHAT ASPECT OF YOUR JOB WOULD SURPRISE AGENCY TEAM MEMBERS?

It may be news to some in the agency that



"DCMA is important to America's warfighters because we serve as the eyes and ears for our military members in the field. In my division, we aid in military and program office critical decision-making by continuously monitoring and reviewing risks to the defense industrial base. We are constantly looking for innovative ways to become more proactive in this regard, as this is what our military members deserve."

— Angelo Marchiano, PM&BI operations research analyst in Philadelphia

"I like working at DCMA because this organization boasts a wealth of diversity in experience, talent and culture. Some of the great things about working at my location include the professionalism, positive employee morale and the fact that most of the team connects with each other outside of the office."

— Roderick Dunmore, AIMO Oklahoma City program integrator



"Though I was not able to follow my father's footsteps in joining the Navy, working for DCMA has given me a great opportunity to help the warfighter in so many ways. I thank my father and his brothers for pushing me and motivating me to become the man I am today."

— Christopher Chan, DCMA Hampton contract administrator

my position has a standing membership on the CARES Council. I've also participated in the initial phases of the formation of the new Strategic Plan. These two facts alone demonstrate that DCMA senior leadership recognizes the importance of DEI work in the accomplishment of our mission and has given the role its due and a proverbial seat at the table.

### WHAT ARE YOUR PROFESSIONAL GOALS?

I want to make the greatest contribution possible in my current and potential future roles. I see myself as a change agent; I always enter a position with the mindset that I will make the greatest impact I can and leave the position and agency better than I found it. Whether that's in three or 10 years will depend on if I feel

like I'm still able to positively affect the organization. I want to make the largest beneficial impact, which may lead me into management or higher echelons of DEI leadership in the government.

### WHAT DO YOU ENJOY AWAY FROM WORK?

I enjoy traveling and good food. My wife and I got engaged in Jamaica and spent our honeymoon traveling across twelve different countries in Europe. During my MBA program, I also completed a global business experience to learn about conducting business in other countries, where I spent time in England again and traveled to Ireland for the first time. Enjoying delicious food and discovering new restaurants are also one of my favorite pastimes.

# KEY MOVES AHEAD

## Keystone program invigorates future

By Jason Kaneshiro

Defense Contract Management Agency's mission ensures the Defense Department, other federal agencies and partner nation customers get the equipment they need delivered on time at projected cost, while meeting all performance requirements.

DCMA's Keystone development program trains the future workforce to ensure the continued fulfillment of that critical mission.

"As one of the agency's premier succession tools, the Keystone program provides the DCMA with a well-trained bench of acquisition professionals able to fill any gaps created through attrition," said Yvette Bowers, the agency's Keystone program manager. "The Keystone program provides DCMA-specific training that allows participant exposure and immersion into processes, policies and methodologies. It also provides recent graduates and those transitioning from other areas — internal and external — to the agency to develop needed acquisition skills and grow professionally. The agency's investment in the Keystone program shows its commitment to ensuring we consistently have the talent needed to meet the demands of the future."

This fall, a Keystone Cohort Workshop held in Orlando, Florida, brought together program participants nationwide for a three-day in-person training session that included presentations, team-building exercises, and the opportunity to network and interact with senior agency leaders.

Keystone program participants are selected from multiple sources, said Susan Li, DCMA East Region Keystone Hub Manager.

"We have been very fortunate enough to hire Keystones from all over," Li said. "During the last cohort, we had some recent college graduates, military veterans and some participants entered the program after being recommended from current DCMA employees to apply."

Additionally, some Keystones were former procurement technicians who applied and began the program after the hiring process.

"Being a new employee at a new agency can already be intimidating, but the pandemic made it that much more intimidating because they were not able to meet everyone on their team," Li said.

Li said the in-person Cohort event targeted first- and second-year Keystones hired around the same time during the pandemic.

"They were able to share experiences with each other and how to work through some of those challenges," Li explained.

During the event, Keystones met face-to-face while building and establishing a stronger support network community, said Sophia Peterson, DCMA West Region Keystone Hub Manager.

"The Keystones would meet their support team face-to-face. That team included DCMA senior leaders, leaders from DCMA's Total Force Directorate, and the leaders from the DCMA Regional Commands," Peterson said.

The Keystones gained a better understanding of how they were valuable to the agency from the agency's senior leaders during the event, Peterson said.

"The Keystones also learned how their contributions at the Contract Management Offices tie into the region's scope of responsibilities in multi-functional areas," Peterson elaborated.

Providing that opportunity for Keystones to build their professional networks and communicate face-to-face with senior leaders and Keystone alumni was also a key goal for Bowers.

"We wanted them to actively engage with other Keystone and program administrators," she said. "We also wanted them to visit a contractor site and see how the many functional areas work together to produce quality products for the Warfighter."

The Keystones had the opportunity to witness the products of their labor during the



DCMA Keystones gathered for a three-day workshop in Orlando, Fla., Sept. 13-15, 2022. Keystone training includes group presentations, self-paced coursework, and direct instruction from employees, who the Keystones are assigned to work with and learn from. (DCMA photo by Jodi Hogan)

contractor site tour as part of the workshop.

The Keystone Program recruits personnel in all contracting disciplines and indoctrinates them in a robust, cross-functional training regimen over three years to improve their preparedness and capabilities. As a Keystone matriculates through the program, their duties and responsibilities increase. Accordingly, their pay grade increases annually from entry-level to the journeymen level.

"Once they graduate from the Keystone program, they will be able to work hand-in-hand with the employees," Li said.

"The Keystones are the future of DCMA," Li said. "Many of the Keystones that graduated from the Keystone program are now supervisors, group directors or directors within the agency."

Peterson concurred that the Keystones are the future leaders of DCMA.

"We have Keystone alumni as team leaders, Administrative Contracting Officers, first-line supervisors, and in senior leader positions throughout DCMA," Peterson added.

Peterson said the agency always seeks to attract and hire high-quality candidates for Keystone positions.

"The caliber of Keystones candidates that are hired does make a difference, and it allows the agency to invest in their training and development," Peterson said.

"That commitment to hire the best-qualified candidates and to use a structured

environment to train our Keystones does influence their abilities to perform well when it comes to the agency's primary mission of ensuring the timely delivery of quality and affordable products."

Peterson said the work environment has changed since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The team realized that the Keystone Program had to keep up with developments in technology and new training platforms to support the Keystone's successful completion of their training requirements for Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act certification.

The Keystone Program focuses on ensuring that graduates can work at their full performance level and are ready on day one to perform the duties required within their functional area, Bowers said.

"Our Keystones must be ready to perform as the eyes and ears of the warfighter, ensuring that the products they receive are safe, cost-effective and meet their needs," Bowers said. "Agency Keystones are a vital element to the accomplishment of the DCMA mission to enhance warfighter lethality."

As a succession planning tool, the hiring and training of Keystones guarantee the agency can fill vital entry-level positions across the agency, grow new leaders and ensure DCMA consistently has the talent needed to fulfill its mission, Bowers said.

"The Keystone program has unlimited potential," Bowers said.

# PIEE



## Increase Productivity

PIEE enables automation through every phase of the procurement process reducing manual data entry and administrative tasks from preaward through contract close.



## Reduce Risk

With built-in checks, controlled access, workflows, data prepopulation and error tracking, PIEE helps ensure contracts, invoices and payment disbursements are as accurate as possible.



## Promote Collaboration

PIEE's integrated document management and messaging capabilities provide a centralized way to securely communicate and share important information across organizations and roles.



## Enhance Visibility

Global access to information such as reports, documents, and workflow statuses allow all users to have greater visibility into the procurement process at any time.

## FIRM Center leads agency's PIEE transfer effort to modernize eTool standardization, access

By Thomas Perry

As part of a Procurement Integrated Enterprise Environment modernization initiative, the Defense Contract Management Agency's FIRM Center partnered with the agency's Information Technology and Technical Directorates, along with representatives from regional commands and contract management offices, to modernize contract and administration tools within the PIEE setting.

Functional Information Resources

Management, or FIRM, falls within the agency's Contracts Directorate. The center provides operational automated systems support — functional and technical — to all DCMA organizations and locations.

The PIEE effort seeks to standardize Contract Administration Services by offering regulatory-based and tested capabilities for use by the DCMA workforce, military services and other Defense agencies performing post-award contract administration.

One of the four pillars of agency modernization, along with Department of Defense 365-J, Product Data Reporting and Evaluation Program, and Advana, PIEE is a centrally accessible information technology platform of acquisition — contracting, finance and logistics — and related applications, capabilities and systems designed to streamline electronic business transactions between the various services and agencies from DOD, federal government and industry.

"PIEE promulgates the DOD's Procure-to-Pay end-to-end e-business vision," said Erik Mims, FIRM Center director. "PIEE is governed jointly by procurement, financial management and logistics Office of the Secretary of Defense leadership."

The undertaking required a sizable multi-functional team from the agency and its outside partners to identify requirements and participate in development.

"It is an involved process, (and) as product owner, we have to navigate developers through the requirements, clarify DCMA's issues and desires, as well as lead the effort to establish/re-establish system and agency agreements, transaction formats, data element changes, and necessary policy changes," said Mims. "Testing requires planning (and) a lot of internal and external coordination with personnel from Defense Pricing and Contracting, Defense Logistics Agency, Defense Finance and Accounting Service, Defense Information Systems Agency, and the military services."

Mims said DCMA has used PIEE since 2003, which helped drive development through its existing program structure, such as agreements, testing plans and team familiarity.

"The team has completed five pre-agency prioritization development efforts, completed four development efforts toward DCMA's top ten priorities, and are currently developing or will soon be developing nine of DCMA's top 10 priorities," said Mims. "In addition, training that we developed has been made for enterprise use by DPC."

Within the PIEE transfer effort, the team has completed 13 eTool development efforts, including Contract Administration Service Directory, Commercial Item Determination, Shared Data Warehouse Single Sign-On, Contractor Business Analysis Repository, Duty Free Entry and MOCAS Contract Closeout. They have also expanded Government Furnished Property capabilities, including plant clearance and property loss, and completed the first installment of Modifications and Delivery Orders.

The Audit Tracking and Action Tool, Delivery Schedule Manager, and final Contract Closeout enhancements are under development.

While work continues, success will be measured by internal functionality and external utilization.

"Developing replacement applications within PIEE creates efficiencies for DCMA personnel by reducing administrative burden and work delays related to obtaining and maintaining system access, as PIEE's Single Sign-On functionality streamlines and condenses processes," said Ben Schmidt, DCMA FIRM Center deputy director. "The PIEE suite also decreases the number of platforms agency users must access to perform acquisition-related job duties, as mandatory applications like Electronic Data Access and Wide Area Workflow already reside there. Finally, the PIEE suite provides a more reliable, secure and up-to-date platform with access to better data sources and functionality within new applications."

For external use, a conscious focus centered on the DOD enterprise.

"Agency customers, including the services, defense agencies and contractors, benefit from DCMA's development of tools in PIEE through access to DCMA's applications, data and information, as well as collaborating in development to enhance applications to meet their needs," said Schmidt.

He also highlighted additional initiatives that support all levels of Defense acquisition personnel and said key partnerships throughout the PIEE transfer project remain vital.

"Our goals are to make DOD acquisition more effective and efficient, providing better user experiences, and developing relationships along the way to facilitate this effort," he said. "We have a long way to go in reaching our goals, but some of the fruits of our labor are beginning to arrive through recent application releases and positive responses from users. This stems from the foundation developed from improved collaboration with developers, the PIEE Program Management Office, Joint Interoperability Test Command, DPC, and other partners. This effort is impossible without these relationships, and the DCMA team has thankfully expanded to include them working toward our common end."

Mims echoed Schmidt's sentiment and emphasized the role of teamwork both inside and outside of DCMA.

"The team's performance has been exemplary, which is no surprise for me because they are mission-focused," said Mims. "There is much to do, (and) they have worked exceptionally well, filling and

addressing gaps when and where necessary. This goes beyond just the FIRM team, additional DCMA personnel who augment product ownership, the DLA PIEE PMO, and the development contractor CACI Enterprise Solutions. Everyone's active engagement has solved many problems on the fly. I also want to highlight the partnership and team effort between DLA as the system owner, particularly the Program Manager Patrick Knepper and his team, DPC as the functional sponsor, and CACI. We have a very close working relationship with them which has resulted in cost savings and development efficiencies."

As the PIEE transfer work continues, the joint effort features many eTools close to release.

"We are excited to finish the Modifications and Delivery Orders module," said Mims. "It is DCMA's number one priority and will be operational later this fiscal year. It will deliver data-rich and standardized modifications to our customers that will conform in services and fourth estate next-generation contract writing systems and Electronic Data Access."

He explained that buying commands will no longer have to issue corresponding modifications in their systems when DCMA issues de-obligation modifications. If a system uses Procurement Data Standard, these modifications will now update it.

"Furthermore, we will no longer run into problems like those that we had when we issued the mass modifications for the COVID-19 Progress Payment class deviation," said Mims. "Before contractors could start billing, we had to wait for the modifications to populate in EDA, and that took a week; now it will happen in real-time."

The Audit Issue Tracking and Action Tool will also be released this quarter. It is the team's most significant development thus far, combining five eTools into one.

The PIEE transfer endeavor parallels FIRM's overall mission. It develops and documents business requirements to improve the agency's capture, analysis, and reporting of data impacting affordability for DOD decision-makers; supports enterprise business solutions by identifying areas for modernization and innovation of automated information systems; conducts testing, training, and maintenance; and performs specific administrative tasks for these systems.



DCMA Twin Cities team members stand with agency Director Army Lt. Gen. David Bassett (uniformed center left) and their contract management office's commander, Air Force Col. Danny Stupinski (uniformed center right) after a Director's Town Hall at Minneapolis-Saint Paul Joint Air Reserve Station Sept. 15, 2022. (DCMA photo by Thomas Perry)

# Upper Midwest Mission Makers

DCMA Twin Cities drives warfighter support across Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, and part of Missouri. Their success is often defined by joint efforts as they work with military program offices, industry counterparts and parallel federal agencies to support America's heroes.

By Thomas Perry

More than 180 acquisition professionals stretch across seven states to conduct contract administration services and oversight for 400-plus contractors while managing 7,000 contracts worth \$37 billion.

This data accurately defines Defense Contract Management Agency Twin Cities, but numbers fail to capture the dedication, skill and teamwork that drives its ultimate warfighter support mission.

"Our mission is 'Enhancing Warfighter Lethality,'" said Air Force Col. Danny Stupinski, DCMA Twin Cities' commander. "The customers we serve are not just the services

and program offices; importantly, they are the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines, far away from home and under impossible conditions, executing difficult missions the nation requires to advance our strategic interests. Those warfighters count on us to get them high-quality capabilities on time, to keep the fight unfair so they can win the war and return home safely. Accordingly, this command values all efforts to more effectively and efficiently deliver those capabilities while delivering value to our warfighters throughout the acquisition lifecycle."

Each Defense Department product and program can face challenges as it cycles

through its acquisition stages: research, development, production, deployment, support, upgrade, demilitarization and disposal. Professional relationships, respect and cooperative problem-solving with industry counterparts, military program offices and other federal agencies can overcome many of these challenges. The lack of these tenets presents its challenges, however.

"We've all seen the damage an adversarial relationship between the government and industry can have on the effective management of a contract," said Stupinski, a Bayonne, New Jersey, native. "When this key relationship breaks, the ultimate victim is the warfighter. Capabilities end up delayed and sometimes not even delivered. That's unacceptable."

To strengthen relationships and prevent pitfalls, Stupinski and his Upper Midwest team create "connective tissue" with their industry counterparts at the peer level — director to director and commander to vice president.

"We develop positive strategic relationships," he said. "We may not always agree, and occasionally we make decisions our industry partners might not agree with but keeping the (communication) open and positive is a force multiplier. This, in my opinion, is key to ensuring DCMA Twin Cities'

work always serves to enhance warfighter lethality and deliver on our mission priorities."

Like all things existential, relationships and their impacts can be challenging to measure. Still, Stupinski points to improvements in measurable real-world data including time- and cost-savings and delivery metrics.

"The connective tissue we've built with our industry partners only delivers value if it has a positive impact on delivering capabilities and value to the warfighter — otherwise, it's just a 'feel good' exercise," he said. "To that end, our command looks to our folks to 'use' us in leadership to address concerns before they become strategic problems that impact delivery and cost. Things that may have stagnated at the lower levels in the past are more quickly elevated to the directors and me."

Organizational flattening describes a company's reduction in managerial layering to enhance communication speed and effectiveness.

"While we haven't organizationally 'flattened' our contract management office, I like to think we've done so psychologically," said Stupinski. "We encourage a more rapid up-channeling of issues before they impact delivery. This allows us to pick up the phone, call our counterparts, and work the problem

in real-time. As such, an issue that might have taken months to work [its] way through normal channels is resolved within days. This is improving our on-time delivery numbers, which, ultimately, means more timely delivery of quality capabilities to the warfighter."

Two prime examples of DCMA Twin Cities' positive relationship building and its impact on warfighter support are the Minnesota-based locations of major Defense industry counterparts Collins Aerospace and Northrup Grumman Armament Systems.

According to the company's website, Collins Aerospace maintains 73,000-plus employees at more than 300 global locations. A local Collins' probe and sensor facility falls within DCMA Twin Cities Quality team members Glenn Kaufmann's and Mike White's area of responsibility. The pair of Air Force veterans, who began their careers on the receiving end of the supply chain, both have flight line experience.

"Much of our Quality Team is made up of prior military, [and] they know how important it is to get the best product out to the warfighter," said Kaufmann, the quality assurance director. "Enhancing Warfighter lethality is our bread and butter."

White, the QA supervisor, highlighted

the command's philosophy for two in-plant personnel and its impact on mission success. "The two in-plant QA specialists, Cliff Hanson and Gabe Busitzky, have an excellent working relationship with the contractor, enabling them to perform their duties efficiently and ensuring all requirements are met."

When requirements are unmet, this philosophy plays a prominent role as all parties work together to develop solutions. In the recent past, when on-time delivery became a challenge for this facility, professional relationships and teaming proved vital.

"The DCMA industrial specialist and Collins' contracts manager took a deep dive into the root causes of the delinquencies," said Brian Adrian, DCMA Twin Cities Engineering director. "Working line item by line item, they identified incorrect contract turnaround times and contract requirements greater than capacity as the biggest causes. The IS, Collins, and (Defense Logistics Agency) worked together to massage a plan to increase on-time delivery. This included a trip by Collins to DLA for a face-to-face discussion on contract structure and a go-forward plan."

Arian said today Collins Aerospace has an improved delivery plan and an on-time delivery rate, outcomes he credits to the

combined government and contractor team put in place last year. At Northrup Grumman Armament Systems — Precision Guided Kits, or PGK, the commitment to warfighter support and professional working relationships make the PGK program special and successful.

“Warfighter support is part of the culture at DCMA and the program offices we support,” he said, adding that he believes it’s a sentiment shared by the Northrup Grumman production line team. “With that common ground firmly entrenched, the relationships built between DCMA, the PGK Army Program Team, and the contractor take over and really make things go.”

According to the Army’s Acquisition Support Center, PGK technology is state of the art and provides a first-of-its-kind capability. PGK contains a Global Positioning System guidance kit with fuse functions and an integrated GPS receiver to correct the inherent errors associated with ballistic firing solutions, reducing the number of artillery projectiles required to attack targets.

“The real-time flow of information and action on the PGK program is extraordinary,” said Adrian. “The DCMA PGK program team definitely does their part to make it happen. That comes in the form of weekly production line status reports, flash reports when potential negative impacts occur, monthly program assessments, timely and recurring program financing payments, fuse inspection and acceptance, all culminated with capability delivered to the warfighter.”

Adam Wilson, DCMA Twin Cities Contracts director, said the PGK contract is valued at \$1.2 billion with an unliquidated obligation value of \$487 million and a period of performance running from 2013



Mark Annen, DCMA program integrator, Lori Nelson, Northrup Grumman Precision Fires portfolio director, Dave Reinsbach, DCMA administrative contracting officer, Glenn Brown, DCMA engineer, Happy Eyafe, DCMA quality assurance specialist, Steve Moberg, DCMA engineer, and Logan Rowell, NG manufacturing engineer, stand just outside the production floor at Northrup Grumman Armament Systems Division — Plymouth Facility. The DCMA team members support the Precision Guided Kits, or PGK, program. (Courtesy photo)

to 2027. It is a complex contract with “lot” deliveries as well as “lot” progress payments requiring “tremendous oversight.”

Success is a joint effort. DCMA, military program offices, industry counterparts and parallel federal agencies work together to support America’s warfighters. As a result, program challenges are often overcome as all involved seek innovation, success and solutions.

“It’s all about getting a quality capability to the warfighter on time and on cost,” said Adrian. “In the case of the PGK, it’s getting our warfighters a guidance package and fuse that turns conventional artillery into a guided projectile with target-specific fusing options. Acquisition insight

is a large part of our business and one way we drive future improvements. The relationships built between DCMA, the Army, and Northrup Grumman Armament Systems, and the real-time flow of acquisition insight that those relationships enable, is a large part of what makes the PGK program successful. DCMA Twin Cities uses PGK as a model as we attempt to propagate program successes to other parts of our business.”



U.S. paratroopers assigned to the 4th Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, fire precision guided munitions from M777 Howitzers while conducting a training exercise at the 7th Army Training Command’s Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany. (Army photo by Visual Information Specialist Gertrud Zach)



The Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine USS Louisiana transits Puget Sound following a 41-month engineered refueling overhaul at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility, Feb. 9, 2023. The Columbia-class ballistic submarine is scheduled to replace the Ohio-class as the older craft begins to leave active service in 2027. (Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Brian Reynolds)

# From Ohio to Columbia

By Jason Kaneshiro

One of the pillars of America’s nuclear triad is fast approaching the end of its service life, and Defense Contract Management Agency is serving a pivotal role in ensuring its heir is ready to deploy and take on the responsibility of boosting national security through strategic deterrence.



A General Dynamics Electric Boat contractor welds the initials of the sponsor of the future Navy ballistic missile submarine District of Columbia onto a metal plate at a ceremony June 2022. (Navy photo courtesy of General Dynamics Electric Boat) (Top) An artist rendering of the Columbia-class ballistic missile submarine. The 12 submarines of the Columbia class are a shipbuilding priority and will replace the Ohio-class submarines reaching maximum extended service life. (Navy illustration)

The Columbia-class ballistic submarine will replace the venerable Ohio-class ballistic submarines, and DCMA's Naval Special Emphasis Operations field office is one of the agencies responsible for overseeing the construction of the new craft.

The Columbia class is the largest and most technologically advanced submarine built by the U.S. and will carry state-of-the-art capabilities in its sensors, weapons and propulsion systems. It's scheduled to begin replacing the Ohio-class boomers as the older craft begins to leave active service in 2027.

With such a high-priority program in their portfolio, DCMA NSEO convened a gathering of key personnel from the Navy's Supervisor of Shipbuilding Conversion and Repair, known as SUPSHIP, and Naval Sea Systems Command, known as NAVSEA, and

their DCMA counterparts in September 2022 at the Philadelphia Navy Yard.

"This event is a good opportunity for our DCMA NSEO managers and supervisors to hear directly from, and interact with, our customers and stakeholders representing the shipbuilding and sustainment sides of our business," said Navy Capt. James Kuhlmann, DCMA NSEO commander.

Kuhlmann said the event was an excellent opportunity for DCMA NSEO personnel to strengthen their familiarity and working relationship with their partners in NAVSEA.

"The event is part informative - understanding the customer's concerns, part professional development - learning more about the naval platforms we support, and part connecting with the mission - understanding the importance



DCMA Navy Special Emphasis Operations field office engaged their Navy Supervisor of Shipbuilding Conversion and Repair and Naval Sea Systems Command customers in September 2022. The engagement included site visits to contractor facilities that support the construction of Navy vessels. (DCMA photo by Jason Kaneshiro)

of what we do through seeing and hearing about the products for which we provide oversight as they progress through testing, installation, and operation," Kuhlmann said.

One of the Navy's concerns involved the suppliers tapped to provide components and materials in the manufacture of the new submarine.

"I was amazed to hear about the extent to which NAVSEA is focused on the industrial base and the levers they are pulling to develop suppliers," Kuhlmann said.

The Columbia class is one of the most complex and capable submarines the world has ever seen, and meeting the schedules and demands of the fleet requires millions of small things to go right, said Navy Capt. Andrew Gillespy, SUPSHIP Groton commanding officer, who attended the event.

"I think our vendor base is fragile right now," Gillespy said. "We have just started ramping up to full-rate production, and it will require great teamwork from the government and from our industry partners to ensure that we get to where the nation needs us to be."

Ensuring the on-time delivery of the Columbia-class submarines means getting quality material on time from the vendor base.

"My goal was to build bridges between the Navy

stakeholders and DCMA and better understand how we could support each other better," Gillespy said. "We rely on DCMA to perform the on-site quality inspections for many of the primary contractor's sub-contractors."

SUPSHIP provides on-site oversight of Electric Boat, the prime contractor, in the construction and maintenance of submarines to ensure superior execution of contracts.

"We are very much like a cross between a company-specific DCMA and a program office," Gillespy explained. "We oversee the building of Virginia- and Columbia-class submarines."

The first two Columbia-class submarines are under construction now.

"In addition to the Columbia class, we are currently building the Block V version of Virginia-class submarine, which includes an additional payload module for most of the class," Gillespy said.

The Virginia class is a smaller, fast attack submarine.

Attack submarines like the Virginia class are key for the Navy to gain access in denied areas, explained Adam Sipp, Virginia-class Submarine Program Office deputy program manager.

"They also defend aircraft carriers from enemy submarines and conduct kinetic strikes on land targets while submerged, preventing (a) counter-strike,"

Sipp said.

Sipp said he concurred it was good to understand the gaps in vendor oversight between SUPSHIP and DCMA and hoped improved communication and understanding between all participating agencies in the oversight of the construction of the Columbia class were an outcome of the conference.

"The biggest thing would be knowing that we are using the combined DCMA and SUPSHIP resources to the best benefit of taxpayers," Sipp said.

Meeting his points of contact in DCMA and knowing how to reach them directly provided another benefit, Sipp cited.

"Partnership and insight are force multipliers," Sipp said. "And that comes from knowing the 'why' behind the customer's actions and connecting to that mission."

Continued communication with customers, renewed commitment to the mission, and more collaboration on efforts that help DCMA and the Navy collectively oversee the supplier base were a highlight of the conference for Kuhlmann.

"Prior to fiscal year 2022, DCMA's support to shipbuilding was relatively basic in scope and complexity," Kuhlmann said. "However, recent events and initiatives are forecasting an expanded working relationship between NAVSEA and DCMA regarding oversight of Navy

industrial base suppliers."

This change may result in DCMA increasing the range and scope of services provided to NAVSEA, Kuhlmann said.

For example, Kuhlmann cited DCMA NSEO assuming quality assurance oversight of outsourced shipbuilding as the kind of workload they are investigating with NAVSEA.

"It may make more sense that DCMA provides that (quality assurance) oversight instead of NAVSEA since DCMA already has a strong presence in the industrial base," Kuhlmann said. "When it comes to nuclear-powered ships, DCMA NSEO is that trusted team of professionals to provide oversight."

DCMA NSEO personnel had been working in person in the manufacturing plants of the industrial base even throughout the COVID pandemic because they understood the importance of the components they actively oversee.

"The teaming is immensely important when it comes to the complexity of nuclear shipbuilding and the timelines for delivery," Kuhlmann said. "When it comes to great power competition, nuclear-powered ships will be in the fight. A sustained focus and effort by the Navy and DCMA for many years will be needed to ensure those ships and submarines are available when needed."



When dealing with aviation, foreign objects fall into three categories: foreign objects, foreign object debris, or FOD, and Foreign Object Damage, known as FOD. FO is an alien substance or article that could potentially enter and/or migrate into/on the product or system, becoming FOD and potentially causing FOD if not removed and controlled. Although the term FOD is often used generically, technically, FOD debris is a precursor to FOD damage. (Air Force photo by Senior Airman Connor Estes)

# Fighting FOD

## Foreign Object Damage costs approximately \$4 billion per year

By Aircraft Operations

Defense Contract Management Agency is, first and foremost, a product delivery organization, managing 225,000 contracts at more than 15,000 contractor facilities worldwide at a total value in excess of \$3.5 trillion.

“Due to the scope and complexity of oversight, many times the agency’s influence extends beyond contract administration and impacts the entire defense industry,” said Laray Deveaux, DCMA Aircraft Operations Ground Operations program



Tech. Sgt. Travis Hendell, 758th Airlift Squadron loadmaster, picks up a piece of foreign object debris, or FOD, during a 'FOD' walk at the Pittsburgh International Airport Air Reserve Station, Pennsylvania. Performing 'FOD' walks protects aircraft engines from any objects on the flight line that could be sucked into the engine and destroy it. (Air Force photo by Joshua Seybert)

manager.

Deveaux is the agency focal point for all aviation ground issues under DCMA’s purview and collaborates with policy, training, risk management and aviation safety for exhaustive contractor surveillance management.

An example of this influence is DCMA’s Aircraft Operations Directorate, a division responsible for implementing policy, training and tools to mitigate risk and help prevent mishaps at contractor facilities under the agency’s purview. DCMA-AO also develops and codifies DCMA policy for asset protection pursuant to Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation System clause 252.228-7001, Ground and Flight Risk.

“For more than a decade, DCMA-AO has teamed closely with (Aerospace Industries Association) to help advance the policies and practices that support asset protection,” said Steve Wyllie, DCMA-AO Policy, Training, and Tools program

manager. “The policies we’ve created help develop the gold standard for all branches of the military and the contractors that support them.”

The primary policy for this protection is DCMA-INST 8210-1, “Contractor’s Flight and Ground Operations,” which is a unique policy signed by the Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard and known as the Combined Instruction. The industry has also provided input to the document development since 2005, and it now serves as the foundation upon which contractors develop flight, ground, and safety procedures.

“In 2017, we began the process to develop a new version of the Combined Instruction, working closely with the services and AIA,” said Wyllie. “The mindset going in was to refocus the core objectives to asset protection, upgrade requirements to meet today’s technologies in flight, ground, and safety operations, and align with aviation industry standards.

AIA was involved through all phases of development and [was] an important partner. I’m proud to say the document is in its final phases of approval.”

The Aerospace Industries Association, known as AIA, defines its mission as “to advocate for policies and investments that keep our country strong, bolster our capacity to innovate and spur economic growth. AIA is dedicated to helping our united membership improve the safety of air transportation, make America more secure, fuel exploration, drive innovation, and ensure a vibrant industrial base.”

Wyllie said by leveraging contacts within AIA, DCMA can address some of the most significant issues facing the safety of aircraft operations.

“One of the biggest challenges in aircraft operations, commercially or within the defense industry, is the prevention of foreign objects that can cause damage to aerospace

systems,” said Deveaux.

When dealing with aviation, foreign objects fall into three categories: foreign objects, foreign object debris, or FOD, and Foreign Object Damage, known as FOD. FO is an alien substance or article that could potentially enter and/or migrate into/on the product or system, becoming FOD and potentially causing FOD if not removed and controlled. Although the term FOD is often used generically, technically, FOD debris is a precursor to FOD damage.

“In the aerospace industry at large, FOD costs approximately \$4 billion per year,” said Deveaux. “One of the most dramatic FOD incidents in recent memory occurred on July 25, 2000, with the loss of an Air France Concorde, killing all 109 crew members, passengers, and four ground personnel. During take-off roll, FOD left by a previously departed aircraft on the runway punctured one of the Concorde’s tires, initiating a deadly cascade of events.”

DCMA contract management offices with aircraft operations deal with the adverse impacts of FOD and look for ways to mitigate the impacts. Last year, aviation assets under agency cognizance experienced three mishaps totaling more than \$585,000, directly attributable to FOD as the primary cause. In two cases, FOD damaged the aircraft engines and required replacement. FOD as a subsequent factor of something else — material deficiencies, human factors, etc. — exceeded \$19,300,000 last year.

“After three consecutive years of positive FOD control trends, we experienced a 4.3 percent increase in FOD escapes last year,” said Deveaux. “We don’t want to see this trend continue to increase, so we’re actively looking at ways we can partner with industry to decrease the impacts.”

DCMA-AO and AIA are developing mitigation

**“One of the most dramatic FOD incidents in recent memory occurred on July 25, 2000, with the loss of an Air France Concorde, killing all 109 crewmembers, passengers, and four ground personnel. During take-off roll, FOD left by a previously departed aircraft on the runway punctured one of the Concorde’s tires, initiating a deadly cascade of events.”**

— Laray Deveaux, DCMA Aircraft Operations Ground Operations program manager

measures for the aerospace industry. For example, in 2017, an international aerospace standard AS9146: “Foreign Object Damage Prevention Program – Requirements for Aviation, Space, and Defense Organizations,” was created to establish an industry-wide set of requirements to help aerospace companies combat the FOD issues with a standardized methodology.

“While DCMA did not participate in the development, this standard corresponded very closely to the existing Combined Instruction requirements for FOD prevention,” said Michael Fludovich, DCMA-AO Policy Program director.

In 2018, AIA, with DCMA-AO, revised their National Aerospace Standard NAS412: “Foreign Object Damage Prevention Guidance Document,” which provided the specific techniques that could be enacted to achieve the prevention requirements identified in AS9146. This update and interaction with AIA continued throughout the development of the new Combined Instruction.

In November 2022, DCMA-AO attended an AIA workshop to revise NAS412. AO’s policy division provided a brief on the vision and expectations of the future Combined Instruction: DCMA-INST 8210-1D.

“Unanimously, all members agreed the future NAS412 should adopt the foreign object definitions described in DCMA-INST 8210-1D that were not defined in the current document,” said Wyllie. “Specifically, the definition of control. Again, the ultimate goal is to align industry/government standards to quell FOD impacts. Once released, the FOD prevention program will place greater emphasis on contractor leadership involvement and empower them to develop innovative processes with greater effectiveness and better prevention.”

DCMA-AO plans continued collaboration with AIA to help develop better industry strategies for national asset protection and innovations within FOD prevention programs.

Wyllie said, “The services and industry strongly support the new FOD prevention program in the 8210-1D and look forward to standardizing program requirements. Further leadership involvement should place greater emphasis on execution and effectiveness.”

DCMA-AO takes a very active role in protecting the nation’s aviation assets.

“We don’t simply want to write policy and conduct training for our CMOs and contractors,” said Jim Broadway, AO deputy executive director.

“We want to be part of the solution to maintain safe and effective aircraft operations.”

In 2021, Deveaux established a round-table of the best and brightest DCMA ground operations subject matter experts to address challenges to the ground operations community, including foreign object elimination and FOD mitigation. To date, this panel has identified 13 threats to U.S. and ally partners’ assets and has implemented cross-geographical countermeasures.

Deveaux believes FOD elimination is possible. “We have visited several contractor facilities where FOD did not exist. We observed at these facilities that the artisans not only understood the ‘what’ of FOD elimination but also the ‘why.’ FOD prevention is a community effort. Despite all of the legislation and training we provide, FOD prevention boils down to each technician, supervisor, and manager actively engaged in the effort. There must be an understanding that a human being’s life depends on what we do.”

To this end, Deveaux’s focus is now on ensuring Aviation Program Team members better recognize when contractor’s procedures or root cause analysis fail to address the human role in FOD prevention effectively.

In 2022, AOO participated on a contractors’ independent

review team to help resolve a Letter of Concern for a significant increase in FOD discrepancies. The effort used aviation experts to help an industry partner identify and resolve blind spots.

Of the effort, a representative wrote, “On behalf of [our] leadership teams, thank you so much for your support and engagement this week. It was quite remarkable how quickly the cross BA, industry partners, and customer teams came together in our moment of need.”

In addition to these industry engagements, DCMA-AO conducts quarterly CMO Risk Advisory Boards chaired by the executive director. Members of the staff average more than 25 years of aviation experience, and they review and endorse each contractor’s corrective action plan on elevated risk inspection findings.

DCMA-AO staff members have often filled CMO-level aviation positions as Government Flight Representatives and Government Ground Representatives during short-term manning gaps experienced throughout the enterprise.

Deveaux said, “We take great pride and ownership in our opportunities to offer practical and tangible support to our CMOs.”

# RESERVE Serving Two Worlds

Military reservists play a vital role in the Department of Defense, providing a more than 800,000 personnel augment pool to the active duty service components. These reserve personnel support organizations and military units around the globe by serving in contingency operations and augmenting exercises, filling manning shortfalls, and tackling complex special projects as needed.

Defense Contract Management Agency offices benefit from reserve support to the agency and civilian employees serving as reservists in support of other organizations. Currently, 175 joint service reservists provide contract and special program services for DCMA throughout the year.

Additionally, DCMA employs more than 850 civilians within the military reserve community supporting other agencies throughout the Defense Department. These individuals support missions and exercises, gaining valuable skills and experiences, which expands the skill set of the agency offices they serve.

This symbiotic relationship with the reserve community results in a better-trained workforce and an organization focused on a shared vision, delivering value to Warfighters throughout the acquisition lifecycle.

The following two articles provide a glimpse into DCMA’s relationship with the reserve community.



# Global Logistics

Retired Rear Adm. Mike Curran continues 31-year career as logistics and acquisition leader by extending longtime professional relationship with DCMA

By Matthew Montgomery

In 1992, Navy Ensign Mike Curran began his naval career as a supply corps officer aboard the USS Portland, never dreaming he would spend the next 31 years moving between active duty and reserve, eventually retiring as a rear admiral from U.S. Sixth Fleet in Naples, Italy.

Curran maintained strong ties to the Defense Contract Management Agency throughout his career, dating back to the late '90s when it was called the Defense Contract Management Command. He currently works for the agency as a general service employee on the Procurement Management Review Team as a procurement analyst — continuing his long career of public service and support to men and women in uniform.

“I remember working out of DCMC’s headquarters at Defense Logistics Agency’s John Kingman Building at Fort Belvoir and then at DCMA’s Metro Park in Springfield,” said Curran, who served in the same DCMC Navy Reserve unit with Jim Russell, former DCMA deputy director.

After 9/11, Curran remembers how the events reshaped reserve requirements supporting the DCMC Crisis Action Team when Joint Reserve members supported 24/7 operations in the following months.

“9/11 was difficult, but it provided our reserve unit a chance to make an impact and show the value we could bring to the agency in times of crisis,” said Curran. “From that moment on, we were intricately intertwined with contract operations stateside and overseas, deploying to places like Djibouti, Africa, when needed.”

Activated reserve members tackled complex problems at contract management offices around the country. For example, Curran recalls supporting a significant effort at the Manassas office to close out

contracts. He led a team of 15 Joint Reserve members who received a crash course in Mechanization of Contract Administration Services, or MOCAS, financial reconciliations.

“We spent over a year of drills working on the project,” Curran recalls. “It involved a lot of research, good communications with the Manassas team, and having an impact. We had a room full of filing cabinets filled with contract files, which needed to be reconciled for closeout. I know that the Manassas team was glad to have our help because we allowed them to focus on their current assignments.”

In 2012, after working in the private sector for about seven years, DLA Aviation as a buyer and then Washington Headquarters Services, Curran rejoined DCMA. He returned as a civilian employee working in the Contracts Directorate as a lead procurement analyst but was soon recalled to active duty to serve as the chief of contracts at Combined Joint Task Force — Horn of Africa at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti.

During this time, Curran and his team faced many challenges involving mitigating loss of services after the Base Operations and Support, or BOS, contractor was changed, resulting in many local political and labor problems for months. He led many changes in contracting at CJTF-HOA, establishing a contracting coordination board to facilitate cooperation between several contracting entities supporting operations. The effort resulted in better coordination of contracting requirements and a more efficient contracting structure.

Upon returning, Curran continued his active-duty service at DCMA-International, where he served as chief of staff for two years, then military deputy to the chief of staff at DCMA headquarters for a year.

While in these roles, Curran continued



to help transition DCMAI from a flag officer position to an O6 command and led several improvement initiatives at DCMAI and agency headquarters. For example, he spearheaded an effort to examine space utilization and open office concepts and made improvements to DCMAI’s strategic planning process and measures of effectiveness.

“Many of the initiatives we were working on became the foundation for how the agency worked in a COVID-19 environment,” said Curran. “We didn’t know it at the time, but our open office concepts and space utilization efforts would become the focus of federal agencies seeking to maximize workspace and minimize physical space footprints in a post-COVID hybrid work environment.”

In 2019, Curran was nominated and selected as a flag officer and then subsequently tapped to serve as the director Fleet Supply, Logistics and Ordnance for U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa, U.S. Sixth Fleet in Naples, Italy.

In this role, Curran led all Navy logistics and engineering operations and plans in Europe and Africa and supported ships deployed to U.S. Sixth Fleet. Curran faced major challenges as COVID-19 impacted supply chains and logistics routing around the globe. He worked closely with major military logistics commands to ensure the movement of military cargo and support for Navy Exchange and Defense Commissary Agency material bound for America’s bases



(Above) Rear Adm. Michael Curran, in May 2022 when serving as director of Logistics, Supply and Ordnance at U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa, U.S. Sixth Fleet, renders a salute during a wreath laying ceremony to commemorate Memorial Day and honor the Allied troops that died in the Battle of Saint Quentin Canal at the Somme American Cemetery in Bony, France. (Navy photo by Lt. Michael Simon)



(Left) Curran leads a press conference with local media about the first of three donations of medical equipment and supplies to local Italian communities in June 2020. (Navy photo)



After Russia invaded Ukraine in early 2022, Rear Adm. Curran and his Fleet Supply, Logistics and Ordnance team supported the USS Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group patrolling the Mediterranean Sea and surrounding areas. (Pictured) The USS Cole, a member of the carrier strike group, transits alongside the fast combat support ship USNS Supply during a replenishment-at-sea, May 17, 2022. (Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Charles Blaine)

and ships. Curran also led humanitarian support relief efforts for COVID-19 providing millions in medical supplies to Italy.

Curran enacted major reforms and remedies to payment invoices related to international support agreements, providing more than \$86 million to Italy and Greece. His efforts led to the solidification of processes that provided accountability and transparency.

“I was humbled and honored when our team was formally recognized by Navy Financial Management with the Most Improved Team Audit Award for 2020,” said Curran. “It was a major win for U.S. diplomacy and military financial accountability working with key U.S. allies.”

When Operation Allies Refuge kicked off, Curran and his team provided support and oversight to Navy Logistics operations at Naval Air Stations Rota, Spain, and Sigonella, Italy.

“Thousands of Afghan allies were processing through these two facilities, which were providing key screening and humanitarian aid for personnel emigrating to the U.S.,” said Curran. “It was both

challenging and rewarding to be part of the process and ensure our personnel had the logistical support they needed to accomplish the mission.”

Curran again sprang into action when Ukraine was invaded by Russia in early 2022. Curran and his team supported the USS Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group patrolling the Mediterranean Sea and surrounding areas.

“We faced difficult logistics supply chain issues, but we were able to leverage our relationships with DLA, United States Fleet Forces, Navy Supply Systems Command, DECA, NEX and U.S. European Command to ensure the CSG, along with a Surface Action Group surged from U.S. Second Fleet, were provided with the food, fuel, and materiel they needed to fulfill their missions.”

Curran officially ended his Navy Reserve career before departing Naples, Italy, May 21, 2022. His family and friends joined him in Italy in person and via livestream.

During the ceremony, Rear Adm. Anthony Carullo, deputy commander U.S. Sixth Fleet and Commander Submarine Group Eight, said, “I can’t overstate how

important and crucial it was having Mike here the past three years — probably three of the most challenging years I’ve seen. During global supply chain challenges caused by COVID, Mike ensured the 14,000 Sailors and Marines stationed on nearly 40 ships throughout our operating area received needed supplies to perform mission requirements. He also worked to complete over \$350 million in military construction projects, including a 150-person Expeditionary Medical Facility strategically positioned in Norway ... I don’t think anyone can argue Mike’s true calling is logistics, and the Navy is a better organization because of his contributions.”

Curran officially returned to DCMA in September 2022, where he hopes to take the knowledge gained supporting the Navy in Italy and apply it to his new agency role.

“DCMA shaped my Navy career from the beginning, and I’m proud to serve the agency now that my naval career has come to an end,” said Curran. “I’m very grateful for the support received over my career from DCMA’s leadership and especially my co-workers in (the Contracts Directorate).”

# QA

## Reserve advisor discusses DCMA role, career development

By Matthew Montgomery

Air Force Reserve Col. Roderick Owens was recently selected to the rank of brigadier general marking a significant milestone in his career and moving him closer to the role he supports for the Defense Contract Management Agency.

Owens, who will pin on his new rank in 2023, currently serves as the mobilization assistant to DCMA Director Army Lt. Gen. David Bassett and as the Joint Reserve Program commander for the agency. These two positions provide critical support to the contracting community and allow the agency to leverage reserve forces as needed to augment contracting offices around the globe with expertise in program management, contracting support and operational support like weapon system deliveries.

Owens recently sat down with INSIGHT magazine to discuss his current roles, future plans and the path leading to his upcoming promotion.

**INSIGHT: SIR, CAN YOU EXPLAIN YOUR ROLES AS THE MOBILIZATION ASSISTANT AND COMMANDER OF THE JOINT RESERVE PROGRAM FOR DCMA?**

**OWENS:** As the mobilization assistant, I’m in queue to backfill the active-duty general officer billet. In this particular case, I would backfill Lt. Gen. Bassett as the director of DCMA if the need arose. I also serve as the commander of the Joint Reserve Program. DCMA



is a joint organization, which means I am responsible for the successful implementation and execution of the entire agency Reserve Force — Army Reserve Element, Navy Reserve and Air Force Reserve. I work closely with Total Force management to ensure timely steps and actions are taken to provide full mission support to DCMA from our Reserve Forces. Lastly, I do other duties as assigned from Lt. Gen. Bassett.

As commander of the Reserve Forces, ultimately, it is my responsibility to ensure we — the Reserve Forces — are providing added value to the active duty forces and the DCMA organizational mission in its entirety. I work closely with Lt. Gen. Bassett and provide quarterly feedback to him regarding the Reserve Forces and programs we're supporting. I also try to meet, at a minimum, once a month to provide status on any additional duties he may have assigned me.

**INSIGHT: CAN YOU SUMMARIZE YOUR CAREER, HIGHLIGHTING THE POSITIONS THAT PREPARED YOU FOR YOUR CURRENT ROLE?**

Owens: For the first five years of my career, I was assigned to Space and Missile Systems Center, now called Space Systems Center. This was extremely challenging and, at the same time, rewarding. This is where I received all of my training, either via courses for certification or on-the-job training for program management, acquisitions, system engineering, contracting, budgeting, as well as research, development and testing, and test and evaluation. This is where I became a true satellite and launch engineer. I was blessed to be exposed to many opportunities early in my career to sink or swim and am deeply grateful for all of those opportunities.

After leaving Los Angeles Air Force Base, now LA Space Force Base, I transferred to

the National Reconnaissance Office as a mid-level to senior-level captain. This is where I really honed my satellite and rocket expertise — both as a military member and a contractor. This is also where the technical and management aspect came together; I was placed into a position to better understand the technical aspects of systems as well as manage and lead teams to accomplish mission-specific assignments.

I was at the NRO for the majority of my career and worked for several different towers, steadily gaining more responsibility and demonstrating leadership skills important to the Air Force as well as the organization. In supporting the different towers, I had the opportunity to support numerous mission areas including being a liaison officer to Strategic Command in Omaha, Nebraska, representing NRO equities, assets [and] capabilities to U.S. Strategic Command.

Serving in this role allowed me to grow and interface with the commander and deputy commander of a unified combatant command. The NRO offered me the opportunity to accept many different challenges and grow and mature as a military officer. I departed the NRO as a colonel and performed my first stint at the Pentagon, working for the Secretary of the Air Force's Acquisition Integration Division, known as AQX.

This division is responsible for the planning, management and analysis of the Air Force's research and development and acquisition investment budget. In this role, I was primarily responsible for taking care of the Reserve community as well as duties as assigned from the director, projects that needed a high level of attention and involvement from a senior leader in the organization to drive to closure. I moved from SAF/AQX to my current position in DCMA.

**INSIGHT: WHAT IS YOUR CIVILIAN JOB? WHAT SKILLS, CONNECTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS ARE YOU ABLE TO LEVERAGE IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE WITH DCMA?**

Owens: I work as a System Engineering Technical Advisor, known as a SETA. This role allows me to leverage my experience gained from the military — technical, managerial [and] leadership — and apply it to my current circumstances and position. As a SETA, it is our job to serve as the government's trusted agent and expert and provide analysis and engineering services. We support or improve organization policy development, decision-making, program and/or project management, and administration support. The skills I learned as an officer allow me to successfully navigate the technical and management aspects of previous and current SETA positions. The intelligence community is very small, and the relationships developed throughout a career can always be proven to be helpful.

**INSIGHT: WHAT WERE YOUR THOUGHTS WHEN YOU FOUND OUT YOU WERE SELECTED TO BG? WAS IT EXPECTED, OR WERE YOU TAKEN BY SURPRISE?**

Owens: I felt overcome with emotions. It is a feeling that is still hard for me to describe. It's very overwhelming, humbling and not something I accomplished alone. It's taken the mentoring, leadership, guidance, friendship and literally a village of support for me to get to this point in my career. I am so blessed and thankful that the Air Force concluded I was worthy of the rank. I still have a lot to give and accomplish, and it's truly a rewarding feeling seeing that the Air Force also believes I have more to contribute to this great service and country.

I was very surprised. I was flying the entire day for work,

**"For the first five years of my career, I was assigned to Space and Missile Systems Center, now called Space Systems Center. This was extremely challenging and, at the same time, rewarding. ... This is where I became a true satellite and launch engineer. I was blessed to be exposed to many opportunities early in my career to sink or swim and am deeply grateful for all of those opportunities."**

**— Air Force Reserve Col. Roderick Owens**

and when I landed, I saw I had a text message from Maj. Gen. Burger's aide. My heart kind of dropped because I knew last time I received that call from Maj. Gen. Sauter, it wasn't good news. Needless to say, I was cautiously optimistic. When I spoke to Maj. Gen. Burger, and he relayed the great news and message, I was simply ecstatic.

*\*Note: Air Force Maj. Gen. Matthew Burger serves as the Deputy to the Chief of Air Force Reserve, Headquarters U.S. Air Force at the Pentagon. He facilitates matters about the oversight of Air Force Reserve appropriations for personnel, operations and maintenance, and construction programs. When Air Force reserve personnel are under consideration for selection to the general officer community, Burger calls them directly with the results. Maj. Gen. Scott Sauter is the Mobilization Assistant to the Chief of the Air Force Reserve and relayed to Owens the message that he was not selected the first time around.*

**INSIGHT: WHAT DOES THIS PROMOTION MEAN FOR YOUR FUTURE PLANS? HAVE THEY CHANGED?**

Owens: My plans have always been to serve the Air Force in whatever capacity I could. Now, I have the opportunity to continue to serve in a general officer capacity and hopefully do even more for the service members and the service itself. There will come a time when I am no longer allowed to serve this country, and that is when I will retire, but until that time comes, I plan to support the military, the organization and

this country to the fullest extent possible.

**INSIGHT: GIVEN THE PENDING PROMOTION, DO YOU SEE YOURSELF STAYING WITH THE AGENCY OR MOVING ON TO A PRE-DETERMINED ROLE THAT COMES WITH THE INCREASED RANK?**

Owens: I will stay with and at DCMA until the Air Force tells me otherwise. Once the promotion occurs, I am certain the Air Force will relocate me to another assignment where they see a need for someone with my skill set and experience/expertise.

**INSIGHT: IS THERE ANYONE YOU WANT TO RECOGNIZE OR GIVE KUDOS TO THOSE WHO HELPED YOU GET TO THIS POINT?**

Owens: There is a long list of names that I would like to thank, recognize and give kudos. First and foremost, all thanks goes to the Lord my God for giving me the strength, the intelligence and the grit to get to this point. I'd especially like to thank my lovely and beautiful wife, Norma, for always supporting me on this journey and particularly for believing in me during this long career as an Air Force officer. I would also like to thank my parents, family and my village — friends, mentors, leaders and bosses — for continuing to support me throughout the journey starting back in 1989.

Finally, I would like to thank the former director of DCMA, Navy Vice Adm. David Lewis, for initially hiring me to fulfill the responsibilities of the MA billet. And I would like to thank Lt. Gen. Bassett for allowing me to continue functioning in the billet when he joined DCMA as the new director and [for] believing in me and my capabilities.



# Cybersecurity Pro Wins STEM Award



By Tonya Johnson

Nicole Dobson realized in high school that she wanted to pursue a STEM career.

Her original plan was to join the Air Force, but during her senior year of high school, she took a computer programming class, which sparked her interest in science, technology, engineering and math.

“After that class, I changed my mind instantly and decided to major in computer science at Bethune-Cookman University,” said Dobson, an information technology cybersecurity specialist for Defense Contract Management Agency’s Technical Directorate. “I was determined and excited to represent African American females in a STEM career.”

Women of Color magazine recently recognized Dobson’s STEM enthusiasm and professional performance at DCMA with the publication’s STEM Technology Rising Star award.

Dobson, a nine-year DCMA team member, works in the Technical Directorate’s Defense Industrial Base Cybersecurity Assessment Center, known as DIBCAC.

“I feel so appreciative, honored, happy and humbled to have been selected for this award,” said Dobson. “This recognition is amazing and surreal. I am still processing and thinking to myself whether this is really happening to me.”

The publication promotes minority achievement in STEM careers. The

organization sponsors multiple conferences, including the Women of Color STEM Conference and Black Engineer of the Year Awards STEM Global Competitiveness Conference.

“This award means so much to me to know that my leadership and peers have been watching me and chose to recognize my work ethic,” Dobson said. “It really gives me an incredible feeling of being acknowledged, seen and heard for the many efforts that I have put in over the course of my career.”

Dobson said her job allows her to support the nation’s military and hone her technical skills. Prior to her current position, Dobson worked as a quality assurance specialist — and later as a software technical specialist — for DCMA Special Programs South within the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program. In addition, she has worked as a technical support analyst and computer systems security analyst for Lockheed Martin. Her diverse experience helped develop her IT cybersecurity specialist skills.

“Nicole is the most conscientious person I have ever had the pleasure to work with,” said Mia Hazelgrove, DIBCAC team chief and Dobson’s supervisor. “She truly cares about each individual person. She makes every person feel welcome and comfortable, no matter the situation.”

As an IT specialist and DIBCAC assessor, Dobson provides detailed Defense

Industrial Base cybersecurity assessment findings and results. She is responsible for providing an in-depth analysis of the current cybersecurity practices and implementation throughout the DIB’s IT infrastructure and network. Additionally, she facilitates instructional cybersecurity assessor training and certification for all Department of Defense agencies to ensure cybersecurity compliance.

“In my current position as an IT cybersecurity specialist, I act as a verification instrument to the Department of Defense’s cybersecurity enforcement policies and doctrine,” she said. “I believe my technical prowess, communication skills, encouraging spirit, friendly attitude and calm demeanor have enabled me to be placed in high-pressure situations where I have produced positive outcomes for the warfighter. I train personnel from the DOD agencies to perform assessments with the correct analytical and technical skills to achieve the optimum assessment results. My assessment results show a real-time representation of a contractor’s ability to meet the requirements necessary to protect controlled unclassified information in non-federal systems and organizations, and ultimately, their ability to safeguard controlled unclassified information.”

As she reflects on her recent recognition, Dobson is glad to be a part of the DCMA team.

She said the agency provides employees

with various training experiences and opportunities for mentorship. Dobson also appreciates the flexible work schedule and interacting with her coworkers, who have a wealth of knowledge.

“We have a diverse group of employees here whom all contribute to the mission success of DCMA by providing a variety of different experiences, unique skills, increasing morale, and creating efficiency and effectiveness within the organization,” she explained.

Dobson thanked her leaders and peers for helping her grow in her position. She has learned much from them over the years and appreciates the mentorship, guidance, and encouragement. Two of her mentors are Angela McLean, a cyber-governance risk and compliance staff

analyst for a DOD contractor, and Mike Ludtka, a DCMA Special Programs South quality assurance supervisor.

Dobson’s immediate career goals are to stay with DCMA and continue to support military personnel and their global missions.

“I want to continue to grow in my career where I can continue to learn, take on additional responsibilities, and contribute as much value as possible to the team and organization,” she said.

Dobson has a bachelor’s degree in computer science from Bethune-Cookman University and a Master’s of Business Administration degree from Webster University. In addition, she has multiple DOD, Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act, known as DAWIA,

“This award means so much to me to know that my leadership and peers have been watching me and chose to recognize my work ethic. It really gives me an incredible feeling of being acknowledged, seen and heard for the many efforts that I have put in over the course of my career.”

— Nicole Dobson, DCMA cybersecurity specialist

and Computing Technology Industry Association certifications in IT, quality assurance, security, networking, and software. She is also a Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., member where she mentors school-age children in various youth initiative programs.

Dobson encourages youth, especially females and minorities, to pursue a career in STEM.

“We need more women and minorities in STEM careers to help to expand on the small percentage of their presence in this area today,” Dobson noted. “Today, it is presently and historically dominated by males. I believe that a bigger representation of minority women in STEM will encourage other young women to pursue a career in STEM.”



The DCMA CARES Council charter was updated Oct. 6, 2022. The revision added three new team members: Nicole Dandridge, anti-harassment program manager, Sonya Ebright, deputy director, and Renee Brown, Information Technology management analyst and president of American Federation of Government Employees Council 170. (DCMA photo by Thomas Perry)

# Respect & Resilience

## CARES Council renews charter, vision for future

By Misha King

Coined by Andrea Benoit, Eastern Region General Counsel, Defense Contract Management Agency CARES stands for Cultivating an Atmosphere of Respect and Resilience through Education and Support.

The council's mission is "to openly discuss, identify, and bring to bear specific measures to eradicate the devastating impact that racism, extremism, sexual assault/harassment, workplace violence, other destructive behaviors, and

suicide has on all [DCMA] personnel, in both their personal and professional lives."

The council renewed its charter Oct. 6, 2022, officially welcoming a new chair and two new team members.

Sonya Ebright, DCMA's deputy director, became the council's leader in May when selected as the agency's second in command. As a CARES team member before becoming the chair, Ebright said her vision for the council's future includes having workplace oversight

and keeping the programs that take care of DCMA's people sustained so they remain meaningful to the team members in the field.

"We want to have a series of programs that people can use, and the CARES Council is responsible for that piece of it," she said. "We are accountable for that oversight, that insight, and making sure it's up to date, current and usable for our 11,000-plus people."

Ebright said the council will always have subgroups and integrated project teams, and she encourages employees in the field to play an active role in developing CARES initiatives.

"[The Council] is a DCMA-wide program, so it shouldn't just be somebody at

headquarters deciding what the rest of DCMA needs," she said. "We are wide open for and welcome ideas and help from any team member around the globe."

In this charter update, the council added American Federation of Government Employees union representation. Renee Brown, a DCMA Information Technology management analyst and president of AFGE Council 170, said the goal is to establish a highly effective relationship and create a communication channel where employees' voices are heard.

"This communication channel has the potential to produce substantial benefits for all parties," Brown said. "These

benefits include delivering improved services to our DCMA team members, improved mutual understanding, and an opportunity for participants to contribute their experience and ideas toward developing and implementing workforce policies."

The charter update also brought the Anti-Harassment Program under the CARES Council umbrella. The recently published DCMA Manual 4201-26, Anti-Harassment Program, establishes agency-wide procedural requirements that set forth responsibilities to maintain a harassment-free workplace and to take prompt and effective action when allegations of harassment arise.

"The goal of the program is to ensure employees and supervisors are aware of the procedures for reporting and responding to harassment," said Nicole Dandridge, the agency's anti-harassment program manager, who now serves on the CARES Council. "DCMA is committed to fostering an organizational culture in which harassment is not tolerated and in which respect and civility are promoted. This goes hand-in-hand with the CARES Council's mission."

Army Lt. Gen. David Bassett,



DCMA's director, said the additions to the council are necessary steps for the agency to show it is sincerely and promptly addressing the things that can become corrosive to the workforce and its culture.

"The CARES Council is perhaps the most visible demonstration of that concern and gives our employees a single place they can come to and get access to the support services they may need," he said.

In addition to union and anti-harassment program members, the council includes participants from other organizations and programs such as Equal Employment Opportunity, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response, and the Employee Assistance Program. Bassett reinforced the importance of these organizations working cross-

functionally to support DCMA team members.

initiative, which resulted in the deployment of a comprehensive Get Help web page and an always-present Get Help desktop app that provides quick access to mental health resources."

Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Adam Rising, DCMA's senior enlisted advisor and council member, said the Get Help web page and desktop app are only the first steps to making these programs more accessible across the diverse and dispersed agency.

"We can do more to support our workforce, and part of that effort includes hearing and understanding our workforce's needs as trusted professionals," said Rising. "That's why we've updated the charter to add union and anti-harassment program representatives to the cross-functional team. Their voices and insight will help guide the council's path forward."

The CARES Council officially stood up Sept. 14, 2021, with a mission "to openly discuss, identify, and bring to bear specific measures to eradicate the devastating impact that racism, extremism, sexual assault/harassment, workplace violence, other destructive behaviors, and suicide has on all [DCMA] personnel, in both their personal and professional lives."



# Family Business

## Agency promotes effort to hire military spouses

By Thomas Perry

Military spouses sacrifice much to support their warfighters and troop readiness. The Department of Defense wants to reward that sacrifice and champion untapped professional assets.

In a Sept. 22, 2022 memo titled “Taking Care of Our Service Members and Families,” Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III highlighted several ways the Defense Department will improve financial security for military members and their families. The DOD website has a special landing page to detail many of these efforts.

“Our military families provide the strong foundation for our force, and we owe them our full support,” said Austin. “This is also personal for me. I have seen firsthand how much our military families sacrifice to keep our force strong, healthy and ready to defend this exceptional nation. In the face of challenges and frustrations, our families show incredible resilience. Over the past

year, we have focused on ways to take even better care of our service members and their families. I am proud of the progress that we have made, and we will keep driving hard to do even more. I understand the extraordinary pressures that our military families face — and we are determined to do right by them every step of the way.”

Improving military spouse employment is among the memo’s priorities. The approach is multifaceted and includes developing occupational licensure interstate compacts; increasing noncompetitive, direct-hiring authorities; launching a new pilot to match military spouses with private-sector fellowships; and expanding the Military Spouse Employment Partnership.

To keep in step, DCMA rededicated its efforts to hire military spouses. The initiative aligns to benefit both employer and employee. The agency’s warfighter-support mission, global presence and organizational flexibility make it a perfect fit for military

spouse employment, and military spouses provide professional acumen, a team-first mindset and unique warfighter-support insight.

According to DOD Civilian Careers, the Military Spouse Preference program, or MSP, provides a key component to boost spouse employment:

“It applies to spouses of active-duty military members of the Armed Forces, including the Coast Guard and full-time National Guard. The program offers opportunities for spouses who desire priority consideration for competitive service positions at DOD activities in the U.S. and its territories and possessions. When a service member is relocated via a permanent change of station, the spouse is entitled to MSP for all positions in the commuting area of the new duty station.”

Holly Borah, a Human Resources specialist and member of Total Force Directorate’s Field Support Center, explained how hiring authorities can benefit from this program.

“The Military Spouse Preference was created by DOD to support military spouses in advancing their careers despite the frequent relocations required by military life,” said Borah. “They are often an untapped applicant pool for managers to consider. Many can



Air Force Capt. Jennifer Orozco, 60th Medical Operations Squadron clinical social worker and her spouse, Josue, participate in the Military Spouse Appreciation Day campaign at Travis Air Force Base, California, in 2022. To align with Defense Department initiatives, DCMA rededicated its efforts to hire military spouses with a plan that benefits employer and employee. (Air Force photo by Chustine Minoda)

bring a great skill set to the workforce.”

The DCMA workforce is dedicated to one mission: to produce and deliver the nation’s warfighters the equipment they need to fight, survive, win battles and come home, she said.

“Because of this, the hiring of military spouses is a vested interest in supporting the DCMA mission and civilian workforce,” said Borah. “What makes military spouses an asset to DCMA civilian workforce is they have the ability to deal with stress and pressure often in their lives, they are extremely adaptable, are committed and have an invested interest in supporting the warfighter.”

“Taking Care of Our Service Members and Families’ priorities

For spouses who rely on state licenses for their professions, frequent permanent change of station moves can impact their earning potential, along with the mental and financial strain of reapplying for licenses in new states. Currently, licensure compacts for some professions exist, and the DOD is working on expanding those to more states. These compacts, developed with industry partners, include a variety of medical professions, and the department is working on agreements for teaching, social work, dentistry, massage therapy, and cosmetology/barbering for states to approve in 2023. This effort is expected to expand to more licenses in the future, according to the DOD. Details about transferring a license can be found on the Military OneSource website.

Austin also directed the military services to increase the opportunities for spouses

to receive a direct hire for noncompetitive positions. For those seeking positions outside the federal government, Austin promoted fellowships for military spouses through the U.S. Chamber of Commerce program “Hiring Our Heroes.”

Applications for DOD’s new Military Spouse Career Accelerator Program are being taken now for opportunities in 2023. Additionally, other companies have various fellowships available for military spouses. More details can be found on the Hiring our Heroes website.

The final effort includes expanding the Military Spouse Employment Partnership. The program started in 2011 and has helped more than 250,000 military spouses find employment, said Gilbert R. Cisneros Jr., the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, during an induction ceremony Oct. 25, 2022, at an MSEP three-day workshop in northern Virginia. During the induction ceremony, Cisneros recognized the 70 new employers added to the program, which now boasts more than 600 companies. Efforts to add more companies are ongoing. Visit the Military Spouse Employment Partnership website for more information.

### Leadership’s Mindset

Army Lt. Gen. David Bassett, the DCMA director, shared his thoughts on the military spouse hiring initiative to highlight the benefits for military spouses and the agency’s team of trusted professionals, who deliver

value to America’s warfighters throughout the acquisition lifecycle:

“Military spouses, as a group, have a great deal of education (and) experience, whether they’re degreed at a four-year university or not. I think there’s a place at DCMA for them.

Whether part of our quality team, contract administration, finance groups, [or] pricing. There are great opportunities across the agency for military spouses to participate.

If they don’t come with those skills already, our Keystone program provides a fantastic opportunity to receive the training from the ground up to learn those skills and remain part of our workforce.

I think it starts with deliberate outreach. It’s about letting military spouses across the country and around the world know that DCMA is looking for their talent and skill within our agency.

There’s an opportunity to have a career that will follow them wherever they’re assigned. It starts with that outreach, whether that’s online through LinkedIn, whether that’s through conferences, and I think the best outreach is just simply word of mouth.

As DCMA employees know of a military spouse that could become part of our team, we want to make sure that we’re reaching out to them to make sure that we’re capturing that talent.

We ask an awful lot of our military spouses. We often ask them to sacrifice every time their spouse is relocated across an entire military career. And this gives, I think, a great opportunity for spouses to be part of an organization that can provide employment wherever their spouse is relocated, whether that’s a DCMA location near the base that they’ve been relocated to or potentially even a remote job that they can take with them throughout their spouse’s military career.

DCMA has offices all across the country. In nearly any place that a military member would be assigned, there’s probably an opportunity with DCMA that’s close enough to support military spouse employment.

Those spouses are already part of our military family. They understand the demands of service. They understand what we are asking of their spouses and of the warfighters, and having somebody that’s already part of that community makes them a great fit to be part of our team of trusted acquisition professionals that can deliver value on the contracts that we manage and the products that we deliver. And I’m really hopeful that we can become ... DCMA can become, really, the employer of choice for military spouses across the department.”



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