



William A. Creech

Shirley Watson saved the government more than \$460,000 by acquiring five full track dozers for the Fort Benning, Ga., department of public works.

Benning bulldozes customer savings

by Daniel P. Elkins
MICC Public Affairs Office

An innovative solution by the contracting office at Fort Benning, Ga., has saved the government almost a half of million dollars while boosting the mission capability of the installation's department of public works.

Shirley Watson, the industrial property administrator for the Mission and Installation Contracting Command-Fort Benning, took advantage of a redistribution program to reallocate five serviceable full track dozers to meet her DPW customer's requirement. In addition to the

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Brigades strengthen contracting capability

by Daniel P. Elkins
MICC Public Affairs Office

Activation of the 419th Contracting Support Brigade June 7 at Fort Bragg, N.C., and 418th CSB July 10 at Fort Hood, Texas, enhanced installation and operational contracting support to Army commands.

The activations follow attachment of contingency contracting Soldiers to the Mission and Installation Contracting Command as part of their integration with contracting centers and offices throughout Army Contracting Command and the MICC that began in March.

"Establishing (the 419th CSB) provides the MICC headquarters the capability to enhance core customer support through improved strategically aligned support to commands and installations," said Col. Antonio Brown, 419th CSB commander. "The brigade also provides the opportunity to strengthen contract compliance and oversight."

Commanding the 418th CSB is Col. Timothy Starostanko.

"Activating a new brigade is

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Contracting for Soldiers

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MISSION

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

Keeping faith in our Army

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

As we enter the final quarter of the fiscal year, the challenges faced by the Soldiers and civilian members of the Mission and Installation Contracting Command are compounded by sequestration and an essential shift in priorities.

The tough but necessary decision by our leaders to move forward with the furlough personally impacts more than 1,300 members of this command. The consequences are real and bring the additional stress of a financial burden for many of you.

Rest assured, we support our workforce and appreciate your hard work and continued dedication to the MICC mission as we navigate through this difficult time. Although we've had a few months to prepare for the furlough, it doesn't lessen the stresses associated with the loss of pay or the hardships it creates. If the stress becomes too great to deal with, make sure you talk to your supervisors, your co-workers or the command team. You don't have to manage this alone.

Our Army is steeped in tradition and culture. This includes taking care of one another. Any action contrary to supporting our Soldiers and civilians erodes the Army profession and command climate.

The Army chief of staff recently identified the prevention and elimination of sexual assault and sexual harassment as the service's No. 1 priority. Sexual

harassment and sexual assault have no place in the Army and no place in the MICC.

This is not a Soldier problem; it's a workforce issue and rightfully the priority of every Army leader and supervisor.

The Army and MICC are absolutely committed to ensuring a professional environment free of sexual harassment and sexual assault. We must provide every Soldier, civilian and family member a climate of respect and dignity. We

are bound by this commitment.

Taking care of each other is critical to ensuring our Army's readiness and resilience. The Ready and Resilient Campaign integrates and synchronizes multiple efforts and programs to improve the readiness and resilience of the Army family – Soldiers, civilians and families. It synchronizes and integrates key Army programs to reduce or eliminate suicide and thoughts of suicide, sexual harassment and sexual assault, bullying and hazing, substance abuse, domestic violence and any stigma or barriers associated with seeking help.

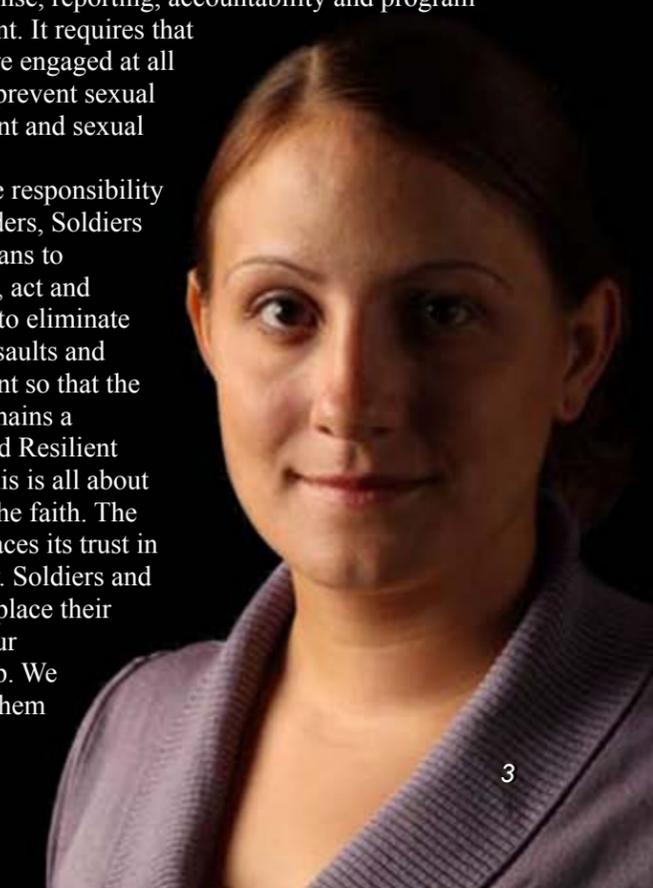
Seeking help or bringing to the attention incidents of sexual harassment or sexual assault is an important part of eradicating this behavior from our Army. Such conduct goes against the standards and ethics of our professional force. Anyone experiencing sexual harassment or sexual assault must feel safe and confident that those committing this behavior are held accountable. Strengthening accountability, command climate and victim advocacy are fundamental to reducing and eliminating sexual harassment and sexual assault.

We are aggressively implementing and expanding the Army's Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Program to reinforce a commitment to eradicate sexual harassment and sexual assault. This is a comprehensive policy that centers on awareness and prevention; training and education; victim advocacy; and response, reporting, accountability and program assessment. It requires that leaders are engaged at all levels to prevent sexual harassment and sexual assault.

It is the responsibility of all leaders, Soldiers and civilians to intervene, act and motivate to eliminate sexual assaults and harassment so that the Army remains a Ready and Resilient Force. This is all about keeping the faith. The nation places its trust in our Army. Soldiers and civilians place their faith in our leadership. We can't let them down.



Contracting for Soldiers



Army announces ACC senior leadership changes

by Ed Worley
ACC Public Affairs Office

Two of Army Contracting Command's senior leaders have been selected for reassignment, Army officials announced June 28.

Maj. Gen. Camille Nichols, ACC commanding general, has been selected for assignment as deputy commanding general for support/chief of staff for the Installation Management Command at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Brig. Gen. Theodore "Ted" Harrison, commanding general of the Expeditionary Contracting Command, has been selected to succeed Nichols as the ACC commanding general. Change of command ceremonies are planned for Oct. 3.

"It has been an honor to serve in the ACC," Nichols said. "The Soldiers and civilians are inspirational in their total commitment in support of our Army. I thank them all for their unconditional support and know they will give Brig. Gen. Harrison the same. There is no better choice to replace me than Ted.

"I have been blessed in my career

to be able to serve our Soldiers and their families and look forward to joining the great IMCOM team so I can continue to serve our Army and this great nation," she said.

Nichols became ACC's first commanding general May 17, 2012. She previously served as program executive officer, PEO Soldier, at Fort Belvoir, Va. She enlisted in the Army in 1975 in her hometown of Niagara Falls, N.Y. She was commissioned as an engineer officer upon graduation from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1981.

Harrison assumed command of ECC in April 2012.

"I am deeply honored to have been considered for this critical position," Harrison said. "I'm very humbled and excited by the opportunity and look forward to helping the command continue its growth and development. Contracting is a key enabler and extremely important to every single war fighting mission.

"At the same time, it is with a heavy heart that I depart ECC," he added. "The ECC team is in a great place with very talented and dedicated people. I know it will continue to succeed. I will not be far away and will continue to assist in ECC's success."

Before assuming command of ECC, he was the deputy director of the National Contracting Organization for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He entered the Army in 1980 as a distinguished military graduate through the ROTC program at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va., and was commissioned in the Air Defense Artillery.

Harrison's successor has not been announced.



Nichols



Harrison

Employees have options

by Justin Creech
Fort Belvoir Public Affairs Office

Basic money management tips are available for Department of Defense civilians seeing a 20-percent reduction in their salaries due to the start of the furlough.

"The first thing people need to do is have a budget," said Erica Drame, Army Community Service Financial Readiness Program manager.

One option DoD civilians can use during the furlough is the Federal Employee Education and Assistance Fund. DoD civilians need to have been with the federal government for at least one year to qualify and fill out an application on FEEA.org. FEEA will give out interest-free loans up to \$1,000.

"They provide no interest loans up to \$1,000 for those people experiencing certain types of hardships," Drame said. "Examples are loss of income, death in the employee's immediate family, separation and divorce. It's definitely money that will help."

Continuing to put money in savings accounts, talking to creditors about reducing monthly credit card and car payments, or deferring payments, and utilizing local charities are key ways DoD civilians can manage their finances during the furlough.

Drame said people need to keep in mind that they cannot maintain their current lifestyles with the reduction in salaries.

Contracting brigades stand up

BRIGADE, from Page 1

exciting in and of itself," he said. "Not many individuals can say that they have activated a brigade from day one."

The attachment of Soldiers to the MICC and activation of the two brigades signal an important milestone in the professional development efforts of contracting Soldiers and benefit to the contracting workforce as a whole.

"We have a great group of professional Soldiers at Fort Hood, and they bring a different perspective," Starostanko said. "Soldiers bring a contingency contracting perspective because of deployments around the world. We, as a whole, bring a fresh perspective on how to accomplish the mission."

MICC officials will be working closely with the two brigades this summer to fill several key positions with military personnel who will help lead the units to full operational capability over the next two years.

The 419th CSB will be made up of more than 250 Soldiers assigned to one of six contingency contracting battalions. In addition to the 900th Contingency Contracting Battalion at Fort Bragg and 902nd CCBN at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., four battalions are planned to be activated in 2013. Those include the 922nd CCBN at Fort Campbell, Ky.; 918th CCBN at Fort Carson, Co.; 919th CCBN at Fort Bliss, Texas; and 925th CCBN at Fort Drum, N.Y.

The 418th CSB will be made up of more than 50 Soldiers assigned to 901st CCBN.

Aligned under the battalions will



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Vin Stevens

Col. Antonio Brown unfurls the 419th Contracting Support Brigade colors with Maj. Gen. Camille Nichols during an activation and assumption of command ceremony June 7 at Fort Bragg, N.C. Nichols is the Army Contracting Command commanding general



Daniel Cernero

Col. Timothy Starostanko, left, and Brig. Gen. Kirk Vollmecke unfurl the colors of the 418th Contracting Support Brigade during an activation and assumption of command ceremony July 10 at Fort Hood, Texas. Vollmecke is the Mission and Installation Contracting Command commanding general.

be contingency contracting and senior contingency contracting teams.

Training and accomplishing contracting operations alongside MICC civilian contracting members day to day, these teams are also called upon to perform contracting

in a contingency environment including military and stability operations as well as natural disasters and humanitarian events.

Both brigade commanders are also directing the MICC field directorate office at their respective locations.

412th CSB attachment streamlines command, control of Soldiers

by Ed Worley
ACC Public Affairs Office

REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala. -- The 412th Contracting Support Brigade is now attached to the Mission and Installation Contracting Command, a move that happened five months ahead of schedule, according to Army Contracting Command officials here.

It is the last major milestone in the ACC Integration that attaches stateside Expeditionary Contracting Command units to the MICC and ACC's major contracting centers.

The integration streamlines command and control of ACC's military contracting Soldiers, explained Col. Kevin Nash, deputy director, ACC Operations Group.

It also gives the MICC and ACC contracting centers direct supervision of Soldiers supporting stateside operations, he said.

ACC began attaching stateside contracting support units to the MICC and contracting centers in December as part of a four-phase plan. The last phase was scheduled to begin Oct. 1 by attaching the 412th CSB to the MICC. ACC attached the 412th to the MICC on June 1.

The 412th CSB's attachment was accelerated "to facilitate the MICC's mission command of the other attached military forces that attached under ACC Operation Order 13-09," Nash said. "Expeditionary Contracting Command's willingness and flexibility to transition the 412th CSB early is a tribute to their support of the ACC military integration effort and their dedication to overall mission accomplishment."

Col. Tim Strange, 412th CSB commander, said the ACC, MICC and ECC leadership realized the military integration process was ahead of schedule and there was no need to delay the brigade's attachment.

"The 412th integration provided an opportunity for the MICC to re-assess its structure," he said. "Bringing on the 412th, its alignment to the (U.S. Army North/5th Army), the Defense support to civil authorities and the chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear response missions fits the MICC execution of the office that

supports the CONUS-based Army Reserves."

He said the support to civil authorities and the CBRN missions relies heavily on Reserve forces, making the arrangement a "logical mission marriage."

"The sense of urgency for getting it right before the fourth quarter of fiscal 2013 shifted the effort into overdrive," Strange added.

He said the brigade will also see some mission changes, including contract execution and administration.

"The brigade mission support to ARNORTH is ideal," he explained. "By inheriting the (MICC-Fort Sam Houston, Texas) mission contracting for the ARNORTH headquarters, it provides a synergy to the contingency support mission. Now, the 412th CSB commander is truly the single contracting expert and enabler to the ARNORTH commander."

ARNORTH conducts homeland defense and civil support operations, and theater security cooperation activities as the U.S. Northern Command joint force land component command and the Army service component command.

According to Strange, the 412th previously did not have a day-to-day contracting mission.

As ACC's military footprint grew the past several years, the 412th provided the command and control and a contracting mission was put on hold, he said. Activation of the 418th CSB at Fort Hood, Texas, and the 419th CSB at Fort Bragg, N.C., divides command and control across the two additional brigades and frees up the 412th for contract execution and administration.

His brigade will continue to be the command's lead for the annual operational contract support joint exercise, currently scheduled for January, Strange said. This year's scenario will be a DSCA response in support of the U.S. Northern Command and "adds a new wrinkle to what has been heretofore strictly a contracting exercise."

Prior to ACC integration, the 412th was home to more than 300 Soldiers and civilians. Strange said the integration process will result in force structure of around 150.



MICC contract specialist earns

ACC NCO of the Year

by David San Miguel
ACC Public Affairs Office

A Mission and Installation Contracting Command Soldier was named the Army Contracting Command NCO of the Year in a test of physical and mental skills.

Staff Sgt. Miguel Martinez of the MICC Field Directorate Office-Fort Knox, Ky., bested 11 other acquisition, logistics and technology contracting NCOs who hailed from as far away as Italy, Germany, Korea, Hawaii and various stateside installations to become this year's title-bearer.

A native of Inglewood, Calif., Martinez had only reclassified into

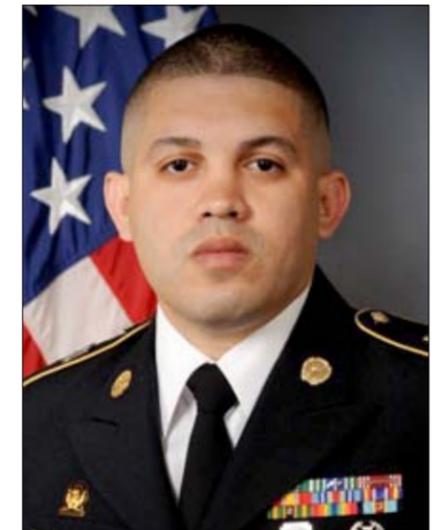
the 51C career field in June 2012.

Previously, he served as a dental assistant, then NCO--in-charge of a dental clinic in Germany.

Martinez was presented his award by Maj. Gen. Camille Nichols, ACC commanding general, during a visit to Fort Knox July 26. He now moves on to represent ACC in the Army Materiel Command's Best Warrior Competition at Rock Island, Ill., Aug. 19-22.

In what may be the first time the Army has conducted any kind of Soldier's competition by video teleconference, ACC has set a new precedence.

According to Master Sgt. Michael C. Bonds, ACC G-3



operations noncommissioned officer, this year's NCO of the Year competition, conducted in May, was conducted virtually in light of current budget constraints.

"This year was a unique experience as far as planning the event on the same line as a traditional competition," he said. "Of course, we had those who wanted the competition here at Redstone Arsenal, Ala., but understanding the funding situation we were under, they eventually jumped on board and provided top-quality NCOs to compete."

Competitors were required to complete the physical fitness test and 12-mile road march at their home stations and to forward the results to the graders at ACC headquarters. The formal boards and exams were evaluated through VTC. Board members included Command Sgt. Maj. John Murray from ACC and Command Sgt. Maj. Angel Clark-Davis from the Expeditionary Contracting Command.

The NCOY runner-up was Staff Sgt. Booker L. Jordan Jr., of the 409th CSB, Kaiserslautern, Germany; and third was Staff Sgt. Billy J. Carrillo of MICC-Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.



Photo by Ed Worley

Command Sgt. Maj. John Murray, left, and Command Sgt. Maj. Angel Clark-Davis conduct the NCO of the year board by video teleconference while Sgt. Ernulfo Cervantes serves as the board recorder.

GPC

efficiencies yield savings

by Daniel P. Elkins
MICC Public Affairs Office

As installation leaders continue to search for cost savings in today's uncertain fiscal environment, more are finding it in an unlikely source – their Government Purchase Card Program administration.

Mission and Installation Contracting Command GPC Program officials are helping ensure Army and federal customers across the country are capitalizing on available rebates through diligent administration of their GPC accounts.

"Rebates are paid quarterly based on the volume of transactions for that quarter and timely payment," said Guy Hunneyman, a business manager with the MICC Oversight and Assessment Branch. "So the faster billing officials certify accounts and the bank is paid, the higher the rebate."

The GPC program allows individuals at the lowest level of government organizations and agencies greater efficiency in the procurement of commercial goods and services from merchants. With a single purchase limit of less than \$3,000, Hunneyman said accounts typically generate rebates of 1 to 1.3 percent. Accounts that are delinquent get little or no rebate.

In fiscal 2012, the MICC managed more than 1.2 million GPC transactions valued at \$1.3 billion, said Gary Pinion, who leads a group of four business managers at the MICC headquarters. To date, GPC cardholders have made more than 655,000 transactions totaling more than \$711 million.

"When you consider the number of accounts to manage and installations across the continental United States, we're the largest Army GPC program," he said.

Through the second quarter of this fiscal year, MICC GPC administrators have helped return more than \$6 million to its military and federal customers through rebates. This amount is trailing an annual trend of between \$15 and \$19 million in rebates.



Photo by Daniel P. Elkins

Guy Hunneyman, left, and Harry Staley review trend data from the Government Purchase Card Program May 10 at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas. The two collaborated to develop the Card Transaction Analysis Tool, which is proving valuable in analyzing GPC data and identifying opportunities for increased savings for the Mission and Installation Contracting Command's Army and federal customers.

"Rebates are down because we're spending less; the sequestration is impacting everybody," Pinion said. "So what we're getting back in rebates and transactions is based on what's being spent by the customers. As money is released, we'll see spending go up and rebates increase if managed in a timely manner."

In fiscal 2012, \$15 million was returned in GPC rebates. Although savings this year lag those from the previous year due to decreased spending, today's budgetary conditions underscore a critical importance of realizing every potential savings opportunity and developing responsive contracting solutions.

Data advantage

The amount of rebates represents a little more than 75 percent of what is available, according to Pinion. Approximately \$4 million in rebates go uncollected each year. Bringing greater emphasis to this oversight

is a new approach of using big data.

GPC business managers at the MICC set out to first make the program more efficient by taking a closer look at activity across all of its account activity. They found that about half of the GPC card accounts were not necessary and instead posed an administration burden.

"We've been reducing the number of cardholders the last couple of years to make it lean by eliminating accounts that were excessive, duplicate and inactive," Pinion said. "The fewer number of cards also make for less risk."

An initial review of the program identified more than 30,000 cardholders and 15,000 billing officials, all administered by slightly more than 100 MICC personnel responsible for managing the day-to-day GPC operations. Following a scrub, Hunneyman said the number of active cardholders and billing officials

were reduced to less than 13,000 and about 6,500, respectively, with a negligible change in the spending activity.

During this process, they teamed with the MICC Knowledge Management Branch to create the Card Transaction Analysis Tool, or CATALYST, to analyze activity across the GPC Program.

"I saw the amount of data that was available to the GPC team and possibility of creating such a tool," said Harry Staley Jr., a procurement systems analyst with the knowledge management branch. "We brought our skills together to develop this tool, because it was taking several weeks to conduct surveillance on GPC accounts."

Staley added that the no-cost, Microsoft Excel-based tool pulls information and reporting data at the U.S. Bank billing official level and applies MICC codes to yield more than a dozen reports that break down data to the major command, installation and cardholder levels, which prove vital in decision making. Due to the effectiveness of CATALYST and value in analyzing data at the installation level, he said the tool will be fielded to MICC contracting offices in the coming months.

"It identifies the types of business the transactions fall into as well as provides analysis breaking down the data ... outlining delinquent accounts, inactive accounts, rebates, fraudulent, suspended, possible split purchases, contract opportunities, span of control, questionable spend patterns, top merchants and other reports giving the analyst the ability to uncover trends previously concealed," Staley said.

GPC business managers apply this data when engaging resource management personnel at the major command level to identify areas requiring attention. Their analysis is also communicated at the leadership level when the MICC commanding general meets with leaders throughout the Army.

"We can calculate best-case scenarios on the amount of potential rebates a major command could have received and the amount they have lost," Hunneyman said. "Now that we can break everything out, we've got a better set of data to analyze and can provide more accurate information to resolve challenges all the while building better relationships with major commands."

Workforce management

MICC leaders can also capitalize on the data analytics by gaining insight valuable in managing its GPC workforce at a time of declining resources. Following the activation of the MICC in 2009, the number of agency or organization program coordinators at the headquarters and across the command has grown in order to keep pace with

administering the expanding number of accounts fixed to the GPC Program.

The MICC's primary supported activities include the U.S. Army Installation Management Command, U.S. Army Forces Command, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, U.S. Army North, U.S. Army Reserve Command and U.S. Army Medical Command. GPC Program administrators

also support university ROTC detachments, recruiting centers and Military Entrance Processing Stations across the country.

"In order to fully manage our manpower, having the right number of cards

out there allow us to have the right number of people out there," Pinion said. "All of the inactive cards were giving a false manpower review."

Most of the MICC program managers are dedicated to the GPC Program full time, but often must rely on the assistance of analysts or other contracting personnel when the number of accounts they manage exceed a regulatory 300-to-1 ratio. Thus, larger installations that call for larger programs also require a greater number of billing

officials and alternates.

A reduction in the number of cardholders can lead to a reduced workload and shift of manpower resources to other contracting priorities.

By leveraging the efficiencies gained through increased oversight and innovative tools, MICC officials hope to achieve 85 percent of all available GPC Program rebates or greater. That command

"Now that we can break everything out, we've got a better set of data to analyze and can provide more accurate information to resolve challenges all the while building better relationships with major commands."

Guy Hunneyman

benchmark takes into account that some challenges leading to delays are beyond their control. Chief among those are hurdles with the General Fund Enterprise Business System, or GFEBs, which shares financial data across

the Army; and a constant need for training resulting from personnel rotations. "Training is critical not only for cardholders and billing officials, but also for our program coordinators as this process becomes more complicated and systems driven," Pinion said. "Agency or organization program coordinators require a skill set of program management and oversight to manage those programs. That's why it's important that we get the right people at the right locations."

ACC-Warren leader tapped for position

The executive director of the Army Contracting Command-Warren, Mich., has been selected as the deputy assistant secretary of the Army for procurement.

Harry P. Hallock's selection was announced in a June letter to the Army acquisition community by Heidi Shyu, the assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics and technology, citing his more than 20 years of experience in support of the warfighter.

"His leadership and contracting expertise will make him an invaluable asset to our team," said Shyu.

Hallock leaves his position as the executive director of the Army Contracting Command-Warren after six years at the helm. He began his career in Army contracting as a 22-year-old intern at the Detroit Arsenal.



Hallock



William A. Creech

Shirley Watson took advantage of an Installation Management Command redistribution program to meet a customer's requirement and save money.

Program saves funding

SAVINGS, from Page 1

\$438,415 in savings, she leveraged a training exercise by the National Guard for the delivery of equipment at no cost, a further government savings of \$25,000.

Watson said she first became aware of the availability of one dozer in March as part of the redistribution program managed by the Installation Management Command at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

"You can't go wrong with the redistribution program. Items are usually in serviceable if not like-new condition," she said. "The DPW was immediately interested in getting a dozer through the program but only asked for one despite the fact they were short five."

Through an exchange of emails and phone calls, she helped secure funding for transportation.

"I called the DPW officer and asked if he was willing to cover the cost to get the equipment here," Watson said. "He was eager to cover the costs; \$5,000 to transport an \$87,000 dozer is a pretty good deal."

Upon reaching IMCOM to

inform program representatives of available transportation funding, she learned that additional dozers were available that could also be reallocated to the Fort Benning DPW if it was willing to fund the cost of transportation.

"After DPW agreed to cover the transportation cost, I received a surprise call from IMCOM (about) a training mission planned by the National Guard, and the dozers would be delivered cost free," she said.

The MICC-Fort Benning deputy director believes contracting offices should educate their personnel on how the program works as today's fiscal environment demands Watson and other MICC members to explore all alternatives for meeting their customers' mission needs.

"Her perseverance saved Fort Benning considerable costs in new equipment procurement, contributed to the overall mission of Fort Benning by procuring the needed equipment, and saved DPW funds that could be allocated elsewhere," said Brenda Clark, who also serves as chief of the contract support division.

Cadre program helps fill void

by **Larry D McCaskill**
ACC Public Affairs Office

The Army Contracting Command's Deployable Cadre Program may be able to help military contracting organizations overseas with staffing shortages.

Managed by the ACC Deputy Chief of Staff Human Capital G-1, the program assists in identifying and deploying civilian contracting and quality assurance volunteers in support of contracting requirements around the globe.

Deploying cadre members provide contract management skills and expertise in operations beyond the scope of the command's day-to-day mission including training exercises, natural disasters and high-visibility priorities across the command.

"Filling those positions can sometimes be a difficult task," said Sandra Merritt, ACC DCP coordinator.

"We have lots of people that sign up, but due to different circumstances they are not always available to deploy when they're needed. They might be dealing with family or health issues or school when we'd like for them to deploy. We have to find the right fit for the cadre member in order for it to be a win-win situation."

Cadre volunteers are Department of the Army civilians from ACC units worldwide and their desire to take on these missions is supported by their local leadership.

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TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Database valuable in tracking, resolving UACs

A database tool for tracking and managing unauthorized commitments throughout the command has led to a significant decrease in unresolved commitments in its first year of use.

Members of the field support division and information technology web presence team at the Mission and Installation Contracting teamed last year to develop the database that would replace a shared spreadsheet for managing the command's unauthorized commitments, or UACs.

"The MICC takes UACs very serious and tracks them by activities to ensure they are being handled properly, identify trends and brief occurrence through command channels," said Terry Lazenby, a procurement analyst with the field support directorate.

Fielded at the start of this fiscal year, the database available through the MICC SharePoint site has proven to be a successful tool for real-time reporting of UACs as well as critical in reducing the backlog of open unauthorized commitments

from 172 to 41 – a 76-percent reduction. An additional 32 UACs were also identified in the past year.

"The estimated value of unresolved UACs likewise went from \$4.8 million to \$2.2 million over the same time period," Lazenby said. "The increased visibility afforded by the UAC database served as a catalyst for significant progress in reducing the backlog."

She said contracting officers can input new UACs into an easy-to-use, fill-in form with drop down menus and make status changes with only a few clicks of the mouse. The database also serves as a management tool that gives field directors insight into detailed information on every UAC within their responsibility. It also allows MICC headquarters personnel the ability to run reports and gather data in minutes versus the manual counts from the antiquated Army Knowledge Online site reporting system.

The database also contributes to the reduction of UACs by offering users the ability to quickly recognize cancelled or duplicate entries as well as UACs that had been ratified without being marked closed.

An unauthorized commitment is an act by an employee or military

member who accepts or otherwise obligates the government to pay for goods and services without authority. On occasion, government representatives make agreements to buy goods or service on behalf of the government without the proper authority.

These non-binding agreements must be ratified in order for a vendor to receive payment. Ratification is the act of approving a UAC by an official who has the authority to do so.

"Failure to track and process unauthorized commitments for ratification in a timely manner can result in difficulty in assessing the circumstances and properly documenting the action, lost funding, congressional inquiries and law suits," Lazenby said. "Additionally, the person

responsible for committing the UAC may be liable for the commitment until the action is ratified."

Until last year, the log for reporting UACs was a vast spreadsheet residing on the AKO site that MICC personnel across the country were required to update monthly. Lazenby said the AKO system of reporting was not user friendly for uploading new or revised reports, and routinely personnel would upload outdated reports over newer reports, resulting in lost data and frustration.



Photo by Army Capt. Peter Warner

Heather Clifton manages unauthorized commitments with the use of a SharePoint database tool July 8 at Fort Bragg, N.C. Clifton is a contracting officer with the Mission and Installation Contracting Command-Fort Bragg.



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Army J&A Exchange

MICC pilots the Virtual Contracting Enterprise module Army Justification and Approval Exchange, or AJAX.

The smart form technology allows the migration of various forms, Microsoft Office Word documents and business processes to more easily build standardized customer requirement packages. Where possible, the data can populate across various documents to pre-fill user information as well as automatically feed the Paperless Contract File and Contract Writing System. AJAX automates J&A preparation, routing, approving, filing and reporting metrics.

The difficulty in preparing and understanding J&As often led to supporting rationale that was poorly written. AJAX helps eliminate inaccurate or insufficient content by standardizing the electronic form and process for higher headquarters and the acquisition community. It also reduces the process time through greater transparency and oversight.

In addition to improving the quality of submissions, user errors are flagged before submission at each phase. AJAX is also helpful in identifying employee training gaps, and the program's narrative fields accessible through pull-down

menus allows for user input and feedback.

Desk Book

The Mission and Installation Contracting Command Policy and Acquisition Training team is in the process of updating the MICC Desk Book – a single document that augments

specific acquisition and contracting procedures while adhering to guidance contained in the FAR and its supplements. Most importantly, the MICC Desk Book is a living document that reflects the changing regulatory environment and the unique acquisition challenges faced within the MICC. To meet these needs, the MICC Policy and Acquisition Training team revises the Desk Book approximately every two months.

Enterprise Contract Directory

The Enterprise Contract Directory is a resource document to assist MICC contracting officers and contract specialists when conducting market research. The

Enterprise Contract Directory is a comprehensive listing of more than 350 commodity and service contractual vehicles available to satisfy a variety of requirements.

Contractual vehicles available through the directory include requirements for cellular and paging, environmental services, medical, translation and interpretation services, office supplies and products, human resources, operations, plans and training, professional and engineering support, information technology, base support services, analytical services, advertising services, aviation services, and logistics services and support.

MICC officials recommend that Army Contracting Command and MICC contracts should be considered for use before contracts awarded by other agencies.



guidance contained in the Federal Acquisition Regulation, Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement, and the Army Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement.

With the revised Desk Book expected by mid-July, this one-stop shop for the acquisition process also rescinds and replaces guidance previously issued by acquisition instructions, contracting information letters, and legacy information memorandums from the Army Contracting Agency's Northern and Southern regions.

The Desk Book provides an avenue for command leadership to establish uniform, MICC-

SB specialists strive to make goals

Despite the impact of sequestration and overarching fiscal constraints, small business officials from the Mission and Installation Contracting Command remain optimistic in meeting their small business contracting goals as spending ramps up heading into the final quarter of the fiscal year.

Announced earlier this year, the goal for prime contracts awarded by the command is 45.8 percent. The command also possesses goals in the areas of small disadvantaged business, 24 percent; women-owned small business, 9.5 percent; historically underutilized business zone small business, 10 percent; and service-disabled veteran-owned small business, 6 percent.

"Small business goal-setting requires coordination and analysis, but it also involves a bit of optimism, a certain can-do willingness to stretch capabilities and to work to achieve increasingly better results," said Pete Hunter, an assistant director, for MICC Small Business Programs. "Achieving those goals takes the sound, solid, sensible effort of committed contracting professionals across the country."

The amount of contract dollars awarded and

percentage achieved goal in each small business category this fiscal year through June 24 are small business, \$1,009,952,398.23, 41.8 percent; small disadvantaged business, \$523,485,433.01, 21.6 percent; service-disabled veteran owned small business, \$214,444,469.26, 8.3 percent; woman-owned small business, \$200,178,986.46, 8.3 percent; and historically underutilized business zone small business, \$159,710,617.07, 7.3 percent.

Hunter explained that the government aids, counsels, assists and protects the interests of small businesses in order to preserve the free competitive enterprise, ensure a fair proportion of the government's contracts are placed with small businesses, and maintain and strengthen the overall economy of the nation.

The command's small business program consists of small business specialists at 34 sites around the country who work to ensure small businesses across all socioeconomic categories have maximum practicable opportunity to compete for Army contracts. The MICC commanding general assigns goals to each of the contracting offices in each of the five program areas.

Educating industry key to small business



Photo by Steve Tirone

Georgette Dilworth prepares to meet with small business representatives to discuss Army contracting opportunities.

More than 80 representatives from industry and government gathered recently for the 2013 Government Procurement Outlook Conference Exhibition & Capabilities Conference in Yuma, Ariz.

"The conference provides a forum for businesses to identify contract opportunities with federal, state, municipal and local governments and subcontract opportunities with prime government contractors," said Georgette Dilworth, the Mission and Installation Contracting Command small business specialist at Yuma Proving Ground, Ariz.

Forecasts discussed during the conference included requirements in design, construction, facilities management renewable energy, information technology, communications, electronics and security. The event also included speakers on a variety of topics.

Dilworth spoke to participants about doing business with the MICC and researching requirements through the Federal Business Opportunities website. She also provided information on marketing industry capabilities to the correct MICC contracting office, small business set-asides and the importance of small businesses to the overall economy.

"Over the past year, the sensitivity to the importance of buying products has been greatly raised," Dilworth added. "A dollar spent at a local business circulates five to seven times, and those local dollars create additional jobs and tax revenues for the area. Even seemingly small purchases add up quickly."

"It is very fortunate to have great community partners and businesses that are committed to fostering development of the local diverse business community," she said.

26-day trek across Spain fulfills dream

by **Walt Johnson**
Fort Carson public affairs

A Fort Carson, Colo., contracting specialist fulfilled a desire to complete the 800-kilometer Camino de Santiago pilgrimage across Spain.

Also known as the Way of St. James pilgrimage, Stella Juarez said she received much more of a reward than she could have imagined while accomplishing that goal in April and May.

The Mission and Installation Contracting Command member traveled to France in late April to begin the journey she said proved to be a life-changing and amazing experience. Juarez said in many ways she didn't really know what to expect, but she knew the trek would be physically challenging. What she quickly learned is that the low expectations of what she could do was far off from what she actually accomplished.

The journey usually takes 35 days when people walk at a regular pace. The problem for Juarez was she had to do it in only 28 days.

"I ended up doing the walk in 26 days. I had a friend who walked with me, but at times we walked alone because you needed that solitary time," Juarez said.

"This journey is really not something that is designed for people to do together. It's not a race, and people start and stop wherever they want to," she said. "People decide when they need a break, when they want to stay in an area longer; so you end up separating a lot from people as you're walking.



Courtesy photo

Stella Juarez points to the milestone that shows she completed the 800-kilometer Camino de Santiago pilgrimage across Spain.

I ended up walking alone a lot more than I anticipated, but also I found that I wanted to walk alone."

Juarez said she benefited from training at altitude in Colorado.

"I heard there were a lot of hills on this journey, and my road work gave me a great advantage. The mountains are not like they are (in Colorado), but there were a lot of mountainous areas, and (it) seemed like every day the town I stopped in was on a hill," she said.

Juarez woke up on the 26th day of her journey knowing it would be the last leg and that she would be at the finish line by early afternoon. While that may have been enough for most people to feel overwhelmed with a sense of accomplishment, it would prove to be the lesser of the good things that would happen to her. After completing the journey, Juarez was soaking in the

accomplishments of having walked the route in 26 days.

"When I heard the songs that were playing in the village, I remembered thinking how incredible I felt, and I remember feeling as though my son was there with me. I was standing there and someone tapped me on the back, and when I turned around, it was my nephew. I was so shocked that it seemed like, for two minutes, I just kept saying what are you doing here? I couldn't talk and I tried to pinch myself to see if it was real, but I couldn't. We hugged and cried and then he told me my father, who I am very close to, and two other nephews were there.

"My father, who rarely cries, and I embraced," she said. "We were standing there shaking. We were crying so hard because I just felt how proud he was of me."

In the Spotlight

Sgt. 1st Class Andre Wilson

Sgt. 1st Class Andre Wilson is a training noncommissioned officer with the 639th Senior Contingency Contracting Team of the 900th Contingency Contracting Battalion assigned to the Mission and Installation Contracting Command's 419th Contracting Support Brigade at Fort Bragg, N.C.

Responsible for the training of the military and civilian workforce, he describes his passion as coming from within.

"There is nothing more important to me than ensuring that our contracting professionals receive any and all the training that's available to them," Wilson said.

Born in El Paso, the Army brat considers his home Columbus, Ga., where he spent the majority of life. His father served 20 years in the Army as a light-wheeled



vehicle mechanic. He has been married for six years to the LaKeita Wilson and they have two children, Iyanna, 7, and Andre, 5, with whom he enjoys spending his spare time. An avid sports fan, he also coaches his daughter's basketball team. Having recently returned from a deployment in Afghanistan where he served as the contracting officer for Special Operations Task Force-South, he clearly sees how "everything we do as contracting professionals supports the Soldier."

"Knowing that what I was doing made an immediate impact on the Soldiers' well-being was a very humbling experience for me," he said. "My well-being didn't matter if one warfighter had to go without. It is my responsibility."

Sonja Ablola

Lured by the faster work pace and the ability to work beside Soldiers in theater, Sonja Ablola said the Deployable Cadre Program is something of which she was meant to be a part.

"It's fast paced a lot of the time but the learning time or adjustment



to the job time is shorter," said Ablola, a contracting specialist currently deployed to Qatar and permanently stationed at the Mission and Installation Contracting Command-Fort Belvoir, Va. "I love seeing the results of what we do. The fact that we contribute to what is going on and provide a valuable service to the warfighters is very rewarding to me."

In Qatar, Ablola is a contract specialist working requirements for procurement and supply and is the alternate agency organization program coordinator for the government purchase card.

"I get to work in a lot more areas than when I'm back home," said the 44-year-old single mother. "This enables me to bring back more skills than I had before."

A University of Phoenix graduate currently pursuing her master's degree, Ablola said she enjoys her job and sees contracting as

an integral part of the supplies and services Soldiers get whether deployed or stateside.

"I believe in what we do, both contracting and deploying, as a civilian," said Ablola, a diehard fan of the Washington Redskins. "It helps us to grow in skills we may not come in contact with at our home station and shows the Soldier that we are part of the team. This helps with the cohesiveness between Soldiers and Department of the Army civilians by establishing camaraderie and bonding. I am glad to be part of a team that promotes unity."

Now on her second deployment, she encourages young contracting specialists to volunteer as a means of expanding their horizons.

"It gives you a different perspective than your job back home. You see what you do and how important it is to the warfighter."