



New process shifts acquisition tracking

by Daniel P. Elkins
MICC Public Affairs Office

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – Mission and Installation Contracting Command officials here are shifting their strategic approach to Army acquisitions by incorporating a more meticulous planning process to improve communication, standardize the development of milestones and increase accountability.

Implementation of the Acquisition Milestone Agreement process across the MICC is set for January 2012 and will rely on a cooperative partnership between contracting experts, requiring activities and Army leaders to ensure efficient and effective acquisition strategies are executed to meet the mission critical need dates of customers, according to officials.

“The AMA process kicks off the teaming arrangement early in the acquisition,” said Kimberly Wentreck, the acting director for Installation Contracting Office-Fort Meade, Md., who is leading the integrated process team for implementing the new process. “The AMA process invites our customers



Photo by Daniel P. Elkins

Sandra Tillman, a contracting officer, pulls a file for review at the Mission Contracting Office-Fort Belvoir, Va. Tillman, along with other contracting professionals throughout the Mission and Installation Contracting Command, will soon receive training on the Acquisition Milestone Agreement process.

to play a more active role earlier in the acquisition process, which results in better working relationships and customer buy-in.”

The change is a result of a number of missed

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OPM sets 2012 premium rates, open season

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Office of Personnel Management announced Sept. 27 that the average premium for the 8 million people enrolled in the Federal Employees Health Benefits program will increase by 3.8 percent for non-postal employees and all annuitants in 2012, which is approximately half of last year's increase of 7.3 percent.

On average, enrollees with self only coverage will pay \$2.32 more per biweekly pay period; enrollees

with family coverage will pay \$6.18 more. Premiums for Health Maintenance Organizations will increase an average 6.7 percent, while Fee-for-Service plans will see an average increase of 3.2 percent.

The 2012 open season for health, dental and vision insurance and flexible spending accounts is Nov. 14 to Dec. 12, 2011. The open season gives federal employees and retirees an opportunity to review their health plan choices and make

changes. It also allows eligible employees to enroll for coverage.

There are no significant benefit changes for 2012.

In 2012, enrollees will have 206 health plan choices. Approximately 90 percent of all federal employees participate. Established in 1960, the FEHBP is the largest employer-sponsored health benefits program in the United States.

For the more information visit www.opm.gov/insure/openseason/factsheet.asp. (Courtesy OPM)

Contracting for Soldiers

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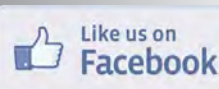
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MISSION

The U.S. Army Mission and Installation Contracting Command, part of the Army's Generating Force, plans, integrates, awards and administers contracts throughout the ARFORGEN Cycle supporting the Army Commands, Direct Reporting Units, U.S. Army North and other organizations to provide the best value for the mission, Soldiers and their families.

Capitalizing on successes of fiscal 2011

by Brig. Gen. Stephen Leisenring
MICC commanding general

I am really proud of the extraordinary work by all members of the Mission and Installation Contracting Command team in helping close out fiscal 2011. Many of you worked until the final hours of the fiscal year to ensure our mission partners received the much needed contracted services and materiel necessary to carry out their missions.

It was no small task given an environment of budgetary constraints and multiple continuing resolutions. Despite those obstacles, your combined efforts over the year totaled almost \$7 billion and more than 63,000 contract actions. Don't lose sight of the intrinsic value of those staggering figures – your dedicated support of our Soldiers and their families.

Leaders across the Army echo my sentiments when it comes to recognizing the contributions by the MICC. At the Association of the United States Army

conference, I was fortunate to be on the receiving end of an outpouring of gratitude from leaders across the service, including the Army chief of staff. Contracting is becoming more a part of our everyday lives to effectively execute the mission, and they get it.

The next step is integrating acquisitions seamlessly into the mission planning process. We've built the framework with the Acquisition Milestone Agreement

Contracting for Soldiers



Photo by Daniel P. Elkins

Brig. Gen. Stephen Leisenring makes opening remarks at the 2011 Mission and Installation Contracting Command Organizational Day Oct. 14 in San Antonio.

and will implement the new process in January. The AMA puts forward a teaming approach that represents a reversal of business as usual in contracting. Instead of waiting for our customers to come to us with a contracting action, the new process

The AMA puts forward a teaming approach that represents a reversal of business as usual in contracting.

incorporates those mission partners earlier in the acquisition process.

By developing mutually agreed upon milestones with the AMA, contracting professionals and customers establish a set of dates critical for meeting mission needs. The AMA works – we field tested it over the summer, and the constructive feedback we received has helped make it a better process.

Another success during the fiscal year was the standup of mission contracting centers throughout the MICC to serve as an intermediate level of command. The MCCs were established to standardize

and enhance the effectiveness of contracted services at installations throughout the continental United States while remaining customer focused. It's important that we integrate the MCCs at all levels of the mission, both up and down the chain.

In addition to building an intermediate level of command, we've begun steps to integrate contracting support brigades and teams into our command structure. Army leaders understand that building a uniformed corps of contracting experts is essential in successfully executing our mission downrange. We've had a number of MICC civilian employees witness this critical need firsthand during their deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. This is a win-win for both the MICC and our active duty Soldiers – take advantage of it.

Again, thank you for all the outstanding support you provide for Soldiers and their families. By building on your success this fiscal year, I'm certain 2012 will be an exceptional year for the MICC.

MICC continues to grow its mission

by **Command Sgt. Maj. Clinton Jackson**
MICC command sergeant major

Transformation of the Mission and Installation Contracting Command from an operating agency to a fully capable command in the almost three years I've served as the command sergeant major is a true testament to the dedicated professionalism of our team.

Achieving this level of acquisition excellence requires an experienced, skilled and accountable workforce. We've taken critical steps to get here including developing the workforce, transitioning the organizational command structure, and implementing new policies aimed at building better relationships with our mission partners by integrating contracting earlier in their planning process.

But our job isn't done. The Army remains committed to replenishing and growing our professional acquisition workforce, enhancing career development and training opportunities. These serve as our compass in defending this nation and the processes to acquire needed capabilities.

Continuing to grow the acquisitions workforce also involves reaching a highly trained, uniformed representation to complement our civilian

professionals. To that end, the commanding generals for the MICC and Expeditionary Contracting Command share a vision of ensuring our active-duty contracting experts are provided the opportunities to most effectively execute acquisition programs.

In my more than 32 years in the service I've seen a lot of change, and the fiscal demands across the services make it inevitable that change will always be on the horizon as we look for better ways to execute our mission. Incorporating ECC CONUS-based units with the MICC at an operational level during sanctuary provides reciprocal benefits in training and mission partner support.

Such integration presents some constraints in command and control and the ability to pull out for a deployed mission. However, MICC and ECC leaders are committed to finding the best solution to ensure the workforce has the right training to execute business strategies focused on meeting requirements of the generating force and providing professional development to Soldiers and command elements while integrated with the MICC.

The way ahead requires a commitment by both our civilian and uniformed contracting experts. The people of this command have come a long way, which reflects their sincere dedication to Soldiers and their families. It is with that same dedicated spirit that our next step in transforming Army acquisitions will be a great success.

One Team. One Fight. One Family.
Hooah!

Spotlight



Courtesy photo

Kimberly Jackson
Mission Contracting Center-Fort Bragg, N.C.
Alternate agency/organization program coordinator

With her sights set on earning a master's degree in procurement and acquisitions from Webster University, Kimberly Jackson enjoys working to support Soldiers at Fort Bragg, N.C. The Fayetteville, N.C., resident spends much of her free time furthering her education on and off the job.

Jackson has achieved Level I Purchasing, Life Cycle Logistics and Facilities Engineering in Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act certifications. As the alternate agency/organization program coordinator for the Mission Contracting Center-Fort Bragg, she supports Soldiers in obtaining government purchase cards to procure items for their respective units.

This allows units to continue with their missions by giving Soldiers the training, support and authority to procure items through normal supply channels.

"It provides real solutions to real-time needs," Jackson said.

ICO-Benning helping tell Army story

by **Brenda Clark**
MICC Installation Contracting Office-Fort Benning

Mission and Installation Contracting Command professionals at Fort Benning, Ga., play a critical role in helping communicate the Army's history through their support of the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center and its historical grounds.

The Smithsonian-quality museum is located outside the Fort Benning Road gates leading to the U.S. Army's Maneuver Center of Excellence, which is home to the service's infantry and armor schools.

The MICC Installation Contracting Office-Fort Benning staff provides support to the museum for

a multitude of services, including grounds maintenance and landscaping, utilities and custodial.

Members of the MICC ICO-Fort Benning also are instrumental in the acquisition, preparation and display of government-owned artifacts from around the world.

The facility is owned and

operated by the National Infantry Foundation, a private non-profit organization established by several retired infantry Soldiers to provide a facility that stands in tribute to the legacy of valor and sacrifice of the U.S. Army infantryman. The museum was opened in June 2009 to honor Soldiers, both past and present.

This state-of-the-art facility tells the story of the Army infantryman, from the fields of the American Revolution to the sands of Afghanistan. The 190,000 square-foot museum houses artifacts from all eras of American history and contains numerous interactive multimedia exhibits, telling the story of the nation's past with the latest in technological innovation.

The National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center serves as the setting for all Fort Benning Soldiers graduating from Basic Combat Training and Combat Advanced Individual Training. Every Thursday and

Friday, the museum's grandstands are filled with 2,100-plus family members and friends who come from all over the country to see their Soldiers march across the parade grounds of Soldier Field. The grass they walk on is seeded with "sacred soil," taken from major battles in U.S. Army infantry history – Yorktown, Antietam, Soissons, Normandy, Corregidor, Hill 180, LZ X-Ray and multiple locations in Afghanistan and Iraq – creating a tangible link between the heroes who have secured our liberty in the past and the new Soldiers who will now defend it.

In addition to the museum building, there is also Patriot Park, a complex of historic monuments, educational institutions and recreational areas, which

includes Heritage Walk, Soldier Field and the ever-expanding Memorial Walk of Honor. The park is located on land owned and maintained by the installation, and members of the MICC ICO-Fort Benning have played a significant role in issuing and administering contracts for its development and maintenance.



Photo by D. Myles Cullen

The Installation Contracting Office-Fort Benning staff supports a multitude of services at the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center.

Prior to the museum's opening, it was housed in an old Army hospital on the installation where space and conditions for artifacts were inadequate. The museum represents a unique relationship between a private not-for-profit organization and the Army. The National Infantry Foundation owns and operates the facility, but the Army rents space in the museum to house government-owned artifacts and maintains office space there to provide oversight of artifacts. The parade grounds, however, are owned and maintained by the Army for their exclusive use for events such as graduations and other Army ceremonies.

Support provided by the MICC ICO-Fort Benning staff ensures the National Infantry Museum remains a world-class facility that pays tribute to Army Soldiers, especially the infantry, and the sacrifices made every day in defense of freedom.

MICC leaders chart course for future

by Ben Gonzales
MICC Public Affairs Office

The seven new mission contracting center directors for the Mission and Installation Contracting Command met at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, to gain insight from senior Army contracting leaders Sept. 7-8 as well as to chart the future for the command's newest echelon.

MCC directors will lead the MICC transformation as it becomes more effective and efficient by standardizing processes and improving customer support.

The new MCC directors are April Miller at MCC-Fort Sam Houston; Clay Cole at MCC-Fort Hood, Texas; Tim Tweed at MCC-Fort Bragg, N.C.; Pam Munoz at MCC-Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.; Deb Emerson at MCC-Fort Eustis, Va.; Carlton Foshay at MCC-Fort Leavenworth, Kan.; and Mike Coburn at MCC-Fort Knox, Ky.

Brig. Gen. Stephen Leisenring, the MICC commanding general, led

the conference, and Jeff Parsons, the former Army Contracting Command executive director, briefed directors on the future state of Army contracting.

Each MCC will have approximately 15 to 20 people and be made up of a command and control element, contract operations, administrative operations and special staff. Each center will be aligned and focused on supporting a primary customer.

Primary customers supported by the MICC include the Army's Training and Doctrine Command, Forces Command, Reserve Command, Military District of Washington, Human Resources Command, and Test and Evaluation Command.

During the conference, MCC directors were briefed by MICC senior staff members on the command and control functions of directors, manpower obligations, facilities management, operations, information technology, and the Acquisition Milestone Agreement.

"What we are doing in the contracting community is very different than just purchasing materiel and services," Leisenring said. "We're not buying things; we are buying combat capability, combat effectiveness and combat processes and procedures whether it is at generating force training bases or for deployed forces. Army Materiel Command cannot accomplish its mission as the global logistics provider without contracting."

Contracting is no longer just taking a request then writing a contract for goods and service; it is a vital line of operation for the Army to accomplish its global logistics mission, the general said. MCC directors are not in place to administratively look over contracts, but to integrate contracting into customers' planning and execution processes so they do not think of it as a contract but rather as a process delivering goods and services necessary to execute the mission.



Photo by Ben Gonzales

Jeff Parsons discusses Army Contracting Command topics with the seven mission contracting center directors and senior staff of the Mission and Installation Contracting Command in September on Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

New process shifts acquisition tracking

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milestones that resulted in the need for sole-source contract actions to continue services, which increased costs and placed MICC customers' missions at risk.

Wentreck said the IPT found that under the previous methodology, the teaming did not typically begin until receipt of an acquisition package at the contracting office, which led to a disconnect between the acquisition strategy and evaluators' perceptions.

"Our efforts resulted in a strategic shift in how the MICC conducts business by not waiting for acquisition packages to arrive in contracting, but rather proactively plan and team with our customers to generate better acquisition strategies that meet customer mission need dates and reduce costs," she said.

The agreement marks a significant departure from previous procedures by bringing parties to the table much sooner for a back-to-basics approach in developing and managing procurements.

"The AMA process defines expectations for all parties, provides expert assistance and identifies and alleviates stumbling blocks to meeting milestones," Wentreck

explained. "It symbolizes a culture shift from reactive to proactive contracting while leveraging the resources of the MICC and our customers."

The change calls for initiating a communication and tracking measure much earlier in the process. Contracting experts will create and coordinate the agreement as part of a kickoff meeting that documents the customer's understanding of responsibilities in the acquisition process.

The agreement will then serve as a binding document with agreed-to procurement milestones thus creating joint accountability between mission partners. Any changes in milestones would require concurrence by both the MICC and requiring activity.

The AMA process will help maintain the MICC's commitment to ensuring that requirements are developed and tracked in a disciplined manner supporting the warfighters' needs by including an in-progress review.

"In-progress reviews are a major component of the AMA process," said Jennifer Hastedt, a MICC procurement analyst and IPT member. "Contracting officers

and specialists will brief both the contracting approval authority at the appropriate level and equivalent manager at the requiring activity. This will ensure the MICC and requiring activity management knows the procurement status and identifies issues that could develop into delays."

The transformation from the Milestone Tracking Report to the AMA process got under way in January. An integrated process team then set out to identify requirements and develop tools for the new process. A successful beta test was conducted this summer at Fort Eustis, Va., Fort Bragg, N.C., Fort Carson, Colo., Fort Bliss, Texas, and Yuma Proving Ground, Ariz.

"The test went very well," Hastedt said. "The MICC test sites provided positive feedback and constructive comments to improve the AMA tools."

Training for the new process at MICC field offices got under way Oct. 1 with full implementation of the AMA process set for January. Representatives from the MICC Contracting Support, Plans and Operations directorate will provide training at the requiring activity headquarters level.



Photo by Daniel P. Elkins

SB Forum

Veronica Romero meets with a small business owner Bob Delgado during the August Mission and Installation Contracting Command Business Opportunities Forum in San Antonio. Romero was one of 10 contracting officers and small business specialists who conducted one-on-one sessions with small business owners based on industry. Romero is a contracting officer with the MICC Mission Contracting Office at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Top honors

Sarah Corley is presented the Department of the Army Decoration for Exceptional Civilian Service by Brig. Gen. Stephen Leisenring during a ceremony in August at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. The decoration is the highest honorary award granted by the secretary of the Army to Army civilian employees and recognized her performance while serving as the deputy director and principal assistant responsible for contracting with the Army Contracting Agency as well as her duties as principal assistant responsible for contracting for the Mission and Installation Contracting Command. Leisenring is the commanding general for the MICC.



Photo by Daniel P. Elkins

PARC sets fiscal 2012 CMR schedule

Contract management reviews ensure standardization, quality for MICC mission customers

Officials from the Mission and Installation Contracting Command Principal Assistant Responsible for Contracting Office have released the fiscal 2012 Contract Management Review schedule.

As part of the CMR, MICC officials will review a sampling of contract files and assess overall procurement practices and processes. In addition, the CMR team will review management programs and procedures. The review is guided by toolkits, available through the Army Knowledge Online website, designed to ensure a standardized and higher quality CMR across all offices.

Each office should receive a notification letter with preparation information approximately 60 days prior to their scheduled CMR.

During the week of the review, the CMR team leader will visit installation and mission activities supported by MICC. This includes visits to the garrison command and directors of public works, logistics, information management and mission customers.

A final report will be completed approximately 45 days following the review.

Following is the fiscal 2012 CMR schedule for the MICC's mission and installation contracting offices:

ICO-Fort Bliss, Texas	Nov. 14-18, 2011
MCO-Fort Dix, N.J.	Nov. 28-Dec. 2, 2011
ICO-Fort Rucker, Ala.	Dec. 5-9, 2011
ICO-Jackson, S.C.	Jan. 9-13, 2012
MCO-Fort Sam Houston, Texas	Jan. 23-27, 2012
ICO-Fort Gordon, Ga.	Feb. 6-10, 2012
ICO-Fort Lee, Va.	Feb. 13-17, 2012
ICO-Fort Carson, Colo.	Feb. 27- March 2, 2012
MCO-Fort Hood, Texas	March 5-9, 2012
ICO-Fort Meade, Md.	March 12-16, 2012
MCO-Fort Knox, Ky.	March 26-30, 2012
ICO-Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.	April 1-6, 2012
ICO-Yuma Proving Grounds, Ariz.	April 16-20, 2012
ICO-Fort Irwin, Calif.	May 14-18, 2012
ICO-Fort McCoy, Wis.	May 6-11, 2012
MCC-Fort Eustis, Va.	June 4-8, 2012
MCO-Fort Eustis, Va.	June 4-8, 2012
ICO-Fort Drum, N.Y.	June 11-15, 2012
DASA(P) PMR ICO Fort Belvoir, Va.	June 17-29, 2012

National conference targets veterans

Expo attracts thousands of small business owners

by Sharon Morrow

Mission Contracting Office-Fort Eustis
Office of Small Business Programs assistant director

Officials from the Department of Veterans Affairs, in partnership with the Veteran Federal Interagency Council, hosted the National Veteran Small Business Conference and Expo Aug. 15-18 in New Orleans.

It is the largest nationwide conference of its kind in support of veteran-owned and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses. Attendees numbering in the thousands were able to connect with program managers and procurement decision makers from many federal agencies, learn about acquisition forecasts from various agencies, expand their knowledge, and develop relationships through networking to enhance their contracting opportunities.

There were three tracks under which various breakout sessions were presented. Those included starting a veteran-owned small business; doing business with the federal government; and business requirements.

The breakout sessions addressed acquisition, business development, compliance, construction, finance, healthcare, human resources, information technology and marketing. Specific topics covered included legal aspects of contracting; General Services Administration schedules; the benefits of hiring veterans; and the Veterans Affairs verification process.

The conference also featured matchmaking with federal, state and local agencies. It used a new online

system to facilitate the scheduling of the matchmaking. Up to six vendors were scheduled for each session.

Rosa Elmore, a small business specialist from the Mission and Installation Contracting Command Installation Contracting Office-Fort Campbell, Ky., and Sharon Morrow, a small business specialist from MICC Mission Contracting Office-Fort Eustis, Va., conducted outreach and established relationships with 30 small businesses during 10 sessions.

Morrow and Elmore were also able to promulgate the MICC's acquisition forecast, provide information to vendors about the types of supplies and services the MICC acquires, and give out brochures containing points of contact information on all small business specialist within the MICC.

"The small businesses were appreciative of the brochures and information they received from the MICC and stated that the information was useful to enhance their contracting opportunities," said Morrow.

The Department of the Army's Office of Small Business Programs sponsored one of the more than 700 booths at the expo. Literature on how to do business with the MICC and a brochure with MICC small business specialist points of contact were available to small business owners.

"The number of attendees and booth sponsors along with the overwhelming response to matchmaking, outreach and demand for MICC literature leaves little doubt of the growth in veteran small business," Morrow added.

General session speakers at the conference included Eric Shinseki, secretary of the VA; W. Scott Gould, deputy secretary for the VA; and Frank Kendall, principal deputy undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics for the Department of Defense.





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Photo by Brenda Beasley

Air Force Col. Benjamin Wham (left) presents Harry Shatto the Commanders Award for Civilian Service, Global War on Terrorism Civilian Service Medal and NATO Medal during an awards ceremony Sept. 27 at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan. Command Sgt. Major Lorne Quebodeaux (right) also presented Shatto with a coin. Wham is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Afghanistan Engineer District-South district commander.

MICC employee earns recognition

A Mission and Installation Contracting Command contracting specialist was recognized for his service to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Afghanistan Engineer District-South during a Sept. 27 ceremony at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan.

Harry W. Shatto, a deployed from the MICC's Mission Contracting Office-Fort Belvoir, Va., was presented with the Commanders Award for Civilian Service, Global War on Terrorism Civilian Service Medal, NATO Medal and a coin from the command sergeant major.

According to USACE officials, these awards and decorations are a reflection of Shatto's dedication and service in support of USACE's mission in Afghanistan, and his commitment to delivering projects that help improve security and governance in Afghanistan.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Afghanistan Engineer District-South provides design and

construction services throughout southern Afghanistan to support the International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan. Our work is carried out in Regional Commands South, Southwest and West with the goal of achieving counterinsurgency effects and bolstering the Afghan Government's services to its people.

Shatto is among a handful of MICC employees deployed in support of contingency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan as part of the Army Contracting Command Deployable Cadre. The program is ACC's primary source for civilian employees interested in deploying in support of critical, highly visible requirements around the globe.

To learn more about the program and qualifications, visit www.armyhire.com/cadre.

Bell earns top honors for Army

A member of the Mission and Installation Contracting Command was recognized at the 2011 U.S. Army Acquisition Corps Annual Awards Ceremony Oct. 9 in Alexandria, Va.

Dorothy Bell, a contracting officer and team leader at the MICC's Installation Contracting Officer-Fort Carson, Colo., received the Individual Sustained Achievement Award.

The ceremony paid tribute to uniformed and civilian professionals who provide combatant commanders and their Soldiers the weapons and equipment they need to execute full-spectrum operations in support of overseas contingency operations.

As a contracting officer, Bell was instrumental in stimulating the local Iraqi economy, which had a significant impact on stabilizing the region, and developing and training a team that closed out more than 5,000 contract awards.



U.S. Army photo

Dorothy Bell, left, is presented her award by Heidi Shyu, acting assistant secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology.

The ceremony honored those chosen to receive Secretary of the Army level awards for excellence in contracting. Heidi Shyu, acting assistant secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology, presented the awards.

Bell was one of four current and former Army Contracting Command individuals honored at the 2011 annual awards ceremony. Other winners included Master Sgt. Sandra Williams, Lt. Col. Carol Tschida and Col. Jeffrey Gabbert.

AMC leaders kick off Bold Ideas campaign

U.S. Army Materiel Command officials are soliciting ideas from Nov. 2 to Dec. 31 to become more cost efficient and effective.

Officials said several factors, including a 10-year war, have forced society and the Army to become a more cost conscious culture.

Participation in the Bold Ideas Campaign will allow your ideas to reach directly to headquarters and identify processes and programs that can save money and fundamentally change how we do business.



The campaign is designed to rapidly gather bold ideas and provide quick recognition for

participants. Continual feedback to contributors will be provided as ideas progress through an assessment process.

Ideas for being more cost effective, changing processes and becoming more energy efficient that are deemed of merit will receive recognition and a letter of endorsement from AMC to participate in the Army Suggestion program.

You can help shape our future by submitting your Bold Ideas through <https://hqamc.aep.army.mil>. (Courtesy AMC Public Affairs)



Org Day

More than 100 members of the Mission and Installation Contracting Command and Mission Contracting Center at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, gathered Oct. 14 in San Antonio for a day of fun and games during the 2011 MICC Organizational Day.

Following opening remarks by Brig. Gen. Stephen Leisenring, the commanding general, participants took part in various events including softball, basketball, dominos, cards games and a pie-in-the-face contest.



Photos by Daniel P. Elkins



MICC MEMBERS PAVE WAY FOR PREP SCHOOL MOVE TO

West Point

by Daniel P. Elkins
MICC Public Affairs Office

WEST POINT, N.Y. -- Mission and Installation Contracting Command experts played an instrumental role in the preparation for the reception of 246 U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School cadet candidates July 18 at their new West Point, N.Y., home.

Although the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission decision to move the prep school from Fort Monmouth, N.J., to West Point established a firm date for the school's move, contract professionals at the MICC Installation Contracting Office-West Point overcame an ever-changing sequence of requirements to meet the command's move ahead of schedule.

"The planning phase began about two years ago, and we worked closely with a team established by the post garrison to coordinate all of the moving pieces, make sure the construction was done on time, and ensure the supplies and equipment were ordered to arrive on time," said Dave Bugger, the former MICC ICO-West Point

director who retired in September.

The prep school move placed a monumental task of requirements on top of the everyday workload already being accomplished by the ICO staff. To successfully manage the procurement of numerous contracts valued at more than \$25 million, Bugger assembled a team led by new director Annemarie Kopko. Recognizing the sheer number of requirements involved with such a move, Kopko coordinated the workload with MICC ICO-West Point teams led by Supervisory Contract Specialists Denise Conklin, Liz Simihtis and Pat Campbell.

"There were a lot of parts moving at the same time. As decisions were being made, requirements were being changed, and we wanted to ensure we remained responsive and have contracts in place," said Kopko of the challenge. "Each of the division chiefs is very familiar with their customers and was able to develop a good idea of what had to be purchased – they knew what was coming before being assigned the work."

Among the moving parts was the need to move the post motor pool to a new location, making room for the

prep school's classrooms. That move along with the purchase of motor pool equipment had to be accelerated to accommodate the arrival of cadet candidates, necessitating a last-minute requirement for a temporary facility until the new motor pool could be finished.

Compounding the challenge was the addition of a handful of requirements at the end of 2010 and earlier this year for services that were originally to be performed in-house or as part of a modification to an existing contract, but were instead impacted by hiring restrictions, Bugger said.

Conklin's team facilitated short-term contracts for facilities maintenance, dining and custodial services until they are assumed this fall by contractors with the AbilityOne Program, which provides employment opportunities for people who are blind or have other significant disabilities by procuring federal contracts for goods and services.

"It was very challenging because we were bringing potential contractors to a site that wasn't yet built," she said.

Also among the contracts were the procurement of information technology and audiovisual equipment; athletic gear; training equipment to include weights, benches, ellipticals, treadmills and a hydrotherapy table; and dining facility equipment.

"We all helped one another when requirements came in for the prep school," Campbell said. "One team was not able to do the amount of work we had with the regular workload."

The remaining construction of some classrooms and office space as well as the rest of the athletic facilities should be complete by January 2012.

West Point Prep prepares candidates selected by the academy's admissions office for the academic, physical and military rigors of the West Point military academy. Students are made up of high school graduates as well as enlisted members from the active, Reserve or National Guard force. Upon successfully completing the 10-month prep school, students enter the academy as part of the class of 2016.

FAR LEFT: The barber's station was the first stop for many of the cadet candidates inprocessing to the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School in July at West Point, N.Y. **LEFT:** Cadet candidates Andrew Soncini, left, and Luke Proulx listen to instructions while filling out their enlistment contracts at the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School.



Photos by Daniel P. Elkins

Civilian opportunities available downrange

Large contingency operations such as New Dawn in Iraq and Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan magnify the need for delivering material and services in a timely manner to meet urgent wartime needs. Included in those requirements is the need for civilian contracting experts to sustain the limited cadre of active-duty contracting officers and specialists.

by Ryan Mattox
MICC Public Affairs Office

Among the Army Acquisition Corps employees supporting the warfighter and ensuring Soldiers are able to execute the mission efficiently are three Mission and Installation Contracting Command contracting professionals. Faye Shepherd-Brennen, Daniel Portillo and Tim Whitt volunteered to temporarily work overseas and have been or are currently deployed to either Iraq or Afghanistan to assist with the Army's contracting requirements.

All three agree the decision to volunteer to deploy offered an opportunity to enhance their professional development and experience contracting in a way not typically found in their stateside positions.

"We worked six 12-hour days and one eight-hour day," said Shepherd-Brennen, who worked in the acquisition support branch responsible for contract close-outs, claims and litigations while deployed to U.S. Central Command Contracting, Regional Contracting Command Central in Baghdad, Iraq. "The work day began at 6:30 a.m. and ended at 6:30 p.m. All of the contract files for forward operating bases in Iraq that had closed were sent to us for close-out. There were several thousand contracts needing to be de-obligated, invoices needed to be paid, contracts needed to be closed-out, and claims needed to be settled. So there was never a shortage of work."

The long hours by Shepherd-Brennen are helping ensure the process of withdrawing operational forces from Iraq runs smoothly.

Tim Whitt is responsible for construction contracts to build new facilities and upgrade existing structures at Camp Leatherneck and throughout the Helmand province in Afghanistan. Whitt is a contract specialist with the Installation Contracting Office-Fort Carson, Colo., deployed to Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan.



“The presence of deployed civilians helped the Soldiers accomplish their mission of shutting down the forward operating bases and getting troops out of Iraq in the

prescribed time frame,” said Shepherd-Brennen, who is a contracting officer with the MICC Contract Support, Plans and Operations Division at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

While operations in Iraq are winding down, the mission is in full swing in Afghanistan, and Whitt and Portillo have found little change in the operations tempo there.

“The job is demanding in terms of workload and hours,” said Whitt, a contract specialist with the MICC Installation Contracting Office-Fort Carson, Colo., deployed to Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan. “I don’t think anybody here works under 85 to 90 hours a week. But as time passes, I find that I actually enjoy coming to work, and it’s getting better every day.”

Whitt works construction contracts to build new facilities and upgrade existing structures

at Camp Leatherneck and throughout the Helmand province in Afghanistan for use by servicemembers and Afghan partners to enhance their wartime capabilities.



“The difference from serving stateside would be just the sheer volume of work, the long hours and knowing that at anytime you could come under fire.”

Faye Shepherd-Brennen

Although some elements of the job remain constant despite the long hours, the deployed environment does present some unexpected opportunities unwind – and share a chuckle.

“The job itself hasn’t changed from back home; the average workday begins at 9 a.m. usually with at least a dozen or more emails, which rarely are good news,” Whitt said. “We also get to laugh, like when the military police

drove his leased vehicle into a drainage ditch right in front of our office. We had a great time with that one because he started to drive off, but the contracting officer for the vehicle contract stopped him to get photos for the contractor claim for the damage.”

Whitt also recalled a time when a field officer was asking why he could not order a goat with operations and maintenance

funds for locals in a nearby village to sacrifice.

Although always ready to share a good story, civilian acquisitions professionals working in forward locations also remain keenly aware of the danger faced daily.

“The difference from serving stateside would be just the sheer volume of work, the long hours and knowing that at anytime you could come under fire,” Shepherd-Brennen said. “Also interesting was the vast number of people from all different countries working in Iraq to support the warfighters.”

All believe they have gained a new perspective of the Soldiers they support and the mission they perform by taking advantage of civilian deployment opportunities.

“At times you feel guilty because you volunteered, whereas they didn’t have a choice,” Shepherd-Brennen said. “The whole experience gives you a better understanding of what Soldiers have to go through, and you really have a greater appreciation for them.”

“It makes us better civilian employees. Since we are in an enclosed compound, we get to know each other better,” said Portillo, a contracting officer from Fort Bliss, Texas, who is deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan. “We see our Soldiers exposing themselves to very dangerous situations to protect us and carry out their missions. In our own way, we contribute to their success by working until the job gets done no matter how hard, how long or how complicated. We are in a war zone, everything

you do means a lot more.”

Whitt also believes that the close quarters environment of deployments help build camaraderie with those they support.

“I think of all of the servicemembers that I work with as friends,” he said. “They are a great, fun-loving group with constant jokes. Of course, they all have the usual bravado, but during the day we have a great time.”

Following a long day, each still finds time to a break away from the mission to decompress.

“We all take our own breaks to go workout or just relax,” Whitt said. “We talk with family and friends back home. We usually travel to the dining facility in groups, and the chit chat is about home, family or a friend, our cars or trucks. We grumble about the heat every day, and it never gets old. We all act like children in a candy store when a new care package comes in.”

Shepherd-Brennen and Portillo described the deployment as a very sobering experience and a time for them to reflect.

“I missed my family the most while deployed. And I also missed all the freedoms we take for granted such as eating out at a nice restaurant or driving my car,” said Shepherd-Brennen, adding that she’ll miss the friendships that developed during the deployment.

“Looking at Kabul is like looking at Mexico 40 years ago,” said Portillo, who was born in Juarez, Mexico. “It brought memories of my youth. In Afghanistan, people are very friendly and humble; much like

the Mexican people.”

Despite the long hours, temporary living arrangements, separation from families and other hardships that a deployment brings, these contract specialists value their experiences and take away a greater understanding of their impact to the war.

“I knew there was a need,” Shepherd-Brennen said. “A need for the experience, for the financial gains and knowing I was on the frontline providing a service to the military.”

To learn more about deployment opportunities, visit the Army Contracting

Command Deployable Cadre website at www.armyhire.com/cadre. The program is the command’s primary source for civilian employees interested in deploying in support of critical, highly visible requirements around the globe.

The program matches an individual’s expertise and experience with the deployed mission needs of the Army Contracting Command with a goal of building a pool of qualified, well-trained volunteers willing to deploy. It is available to employees of ACC and its contracting centers and subordinate commands.

ACC Deployable Cadre Facts

- Volunteers support enduring overseas contingency missions
- Volunteers stand-ready to support short notice critical requirements
- Choose to be considered for overseas deployment, state-side TDY - or both
- Guaranteed return rights to your current assignment
- Readiness training prior to overseas deployment
- Overseas deployment is typically six months

Requirements

- ACC employee in the 1102, 1103, and 1910 career fields
- DAWIA Level II or III certified
- Meet medical and dental requirements for overseas deployments
- Sign a commitment to deploy agreement

Benefits

- Pride in service
- Professional development
- Real-world experience
- Career enhancement
- Travel opportunities
- Generous financial incentives
- Adventure
- Experience of a lifetime

Wetland credits help environment, save money



FORT BENNING, Ga. -- The purchase of wetland and stream credits by the government is allowing Mission and Installation Contracting Command professionals to help guide the U.S. Army Maneuver Center of Excellence here toward full operational capability in September.

The projects, totaling more than

\$3.5 billion in construction of new barracks, motor pools, ranges, dining facilities and administrative buildings in four major cantonment areas, requires a hefty footprint.

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission called for the relocation of the U.S. Army Armor School from Fort Knox, Ky., to Fort Benning. Its integration with activities at the U.S. Army Infantry Center and School established the U.S. Army Maneuver Center of Excellence, which was activated in October 2010. The center will soon be responsible for training more than 52 percent of the Army's warfighters.

"The constraints of available

land suitable for construction made it impossible for Fort Benning to avoid impacts on wetlands or streams," said Brenda Clark, the deputy director for the MICC Installation Contracting Office-Fort Benning. "Whenever such a massive construction effort takes place, it is inevitable that wetlands and streams are lost in the interest of progress."

She added that without the purchase of wetland and stream credits from mitigation banks, construction projects and other ICO procurement actions required to meet the new mission for the MCoE at Fort Benning would not have been executed.

Clark said more than 10,000 feet of streams and 3,000 acres of wetlands were impacted during the construction of facilities in support of the MCoE.

"Construction of this magnitude involved the total transformation of an area of Fort Benning that was mostly woodlands and wetlands," Clark said. "An entire infrastructure had to be built."

That infrastructure included the installation of water, sewer and electrical services; the re-paving of abandoned roads and cut of new roads; construction of new buildings and ranges; as well as renovation and expansion of other buildings in the developed areas of the installation to accommodate the increased training load.

Clark explained that during the BRAC construction, wetlands were impacted when fill was placed in a wetland area to build barracks, destroying the wetland. She said streams on the installation were also impacted with the placement of pipes or hardened surfaces to allow for tank crossings.

Without the purchase of the wetland credits, officials at Fort Benning would have been in violation of the Clean Water Act of 1997, which would have resulted in Environmental Protection Agency fines at a considerable cost to the government as well as potential delays from a stop-work mandate for all BRAC construction projects.

"Wetland and stream mitigation

banks provide a vital service to the Army to maintain compliance with the Clean Water Act as well as help the environment by ensuring the preservation of wetlands and streams for our future," Clark said.

A mitigation bank is an area of land where the wetlands and streams have been restored and are available for the purchase of credits to offset the loss of wetlands and streams in other areas. Commercial mitigation banks are regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to preserve, enhance or restore a wetland or stream area.

Some mitigation activities include restoring natural stream conditions by removing dams and culverts; planting mass producing species in areas that have been timbered or flooded; replacing monocultures of young red maple and sweet gum trees by thinning and planting more desirable hardwood species such as black gum, cypress, ash and oak; and reducing hydrologic extremes by restoring natural landscapes.

The process usually involves an area where wetlands and streams

have been impacted by construction or erosion or sedimentation. These areas are then used to offset other areas where change causes the loss of wetlands or streams. The offset is achieved through the purchase of credits that guarantee an equal amount of wetlands or streams are preserved in the vicinity of the wetlands or streams that were impacted as a result of change.

The Clean Water Act of 1997 requires compensatory mitigation to offset any wetlands or streams impacted as a result of changes. Additionally, Army policy mandates no net loss of wetlands or streams as a result of changes to an installation. To be in compliance with the law and Army policy, Fort Benning officials purchased approximately \$2 million in wetland and stream credits from a mitigation bank.



Historic West Point presents distinct role for contracting office

by Daniel Elkins
MICC Public Affairs Office

WEST POINT, N.Y. -- As the oldest continuously occupied military post in America, West Point creates an extraordinary workload for contracting professionals here who must harmonize the post's modern needs with its rich history.

Contract actions by the Mission and Installation Contracting Command staff take into consideration the need to preserve a history dating back to the Revolutionary War while incorporating the latest state-of-the-art equipment in support of the post's 4,000-strong cadet corps, 25 intercollegiate athletic teams and premier performing arts center.

Taking on this challenge is a staff of 35 at the MICC

Installation Contracting Office-West Point responsible for planning, integrating, awarding and administering contracts in support of the academic dean's office, corps of cadets, garrison, department of public works, directorate of logistics as well as other installation customers and nearby 2nd Aviation at the Stewart Air National Guard Base.

"We have phenomenal employees," insisted Annemarie Kopko, the ICO director who will assume duties as director at the end of September. "We're in our little corner of the world here, so it's pretty amazing that we're able to attract the people we do to work. They're smart, motivated and excited about work; and I'm talking about people that have been here more than 20 years as well as those just walking in the door. I'm very impressed."

Pat Campbell along with fellow members of the Installation Contracting Office-West Point often face a balancing act of preserving history while supporting a modern force. Campbell is a supervisory contract specialist.

Dave Bugger, the former MICC ICO-West Point director who retired in September, agreed and commended the staff's work ethic at a time when its workload is going up and a new major customer has just arrived at the post. The ICO was instrumental in the move of the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School from Fort Monmouth, N.J., to West Point in time for the July arrival of the first 246 cadet candidates.

Having served as director since 2006, Bugger's stint with the ICO-West Point began in 1990 and will wrap up in September following his retirement. He pointed out that the very building in which the contracting office resides as a classic example of the length to which post leaders attempt to preserve its history.

"It used to be the military police station until it was renovated in the mid-1990s," he said. "The engineer who ran the project said if we would have just knocked it down a new building would have cost less. We preserved the shell of the building and basically gutted the inside."

Kopko said the MICC ICO-West Point is presently administering a \$9.2 million construction project in-house as part of a multiple award task order contract through the Facilities Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization program. The program aims to keep the inventory of Defense Department facilities in good working order by addressing day-to-day maintenance requirements as well as fund the restoration of aging facilities.

The number of contract actions and modifications for the office remained constant from 2006 to 2009 but jumped by more than 35 percent to 3,358 in 2010. The amount of dollars

obligated has also seen a recent spike from \$122 million in 2006 to more than \$144 million in 2010 and cover the gamut of acquisitions.

"I remember when I first came here, one of my first procurements was to buy a wind tunnel," Kopko said. "We also buy lasers and all kinds of test equipment to support academic research."

Contracting experts also played a major role in the renovation, lighting and sound system of West Point's Eisenhower Hall Theater, which annually hosts national entertainers from stage and music and served as the setting for President Barack Obama's 2009 address to the nation concerning the surge in Afghanistan.

"It's the second largest performing arts theater on the East Coast, next to Radio City Music Hall, offering a Broadway-caliber venue for performing arts and attracting some of the biggest artists," Bugger said.

From the stage to the sports field, contracting professionals constantly find themselves having to become experts on subjects they've never dreamed of, including football stadium turf.

"We have NCAA-caliber athletic teams here, so it's important that the fields these teams play on meet NCAA standards," Bugger said. "Following a change in technology to Astroturf to reduce injury, West Point's Michie Stadium was one of the first to install the new surface."

"That took a lot of research, and we worked with the football coach and officials from Giants stadium. The sample proposals we received looked like something for a science project in a clear plastic box with a crosscut of dirt and turf," Kopko added. "Some procurements are very complicated but interesting, and you always walk away learning something."

"I remember when I first came here, one of my first procurements was to buy a wind tunnel. We also buy lasers and all kinds of test equipment to support academic research."

Annemarie Kopko
