

because I was part of the first group of lieutenants ever assigned there. We had great leadership that put us in with the interns and really allowed us to move around and learn our jobs,” said Kop. “After four years, they told me I would be coming back -- once you’ve been here, it’s inevitable you’ll be back. Now, 23 years later, I’m coming back to the area. It’s a full circle back to where I started my career.”

As the new commander, Kop oversees

contract management offices dispersed from Texas to Alaska and Hawaii, which comprise more than 2,200 DCMA civilians and approximately 160 active duty military personnel. The region is responsible for more than 68,000 active contracts with an obligated amount of more than \$450 billion.

Lowry, who has more than 30 years experience in defense acquisition management, was honored during an

emotional retirement ceremony following the change of command.

“There are countless mentors throughout my career who enabled me to be successful,” said Lowry. “Working for DCMA is a highlight of my life, and to all those that made it possible — thank you for the opportunity.”

In review: Ellis assesses Central's progress

Jo Adail Stephenson | DCMA Public Affairs

“I work for you ... not the other way around. My job is to support the tactical mission which is all about taking care of the interests of the taxpayer and the warfighter and that’s what you do,” said Army Col. John A. Ellis to Defense Contract Management Agency Central Regional Command employees when he assumed command in June 2011.

Fifteen months later, Ellis is still working for Central Regional Command employees and customers as well as warfighters as DCMA’s tenured regional commander after changes of command took place recently at the Eastern and Western Regional Commands. “I know my colleagues are very qualified and will quickly adapt to their new roles as region commanders,” he said.

Ellis quickly adapted to his new role by “establishing goals for myself and the region.”

Those goals included:

- Building on the progress achieved by his predecessor and continuing to mold the Central Region staff into a fully functioning integrated team.

- Establishing a focus on performance accountability and metrics throughout the region and achieving significant improvement in areas of deficiency.
- Emphasizing a visible commitment to stewardship by establishing ongoing processes for tracking and correcting findings related to various inspections and routinely visiting the contract management offices to conduct interactive operations briefings and reviews.
- Establishing and supporting various recognition programs to reward Central Regional Command employees for their achievements.
- Creating clear and consistent communication channels between the agency’s chief operations officer, the sectors, and the CMOs to address issues quickly and efficiently.

Assessing his first year in command, Ellis said, “We have made significant progress in all of these areas, and I plan to continue my focus on these initiatives.”

The biggest challenge is adjusting to changes in the leadership team, according to Ellis. “Through promotions and transfers we have lost many highly talented employees,” he said. “As a leadership team, we must find highly qualified replacements and ensure we provide the mentoring and support to accelerate the development of these new employees.”

In the coming year, Ellis said he will continue to focus on employee performance and development through increased emphasis on the individual performance



*Army Col. John A. Ellis
DCMA Central Regional Command
commander*

plan and electronic individual development plan processes; integrated initiatives with the agency and the chief operating officer to push more decision-making responsibilities to the region and CMO level; and resource planning during a period of significant uncertainty caused by changing mission requirements and fiscal concerns.

When asked what advice he would give to the new commanders of the Eastern and Western Regional Commands, Ellis said, “The best advice I can give them is based on my experiences: Build a region staff committed to customer service. Create and sustain open lines of communication with all of your stakeholders. Pay attention to your people. Recognize, reward, counsel and mentor. Be patient - DCMA is a highly matrixed organization with lots of functional overlaps. Listen to all inputs and work collectively for win/win outcomes.”

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commander