



US Army Corps
of Engineers®

Vol. 36 Issue 2
April 2015

www.hnc.usace.army.mil

Huntsville Center

Bulletin

On the Inside...

**Twing,
Shippers retire
after long
careers**

■ Pages 5, 6

**Contracting
professionals
take USACE
award**

■ Page 7

**Medical
Division
employees
recieve kudos**

■ Page 8

**Center honors
workers
back from
deployment**

■ Page 9

**Strategic
review directs
Center**

■ Page 10

Mustard agent destruction marks another milestone for Center's Chemical Demilitarization Program



Photo courtesy PEO ACWA

Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant Explosive Destruction System operators place a Department of Transportation bottle containing mustard agent in the Munitions Holder for destruction March 18. After safe detonation, the bottle, which will be a metal fragment, is removed from the vessel.

**By Julia Bobick
Public Affairs Office**

The March 18 destruction of the first item in the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant Explosive Destruction System marked another milestone for Huntsville Center's Chemical Demilitarization program.

Designated as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Life Cycle Project Manager for Chemical Demilitarization in 1990, Huntsville

Center officially received the chemical demilitarization facility construction mission.

The Center's Chemical Demilitarization Program has had a role in the design and/or construction of all nine of the Army's chemical agent destruction facilities.

Only two facilities remain to complete the destruction of the nation's chemical weapons stockpile – PCAPP near Pueblo, Colorado, and the Blue Grass Chemical Agent

See *Mustard* on page 5

Commander's thoughts

Welcome to spring. I imagine we are all ready for warm weather after the snow and ice in late February and early March.

We have a number of people who retired in March or plan to do so in April – many more than usual.

I want to thank each of them for their years of government civilian service, and for all the work they did for Huntsville Center and the Corps of Engineers. I hate to see them leave, but I wish them well in their retirement.

In March, Chuck Twing, chief of the Chemical Warfare Design Center, Ordnance and Explosives Directorate, retired March 20; Valerie Shippers, director, Installation Support and Programs Management Directorate, March 30; and Sharon Butler, Chief, Contracts Management Division B, Contracting Directorate, March 31.

In April, Bettie Doss, accountant, Resource Management, is retiring April 2; Suzanne Murdock, chief of the Civil-Structures Division, Engineering Directorate, April 3; and Linda Sisk, finance and accounting officer, Resource Management, April 17.

On a happier note – at least for Huntsville Center – in March we kicked off the Employee of the Month

recognition. The awards will recognize Center employees who have excelled in their jobs and have made daily strides in improving our effort to support the USACE mission.

Each month, one employee will be selected from those nominated, and a winner chosen. In addition to Certificates of Appreciation, the chosen employee will select a designated reserved parking spot for the month.

The recipient of our first-ever Employee of the Month recognition in March was Tammy Cinnamon, who has been the acting chief of the Architectural Engineering Contracts and Criteria Branch. Congratulations Tammy! Keep up the great work.

Speaking of awards, before the next issue of The Bulletin is published, we will have presented our annual Engineer Day awards. Information on submitting our outstanding employees for awards in each of the categories will be coming out via email. Please prepare your nominations and get them to the Public Affairs Office by the deadline so the Incentive Awards Committee has time to review them and make a recommendation, and PAO has time to order the trophies for delivery before the annual awards day picnic June 5.



Col. Robert Ruch

More details on the picnic will be forthcoming.

In my last column, in the January Bulletin, I talked about counseling.

It's now time for the year interim counseling for employees. Supervisors, please take the time to talk to your employees about how they are meeting – or not – their objectives, and how they can improve. Don't forget to let them know when they are doing a great job, too. That feedback is just as important.

Employees, if you have questions of your supervisors, please ask. Counseling has to be two-way for it to be most effective.

Thank you for all you do every day to make Huntsville Center great!

Hails & Farewells

Hail: Kathy Schmidt, Executive Office; VinCene McClain, Security Office; Michael Ott, Dustin Lawler, David Stevens, Patrick Stone, Installation Support and Programs Management Directorate; Karyn Toso, Resource Management Directorate; Hector Vega, Lelani Banks, Leigh Cathey, Center Contracting Directorate.

Farewell: Valerie Shippers, ISPM; Charles Twing, Ordnance and Explosives Directorate; Chung-Rei Mao, Environmental and Munitions Center of Expertise; Ashley Parkman, Mary Hicks, Faeh Reese, Molly Richardson, Engineering Directorate; Jordan Miller, Sharon Butler, CT.



US Army Corps of Engineers

The Huntsville Center Bulletin is printed by digital copier as an official publication authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the U.S. Army. Inquiries can be addressed to Public Affairs Office, U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, Attn: CEHNC-PA, P.O. Box 1600, Huntsville, AL 35807-4301. Phone: DSN 760-1692 or commercial 256-895-1692. The Bulletin is also online at www.hnc.usace.army.mil. The Huntsville Center Facebook page is located at <http://bit.ly/HNCfbPage>. The Twitter page is located at <http://twitter.com/CEHNC>. Circulation: 500.

BULLETIN

Commander..... Col. Robert Ruch
 Chief, Public Affairs..... Debra Valine
 Editor..... William S. Farrow



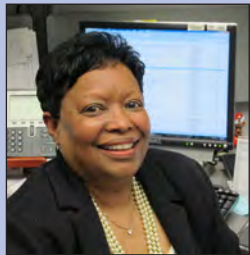
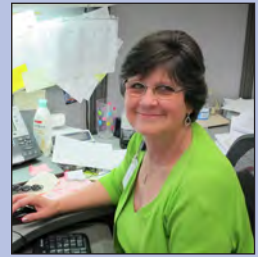
**Printed on recycled paper
 30 percent post-consumer**

The Bulletin asks:

“Upon your retirement, what will you miss most about working at Huntsville Center?”

“ I’ve spent the past 29 years at Huntsville Center in the Resource Management Directorate and have very close ties with my co-workers so I will miss my work family the most. ”

Linda Sisk
Resource Management Directorate

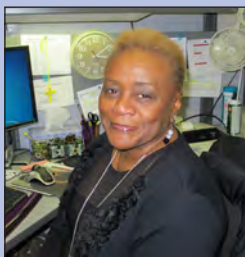
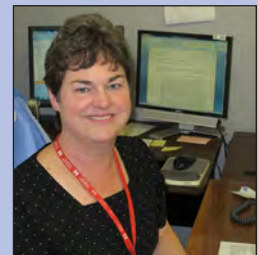


“ I’ll miss the people and relationships, the partnerships and the mission most. I’ve really enjoyed coming up with innovative solutions to problems, getting a chance to mentor others and watching them grow and being a part of the team that makes decisions which impact service members and their families worldwide. ”

Sharon Butler
Contracting Directorate

“ My closest friendships have developed here during the past 26 years. My best friends have all been at Huntsville Center. I’ll also miss the work. I’ve held five different jobs here and they have all been great experiences for me. ”

Suzanne Murdock
Engineering Directorate



“ I’ll miss my job and the people most. I’ve been at Huntsville Center since December 2001 and have made lots of friends and acquaintances here. So leaving Huntsville Center will be like leaving family. ”

Bettie Doss
Resource Management Directorate

Retirement Information Center



The Office of Personnel Management has information about retirement benefits for new, prospective, and current Federal employees: <http://www.opm.gov/Blogs/Retire/>

Tammy Cinnamon

By Jo Anita Miley
Public Affairs Office

Tammy Cinnamon, acting chief of Huntsville Center's Architectural Engineering Contracts and Criteria Branch, received the first-ever Employee of the Month Award March 9.

The awards, organized by the Huntsville Center leader and employee recognition board, recognize Center employees who have excelled in their jobs and have made daily strides in improving our effort to support the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers mission. Boyce Ross, director of Huntsville Center's Engineering Directorate nominated Cinnamon for her work within the directorate. Ross said

Cinnamon has done an excellent job serving on a temporary detail as branch chief of the directorate's AE Contracts and Criteria Branch.

"Tammy has done an incredible job as the acting chief of AE Contracts and Criteria Branch. During this past month she has worked very hard to develop a task order for cost estimating support for the Veterans Hospital in Aurora, Colorado. She continues to support the acquisition of the Ministry of Defense Hospital projects in Kuwait and Afghanistan and provided valuable mentoring to our intern," Ross said.

"In addition to those major efforts, she has kept up with the day-to-day operations of the branch including onboarding a new employee. Her efforts during this time have been critical to keeping the branch performing at a high level."

Cinnamon received a Certificate of Appreciation from Huntsville Center Commander, Col. Robert Ruch, and



Photo by Jo Anita Miley

Tammy Cinnamon receives award recognition and designated parking space at the organization from Huntsville Center Commander, Col. Robert Ruch and deputy for programs, Charles Ford.

deputy for programs, Charles Ford and a monthlong designated parking spot of her choice for the remainder of the month.

Cinnamon said she appreciates receiving this distinction.

"I am honored to receive the Employee of the Month for March. It's a nice feeling to be recognized for the work I am doing. I owe a BIG thank you to everyone I work with who help make my job so enjoyable," Cinnamon said.

"I admit I was shocked to learn that I am the first recipient of this new award. Huntsville Center has so many great people who work on some

amazing projects. This is a great way to recognize those efforts; not to mention the monthlong designated parking spot is a nice perk."

Cinnamon earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Tennessee and her professional engineer license from Alaska. Cinnamon began work with USACE and Huntsville Center in 2003. She left the Center in 2004 to work at Bluegrass Army Depot, Kentucky, and Alaska and Europe U.S. Army Corps of Engineers districts. She returned to Huntsville Center's Installation Support and Programs Management Directorate in January 2014.

The **Employee Spotlight** is intended to let our Center employees shine for positively impacting our organization through mission achievements. Employees are nominated and are featured quarterly in the Huntsville Center Bulletin. If you'd like to nominate someone within your office for this recognition, please contact Jo Anita Miley, Public Affairs Office, at 256-895-1585, or email: JoAnita.Miley@usace.army.mil.

Chemical response pioneer Twing retires

By William S. Farrow
Public Affairs Office

After more than 24 years of civil service, Charles (Chuck) Twing, chief, Chemical Warfare Design Center, retired March 31.

His accomplishments were recognized during a March 20 retirement ceremony attended by current and past Huntsville Center employees as well as representatives from Redstone Arsenal and other Army agencies outside the USACE and Huntsville Center realm.

"These people didn't have to come to the Center on a rainy day like today, but they showed up and that is a testament to you Chuck," said Col. Robert Ruch, Huntsville Center commander. "That speaks strongly to the support you've given."

Prior to being hired in 1990 as the second unexploded ordnance safety specialist brought on board at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Huntsville Division, Twing served 20 years in the active-duty Army as an explosives ordnance disposal officer.

After retiring from the Army, Twing hired on with the then-Huntsville Division to assist with efforts to start an Unexploded Ordnance Investigation and Remediation Program.

Over the next 24 years, Twing was instrumental in the



Chuck Twing

development and growth of Huntsville Center's Ordnance and Explosives Directorate and Military Munitions Response Program.

As Twing's career was initially focused on locating and removing munitions at Base Realignment and Closure and Formerly Used Defense Sites, he said in the early 1990s he noticed there was no real process for dealing with non-stockpile chemical warfare materiel discovered at these sites. It was then that he became interested in the Chemical Weapons Material issues.

"I had a background in chemical weapons from the military as one of the aspects of EOD is chemical munitions," Twing said.

Through the years, Twing led the growth of the Chemical Warfare Design Center as the single executing agency for the investigation and recovery of chemical warfare materiel for the Department of Defense.

"It started as a working team with me as a team leader to a Division in the Ordnance and Explosives Directorate, doing \$69 million last fiscal year," Twing said.

Bill Sargent, director of the Ordnance and Explosives Directorate, said Twing was the primary person who pushed and developed the chemical response program here.

"I guess you could call him one of the 'Founding Fathers' of the ordnance program within USACE," Sargent said.

MUSTARD

continued from page 1

Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP) near Richmond, Kentucky.

For each U.S. site, Huntsville Center Chemical Demilitarization and Engineering Directorate staff have overseen development of initial design requirements for the highly-automated state-of-the-art disposal facilities and overseen design and procurement of demilitarization equipment – to include the specialized robots that transfer materials to the appropriate processing stations at the Pueblo and Blue Grass facilities.

"We are very proud of our role in this extremely important mission for our Center and the nation," said Steve Light, chief of the Chemical Demilitarization Directorate's

Alternative Technologies Division at Huntsville Center. "It's a great honor knowing we have contributed to making our nation and our world a safer place."

Just minutes before noon March 18, the United States returned to honoring its international commitment when the first detonation occurred in the PCAPP EDS, which accessed the bottle filled with mustard agent, according to U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot (PCD) staff. The PCAPP will destroy 2,611 tons of mustard agent contained in over 900,000 mortar rounds and artillery projectiles safely stored in munitions storage igloos at PCD.

"We are excited and proud to be back on a path of ridding our nation of chemical weapons," said Bruce

Huenefeld, PCAPP EDS site project manager at PCD. "We look forward to the day when the first projectile makes its way through the main plant here later this year."

Completion of BGCAPP facility construction, which is now about 93 percent complete, will bring an end to Huntsville Center's Chemical Demilitarization Program. The BGCAPP will destroy 523 tons of chemical nerve agent in rockets and artillery projectiles stored safely in munitions storage igloos at the Blue Grass Army Depot.

Editor's Note: Excerpts of this article are from a March 18 release by the U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot Public Affairs Office.

ISPM director Shippers retires

By William S. Farrow
Public Affairs Office

Valerie Shippers, director, Huntsville Center's Installation Support and Programs Management Directorate, retired from federal service March 30 during a ceremony at the Center.

In her position as director, Shippers was responsible for partnering with geographic districts, centers and agencies to provide life-cycle worldwide support to Army, Department of Defense, and non-DoD agencies in providing maintenance, repair, operation and upgrade services for their facilities and infrastructure.

The ISPM Directorate manages more than two dozen programs supporting customers throughout the world.

Shippers took her position at the Center in 2011 coming from the Fort Worth District where she began her Corps career in 2008 as the deputy director for the Fort Bliss, Texas, Program Office. In that position she was responsible for managing an expansion program valued at more than \$4 billion.

Prior to her move to Huntsville Center, she was the chief of the Military Branch, Program and Project Management Division, Fort Worth District. Shippers said coming to Huntsville Center from another district she understood the mission at Huntsville Center extended beyond geographic boundaries. She also said one of her priorities as ISPM director was to ensure transparency with the divisions and districts ISPM works with.

"Huntsville Center works outside their box a lot and since I've been here I think we've improved those relationships. That doesn't mean we still don't work in those folks' areas of responsibility, but there is a transparency now, and we get a lot of accolades on that, and hopefully I had some influence and helped make a difference in building those relationships with the other Corps organizations," Shippers said.

"Instead of working in someone's AOR, we're really collaborating to give the customers a better product and a better deliverable. Using the resources where we have them is good for the whole Corps," she said.

One of the greatest challenges Shippers said she encountered here at the Center was "ownership" employees had regarding projects in other divisions and districts and the fear of transparency within that work.

"I think there was an internal resistance to transparency for fear it would have negative impact on the work the Center does but in reality our workload has done nothing but increase over the last few years," Shippers said.

She said she pushed transparency forward simply by building relationships.

"Now we're providing monthly project listings to all other

Major Subordinate Commands telling them what we're doing and engaging and being part of project development teams from beginning to end. The Center instituted a strategic engagement plan that assigned GS-15 counterparts to each MSC, and we require in their objectives they do face-to-face visits with those folks. Now we've assigned GS-14 branch chiefs to each district, and they are required to make a phone call to the deputy project managers.

"Opening that communication and developing those partnerships is important because once a customer has a face to put with our work, it just works better."

As the spouse of an Army officer, Shippers has close ties to the local area. From 2001 to 2008, she worked for the Missile Defense Agency at Redstone Arsenal as the chief of Site Activation and Integration. There she supervised essential planning and construction activities that supported the successful deployment of national missile defense initial operating capabilities at various locations in Alaska, California, Colorado, Japan and Greenland. She also engaged in the siting, planning and initial negotiation efforts with other nations in planning for expansion of operating capabilities.

Prior to Missile Defense Agency, Shippers worked with Army Directorates of Public works in Germany, Kentucky and Alabama, serving in a variety of positions to include master planning, engineering, environmental, energy, housing and operations. She said the work she did early in her career became very relevant to the work she did with the Corps at Fort Worth District and especially Huntsville Center and ISPM. She said her past experience brought a strong customer perspective and focus to her Huntsville Center responsibilities.

"Before the Corps, I worked a lot at military installations' department of public works so that's the work I knew best," she said.

"This has really been a terrific job and I like to think I made a difference," she said.

Shippers graduated from Kansas State University with a Bachelor of Science in Architectural Engineering, and she is a certified Project Management Professional.



Valerie Shippers

Center Contracting professionals earn top USACE awards

By Jo Anita Miley
Public Affairs Office

Two Huntsville Center contracting professionals received Excellence in Contracting awards Jan. 12.

Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Kendall Bergmann presented the awards during a staff meeting at the Center.

Tonju Butler and Lillian Fox, both contracting professionals in the Center's Contracting Directorate, received the awards for their work in fiscal year 2014.

Butler, chief, Preaward Branch, competed with other Corps contracting officers to win the Procuring Contractor of the Year award. She distinguished herself as a skillful leader and advocate for process improvement, providing oversight to 26 multimillion and multibillion dollar acquisitions and serving as the procuring contracting officer for six of those procurements ranging in value from \$100 million up to \$7 billion.

Butler also was recognized for her contributions to the USACE acquisition workforce, consistently garnering high praise for her ability to execute the strategic mission of the Army and the Center while helping to develop the skills of new contracting officers through teaching the USACE Contracting Officer's Workshop. She also was identified by Headquarters, USACE as "one of the best and brightest contracting officers."

Fox, chief, Information Technology Services Branch, also emerged as a winner in the Manager of the Year award category. She was recognized for her exceptional leadership, selfless service and resilient professionalism while leading the ITS Branch through a successful fiscal year. Her consistent delivery, superior professionalism



Photo by Jo Anita Miley

Tonju Butler, left, and Lillian Fox of Huntsville Center's Contracting Directorate recently earned recognition in the 2014 Headquarters, USACE Excellence in Contracting Awards.

and commitment to excellence have positively impacted the warfighter and their families worldwide.

Fox also was noted for her exceptional leadership, ability to maintain a vigorous workload throughout the fiscal year, produce quality work and sustain positive working relationships with the product delivery teams, stakeholders and customers.

Her efforts were critical to avoiding adverse impacts to life and safety for military and civilian personnel and critical patient care for wounded warriors.

Coleen O'Keefe, Huntsville Center's chief of contracting, agrees. She said their example helps the directorate contract and keep great talent when they see what the Center does.

"Receiving this recognition from

USACE reflects great credit on Huntsville Center and their ability to execute high dollar value, high profile workloads while creating new teams and leading and mentoring others at the organization," O'Keefe said.

"It's great their exemplary performance can be recognized on multiple levels. I'm very excited and extremely proud."

The USACE Excellence in Contracting Awards are presented annually to distinguish contracting professionals who have singularly and collectively fulfilled the USACE Campaign Plan Objective 4c3: "Improve Acquisition Execution with Policy, Processes, and Certified Professionals" and have achieved exceptional success to support the contracting mission worldwide.

Medical Division employees receive kudos from customer

By Debra Valine
Public Affairs Office

Two employees with the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville's Medical Division received certificates of achievement from the director of Walter Reed National Military Medical Center for support provided in fiscal year 2014 during a town hall Jan. 23.

Huntsville Center Commander Col. Robert Ruch presented Mark Batchelor and Lt. Cmdr. Brandon Groh with the certificates signed by Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Clark.

"Awards such as these demonstrate some of the great support we at Huntsville Center are doing for our national Military Health System customers," said Wes Turner, chief of the Medical Division. "This type of recognition gives us real meaning for our daily tasks and a true sense of accomplishment."

The certificates recognize superior performance by Batchelor, the program manager for Project Support Services (PSS), and Groh, an officer in the U.S. Public Health Service, is a project manager in Medical Repair and Renewal (MRR) program.

According to the citation, Batchelor earned the certificate of achievement for superbly managing pre-award services for Walter Reed National Military Medical Center's support services contract worth more than \$1 million. The contract ensures highly qualified architects and engineers filled critical gaps in the Facility Management Department.

Groh's citation reads, "He superbly managed pre-award services for architectural-engineering projects worth over \$1 million in support of the medical center's critical construction work, including high-priority projects such as the Bio-Safe Lab Level 3 Suite Assessment and Building 1, south wing renovation design."

In Fiscal Year 2014, the PSS team managed more than 130 projects valued at approximately \$60 million for the U.S. Army Medical Command, Air Force Medical Support Agency and the U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery. In addition, as the designated Enterprise-Level Quality Assurance (QA) Coordinator for the MEDCOM Sustainment Restoration and Modernization Program, the team worked with Army Corps of Engineers districts to provide 14 facilities with USACE QA support.

The Medical Repair and Renewal Program offers a fast track, efficient method for design and execution of all types of medical facility repairs, renovations, conversions, alterations, additions and construction projects. MRR provides program and project management, engineering,



Photos by Julia Bobick

During the Jan. 23 Town Hall, Huntsville Center Commander Col. Robert Ruch presents Mark Batchelor (above) and Lt. Cmdr. Brandon Groh with certificates of achievement on behalf of Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Clark, Director of the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

contracting and construction support to multiple Department of Defense and non-DOD agencies at locations nationwide.

In fiscal year 2014, the MRR team managed more than 170 projects valued at approximately \$494 million.

In addition to PSS and MRR, Huntsville Center's Medical Division also includes Initial Outfitting and Transition; Integrated Medical Furniture; and Operation and Maintenance Engineering Enhancement.

Center workers honored for deployments

By Jo Anita Miley
Public Affairs Office

Huntsville Center employees Sharon Howard, Business Management Office, and Tracey Shaw, Contracting Directorate, were both recognized for their efforts while deployed to Afghanistan.

Howard, a workforce development specialist, received the Corps of Engineers Steel Order of the de Fleury Medal for providing administrative support to the Transatlantic District-North. Howard distinguished herself as a skillful administrator, providing timely and accurate administration of a multitude of personnel actions and partnering with all staff levels and area offices across the Transatlantic District's operational footprint.

Howard demonstrated excellence when working with stakeholders to make certain personnel actions were handled properly. Her exceptional knowledge and experience enabled her to identify and effectively address personnel issues while supporting her team. Her exemplary professionalism and dedication enabled the commander, executive staff and support elements to flawlessly facilitate and transition competing priorities, which required senior leadership engagement, to meet mission requirements.

According to the citation, "Her outstanding professionalism, dedication to the mission and selfless service are in keeping with the finest traditions of the Transatlantic District-North, the Transatlantic Division, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Engineer Regiment and the U.S. Army."

Shaw, a contracting officer, was recognized for his contributions to the USACE contracting workforce with the Barbara C. Heald (Deployed civilian) Special Award and Superior Civilian Service Award. He consistently garnered high praise for his ability to provide critical construction contract



Sharon Howard

administration support throughout the Central Command as the first contracting officer forward deployed to the Southern region resident office in Afghanistan for Transatlantic Middle East District and Transatlantic Division. He stood up the Contracting office at Kandahar Air Field for TAM and was lead for the TAM Project Delivery Team, providing expert counsel and guidance to PDT members and executed all contractual actions in the resident office without administrative contracting officer support, providing contract oversight for more than \$500 million of combined design-build and design-bid-build construction projects for the Southern Afghanistan Area Office.

Shaw was also distinguished for his exceptional leadership and exemplary service. He demonstrated excellence when working with project stakeholders to make certain projects were contractually compliant and for



Tracey Shaw

the execution of USACE projects in Southern Afghanistan, vastly improved the overall contract support and improved the effectiveness and quality of TAM that made a significant and lasting positive impact to the security and stability of Afghanistan.

Jeffrey Davis, deployment coordinator at Huntsville Center, is responsible for filling deployment vacancies for USACE contingency operations around the globe.

Davis said he wishes more Huntsville Center employees would consider deployment. He said 18 employees within the organization are currently deployed around the globe. "I'd love to talk with anyone at the center who is considering a deployment and has some unanswered questions," Davis said.

For more information about deployment opportunities at Huntsville Center, call Davis at 895-1351.



Campaign Plan

Goal 1: Support National Security.

Objective 1a: Support the Combatant Commands' security activities, and the efforts of other U.S. government agencies around the globe, to advance our Nation's interests.

Strategic review keeps Center moving in right direction

By Julia Bobick
Public Affairs Office

Maintaining transparency, listening to and meeting the needs of customers and clearly defining measures of success were resounding themes throughout the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville's Command Strategic Review Feb. 12-13.

Led by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Deputy Commanding General Maj. Gen. Richard J. Stevens, the discussion focused on looking at Huntsville Center programs, opportunities and challenges from an enterprise-level perspective. This was the sixth of 10 strategic reviews Stevens is conducting at USACE units this fiscal year in an effort to improve transparency across the Corps and ensure the entire enterprise is effectively working toward the command's Campaign Plan goals.

"Our intent really is to look at the enterprise-wide issues and share best practices and lessons learned," Stevens said. "I know you all are doing a lot of things right here. Sometimes we get very focused as an organization on what's going wrong [when] we ought to be focusing on those things that are going right and figuring out how we can export that to the larger organization."

The result of the CSR was a detailed homework list for both Huntsville Center and the Headquarters. Key issues included the civilian hiring process and student employment programs, external audit tracking, information sharing and deliberate planning for contingency operations to better address Army requirements.

"This is OUR campaign plan," said Alex Dornstauder, chief of the USACE Strategy and Integration Office. "If we are not focused on the right things and measuring the right things, please help us. It's not just all about the dialogue. We are holding ourselves accountable to homework assignments and committing to get things done."

Huntsville Center Commander COL. Robert Ruch said the Center's briefings to the Headquarters staff "focused in on the things we think [Headquarters] can help us with to move the USACE Campaign Plan forward."

"It's about Headquarters hearing our direction and interpretation of things, us hearing the Headquarters' direction and interpretation, and then at the end of it knowing we have the right azimuth and confirm we are moving in the right direction," added Dan Heinzelman, Huntsville Center's business director.

Day two included a voice of the customer discussion about how the Center can improve processes and better



Photos Julia Bobick

Huntsville Center Commander Col. Robert Ruch talks with USACE Deputy Commanding General Maj. Gen. Richard Stevens during the Command Strategic review at the Center Feb.13.

support customers. Feedback from key stakeholders interviewed by Headquarters staff was overwhelmingly positive; the U.S. Department of Energy gave high marks for Huntsville Center's contracting support, and the U.S. Army Installation Management Command offered praise for the Center's facilities reduction, furniture and master planning programs.

The day-and-a-half event also included candid lunch-time discussions with emerging leaders from the Center's Leadership Development Program (LDP).

"What I got from them, frankly, was a sense of what's important to our young workforce today and how they think, and how we have to adapt as an organization to be able to harness the energy of the young workforce," Stevens said, adding that he appreciated their involvement in the CSR program. "It takes everybody – from interns all the way up to make this organization pump. We ought to embrace that diversity as a strength."

During his closing comments, Stevens asked the group if the event was a success.

"I'll tell you I don't know yet if it was a success," he said. "I wouldn't say it was successful if we all go back to our desks, throw the briefing book on the shelf behind us and go about our days the way we always have. It's up to all of us to follow up; time will tell if it was a success."

Commander addresses new missions, building upgrades, delivering on promises

By Julia Bobick
Public Affairs Office

Huntsville Center Commander Col. Robert Ruch led off a Jan. 23 town hall sharing praise he's received from leaders across USACE and the Army, and looking ahead at work coming to the Center as a result of successful project delivery time after time.

"To get thanks at a time when you're not expecting it tells you what people think about us," Ruch said, relaying a call early that morning from Brig. Gen. Donald (Ed) Jackson Jr. in Afghanistan.

The conversation about metering with the soon-to-be Army Corps of Engineers' Deputy Commanding General for Military and International Operations ended with an unexpected thank you to the entire Huntsville Center team.

During the town hall held at the University of Alabama in Huntsville's University Center, Ruch weaved in his priorities for 2015: support the fight, deliver on promises and be a better place to work.

"I may be the first commander ever in Huntsville who talked about slowing down a little bit," Ruch said.

New missions continue coming along fast and furious – and some are coming back around – like in Iraq, he said. The Center has been asked to perform work for Jordan, New Zealand, Angola, Albania and Kazakhstan, and Ruch said he expects more missions supporting Transatlantic Division.

"If we have to slow down a little bit to get resourced to make sure we are able to deliver on our promises, then we need to do that," he said. The nearly 100 percent cost-reimbursable organization has a very entrepreneurial spirit, with innovative program managers who are continually



Photo by Julia Bobick

During the Jan. 23 town hall, Huntsville Center Commander Col. Robert Ruch discussed his priorities, thanked employees for their efforts and answered questions about upcoming facility renovations, fitness center access and employee incentive awards.

developing new projects, identifying potential customers, ensuring fellow USACE districts are informed and working together with the districts to achieve viable solutions for customers. While the Center achieved record success in 2014, Ruch cautioned, "If we don't deliver on the promises we've made," the customers won't keep coming back.

It is equally important to keep Center employees engaged in meaningful work and have a professional environment, Ruch said, discussing the Center's 2014 climate survey.

Ruch said he read about 1,000 individual survey comments to get a better understanding of employee satisfaction and morale.

Maintaining a positive climate "goes back to making sure we are taking care of resources; everybody here is a

resource, and if you're not happy and you don't know where you're heading in your career, you're likely to go someplace else."

Ruch ended the town hall responding to employee questions about upcoming building renovations, annual performance awards, use of the fitness center and cafeteria, teleworking, career development opportunities and support for the Center's activities association.

The Center, which will remain in its current location for at least the next five years, is conducting a requirements analysis through the summer to determine the needs of every directorate and small office and develop a course of action for updating workspaces and common areas of the 20-year-old building.

"This is a great place to work, but we can all make it better."

Work to upgrade Letterkenny Army Depot industrial facilities underway

By Debra Valine
Public Affairs Office

Work is underway at Letterkenny Army Depot that will modernize depot infrastructure, cut energy use by approximately 28 percent, reduce water usage by nearly 50 percent, and generate at least \$4.1 million in annual energy and operational savings.

The \$43.6 million Energy Savings Performance Contracting project at the Pennsylvania depot was awarded by the Huntsville Center, to Honeywell in August 2014. Work started in December 2014 and is expected to be complete by the end of 2016.

The project is expected to save the Army Materiel Command depot nearly 14.8 million kilowatt-hours of electricity each year – enough energy to power more than 1,360 homes on average, and an environmental benefit of cutting an estimated 72 million pounds of carbon dioxide each year, which is equivalent to removing more than 6,300 cars from the road.

An ESPC leverages third-party financing to make comprehensive energy and water efficiency improvements on facilities or implements new renewable energy capabilities at no upfront cost to the garrison. During the 23-year term of the contract, a portion of the contractor-guaranteed savings will pay for the project.

“These improvements will allow the depot to meet and exceed current energy requirements in Executive Order 13423, ‘Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy and Transportation Management,’ signed by President Bush Jan. 24, 2007,” said Rodney Gettig, Letterkenny’s director of public works.

The Executive Order established



Photo courtesy Letterkenny Army Depot

Letterkenny Army Depot painters prepare to de-mask a freshly painted ground mobility vehicle inside a paint booth similar to the booths being upgraded as part of a \$43 million project to make improvements to the infrastructure on the depot. The GMV was road tested prior to going through the final paint process.

energy reduction goals of 30 percent energy and 15 percent water reduction by the end of 2015.

Gettig said construction will take about two years.

“Our reduction in energy use makes us a better deal for the tax payer long term in terms of saving money for services required by our nation’s military,” Gettig said.

When finished, the improvements will not only save on energy and water consumption, but also help provide continuous support to warfighters.

“Obviously the more efficient operations can be the more output Letterkenny achieves,” said Jason Bray, Huntsville Center’s project manager.

According to Bray, this is the second Army ESPC project to incorporate industrial process savings.

“Industrial process is making the process more efficient. At Letterkenny, the blast booth was causing delays because the depot had to subcontract this operation out, which meant sending the parts outside the depot and waiting for them to come back before work could be finished,” Bray said. “The upgraded blast booth will remove that step from the process.”

Letterkenny refurbishes military

vehicles and electronic guidance systems used by Armed Forces around the world. Huntsville Center is the Corps of Engineers’ Center of Expertise for ESPC and manages 85 to 90 percent of the Army’s ESPC portfolio.

LAD upgrades include:

- **Modify existing blast booth in building 350 with a new floor sweeper and media recovery system that automatically recovers abrasive blast materials.**
- **Install new wash water recycling systems in buildings 320 and 351.**
- **Replace inefficient metal finishing lines in building 370 with modern energy and labor efficient systems.**
- **Optimize operation of the compressed air plant in building 349.**
- **Install new controls in the blast and paint booths and clean rooms in the production buildings 350 and 370.**
- **Modify existing carousel paint line in building 350 to include a powder coat application.**

Furnishings Program replacing Army administration furniture in Republic of Korea

By William S. Farrow
Public Affairs Office

At 82 U.S. Army facilities on installations across the South Korean peninsula, contractors are busy replacing more than 8,000 administrative desks, chairs and filing cabinets in one of the largest furniture projects ever taken on by Huntsville Center's Military Integration Division's Furnishings Program.

The project, valued at more than \$6.7 million, was also one of the highest dollar amount contracts executed by the Furnishings Program.

"Removing old furniture, cleaning rooms and installing new furniture in 82 buildings in 44 weeks is an 11 - month logistical masterpiece – the Berlin Airlift of furniture," said Alan Fearn, Huntsville Center Contracting Directorate's lead contracting specialist for the project.

Just as the Berlin Airlift was a mutual effort accomplished by Allied nations' air forces, supplying the Eighth Army with furniture required collaboration as well.

The contract award process was a joint effort between Huntsville Center and the Far East District, which first initiated the project by hiring an architectural firm to perform surveys at Eighth Army and FED facilities to assess what furniture is currently serviceable and what furniture needed replacing. A daunting task considering the assessment included more than 80 facilities at multiple installations located across the peninsula.

The FED Logistics Management Office is also the sponsoring activity for U.S.-Republic of Korea Status of Forces Agreement for all contracts. In that capacity, they provided required logistical support and processed the customs paperwork for container delivery for two of the three (furniture) contracts.

Project manager Patricia Mooneyham said once the completed survey results were submitted to the Center in 2013, the Furnishings Program received funds to execute the contract in February 2014 and was tasked with procuring what was initially estimated as \$8.2 million of furniture and executing the contracts by fiscal year end.

"What made this contract so staggering was that the average contract for us is typically \$500,000," Mooneyham said.

"This was an incredibly aggressive schedule that we overcame due to the excellent teamwork and the support



Photos courtesy Far East District

Contractors off-load new furniture at a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Far East District facility in January. The new furniture is part of a \$6.7 million administrative furniture replacement project for 82 U.S. Army facilities across the South Korean peninsula.

of the lead interior designers, Jennifer McDowell and Amy Webb, as well as Alan Fearn in contracting," she said.

Mooneyham said the contracts' statements of work stated vendors had to comply with General Services Administration industry standard specifications and Huntsville Center performance specifications that incorporated the durability Soldiers require.

Mooneyham said quotes, complying with project specifications, were then received from vendors.

"Huntsville Center ensures only comparable furniture in terms of quality of construction and materials, end user requirements and overall functionality (critical for facility standard design application) is considered as the best solution for outfitting the facility," Mooneyham said.

Due to the tremendous scope of the project, Fearn said carefully crafting the Eighth Army's request into multiple contracts streamlined the large project and enabled the customer to receive the greatest benefits.

"With a single contract to furnish 82 buildings, the contract could have taken a year and a half to complete and would have been too much, too long for the stakeholders," Fearn said.

According to Fearn, the project manager made a decision to divide the 82-building project into three large projects.

"While consolidation can provide significant value and efficiency, care is required," Fearn said.

"Because the duration of activities had never been performed by the contractors, there was risk – which could have translated to cost. Due to an excellent project management plan that was well-executed by the interior designers and the Center's Contracting Directorate, Huntsville returned \$1.4 million to the customer."

Introductory course provides students deeper understanding of Corps operations

By William S. Farrow
Public Affairs Office

More than 35 Soldiers and an Army civilian newly assigned to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers gathered at the USACE Learning Center Feb. 23-27 for a weeklong District Officer Introductory Course.

The course is designed to familiarize newly assigned personnel with military and civil works projects within USACE through topics such as project management business processes, civil works, military construction, contracting, legal areas and emergency management.

The goal of the program is to provide training and resources necessary for military personnel and Army civilians to successfully perform duties leading up to and including those of a district commander.

Many of the students have vast experience in combat engineering and support, but their careers have been with Engineer Regiment's direct reporting units or other Army units. The majority of the students don't have much experience with the Corps.

"Overall, the course teaches them the ropes about their roles and responsibilities within the divisions and districts they will serve," said Stacey English, ULC instructional systems specialist.

A lineup of seasoned professionals from the Pittsburgh and Mobile districts and the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville provided course instruction. Instructors used personal experience and discussion to enhance students' understanding of specific subject matter in selected areas of the course.

Huntsville Center Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Kendall Bergmann volunteered to champion the course and said the course provides students a broad introductory overview of what USACE is and what it does.

"The Soldiers gain a better understanding of our civil works, MILCON and contracting missions as well as project management, emergency management and USACE's support to overseas contingency operations," Bergmann said.

"We (USACE) gain Soldiers who can reinforce and enable our project delivery teams with their military perspective,



Photo by William S. Farrow

Huntsville Center Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Kendall Bergmann addresses students at the District Officer Introductory Course at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Learning Center. Bergmann volunteered to champion the course which provides training and resources necessary for military personnel and Army civilians to successfully perform duties with the Corps of Engineers.

decision making capabilities and leadership," he said.

Students are primarily company grade officers in occupational branch series 21 and noncommissioned officers from a variety of pertinent military occupation specialties who are newly assigned duties within USACE. The course is also available for civilian personnel GS-12 and above who are newly assigned to USACE.

Instructors during the week included Huntsville Center Commander Col. Robert Ruch and Huntsville employees Margaret Simmons (Office of Counsel); Marcus Adams and Adam Sundstum (Contracting Directorate) and Wade Doss (Installation Support and Programs Management Directorate). Also instructing was Steve Arendale (military construction), Mobile District, and John Peukert (civil works), Pittsburgh District.

Capt. Dustin Zawalich, a DOIC student assigned to the 88th Regional Support Command, Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, said as a special programs officer for the 88th RCS and a liaison officer for Huntsville Center, the instruction provided him with a greater understanding of the role USACE plays in projects impacting the 88th RCS and its subordinate units.

"Experience is in high demand now in the workplace and the use of the instructors' personal experiences enhanced the course," Zawalich said.

"We can relate their (instructors') experiences to our future projects."

Thirteen businesses awarded Utility Monitoring and Control Systems contracts

By Julia Bobick
Public Affairs Office

Huntsville Center awarded the last of 13 contractors to the fourth generation of its Utility Monitoring and Control Systems Multiple Award Task Order Contract in January. Representatives from the pool of contractors gathered for a post-award kickoff meeting Feb. 18 at the University of Alabama in Huntsville campus.

“We talk to them as a group about UMCS IV, and we walk them through the contract and program management, as well as our small business goals,” said Program Manager Steve Goolsby. Though the majority of the contractors have previously worked with Huntsville Center, Goolsby said it is important to go over performance expectations and share current issues across the various programs and projects under the UMCS MATOC umbrella. The Center’s Electronic Security Systems and the Army Central Metering Program also share the \$2.5 billion capacity MATOC, the second largest capacity MATOC at the Center.

During the five-year contract period through January 2020, the 13 companies are now able to compete for task orders to deliver UMCS; Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning Systems (to include chillers, boilers, air handling units and ductwork systems installation and/or integration); Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition systems; Fire Alarm Systems; life safety control systems; chemical / biological / radiological contaminant detection/ filtration, utilities (electric/gas/ water) metering and ESS services to Department of Defense and other federal agencies worldwide.

“Customers come to us from around the world with their work requirements and funding, and they hire



Photos Julia Bobick

Utility Monitoring and Control Systems Program Manager Steve Goolsby talks with contractors during the UMCS IV post-award kickoff Feb. 18 at the University of Alabama in Huntsville campus.

us as a reimbursable organization to manage projects for them that enhance their capability to achieve the federally mandated energy goals and objectives,” Goolsby said.

Huntsville Center is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Utility Monitoring and Control Systems Mandatory Center of Expertise to provide quality oversight and technical expertise in the design and installation of UMCS. The UMCS MCX is the backbone to a turnkey program offering comprehensive, professional, high-quality, reliable, cost-effective and cyber secure products and technical solutions for customers.

Huntsville Center followed a new staggered award process for the UMCS IV contract, according to Tonju Butler, the Contracting Directorate Preaward Branch chief. The first three companies, which all had no deficiencies, were

directly awarded contracts in August to give the UMCS program the option to use the contract vehicle to meet missions before the end of fiscal year 2014.

The previous MATOC’s capacity had been expended. The remaining contractors were awarded in January.

“We also awarded using a combined suite, announcing it as unrestricted but with a \$500 million small business set aside because we felt this was such a great opportunity for small businesses,” Butler said. Up to \$500 million of task orders for the \$2.5 billion capacity MATOC will be open only to small businesses.

Both large and small businesses can compete for task orders for the unrestricted pool, increasing the opportunity for small business, she said.

The following five small and eight large businesses were awarded contracts from August 2014 to January 2015.

Eaton

EPC Service*

Evergreen Fire Alarms*

Exp Federal

Honeywell Technology Solutions

Infotec Systems*

Johnson Controls

Schneider Electric Buildings Americas

Secure Mission Solutions

SEI Group*

Siemens Government Technologies

Spectrum Solutions*

Williams Electric Company

Goolsby said companies could be removed and/or additional companies added to the pool if needed through the on-ramp-off-ramp process, which is subject to the same proposal instructions and evaluation procedures as contained in the original solicitation.

This could occur once every 12 months during the contract period, according to Butler.

Mission Focus:

Planners have full-spectrum worldwide focus

By Julia Bobick
Public Affairs Office

Huntsville Center's newest planner brings an additional set of capabilities and a fresh perspective to the Planning and Programming team.

A certified planner with 20 years of city planning experience, Daniel Reed served as the planning director for the city of Daytona Beach, Florida, before embarking on a planning career with the military. In Naples, Italy, where he just came from, Reed worked as a NATO planner representing Navy infrastructure requirements. He has also worked as a planner for the State Department in Iraq, Nigeria and Djibouti, and then with the Marine Corps in Japan.

"Because of the unique nature of Huntsville Center – with a worldwide area of operations – we deal with planning in countries all over the world," said Wesley Bushnell, a military construction economist with seven years of experience on Huntsville Center's Planning and Programming team.

The standards are the standards when it comes to military construction, Reed said. Planners must interpret each site through the lens of the headquarters regulations – meeting sustainability, environmental stewardship and security goals – while trying to make the most efficient and effective use of the allotted space to meet the needs of the organization.

"Customers come to us because they have a requirement to get a mission done – whatever it might be," said Sally Parsons, program manager for the Planning and Programming Branch of the Installation Support and Programs Management Directorate Military Integration Division. "We help them develop the funding documents (DD Form 1391) that go to Congress so it can eventually be approved and funded as a project."

Primary customers include the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management, Army Reserve Installation Management Directorate, Installation Management Command, Army Sustainment Command, U.S. Army Network Enterprise Technology Command and the U.S. Army Reserve. This year for OACSIM alone, projects range from maintenance complexes and stockyards to central issue facilities and line haul ammunition supply storage.

The planning focus in many locations – both in the states and overseas where buildable land space is limited – has transitioned more toward walkability, compatible mixed use spaces and building up not out.

"The amount of space devoted to the automobile in the states is just crazy; everything is for the car here, nothing is for people," Reed said.



An architectural drawing of Hawaii's Schofield Barracks Town Center Area Development Plan proposed parking structure would match the historic decor of the nearby quads. The Town Center ADP project, which won an American Planning Association Award, was managed by Huntsville Center's Planning and Programming Branch.

Overseas everything is denser – more public transportation, more pedestrian and bike friendly urban environments. "You learn how to think about maximizing the available space," Reed said.

On the U.S. Marine Corps base where he worked in Japan, Reed said they designed for every road to include well-marked bike lanes and every building with covered bike structures in prominent locations for Marines and civilian employees.

Huntsville team members have a wealth of overseas planning and/or project management experience among them, and many have high-level security clearances that enable them to provide planning support in a broad range of environments.

Team capabilities include facility requirements analyses, economic analyses, whole installation and area development plans, planning charrettes, centralized military construction planning, installation planning standards and vision plans. Parsons added that Bushnell's experience performing economic analyses for military construction is another capability that sets Huntsville Center apart.

Three Center projects recently received awards from the American Planning Association: an area development plan for Guam, Saipan and American Samoa; an area development plan for Schofield Town Center in Hawaii; and the Logistics Readiness Center Project Definition and Validation Plan.

"We are trying to cover the full spectrum of possible needs and planning environments to respond to the individual needs of each organization, and we have to be able and prepared to fulfill planning needs anywhere in the world," Bushnell said.

Continuous process improvement increases center efficiency, customer satisfaction

By Julia Bobick
Public Affairs Office

Everyone has ideas about what is wrong, what could be done differently and how they might fix problems in their work areas. They just might not know how to go about getting it done. That's something Carolyn Harris wants to change.

"I want employees to know they have someone to come to and the tools available here in the Center to improve our programs and make our people and processes more efficient, which ultimately leads to greater customer satisfaction," said Harris, Huntsville Center's program improvement manager since June 2012.

"I don't know what's going on in every work area to know where people are experiencing problems," Harris said, adding that anyone can identify a process for improvement.

The Center's most recent project, suggested by Resource Management Director Audwin Davis, ultimately resulted in reducing its Proponent Sponsored Engineer Corps Training bill payment process from an average of 63 days down to six days. Already holding corporate and Marine Corps Lean Six Sigma black belt certification, Harris led the six-month project this past year to complete her Army certification.

Through several process mapping and brainstorming sessions and extensive data analysis, a team of about 10 employees from throughout the Center developed several ways to improve the process. The final agreed upon solution was then tested to ensure the process worked smoothly. The end process eliminated more than 20 non value-added steps and cut about 57 days from the payment cycle time – a 91 percent improvement.

Harris emphasized that employees don't have to have the time or desire

to take on a project in order to bring it to her attention. Not every process issue merits a Lean Six Sigma project.

"We have to change the culture. When people hear Lean Six Sigma, they often think of a long, drawn-out process that is a lot of work and can take a long time," Harris said.

"A lot of times when we delve into the process, we learn the hiccups are just a result of people not following the prescribed process – that's an easy fix."

The first step is identifying those process issues people are dealing with.

Lean Six Sigma is just one piece of continuous process improvement, which also includes leaning processes by removing waste (non value-added steps), identifying and removing bottlenecks (work piling up at a particular point in a process) and implementing quick fixes.

Lean Six Sigma is a structured problem-solving method to eliminate non value-added steps – or lean – a process through a team project that can take one to several months. Harris was careful to point out that not all non value-added steps can be removed from a process – some might be required by law or regulation – but there may be a way to increase efficiency within the step.

When someone identifies a project, Harris said she will do the background work to help identify quick solutions or determine if it's a viable Lean Six Sigma project for a team to tackle. The next step is mapping out the existing process



Photo by Julia Bobick

Carolyn Harris, Huntsville Center's program improvement manager, holds the star note from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Commanding General Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick congratulating her on her Lean Six Sigma black belt project success.

to identify each step, as well as any gaps, roadblocks or hurdles.

Huntsville Center has a handful of Lean Six Sigma certified process improvement practitioners, but has also recently lost a few to retirement and relocation. Harris mentored four green belts who earned certification in 2014, and three employees are registered for the next green belt course that begins in July. She said it's a continuous mentorship and training cycle to ensure the program remains viable and to maintain of culture of continuous improvement.

"One thing about continuous process improvement is that a year or two down the line, someone else could come up with an even better way to do a process."

Employees with improvement initiatives or questions about continuous process improvement or Lean Six Sigma can email Harris or call 256-895-1393.

Contracting offers 52 fun-filled weeks of the FAR

By Julia Bobick
Public Affairs Office

Making the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) fun, conversational and relatable – as well as giving people the tools to use it more effectively – are the primary goals of a new lunch-and-learn program at Huntsville Center.

A complex set of rules governing the federal government’s purchasing process, the FAR helps ensure uniformity, consistency, impartiality and fairness in acquisition procedures across all federal executive agencies. It’s thousands of complicated and intimidating pages. And it’s very dry reading, according to Colleen O’Keefe, Huntsville Center’s chief of contracting who implemented the weekly lunch-and-learn training.

“It’s almost impossible to just sit and read the FAR – you basically crack it open when you’re having an issue and trying to figure something out,” O’Keefe said, adding that instructors will come from throughout the Center to teach the different parts of the FAR and add their own experiences.

“We wanted the training to be more conversational and provide specific situations that impact us here in the center so we can all learn from them.”

While there are 53 parts of the FAR, O’Keefe said the yearlong training will cover a different part each Monday for “52 Weeks of the FAR,” and then start all over again next year. The inaugural session covering Part 1 of the FAR Jan. 5 injected humor wherever possible and slides even included a Dr. Seuss styled FAR rhyme: “You will use it here or there, You will use it everywhere, Yes even if you are in a war zone, Yes even if you are all alone ... Yes even if it’s fiscal year end, Yes even if the PM is your best friend ...”

O’Keefe admitted that it’s not easy to do fundamental contracting well; the federal government makes it very difficult. Finding and making the time



Photo by Julia Bobick

Jamaya “Rocky” Smith, a contract specialist for Huntsville Center’s Information Technology Services Branch, talks to employees during the Jan. 12 Federal Acquisition Regulation lunch and learn program about the importance of understanding and clarifying definitions of contracting words and terms to avoid confusion.

to sit back, open the FAR and think about the little things that are incredibly important within a contract can be a challenge.

“The OPTEMPO here in Huntsville Center is intense; we have a lot of turnover and we have a lot of people who get promoted rather quickly,” she said. “But we need to ensure we all have a solid foundation in our jobs.

“Potential for miscommunication is huge, because although the terms are defined, they may be defined differently in different parts and, on top of that, industry has different definitions than the federal government.”

In week two training, Jamaya “Rocky” Smith, a contract specialist for Huntsville Center’s Information Technology Services Branch, illustrated how easily words as simple as “day” can cause confusion. He shared the story of a mission critical project for which he

was expecting a proposal on a certain day – he was tracking the schedule in calendar days. The contractor, however, thought the schedule was in business days and therefore had three more days to complete the proposal. The term “day” was not specifically defined in the solicitation. While the FAR dictates the default treatment as calendar days when “day” is not specifically defined, Smith emphasized that spelling out any potentially unclear terms just helps avoid confusion and ensures everyone understands the contract requirements.

“This training is also a great way for non-contracting professionals to learn about how complicated the FAR is and understand, ‘Oh, I have to look at four different things in the FAR system plus the USACE acquisition instructions plus the local policy before I even figure out what the definition of a word is,’” O’Keefe said.

Contracting Corner: Making reverse auctioning a reality

By Lillian Fox and Markesha McCants
Center Contracting Directorate



A reverse auction is a type of auction where the roles of buyer and seller are reversed. The reality of reverse auctioning is prices decrease as sellers lower their proposed prices to become more competitive.

Reverse auctioning also reduces procurement lead times, increases savings to buyers, increases competition and exposure to small business vendors, and drives tremendous cost savings.

The Army has an established reverse auctioning tool available to all Army agencies through an internet based system. The concept is pretty easy: the government independently conducts market research to determine if reverse auctioning is the most appropriate strategy for meeting a requirement. If so, the contracting officer posts a solicitation for supplies or services as a buyer on the system and sets a target price based upon the government estimate.

The government then identifies any selection criteria and selects various seller segments and contracting vehicles such as full and open, small business, other socioeconomic groups, CHESSE vendors, GWACS, etc.

All interested sellers then have the ability to submit a quote or proposal. Sellers can competitively lower their bids as many times as they choose until the closing date and time is reached. This repetitive bidding ultimately drives the costs down for the buyer by reversing the auction. When the closing date and time has passed, the contracting officer is provided with the resultant documentation for evaluation and a fair and reasonableness determination.

The U.S. General Services Administration also offers a reverse auction platform to federal agencies for buying non-complex commodities and simple services through GSA Multiple Award Schedules and Blanket Purchase Agreements.

At ReverseAuctions.gsa.gov, buyers can solicit requirements while the sellers successively bid prices down until the auction time ends. The contracting officer can make award to the lowest bidder if it meets the solicitation's terms and conditions and is technically acceptable.

Reverse auctioning is ideal for simple commercial supplies and services that can be firm fixed priced. The top five most common product categories typically purchased using reverse auctioning procedures are information technology (equipment, software, supplies, etc.), medical and laboratory equipment, furniture and communications equipment. The top five most common service categories are lease or rental of equipment, maintenance and repair of equipment, IT services, housekeeping services and installation services.

Through the use of reverse auctioning, the Center has

the opportunity to realize many benefits. The method usually increases competition, reduces schedule, decreases workload, increases cost savings and assists with meeting small business goals. Under the Army reverse auctioning contract, FedBid offers a dedicated force of personnel who scan and contact marketplace sellers when an opportunity is posted. All solicitations posted to FedBid are also automatically transmitted to the official Government Point of Entry, FedBizOpps. These two combined ensure maximum exposure of the requirement and enhances the competitive environment. The products and services procured through the site are commercial items so the contracting officer can specify RFP/RFQ timeframes that are shorter than the typical 30 – day open period. On average, most solicitations are open four or five days. Once a solicitation has closed, the contract specialist and contracting officer receive a package which has all of the competitive data compiled and sorted so that it is easy to evaluate. This reduces the administrative time associated with organizing the data before making final determinations.

GSA's reverse auction platform is a self – service tool that offers similar benefits to buyers. In addition to the benefits such as increasing cost savings, assisting with meeting small business goals and reducing procurement lead time, the reverse auction platform provides buyers with spend data and interfaces with existing GSA systems such as eBuy and eLibrary. In fact, since the inception of the reverse auction platform; data show total savings of 25 percent and a small business utilization rate of 92 percent. Training on the platform is available and agency buyers needing assistance can contact the reverse auction help desk at reverseauctionshelp@gsa.gov or calling 855-372-1094. Reverse auctioning is a growing method for acquiring commercial items in the federal, state and local governments, and commercial and educational arenas. In FY14 the Center awarded 107 buys using reverse auctioning achieving \$1,427,377 in savings against the IGCE. Of those 107 buys, the Center awarded 82 percent of the awards to small businesses concerns. In the first quarter of FY15, the Center has awarded 23 buys achieving \$260,193.00 in savings against the IGCE. Of those 23 buys, the Center awarded 70 percent of the awards to small businesses concerns.

As the end of FY15 approaches, consider requirements that may be good candidates for reverse auctioning.

As you can see, there is potential to save the government dollars during these fiscally difficult times.

Assisting USACE, federal agencies with Energy Portfolio Management approach

By Julia Bobick
Public Affairs Office

Huntsville Center is executing a holistic energy portfolio management approach for helping Army organizations and other federal agencies achieve federal energy mandates, reduce energy consumption and enhance energy security.

Energy Division staff had the opportunity to explain their energy and sustainability efforts to Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy and Federal Environmental Executive Kate Brandt earlier this year during a tour of Stennis Lock in Mississippi on Mobile District's Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, the site of the Center's first-ever USACE civil works Energy Savings Performance Contract project.

Through the \$3 million ESPC, Mobile District is retrofitting and replacing lighting at 46 locations along the 234-mile Tenn-Tom Waterway, which will result in guaranteed savings of more than \$172,700 in the first year alone. The 143 lighting upgrades at Stennis Lock, 1 of 10 on the waterway, are nearly complete on the lock walls, inside the control building, on the adjacent spillway structure and in nearby recreation areas.

"At first glance, swapping some light bulbs may seem like a small, unremarkable project. But improved lighting is actually one of the most straightforward and commonsense ways to improve energy efficiency. And the benefits are far from small," Brandt said on the White House Council on Environmental Quality Blog following the Jan. 21 visit.

"In the federal government we're committed to doing our part to improve lighting efficiency and save taxpayer dollars."

Total savings during the 22-year ESPC contract with Siemens Government Technologies are estimated at \$5.2 million, and the district had no upfront costs.

"Third-party financing projects like this bring tremendous success, especially when a customer fully embraces and takes ownership of it," said Paul Robinson, who delivered the presentation on Huntsville Center's energy management programs and capabilities.

Mobile District's Tenn-Tom Waterway Operations Manager Rick Saucer, who provided an overview of the expansive waterway and led a tour of the lock operations, said that while the upgrades will provide a significant cost benefit from both the energy savings and reduced operations and maintenance, they have also significantly improved visibility in every location.

Several Stennis Lock operators shared their amazement



Photo Julia Bobick

From the top of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' dam at Stennis Lock on the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway in Mississippi, Hon. Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, asks lock operations manager Rickey Saucer about the lighting in the dam recreation area parking lot. Darcy and Kate Brandt, Federal Environmental Executive, White House Council of Environmental Quality, visited the Mobile District lock and dam Jan. 21 to learn about their energy and sustainability efforts with Huntsville Center.

at how much more of the dam and the lock channel they can now see at night under the new lights.

"Lighting is not as sexy as other energy conservation measures, but it makes a difference," said Rob Mackey, the ESPC program manager at Huntsville Center, explaining that rigorous measurement and verification processes are crucial to ESPC Program success moving forward.

Educating people about how ESPCs work is incredibly important, according to Col. Robert Ruch, commander of Huntsville Center, the Corps of Engineers' technical center of expertise for ESPC. While the energy conservation technology can be easily understood, he said the third-party financing process can be more of a challenge to explain.

ESPCs leverage industry expertise and private sector third-party financing to make comprehensive energy and water efficiency improvements or implement renewable energy capabilities at federal facilities.

The energy service contractor provides the operations and maintenance through the contract term (up to 25 years) in exchange for a portion of the generated savings.

"We provide the tools and that expertise to help organizations achieve their goals," Ruch said.

Center's Meekie recalls uncle, a Tuskegee Airman and decorated pilot

By Jo Anita Miley
Public Affairs Office

When Robert Meekie, a contract specialist at Huntsville Center's Contracting Directorate, thinks of the great contributions African-Americans have made in America's history, he doesn't have to look any further than his own relative.

Meekie's uncle is retired Lt. Col. James H. Harvey III, one of the original members of the 332nd Fighter Group, the world famous Tuskegee Airmen.

Harvey was drafted into the Army in 1943, where he said he was first introduced to prejudice and discrimination after boarding a train in Pennsylvania and being removed from the passenger car in Washington, District of Columbia and transferred to the last car where African-Americans had to ride. This experience helped prepare Harvey for the struggles he would face on military installations.

Harvey was initially assigned to the Army Air Corps but always dreamed of flying. After taking cadet training exam at Bolling Field outside of Washington, D.C., he was accepted for flight training at Moton Field, Alabama. He graduated from Flying School at Tuskegee Army Air Field as a second lieutenant in 1944. Following graduation, he was assigned to the 99th Fighter Squadron, Godman Field, Kentucky, where he flew the Republic P-47 Thunderbolt.

"I like talking about the things we went through and how we overcame the obstacles. We (Tuskegee Airmen) had a hard time as pilots. We had to do everything better than our white counterparts and often were not recognized for our efforts," Harvey said.

In 1949, Harvey moved closer to his goal when sufficient traction had been made political to officially end



Photo courtesy U.S. Air Force

Harvey (second from left) with other Tuskegee Airmen who won the Air Force's inaugural weapons meet in 1949.



Robert Meekie, nephew of James H. Harvey III, is a retired Soldier who built on his uncle's determination for inspiration during his deployment to Iraq in 2004.

segregation in the United States military with the signing of Executive Order 9981.

Meekie said Harvey instilled in him that regardless of your economic status in life if you can believe it, you can achieve it. The only means of survival would depend upon determination.

"Dealing with segregation wasn't easy. They gave us inferior living conditions and everything we did had to be better," Harvey said. "It only made me stronger. I refused to believe

I couldn't do something because of the color of my skin. There was nothing for me to address because they had the problem, I didn't."

Meekie said when he thinks of Harvey and the thousands of African-American men who entered the Army Air Corps at that time, he is extremely humbled.

"We not only battled enemies during wartime, but also fought against racism and bigotry," Harvey said. "One of my career highlights was finally receiving a medal for a 'top gun' competition I'd earned 46 years earlier. I was one of the pilots who won the military's first top gun fighter competition in May 1949. However, we were not fully recognized for our accomplishment until 1995, when the U.S. Air Force archives were updated officially documenting our victory," he said.

Meekie served in the Army for 20 years, retiring as a staff sergeant in 2007. He began work with the Corps of Engineers in 2012 at Jacksonville District and has worked at Huntsville Center since 2014.

Meekie said he remembered and built on Harvey's determination for inspiration during his deployment to Iraq in 2004.

"He was the military's first black jet fighter pilot to fly in Korean airspace. In 1950, he led an element of four F-80s in close support to a bomber mission under adverse weather to attack enemy troops three miles north of Yongsan, Korea. The things that happened to me in Iraq are nothing compared to his experiences," Meekie said.

Meekie said Harvey is his hero.

"Uncle James is truly an ambitious man with purpose," Meekie said. "He turned racism and bigotry into opportunity and never gave up on his dream. I'm proud to have followed in his footsteps."



Photo by Jo Anita Miley

Huntsville Center employees sing the black national anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” during the 2015 Black History Month celebration.

Center’s event encourages rebuilding diversity dream

By Jo Anita Miley
Public Affairs Office

Huntsville Center celebrated Black History Month March 3 with a program featuring songs and an inspirational message from a local pastor.

The program was sponsored by the Commander’s Special Emphasis Program Committee and organized by Angela Morton and Stephanie Caldwell, both from the Center’s EEO Office; Jeffrey Davis, Executive Office; Arthur Martin III, Installation Support and Programs Management Directorate; and Russell Torbett, ACE-Information Technology Office.

Key note speaker Rev. Patrick Clayborn, pastor at St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church, spoke about the dilemma of African-Americans throughout history, the impact Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had on people of all cultures and his personal struggle with racism and discrimination in America.

He also stressed the message that everyone can build on King’s dream of diversity and inclusion using the prophet Nehemiah from the Bible as an example.

“Although the consequence of slavery became associated with the color black down through the ages because we were a people who were considered last, least and lost; adversity isn’t also associated with the color black, everyone has to deal with difficulty at some point in their life,” Clayborn said.

“Nehemiah had to build a dream in spite of being among persons who didn’t care if the walls of Jerusalem were up or down. The world is filled with people who won’t be able to see your dream – all the doubters and naysayers. Selma brought people together to rebuild – not folks who don’t care if the work gets done and want to complain. If you lift your voice, others will join you. In spite of the obstacles, we must transform our minuses into pluses. Let’s develop ourselves and unite with others around a common goal to rebuild the

dream. Build right where you are. Don’t stay where you start, make sure you grow. Finally, push and stretch and reach and pull till change occurs.”

Before Clayborn spoke, Reneda Kelly, of the Installation Support and Programs Management Directorate, sang the national anthem and local vocalist Carla McAlpine-Franklin sang “God Bless America,” and “For Every Mountain.”

Morton, chief of the Center’s Equal Employment Opportunity Office, along with the audience sang the black national anthem “Lift Every Voice and Sing” at program’s end.

Huntsville Center Commander Col. Robert Ruch opened the program with thoughts about diversity and concluded the program with an invitation to the audience to view the Center’s African-American/Black History Month display. The display won first place in the Team Redstone Display contest.

“These programs are very important for our organization,” Ruch said.

“There is a lot of diversity in the Department of Defense right now, especially with our having the first African-American president, our commander in chief, President Barack Obama in office. We have diversity in Huntsville Center because several African-Americans hold key positions at the Center and work on very important Corps programs and projects worldwide. We have to keep our special emphasis program going in order to continue to raise awareness and promote diversity within the workplace at every level.”

Huntsville Center employees said they enjoyed the program.

“I think these programs are very important for an organization because it encourages multiculturalism,” said Tom Meier, chief of Huntsville Center’s Management Review Office. “Today’s event gave me an opportunity to take in another culture.”

Center employees share love of reading

By Jo Anita Miley
Public Affairs Office

Several Huntsville Center employees volunteered to participate in Team Redstone's local "Read Across America" reading initiative March 2.

Read Across America is an initiative on reading created by the National Education Association and National Read Across America Day is an observance in the U.S. held on the school day closest to March 2, the birthday of Dr. Seuss.

Huntsville Center Commander Col. Robert Ruch joined 13 Center employees to read books to students at Rolling Hills Elementary School in Huntsville, Alabama.

Each reader was guided to a class of children waiting to hear employees read books like "The Foot Book," "Green Eggs and Ham," "The Cat in the Hat" or "Hop on Pop."

Once a book was read, students were encouraged to ask the employee about their jobs at Huntsville Center and the impact reading had on their career.

The outreach team read to more than 400 prekindergarten through sixth – grade students in 25 classrooms during the event.

The Huntsville Center workforce also organized a book drive in conjunction with the reading event. Their goal was to collect 100 new and gently used books to give to the students.

The team surpassed this goal by collecting 450 books, enough to provide one book to the entire student body and donate the 24 remaining books to the school's library. Ruch and Center volunteers distributed the books to students during the reading event.

Center volunteer Nelda Bradford said she enjoyed participating. She felt like she was giving back to the students.

"I am thankful for the opportunity



Photo by Jo Anita Miley

Huntsville Center Commander Col. Robert Ruch joined Huntsville Center employees to read and donate books to students at Rolling Hills Elementary School March 2 as part of National Read Across America Day.

to read for the children at Rolling Hills School. My husband and I both read in the classrooms and donated two books toward the book drive. It was tons of fun," Bradford said.

Tamika McGill, curriculum specialist at Rolling Hills said she was pleased Huntsville Center volunteers read to the entire student body at her school.

She invited employees to come back any time to read to students.

McGill said the school is always in need of volunteers for reading initiatives and other education outreach opportunities.

"We are pleased by the number of volunteers at the school and the events success. The faculty and staff of Rolling

Hills Elementary School would like to thank you for all you have done to make Read Across America Day a success. We really appreciate all of the volunteers that came to read to our students. They were great and the students enjoyed every minute of it. They loved the silly hats (worn by some volunteers) too," McGill said.

"We are so grateful to have such great friends. The students were so excited to receive the books. Many of them brought them back to school the next day to read during their free time," she said.

"Our faculty and students have benefited from the visit. You'll be hearing from us again."

Ethics Corner: Avoiding the appearance of impartiality

**By Clay Weisenberger
Office of Counsel**

As a government executive branch employee, you have additional responsibilities that your private sector counterparts do not have.

For instance, as a government employee, you are charged with upholding the public's trust. Being impartial in your duties is one way in which you uphold that trust.

But it doesn't end there. You must also avoid any appearance of impartiality.

Specifically, the Joint Ethics Regulation (JER), at 5 CFR section 2635.502 states that "Executive branch employees are required to consider whether their impartiality may be questioned whenever their involvement in a particular matter involving specific parties might affect certain personal and business relationships."

Examples of particular matters involving specific parties include all phases of the contracting process, as well as grants, permits, licenses

or other agreements where individual, company or other prohibited source is involved. General rule-making and policy decisions, on the other hand, are not considered a "particular matter" involving specific parties.

If the matter could affect the personal or financial interests of a member of a government employee's household, or if a person with whom the employee has a "covered relationship" is a party or represents a party on a particular matter, the employee must consider whether a reasonable person would question his impartiality in that matter.

The JER considers this to be "creating the appearance of impropriety," which is prohibited unless approved by the agency. These matters should always be disclosed to your supervisor and the Office of Counsel in advance.

The test is not whether you are, in fact, acting impartially, but rather whether a reasonable person would question your motives.

The impartiality rules are very detailed and go into at least five different

covered relationships, but the bottom line is that you are charged with upholding the public's trust.

To maintain that trust, you should not be involved in a project that affects the personal or financial interests of you or your immediate family.

Another practice for avoiding any appearance of impropriety is to maintain transparency in everything you do.

The best way to accomplish this is by open communication, good record-keeping, seeking the input of others when needed, and getting a consensus on controversial issues.

Finally, as a rule of thumb, always approach a decision by asking yourself three questions. Is it legal? Is it ethical (i.e., the right thing to do)? How would it look if the media ran a story depicting my decision/action in the worst light possible?

As always, if you have an ethics question, call me at (256) 895-1140 or email clay.weisenberger@usace.army.mil before you act.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
ENGINEERING AND SUPPORT CENTER, HUNTSVILLE
P.O. BOX 1600
HUNTSVILLE, AL 35807-4301**

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED