

The MICC Communicator



July 2012

Mission and Installation Contracting Command

Vol. 2, Issue 3

Program aims to enhance MICC contract administration

by Daniel P. Elkins
MICC Public Affairs Office

Officials from the Mission and Installation Contracting Command at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, continue to implement phases of its Quality Assurance Program aimed at improving contract administration and oversight to help ensure Army organizations are getting what they pay for.

The program builds upon steps already being taken by the Army to address deficiencies identified in various reports from the 2007 Gansler Commission, Government Accountability Office and Army Audit Agency.

Focused primarily on expeditionary contracting operations, leaders with the MICC took lessons learned from commission's findings to strengthen the compliance of contracts let in the continental United States with federally established quality control standards and requirements.

"The reports identified the Army had a material weakness in contract administration and oversight and documentation of that oversight," said Joe Merry, a senior quality assurance specialist with the

See QUALITY, Page 8



Photo by Ryan Mattox

Maj. Gen. Camille Nichols discusses contracting operations with the Mission and Installation Contracting Command senior staff July 10 at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

MG Nichols visits MICC

Army Contracting Command's commanding general visited Fort Sam Houston, Texas, July 10 marking her first trip to a subordinate unit since taking command of ACC in May.

Maj. Gen. Camille Nichols had the opportunity to see first-hand the impact being made by members of the Mission and Installation Contracting Command while also learning about the command's successes and challenges.

She received a series of briefings including a command overview from Brig. Gen. Kirk Vollmecke, the MICC commanding general, as well as a summary of functional changes at the MICC headquarters.

"It is hard to change an organization," she said. "It is about getting the most capacity on the floor and making sure we have people empowered to do their job ... and bring the best in class inside our organization out to the field as soon as possible so they can benefit

from someone else's great ideas."

She was also briefed on the command's workload and workforce; the gap assessment in knowledge, skills and proficiency; and small business efforts.

She informed MICC leaders of changes taking place in ACC.

"The Army Contracting Command is going to be an APT organization, which means we are going to be quick and responsive," said Nichols referring to agile, proficient and trusted. "That agile piece means we have got to be able to morph. The basic core competency – writing contracts – won't change, but how we do it might change a little bit."

The general stressed that each person is vital to such change.

"You are what will make this organization go. We have got to get back to what our organization is all about – contracting. We need to be more proficient and efficient in how we approach our jobs."

Contracting for Soldiers

CONTENTS

CG: Core Values Vital to Contracting 4

MICC Members Earn ACC Acquisition Honors 6

MICC Events Target Small Business, Industry 9

Chief of Staff's Journey Comes to End 12



COMMAND STAFF

Brig. Gen. Kirk F. Vollmecke
Commanding General

George M. Cabaniss Jr.
Deputy to the Commander

Command Sgt. Maj. Rodney J. Rhoades
Command Sergeant Major

EDITORIAL STAFF

Ben Gonzales
Director, Office of Public and Congressional Affairs

Dan Elkins
Deputy Director, Office of Public and Congressional Affairs

Ryan Mattox
Congressional Affairs Liaison

The MICC Communicator is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. Army. Contents of The MICC Communicator are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or Mission and Installation Contracting Command. The MICC Communicator is a quarterly publication produced by the Mission and Installation Contracting Command Office of Public and Congressional Affairs. All editorial content is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the MICC Office of Public and Congressional Affairs.

Submissions to The MICC Communicator may sent to the MICC Office of Public and Congressional Affairs at 2219 Infantry Post Road, Fort Sam Houston, TX 78234-1361 or you may reach the staff at (210) 466-2291 or usarmy.jbsa.acc-micc.list.pao@mail.mil.



www.facebook.com/army.micc



MISSION

Provide Army Commands, installations and activities with responsive contracting solutions and oversight.

Army Strength: Soldiers, families, civilians

by Command Sgt. Maj. Rodney Rhoades
MICC command sergeant major

A rmy Chief of Staff Gen. Raymond Odierno recently said that America's greatest generations are built on the strength of America's strongest citizens – U.S. Soldiers.

Foundational in those words are the three following core attributes: The strength of our nation is our Army. The strength of our Army is our Soldiers. The strength of our Soldiers is our families.

The federal civilian workforce is also a vital link in the strength of this nation. The professional civilian workforce at the Mission and Installation Contracting Command continues to provide direct and indirect support to Soldiers and their families in an evolving world climate that is directly tied to the strength of our Army.

Woven through all three attributes is a common theme – each is dependent on the other and bounded by trust between Soldiers, civilians, leaders, families and the American public.

As subordinate command to the Army Contracting Command, we are responsible for meeting the needs of Soldiers and their families throughout the nation. From feeding Soldiers and helping shape tomorrow's leaders through contracted training services to supporting operations at installations and building much needed facilities, our role in meeting the needs of the Army couldn't be more important.

The celebration of the Army's 237th birthday in June demonstrated that we have always been and will always continue to be the strength of this nation. Our Soldiers are the world's most decisive land force capable of effective operations across the spectrum of conflict. This competence begins with our ability to provide the most effective training and equipment.

As we reduce the size of the Army and shape the future force, we remain entrusted by the American people to not only provide innovative business solutions for acquisitions but also best prepare Soldiers who are leaving active duty.

Many of the Soldiers redeploying from downrange and returning to their families are genuinely concerned about their futures. We owe it to them to provide the best contracted services available so that they can make well-informed decisions; whether it's about retirement, separating to pursue a full-time education or moving onto another career in the private sector. Some of you working alongside Soldiers who are facing similar situations may already have an

understanding of their needs and the challenges they face in this present environment.

The Army secretary's commitment to transform the institutional Army in an era of budget uncertainty and limited resources following a decade of war will be a challenge for many us all. But as a team, I trust that your hard work and dedication will be the difference in once again preserving the strength of our Army and nation.

Contracting for Soldiers! MICC Strong! Army Strong!



Core values foundation to contracting

by Brig. Gen. Kirk Vollmecke
MICC commanding general

The Army chief of staff has stated the strength of our nation is our Army, and the strength of our Army is our Soldiers, and the strength of our Soldiers is our families. The Mission and Installation Contracting Command adds that the strength is not just the Soldiers; it is also the Army civilians.

The MICC's strength comes from our motto: Contracting for Soldiers. This defines our role to our nation, to our Army, and to our Soldiers and defines who we are and what we do. Our inherent strength is our motto. Each and every member of our team provides the necessary resources to give our Soldiers what they need to continue to be America's decisive force. Our motto is the most connected statement to what an organization does that I have ever seen.

We are in the process of realigning our command. We owe it to ourselves, our higher headquarters and the Army to make sure we are aligned properly for maximum potential. We must get the staffing procedures right. The MICC headquarters must be ready for the single Principal Assistant Responsible for Contracting implementation based upon the single Head of Contracting Activity construct. It is about managing change and moving forward as



Photo by Ben Gonzales

Brig. Gen. Kirk Vollmecke delivers the keynote address during the Fourth of July Patriotic Ceremony at the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in Texas.

an organization. We are going to take the goodness from the past and develop it into our future. We are not going back; we are going forward. We are going to collapse the mission contracting center/mission contracting office/installation contracting office construct; and localize it with regional emphasis to focus on the span of control.

We are now five years after the Gansler Report has come out. There is an expectation – from the Hill, from our senior leaders all the way

up to the secretary of the Army – about improving contracting oversight. Responsive solutions and oversight go hand in hand. The MICC should be recognized not only for its solutions but its premier and timely contracting support. We must be dedicated to contract administration, contract management and oversight. We must focus on our procurement and non-procurement roles and then shepherd requirements from development to fruition.

We have a lot of parallel efforts

You are the strength of the MICC. This is our time – our window – and we must seize the opportunity to do all we can for our command, our Soldiers, our Army and our nation.



going on right now. We need to support the Army Contracting Command commanding general's priority of synchronization and integration of military members across the MICC. A council of contracting colonels will be evaluating that process and develop the best way forward for that requirement and present the findings to Maj. Gen. Camille Nichols.

The MICC Team needs to improve workload visibility and management across our operations, despite our geographical distances. We are a complex organization with 40 operating sites, but we are one team. Another priority we must emphasize is to reduce our core workload overmatch demands and inefficiencies as we must work smarter to accomplish our vital mission. And we need to improve our attention to policy and procedural compliance while enhancing our best practices. We have creative and dedicated contracting professionals who make up the world's best workforce, so let's standardize the things we do well and enhance the way we do business.

This is our time to shine. This is our time to make a difference and show our Soldiers, our Army and our nation that the MICC is committed to providing responsive contract solutions for our customers. Great accomplishments come with great challenges. The Army faces significant budget reductions that will impact installations and activities. The MICC comprises a lean workforce maturing into seasoned contracting officers and professionals, and with nurturing and guidance from senior

leaders will blossom into talented staff members with boundless potential.

Another challenge is the Army's transition of the Enhanced Army Global Logistics Enterprise Contract Program, or EAGLE, from the Directorate of Logistics at Army installations into the MICC's core of responsibility. This is a program that will take the efforts of every one of us, but this is an Army-level decision that we must support and make into a successful and smooth transition. It is a transformational campaign and a major priority of Gen. Ann Dunwoody, the Army Materiel Command commanding general. Army Sustainment Command is now the program manager of the DOL. We are partnering with ACC-Rock Island, Ill., which will be the head of contract actions for EAGLE and will make the new awards and delegate full contract operations to the MICC. The MICC will also be responsible for all existing EAGLE contracts.

In addition we are standing up a war room as we prepare for end-of-year operations. It will be a demanding fourth quarter, but working together I am positive we can produce outstanding contract solutions.

I'm very proud of the MICC Team as every member understands the value and importance of what we provide to our Soldiers. We will get the realignment process done; we will make sure this command is resourced, staffed and able to do its core mission. In the end I ask for your commitment because our strength is through our motto. You are the strength of the MICC. This is our time – our window – and we must seize the opportunity to do all we can for our command, our Soldiers, our Army and our nation.

Contracting for Soldiers! MICC Strong! Army Strong!



Mission

Provide Army commands, installations and activities with responsive contracting solutions and oversight.

Vision

Known for premier and timely contracting support, practices, and oversight.

Goals

- Set ethical tone and contracting standards for Army
- Strengthen core functional mission support, responsiveness and oversight
- Improve contract management and oversight
- Improve standardization and consistency of our practices
- Make the right human capital investment (development, training, technical competence and depth)
- Strengthen authority and accountability

Communicate

Collaborate

Coordinate

5 MICC members earn ACC honors for excellence

Five members of the Mission and Installation Contracting Command were recognized at the Army Contracting Command's annual contracting awards ceremony May 16 at Huntsville, Ala.

"It's an honor for me to recognize the recipients for their hard work and dedication," said Dr. Carol Lowman, ACC deputy to the commanding general. "These professionals exemplify the best of this command and are the type of individuals others can aspire to become."

Awards were presented for excellence in acquisition, contracting and small business. MICC members earning ACC awards include the following:

Maj. Christopher Center
MICC-Fort Drum, N.Y.
Outstanding Contingency Contracting Officer

Center deployed to Afghanistan in April 2011 as the deputy chief of the regional contracting command at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, and led the center for three months in the absence of a chief. He led 45 members and oversaw 4,500 contracts worth \$1.7 billion in support of 140,000 warfighters. He supervised the source selection and award of the \$984 million National Afghan Transportation contract that fundamentally changed the prime contractor vetting and subcontracting processes to improve contract oversight and enforcement of ethical behavior.

Kimberly Ross
MICC-Yuma Proving Ground, Ariz.
Outstanding Intern of the Year Award — Other Than Major Weapon Systems

As a contract specialist intern, Ross prepared 43 awards with a value of \$19.3 million. Her research initiative on cost savings resulted in negotiation efforts that saved \$96,000 in a data center technology upgrade requirement, which was leveraged to support unfunded requirements by the customer. Ross achieved Contracting Level II Certification and completed the Army Management Staff College Basic Course. Her efforts proved significant in executing 1,259 contract actions totaling \$203 million in obligations in fiscal 2011, allowing mission and garrison customers to ensure their critical mission requirements were met on time for base support and test and evaluation.



Photos by Larry McCaskill

In attendance at the ceremony to receive their Army Contracting Command awards from Dr. Carol Lowman were, from top to bottom, Ann Arketeta-Rendon, Kimberly Ross and Maj. Christopher Center.



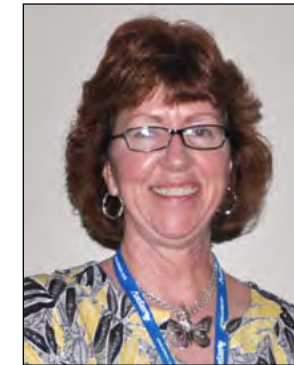
Photo by Ben Gonzales

Office visit

George Cabaniss and Victoria Prevost discuss AbilityOne issues June 15 at the Mission and Installation Contracting Command-Fort Bliss office in Texas. Cabaniss is the MICC deputy to the commander, and Prevost is a MICC-Fort Bliss contracting officer.

Deborah Ault
MICC-Fort Knox, Ky.
ACC AbilityOne Award

As an advocate for the AbilityOne Program, Ault was successful in facilitating the addition of contracts for facilities maintenance services and human resources at Fort Knox to the procurement list. The success of the facilities maintenance services contract led a decision by the National Industries for the Severely Handicapped to stand up a training program for its non-profit partners, employing approximately 200 people. The contract for call center services awarded to a NISH non-profit agency also will provide employment opportunities to more than 60 individuals with significant disabilities.



Ann Arketeta-Rendon
MICC-Fort Sill, Okla.
Small Business Specialist of the Year

Arketeta-Rendon processed socioeconomic reviews and documentation in support of \$153 million in obligations by the contracting office during fiscal 2011 while independently and proactively assisting contracting staff and garrison customers with market research and advice covering a spectrum of complex issues and situations. Her training efforts on the set-aside features within the new Women-Owned Small

Business and economically-disadvantaged WOSB programs resulted in \$26 million in awards to that category by the contracting office. She also awards in post-award actions. Following award of contracts, her audit of files identified a \$106 million contract not in compliance and she also discovered a \$100,000 overcharge to the government.

Bethany Rosser
MICC-Fort Eustis, Va.
Small Business Program Supporter of the Year

As a procuring contracting officer, she promoted small businesses and successfully brought the Combined Arms Center-Training on board to place their estimated \$25.8 million requirement for the Army Training Information System into the Small Business Program. Rosser's efforts directly contributed to the contracting office exceeding its fiscal 2011 small business goal by 19.4 percent, achieving a total of 39.4 percent. Her resourcefulness, analysis and acquisition planning demonstrated strong support for MICC and ACC's Small Business Programs, promoted competition, saved more \$3 million, and placed more than \$22 million into the Small Business Program.

Selectees were recognized for their outstanding achievements between Oct. 1, 2010 and Sept. 30, 2011. An awards panel comprised of representatives from ACC, Expeditionary Contracting Command, MICC and major ACC contracting centers reviewed more than 200 nominations before making the selections.

Editor's Note: Contributing to this article was ACC Public Affairs Office

Program aims to improve contract administration

QUALITY, from Page 1

MICC here. “In many cases, we didn’t have a lot of documentation to support what we’ve paid contractors.”

While previously assigned to the Defense Contract Management Agency, Merry often found that when a contract was written, the government “didn’t do a very good job of defining requirements, which made it difficult to hold a contractor accountable for performance or defined outcomes.”

To address that, the Quality Assurance Program calls for the placement of quality assurance specialists at MICC subordinate units to team with contracting officers and specialists to assist in pre- and post-award contract management and oversight as well as a more robust training calendar for contracting officer representatives who, in many cases, are the face of contracting to contractors.

MICC quality assurance specialists are acquisition professionals who serve as functional experts in contract quality assurance and oversight and provide valuable insight into the development of measurable contract requirements to hold contractors accountable for performance and responsible for quality control, said Pat Hogston, the MICC Contract Support, Plans and Operations director.

In 2011, positions were created to add quality assurance specialists to MICC subordinate units. Forty-nine individuals were hired to fill QA positions throughout the command before a hiring freeze went into effect. That number includes 10 interns, which also entails a training element. Quality assurance specialists are in place at a little more than 60 percent of the organizations 40-plus sites as officials here await an ease in hiring restrictions.

Merry said the program’s effectiveness relies on a teaming approach between MICC acquisition members and a bit of a culture change.

“The MICC is a contracting officer-centric organization. They are ultimately responsible for everything in the Federal Acquisition Regulation, which allows for the use of other specialists,” he said. “Turning over the oversight piece of contracting to quality assurance specialists is a hard thing to do.”

David Garrett, a quality assurance specialist at the MICC headquarters, said the teaming of acquisitions professionals in contracting and quality assurance ultimately leads to the customers’ needs being met in a more effective manner.

“Before, we had to be reactive because the



Photo by Christopher Rinard

David Garrett conducts a train the trainer class at Fort Drum, N.Y., May 31 as part of the Mission and Installation Contracting Command’s enhanced contracting officer representative training.

contract had already been let,” Garrett said. “Now we’re working with mission customers to identify requirements in such a way that contractors are accountable.”

That accountability is often accomplished through the efforts of contracting officer representatives who can be responsible for the surveillance of several contractors as an additional duty to their primary job. As part of the Quality Assurance Program, Garrett said quality assurance specialists are responsible for training, mentoring and performing oversight of CORs. The MICC’s 12 certified instructors have ramped up the number of training classes for CORs from 23 in 2011 to more than 75 thus far in 2012 and have trained more than 650 individuals this year alone.

“We focus the classroom training on tasks we’re asking the contracting officer representatives to perform for us such as surveillance as well as other areas of instruction they may not get from online training,” Garrett said. “What gets watched gets done.”

Merry added that the concentrated effort in face-to-face training with CORs and resulting payback in improved contractor performance ensures that needs of Soldiers and their families are being met.

“By working with our customers to develop requirements with measurable outcomes up front before a contract is awarded, it’s easier to hold a contractor accountable later,” he said. “Quality assurance specialists don’t own the entire process, but they certainly add value and will influence a better outcome.”



Photos by Daniel P. Elkins

Brig. Gen. Kirk Vollmecke speaks with small and large business owners representing a variety of industry sectors during the Mission and Installation Contracting Command’s industry day outreach event June 5 at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

MICC hosts small business, industry events

by Daniel P. Elkins
MICC Public Affairs Office

Hundreds of representatives from around the country participated in the Mission and Installation Contracting Command’s small business and industry day events June 4 and 5 at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, to learn about contracting opportunities with the Army.

More than 200 small business representatives attended the half-day June 4 small business event that included informational briefings and one-on-one meetings with MICC contracting officers and small business specialists.

Leading off the small business event with opening remarks was Brig. Gen. Kirk Vollmecke, the MICC commanding general, who emphasized the importance of small business in supporting Soldiers.

An industry outreach event June 5 attracted more than 300



Ann Arkeketa-Rendon discusses Army contracting opportunities with a business representative during the small business event June 4 at Fort Sam Houston. Arkeketa-Rendon is a small business specialist with the Mission and Installation Contracting Command-Fort Sill, Okla.

industry representatives from around the nation to requirements from some of the Army’s major command. Acquisition forecasts were presented by the U.S. Army’s Forces Command, Installation Management Command, Reserve Command and Training and Doctrine Command.

Both events were open to all industry representatives.

For those who were not able to attend, briefings to include opening remarks, doing business with the MICC, forecasts, and questions and answers are available on the MICC public web at www.acc.army.mil/micc/industry.asp.



Photos by Ben Gonzales

Unsung hero

(Above) Volunteers dressed in period uniforms during the American Revolutionary War fire their muskets at a Fourth of July patriotic ceremony July 4 at the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in Texas. (Right) Retired Sgt. James Gerard speaks with Brig. Gen. Kirk Vollmecke and Command Sgt. Maj. Rodney Rhoades at the ceremony. Gerard retired from the Army in 1971 after serving in the Korean and Vietnam wars. (Bottom) Brig. Gen. Kirk Vollmecke and Command Sgt. Maj. Rodney Rhoades present a wreath during the ceremony. Vollmecke served as the keynote speaker for the ceremony. Members of the community and military gathered to celebrate the nation's birthday and honor those who have sacrificed in defense of the country. Founded in 1975, the Order of Granaderos de Galvez serves to educate the public about the contributions by Spain and General Bernardo de Galvez in support of the American colonies during the American Revolution.



Contracting for Soldiers

From the G-1

Leadership moves

The following new leaders have joined or will be arriving at the Mission and Installation Contracting Command.

— Lt. Col. Robert Law assumed duties as director for MICC-Fort Bragg, N.C., in May. He comes to the MICC after serving as the chief of the operations and contingency division for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers National Contracting Organization.

— Col. Jeffrey Morris assumes duties as the MICC chief of staff. Morris comes to the MICC after serving as commander of the 412th Contracting Support Brigade and assumes the position being vacated by the retirement of Col. Shane Dietrich.

— Lt. Col. Shawn Jenkins arrives at MICC-Fort Bliss, Texas, in August from the 411th CSB in South Korea. Col. Stanley Lewis departs Fort Bliss for an assignment with the Army Capabilities Integration Center at Fort Eustis, Va.

— Lt. Col. Johnny Edmonds will replace Lt. Col. Catherine Lassiter as the commander of the Contracting Center at Fort Dix, N.J. Lassiter leaves for an assignment with the Acquisition Support Center at Fort Belvoir, Va.

Appraisals

Personnel officials announced that appraisals for those in the grades GS-13 to GS-15 should be completed within 45 days of the end of the rating cycle, which ended June 30.

Evaluation reporting

The Army Human Resources Command recently published updates to Army Regulation 623-3 and Department of the Army Pamphlet 623-3 that affect officer and noncommissioned officer evaluation reports with a through date of July 5, 2012, or later.

Publications are available at the Army Publishing Directorate website <http://www.apd.army.mil/>.

For more information, call John Towry at 210-466-2327 or DSN 450-2327.

SSC selection board

The fiscal 2012 Senior Service College Selection Board convenes Sept. 5 to consider eligible officers to attend academic year 2013-2014 resident SSC, fellowships, equivalent foreign schools and the 2013-2015 Army War College Distance Education Program.

Additional boards taking place during the fiscal 2012 fourth quarter include:

- Reserve Components Colonel Army Promotion List, July 9 - 27
- Army Reserve Battalion Command Assignment, July 9 - 19
- Army Reserve Army Guard Reserve REFRAD, Aug. 13-17
- Army Reserve Colonel Command, Aug. 20-28
- Lieutenant Colonel MFE Command, Sept. 5-21
- Lieutenant Colonel OS Command, Sept. 5-13
- Lieutenant Colonel FS Command, Sept. 10-26
- Major Judge Advocate Corps, Sept. 11-14

For more information, call John Towry at 210-466-2327 or DSN 450-2327.



Recognition

Maj. Chris Watson, left, pins the Meritorious Service Medal on Capt. Maurice Hudson during a ceremony June 14 at Fort Benning, Ga. Hudson was recognized for his actions during his deployment to Afghanistan. Both are contingency contracting officers with the 614th Contingency Contracting Team.

Contracting for Soldiers

Chief's journey comes to end

Daniel P. Elkins
MICC Public Affairs Office

As the Mission and Installation Contracting Command's chief of staff prepares to retire in August after 36 years of service, the significant contributions he's made to the Army and the contracting community will long impact Soldiers serving today and in the future. But few people know that his budding career in contracting came long before his accession into the Army Acquisition Corps in 1995.

During his junior and senior years of high school in Sierra Vista, Ariz., Col. Shane Dietrich liked working with his hands. Spending numerous weekends helping his father in the yard made for a natural transition into landscape work. After learning of the disparity between his hourly wage and what his employer was charging for that effort, he made the move into the more lucrative heating and air conditioning

trade where he learned to work with sheet metal. It wasn't until he worked on dumpsters that he would become a government contractor.

"Winning the contract to refurbish dumpsters at Fort Huachuca, Ariz., was one of the best and worst jobs I've ever had," Dietrich said. "I was the guy inside scraping the paint, manure and all of the garbage out of there, and then going around with the grinder on the inside knocking off doors and steam cleaning them. That was a job that kept me going during my formative years."

As high school graduation approached and prospects to play middle linebacker at the collegiate level were ruled out, conversations about future plans between Dietrich and his father – a World War II Marine aviator – became more pointed.

"My dad gave me that lecture, 'Shane, I anticipate that you're going to get a job and move away from home, you're going to go to college and move away from home or you're going to join the military and move away from



Courtesy photos

(Above) Col. Shane Dietrich began his career as an Army private after completing basic training in March 1976. (Above left) At left, Dietrich attended Pathfinder School in 1986. (Left) While deployed to Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, Dietrich was forced to take a little ribbing over the Army-Navy game from his brother, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Mark Dietrich.

him well upon his 1985 selection to attend Officer Candidate School. After being commissioned a second lieutenant in air defense artillery, he served in a variety of positions to include a Vulcan platoon leader; Stinger platoon leader of 48 Soldiers; and brigade air defense fire support officer in Germany where he got to see how the staff and planning process worked as well as learn from the exposure to all of the other combat arms and combat service support organizations inside of a division.

His chance to become a battery commander wouldn't come until he completed the rigorous course at Ranger school.

"I had the chance to take a medical drop on three different occasions, but I had a battalion waiting for me to come back with a Ranger tab and take command of a battery. I was driven to finish at a time when air defense had a really

(Above) As a captain, Dietrich served as a battery commander in 1991. (Right) Dietrich enjoys a little down time with his animals while at his home near Copperas Cove, Texas, where he and his wife care for three horses, two Beagles, a tarrier, cat, chickens and a rooster.



home," he recalled. "The recurring theme was that I was going to move away from home."

It was soon after that Dietrich found he had a vulnerability to military recruiters and enlisted.

Having been raised in Monterey, Calif., he was first interested in joining the Navy. However, an Army recruiter persuaded him to become a Soldier and take advantage of the only three-year enlistment available and GI Bill before Congress took it away.

It didn't take much convincing as patriotism and community benevolence run deep in Dietrich's family.

He spent his first three years of enlistment as a medical specialist where he learned all of his basic Soldier skills and spent many days in the field training. In 1979, a re-enlistment NCO then sold him

on the idea that air traffic control was the right job in which to move. Whether or not it was the right job, it eventually turned out to be the right time and place as he met in 1983 and then wed fellow air traffic controller Della St. Louis in April 1984.

Over the six and a half years Dietrich spent as an air traffic controller, his leadership skills would flourish. He served as a shift supervisor, tower chief, squad leader, platoon sergeant and acting first sergeant.

"I loved that job because it was a lot of responsibility," he said. "I learned a lot of valuable lessons and was fortunate to have had leaders that gave me the flexibility, top cover and support to let me lead."

His more than nine years as an enlisted Soldier and experience as a platoon sergeant would serve

him well upon his 1985 selection to attend Officer Candidate School. After being commissioned a second lieutenant in air defense artillery, he served in a variety of positions to include a Vulcan platoon leader; Stinger platoon leader of 48 Soldiers; and brigade air defense fire support officer in Germany where he got to see how the staff and planning process worked as well as learn from the exposure to all of the other combat arms and combat service support organizations inside of a division.

His chance to become a battery commander wouldn't come until he completed the rigorous course at Ranger school.

"I had the chance to take a medical drop on three different occasions, but I had a battalion waiting for me to come back with a Ranger tab and take command of a battery. I was driven to finish at a time when air defense had a really

bad attrition rate," Dietrich said.

He credited a lot of his success in Ranger school to a first sergeant in Germany who took the time to train him in navigation, swimming and running so that when he would arrive at Fort Benning, Ga., during the hot summer, he would be 30 pounds leaner and in the best shape of his life.

"Ranger school is a leadership school. It's a series of leadership positions through which you rotate for a chance to work with different people and be tested on leadership skills," Dietrich said.

Ranger school has had the greatest personal impact on his life and career.

"I learned a lot about myself and got injured in every phase of

training. It was a true test of my metal as an individual, a leader and a Soldier.

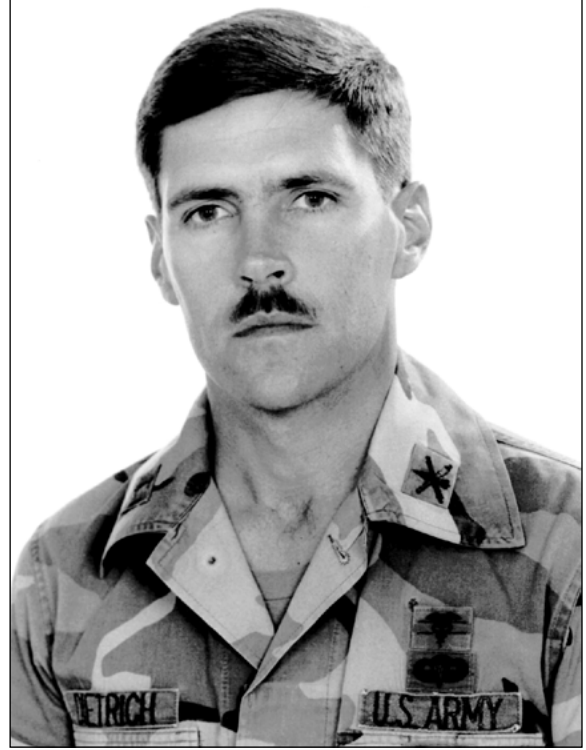
"I learned discipline, whether it's making an MRE last an entire day or staying awake at a time when you haven't slept in a couple of days," Dietrich said. "Ranger school provided an understanding of the formalized leadership process that included planning and orders, but the biggest thing I walked away with was a better appreciation of what I could tolerate and how far I can push myself. And that has kind of stuck with me since."

After earning his Ranger tab, he returned to 4-3 Air Defense Artillery as a battery commander. Two years later, he was an instructor at the Army Aviation

Center, where he had the chance to teach a variety of courses and became one of the few non-aviators selected as Instructor of the Year.

A member of the Army Acquisition Corps since 1995, Dietrich's experience spans contracting, operational testing, developmental testing and acquisition advisory assignments. Among his most memorable assignments was commanding the Army's Desert Environment Test Center at Yuma Proving Ground, Ariz. There he stood up a counter IED test facility and tested automotive and armored systems, armored door kits, armored vehicles, body armor, weapons, the Excalibur and lightweight Howitzer.

"It was 1,100 people, 1,300



Courtesy photos

(Left) Dietrich and his wife, Sgt. Maj. Della St. Louis, were stationed in Iraq together. (Right) Dietrich joined the Army Acquisition Corps in 1995.

square miles of real estate, 2,000 square miles of restricted airspace and one of the most diverse missions in the test community,” he said. “It was a fantastic experience to be at the test center because it gave me a better appreciation for the acquisition workforce.”

Dietrich believes that the Army acquisitions community is a great place to make an impact on the Army.

“Whether you’re a contracting officer, contingency contracting officer, contracting specialist or test officer, it’s a great place to really support Soldiers,” he said. “Much of it is taken for granted because most of the operational force doesn’t understand the acquisitions process. It’s a great place to make a contribution to the Army.”

He points to his previous assignment as commander of the 408th Contracting Support Brigade in Kuwait as evidence where he had the greatest direct impact on the service.

“I owned my environment and was embedded in the U.S. Army Central staff. I shaped outcomes and saw my work come to fruition

in Afghanistan and Iraq, probably the most rewarding job I’ve ever had” he said.

Dietrich considers himself an example of the success of the Army’s education program – from picking up night-school classes wherever possible and Officer Candidate School to Command and General Staff College and a master’s degree in administration from Central Michigan. He gained his greatest perspective during the Army War College fellowship at the University of Texas at Austin.

“For a kid who started off to do three years, get the GI Bill and get out, here I was among a group of officers who have accomplished quite a bit,” he said. “Acquisitions has been a fantastic and very rewarding job.”

He described his last two years at the MICC as the classic game of Whac-A-Mole since his duties have chiefly involved putting out fires and making things happen. Personally, it’s provided a chance to be closer to his wife and home near Fort Hood, Texas, reconnect with old friends assigned to the MICC, and fully appreciate the outpouring

of community support that defines San Antonio as Military City USA.

Army needs have forced Dietrich and his wife to be apart the last nine years and 18 of the 28 years they’ve been married. As a veteran, St. Louis knows all too well the hardships of separation in the Army. She retired in June 2011 after 32 years of service as a Soldier and lives at their little rock house on three acres just outside of Copperas Cove, Texas, where she stays busy participating in horse shows and competitive trail rides when not looking after their two Beagles, rat terrier, cat, chickens, roosters and three horses.

Now 55, Dietrich will join his wife at their home while “taking the month of September off” before leaving for Idaho where he’ll help his brother put his barn up for the winter and take some time to relax over fly fishing and dusting off a Harley motorcycle he had shipped to his brother’s home in 2009. After that, it’s on the road again to Louisiana to visit his son and grandchildren, then Ohio to see his sister and mother.