

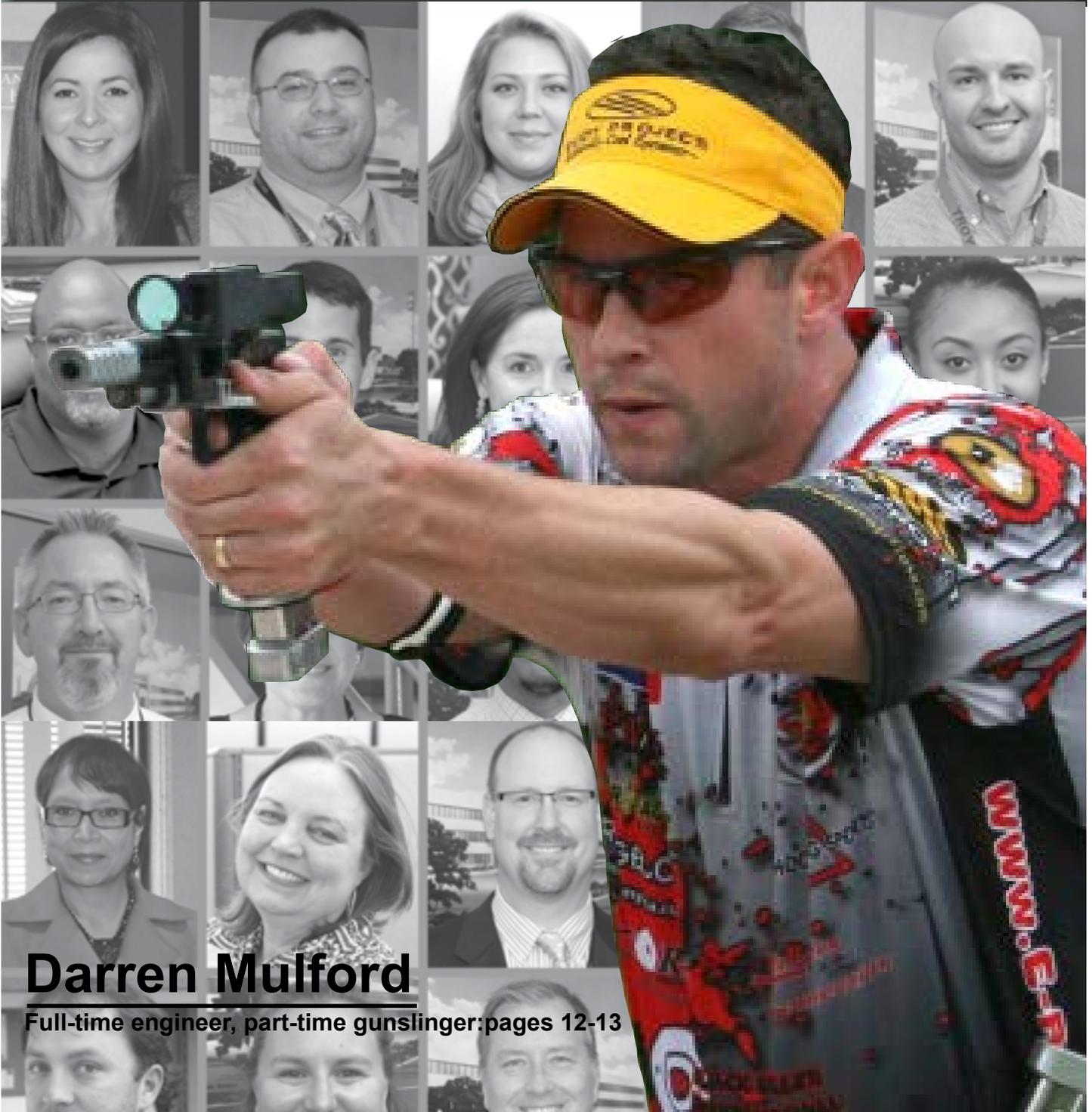
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Huntsville Center Bulletin



U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville



Darren Mulford

Full-time engineer, part-time gunslinger: pages 12-13



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Hails & Farewells

Hail: Jose Gamboa, Patrick Fields, Wendy Fields, Dennis Lowrey, Maria Calica, Robert Reynolds, Ron Clark, Brittney Cowan, Karen Gatton-Zahn, Marvinia Adams, Center Contracting; Robert Zandler, Richard Campbell, Larry Quick, Andrew Brand, Engineering Directorate; Shannon Tidwell, Scott Backus, Jason Cade, Sean Martin, Kim Duda, Erik Johnson, Ryan Carman, Billie Gaston, Lourdes Roman, Installation Support and Programs Management; Sherry Page, Office of Counsel; Latonia Grant, Business Management Office; Karl Clark, Resource Management Office; Bobby Shaw, Logistics Office; Lorena Henderson, Ordnance and Explosives Directorate; Ray Waits, Safety Office.

Farewell: Tina Springer, ED; Marcus Adams, Melody Hinkle, CT.

Commander's thoughts



Team,
It is really hard to believe I am in my fourth year of command here at the Huntsville Center. It's even harder to believe I am about to complete 30 years of service in uniform. I went back and read the very first column I wrote here to see if I could put things in perspective.

Reading it really reminded me how very good this organization is at navigating changes and constantly adjusting to ensure future success.

Back then I wrote about what I brought to the table as a new commander and the fact that Lt. Gen. Bostick had just taken over as the Chief of Engineers.

Guess what? The Center is about to get a new commander and a new Chief again! Maybe this is a predictable pattern more than constant change.

What I do know is the way this Center welcomes new leadership makes a big difference. This Center is so very different from a District and your calm, cool professionalism and absolute understanding of our programs made a huge difference as I tried to get my arms around this job.

I am not at all worried about my upcoming transition, but if I were given the choice I would stay in this position as long as they would allow. That is based on the great people in this organization and the great missions we deliver each day. There is a great understanding of how our programs impact the everyday lives of Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, Marines and their families. We are delivering on the installations for a variety of stakeholders and it really matters.

We are also delivering on the

national level. For example, we are bringing the Chemical Demilitarization program to a close – an amazing feat largely untold to a nation that is much safer for our hard work. We are cleaning ranges in Afghanistan, and that delivers a strategic impact for the nation. We are designing hospitals to care for our service members. We are also outfitting and maintaining those facilities in a first class manner. We are leading the federal government, the Department of Defense and the Army in energy and third-party financing. There is not a program in the Center that isn't making a difference.

So what do I see for the future?

I see a lot more of the same, and that is a good thing. As I mentioned, you will bring a new commander on board, and I expect that will be seamless. Lt. Col. Burlin Emery will take charge in the interim prior to the arrival of Col. John Hurley. Lt. Col. Emery will keep the train on the tracks for two or three months. He has been here long enough, and I have great confidence in his abilities. Col. Hurley has experience as the commander of the Buffalo and Japan Districts as well as having served as the Transatlantic Division deputy commander. You could not find a more seasoned incoming commander, and best of all, Huntsville is where he wants to be.

He and his family will find a home here in Huntsville and will fit in very well. When the new Chief of Engineers is confirmed, you will probably see a review of current Strategic Plans eventually filtering down to this level. It will consider the current strategic outlook and try to place the Corps on the best track to support the nation as



Col. Robert Ruch

required.

The great thing about Huntsville Center is we are already flexible and agile enough to take that in stride, so do not worry about that. For me, the hard part is acknowledging that I will not be with you as this period of change kicks off. The easy part is knowing you will excel and come out of the other end better than ever. I am truly blessed with a great family at home and great family at work. I imagine the first day I don't put on a uniform and have no reason to drive to 4820 University Square will be emotional for many reasons but it will mostly be because I will miss the team I have worked with individually and collectively over the past four years.

I have put off writing this column because it is an admission that the last day is approaching rapidly, and there is a sadness to admitting that. Well, let's just say that I am leaving happy and proud because together we have done great things, and I believe I have made a great many friends that I will remain close to for the rest of my life. If you can say that when you leave a job, then you can leave with a smile. I am smiling!



US Army Corps of Engineers

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BULLETIN

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Chief, Public Affairs..... Debra Valine
Editor..... William S. Farrow

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Employee Spotlight

Tiffany Torres

How does an introvert find herself in a job where a key role is advising others on how to improve their projects? For Tiffany Torres, it wasn't a straight line to her current professional role at the Army Corps of Engineers, Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville.

"I was never interested in engineering, I was more into books," Torres said. "Engineering wasn't on my radar until I was a junior in high school. My math teacher took me to the side one day and mentioned that there was a summer program at Auburn (University) and asked me if I was interested."

Torres spent a week in Auburn, and after the experience started dreaming of a job at NASA.

"The one engineering program that I did not want to do was industrial because it seemed so boring – and that is the one that I ended up doing!" she said.

Torres, a native of Miami, Florida, would go on to attend the University of Miami. While at UM, she joined ROTC and planned a military career in the Air Force, until a heart murmur grounded her aspirations to work in missile defense. Or so she thought.

After graduation, Torres accepted a position with SMDC, where she would spend four years in the command's internship program. While an intern the first two years, Torres had the opportunity to work in many different capacities but was not sure that SMDC was ultimately where she was meant to spend her professional career.

While browsing government jobs online, Torres came across a job announcement for her current position.

"When I read the description, it



Photo by Amy Newcomb

Tiffany Torres is a value engineering officer with the Army Corps of Engineers, Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville.

was very much in line with my degree," Torres said. "Value engineers study and look for ways to improve (projects)."

Torres was hired in 2008, and in the past eight years has assisted program managers, as well as led studies, training and discussions – which have been a hurdle for someone who "hates public speaking," she said. Earlier in her career, Torres said that she struggled with stage fright and having the spotlight turn to her.

"My biggest challenge is myself," she said. "I felt like I was pressured to be more assertive in meetings and that is not my personality type. I felt like I was pressured to fit into a certain mold."

Today, Torres said that she has found a way to be true to herself, while building a confidence in front of large groups that has come with experience. Part of that confidence she said, comes from a genuine love for her job.

"I enjoy the work ... I enjoy the fact that my position that has to touch every program in the building – I love to find out what everyone is working on. We really are a diverse group here that does such different work and I really enjoy learning about everyone's program," Torres said.

When not at the Corps, Torres is the mom to four – two toddlers and a baby on the way. Sadly, her oldest son Julius passed away in 2010. With a bustling household of children under the age of five, Torres and her husband made the decision for him to be a stay-at-home dad. But even with her husband as primary caregiver, life is still understandably busy, juggling the roles of engineer and mom.

Torres credits the Corps as providing a family-friendly atmosphere, with little travel and flexibility in her job role. She tries to maintain a work/life balance by turning off her Blackberry when she is home to better focus on her family.

"I feel very fortunate to be here," she said. "But it is still always hard to leave them."

Even though Torres said that engineering is still a male-dominated profession, she encourages young women today to change that. And what better place to pursue engineering as a career than the Rocket City?

"There are a lot of engineers in this town," she said. "Don't be afraid if it is a male-dominated profession. Don't let fear hold you back. If you are really interested in engineering, go for it. It is a very rewarding profession. I have no regrets."

Editor's note: This article appeared in the Feb. 23 Redstone Rocket.

The **Employee Spotlight** is intended to let Center employees shine for positively impacting the organization through mission achievements. Employees are featured quarterly in the Huntsville Center Bulletin. If you'd like to nominate someone within your office for this recognition, please contact William S. Farrow, Public Affairs Office, at 256-895-1694, or email: william.farrow@usace.army.mil.

The Bulletin asks:

What's the greatest impact Col. Robert Ruch had as commander of Huntsville Center ?

“I think it was his interaction within the Huntsville community. He explained to leadership throughout Huntsville that although we don't reside on Redstone (Arsenal) and we don't have a typical Corps of Engineers mission, we are a very valuable and unique organization supporting the Department of Defense and many other federal agencies worldwide.”

Martha Cook
Executive Office



“Family. You could tell Colonel Ruch really cared about his family and I believe that translates to a deep understanding of what's most important to a workforce, which is family. Since family is so important to him it always seemed like he was encouraging people to take time to care for their family. He put family first.”

Barbara Whitney
Center Contracting

“He's been a big enabler in the arena of helping us work with other districts and emphasizing the importance of doing so. He helped us become recognized more as a force multiplier among other Corps Districts. With his leadership, maturity and experience, we're now having less difficulties working across geographical boundaries.”

Boyce Ross
Engineering Directorate



Take note

☐ **April 19-22: Incoming commander, Col. John Hurley, is scheduled to visit Huntsville Center.**

☐ **May 13: Relenquish of Command Ceremony, 10 a.m., Bob Jones Auditorium at Redstone Arsenal. Busses will be provided for transportation.**

☐ **June 10: Engineer Day at Monte Sano State Park (Date subject to change).**

Huntsville Center's new commander announced, takes reigns in June

Colonel John Hurley is set to assume command of the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville in June. Hurley comes to Huntsville Center from the Japan District.

Hurley assumed command of the Japan Engineer District on July 9, 2013. Prior to this assignment, Hurley served as the Deputy Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Transatlantic Division (TAD). As Deputy Division Commander, he was responsible for numerous aspects of the Division's operations as TAD served as the lead design and construction agent for the Department of Defense in the 20 countries in the Middle East from Egypt through Pakistan. This multi-billion dollar program included military construction, contingency construction in Iraq and Afghanistan, and foreign military sales.

Hurley earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Aerospace Engineering from the U.S. Military Academy and was commissioned in the Army Corps of Engineers in May 1989.

He has held a variety of leadership, command and staff positions in the 14th Engineer Battalion at Fort Ord, California, the 65th Engineer Battalion (Light) at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, and the 326th Engineer Battalion (Air Assault) at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. During these assignments, he deployed numerous times to include Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Following graduate school at Northwestern University, Hurley was an instructor at the U.S. Military Academy, where he taught Leadership and Sociology.

He also worked for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Naples, Italy, where he was a member of an international team supervising the construction of a new Joint Forces Command headquarters for NATO. He worked closely with the Italian Air Force in a construction, contract and program management oversight role.

Hurley commanded the Buffalo District, USACE, from 2006 to 2008. In that capacity, he was responsible for navigation, flood risk management, regulatory and



Col. John Hurley

environmental remediation missions for USACE along the Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, and St. Lawrence River watersheds. Following command of this civil works district, he served as the Military Assistant and later Executive Officer for the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA-CW) from 2008-2010.

Hurley also holds a Master of Arts degree in Sociology. He is a licensed Professional Engineer in Missouri, a registered Project Management Professional and is Ranger, Airborne and Air Assault qualified.

He has attended Engineer Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, Combined Arms Service Staff School, and the Command and General Staff College.

He has been awarded the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal and the Bronze Order of the de Fleury Medal.

Huntsville Center exceeds President's energy savings goal for 2016

By Amy Newcomb
Public Affairs Office

Two task order contracts catapulted the Energy Savings Performance Contract (ESPC) Program above the Army's President's Performance Contracting Challenge (PPCC) goal of \$12 million in energy-efficiency performance contracts at federal facilities through 2016.

The task orders awarded to Honeywell Building Solutions by the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Pittsburgh District (LRP) and Humphreys Engineer Center Support Activity (HECSA), to perform civil works projects are 11 months ahead of schedule, said Wesley Malone, Energy Division program manager.

"These two projects are part of the ESPC programmatic goal to achieve \$200 million in energy-efficiency performance contracts for Fiscal Year 2016," he said.

"Installation Support and Programs Management Energy Division has executed \$914 million toward the President's Performance Contracting Challenge of implementing \$4 billion since its inspection."

Last year, ESPC annual savings was almost \$8.5 million that included \$184.7 kilo gallons in water savings, a 333.8 million British thermal unit (Btu) energy savings with an average 9.4 percent energy reduction.

An ESPC is one of the



acquisition vehicles an installation can use to meet the Army's 30 percent energy and 15 percent water reduction goals without upfront capital costs.

The \$5.6 million LRP task order was awarded 11 months before the PPCC deadline and is expected to lead to a 23 percent reduction in energy consumption or almost 20 billion Btu per year, equivalent to a reduction in 912,040 gallons of fuel. The total proposed cost savings through the term of the contract is \$10 million.

The savings will be met through the installation of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning programmable thermostats, lighting improvements, high efficiency transformers, and water meter replacements at various locations within the Pittsburgh District, said Priya Stiller, ESPC project manager.

"The installation of the equipment will allow LRP to benefit from robust equipment warranties requiring minimal operations and maintenance and create safer working conditions for the locks and dams through improved lighting," she said.

Also awarded, the HECSA \$7.4 million task order is expected to lead to a 16 percent reduction in energy

consumption or 13 billion Btu per year, comparable to 2,159 acres of forest. The total proposed cost savings through the term is \$13.7 million.

The energy intensity reduction for the Kude Building, HECSA's largest consuming building, is expected to be reduced by 50 percent, Stiller said.

"The reduction will be achieved through the installation of high efficiency condensing boilers, chiller plant optimization, installation of programmable thermostats, installation of a new direct digital control system, replacement of air handling units, low-flow toilet and sink water conservation measures, and non-chemical water treatment that will reduce water usage from blow down and eliminate chemical usage," she said.

The project will lead to infrastructure modernization that will replace equipment beyond the end of expected life, and it will also provide technical resources to HECSA enabling them to make intelligent facility decisions.

"It will provide HECSA with a comprehensive energy project that supports U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' goals for reducing utility costs and energy consumption," Stiller said.

Both civil works projects are scheduled to be completed in early 2017.

Workforce success: understanding, embracing team member differences

By Julia Bobick
Public Affairs Office

Identifying, understanding, appreciating and making the most of employee differences within teams and across the organization was the theme echoing throughout two interactive, engaging, laughter-filled presentations by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Director of Human Resources Sue Engelhardt.

Invited to the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville March 2 to kick off Women's History Month, Engelhardt delivered supervisor training on recognizing individual work styles in the morning and a centerwide presentation on embracing generational differences in the afternoon.

"We are going to have some fun, we are going to make fun of people, and I'm going to make fun of myself," Engelhardt said, opening the first of her presentations, both of which had the audience laughing, drawing, singing, cracking jokes and – most importantly – thinking, communicating and learning.

Engelhardt, who was appointed to the Senior Executive Service at USACE Headquarters in May 2009, engaged the supervisors in a discussion about the four work styles identified in the Gregorc Style Delineator: Concrete Sequential, Concrete Random, Abstract Sequential and Abstract Random – or as she prefers to call them: Doers, Seers, Thinkers and Feelers.

The training separated leaders into groups in which everyone had the same dominant work style. After a couple of interactive exercises, Engelhardt asked the room, "Wouldn't it have been better if I'd mixed people up?"

"We would have had better products, probably more talking, more dialogue



Photo by Julia Bobick

Sue Engelhardt, USACE Director of Human Resources, delivered two engaging presentations for Huntsville Center supervisors and employees March 2 to kick off Women's History Month.

and people would have come together better. You need to have those different work styles coming together," she said.

"We are all different styles," she said. "We really need to think about being broad minded about what all these work styles bring to the table. The way we see things and the way we work make a big difference, and we have to understand that."

"One of the most important things we can do is go to lunch with someone in another part of the organization and talk about stuff that's going on and bring the information back ... It's one of the most important things we can do, and we don't do it. I've really learned that as I've grown up in the world. What I have to do as a senior leader is to build relationships."

A similar message was repeated in the afternoon session with regard to generational differences, when Engelhardt discussed characteristics of the generations: Traditionalists (born before 1946), Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Generation Xers (1965-1981) and Millennials (1982-2000).

"This impacts all of us. This is the first time we've ever had four generations at work," said Engelhardt, adding that it's critical to know how people from each generation act and react to one another.

She said one primary thing she really wanted people to take away from her presentation was the importance of feedback and how and why generations differ in the way they prefer to give and receive feedback.

Younger employees want to know how they are doing. "It's one thing that is going to drive Millennials and Gen Xers away – if we don't give feedback," Engelhardt said.

Why should organizations talk about this? While Millennials are a small percentage of the Corps of Engineers civilian workforce today – just 17 percent as of January 2016 – she said they will rapidly become the largest percentage of the workforce.

"It's not just about Millennials," she said, "and it's not just about us [Baby Boomers] understanding Millennials. It's also about Millennials understanding the generations that came before them."

Talking about diversity – whether gender, ethnicity, generational or work style – is about recruiting and retaining the very best talent in our organization, according to Engelhardt.

"The key to success in the workforce is understanding and valuing what every individual brings to the team," Englehardt said.

Corps removes grenades from Rock Island Arsenal housing area

By Todd Hornback
Louisville District

A partnership among federal agencies and contractors has cleared property of explosives at a housing project at Rock Island Arsenal, Illinois.

The Arsenal contacted the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Louisville District, after discovering a 40 mm grenade during a preliminary sweep within a housing development.

"Since it is a housing area, we decided to do a full clearance of the site to a depth of two feet," said Nicholas Stolte, project manager for the Military Munitions Design Center, at the Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, Alabama, adding safety was a priority for the removal. "The 40 mms are one of the most sensitive unexploded ordnance items that we encounter. The slightest movement can cause a detonation."

The Army Environmental Command requested the Corps to execute a removal action with the objective to have the 4.12 acres cleared by Dec. 23, 2015. The Corps received funds Oct. 1 and awarded the contract by Nov. 19. To facilitate the project schedule, the Huntsville Military Munitions Design Center prepared the Explosive Safety Submission, known as an ESS, and staffed it for signature by the Department of Defense Explosive Safety Board in Washington, D.C., while the team worked on the procurement. HydroGeoLogic Inc., the contractor, prepared work and safety plans.

The team held biweekly project delivery team conference calls in the first two weeks of December and approved the contractor to perform the removal action Dec. 11 with approved work plans and ESS.

"The process normally takes three to four months, but all parties worked together to meet the client's objective," said Brooks Evens, a Louisville District geologist and technical manager.

The team cleared more than four acres, investigated more than 5,300 metal objects referred to as anomalies, and safely disposed of two M406 40 mm high explosive grenades. The contractor completed the removal action 32 days ahead of the 60-day required work schedule starting Nov. 23 with completion Dec. 21, 2015.

The Louisville District project team; Military Munitions Design Center representatives from the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center in Huntsville, with support from the Baltimore District MMDC; AEC; Rock Island Arsenal; and HydroGeoLogic, worked in unison to detect and remove the ordnance.



Courtesy photo

A M406 40 mm grenade is uncovered near a housing area. The unexploded ordnance is a reminder for anyone finding ordnance to recognize, retreat and report the ordnance.

The removal required coordination with the installation to close one of the installation's primary roadways and evacuate non-essential personnel from adjacent buildings. Wintry weather conditions, frozen ground, underground utilities and safety requirements served as some of the obstacles the team overcame leading to a successful removal with no health or safety incidents.

The work minimized impacts to the installation, opened the road earlier than scheduled and garnered the contractor the 2015 Excellence Award for Environmental Services from the Society of American Engineers, Kentuckiana Post.

"We were able to accomplish the removal for the customer and the Army," said Evens. He added, knowing the importance of minimizing impacts to Rock Island Arsenal, everyone responded immediately to what was needed to accomplish the mission.

It is not uncommon for an installation to have unexploded ordnance, Evens said, but it is unknown why munitions hid below the surface at the Army Housing Site 2 when historical records did not document any munitions-related activity. One theory is that soil containing the grenades was brought in from an outside location as fill material.

Engineers share STEM career paths with Alabama educators

By Amy Newcomb
Public Affairs Office

The number of graduates entering Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines is not adequately meeting labor market demands. So, how do we interest more students to choose STEM career fields?

We start by sparking an interest in these fields through their professors, teachers and counselors. To do that, several U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville (HNC) engineers participated in the Alabama Community Education Association's (ACEA) annual conference at the Huntsville Marriott Feb. 25.

Karl Gullatte, Installation Support and Programs Management Directorate; John Nevels and Brian Spear, Engineering Directorate and Bruce Railey, Ordnance and Explosives Directorate, all Huntsville Center engineers, engaged more than 350 educators from throughout Alabama by discussing their career fields.

It's important for Huntsville Center to participate in events like these and be a positive influence in the community, said Spear, site development civil engineer.

"The educators today are teaching the citizens of the future and providing them with the information they need to shape the future we will share together," he said. "The emphasis on STEM fields of study will be paramount to HNC, the greater Huntsville area, as well as this country in order to remain the world leader in the technology industries."

Studies have shown that school personnel are often cited as key influences in a student's choice of major. If a student isn't exposed to a particular area, interest can't develop.

Paul Morin, ACEA president and

Alabama Afterschool Community Network coordinator, said this year the conference offered a unique opportunity for teachers to learn about STEM careers first hand to take back to their students.

"Last year, only 27 percent of graduating seniors expressed any type of interest in STEM disciplines, which is a problem," he said. "It's not only a problem for our economy and workforce development, it's a problem for them because that is where the jobs are and where the jobs are going to be."

Morin said educators have the ability to create an atmosphere where students can experiment and have fun and regain a sense of wonder regarding STEM disciplines.

Giving educators that ability is exactly what Nevels, explosives safety structural engineer, hoped to achieve while showing examples of his work in protective construction and how he

determines the effects explosives have on structures.

"Teachers and administrators work long hours lifting up and taking care of our greatest resource, our future, and I think it's important that we try to take care of them however we can," said Nevels.

Each of the volunteers talked to the educators one-on-one after their presentations.

Railey, international operations civil engineer, enjoyed connecting with the teachers and hoped he shared the importance of their efforts in what can sometimes be a thankless job, he said.

"There is hope that we might encourage these educators, as we were encouraged during our early years," he said. "I wish I could thank all of the teachers who saw the hope in me when I didn't see it in myself."



Photo by Amy Newcomb

Brian Spear, Engineering Directorate site development civil engineer, discusses the merits of the sUAS with educators throughout Alabama during the Alabama Community Education Association's annual conference at the Huntsville Marriott Feb. 25.

Furnishings Program fills cadet barracks

By William S. Farrow
Public Affairs Office

During U.S. Army Cadet Command's annual Cadet Summer Training at Fort Knox, Kentucky, 8,000 to 12,000 Army Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets and supporting staff from colleges across the nation call the installation home.

After a long day of training, cadets can rest well thanks to U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville Furnishings Program contracts providing quality, functional furniture for their barracks.

Two contracts, valued at more than \$5.8 million, filled more than 400 rooms in 14 buildings with the beds and mattresses, chests, wardrobes, lounge furnishings for dayrooms, and washers and dryers for laundry rooms. Cadets cycling through the CST are billeted for four weeks at a time in the barracks with four, six or eight cadets living in a single room. Smaller, two-person rooms are available to billet cadre.

The furniture Cadet Command requested is spartan to say the least.

The contract requested the furnishings have "simple lines and detailing free of ornamentation." The result is metal frame beds, most configured as bunk beds, accompanied by plain metal wardrobes. All furnishings require easy maintenance and durable material to endure heavy daily usage over an extended life with a minimum of maintenance and repair.

"CST is effectively basic training for cadets, and the furniture suites the mission: basic," said Stephanie Hardin, Huntsville Center barracks furnishings project manager.

Hardin said most of the barracks furniture projects she's managed are for the permanent party junior grade Soldiers assigned to an installation. Wooden or metal beds, night stands, chests of drawers, chair and writing table are common furnishings for the Soldiers' private rooms.

"We are mindful that the furniture is intended to provide Soldiers with a living space that feels more like a home, and although these two contracts called for basic requirements—we ensured a comfortable living environment for the cadets. We have to make sure what we purchased is very sturdy and durable to withstand substantial use," she said.

As barracks furnishings project manager, Hardin said her main role is annual budgeting and work plan formulation, preparing and executing the acquisition plan and developing minimum quality specifications for furniture requirements.

Kevin Stickle, chief of Fort Knox Furniture Management Office, said the furniture received at Cadet Command certainly met the requirements, and the customer service provided by Huntsville Center Furnishings Program is the selling point for procuring furniture through Huntsville Center.



Courtesy photo

Workers stage washers and dryers prior to delivering them to a U.S. Army Cadet Command barracks laundry rooms at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Two Huntsville Center Furnishings Program contracts, valued at more than \$5.8 million, filled more than 400 rooms in 14 buildings with the beds and mattresses, chests, wardrobes and other furnishings used by more than 8,000 cadets during Cadet Summer Training, the largest single source of new officers for the Army.

"They (Furnishings Program personnel) always do a good job procuring the furniture, but it's the delivery and installation oversight they provide that deserves recognition," Stickle said. "Stephanie (Hardin) called prior to delivery, during and after delivery, and during the installation process checking to make sure everything was going well. She also followed up with on-site quality assurance inspections. I really appreciate her engagement during the entire process."

Hardin said she doesn't feel like she's doing anything above and beyond her duty as barracks project manager.

"My job is ensuring that the furnishings program provides quality furnishings to enhance the quality of life for all military members and their families by implementing best business practices and initiatives to reduce costs. Knowing that our customers are appreciative of the program's efforts, makes the typical project obstacles seem very minor," she said.

Cadet Command is the largest single source of new officers for the Army, commissioning the majority of Army officers each year through the senior ROTC program. All cadets attend Cadet Summer Training between their junior and senior years in college. They must graduate from training as one of the requirements to be commissioned as Army officers after graduating college.

Huntsville Center's Furnishings Program is a full service organization capable of providing project management, interior design, procurement, installation and quality assurance for all federal agencies' furniture needs. The program procures barracks and administrative furnishings for federal agencies worldwide.

Full-time engineer excels as part-time gunslinger

By Julia Bobick
Public Affairs Office

Efficiency and focus drive Darren Mulford in everything he does. The civil engineer and administrative contracting officer at the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, is also a competitive pistol shooter ranked in the top 15 percent of classified shooters in the U.S. Practical Shooting Association (USPSA).

“I don’t know what it is about shooting. I’m good at it; I love the competition,” Mulford said. “I think if you’re good at something, you should not quit doing it. You should continue improving because it’s a gift you’ve been given.”

Mulford said he’s always loved shooting. “I grew up in a small farm community in northeast Missouri shooting BB guns and rifles; it was not a big deal to go shooting all the time.”

The type of shooting he’s doing now – competing mostly in USPSA events – is more exciting than shooting at the tin cans of his youth, he said.

“You’re shooting on the move; you’re shooting targets that stand still; you’re shooting targets that move; you’re shooting paper targets and steel targets. And it’s up to you to figure out the most efficient way to navigate a course of fire. It’s about speed, as well as accuracy.”

It’s a constant conflict, Mulford explained: “The faster you go, the less accurate you are; the more accurate you are, the slower you are – so you have to find the right balance. What it boils down to is conservation of energy and movement to achieve that right balance.”

Shooting well requires focus, any extra movement, any extra steps reduce your efficiency and negatively impact your performance.

The “OCD” engineer, as he refers to himself, said that same focus on efficiency translates to his work, as well. On a project, anything that affects the critical path reduces efficiency and negatively impacts the schedule and quality of the product.

Mulford said his path toward an engineering career began as a child during the summers spent with his grandpa.

“Although he was not an engineer, he was a tinkerer,” Mulford said.

“He was always making something. When I wasn’t mowing grass, he always had me making something. Whether it was a chess board out of oak and walnut or stained glass windows or blacksmithing, we were always doing something, and I loved making things.”

He said when he asked himself, “What career can

I pursue to make things?” He always thought it was engineering.

Mulford got his start with the Army Corps of Engineers during college as a coop student at the St. Louis District during the Great Flood of 1993. It was that experience that also led him to change his major from mechanical to civil engineering.

The University of Missouri-Rolla graduate was a sales and marketing engineer in private industry before a downsizing forced him to look for something new. He landed back at the St. Louis District as a civil engineer.

After 14 years working on civil works projects at the St. Louis District, the opportunity to deploy to Afghanistan presented itself at the right time and he jumped at the chance. Mulford said he got his introduction to military construction in Afghanistan, where he was a senior project engineer in Bagram and then promoted to resident engineer at Camp Qargha outside Kabul.

“One of the neat things about the Corps is the projects we work on,” said Mulford, who has been a design engineer for several projects in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina, resident engineer for the Marshal Fahim National Defense University in Afghanistan, and now an administrative contracting officer. He has volunteered for flood fighting missions, disaster relief teams, debris removal and Temporary Roofing Planning and Response Teams.

“If you are willing to travel and willing to get out of your comfort zone, there are so many different things you can do in the Corps.”

Following his deployment, Mulford and his family made the move to Huntsville, where he joined Huntsville Center’s Chemical Demilitarization Directorate in January 2016.

The part-time gunsmith who builds his own competition handguns said he keeps extremely busy outside of work shooting, reloading or gunsmithing – or talking with people about shooting, reloading or gunsmithing.

“I love helping people; it’s something I’ve always done so it comes natural to me.”

A Cabela’s Shooting Pro-Staffer for two years, Mulford makes in-store appearances and gives seminars about shooting, reloading and weapon safety.

Nationally ranked as a master in the U.S. Practical Shooting Association and the International Defensive Pistol Association, Mulford said he typically shoots 15,000-20,000 rounds per year.

Before deploying to Afghanistan, he was competing in one to two local matches every weekend and one or two major matches each month during the April to November competition season.



Courtesy photo

Huntsville Center civil engineer and administration contracting officer Darren Mulford competes at a USPSA shooting event. Also a part-time gunsmith, he builds all of his competition handguns.

He has competed at all levels of the sport, winning several area and state level competitions and placing 31st of more than 200 shooters in the invitation-only 2014 USPSA Nationals.

In 2012 he was both the Illinois and Missouri IDPA state champion.

Mulford said he’s undecided about what he considers his most significant accomplishment in shooting.

He said earning his master ranking was a significant achievement – similar

to earning his professional engineering license.

“But I think the thing that I’m most proud of is my constant progression toward the top,” said Mulford, who admitted he’s still striving to be known as one of the top handgun shooters in the country. He really enjoys sharing his knowledge and introducing new people to the sport any chance he gets.

“I feel I have a lot to offer, and I just want to make a difference.”

The USPSA is the national governing body of practical shooting in the United States under the International Practical Shooting Confederation. The organization has more than 25,000 active members and 400 affiliated clubs, and is the largest competitive pistol shooting organization in the United States.

For more information on the USPSA, visit their website at www.uspsa.org

Facilities Reduction Program demolishes Fort Benning World War II-era buildings

By Amy Newcomb
Public Affairs Office

Huntsville Center is managing the Soldiers Plaza demolition project at Fort Benning, Georgia, as part of an existing Mid-East Region U.S. Facilities Reduction Program Multiple Award Task Order Contract.

Huntsville Center manages regional demolition contracts to support removal of excess facilities under its Facilities Reduction Program (FRP).

Under this task order, the contractor will perform a range of demolition services on the installation. Demolition will include, but is not limited to, the abatement/removal of asbestos containing materials and other regulated materials, disconnect/capping of utilities, disposal of all debris materials, and restoration of the site to a specified condition. The contractor will restore all work sites with respect to grading and proper drainage.

Huntsville Center has worked with Alan Bugg, Savannah District area engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to execute the project's quality assurance that ensures safety and proper disposal of all materials.

The \$1.4 million contract kicked off Feb. 15. It will ultimately remove 45 facilities totaling nearly 407,000 square feet of excess infrastructure from Fort Benning's real property inventory.

The excess facilities being moved by All Phase Services, Inc., of Delray Beach, Florida, will reduce Fort Benning's footprint. Of the 45 facilities, 43 are located within Soldiers Plaza and 31 of them, or almost 120,000 square feet, are World War II-era wood structures. To date, 14 have been demolished reducing Fort Benning's infrastructure by more than 40,000 square feet.



Courtesy Photo

Soldiers Plaza building 2602, a World War II wooden building used most recently as an administrative building, is demolished at Fort Benning, Georgia, under the Facilities Reduction Program.

The Soldiers Plaza project is scheduled to be completed in April, with the other two buildings scheduled to be completed in September. This demolition will remove the installation's last World War II buildings on main post, which served most recently as administrative buildings but have been used as barracks, medical facilities and for other Soldier-related services.

The wood structures were built for temporary use in the early 1940s and removing them marks the end of an era, said Dave Shockley, Huntsville Center Facilities Division branch chief.

"They were supposed to be gone within 25 years of when they were built; they are coming up on almost a century," he said.

Frank Hanner, National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center director, said when the structures were built, there was a demand for buildings because the nation was mobilizing for World War II, and the Army couldn't house Soldiers in tents.

"They came up with building the World War II buildings out of local material, or at least that was what they were supposed to use," he said. "Here in Georgia, that would be the great

pine."

More than 600,000 World War II Soldiers were trained in the buildings, but instead of coming down after the war, the buildings housed even more Soldiers as the Cold War began, said Hanner.

"These buildings meant a great deal to the Armed Forces," he said. "They symbolized a great effort by the nation to take care of its Soldiers as it trained them for war. It was almost like a rite of passage."

Through each future conflict, the Army would expand, and each time the World War II wood buildings answered the nation's call. Over time the buildings became costly, and in the 1990s Fort Benning was told all World War II structures would be demolished.

However, Dick Grube, former National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center director, asked that some buildings be saved. The National Infantry Foundation was able to rescue a barracks, mess hall, orderly room, supply room, chapel, and sleeping quarters and headquarters used by Gen. George S. Patton prior to his deployment to North Africa, Hanner said.

Financial management personnel race the clock to complete certification

By Amy Newcomb
Public Affairs Office

The sound of the proverbial clock ticking down has the financial management workforce at the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville taking extra time to complete training certification.

Department of Defense employees know each year they must complete what seems like an endless list of training requirements. However, some job specialties, like financial management, require an additional certification.

In 2012, the National Defense Authorization Act allowed the Secretary of Defense to establish a certification program for financial management career fields. In June 2014, the DOD Financial Management Certification Program was implemented, giving the workforce two years to complete all required training.

"The clock is ticking away on the DOD Financial Management website," said Huntsville Center's Finance and Accounting Chief Frank deBoer. "June 2016 is right around the corner."

The program was designed for both military and civilian financial management workforce career fields with the purpose of providing a framework to guide professional development in key areas such as decision support and audit readiness.

For civilians, the program is primarily focused on the 05XX occupational series.

"However, the program includes civilians who perform financial management tasks, but are not assigned in the 05XX Occupational series," deBoer said. "For example, program analysts assigned to 0343 occupational series that primarily work in the financial management field are required to complete the certification."

Huntsville Center has 27 personnel required to complete the certification program. So far, 18 have been certified, with the remaining 9 not far behind.

The certification program has three certification levels. For GS-07 and below, Level 1 is required; GS-09 through GS-13 must complete Level 2; and GS-14 and above must complete Level 3. Dependent on the Agency, some job positions may require a higher level of certification.



Photo by Amy Newcomb

Huntsville Center Financial Management Analyst Loren Norgren recently completed the program's Certification Level 2. While the program wasn't academically rigorous, the process was, he said.

When Norgren tried to transfer his certification from the Department of the Navy to Huntsville Center eight months ago, he discovered a problem.

"I thought I had completed the certification, but it got kicked back," he said. "They had to transfer my account, and I basically had to start the process over, but I was able to use most of the courses I had already completed toward my certification."

Through his first attempt at certification he learned he had taken some courses he didn't need.

"One of the biggest issues was determining what classes to take and in what order to take them," Norgren said.

Overall, being efficient with your time and understanding the program's requirements are key, Norgren said.

"Identify the courses you need to take by writing them down on the worksheet the program provides. This ensures that you are not taking courses you don't necessarily need," Norgren advised. "Challenges that people have had are shared challenges, so talk to someone who has been through it because they will probably be able to give you good advice."

And remember, the clock is ticking. A June 30 deadline is set for financial management professionals.

Team supporting VA receives award

By Debra Valine
Public Affairs Office

The Aurora Veterans Affairs Hospital Replacement Alpha Contract Team was named the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' 2015 Procurement Team of the Year in the Excellence in Contracting Awards Program.

Each year USACE recognizes the achievements and contributions of its contracting workforce for their continuing and exceptional commitment and service. The awards program highlights its very best contracting professionals and honors their superior performance and fine accomplishments.

Col. John W. Henderson, Omaha District commander, in an email recognized there were dozens of people who supported the efforts of this team. The nucleus of the team included employees from USACE's Omaha District and the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville.

Robert Michaels, Doug Hadley, Pete Sturdivant, Glenn Marks, Dick Taylor, Stan Tracey, Sam McGuffey, Jay Ling, and Eric Vokt from Omaha District received support from Huntsville Center's Boyce Ross, Arkie Fanning, Pat Haas and April Rafael-Adams.

"The brilliant efforts of this team to work through extreme complexity to negotiate a new \$571 million fixed price incentive firm completion contract for the remaining work on the Aurora (Colorado) Veterans Affairs Medical Center are truly laudatory and certainly saved our nation tens of millions of dollars in the process," Henderson said. "Kudos to you all for this very well-deserved recognition."

The team worked together to find a solution for completing a Veterans Affairs Medical Complex construction project in Aurora, Colorado. It was decided that USACE would procure a sole source acquisition with Kiewit – Turner, a Joint Venture to finish the last half of the project.

According to the nomination application, USACE implemented a non-traditional approach to the acquisition process called "Alpha Contracting." Alpha Contracting is an acquisition process used to reduce the cycle time by the government and the contractor collaborating on qualifying technical requirements and reaching agreement on risk assessment. The contractor then submits its pricing and the Joint Alpha Acquisition Team, including government and contractor personnel, discuss the pricing in order to reach a fair and reasonable price.

John Jacobson, Omaha District chief of contracting said the team broke new ground on multiple fronts; from bringing key players from various locations throughout USACE together in one location to develop and complete vital acquisition documents (such as the Acquisition Strategy in record time), to the proposed utilization of a Fixed



Photo by Debra Valine

Huntsville Center's Arkie Fanning, April Rafael-Adams, Pat Haas and Boyce Ross are part of the team receiving the Procurement Team of the Year in the USACE Excellence in Contracting Awards Program.

Price Incentive (Firm Target) contract for a half completed construction project. The collaboration and coordination up and down the leadership chain was noteworthy and was directly responsible for the effective streamlining of the acquisition process.

Ross, Huntsville Center's director of engineering, explained that when Omaha District was tasked with taking over and completing this project, they looked to Huntsville Center's Medical Mandatory Center of Expertise and Standardization for assistance validating the design and status of construction.

"What no one expected was how daunting a task it would be to put a new contract in place to complete a 1.2 million square foot medical complex that was 50 percent complete," Ross said. "Omaha needed help from all of USACE figuring out how to put a cost estimate to complete the project together, as well as new a new construction contract in place in less than six months."

Ross said Huntsville Center had developed many programmatic type estimates-to-complete for chemical demilitarization projects over the years that was used to estimate complex facilities like medical, missile and demilitarization projects.

"We borrowed contract capacity from the Walla Walla District Civil Works Cost Center of Expertise and utilized a firm out of Atlanta that our cost engineers had worked with in the past (Project Time and Cost). The estimating team from the Center, augmented by as many as 15 PT&C estimators, developed a detailed estimate of the work left to do on each building in the Aurora complex over a 60-day time period. Ultimately the Fixed Price Incentive (Firm Target) was established very near the government's estimate, the first time that has occurred in my career!"

Succession planning big part of strategic off-site discussions

By Debra Valine
Public Affairs Office

Each year, U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville leadership conducts a strategic off-site that is designed to help shape actions for the coming year.

During the off-site Jan. 19-21, the group discussed succession planning as a way to meet staffing challenges during transition, as well as various other topics.

A key element of transition is succession planning. It helps speed the process of hiring against vacancies if a succession plan is in place.

About half of Huntsville Center's 900 or so employees are over 50 years old and 20 percent of those are eligible for retirement or early voluntary retirement. To get ahead on replacing employees who decide to retire, supervisors can review position descriptions and make any necessary changes to them, develop vacancy announcements and position questionnaires that they have on-hand for when the time comes.

Blaine Guidry, chief of the Geosciences Branch, presented what he sees as a problem in his section: being able to recruit and keep younger employees. His Operation Solarium briefing focused on employees in the Millennial age group, those born between 1982-2000.

"Between 2012 and 2015 there have been over 12 million Millennials enter the workforce," Guidry said. "Huntsville has only added five." He also noted that the number of employees under age 39 has been steadily decreasing since 2012.

But the problem is not specific to hiring Millennials. As the Baby Boom (born between 1946 and



Photo by Debra Valine

Col. Robert Ruch, commander, U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, left; Colleen O'Keefe, Center chief of Contracting; Dan Heinzelman, business director; and Boyce Ross, director of Engineering participate in a strategic off-site Jan. 19-21.

1964) generation retires, they will need to be replaced. He suggested supervisors look at what the younger employees, including Millennials and those in Generation X, 1965-1981, are looking for in an organization, and that supervisors engage the younger employees to get answers.

"Huntsville needs a healthy level of multi-generational diversity to fulfill its mission in 2025," Guidry said.

According to Jen Haapoja, chief of Human Capital Management in the Business Management Office, the most common grade at Huntsville Center is GS-13, and there has been an 8.3 percent increase in GS-13s over four years, from 305 to 388.

Guidry suggested supervisors might want to look at the Integrated Manning Document to identify those positions that could be converted to developmental positions that start at a lower grade. Individuals graduating from college will not initially qualify for the GS-13 position.

Areas identified for emphasis by Haapoja include the low representation rates for Asian Pacific Islander and Hispanic populations,

the high turnover rate for contracting specialists and the generational gaps.

Areas of concern show that the rate of gain for the under 30 workforce is significantly and consistently less than the rate of loss, Haapoja said. "The rate of gain for the under 30 workforce is less than or equal to the gain for the 60+ workforce for the past two years."

To address these areas of concern, Haapoja recommends annually conducting succession planning by identifying critical and key leadership positions and determining those at risk and identifying and defining competencies and skills that are needed for critical and key leadership positions. She suggested building the bench using programs such as Pathways and SMART programs or using reemployed annuitants for mentoring and training junior employees. Other ways to recruit and retain employees may be targeting recruitment by way of career fairs, publications, advertisements, etc., and placing more emphasis on exit interviews and surveys to learn why employees are leaving.

Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Day Celebration encourages fellowship

By Amy Newcomb
Public Affairs Office

The promise of esprit de corps and multicultural food sampling drew employees to the Jan. 22 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Celebration at the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville.

To honor King as an activist, humanitarian and leader of the Civil Rights Movement, Huntsville Center celebrated, “Weaving Diversity into the Fabric of America: We All Have a Place Beneath the Stars!” The event highlighted a multitude of cultures including European, Hispanic, Indian/Native, African and Asian Pacific American.

“Dr. King sought to forge the common ground on which people from all walks of life could join together to address important community issues,” said Angela Morton, Huntsville Center Equal Employment chief. “He believed in a nation of freedom and justice for all, and encouraged all citizens to live up to the purpose and potential of America by uniting and taking action to make this country a better place to live.”

The ideas of unity, purpose and the great things that can happen when people work together toward a common goal are just some of the many reasons we honor Dr. King through service on this special holiday, Morton said.

Morton, who sang gospel songs as part of the Huntsville Center Ensemble, said it was phenomenal that so many people pulled together as a team to make this event a success.

Chip Marin, Installation Support and Programs Management director and keynote speaker for the event, said unity and diversity can be seen

throughout American history.

“The peopling of the United States of America is one of the greatest stories in all of human history,” he said. “Over the years, and still today, a stream of humanity crossed every ocean from every continent to reach the United States. They came speaking every language, representing every nationality, race and religion.”

However, the road to diversity has not always been an easy one, Marin said.

“But, like anything else worth achieving, the road to success must be challenged head on, obstacles overcome and movement, little by little, made each and every day toward achieving the goal,” he said.

During the event, several Huntsville Center employees played music they had written, sang songs and spoke to those gathered about their cultural achievements.

Matthew Urbanic, a lead contracting officer at Huntsville Center, discussed his second-generation Yugoslavian immigrant heritage and what it means to him to

be an American.

“In 1921 when my grandfather crossed over the ocean ... he was awestruck by what he saw and like most immigrants, he made a promise to be worthy of the citizenship he hoped to receive,” he said.

Because of his grandfather’s promise, Urbanic said he made the same vow.

“He wanted that his children would be worthy of their citizenship; he didn’t see it as an entitlement he saw it as something to be earned,” Urbanic said. “Every male in the Urbanic line has served their country. As part of my vow to my line, I enlisted at the age of 17.”

Throughout his life and service to his country, Urbanic said he learned that being American is something worth earning and every citizen does it each day through his or her choices.

During the Redstone Arsenal, Alabama, Martin Luther King Jr. Day event Jan. 20, Huntsville Center won second place in the Team Redstone Martin Luther King Jr. Day display contest.



Photo by Amy Newcomb

Tyler Yell, a student in Installation Support and Programs Management, serves a variety of food to U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville employees during the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Day Celebration Jan. 22.

CES provides development, progression

By Russell Dunford
U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center,
Huntsville

The Civilian Education System or CES is a progressive and sequential leader development program that provides enhanced educational opportunities for Army Civilians throughout their careers. CES is not the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) nor is it under the guidance of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) certification process.

CES provides eight levels of Civilian development courses that are applicable to respective civilian grade levels.

CES essentially is the civilian equivalent of the Army Officer or Enlisted career path professional development defined for one’s civilian career. If you are a retired Army Officer or Noncommissioned Officer, you can submit Army Training records and receive credit up to the “Advance Course.”

After equivalent credit is given, one must register and complete the one week Civilian Education for Senior Leaders (CESL) resident course. Regardless of whether equivalent credit is received, you MUST take the distance learning Foundation Course if you entered the Civilian workforce after 2006.

The Foundation Course does for the civilian workforce, what Basic training does for the new recruit: it strives to instill not only an understanding of the civilian “task, conditions and standards” but the Foundation Course also serves as a means to introduce the civilian workforce to the Army structure and provide a history of “The Army.”

Yes, any retired military member will quickly click through the Army structure courses, but I encourage you to take the time and review the information for this is the very information the new workforce is getting as their basis of knowledge. Soldiers have had the Army history and force structure pounded into us for 20+ years. The new engineer intern or employee has not.

The course I attended was the Civilian Education Senior Leaders Course, or CESL and it is the Leader Development Program within the Civilian Education System taught by the Army Management Staff College (AMSC).

I encourage leaders at every level to add the completion of the Foundation Course to the goals list for employees, interns, summer hires, etc. Like me, initially they will not like it, but in the end will walk away with an appreciation and better understanding. Worst case is you learn nothing, and you can email the Army Management Staff College and provide them feedback on how to improve the course.

What did I learn? Our guest speakers included Senior Army Leadership that one would never get an official call with if they tried on their own accord. Our guest speakers included, but not limited to the following. Some takeaways follow as well from



Courtesy graphic

some speakers.

Vicki Brown, chief, Civilian Training and Leader Development, is a dynamic speaker who is responsible for not only the CESL course but for the Army Career Tracker (ACT) that is being implemented. And yes, ACT very much parallels the Acquisition Corps Record Brief (ACRB). ACT calls it the Civilian Record Brief (CRB) and has an Individual Development Planning (IDP) tool as well as highlighted what training is needed for one to be current and qualified in their respective career field. And yes, it is Brown’s intent that the Acquisition Corps ACRB, IDP and other data will automatically merge into ACT. In fact, the Acquisition Corps career management tools were analyzed and used as a base line to build ACT.

So you are now saying: why do we have ACT and a separate Acquisition Corps online career management tool? Why do we not have one system? Easy, the Acquisition Corps is mandated by Congress to develop and track their workforce career development per the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act or DAWIA Certification process.

Will we get to one system? I certainly believe so. Right now the Big Army has the goal of every member of the civilian workforce to be integrated into Army Career Tracker (<https://actnow.army.mil/>).

Additional courses offered by the Army Management Staff College include: Action Officers Development Course (AODC), Supervisor Development Course (SDC) and Manager Development Course (MDC).

The method of delivery is distributed learning (DL), resident instruction or blended learning, a mixture of both DL and resident instruction.

Interested? Get more information or register for any Army Management Staff College Course at <http://cpol.army.mil/library/train/catalog/ch01-ces5cesl.html>.

Virtual project managers bridge gaps in Corps workforce

By Amy Newcomb
Public Affairs Office

To meet the demands of a very robust military construction (MILCON) mission, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) employee base has grown to some 37,000 talented Civilians and Soldiers. After more than a decade, the MILCON projects are completed, and USACE is looking for creative ways to retain its employees.

One solution that is working well for Huntsville Center is the use of virtual project managers, and because of its success, the Installation Support and Program Management (ISPM) Directorate plans to bring additional virtual project managers to the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville within the next year to work in the Facilities and Medical divisions.

According to Chip Marin, ISPM director, USACE had a multi-billion dollar MILCON program between 2000 and 2013 due to Department of Defense force realignments. Occurring at the same time as the Corp's MILCON efforts, a 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC) was underway.

"Because of BRAC there was a re-stationing of forces because we closed smaller camps and stations and consolidated forces at larger installations," Marin said. "In order to relocate those forces, we had to build new facilities and infrastructure at the bases to which they were moving."

Due to the vast amount of work, USACE had to increase its workforce. However, in 2013 most of USACE's MILCON projects were completed. This left many employees without work, and some districts had a surplus of personnel they no longer needed, Marin said.

USACE had two choices, complete a reduction in force or find its surplus employees work.

A unique opportunity for work presented itself through the Huntsville Center, which works mostly on operations and maintenance, and sustainment restoration and modernization.

"We fix and sustain stuff that is already built, and our program has been going up while new construction is going down," Marin said. "Rather than us hiring new people just for us, we are trying to use the excess people who are out in the geographic districts so they don't have to let them go."

This was a win-win situation, said Marin. Huntsville Center receives an employee who already understands USACE processes, as well as the roles, responsibilities and requirements of project management.

"The virtual project managers are also familiar with the area of responsibility in which they are assigned by their geographic district," he said.



Courtesy photo

Lynn Daniels, left, a senior virtual project manager for Huntsville Center's Facility Reduction Program, visits Fort Bragg, North Carolina during a demolition project. Pictured with Daniels is Bryan Smith, Savannah District quality assurance representative and NorthStar Contractor Amos

Lynn Daniels, a virtual senior project manager for Huntsville Center's Facility Reduction Program, works from the Seattle District's Missoula Business Office in Montana. She manages demolition projects, primarily on the west coast, for the U.S. Army Installation Management Command, NASA, Defense Logistics Agency and two USACE districts.

Her proximity to projects is a benefit to Huntsville Center, but being a virtual project manager is like an extreme form of teleworking, and if you want to be successful you have to be self-motivated, Daniels said.

"I don't hesitate to pick up the phone and call my teammates, my customers and my contractors," she said. "I am in constant motion from initiating projects, managing those in the field and then closing out old projects."

A busy schedule and geographical separation sometimes requires a work schedule adjustment, which is nothing new for Lisa Cass, another Huntsville Center virtual project manager.

Cass, who works from the Seattle District, is a maintenance and service project manager for the Huntsville Center's Access Control Point program and likes to ensure communication is streamlined with all project stakeholders regardless of their time zones.

"Having all the paperwork up to date, schedules reviewed and budgets under control are also essential to ensure seamless virtual project management with team members," she said.



Contracting Corner:

O'Keefe takes award

While leading the largest contracting workforce in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Colleen O'Keefe successfully implemented several innovative initiatives this past year to develop, retain and empower employees at every level of their careers. Those efforts have earned her recognition as the 2015 Manager of the Year in the USACE Excellence in Contracting Awards Program.

Huntsville Center's Contracting Directorate chief since 2014, O'Keefe oversees a team of more than 150 contracting professionals who annually execute some \$2 billion in complex acquisitions worldwide.

"Ms. O'Keefe understands the importance of empowering the workforce and has always been a spirited advocate for contracting professionals," said Stuart A. Hazlett, USACE Director of Contracting.

"While most managers accept that taking care of and developing people is important, she goes beyond and embodies that commitment in all her interactions with those she leads."

O'Keefe spearheaded initiatives to enhance the technical competencies of the Center's acquisition workforce



Colleen O'Keefe

and promote contracting excellence, said Hazlett, who announced the 2015 winners in December.

Taking a very hands-on leadership approach – O'Keefe conducts team lunch-and-learns, monthly town halls, bimonthly managers meetings and monthly team lead meetings. She has begun succession planning to equip employees for the next level by providing leadership and professional development opportunities in the form of rotational assignments across the Center's 42 programs, temporary promotions and senior leader shadowing.

To help ensure her contracting team

has a solid regulatory foundation and the Center's non-contracting project delivery team (PDT) members gain a better understanding of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), O'Keefe implemented weekly lunch-and-learn training on each FAR part.

Her 52 Weeks of the FAR training has been implemented in several districts across USACE, and the U.S. Army Contracting Command headquartered on Redstone Arsenal.

"This is a great recognition," said Col. Robert Ruch, Huntsville Center commander. "We have incredible pressures here that other Corps of Engineers offices don't have," Ruch said.

"There's a huge concentration of contracting personnel in Huntsville, which translates to a huge churn of people moving from one contracting organization to another. Not only does she have the largest workforce, but she is constantly having to hire, manage the people who are moving around and identifying ways to retain the incredible talent we have here in the Center. To be named manager of the year is really something special."

Government Purchase Card billing officials review begins April

Procurement Analysts Lelani Banks and Nory Maldonado will performing a review of all Government Purchase Card billing officials' records beginning April.

This annual review is a mandatory requirement and is one of the components used to verify the accuracy and quality of the GPC program at Huntsville Center. The review will consist of ensuring records conform to the Army Federal Acquisition Regulation (AFARS) Appendix

EE, and cardholders are correctly performing and documenting GPC purchases.

Billing officials review their own cardholders prior to the Procurement Analyst review. Findings of the reviews will be shared with the billing official and cardholder. If systemic deficiencies or trends are identified, the results will be shared with the entire Center. "Spot" training will also be provided to ensure that Billing Officials and Cardholders are trained on the proper GPC purchase procedures.

Volunteer judges help science fair inspire students to pursue STEM

By Amy Newcomb
Public Affairs Office

Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) jobs are on the rise in the U.S., but according to the Department of Education only 16 percent of high school seniors are interested in becoming STEM professionals.

In an effort to increase student interest in STEM fields Challenger Elementary School held its annual science fair Jan. 20.

Michele Wallace, Challenger Elementary School principal, said the science fair helps students understand the procedures of scientific experiments and research.

“Kids might learn facts and figures during science class but they rarely have enough time to go through a scientific process,” she said. “We wanted to make sure they knew the process of how to think through a problem, create a hypothesis, go through the trials and then present it.”

After 10 weeks of hard work and preparation, students were ready to show their presentations.

Eight volunteers from the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville offered their STEM field expertise to help judge more than 110 science fair projects during the event.

Wade Doss, Huntsville Center’s Civil Structures Division chief, volunteered as a science fair judge to stay up-to-date on how well area school systems are promoting STEM. He said he believes the students are in good hands.

“These are our future leaders,” he said. “I think events like this are great ... the intelligence and ability of these kids in the things they are doing right now are impressive.”

Doss said volunteering at events like this shows children how important it is and helps get them interested in STEM.

“It’s important for them to hear from, and get feedback from, engineers and scientist because those



Photo by Amy Newcomb

Steven Pautz, a center closeout manager for Chemical Demilitarization, speaks to Aiden Barnard about his “Refraction of Light” fifth grade science fair project during the Challenger Elementary School Science Fair Jan. 20. Barnard placed first in the physical category of the school’s science fair and will move forward to the Regional Science Fair competition.

are the people who do these things for a living,” he said. “So, hopefully it will inspire them to be an engineer or a scientist one day.”

Fifth-grader Aiden Barnard’s “Study of Light Behavior” project placed first in one of three science fair categories.

Barnard said the idea for his project came after his dad showed him that after placing a quarter under a glass of water and bending down, you could no longer see the quarter.

“I asked my dad, ‘Why did this happen?’ and he told me, ‘Refraction,’” he said. “I knew the science fair was coming up ... so, we went online and researched refraction.”

Barnard’s hypothesis was “just because three substances are clear doesn’t mean light behaves the same way” when it passes through a substance.

Barnard and other fifth-grade students who placed first, second and third will go on to compete in the Regional Science Fair.

To learn more about STEM and its importance to the future of our nation, visit the the U.S. Department of Education webpage at www.ed.gov/stem. Interested in volunteering for other Huntsville Center STEM outreach events? If so, contact the Huntsville Center public affairs office at 256-895-1694.

Furnishings Program completes \$2.3 million project for Army Contracting Command

By Amy Newcomb
Public Affairs Office

The U.S. Army Contracting Command’s (ACC) new headquarters building renovation included a \$2.3 million furniture procurement project through the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville Furnishings Program.

Sara Cook, a Furnishings Program project manager and interior designer for the project, said this was a full-service project that included provisions for a space planning concept prior to purchasing the furniture.

Space planning involves creating interior spatial areas and developing plans and layouts for furniture and equipment placement.

“Redstone’s Directorate of Public Works gave us the plans in AutoCAD, which is a computer-based program that allowed us to design a layout for the workspaces from the empty shell of the building,” Cook said. “So, if they wanted 50 people in one room then we created the furniture to fit the number of people they needed, per room.”

During the space planning process, the Furnishings Program also considers things like the customer’s project goals and priorities, organizational structure and relationships, as well as building and safety codes and more.

“Health, safety and wellness are a big concern because we have to design our layouts to meet all of the Life Safety Codes per National Fire Protection Agency guidelines,” Cook said. “You also have to design around how many people they need in each area and who needs to work close to one another.”

Understanding the number of people and organizational structure is important information when constructing floor plans, said Krysta Zurowski, who managed the project.

Normally, the Furnishings team receives furniture packages that already include the space planning and design phase. This can add time constraints that do not allow as much interaction with the customer.

“With [Contracting Command] ... we had all the information up front so we knew who was going where and we could plan it for them to meet their needs,” she said. “Based on their feedback, they are happy with the furniture. And, we know, based on our furniture specifications and the quality of furniture received, the customer will have a product that will last, so we consider this project a success.”

Additionally, the Furnishings Program was asked to develop a branding solution for ACC’s building. Branding

features included an updatable digital and magnetic graphic world map display with the ACC unit crest in the main lobby, as well as display cases and digital graphic visual displays in the command suite areas.

Due to the amount of customized work needed, Huntsville Center’s Special Projects Program (SPP) took on the task.

The \$500,000 branding project, the first of its kind for the Huntsville Center SPP, has successfully completed the first of three phases, said Jerad McIntyre, SPP project manager.

“ACC is very pleased with what we did,” McIntyre said. “Our contracting folks really thought out of the box to do this right for our neighbor and customer.”

As the project goes on, the SPP will continue to place 2D and 3D digital graphic displays on each floor, design a mapping system for the entire building and add directional signage, as well as photos and visuals.

ACC celebrated the completion of the new headquarters building on Redstone Arsenal, Alabama with a ribbon-cutting ceremony Jan. 7.

Personnel are scheduled to begin moving into the building later this month with the move to be completed in February.



Photo by Amy Newcomb

U.S. Army Contracting Command leadership cut the cake during the ribbon-cutting ceremony held at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama, to celebrate the completion of their newly renovated headquarters building Jan. 7.

Ethics survival reference guide: what you need to know

By Clay Weisenberger
Office of Counsel

Serving as your ethics counselor means navigating those murky areas where the rules meet real life. The following is a quick reference of the most frequently asked questions I have received over the past years. Think of it as your “Ethics Survival Guide.”

The information below is to be used solely for general reference. Seek clarification from counsel on specific issues before you act.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT: A federal employee may have outside employment or business interests but may not represent a contractor on matters involving the government.

A federal employee may work for a contractor on federal contracts in a non-representational, behind the scenes role, but only if there is no conflict of interest. Substantial ownership by a federal employee in a company disqualifies that company from receiving a federal contract. All outside employment requires supervisor and OC notification.

PROHIBITED SOURCES: Prohibited sources are everywhere.

Don’t accept gifts from prohibited sources, unless appropriate due to a relationship outside of official duties. Yes, you may accept a gift valued under \$20 on some occasions, but that doesn’t mean you should accept it. Ask yourself, “Why is the contractor offering this gift?” If the answer is possibly to advance business interests, you should politely decline.

What may seem harmless to you may be perceived differently by others.

RIDING WITH

CONTRACTORS: Do not rideshare with contractors. There are a few rare exceptions, but saving money and convenience are not even considerations.

CONTRACTOR

RECOGNITION AND AWARDS:

DoDI 1400.25-V451 now prohibits any form of contractor recognition. The reason is “to avoid issues in connection with contractual relationships and obligations, actual or perceived conflicts of interest, and actual or perceived acts of favoritism.”

CHARITIES: No matter how great the cause, the government cannot endorse charities. Fundraising in the

workplace is prohibited, except for CFC. You may, however, place an order form for Girl Scout cookies or school/church fundraisers in your workspace, but do not solicit co-workers on contractors. Collection boxes for food, toy or clothing drives are permitted with Center approval. All other fundraising should be limited to “unofficial announcements” and conducted outside of duty hours.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY: Don’t wear a political shirt to work, and don’t wear a work shirt to a political rally. A bumper sticker on your vehicle is okay, but a bumper sticker at your desk is not. Be careful of discussing political views at work and never use official email for such conversations.

SOCIAL MEDIA: The pitfalls of using social media outlets are endless. Use caution when posting on social media while at work. Federal employees may not engage in partisan political activity while on duty, or when using government equipment.

Remember, it takes years to build a reputation and only minutes to destroy it. If you have an ethics question, email clay.weisenberger@usace.army.mil before you act.

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