

DoD Clarifies Civilian Overseas Assignment Policy

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (OCT. 5, 2012)

Karen Parrish

WASHINGTON—The Defense Department wants to clarify a personnel policy—generally known as the “five-year rule”—that establishes time limits for civilian overseas assignments, an official said here today.

Sheila Dent, the department’s acting director of human resources for operational programs and advisory services, spoke to the Pentagon Channel and American Forces Press Service about the thinking behind DoD Instruction Number 1400.25, Volume 1230, which took effect in July.

“What we’ve done is taken several different policy documents and consolidated them into one regulation,” she said. “The basic policy remains the same as it was ... but now we only have to go to one place.”

Since the new policy was published, she said, her office has offered a lot of advice to “folks wanting to make sure that they understand what the provisions are.”

The five-year rule has been in effect in some form since 1960, Dent noted. The policy establishes time limits for overseas assignments, and sets conditions for re-employment “return rights” when civilian workers return from overseas assignments.

The policy, she said, states that, “If an employee takes an assignment to an overseas post, then they have a job to return to in the states, but that the typical rotation period shouldn’t exceed five years.”

There is a provision for overseas employees to remain after five years, but only in two-year increments, officials said. Dent explained the new instruction offers components—the Army, Navy, Air Force, and DoD agencies—some flexibility in setting approval authority for such extensions. There is no cap on the number of extensions an employee can receive, she said, but under the policy components can set approval authority at any level within the component.

“Previously, it would stop at the installation commander level, typically,” she added. “But now it might be a level or two above that commander.”

Higher level approval of extensions can benefit workforce and succession planning, Dent said.

“We see that we have to be more deliberate in determining what our competencies are ... [and] what we need to meet

the mission,” she said. “Typically, a supervisor above that local level has a wider perspective of what’s going on in that area of operations.”

The instruction also states an employee must spend two years in a stateside job after completing an overseas posting before being eligible for another five-year overseas assignment.

“Basically, when an employee returns to the states, we’re looking to establish a couple of things,” she said. “One is stability in that work environment that they return to ... [and second] that the employee has time to get settled and re-familiarized, so that they can get up to speed in the latest changes in technology.”

Civilian jobs exempt from the five-year rule have, in the past, included positions that included frequent contact with host-nation officials or that required a high level of host-nation cultural knowledge, Dent said.

“We eliminated the exemption from the five-year rule,” she explained. “However, the commander still has the authority to approve an extension for individuals in those positions. Again, it goes back to workforce planning and shaping.”

In deciding on repeated extensions for long-term overseas employees, she said, managers should consider how to grow the skillset the next worker in that job will need, and also ensure that policy makers in the states can benefit from the knowledge overseas employees gain about partner nations. When employees do rotate back to the states, Dent noted, they can benefit from a broad range of return rights guaranteed under the new instruction.

“Previously, each component set the rules about ... how they would authorize return rights,” she said. Now, she noted, “if you take an assignment outside of that organization overseas, you are guaranteed return rights back to a position similar to what you had, in the organization that you left.”

Overall, she said, the new instruction doesn’t require any big changes from commanders and managers overseas.

“This document gives the managers clearer emphasis on their responsibility for planning for that strategic workforce,” Dent said.

DoD Official Praises Vet Employment Program

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (OCT. 15, 2012)

Karen Parrish

WASHINGTON—A senior defense official took part today in the announcement in New York of a new hiring program that aims to train and place 100,000 veterans in advanced manufacturing and related jobs by 2015.

John R. Campbell, deputy assistant secretary of defense for warrior care and transition policy, joined officials from General Electric, Alcoa, Boeing, and Lockheed Martin as they announced a partnered effort with the Manufacturing Institute to fast-track veterans into manufacturing jobs or skills training.

The “Get Skills to Work” program, according to GE chairman and CEO Jeff Immelt, seeks to match veterans with some of the more than half-million unfilled high-tech manufacturing jobs in the United States. Veterans, a million of whom are expected to leave service in the next four years, have the teamwork skills and personal values to make them successful in manufacturing, he said.

The program will offer veterans an online skills assessment and badging system for those who are already qualified for high-tech manufacturing jobs, and will train other veterans through partnerships with community colleges and technical training schools in 10 states, Immelt noted.

GE officials said the first class of veterans will enroll in January at Cincinnati State Technical and Community College in Ohio, near GE Aviation’s manufacturing hub.

Additional training sites will open throughout 2013, officials said, in Fort Worth and Houston in Texas; Schenectady, N.Y.; Greenville, S.C.; Durham, N.C.; greater Los Angeles; and Evansville, Ind. Program details are available online at <http://getskillstowork.org>.

Campbell, a Marine Corps veteran who served from 1967 to 1970, is the Pentagon’s senior official responsible for ensuring that wounded, ill, injured, and transitioning service members receive high-quality services, including the tools they need to re-enter civilian life successfully.

“Something very interesting happens when a veteran enters the workplace,” he said. “I call it the vet effect: leadership, teaming, personal values that course through a company’s DNA. Something really magical happens.”

Campbell said that when he left the Marine Corps and took a job with J.P. Morgan, he didn’t have to worry about proving the value of his military experience—the company’s chairman and several other senior executives also were veterans, he noted.

“It’s much different today,” he added.

“When 1 percent of this country is serving or is connected to the military,” Campbell said, “and we have so many that don’t really know there’s a war, ... it’s really incumbent on programs like ‘Get Skills to Work’ to show what these terrific young men and women ... [are] capable of doing.”

He noted the Defense Department partners with the departments of Veterans Affairs, Labor, Education, and Homeland Security, along with the Office of Personnel Management and the Small Business Administration, on the redesigned Transition Assistance Program, called Transition GPS.

The government agencies involved are working to make Transition GPS “a new program that is really going to be 21st century in its thinking and ... its outreach,” Campbell said. He noted VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki and Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta are both “committed to making sure veterans are ‘career ready,’ and their departments are also involved in spouse employment efforts.

“On some days, I think we’re doing all we can; other days I think we can do more,” he said. Public-private partnerships such as ‘Get Skills to Work’ can help target specific manufacturing needs in communities with large veteran populations, he added.

DoD Seeks Mentors to Help Hire People with Disabilities

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (OCT. 19, 2012)

Terri Moon Cronk

WASHINGTON—The Defense Department on Oct. 26 will kick off its annual volunteer mentoring program to help hire individuals with disabilities as part of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, Stephen M. King, DoD’s director of disability programs, said recently.

King said the volunteer program is in step with Executive Order 13548, “Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals with Disabilities,” to highlight the importance of mentoring people with disabilities, and to improve the hiring and retention of people with disabilities within DoD.

“The mentor-mentee relationship develops over the course of seven months, and sometimes becomes so strong it extends outside of the program,” King said. “The relationships

have even encompassed advice in decision making related not only to mentees' professional lives, but their personal lives as well."

DoD established the Electronic Mentoring Program—known as "e-Mentoring"—in 2002 to supplement the Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students and Recent Graduates with Disabilities, said Eileen Lainez, a spokeswoman with the Defense Press Office, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs.

The WRP connects the federal sector with highly motivated post-secondary students and recent grads with disabilities, Lainez said.

The WRP began in 1975 and the program was expanded to all federal agencies 20 years later. Nearly 6,000 positions since then have been filled by WRP participants.

E-Mentoring helps volunteers encourage participants to hone their career plans and consider DoD careers, King said. E-Mentoring also offers weekly discussion topics, from interview techniques and goal setting to applying for federal jobs and business etiquette.

"Participants have said that DoD's Workforce Recruitment Program's e-Mentoring program gave them the confidence and knowledge needed when applying for full-time employment within the Department of Defense, and the federal government as a whole," King said.

Hiring people with disabilities also contributes to military readiness, Lainez said. For organizations to operate at their optimum, they must capitalize on what all employees bring to the workplace in knowledge, skills, and abilities, she noted. And people with disabilities develop problem-solving abilities that transfer to the workplace, Lainez said.

Last year, 86 recruiters from 40 federal agencies, including 33 DoD recruiters, interviewed students at 290 colleges and universities across the country. DoD hired 79 percent of the WRP participants and 30 percent were people with targeted or severe disabilities as recognized by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Lainez said.

Mentors comprise servicemembers and civilians from DoD installations worldwide who volunteer their time to help develop qualified individuals with disabilities to enter the DoD workforce. Additionally, mentors bring leadership to the program by "giving back," she said.

"You would be surprised to know that sometimes mentors benefit from the program just as much as the mentees do," King said.

"In working with their mentees, they are reminded of their own career goals, and become inspired to reassess their own life plans," he noted.

And those who are mentored become more prepared and integrate more easily into an organization after an experienced volunteer mentors them, Lainez added.

The varieties of opportunities in DoD career fields include business management, accounting, education, criminal justice, administration, and information technology.

Military and DoD civilian employees who are interested in becoming volunteer mentors can contact DOD's e-Mentoring program coordinator at ability@osd.mil.

Developing Leaders Tops Army's Priorities

ARMY NEWS SERVICE (OCT. 26, 2012)

David Vergu

WASHINGTON—Soldiers, having experienced the "crucible" of the last 11 years of an Army at war, where "discipline, initiative, freedom of action, adaptability, and decentralization" have been the norm, are today "professionally advanced [in leadership] way beyond their years in any grade—noncommissioned officer and officer," said retired Army Gen. Frederick M. Franks Jr.

"The challenge facing us today as we transition is how does the Army keep that goodness [in its leaders] as we deploy less and make do with less resources," he said.

That question framed the discussion that followed, during the Association of the United States Army's Institute of Land Warfare's "Developing Leaders: The Key to Readiness, Sustaining the Profession, and Ensuring our Legacy" forum, Oct. 24.

Franks, who is chair of the Simon Center for the Professional Military Ethic at the U.S. Military Academy, was one of eight panelists.

Developing and nurturing good leaders is not just about sending them to leadership courses, Franks said. Though retired, the general has been listening to leaders throughout the Army.

"Roughly 80 percent of leaders—NCOs and officers—say they learn best by experience, even as they acknowledge



Leadership development occurs even when soldiers are deployed. Here, soldiers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team provide overwatch security as a convoy passes through a valley, April 29, 2012, in southern Wardak province, Afghanistan.

U.S. Army photo

the value of institutional and self-development approaches," Franks said.

Brig. Gen. Gordon B. Davis Jr., deputy commandant, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College/deputy commander, Leader Development and Education, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, said soldiers learn the art and science of war through education, training, and experience, with the goal of preparing them for the next rank or position of responsibility.

Davis said leader development has many goals. Included among those goals is teaching soldiers how to analyze and solve complex problems, how to better collaborate with other Services and multinational partners, how to be better communicators and negotiators, and how to be better leaders and managers.

The general added that leadership development "allows us to inject the latest concepts, doctrines, policies, best practices, and emerging ideas into the graduates, who then take that new knowledge and inject it back into the Army, thus allowing us to institutionalize and operationalize change."

The Army invests heavily in military education, much more so than businesses and other government agencies, he said.

"Private-sector leaders I've spoken with are surprised [at] and envious [of] the Army's time and effort [spent] in developing leaders for future responsibilities," Davis said.

Leadership education and development outside the classroom is occurring all the time, according to Maj. Gen. Joseph Anderson, commander, 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized).

He said such education takes place during physical fitness and battle skills training, in competitive team-building events, and in many other venues which can take place even when troops are deployed.

He suggested too that soldiers be rotated—given a variety of tasks and responsibilities—so they don't become stale.

Maj. Gen. Anthony A. Cucolo III said there are two essential elements to leader development while in an operating force environment.

The first of those, Cucolo said, is identifying the sphere of influence—deciding who will develop the leader and have the discussion with him or her.

Secondly, he said, is articulating an end state. That means knowing ahead of time, before the officer leaves a command,

what the leader wants that officer to know about, know how to do, or understand.

“In other words, you start with the end state, then build the program,” Cucolo said.

Cucolo, who is commandant of the U.S. Army War College, said that end state can’t just be driven by a list of events. He said the plan has to include “personalized development sessions” that are discussed one-on-one, not just top-down driven.

All in all, the Army is doing a pretty good job at developing its leaders, said retired Col. Joseph N.G. LeBoeuf, PhD., professor of the practice of management, Fuqua School of Business and Coach K Center on Leadership and Ethics, Duke University.

Many who are in charge of leadership development at the best business schools and Fortune 500 companies are former soldiers, he said.

One of the reasons soldiers do so well, he suggested, is that they practice transformational leadership as well as transactional. He defined transactional leadership as simply using people to accomplish tasks and transformational as getting stuff done in the right way—using tasks as leadership development opportunities.

These opportunities could be anything from providing constructive feedback and rewards to self-assessment and reflection.

My Educational Journey: Take Advantage of the Benefits Available to You

AIR FORCE MATERIEL COMMAND NEWS (NOV. 2, 2012)

Mark Bacon

HANSCOM AIR FORCE BASE, Mass.—One of the saddest things I’ve witnessed during my 35 years with the Air Force—including over 23 years’ active duty, as a contractor, and now as an Air Force civilian—has been people who stay with our Service as a career, yet never use the many educational benefits available to them. My educational journey is in many ways a story about all the educational benefits that I’ve been fortunate enough to take advantage of over the years.

My story begins with my enlistment in the Air Force in February 1978. To say that I was an extremely unfocused high school student is being kind. Owing to a lack of effort and many unexcused absences, I dropped out of high school and convinced my mother to sign for me to enlist when I was barely 17. At the military processing station, several recruit-

ers told me that I scored high enough on the General Technical portion of the ASVAB entrance test to be a linguist. They gave me an artificial language test, which I passed, and after basic training I was off to the Presidio of Monterey, Calif., to learn Korean. Although the curriculum was very challenging, I had a fairly easy time with it and to this day I still enjoy the Korean language. When those recruiters told me about language training, they mentioned that it would be worth civilian college credit. That didn’t mean much to me then. I had simply found a vocation I enjoyed. Consequently, I became a lot more focused and decided to give this profession a serious try.

My 13-year enlisted career as a linguist took me on three remote tours to Korea and three tours at Fort Meade, Md. Many of my colleagues at those locations were smart and achievement-oriented, and through them I developed a desire to get ahead. I took and passed the GED and began taking college courses funded by Air Force tuition assistance—a fantastic education benefit. Attending class in the evenings was a long, hard struggle, but by 1986 I completed enough classes to earn my Community College of the Air Force degree. The officer presiding at the commencement ceremony encouraged us to go on and pursue a bachelor’s degree, which I had already resolved to do. When I spoke to a counselor at the University of Maryland, I was pleasantly surprised to learn that the university would transfer 33 semester hours of credit for the basic and intermediate Korean courses I completed in Monterey. This put me within a year of completing a bachelor’s degree and also made me eligible for a program called Operation Bootstrap. This was a super deal in which—if my duty section agreed—I could go to school full time, at full pay (E-6, at the time), to earn my degree. I could not use Air Force tuition assistance while participating in this program, but I could and did use my benefits under the Veterans Education Assistance Program.

Operation Bootstrap was a three-to-one payback: for whatever time it took me to complete my degree, I had to pay back three times that to the Air Force. When I completed my Bachelor of Arts in Government & Politics in 1987, I was at nine years time in service and I owed three additional years active duty service commitment time. I decided that since I was already committed to the Air Force, I may as well apply for a commission and go as far as I could in those remaining years. I was accepted to Officer Training School and was commissioned a second lieutenant on November 20, 1991—a very proud moment for me. I was assigned to missile crew duty at Whiteman AFB, Mo. While there I learned that there was another education program specifically for my career field called the Minuteman Crew Member Education

Program, which would pay for graduate courses, to include books. Another great education deal!

I completed as many courses at the University of Central Missouri as I could through MCMEP, but when the missile wing at Whiteman shut down I had to PCS after only three years on station. During subsequent assignments I kept plugging away with occasional night courses. My goal was to transfer credits back to CMU and complete a Master of Arts in History, which I did in 2003—two years after I retired from active duty. The challenge for me—as it is for anyone trying to get ahead in any profession—has been to find the right balance among home life, school, and work. In hindsight, I regret not having completed my education sooner and not having advanced through the ranks quicker, but this is simply the way the trade-offs worked for me. I am very pleased with the results.

My educational journey didn't end with my retirement from active duty as a captain in 2001. In the early '90s, I paid \$1,200 to convert my VEAP account to the Montgomery GI Bill. I still consider this one of the best investments I ever made. In late 2005 I took a job as a contractor with the Electronic Systems Center. My MA in History wasn't going to provide adequate "creds" for the acquisition business, so I enrolled in Boston University's Master of Science in Business Administration program conducted on Hanscom. I completed my second master's degree in 2009. The next year the GI Bill even paid the \$500 fee for me to take the Project Management Institute's Project Management Professional certification exam!

Here I am in 2012 with an associate's, a bachelor's, two master's degrees, and a Project Management Professional (PMP®) certification, all thanks to Air Force educational assistance programs. My GI Bill benefits expired last year, and I'm proud to say that there weren't more than a few dollars left in my account when it was closed. Looking back, I can say with confidence that the excellent training and off-duty education I received always made me a better and more productive person on the job. I'm sure this is at least part of the logic behind the establishment of these programs, which I hope will continue to stay around for those who follow. It's a win-win for both the Air Force and those who actively pursue these benefits. To those of you who are just starting your journey, take advantage of as many educational benefits as you can. You'll find that education is the key to the door of opportunity, and the ticket to success!

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U.S. Air Force photo

Systems Center, Air Force Materiel Command, Hanscom AFB, Mass.

U.S. Army Acquisition Leadership Challenge Program

U.S. ARMY ACQUISITION SUPPORT CENTER (NOV. 8, 2012)

The "Acquisition Leadership Challenge Program" (ALCP) is the newest program to the Acquisition Education and Training Portfolio for the Army. Based upon the huge success the Air Force has enjoyed with ALCP, the Army piloted multiple offerings of the 2-1/2 day course in FY12. For FY13, the Army is bringing the course to you. For more information on how to apply, please visit the U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center website: <http://asc.army.mil/web/career-development/programs/acquisition-leadership-challenge-program/>.

Below are the FY13 ALCP training dates (by location):

DATE	OFFERING TYPE (ALCP I or II)	LOCATION
Jan. 14-18	Level I & Level II	Atlanta, Ga.
Feb. 25-March 1	Back-to-back Level I offerings	Huntsville, Ala.
March 11-15	Level I & Level II	Huntsville, Ala.
April 29-May 3	Level I & Level II	Aberdeen, Md.
May 20-24	Level I & Level II	Atlanta, Ga.
June 10-14	Back-to-back Level I offerings	Warren, Mich.
July 29-Aug. 2	Level I & Level II	Huntsville, Ala.

Aug. 19-23 Back-to-back Aberdeen, Md.
Level I offerings

Panetta Directs Review of Officers' Culture of Stewardship

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (NOV. 15, 2012)

Cheryl Pellerin

BANGKOK—Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta has ordered a review to determine how the armed forces can better foster a culture of stewardship among senior military officers, Pentagon Press Secretary George Little said here today.

Panetta directed Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to work with other members of the Joint Chiefs on the review, Little said, adding that initial findings are due to the secretary within the next few weeks. Little said this is an ongoing process, the timing of which—amid recent reports and investigations of potentially improper behavior by several general officers—is coincidental. The review, he said, “was going to happen anyway.” Input to the secretary will form the basis of a report to President Barack Obama on the department’s progress in this area by Dec. 1.

The process, Little noted, is intended to reinforce and strengthen the standards that keep the military well led and disciplined.

“The secretary believes that the vast majority of our senior military officers exemplify the strength of character and the highest ethical standards the American people expect of those whose job it is to provide for the security of our nation,” Little said.

“They represent not only the best of the American military, but the American people,” he added. “The majority of these officers lead by example, which is one of the reasons the United States military stands without peer.”

Over the past several months, the press secretary said, Panetta has spoken with the Service secretaries, Service chiefs, and combatant commanders about instances when senior officers have not lived up to the standards expected of them.

“This has been an ongoing discussion,” Little said, “reflecting shared concerns.”

The secretary is traveling this week in the Asia-Pacific region, visiting defense officials in Australia, Thailand, and Cambodia.

Vice Chairman Commends Business Leaders for Hiring Veterans

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (NOV. 15, 2012)

Terri Moon Cronk

WASHINGTON—Hiring veterans is neither an act of charity nor patriotism, but a smart choice, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff told business leaders at the start of the fifth annual “Business Steps Up: Hiring Our Heroes” event held at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce here today.

As keynote speaker for the event, Navy Adm. James A. Winnefeld Jr. said he was there to “kick off what is a very important topic—how to best serve the brave men and women who served our nation in uniform who are home looking for work,” and how to best serve business people who want to hire quality people for their organizations.

“One of the centerpieces of the Hiring Our Heroes campaign was to create a movement. Thanks to those efforts, 85,000 veterans and military spouses have been hired, and that’s a remarkable accomplishment,” the vice chairman told the large group of attendees.

“There is undeniable growth in both the awareness and action in the cause of hiring veterans, and the business community definitely gets it,” Winnefeld said, adding that the movement is “really thriving.” He also said the trend of veterans’ unemployment was beginning to slow.

“We remain a nation at war,” Winnefeld said. “While, thanks to the numerous and tremendous efforts of our brave warriors, we furled the battle flag from Iraq and are beginning a drawdown from Afghanistan; the transition out of these conflicts and the inevitable normal cycle of a defense drawdown after a long war means thousands of our veterans will make the transition of wearing the cloth of our nation to wearing the cloth of business and industry.”

As that happens, he said, several important tasks lie ahead for the nation to accomplish. Wounded warriors, with visible and invisible wounds of war, must be taken care of along with their “tireless” caregivers. Americans also must make sure the veterans who’ve stood in defense of their nation also have a place to sleep at night.

“Today, a third of the entire adult homeless population in our nation are veterans,” Winnefeld said. “That’s 67,000 veterans who are going to sleep at night on our streets. There’s more we can do to keep this from happening—to get those who’ve fallen into homelessness back on their feet.”

Most importantly, Winnefeld said, is for veterans to gain employment. "That effort is under way and we're moving in that direction," he said, citing Bureau of Labor statistics that show the unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans that averaged 12.1 percent in 2011 has dropped to 10.2 percent. "That's progress," he said. "But even at 10 percent, there's much more we can do."

The employers who hire veterans already know their value to a company, organization or agency, he said.

"You've seen them in action ... and the value they bring to your various teams," he told the audience. "You've witnessed their agility, their adaptability, their proven interpersonal skills, and their ability to perform under pressure. After all, the pressure of daunting deadlines is more manageable after [experiencing] the pressure of an incoming rocket attack," he added.

Winnefeld said a "sea of good will" exists, and new companies are looking to join the movement to hire veterans every day.

"But we need your help in showing them the way," he told the business leaders. "We need your help to encourage them to participate in job fairs, to help fortify that bridge from employee to employer, to help develop innovative transition programs for veterans to ease into the workplace."

Winnefeld urged the business leaders who employ veterans to network and perform outreach work to help ensure that fellow members of the business community understand what an investment it is to hire a veteran.

"Help them understand how veterans' skill sets on the battlefield and elsewhere translate into skills in the workplace," he said.

The vice chairman thanked audience members for their support in hiring veterans.

"I can't begin to express to you how important it is to [the armed forces' senior leadership] to know our young people—who have worn the cloth of their nation and have served and sacrificed so much [and] are leaving the Service—are being looked after by the business community [that] understands the value of hiring them and giving them an opportunity to excel in a new life," he said.

Winnefeld said each person and their company represents a champion to him for hiring veterans.

"You understand the price of freedom, and you continue to give back to those who sacrificed so we can all prosper back here at home," he said. "You're making a huge difference."

Army to Close its National Capital Region Contracting Center

U.S. ARMY CONTRACTING COMMAND Public Affairs (NOV. 16, 2012)

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Army will close its National Capital Region contracting center next year, the Army announced Nov. 16.

Army Contracting Command-National Capital Region, located in Alexandria, Va., will be closed July 20, 2013, and its workload distributed to other contracting centers operated by the U.S. Army Contracting Command.

The workload redistribution affects 260 civil service positions and six military positions. All ACC-NCR civil service employees will be offered their current position at the new locations. Soldiers will be reassigned through the military personnel system.

"This was a difficult decision," said Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols, commanding general, U.S. Army Contracting Command, headquartered at Redstone Arsenal, Ala. "But as good stewards of the taxpayers' money, we must make the most effective and efficient use of our resources, including our people. We have a position for all of our valued employees and will work diligently to make their transition to their new job locations as easy as possible."

High employee turnover and operating costs were the primary factors for closing the center and redistributing its workload to other ACC contracting organizations, according to Gene Duncan, acting chief, Operations Division, ACC Operations Group, and project officer for the transition. ACC-NCR employee turnover was more than 30 percent between Oct. 1, 2010, and June 30, 2012, compared to normal workforce attrition of between eight and 10 percent. By moving the organization from a highly competitive area, turnover will be reduced, the workforce will stabilize, and the already strong customer service and contract quality will improve, he said.

The Army predicts the move will save about \$13 million annually, once the transition is complete, through increased efficiencies, reduced facilities and information technology costs, reduced turnover, and reduced locality pay as the positions are moved outside the National Capital Region.

ACC-NCR's workload will be distributed to ACC contracting centers at Rock Island Arsenal, Ill. (87 positions); Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J. (79 positions); Warren, Mich. (10 positions); Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. (32 positions); and Redstone Arsenal, Ala. (22 positions); as well as to the Mission and Installation Contracting Command offices at Fort Knox, Ky. (10 positions) and Joint Base San Antonio, Texas (12 positions). An element of 14 positions will remain in the National Capital Region at Fort Belvoir, Va., to handle support functions including customer support, coordination, and Government Purchase Card oversight.

Employees will have until Jan. 8, 2013, to accept or decline the management-directed reassignment. Employees who decline transfer will be eligible to register in the Priority Placement Program, a Department of Defense system designed to help displaced employees. In addition, ACC will provide relocation and transition assistance. Employees may also be eligible for placement through the Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan for positions outside the Department of Defense.

"There will be another option within ACC," Duncan said. "Under the ACC Command Assistance for Placing Employees Program, employees who decline the management-directed reassignment will have the opportunity to indicate interest in other ACC locations. Selecting officials will receive information regarding those employees' skills and certification levels. The gaining selecting official will make the selection. Employees selected under this program will receive travel orders and must report to the gaining location no later than July 20, 2013."

Army Contracting Command provides global contracting support to soldiers through the full spectrum of military operations. ACC consists of about 6,800 civilians and soldiers at more than 100 locations worldwide. In fiscal year 2012, ACC awarded and managed more than 228,000 contract actions valued at more than \$74 billion.

In fiscal year 2012, ACC-NCR executed more than 4,600 contract actions valued at \$1.84 billion.

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Military-to-Civilian Skills Credentialing Pilot Underway

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (NOV. 20, 2012)

Claudette Roulo

WASHINGTON—After completing an analysis of industry and employment trends, the Defense Department has em-

barked on a pilot program to help servicemembers obtain civilian professional credentials, the department's director of training readiness and strategy told reporters today.

Frank C. DiGiovanni said five occupational areas were selected for the pilot program—aircraft mechanic, automotive mechanic, health care, supply and logistics, and truck driver. A total of 17 military specialties are covered under these five areas, which align with Department of Labor's standard occupational classifications, he noted.

To select the occupations, he said, the department looked at the private sector for areas where there would be average or better growth coinciding with high numbers of projected job openings.

"What we've asked the Services to do ... is to look at those five areas, look at their specific military occupational codes, marry them up, and get some people into the pilot program," DiGiovanni said.

The program began in October, he said, and as it progresses, officials will examine whether existing military training is sufficient to qualify servicemembers for civilian credentials. Where the current training is found to be insufficient, DiGiovanni added, the department will determine if the program can be adjusted or if training from external sources is necessary.

Training is just part of career development, however. "Some of these licenses and credentials require a certain level of experience to qualify," he said. So, the program will eventually assess servicemembers at various stages in their military careers, he said.

Military officials will also assess the program's success from the perspective of the three key participant groups, DiGiovanni said. "The first is the individual," he said. "Did they feel they got what they needed to go out and compete?"

The second group, technical schools and supervisors, will be surveyed to determine whether meeting the requirements of a civilian certification program helped them or if it created additional challenges, DiGiovanni said.

As the servicemembers involved in the pilot program transition from military service, a third group—employers—will be surveyed, he said.

"We'd have to go to some of the industry folks and say, 'The fact that [servicemembers] were able to get some of these licenses or credentials while on military service—did that

help in your decision to hire an individual? What kind of employee are they?" he said.

"For us, the objective really is honoring the service of our servicemembers and helping them ... while they're in the service to professionalize and expand their knowledge in these occupational areas," DiGiovanni said.

The program's second aim is to determine whether conducting this type of training through the Services is cost-effective, he said. Other options could include vocational training through the Department of Labor or Veterans Affairs, he added.

The pilot is one of several DoD Credentialing and Licensing Task Force initiatives, said Eileen Lainez, a spokesperson for the Defense Department.

"We're looking at how we can better document and translate military training and experience so that civilian credentialing agencies and states can better understand the nature of military training and award appropriate credit," she said. "Industry has told us ... that military members bring several advantages to the table," DiGiovanni said. Employers consider servicemembers and veterans to be diligent, efficient, and reliable, he said.

Servicemembers and veterans report that their military experience provided them with leadership and problem-solving skills, adaptability, and the ability to work in teams, he added. "In many industries ... the training and experience they have in the military gives them a jump start," he said. "However, civilian employers also report that translating military skills to civilian job experience is one of the biggest challenges of hiring employees with military experience," Lainez said. "Civilian credentials provide a means of doing this translation."

Staff College Offers New Joint Course in Tampa

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (NOV. 20, 2012)

NORFOLK, Va.—Officers and civilians will soon have an additional avenue to pursue professional education, thanks to a non-resident satellite Phase II Joint Professional Military Education course that will launch in January in Tampa, Fla. The satellite JPME II format will be nearly identical to the in-residence program taught at National Defense University's Joint Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Va. JFSC will oversee and conduct the 10-week satellite course, which will be offered up to four times annually.

This is a pilot initiative authorized by Congress to complement the current in-resident program at JFSC. Those eligible are officers in the grades of major, lieutenant colonel, and colonel, and a limited number of civilians in equivalent grades.

The program aims to supplement the current pipeline of students attending JPME II and prove the educational validity of completing JPME II in a non-resident format, according to Dr. Ken Pisel, JFSC non-resident satellite program director. It will not reduce the number of students attending JFSC in residence.

The satellite course will primarily look to fill slots from those assigned to U.S. Central Command and U.S. Special Operations Command; however, the military services can potentially look elsewhere to fill any vacant slots.

U.S. Central Command and U.S. Special Operations Command will nominate students and Services will assign them to the course. Students will be in a local temporary duty status and engage full-time in the curriculum.

With Congressional approval, the long-term goal is to eventually offer this satellite program at other combatant command locations.

For more information about the course and class dates, prospective students can contact Pisel at 757-443-6229.