



U.S. ARMY ENGINEERING AND SUPPORT CENTER, HUNTSVILLE



The Bulletin

March 2022

JOB SECURITY

Huntsville Center contract providing electronic security systems for all National Guard facilities

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The U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, engineers adaptive, specialized solutions across a broad spectrum of global enterprise covering five main lines of effort: Energy, Operational Technology, Environmental, Medical, and Base Operations and Facilities



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**OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
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OF ENGINEERS,
U.S. ARMY ENGINEERING
AND SUPPORT CENTER,
HUNTSVILLE**



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Commander's Thoughts

“ Even though we will see an increase in the numbers of employees in the Center’s facilities, I still encourage full vaccination as a sure way to safely meet our readiness requirements. ”



Col. Sebastien Joly

Team,
Since the post-holiday surge, we’ve recently experienced a significant regional case reduction of COVID-19. As a result, Huntsville Center is transitioning from the current encouraged maximum telework posture back to a 50 percent capacity posture. I recognize we are all looking forward to returning to “normal.”

However, we are not out of the woods yet and I am still cautious concerning the safety of the workforce. Even though we will see an increase in the numbers of employees in the Center’s facilities, I still encourage full vaccination as a sure way to safely meet our readiness requirements. Immunization with FDA approved vaccines is consistent with Department of Defense requirement to use preventive measures to address potential health threats and exposures.

Women’s History Month is celebrated during the month of March and this year, the national 2022 Women’s History Month theme is “Women Providing Healing, Promoting Hope.” This theme recognizes the thousands of ways women of all cultures have provided both healing and hope throughout history. Throughout

history, women have made our Army stronger. Female Soldiers, Army Civilians, Veterans and family members are critical members of our Army team. April is Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month and this month,

Victor Roberts, Huntsville Center Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, is conducting mandatory Sexual Harassment Assault Response and Prevention training sessions to ensure you are all familiar with SHARP program and reinforce the role and responsibility of every member of the Army Team to prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment. When it comes to harmful behaviors such as sexual harassment, sexual assault and associated retaliation, the only person responsible for committing the act is the perpetrator, but all members of the team are responsible for each other’s safety and wellbeing.

Each one of us receives numerous requests to complete surveys each year and they can be tedious to complete.

That said - your input on these surveys is very important to me and is the most important method I have for shaping our workplace. There is simply no way that I can replace the valuable input that you provide through these

surveys. For example, Center staff is currently creating an action plan to address issues raised in the FEVS and DEOMI surveys. We’ll do the same with the recent Army Readiness Assessment Program survey. This survey is important because it provides me with valuable feedback regarding our organization’s safety climate. Your candid feedback is critical to developing our Safety Management Action Plan and how we invest our resources.

Early in February the Center’s Contracting Team held a virtual offsite with various senior contracting leaders to develop our contracting workforce. Topics included discussion with SCO and Alt SCO on what the SCO is looking for in senior Leaders, metrics to monitor and shape performance, link between staffing and budget, building and maintaining relationships, strategically partnering with other functionals, assessing our current readiness, and identifying and resolving underperformers and underutilized performers. This investment in people is sure to strengthen capability, confidence, and commitment to the organization.

Thank you for all you do for your Nation and Essays!

Job Security: Center providing ESS support for National Guard Bureau facilities

By Kristen Bergeson
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

After two decades of witnessing the outstanding support provided by the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, the National Guard Bureau has chosen the Center for its Electronic Security Systems needs.

What started out as a few small task orders more than 20 years ago has ballooned into a programmatic effort awarding about \$10 million in contracts each year, said Leigh Ann Toth, project manager for Huntsville Center's Electronic Security Systems program.

"We started kind of small with some projects in California, but their needs and their reliance on us has expanded tremendously since then," said Toth, who has worked on the National Guard Bureau projects from the beginning.

The ESS Program provides cradle-to-grave support for the design, procurement, installation, testing and maintenance of ESS for U.S. government agencies worldwide. For the National Guard, ESS mostly covers intrusion detection systems used to protect their primary assets, including arms, munitions and explosives.

The Center's ESS program's success comes down to speed, efficiency and relationships, said Daryl Britton, project engineer.

"We've worked with the National Guard Bureau for many years to help them select the equipment they would be using for the installation, establishing their policies and procedures, creating drawings specific to their requirements, all of it," said Britton.

"But what's helped the most is the contract vehicles we have established that enable us to turn around task orders much more quickly compared to what they would get from



File Photo

other agencies."

The ESS team uses multiple types of contracts to competitively acquire products and services using a streamlined acquisition process.

The primary contract vehicle currently being used is the ESS VI Multiple Award Task Order Contract (MATOC), which has a contract capacity of \$450 million.

This MATOC includes multiple small and large business contractors experienced in designing, installing and maintaining ESS.

The ESS VI MATOC is ideal for the level of support required by the National Guard Bureau. Federal regulations require all ESS to be updated every ten years, so the program's work in support of facilities in all 50 states is ongoing and requires numerous task orders each year.

"We're continuously updating systems," said Toth. "Our biggest year was in 2017 when we did roughly \$50 million to upgrade all the small, stand-

alone facilities throughout the U.S. That was about 2,000 sites."

To successfully support the National Guard, Huntsville Center has also established a programmatic team of contractors dedicated solely to understanding the specific needs of the program's largest customer.

"A lot of the people involved with the team are retired National Guard people who work well with the states because of their background and are able to help us oversee the projects on site," said Britton.

"They also teach certification classes to our contractors, so they can make sure they have a good understanding of the equipment that is being installed."

For more information about the Center's Electronic Security Systems program, visit <https://www.hnc.usace.army.mil/Media/Fact-Sheets/Fact-Sheet-Article-View/Article/482087/electronic-technology-division-electronic-security-systems/>.



File Photo

Huntsville Center Medical Division partnered with the U.S. Army Health Facilities Planning Agency and Fort Worth District with the 1.1 million square foot William Beaumont Army Medical Center replacement hospital at Fort Bliss, Texas.

Medical Division awards fourth generation Architectural-Engineering services contract

By William S. Farrow
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

Huntsville Center awarded the \$200 million multiple award indefinite delivery contract Jan. 19 to provide architect-engineer services in support of the Medical Division Architectural-Engineering program and its customers.

An IDC is an acquisition vehicle awarded to one or more vendors to facilitate the delivery of supply and service orders.

This fourth-generation award supports the Defense Health Agency and other non-DoD customers by providing full-service specialized medical facility architecture, engineering, and planning services to support the medical Sustainment, Restoration, and Modernization program.

The scope of services includes design and engineering for hospitals, clinics, medical administration buildings, health facilities, warehouses, and wellness centers.

The contracts will support locations throughout the contiguous United States, the District of Columbia, Alaska, Hawaii, U.S. Territories, the Republic of Korea, Japan, Italy, and Germany. The Center's Medical Division provides

outfitting and transition, repair and renewal and operations and maintenance engineering services to Department of Defense medical facilities around the world.

This fourth-generation award supports the Defense Health Agency, its subordinate medical services (U.S. Army Medical Command, U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine, and the Air Force Medical Support Agency), and other non-Department of Defense customers by providing full-service specialized medical facility architecture, engineering, and planning services to support the medical Sustainment, Restoration, and Modernization program.

The scope of services includes design and engineering for hospitals, clinics, medical administration buildings, health facilities, warehouses, and wellness centers.

The ordering period totals seven years, from 2022-29 and the contract capacity is shared among five small businesses.

The awarded firms are: Global Engineering Solutions; GoldenWolf-EwingCole; Health Facility Solutions Company; Shadpour Consulting Engineers, Inc.; Sherlock, Smith, & Adams, Inc.

Harris teaches virtual Green Belt course

By William S. Farrow
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

Huntsville Center's Lean Six Sigma Black Belt is teaching a three week-long blended learning Virtual LSS Green Belt Training course to more than 30 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' employees to hone their basic problem-solving techniques.

Carolyn Harris, Program Improvement Specialist with Huntsville Center's Business Practices Division, is teaching the course with a goal of improving projects and processes vital



Carolyn Harris

to USACE missions. Harris is one of a small fraternity of Lean Six Sigma senior practitioners.

In 2019, she was the 163rd member to be awarded Master Black Belt (MBB) in the Army and currently one of six USACE MBBs since the Army Lean Sigma deployment in 2005. Harris said LSS Green Belts are the tip of the spear in process improvement and are trained in basic problem-solving techniques.

Lean Green Belt training covers the fundamental principles, practices and tools of Lean methods that underlay modern organizational productivity approaches applied in today's Army across all Commands, Harris said.

The course includes lectures, virtual learning exercises, video clips and reference material. A major portion of the course, Harris said, is devoted to understanding and applying the Lean approach to process improvement through a Rapid Improvement Event.

"The Green Belt course is an introductory course to the Army Lean Business Process Improvement (BPI)



instructional program focusing on a Lean approach to process improvement with simple tools and concepts geared towards reducing the time it takes to complete a process."

Harris said the course provides a basis for advancement into the next, more challenging level: Army LSS Black Belt that teaches students how to Identify, analyze and improve process productivity problems utilizing the A3 Project Management discipline.

The Black Belt course develops Army Soldiers and Civilians who can demonstrate their knowledge of Lean (value add and waste reduction) focused tools and processes solving basic process challenges associated with waste, she said.

"The class provides an intensive approach focused on achieving quick wins through the application of LEAN tools and techniques during rapid improvement events.

Additionally, students will be exposed to the Plan-Do-Check-Act

framework and A3 problem solving methodology to assist practitioners in "leaning-out" (identifying and mitigating waste as defined by LEAN) Army processes, increasing Army capabilities, and reducing associated Army costs.

Carlos Reis, Value Engineering Program Manager with Huntsville Center's Business Practices Division is one of the students taking the virtual course.

He said the course is improving his knowledge of quality he hopes to apply toward a into a logistics project (Welcome 2It Process) and he already has a team formed and the project approved by leadership.

"What I take from this course can be applied to any process improvement project my directorate will be interested me running," Reis said.

To learn more about the Army's Lean Six Sigma program, contact Harris at (256) 895-1393



Sargent selected for Reserve command

By William S. Farrow
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

A citizen Soldier working in Huntsville Center's Engineering Directorate was recently selected to take command of the Army Reserve's 38th Regional Support Group in Cross Lanes, W.V. this summer.

Wesley Sargent, Huntsville Center Architectural and Engineering Contracts Coordinator, learned of his command selection in January. His command transition will happen this summer and he is set for a two-year tenure with the unit.

"I am extremely excited and honored to be able to serve at this level," Sargent said.

"After previously holding a Battalion Command under the 310th Sustainment Command, stepping into this Brigade-level position means I will be returning to that great organization as well."

Sargent has served for more than 35 years with 24 years as a commissioned officer. Sargent has also been serving his country for more than a decade as a Federal Civilian employee.

He's been employed with the federal government for 10 years and working at Huntsville Center since June.



Col. Wesley Sargent



Photo by William S. Farrow

Recognition for ChEM-RU

Wes Johnson (left), Ordnance and Explosives Directorate Acquisition Program Manager, Amanda Sticker, OE Technical Lead, Melanie Braddock, attorney, and Gabriele Jarrell, contract specialist, were recognized by Albert "Chip" Marin III, Huntsville Center Programs and Business Director, March 10 for their support of the Ordnance and Explosives Directorate's primary contract vehicle, the \$1.1 billion Chemical Environmental and Munitions Response-Unrestricted Multiple Award Task Order Contract (ChEM-RU MATOC). The ChEM-RU MATOC supports the two Ordnance and Explosive Directorate's Design Centers for the next decade. The Design Centers have a mission to protect the lives and safety of citizens and Soldiers by locating, removing, and disposing of conventional and chemical munitions on past and current military installations. Latosha McCoy, contracting officer, was not available for the photo.

Safety Office provides training, equipment for medical emergencies

By Kristen Bergeson
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

Nobody expects a medical emergency. Yet emergencies can strike anyone, anytime, anywhere—even in the workplace. Huntsville Center's Safety Office is actively taking steps to decrease the risk of an unfavorable outcome for medical emergencies occurring at the Center by ensuring employees have access to the correct equipment and training, establishing emergency protocols, and training first aid attendants to serve in all facilities.

First Aid Training

Huntsville Center now has five certified First Aid/CPR instructors who are providing this vital training quarterly to employees who volunteer to serve as attendants, said Safety Manager Kellie Williams. The Center currently has 31 trained first attendants.

"No matter how safe and secure our

workplace is, injuries and or medical emergencies happen," said Williams. "First aid attendants are trained individuals that can take the best possible course of action in the event of an emergency."

First-aid training teaches employees skills that can save lives not only in the office but anywhere a medical emergency occurs, she added. "If something happens at home or in the public, trained individuals are better equipped to take control of the situation and render aid," Williams said. The training is open to all employees, and the schedules are communicated via email.

Lifesaving Equipment

Huntsville Center's Safety Office has also placed five automated external defibrillators throughout the main building at Quality Circle and another in an ancillary facility. These lifesaving devices deliver an electric shock through the chest to the heart that can

potentially stop an irregular heartbeat and allow a normal rhythm to resume following sudden cardiac arrest. Should an employee suffer a cardiac event in the workplace, access to an AED could mean the difference between life and death.

Returning to the Office

The Safety Office encourages employees returning to the office to check around their work stations to locate the closest first aid attendant and AED in case of an emergency. A complete list of first aid attendants is available on the [Safety Office's SharePoint page](#). Click on the "Emergency Plans" tab on the left side of the page and select "First Aid Attendants."

If an emergency occurs and a first aid attendant cannot be located, employees should call the guard station at 5-1180 and have them make an announcement over the public address system.

Spotlight on April Rafael-Adams, Huntsville Center first aid attendant

“My role as a first aid attendant is to make sure the scene is safe, provide aid if required, and notify the proper officials (911) of the location, what has happened, and the number of people injured. I volunteered the first time, more than 15 years ago, because another employee, Pam McDougal, told me how it felt to help someone. That conversation made me more confident in volunteering and taking the first aid training class. I later had the opportunity to find out for myself by being able to use the skills without even thinking about it, and since then, I've been able to help several people. I'm so grateful for the training.”





Tornado season is upon us



File photo

Debris lines a Harvest , Ala., street awaiting removal in 2011 after more than 100 tornadoes cut a swath across Alabama.

**Article courtesy
Huntsville Center Safety Office**

Tornadoes are one of nature's most violent storms capable of tremendous destruction with wind speeds of 250 mph or more. Damage paths can be more than one mile wide and 50 miles long. Tornadoes come in all shapes and sizes and can occur anywhere in the U.S. at any time of the year. In the southeastern states, peak tornado season is March through May. Remember, tornadoes occasionally develop in areas in which a severe thunderstorm watch or warning is in effect. Remain alert to signs of an approaching tornado and seek shelter if

threatening conditions exist.

The average tornado moves from southwest to northeast, but tornadoes have been known to move in any direction. Find out what you can do before severe weather strikes. Preparation is key to staying safe and minimizing impacts.

Be Weather-Ready: Check the forecast regularly to see if you're at risk for severe weather. Listen to local news or a weather radio to stay informed about severe thunderstorm watches and warnings.

Create a Communications Plan:

Have a family plan that includes an emergency meeting place and related information. Pick a safe room in your

home such as a basement, storm cellar or an interior room on the lowest floor with no windows.

Practice Your Plan: Conduct a family severe thunderstorm drill regularly so everyone knows what to do if a damaging wind or large hail is approaching. Make sure all members of your family know to go there when severe thunderstorm warnings are issued. Don't forget pets if time allows.

Prepare Your Home: Keep trees and branches trimmed near your house. If you have time before severe weather hits, secure loose objects, close windows and doors, and move any valuable objects inside or under a sturdy structure.

Warning

A thunderstorm capable of producing a **tornado is imminent.**

Take shelter now!

Go to a **basement or interior room.**

Stay informed of forecast updates.

Take action.

Watch

Conditions are favorable for the development of thunderstorms capable of producing tornadoes.

Stay informed in case a warning is issued, and **know where to take shelter.**

Be prepared.

Recruiting for the future



Photo by William S. Farrow

February was a busy month for several Huntsville Center representatives who visited various university campuses to recruit future employees. Above, Samuel Curry, contracting specialist, volunteered to speak to potential employees Feb. 9 at the Alabama A&M University Spring 2022 Career Fair and below, John Nebelsick, Environmental and Munitions Center of Expertise director, volunteered to encourage University of Nebraska - Lincoln students to consider career with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during the university's Spring 2022 Career Fair Feb. 15-16. Huntsville Center representatives also manned recruiting booths at the University of Alabama-Huntsville career fair Feb. 2 and Auburn University's career fair Feb. 16.



Courtesy photo



Photo by Chris Putman

The University of Alabama in Huntsville held their inaugural College of Engineering Student Showcase during Engineer Week on the evening of February 22. Members of the Engineering Directorate, including Jon Nevils, above, attended the event to see the presented projects and talk to students and professors from the University.



Photo by Kristen Bergeson

The task at hand

A kindergarten student at Challenger Elementary School's STEM Night March 8 uses a metal detector to identify dummy munition rounds at the Huntsville Center booth manned by Benton Williams, geophysicist, and Todd DuVernay, Civil Structures chief. The school's STEM Night allowed students to participate in various interactive science activities focusing on science, technology, engineering and math.

Property data visualization tool in development

From staff reports Huntsville Center Public Affairs

A Business Data Analyst with Huntsville Center's Business Practices Division is in the process of developing a data visualization tool to aid in property management.

Mary Hinson is creating a tool that pulls from the source record of the Automated Personal Property Management System and populates the visual "cards" of the dashboard made from PowerBI.

By pulling from the source record, no extra manual data entry is required to view one's hand receipt account.

However, hand receipt holders will still need to maintain their property within the APPMS system if they wish for up-to-date information to display in the tool.

Some of the benefits of the Property2IT Dashboard will include no requirements to submit an Access Request Management System Request in order to view one's Hand Receipt Account which is required for the APPMS System.

According to Hinson, the tool is intuitive and easy to use.

"A hand receipt holder alternate can simply go to the dashboard, search by the HRH name, account number or even a specific bar tag number and

the entire property list will populate as opposed to going through multiple windows and selections to access the active property account."

During alpha testing, Hinson said when users found an overage of property, they were able to search the bar tag number within the tool and pull up the correct Hand Receipt Holder and return it, without the need of sending out a Center-wide e-mail.

"The goal of the Property2IT tool is to provide easy access and better visualization of user's hand receipt accounts," Hinson said.

For questions or interests about the Property2IT tool, call (256) 895-7368.

Half century of excellence

OED expert retiring after 50+ years as civilian, soldier

By Kristen Bergeson
Huntsville Center Public Affairs

After more than 50 years of working with explosive ordnance as a soldier and civilian, Wilson Walters isn't about to slip into a lazy retirement.

Walters, a safety and occupational specialist and technical manager for recovered chemical warfare materials for Huntsville Center is saying goodbye this month to the program he was instrumental in creating when he began his civilian career in 1992.

An Army retiree, Walters came to Huntsville Center's Ordnance and Explosives Directorate just months prior to the Center's initial work in disposing recovered chemical warfare materiel. It's this early work—initiated by a high-profile project in an upscale Washington, D.C. neighborhood—that he's most proud of, said Walters.

Before D.C.'s Spring Valley neighborhood became home to posh homes with expansive yards, valued at approximately \$5 million each, it was a remote testing and disposal site for chemical weapons, including mustard gas, during World War I. It wasn't until years after the homes were built that residents began finding remnants of these deadly weapons, and the Corps of Engineers was called in to start the clean-up process.

This was the first clean-up of its kind, said Walters, but it would be the first of many.

"Our team of only four people was starting from scratch, building new regulations and guidance specifically for chemicals," Walters said.

"This was a significant moment in my career because I was able to work with so many important people—ambassadors, senators, the Deputy Assistant of the Army, and so on—and



Photo by Kristen Bergeson

Wilson Walters, an Army retiree who has served as a safety and occupational specialist and technical manager for recovered chemical warfare materials at Huntsville Center since 1992, will retire March 31.

it was significant for the nation because of its far-reaching effects."

Prior to the Spring Valley clean-up, the removal of chemical weapons was against Department of Defense regulations for Explosive Ordnance Disposal units, both civilian and military, he said.

"Because of Spring Valley, other sites started saying, 'Hey, we have the same problem,' and the DoD started paying attention," said Walters. "Spring Valley was the institutional beginning of what got us the funding and authorization to handle these issues at sites around the world."

Since his work on the Spring Valley

project, which wrapped in 2021, Walters's team at Huntsville Center has nearly quadrupled in size and is now working three full-time projects, including the munitions site removal on Redstone Arsenal. Huntsville Center is now the "go-to guys for chemicals" for all U.S. Army Corps of Engineers districts, Walters said.

"We work with chemicals every day, so we know how things can change quickly, and we know what has to be done to keep everyone safe," he said.

"Plus, some of this stuff has been in ground since World War I, and it's

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Courtesy photo

Soldiers train at the American University Experiment Station during World War I. The American University Experiment Station was closed after World War I and its historic boundaries are included within the Spring Valley Formerly Used Defense Site where the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers carried out cleanup efforts to remove potential hazards stemming from past military activity. Wilson Walters, a Huntsville Center employee who was instrumental in the beginning stages of the Spring Valley project, will retire at the end of this month.

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leaking, so we're always investigating new ways to be as environmentally safe as possible."

Walters said he's "extremely proud" to be able to say that not a single Center employee or contractor has had a chemical injury since the beginning of the program.

The dangerous nature of the job was not new to Walters when he accepted his first civilian job at Huntsville Center. He had previously served 28 years as an EOD soldier in the Army, from which he retired as sergeant major of the EOD division at Redstone Arsenal in May 1991.

Despite seeming to be perfectly cut out for a career in EOD, he actually stumbled upon it because he happened to have taken a typing class in high school, he said.

"I was in a replacement unit at Fort

Stewart, Ga., and a sergeant came in asking who could type," said Walters.

"I raised my hand and, before you knew it, I was working as a clerk for EOD."

He eventually decided to take advantage of the hazardous pay incentive to become an EOD technician, almost doubling his salary at the time. However, the pay was not what caused him to stick with a profession that many abandon after the first few years, he said.

"I always liked what I did because it was something useful," he said. "The Army is like a firefighter in peacetime. You don't need it until there's a war. But EOD is always in demand, even in peacetime--taking care of ranges or stuff they'd find on post, supporting presidential campaigns, working with Secret Service to protect VIPs, stuff like that."

His career provided him numerous

opportunities for travel and celebrity assignments including accompanying the Nixon family on vacation in Key Biscayne, Fla., and protecting presidential candidates Nelson Rockefeller and George Wallace during their campaigns.

After such an exciting career, Walters is looking forward to spending more time with his wife, children, and grandchildren, but he has no intention of taking it easy.

"I'm 77-years-old, so I'm not going to sit around and do nothing," he said.

"I like a challenge and would still be up for the challenge of EOD, but it's time for me to move out of the way for the new guys and gals to take over and run this thing for the next 20 years. I've helped train them, so I know they're ready."

The Ordnance and Explosives Directorate is hosting a retirement celebration for Walters March 31.

FOCUS ON LEADERSHIP

By Tonju Samuels
Chief, Pre-Award Division, Contracting Directorate

As the child of a 26-year Army Veteran, steadfastness, tenacity, determination and hard work was engrained in me at an early age. I also learned the meaning of responsibility and setting the example as the oldest of my father's children.

My dad believed in hard work, respect and discipline; he would say "never expect anyone to just hand you anything, recognition or success are the results of your hard work." During our many special moments prior to his death in 2003, he would share with me the importance of setting goals, encourage me to pursue my dreams regardless of public opinions, and tell me to always be the example that others could follow.

If you asked me 30 years ago if I would be where I am in my current career, I would have told you no sir/no ma'am. When I started my government career my goal was to get promoted to the grade of GS-12 in the budget field. Back then that seemed nearly impossible. So, as I look back over my career, I can say I am truly blessed by being mentored by many successful leaders. I can also say what a difference leadership, opportunity and believing in yourself can make and even change your path.

My career path didn't take the normal route from graduating high school followed by attending and graduating college and securing an intern position with the government. My path to leadership would be filled with some bumps in the road and a few steep hills to climb before I could see a clear path to my destination. Despite the status quo of being a young military spouse and having a two-year college degree, I found my way into the government as a GS-3 clerk typist.

In the late 80's that was a great accomplishment and the beginning to fulfilling my career goal...or at least I thought.

With all the joys of traveling stateside and abroad, there came the disappointment of the type of jobs I would be able to obtain, further delaying my goal to have a successful career in Government service. I refused to let that be a stumbling block and keep me from my plans.

Later I would become a mother as I continued to take college classes and I eventually obtained my bachelor's degree in business administration with a focus in contracting. After obtaining my degree I successfully found openings and opportunities to showcase my talents.

Although, I had to compete at each grade level for promotions there is nothing significant I would change about



Tonju Samuels

my life choices and career. I learned so much during my time coming up through the ranks which helped groom me to be the leader I am today. Each bump and bruise became a teaching moment and those lessons learned stay with me today.

My career journey has also afforded me the opportunity to work for several different Army commands, the Army Reserve Center and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Working at Huntsville Center has afforded me many opportunities to grow as a professional and as an individual.

As a leader I have been placed in situations where I have been able to institute a lot of creativity and innovation which contributed to my success.

However, it couldn't be done without the support and confidence of leadership providing great guidance and at times room to grow. One example is when I was given the opportunity to lead and shift the pre-award team from a branch to a division six years ago.

I was given great latitude in standing up the division which

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LEADERSHIP

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grew from 12 to 30 personnel.

As I think back now, there were leaders who saw more in me than I could have imagined and pushed me to greater heights.

I am thankful for all mentors and leaders: the good leaders who showed me through their actions what it is to lead, teach, coach, mentor and grow people. Even the leaders who taught me what not to do when leading people. As I served in many leadership positions; I became the leader always looking for ways to inspire staff, finding opportunities for them excel and grow beyond their capabilities.

As a leader there are several things you can do to set yourself up for success. Here are a few tips I have found to be helpful and used over the years:

Self-assessment

You need to be honest about the things you do well but more importantly be honest about the things you need to work on individually. Think carefully and make plans to improve and excel. Self-assessment can be done informally or formally by scheduling time with your supervisor, mentor, peer or with you making notes based on your performance/actions on a recent project/acquisition. Ask your mentor or peer to be honest in their assessment.

Taking this approach, you will be able to obtain constructive criticism and gain ideas on how to improve or expand your knowledge base. As a part of assessing yourself make a list outside of your job description of what you should know about your current job and the job at the next level. Write down what you do well, any actions you are proud of achieving, your strong suit and what attributes you have that contribute to the successes of the team/mission.

Consider what you could improve about your work or yourself. Everyone should be able to find something they

can improve upon. Also remember regardless of your grade or position you won't know how to do something that you have never been exposed to and your supervisor will not know what you can't do or understand if you don't raise your hand and let them know.

Set yourself above the crowd

Find ways to stand out from your peers by accepting opportunities to excel which may take you out of your comfort zone. Raising your hand for unique, complex, and challenging assignments shows that you are serious about your professional growth.

The ability to expand your horizon beyond your daily duties will make you more competitive amongst your peers and can also build relationships outside of your circle. I am passionate about my profession which has led me to become an USACE Prospect Instructor. In addition to my duties as Division Chief I teach Prospect 182 PCO Workshop and Prospect 183 Formal Source Selection courses attended by personnel across USACE. Teaching gives me an opportunity to meet professionals across USACE and gives me a chance to share my experiences in contracting while learning about other Districts and Centers.

Continuous learning

Business acumen is critical to grow your professional resume. You are never too far in your career to learn something new or grow. As a leader, it's paramount you are in tune and up to date on the latest innovative tools in your profession, along with any new processes implemented or critical requirements for projects.

You may have to find "outside" training and pay for it with your personal funds. Invest in yourself. Due to budget constraints, training may be very limited other than the normal mandatory annual courses provided for required certification. I am a strong

proponent for continuing education. I obtained my Federal Contracts Manager certification through National Contract Management Association by paying for the course myself and taking prep classes after duty hours. I also recently completed Defense Contract Audit Agency's Directors Development Program in Leadership. It was an 18-month executive leadership program providing valuable competency-based training for senior leaders.

Set goals

Initiate timeframes and milestones to achieve the goals you have set for yourself. Review these goals often to ensure you are on the right path. Align yourself with people who have the same or similar vision and goals.

Consider the professional relationships you have and consider joining a professional organization to stay abreast of current issues and opportunities critical to staying in tune to the latest knowledge and practices. Establishing relationships with like minded people keeps you focused on your goals for professional achievement.

Although I have over 25 years in my profession, I treat each day as if it were the first day. I am excited about learning new ideas/ways to complete our mission to support the warfighter.

I still gravitate towards complex and innovative projects or processes. Remember we are all in charge of our career — you are empowered to change your course if you start to feel stagnate. I started my career thinking I would achieve one goal but shifted along the way as I grew and became interested in a career that was uniquely different and

I believe it was the best decision for me. Remember, you are a leader where you are right now regardless of your grade or position.

FOCUS ON EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY



By Karen Wolfe
Medical Division project manager

Seventy-seven years ago, in 1945, Nazi concentration camps Auschwitz, Birkenau, Dachau, and Buchenwald were liberated by Allied Forces.

An estimated 6 million European Jews and 2 million others (Poles, Roma, Soviets, and gay men) were exterminated from 1933 to 1945 in the Holocaust. Approximately two-thirds of the Jewish population were killed; families, businesses, and culture were forever changed.

To commemorate this event and honor those lost and those who survived, the US Army Corps of Engineers, Huntsville Center, coordination with Redstone Arsenal, will host Holocaust Remembrance Day on April 28, a pre-recorded event.

The theme for this year is Honor, Determination and Hope: Lessons for a new Generation.

This program will bring insights into several activities, such as traditional remembrance prayers and Violins of Hope, an organization with a mission to restore violins played by concentration camp detainees. Additionally, personal accounts of survival will be shared.

Anti-Semitism and other forms of racial violence continue to this day. As we learn about the historical events of the Holocaust, let us attend with a mutual mindset of supporting and creating environments free of oppression and bias.

Join us for this hour-long presentation led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Equal Employment Opportunity office to hear about the strength and resiliency of survivors and understand how this historical event is still relevant in 2022.



A living memorial to the Holocaust

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum inspires citizens and leaders worldwide to confront hatred, prevent genocide, and promote human dignity. Located among our national monuments to freedom on the National Mall in Washington, the museum provides lessons in the fragility of freedom, the myth of progress, and the need for vigilance in preserving democratic values. To learn more about the museum's exhibitions and collections, visit the museum's website at <https://www.ushmm.org/>



FOCUS ON ETHICS

Crowdsourcing and the Federal Workplace

**By Melanie Braddock
Office of Counsel**

When something bad happens or someone is in need, the days one of the methods used is crowdsourcing – whether that be through GoFundMe, Kickstarter, etc.

However, as we know from ethics training, there are limitations on federal employees about fundraising and gifts between employees.

The DoD SOCO Advisory 20-07 provides specific guidance regarding crowdsourced fundraising. Crowdsourcing sites are merely online tools to facilitate the collection process.

Whether the site may be used depends on two things: whether the fundraising/gift rules permit collecting funds for the stated purpose/circumstances in the first place; and whether the site is capable of being structured in a way that meets the applicable requirements and limitations for those purposes.

For example, fundraising by military members and civilian employees, designed to support unofficial activities for those personnel such as coffee funds, flower funds, sunshine funds, etc., may be a permissible purpose, but if there is no way to restrict or identify contractor contributions using the site, then the site is not capable of being used in a way that complies with the ethics rules.

Likewise, if there is no way for

the site to cap contributions for a group gift at \$300, then the site could not be used to collect for that purpose.

As a reminder – solicitations may never include or be directed toward contractors, regardless of whether the collection is for a fundraiser or a group gift.

On an unsolicited basis, a contractor employee may purchase goods/services sold as part of a fundraiser (e.g., a bake sale). However, cash donations to a fundraiser from a contractor may not be accepted.

When collecting for a gift, unsolicited contributions toward a gift from a contractor would be subject to the rules on gifts from outside sources.

For example, a group gift purchased with funds that included an unsolicited contractor donation would be limited to \$20 instead of \$300.

For gifts to other federal employees, the general rule is that a subordinate may not give a personal gift to their supervisor. See 5 CFR 2635.301 and 302.

A personal gift to a supervisor in certain circumstances such as the supervisor's marriage; birth/adoption of child; retirement; or family member passing would fall under the special infrequent occasion exception to the rule. See 5 CFR 2635.304(b).

If it is a group gift, the amount

of the gift may not exceed \$300 and one may only solicit a nominal amount (\$10) from each employee.

With a group gift, the individual may give nothing, less than \$10 or more than \$10 – but any donation must be voluntary.

The examples listed in the rules are a \$30 floral arrangement for a supervisor in the hospital; a \$70 place-setting for a supervisor's wedding; and a \$19 book for a retiring supervisor; however be aware that a promotion within the same chain of command is not a special infrequent occasion.

Lastly, the advisory talks about employees, or their friends or family members on their behalf, seeking financial assistance from crowdsourced fundraising platforms such as GoFundMe.

It advises that pursuing crowdsourced or web-based fundraising for personal benefit poses several ethical issues, such as misuse of position, improper solicitation, and acceptance of prohibited gifts.

Crowdsourcing fundraising is an easy, streamlined way to raise funds but it has the potential for real ethical pitfalls for federal employees. Given the potential ethical pitfalls, employees should consult with their local Ethics Counselor before any such campaign begins or immediately upon learning that a friend or family member might be crowdsourcing on his/her behalf.

About Huntsville Center

HNC

Unique to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

Huntsville Center provides innovative engineering solutions to complex, global missions. Our team of professionals engineer adaptive, specialized solutions across a broad spectrum of global enterprise covering five main lines of effort: Energy, Operational Technology, Environmental, Medical, and Base Operations and Facilities. Our portfolios comprise 43 program areas, as well as nine mandatory and six technical centers of expertise, and 17 centers of standardization. Through partnership with Department of Defense agencies, private industry and global stakeholders, we deliver leading edge engineering solutions in support of national interests around the globe.

FY2021 40+ Programs

**8 Mandatory Centers of Expertise,
6 Technical Centers of Expertise
and 17 Centers of Standardization**

\$1.9B

**“HNC Delivers
Innovation”**

**In fiscal 2021, Huntsville Center awarded contract actions totaling more than
\$1.9 billion in obligations for its stakeholders.**



The U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, engineers adaptive, specialized solutions across a broad spectrum of global enterprise covering five main lines of effort: Energy, Operational Technology, Environmental, Medical, and Base Operations and Facilities