



*Air Force Col. Stephen Elliott (front left), Defense Contract Management Agency Dayton commander, walks a facility with DCMA Dayton employees Errol Palmer (front right), program integrator; Jay Pfeffer (back left), engineer; and Chris Burgin, quality assurance specialist. (Photos by Jo Adail Stephenson, DCMA Public Affairs)*

# DCMA Dayton walks the talk

Jo Adail Stephenson | DCMA Public Affairs

“**T**here is no I in team.”

Air Force Col. Stephen Elliott, Defense Contract Management Agency Dayton commander,

believes the essence of teamwork involves living the agency’s core values — integrity, service and excellence — each day.

“Being honest with each other, being respectful of each other and wanting to be a team member — I have great, great, great folks — young, and more experienced seasoned employees, a motivated team. I don’t have the I’s anywhere,” said Elliott about DCMA Dayton and its two streamlined contract management offices, Indianapolis and Cleveland.

Consisting of more than 300 employees, who are responsible for approximately 14,000 contracts valued in excess of \$30 billion, the team works together and puts individual differences aside to achieve the common goal.

James Cox, DCMA Dayton contract operations group manager, said, “We’ve gotten really good at cross-functional problem solving — and not only cross-functional but cross organizational. That doesn’t happen by magic .... Some of the meetings do get heated. We don’t always



*Defense Contract Management Agency Dayton quality assurance specialists (left to right) Jon Lutz, Sharon Vetter and Rocky Ash review surveillance paperwork at a contractor facility.*

agree — (there are) a lot of strong opinions — but we are all respectful of each other. We get it out on the table and air our issues and concerns.”

Elliott believes this type of “teaming” resolves problems by leveraging the team’s

combined expertise. “My experience has been when you find a problem, it’s usually not the people but the processes,” he said. “When we have a problem, we address it head-on. We take care of it and we move on.”



*Jim Richmond (left), Defense Contract Management Agency Cleveland quality assurance representative, inspects an aircraft engine seal assembly with a contractor employee and Jan Bayus (right), quality assurance team leader.*





*Defense Contract Management Agency Indianapolis employees Greg Harler (left), engineer, and Kraig von Nostitz, engineering/manufacturing team leader, talk about material review board actions at a contractor site.*

That synergy is vital in DCMA Dayton where the workload deals primarily with integral parts and components but few end-products.

“I share with folks how important their job is each and every day with everything they do — from the gasket produced out of a small business to the environmental control units from a larger supplier,”

Elliott said. “When it all comes to bear, it’s important because it makes a difference to the warfighter.”

Jim Richmond knows this firsthand. “I am a warfighter myself,” said the DCMA Cleveland quality assurance representative and current Air Force Reservist who has a combined total of 28 years of active duty and Reserve service. “I know what

it’s like to be overseas in the AOR (area of responsibility) and get the part out of Supply and the part doesn’t work. I want to make sure they get the right stuff at the right time.”

For DCMA Indianapolis employees Eric Stickdorn, engineer, and Cynthia “Cindy” Appleget, quality assurance specialist, warfighters are always in their thoughts.



*Defense Contract Management Agency Indianapolis employees Eric Stickdorn, engineer, and Cynthia “Cindy” Appleget, quality assurance specialist, review a mounted vehicle part prior to performance testing. (Courtesy photo)*





Defense Contract Management Agency Cleveland quality assurance specialist Dan Sexton, shows Army Lt. Col. Don Hurst, DCMA Cleveland commander, the inspection characteristics for a decontamination shelter. (Photos by Jo Adail Stephenson, DCMA Public Affairs)

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— Air Force Col. Stephen Elliott, Defense Contract Management Agency Dayton commander

“Every day we are thinking about the people using the products. They’re in our minds every day not only because they always should be but because some of us end up being out there with them like Cindy has,” Stickdorn said.

Appleget recently returned from a six-month deployment to Afghanistan where she evaluated contractor compliance to

Logistics Civil Augmentation Program IV contract requirements. LOGCAP IV encompasses basic life support services and Theater Wide Contract Administration, or TWCA, contracts.

Every chance he gets, Elliott stresses to DCMA Dayton employees how important their work is to the warfighter. He said it’s the whole team — the quality assurance specialist, contract administrator,

administrative contracting officer, engineer, industrial specialist — working together so the quality product is delivered at cost and on schedule to the warfighter.

The key is true motivation, according to Elliott. “I believe in empowerment and sending people out to do their jobs. My job isn’t to write a contract or inspect a part. My job is to motivate people, reward people and recognize people. That can be anything from a handshake to showing up.”

Elliott “walks the talk” by showing up to shake hands with DCMA employees and contractors as he travels throughout the CMO.

The uniforms he and his two streamline CMO commanders, Army Lt. Col. Todd Spencer, DCMA Indianapolis, and Army Lt. Col. Don Hurst, DCMA Cleveland, wear make a definite impact.

“I’m a visual,” said Elliott. “Lt. Col. Hurst and Lt. Col. Spencer are extensions of that. When I go to contractor facilities, it amazes me the number of people working for the contractors who come up to me and say, ‘Hey, Colonel, thanks for what you do.’ And my response is: Thanks for what you do.”

The essence of DCMA Dayton’s team is its members and how well they work together.

Cox, who has been employed at other organizations prior to coming to DCMA, said, “It’s the people who work together well. In terms of working together, it’s the best I’ve ever been associated with.”



Tim Johnson, Defense Contract Management Agency Dayton quality assurance specialist, visually inspects small arms ammunition containers.