

The MICE Communicator



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Forecasting Success

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The MICC Communicator

Contracting for Soldiers

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Forecasting success

In an effort to expand its outreach efforts to small businesses, officials from throughout the Mission and Installation Contracting Command conducted acquisition forecast open houses at most of its locations throughout the country as the command enters the final quarter of the fiscal year. For more on the success of these events, see Page 10.



Graphic by Daniel P. Elkins

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Mission and Installation Contracting Command certified professionals provide responsive, complete and compliant contracting solutions to Army commands, installations and activities. On order, provides trained and deployable contracting support forces to the operating force.

Contracting senior enlisted relevant, resilient, ready to serve at strategic level

by **Command Sgt. Maj. Stephen Bowens**
MICC command sergeant major

As our Army continues its transformation following more than 13 years of continuous war, it increasingly relies on its senior enlisted leaders to advise in the management and strategic development of the most talented and superior Soldiers to serve as the next generation of leaders.

Organizations across the Army necessitate their leaders possess the strategic knowledge and discipline necessary to carry out their missions while implementing force structure changes. As stewards of our resources, today's senior enlisted leaders must be innovative in setting conditions for the future while at the same time expanding their levels of influence beyond the commands in which they serve.

I had the fortune of joining the Mission and Installation Contracting Command in January following my assignment as a command sergeant major with the U.S. Army Recruiting Command. The 51C contracting military occupational specialty is relatively new and was established in 2006, but I quickly discovered that I'm surrounded by some of the brightest senior non-commissioned officers in the Army who are proven leaders.

In addition to carrying out policies and ensuring standards are met or exceeded, command sergeants major and sergeants major in the 51C MOS bring an intellect and unique set of leadership skills to the Army. They are decidedly competent, committed to the profession of arms, and of the highest character.

Acquisition senior enlisted leaders interact daily with leadership at all levels from across the installation and regionally supported activities to ensure Soldiers have the goods and services necessary to perform their jobs and accomplish the mission. The skills and experience gained from a thorough understanding of acquisition legal considerations, source selection, government property management, contract costs and negotiation analysis directly apply across multiple aspects of the

Army mission and role of a leader.

They challenge conventional thinking by finding innovative solutions to meet the mission. It is through their experience as a 51C that senior acquisition NCOs have honed the critical leadership skill of business acumen, adding a valuable dimension in the decision-making process that surpasses many of their peers.

They possess education and certification that parallel the industry. The Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act outlines core standards in acquisition and functional training as well as education and

experience for contracting certification in order to execute contracts on behalf of the government. Certification includes attaining a bachelor's degree with 24 semester hours in any of the business disciplines as only an initial step.

The level of education and training required by senior enlisted leaders in the 51C MOS is among the most stringent in the Army. DAWIA Level III certification in contracting translates into having executed some of the most complex contracts valued in the multi-millions of dollars on behalf of organizational leaders resulting in mission achievement.

The depth of leadership skills by command sergeants major and sergeants major in the 51C MOS is also matched by a breadth of experience. Senior enlisted 51C Soldiers are among the service's best and have cultivated their knowledge from a multitude of career fields. They are battle tested from multiple deployments and leverage this knowledge through reflective, focused experiential learning with Soldiers. It is through this career-long synthesis of professional training, education and experience in both the institutional and operational Army that senior NCOs in contracting have emerged as leaders whose place alongside Army senior commanders is overdue.

Today's Army demands enlisted leaders who are at the top of their profession and finding the right enlisted leaders to fill the right positions -- 51C Soldiers are resilient, confident and ready to lead at the highest levels within our Army.



Fort Drum KO credits team for SB award

by Daniel P. Elkins
MICC Public Affairs Office

The skill of juggling two jobs at once has proven quite successful for a contracting officer at Fort Drum, New York, who recently earned Army recognition for his contracting efforts with America's small businesses.

Anthony Sligar, the chief of the Mission and Installation Contracting Command-Fort Drum Construction and Supply Division, received the Fiscal Year 2013 Army Part-Time Small Business Specialist Award.

"I am honored that Fort Drum was recognized for its achievement in supporting the small business program," said Sligar, a full-time contracting officer who performs small business specialist duties on a part-time basis.

He is quick to credit the award to the efforts by all MICC civilian and uniformed contracting personnel there.

"Fort Drum employees work hard to support the small business program. It's a success due to a collaborative effort," he said. "I am very proud of all the contract specialists and contracting officers for their achievements."

The award recognizes Sligar's excellence during fiscal 2013 in providing small business support as well as marketing and implementation of program strategies that allowed MICC-Fort



Photo by Richard Smith

Anthony Sligar earned the Fiscal Year 2013 Army Part-Time Small Business Specialist Award for his efforts in supporting small businesses with Army contract opportunities.

Drum to exceed its socio-economic goals that year.

Under the guidance and recommendations of Sligar, MICC-Fort Drum more than doubled its 25-percent goal for woman-owned small businesses by achieving 56.9 percent. The office also exceeded its 25-percent historically underutilized business zone goal with 28.5 percent despite the loss of construction projects due to budgetary cuts and the census redistricting that negatively impacted previous HUBZone-qualified firms in the upper New York area.

"His sage advice increased

opportunities for small businesses, enhanced market research efforts, stimulated competition and enlarged the percentage of new vendors doing business with the MICC and Army," said Lynette Ward, an assistant director for the MICC Office of Small Business Programs at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas. "This created a positive impact on our nation's economy and strengthened ties with the northern New York community."

During fiscal 2013, Sligar helped guide the MICC-Fort Drum team to more than \$63 million in annual obligations, including more than \$44 million to small businesses.

419th CSB welcomes new leader

by Daniel P. Elkins
MICC Public Affairs Office

Command of the 419th Contracting Support Brigade changed hands during a July 22 ceremony at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, attended by contracting leaders, family members, distinguished guests and members of the brigade.

Col. Carol Tschida assumed command from Col. Tony Brown in a ceremony officiated by Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Gabbert, commanding general for the Mission and Installation Contracting Command.

Tschida comes to the 419th CSB after 10 months at the Air War College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. She previously served as the deputy chief of staff for strategic plans at the Expeditionary Contracting Command at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama. Brown departs for an assignment with the Army Acquisition Support Center as a Defense Acquisition University contracting instructor at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

The MICC commanding general praised Brown for his success in standing up the 419th CSB and guiding it to full operational capability with minimal staffing and limited resources.

Gabbert charged Tschida to continue that success as the brigade's new commander.

"You have an immense responsibility to the airborne and special operations forces communities as well as installation support to Army posts," Gabbert said. "This is an incredible responsibility, and with your



Command Sgt. Maj. Eliecer Quintero passes the organizational flag from Col. Carol Tschida to Col. Tony Brown during the 419th Contracting Support Brigade change of command ceremony. Quintero is the 419th CSB command sergeant major.



Photos by Lewis Perkins

Col. Carol Tschida addresses those in attendance at the change of command ceremony.

experience and training, I have confidence you will be able to superbly lead our contracting professionals."

Tschida received a commission into the aviation branch as a distinguished graduate from the

University of West Florida ROTC program at Pensacola, Florida. She has logged more than 1,000 flying hours in rotary and fixed-wing aircraft prior to joining the Army Acquisition Corps. The new brigade commander has served in various command, staff and operational assignments during her 23-year career including three deployments. Tschida is Level III certified in contracting and Level I certified in Program Management and Information Technology.

In addition to accomplishing all necessary levels of professional military education, her advanced education includes master's degrees in procurement and acquisition management from Webster University and strategic studies from the Air War College.

The 419th CSB has oversight of MICC contracting offices at Fort Bragg; Fort Drum, New York; Fort Polk, Louisiana; Fort Campbell, Kentucky; Fort Stewart, Georgia; Fort Belvoir, Virginia; and Fort Meade, Maryland.

MICC fielding sourcing solution

by Daniel P. Elkins
MICC Public Affairs Office

An acquisition database application developed at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, to better manage contracting operations and enhance customer support and contract management is being fielded across the Mission and Installation Contracting Command.

MICC officials at Fort Belvoir launched the Contracting Tactical Operations Center application at the end of 2013 to provide online, real-time procurement insight to address challenges of a geographically dispersed command, acquisition training, managerial capabilities and resourcing levels.

In January, application capabilities were demonstrated to MICC leaders at the brigade and field directorate office level during the Operational Contract Support Joint Exercise 2014 at Fort Bliss, Texas.

Lt. Col. Maria Schneider, the commander of MICC-Fort Belvoir, said an informal canvas of offices interested in fielding CTOC was then conducted to determine if the application had further effectiveness at other sites. Locations identified included Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Fort Carson, Colorado, and Fort Polk, Louisiana. This month, officials are adding Fort Drum, New York, and Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, to that list of early adopters.

Following the success at MICC-Fort Belvoir and six months of field testing at the select contracting sites, Army Contracting Command officials approved expanding use of CTOC across the MICC as a tactical contract management system.

“The system has been very successful,” said Cyp LaPorte, the chief of contract plans and programs here who is leading the plan to field the application across the MICC enterprise. “So much so that ACC headquarters has agreed to allow the MICC to field it across the command.”

The CTOC software program helps to bridge the gap between the needs of the tactical operational mission at the local contracting office level versus the strategic needs of the higher headquarters, which are supported through Virtual Contracting Enterprise-Contract Management module.

Schneider explained that several objectives had to be accomplished over the first half of this year to reach the point of command-wide implementation.

The first of those was gaining access to the necessary software. CTOC is operated in the QuickBase business application platform. MICC officials reached out to

the Army Materiel Command and gained support for QuickBase licenses in support of CTOC efforts.

Next, MICC officials refined procurement management requirements and expanded the application software to focus on the three functional management pillars of workforce, contract operations and oversight.

Schneider and the MICC integrated process team leading the CTOC effort also worked closely with the operators of the ACC VCE for four months conducting necessary analysis to ensure a smooth transition. At the end of May, the two teams arrived at a successful interface for all mandatory record fields.

“This virtual demonstration was a major milestone required to receive concurrence from the ACC commanding general on the fielding of CTOC to all MICC offices,” Schneider said.

As the CTOC application is fielded throughout MICC contracting offices, the integrated process team will continue to refine its capability to include establishing and implementing a configuration management process; constructing sustainment support consisting

of a help desk, survey and functionality reviews; and validating reporting requirements and dashboard aides.

Deployment of CTOC capability is being accomplished over four phases. Officials are now coming to the end of the first phase and have been working with leaders across the command to collect requirements and organizational structure. By the end of this fiscal year, all MICC offices will be virtually loaded into CTOC while those where the software has already been field tested will be fully operational.

During a second phase beginning in October, the CTOC team will focus on conducting training workshops for the remaining MICC offices and putting in place sustainment measures.

This phase comes with a clear understanding that the timing of the CTOC deployment may be cause for concern.

“There is never a good time to field a new process in contracting, and it can’t get any worse than right in the middle of fourth quarter, year-end operations,” Schneider said. “However, the MICC CTOC team is confident that with the demonstrated capability, offices will embrace the change; and the information required on the front end from offices is minimal.”

She encourages contracting leaders and supervisors

to reach out to other MICC offices at which the CTOC is already in place to learn more about its value.

Also during the second phase of deployment, officials plan to mitigate funding constraints and the limited number of trainers with the establishment of a CTOC training university and development of a train-the-trainer concept. They will also optimize training opportunities through virtual sources such as the Defense Connect Online as well as a regional approach to on-site workshops, the MICC-Fort Belvoir commander said.

The third phase will center on all MICC offices achieving fully operational capability in November and December.

“The fourth and final phase is focused on sustainment efforts of CTOC application,” Schneider said. “Primary emphasis for the CTOC team is to closely monitor the progress of the Army Contract Writing System and integration of capabilities within the application for day-to-day workload management.”

The approval by ACC officials to expand use of CTOC offers acquisition members across the command a new tool to replace antiquated methods that offered little insight into the effective management of resources.

“In order to manage something you have to be able to monitor it; that is where CTOC provides an advantage over other existing management systems,” LaPorte said. “Currently our office directors, division chiefs and branch chiefs at the tactical level are using various non-automated tools to manage their procurement workload. CTOC provides MICC operational leaders with the ability to review their current workload without having to learn or rely upon additional systems.”

LaPorte added that organizational leaders can drill through multiple levels of data and various graphic interfaces to gain an understanding on office trends or status of procurements.

“All of these abilities allow leaders to gain a better understanding of the procurement workload within their office and the effects on their workforce and customer support through one automated system,” he said. “CTOC enhances the leaders’ ability to align resources to appropriate work areas based upon a given set of leader developed criteria.”

Although built around the better management of the acquisition process, its workload and resources, officials believe efficiencies offered by the new application ultimately benefits MICC-supported customers.

“Better management at the tactical level will increase the office efficiency and effectiveness providing more timely support to the customer,” LaPorte said.



Photo Maj. Michael Mignano

Members of the 918th Contingency Contracting Battalion review the Contracting Tactical Operating Center application during a meeting at Fort Carson, Colorado. The application streamlines the data collection process and establishes a common operating picture for the organization.



Photo by Larry D. McCaskill

Staff Sgt. Ryan Johnson has his uniform checked prior to going in front of the Army Contracting Command Best Warrior competition board.

MICC Soldier edged out as ACC's Best Warrior

by Larry McCaskill
ACC Public Affairs Office

Nine points separated the top two finishers in the Army Contracting Command's Best Warrior competition June 23-26 at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama.

The Mission and Installation Contracting Command Best Warrior, Staff Sgt. Ryan L. Cross of the 419th Contracting Support Brigade, finished as runner-up to Staff Sgt. Eliud Temblador from the 413th CSB at Fort Shafter, Hawaii.

Temblador topped the

competition that brought together ACC's best 12 Soldiers with a total score of 371 out of 500 possible points while Cross finished with 362 points.

Despite the competitive nature, Cross believes all Soldiers shared a sense of team.

"Even though it was a competition, there was a sense of camaraderie, and we all worked to help each other by offering tips," he said. "We all understand the environment we work in and how it relies on how much we can help out our team. There was a good sense of pride."



Photo by Larry D. McCaskill

Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Gabbert presents Staff Sgt. Ryan Cross with the Army Achievement Medal for being named the Mission and Installation Contracting Command's Best Warrior for 2014.

According to ACC's Command Sgt. Major David M. Puig, the competition was four competitions conducted at once. It was best warrior competitions for ACC, Expeditionary Contracting Command, MICC and any other Redstone Arsenal organization that wanted to participate.

"Because of the caliber of the competition we provide, we were tasked by the (Army Materiel Command) command sergeant major to provide a venue and validation for any NCOs here on Redstone who wanted to compete at AMC's competition at Rock Island," Puig said.

The event was hosted by ECC. "It's important for NCOs to make the extra effort to stand out and lead from the front," said ECC Command Sgt. Maj. Angel Clark. "Competing in these types of competitions helps Soldiers fine tune their military knowledge and skills while also increasing the esprit de corps within the non-commissioned officer corps."

This year's competitors also included Staff Sgts. Cedric Belmont, 739th Contingency Contracting Team, Warren, Michigan; Kamba J. Cilumba, 418th CSB, Fort Hood, Texas; Ryan D. Johnson, 412th CSB, Joint Base

San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas; Maxim A. Pikulskiy, 920th Contingency Contracting Battalion, Fort Drum, New York; Christopher R. Sanchez, 727th Senior Contingency Contracting Team, Yongsan, Korea; Arter E. Sweatman, 926th CCBn, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland; Jerri A. Taylor, 414th CSB, Vicenza, Italy; John R. Tigue, 410th CSB, JBSA-Fort Sam Houston, and Mark C. Wirtz, 604th SCCT, Fort Lee, Virginia. Also participating was Sgt. Gunnar G. Kallstrom from the AMC Band at Redstone Arsenal.

Participants endured four days of mental and physical challenges.

Day one included the Army Physical Fitness Test, an appearance before a board of command sergeants major, a written test and writing an essay.

Day two saw the Soldiers conduct warrior tasks and battle drills in the morning. In the afternoon participants navigated the urban orienteering course as the Alabama sky provided an extra challenge - rain.

"If it ain't raining, we ain't training," said Johnson's sponsor, Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Carter, 412th CSB.

Participants completed an 8.2-mile road march followed by weapons qualification on the third day.

"Of all the events, the most challenging by far was the warrior tasks and battle drills," Puig said. "The road march required physical endurance but the warrior tasks required participants to be both mentally and physically tough. It required you to think on your feet when it came to first aid in the field and be strong enough to move that 180-pound victim as well."

According to MICC Command Sgt. Maj. Stephen E. Bowens, all participants can walk away feeling proud of their accomplishments.

"They worked hard to get here and are fine representatives of their units, the Army and America," he said.

Small business receives \$500 million

by Daniel P. Elkins
MICC Public Affairs Office

More than \$505 million in contracts were awarded to small businesses throughout the nation during the third quarter of this fiscal year by contracting officials with the Mission and Installation Contracting Command.

Through June 30, MICC contracting officers have awarded more than \$1.1 billion in contracts for fiscal 2014 to small businesses representing 41.7 percent of total small business eligible dollars awarded by the command. In fiscal 2013, the command executed more than \$2.1 billion to American small businesses. Historically, the number of contract awards increase in the fourth quarter as organizations supported by the MICC refine and finalize their mission sustainment requirements in the final quarter of the government fiscal year.

“The importance of the fourth quarter of the fiscal year cannot be overstated, not only to the command as it achieves its small-business goals, but also to the thousands of American small businesses that will find, compete for and win new Army contracts during that period,” said Mark Massie, associate director for the MICC Office of Small Business Programs at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

MICC officials and small business specialists across the command conducted several acquisition forecast open house events at installations throughout the country in June. Massie said these outreach events were vital in helping communicate projected MICC contracting opportunities to the small-business community looking to do business with the Army.



U.S. Army photos



(Top) Michael Faire speaks to small business representatives during an acquisition forecast open house June 23 at Fort Rucker, Alabama. Faire is the small business specialist for the Mission and Installation Contracting Command at Fort Rucker. **(Bottom left)** Diane House speaks with Julie Ann Padilla during an acquisition forecast open house June 2 at Fort Irwin, California. House is the MICC-Fort Irwin small business specialist, and Padilla is the director for the procurement assistance center in Corona, California. **(Left)** Pam Munoz speaks to small business representatives during an acquisition forecast open house June 5 at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. Munoz is the MICC director of contracting at Joint Base Lewis-McChord.



Sgt. 1st Class Melissa Browning, left, reviews contract actions with Reece Hockstedler June 24 at Fort Riley, Kansas.

Photo by Dena O'Dell

NCOs set pace for certification

Two Soldiers attached to the Mission and Installation Contracting Command are among those exemplifying the Army profession through their acquisition certification efforts.

Sgts. 1st Class Melissa Browning and Shannon Davie are setting the pace for their enlisted peers in contracting by achieving certification levels beyond their requirements.

by Daniel P. Elkins
MICC Public Affairs Office

The Army Acquisition Corps requires enlisted Soldiers to meet specific education and certification requirements in order to execute contracts on behalf of the government. In order to obtain certification in the contracting career field, Soldiers must meet a minimum education requirement of a bachelor's degree in any field of study with at least 24 hours in business disciplines.

The Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act, or DAWIA, further outlines standards in acquisition and functional training as well as education and experience for contracting certification at three levels for both uniformed and civilian members in the workforce. Army staff sergeants are required

to obtain a minimum Level I certification; sergeants first class should attain their Level II certification; and those in the grade of master sergeant and above must achieve their Level III certification.

The degree requirement often compels enlisted Soldiers to expedite higher education goals in order to obtain certification commensurate with their rank to perform their missions. For Browning, a contracting officer for the 634th Contingency Contracting Team at MICC-Fort Riley, Kansas, this prerequisite proved most challenging.

"Completing a degree was actually the most difficult (challenge) to accomplish," said Browning, who entered the contracting military occupational specialty in May 2009 after spending 15 years as an automated logistical specialist. "It consumes

a lot of time, and mixing that in with your daily workload requires a delicate balancing act between the two."

She earned dual master's degrees in business administration and logistics from Trident University International in 2013 and is Level III certified in contracting, one level above that required as a sergeant first class.

Davie, who had about 80 semester hours under his belt before his selection to the Army Acquisition Corps in 2009, found the requirement less stressful so long as he remained focused on his goal.

"As long as you were a good Soldier and were motivated, the requirements were fairly easy," said Davie, the MICC noncommissioned officer in charge of training and readiness at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas. "I just kept chipping away at the civilian school and (Defense Acquisition University) courses to obtain my certification. The motivation was just to continue along my career path, so I could have everything in place in order to do my job to the best of my ability."

Davie completed a bachelor's degree in management in 2012 from the American Military University and has since focused his attention on obtaining DAWIA Level III certification in contracting and also

working toward a master's degree in healthcare administration. The Hopkinsville, Kentucky, native completed his final contracting course in July and is now Level III certified and is in his final class to satisfy requirements for the master's degree.

A dental lab technician supporting patients for nine years, Davie found the 51C MOS as a natural transition to continue applying his customer service skills by supporting military and contract partners.

Attracting Browning to the MOS was a curiosity of how essential supplies and services have always seemed to be in place ahead of her arrival upon multiple deployments as a logistician.

"There were several instances in which we were the first unit to occupy the area. It amazed me that items would just start to appear, and I honestly had no idea where they were coming from since we were the main logistical hub on the ground," the Vienna, Illinois, native said.

Both Browning and Davie entered the contracting career field with a basic understanding of contracting. They began their training with simplified contract actions that included the acquisition of supplies and services, including minor construction, research and development, and commercial items not exceeding a threshold of \$150,000. They have each moved on to more complex contracts while becoming more proficient in all procedures making up the contracting life cycle from pre-award and award to administration,



Photo by Daniel P. Elkins

As an acquisition noncommissioned officer, Sgt. 1st Class Shannon Davie is pursuing contracting certification requirements beyond what is required by his grade.

including contract closeout.

They believe their previous service contributed to their success and drive to excel in the 51C specialty but also credit mentorship by civilian contracting professionals.

"Mentoring is important in every aspect. In regards to certification, mentoring is most important in the ability to provide guidance

and direction to contracting NCOs and officers to help them excel," Browning said. "The purpose of mentoring is also to help you pay attention to your intentions and get to where you want to be."

Davie agrees, adding that mentors play a critical role in helping guide Soldiers and other civilians through the myriad of changes to the Federal Acquisition Regulation,

contracting policies and the certification process.

With each having achieved an acquisition certification level beyond their requirements, they serve as a motivating force for others to emulate, according to Donna VanGilder, the chief of training and readiness for MICC Operations.

She said approximately 34

percent, or 78, of the 230 enlisted members attached to the MICC have achieved their necessary certification level against a threshold of 96 percent established by the office of the principal deputy to the Army acquisition executive. VanGilder said the primary reason for NCOs not meeting their required level of certification is the lack of a bachelor's degree. However, approximately 48 additional NCOs are expecting to complete their degree in the next six months, and a large number of those have already completed the required DAWIA training and experience requirements for certification.

Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Gabbert, the MICC commanding general, said a commitment to the Army profession combined with the contracting proficiency expected of senior NCOs in the 51C MOS reveal a higher caliber of professionalism and leadership. He believes contracting certification reflects a practical and professional experience valuable to Army leaders at all levels of command.

"The acquisition corps is able to attract and retain the best Soldiers our Army has to offer, because today's Soldiers want to be challenged," Gabbert said. "To succeed within the career field, an NCO must not only be intelligent, a leader and possess character beyond reproach but must also be self-disciplined and driven."

Editor's note: This is the second in a series of articles on the certification for contracting Soldiers.

BRING YOUR CHILD TO WORK

by Ben Gonzales
MICC Public Affairs Office

Approximately 50 children spent the day with their parents at the Mission and Installation Contracting Command headquarters June 18 as part of bring your child to work day.

Soldiers and Army civilians from the 410th Contracting Support Brigade, the 412th CSB and MICC brought their children to work to show them what the Army is all about as well as to help prepare them for the future.

Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Gabbert, the MICC commanding general, welcomed the families to the headquarters. Command Sgt. Maj. Steven Bowens, the MICC command sergeant major, provided encouragement by teaching them how to bellow a hearty "Hooah."

Younger children spent the morning with arts and crafts and a scavenger hunt across the Long Barracks while pre-teens and teenagers took a personality test and learned how to relate with other personalities.

After a pizza lunch, the 323rd Army Band kicked off the afternoon performing top hits while participants visited military and fire department vehicles on display. Army recruiters were on hand to talk about careers and also brought games to challenge the children. Youngsters also had the opportunity to try on some battle armor and sample Meals Ready to Eat. In addition, Air Force security forces demonstrated the capabilities of military working dogs.

Additional activities in the afternoon included minute-to-win-it games for the younger ages while older children learned about the interview process from MICC human resources representatives.



Photos by Daniel P. Elkins

MICC member heads CIAA officials

by Daniel P. Elkins
MICC Public Affairs Office

A commitment to the success of student-athletes is paying off for a Mission and Installation Contracting Command member following his recent selection to serve as head coordinator of football officials for the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association.

Donnell Leathers, a contracting specialist for MICC-Fort Bragg, North Carolina, got his start officiating high school games more than 20 years ago at Fort Bragg while he was on active duty. Throughout his years in the Army, he went on to call games at the NCAA Division II level and today officiates at the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference Football Championship Subdivision level.

“My involvement with athletics

has brought me in contact with some great people, and I have made some great friends around the United States,” said Leathers, who joined the command almost four years ago. “At no matter what level you are, just remember that is it never about you but for the student-athletes.”

In addition to football, Leathers officiates basketball in the CIAA and South Atlantic Conference. This combined with the duties of his new role as coordinator leaves little spare time during his weekends. Those duties include supervising CIAA officials, assigning staff for football games, conducting training and evaluating officials.

“I’ll also observe games and supervise a staff of observers who are my eyes and ears at every game. It involves a lot of different responsibilities,” he said.

Additionally, he’s responsible for selecting and recommending officials to the College Football Organization for the playoffs.

The CIAA was founded in 1912 as the Colored Intercollegiate Athletic Association and is the oldest African-American athletic conference in the nation. It consists of historically black colleges and universities throughout the east coast with student enrollments ranging from 750 to more than 7,000.

The similarities between what it takes to succeed at work and on the field does not go unrecognized for the retired Soldier.

“It has taught me that hard work and dedication pays off, which I currently employ in my position as a contract specialist, and to also strive to be a leader at whatever you do,” Leathers said.



Courtesy photo

Referee Donnell Leathers, center, has been officiating for more than 20 years, including the 55-14 win by Jacksonville State University over Samford University Nov. 30, 2013.