



Huntsville Center
Bulletin



U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville

Determining Strategy

Huntsville Center leadership discusses strategic initiatives that will guide the organization into the future.

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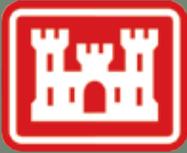


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Hail and farewell

Farewell

Merton Cota, Mary Johansen, Benjamin Wissenburg, Environmental & Munitions Center of Expertise; **Felicia Culbertson, Oksana Joye, Brittney Cowan, Melinda Windham**, Cener Contracting; **Sherry Page**, Office of Counsel; **Derek Prosser**, Executive Office; **Dwayne Ford, Marvene Seaman**, Environmental & Munitions Center of Expertise; **Lary Quick, James Croom, Michael Eisenzimmer, Horace Spoon, Linden Torchia**, Engineering Directorate; **Charles Ford**, Programs Director; **Al Neva**, Business Management Office; **Clint Kimbrell**, Installation Support and Programs Management Directorate

On the cover
Photo by Michael May.

Commander's thoughts



Team,
First of all, I want to congratulate all the employees who are participating in my fitness challenge.

Fitness and well-being are very important. I think we all benefit when we make healthier life choices (whether that is eating habits, stress management, exercise or quality of sleep), and we are lucky to have a facility here in Huntsville where you can take advantage of classes coordinated by your fellow employees. If you have not yet joined the challenge, check for an email from the fitness center. It's not too late to sign up!

Huntsville Center senior leaders recently met for two days to help me come up with a strategic way ahead for the Center. We identified seven topics for development as strategic initiatives: Huntsville Center governance structure, strategic engagement and communication plan, project management transition, third-party financing center of expertise, medical military construction staffing and organization, a human capital plan that includes the action plan in response to the Federal Employee Viewpoint and Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute surveys, and the Acquisition Gateway. We will present these initiatives to HQ USACE when they come to Huntsville in May for the Command Strategic Review and we'll meet again in June to assess our progress.

Additionally, we reviewed and discussed our mission and vision statements. The mission statement captures what we are tasked to do today, and the vision statement describes what we should look like in 3-5 years that will enable us to execute our

future workload. I approved a minor amendment to our mission statement to emphasize our support to the Nation. It reads: The U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville provides specialized technical expertise, global engineering solutions, and cutting edge innovations through centrally managed programs in support of national interests.

In the vision statement, I want to emphasize to everyone the importance of certifications and our ability to be the organization that others turn to first for innovation and leadership. The vision statement reads: A certified, professional work force with an expeditionary mind-set capable of pioneering solutions to unique, complex and high risk missions in strengthened partnership with the USACE enterprise, key DOD stakeholders and our strategic allies.

It is time for us to complete my initial Army Readiness Assessment Program (ARAP) survey. This survey is important to me because it will provide me with your valuable feedback regarding our organization's safety climate, as perceived by you. Information will be sent to you by email with a suspense of April 14. Your candid feedback is critical to our efforts to assess and improve the safety culture within the Center. I appreciate your support. I know there are numerous surveys – but your vote counts! Take the time to complete the survey

In April we will officially sign the collective bargaining agreement with the union. It has been a couple of years with a lot of hard work negotiating the agreement. I look forward to this important milestone.



Col. John S. Hurley

We said farewell to Charles Ford, our programs director, March 3, after nearly 40 years as a federal employee. Because of the hiring freeze, we were not immediately able to permanently fill this position, therefore we have temporarily assigned Albert "Chip" Marin to the acting programs director position. With Chip moving to the programs director position, Arthur Martin assumed the role of acting director of the Installation Support and Programs Management Directorate.

We also said farewell to Gina Elliott, who retired March 31. She served in many key positions in her 37 years of federal service, to include acting deputy commander between the departure of Lt. Col. Bill Burruss and the arrival of Lt. Col. Burlin Emery.

Both Charles and Gina will be greatly missed.

We'll have the annual organization day picnic, June 9, 10 a.m., at Monte

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**US Army Corps
of Engineers**

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BULLETIN

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Editor..... William S. Farrow



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Employee Spotlight : James “Jay” Clark

By Susan L. Follett
Special to the Bulletin

What began as a summer job with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers turned into a career for James “Jay” Clark, thanks to a boss’s encouragement and an early assignment that provided a young architect the opportunity to do more than just design rest rooms.

Clark is Huntsville Center’s Interior Design Branch chief. However, he started with USACE as a summer hire in 1982 while he was in college.

“I only expected to be there for that one summer,” he said. “But I received a nice letter of commendation for the work I had done, plus my boss had told me he really wanted me back the next summer, so I reapplied and came back the following year.”

After a couple of summers, Clark was offered a temporary position at a higher level than most young architects.

“Also, I had been involved in actual design projects, not just doing toilet details like would have been the case at a large architectural/engineering firm,” he said.

“Even before I graduated, I was put in charge of a project at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, to develop final working drawings.”

Much of Clark’s work over the past 30 years has been in standard designs for several types of facilities, including physical fitness facilities, child development centers, school-age centers, youth centers and fire stations.

“Developing these standards has led to major improvements in the quality of life for Soldiers and their families across the Army while at the same time conserving taxpayer dollars,” he noted.



Courtesy photo

He was also involved in establishing centralized procurement of furniture for unaccompanied housing, providing a uniform level of quality and durable furniture across the Army, and reducing the amount of money the Army spends on furniture.

His work has taken him to physical fitness facilities in Germany, Department of Defense schools in Puerto Rico and planning meetings in Alaska, as well as sites across the United States for a range of projects. He credits his career longevity to that diversity, and to the satisfaction of a job well done.

“I think what is most memorable for me now are the facilities that were built in the last 10 years to the standards I developed,” Clark said.

“I find it very rewarding to visit those facilities now that they’re completed: to hear all of the positive feedback and to hear from the facility managers how popular the new facility has become, mainly due to a number of the features that I incorporated within my standards.”

One of the biggest changes he has seen over the past four decades is technology.

“We used to draw on Mylar sheets using plastic lead in our mechanical pencils. Everything was done by hand.”

Clark was one of the first architects in the Corps to use computer-aided design and drafting (CADD) when it was introduced to the organization in the mid-1980s, and he used it to create the first standard designs.

“In fact, to make the drawings look better, I created the drawings on CADD and the verbiage on a word-processing type of computer, and stuck the text onto the drawings with clear sheets.”

The other noteworthy change is the role of the architect in USACE.

“When I started back in the Tulsa (Oklahoma) District in 1982, they had just created the Architectural Section, and we only had one or two licensed architects. The role of the architect within USACE at that time was also not well known or defined. Over the years, the value of the architect to a product team has become much more apparent and accepted.”

In the summer of 2016, he applied for a promotion to serve as chief of the Center’s newly formed Interior Design Branch and was selected. The new role represents a big change, managing nearly 30 interior designers and handling architectural designs, criteria and review, but it is one that Clark takes on without hesitation.

“When I started here, architecture wasn’t a common profession within the Corps. Over my years here, I have helped grow the role. Now I feel it’s time for me to give back. Interior design has not had a predominant role in the Corps, and I’m really committed to this great group of designers and to changing that culture, like the architects did.”

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 did you take away from attending the Project Development Team Boot Camp March 29?



“ Coming from outside U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and starting my first job in the federal government in November, PDT Boot Camp answered many questions I had about Huntsville Center and its mission. From a public affairs perspective, it was eye-opening to see the amount of work and coordination the professionals of the Center put into seeing their projects through to a successful completion. I came away with a more solid understanding of and respect for the people working for the Center. ”

Mark Thompson
Public Affairs Office

“ I thought it was an excellent general overview of the various departments within the Center. It helped me understand the benefit of communication, an integral and vital ingredient for the overall success of project execution from inception to completion. ”



Karim Manji
Commercial Utilities Program

“ It clarified how all the divisions in the Center work together, forming Project Development Teams to meet the ever changing needs of our customers. I walked out with a better understanding of the importance of the Public Affairs Office in the Center’s success; how scheduling impacts post-award performance; why a Strong Matrix PDT is the best PDT; and the golden rule: Communicate! Communicate! Communicate! ”



Brecken Bailey
Facilities Division

Commander

Continued from page 3

Sano State Park. Current and retired employees are welcome. Requests for nominations for the Engineer Day Awards was sent out by email March 28. Please take some time to think of

employees who have done exceptional work over the past year and nominate them in the correct category. Also, volunteer to assist the Huntsville Center Activities Association with planning and executing the day. It takes a lot of folks

to make this a fun day for everyone.

There has been a lot going on around the Center since my last Commander’s Column. I appreciate your hard work and dedication to the Huntsville Center. Essayons!



Photo by Michael May

Col. John S. Hurley, Huntsville Center commander, unveiled his concept for a briefing chart that breaks down Huntsville Center's missions by portfolio at the start of day two of the Center's two-day strategic off-site March 23.

Leaders meet to determine Center's way ahead

By Debra Valine
Public Affairs Office

Leaders from the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, gathered March 23 – the second day of a two-day off-site – to discuss strategic initiatives that would guide the organization into the future.

Huntsville Center Commander Col. John S. Hurley opened the discussions Feb. 22 – the first day of the off-site – by asking: “Are there a couple of things we can work on, i.e., organizational changes, staffing, processes, that we can put in place that will put us in a better position to execute 18-36 months down the road?”

To answer the questions, the off-site kicked off with each of the directors presenting an analysis of where their programs are and introducing action items to be further researched.

Taking into account the information presented during the day, the leaders came up with 16 action areas to be explored by project delivery teams to determine which actions to pursue.

“We are going to focus on a finite number of opportunities, appoint

people/teams, and give them a month to flesh out the details,” Hurley said in February.

“It is acceptable to come back in a month and say it isn't something we can do because of timing, issues, project, etc.”

The 16 action items introduced in February yielded 13 topics for discussion March 23

“We identified the seven strategic initiatives we will pursue for the next few months,” Hurley said.

Hurley said he would present the initiatives to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deputy commanding general and senior staff at the command strategic review scheduled for May, and talk about all the initiatives, what Center leaders learned about themselves and the results of these discussions. The initiatives identified were Huntsville Center's governance structure, strategic engagement and communication plan, project management transition, third-party financing center of expertise, medical military construction staffing and organization, a human capital plan that includes the action plan in response to the Federal Employee Viewpoint

and Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute surveys, and Acquisition Gateway. In a few months, the group will meet again to assess progress.

- The governance structure team will look at information and decision-making procedures that exist in the Center's governance structure. The goal is to have the forums and decision making bodies in place to share information, make corporate decisions and then disseminate those decisions and information, and ensure unity of effort.

- The strategic communication and engagement initiative will review the means and methods the Center uses to communicate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers headquarters, USACE Division and District commands, and key external partners and stakeholders on a regular basis. The goals are to create the most efficient and effective means of communicating with these key organizations, ensure the Center's efforts are fully integrated with other USACE and Defense activities, assess the quality of our relationships and

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Off-site

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make investments to improve relationships.

- A project management transition initiative will look at the risks and vulnerabilities inherent in the transition of projects between teams or the transition of individuals on and off teams. While looking at lessons learned is a necessary component of the initiative, this focus area must analyze and minimize the inefficiencies inherent in transitions with a goal of increasing project quality and minimizing expense.

- The Center will explore the utility of developing a center of expertise for third-party financing that any USACE activity can leverage. Because Huntsville Center’s Energy Division is experienced in this type of contracting, a group will explore third-party financing other areas and collaborate with HQ and other elements of USACE in order to develop the technical expertise to use third-party financing across the enterprise.

- As the need for federal medical construction continues to grow, it is critical that Huntsville Center build the bench in medical expertise in all career fields to support medical construction programs. The Center must have qualified technical staff to be able to support USACE Divisions and Districts execute their new medical construction programs, while maintaining sufficient staff to support our medical facility renovation programs, said Boyce Ross, Engineering director.

- The leadership recognized the need to comprehensively update its human capital plan. According to Jen Haapoja, Human Capital chief, 16 percent of the workforce can retire now, and another 35 percent will be eligible to retire within in five years. Additionally, the nature of the work that the Center executes continues to adapt to the changing needs of the Center’s stakeholders. As a result of these realities, the need for a robust and executable succession plan has never been greater. Further, the leadership recognized the need to ensure the human capital plan was informed by the issues identified in the FEV and DEOMI surveys. Together, this plan will position the Center for future success.

- Todd Watts, Facilities Division chief, presented how the General Services Administration’s Acquisition Gateway can benefit 33 of the Center’s 42 program areas.

The Center recently received the Army’s only Best-in-Class Designation for its Facilities Reduction Program contract vehicles.

Watts suggested taking advantage of the opportunity to expand the Center’s participation before use of the Acquisition Gateway becomes mandatory and the available contracting vehicles may not meet the Center’s needs.

“We will see how we are doing on these strategic assessments,” Hurley said. “We are having our Command Strategic Review in May, and I would like to be able to present our strategic initiatives then.



Photo by Michael May

Lee Tew, Center Contracting, briefs attendees on information flow at the Huntsville Center off-site March 23.

“I approved a minor amendment to our mission statement to emphasize our support to the Nation,” Hurley said. It reads: The U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville provides specialized technical expertise, global engineering solutions, and cutting edge innovations through centrally managed programs in support of national interests.

“In the vision statement, I want to emphasize to everyone the importance of certifications and our ability to be the organization that others turn to first for innovation and leadership,” Hurley said.

The vision statement reads: A certified, professional work force with an expeditionary mind-set capable of pioneering solutions to unique, complex and high risk missions in strengthened partnership with the USACE enterprise, key DOD stakeholders and our strategic allies.

Center's programs director Ford retires

By William S. Farrow
Public Affairs Office

After nearly four decades of service to his nation, Charles Ford, Huntsville Center's program director, retired March 3.

However, Ford isn't just retiring from a career, he's stepping away from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the organization with the greatest impact on his life.

"I wanted to be an Army Engineer. That's what my dad did for 20 years, and that's what I wanted to do. He was a lieutenant colonel in the Corps of Engineers," Ford said.

Ford grew up a military brat – a term of endearment used to describe the child of a parent or parents serving full-time in the U.S. Armed Forces. As a brat, Ford experienced a mobile upbringing with extensive exposure to foreign and American regional cultures, and developed a love of traveling.

He also grew up with a heightened sense of patriotism and a pursuit of a service-related career.

"I was born in England, and lived in three countries, three states and one U.S. territory before my father retired from the Army and settled in Montgomery, Alabama, to take a job with the state," Ford said.

Following graduating from Jefferson Davis High School in Montgomery in 1972, Ford attended Auburn University where he enrolled in the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps. In December of 1976 he earned his bachelor's degree in civil engineering, was commissioned in the Army as a second lieutenant and married Rhonda, his college sweetheart. After obtaining an educational delay from the Army, Ford went on to obtain a master's degree in geotechnical engineering before going on active duty in 1978.

With his initial training at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, complete, his first assignment was as the facility engineer with the 558th Artillery Group in Athens, Greece. The assignment allowed Ford and his new bride, Rhonda, to travel extensively throughout Greece as well as taking trips to Turkey, Egypt, Israel and the Soviet Union. Rhonda, a Montgomery native, knew she wanted to travel, making assignments overseas more interesting and exciting.

The Fords returned to Fort Belvoir in 1982 where he served for two years as the Prime Power Production Specialist school commandant. However, he and his wife knew they wanted to return overseas as soon as possible, but the



Photo by William S. Farrow

Charles Ford, Huntsville Center's programs director, retired March 3.

opportunities to do so as an Army officer just were not available.

Ford made the decision to transition out of the active duty Army in 1984 and began looking for engineering work that was rewarding professionally and would allow his family to see more of the world. He took a civilian position at Fort Belvoir working in the systems division at the U.S. Army Facility and Engineering Support Agency.

Within a year, Ford accepted a position overseas with the USACE Turkey Area office at Incirlik Air Base. Ford and his family called Turkey home for five years, followed by a

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Ford

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project manager position at a USACE office in Germany and a return to Turkey for another four-year assignment where he said he held all the positions a civilian engineer could hold in the area office there.

“I found it all very rewarding. All the jobs overseas, and especially in Turkey, taught me a lot about construction, how to deal with contractors and stakeholders, and how an installation operates,” Ford said.

With twin daughters reaching their teens, Ford said he and Rhonda knew it was time to return to the states.

“You enjoy living overseas, but you miss family,” Ford said. “I wanted to be near home and I knew some people here in Huntsville. After more than 15 years working overseas I had gained a significant amount of experience in both project management and construction and because Huntsville Division supported some of my projects in Turkey I had knowledge of the Huntsville mission.”

Ford said he was willing to accept a downgrade from a GS-14 to a GS-12 to move to Huntsville Division.

“My family comes first. Huntsville’s a nice town, and the Center had a great mission, so in December of 1996 I began working here at Huntsville Division in the medical program as a project manager,” he said.

In 1997, after USACE designated Huntsville Division as the Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, Ford began working the Center’s Chemical Demilitarization mission climbing the ladder from alternate technology chief to deputy director.

However, before becoming deputy director, he had the opportunity to work on a very unique project that took him back overseas.

In 1998 the U.S. government assigned the Huntsville Center as the U.S. construction oversight agent for chemical demilitarization activities in

the former Soviet Union.

“The Center was tasked to provide contract planning, management and on-site program management for construction of the Russian Chemical Weapons Destruction Complex at Shchuch’ye, Russia,” Ford said. “I was detailed to the site east of Ural Mountains where I was the first site manager, and I kicked off construction on the site.”

Ford said the project was unique because he was working with Russian engineers and contractors to build a plant to dispose of Russian chemical weapons.

“We were in charge of facility construction, and the Russians were in charge of the demilitarization operations there,” Ford said.

“I was only there from January through June before turning it over to subsequent site managers but it was a great learning experience. There were a lot of construction practices in Russia that were totally alien to me. Living in different countries, I learned about engineering techniques and learned there are ways to do the same thing differently, but this was very different. I questioned some of the things they were doing, requiring that they demonstrate their methods were allowed by their codes. So I had to adapt to different construction methods, allow the contractor to do their job and at the same time deal with the Russian government. It was very interesting assignment.”

Ford returned to the Center as the deputy chief and subsequently Director of the Chemical Demilitarization program.

While in the position as chief, Ford soon targeted a specific Center position that had not even been created.

“Jim Cox was the business director, and he was looking at creating a project management directorate, and he asked me for my advice on how to organize it,” Ford said.

“After I helped him in the planning

and laying it all out, I told him ‘I want that job (directorship chief).’ It wasn’t a pay raise, it was a grade equivalent position to the one I was in, but it was something I thought I was suited to do because I was passionate about project management.”

Ford stayed in the position as director of what eventually became the Installation Support and Programs Management Directorate until becoming the Center’s Programs Director, the senior civilian position at the Center.

However, he said when he took his first job at the then Huntsville Division, he and his wife never expected to be in Huntsville more than three years.

“Huntsville Center is dynamic. With an ever changing work environment and mission requirements, the Center is able to adapt. I moved from job-to-job at the Center, and I really enjoyed every position I had and before you know it, 20 years passed,” he said.

“I love the Corps of Engineers. Earlier in my career I had opportunities to leave the Corps for higher grade positions with NASA and GSA, declining both to stay with the Corps. I liked the professionalism of the Corps, the mission of the Corps and the locations where the Corps operates, and the more I worked with other agencies, the more I realized the Corps of Engineers is unique.”

In retirement, Ford said initially he will concentrate on home improvement projects.

He said he also wants to give more time to his church. Joined by Rhonda, he will continue to travel.

Ford said he always knew he wanted to be in the Army Corps of Engineers and to travel.

For most of his life that’s what he has done.

“I was born in the Corps; my birthday is the same as the Corps’ birthday. It’s a fabulous organization. I’m going to miss the Corps.”

Reach out call saves Army post valuable resources, enhances force protection

By William S. Farrow
Public Affairs Office

With a simple phone call, a Huntsville Center project manager prevented the loss of use of vital access control points for an extended period of time as well as potentially saving her customer millions of dollars.

After the Army Office of the Provost Marshal General requested that Huntsville Center Access Control Point Program look into Reilly Road and Canopy Lane road projects at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Heather Wilburn was assigned as project manager to provide oversight for design-build construction and infrastructure upgrades for the two access control points at the largest military base by population on earth.

Wilburn learned from Fort Bragg officials that an agreement made between Fort Bragg and the North Carolina Department of Transportation more than 20 years ago required NCDOT to provide assistance with construction of entry ways to the base did not adequately account for current construction standards and would not be usable if the current construction plan was followed.

Wilburn began digging through the paperwork for the project developed in the late 1990s to relieve traffic congestion around Fort Bragg. With more than 50,000 active duty personnel assigned and 150,000 family members and retirees serviced there, the installation also employs more than 10,000 civilian employees and contractors.

The resolution to the issue was the construction of Interstate 295, known as the Fayetteville Outer Loop. The project saw Fort Bragg Directorate of Public Works and NCDOT work together to develop the 39-mile outer loop, reducing the volume of traffic on



Photo by Michael May

During his visit to Huntsville Center Feb. 16, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Commander Lt. Gen. Todd Semonite presented Commander's Awards for Civilian Service to Access Control Point Program's Heather Wilburn and Ron Brook.

portions of the local street network and provide interstate connectivity for the region and provide Fort Bragg direct connections to I-95.

Wilburn said she knew a project as large as the Outer Loop takes a long time to complete, and although an agreement was made years ago, things had changed. However, she said she knew the parties involved were intent on meeting their obligations.

"During the planning stages in the 90s, NCDOT agreed to take on some of the costs associated with entry gates, but the agreement was very vague," Wilburn said. "However, that agreement came prior to 9-11 and an increase in stringent base access requirements."

Although many of the gates associated with the Outer Loop project have been upgraded over the years, Wilburn came to the project with her focus being the upgrades on the gates at Reilly Road and Canopy Lane.

"I'm working with Fort Bragg Department of Emergency Services to submit unfinanced requirements for all remaining facilities required to meet Army ACP standards," Wilburn

said. "That included vehicle barriers, guard booths, gate houses, lighting and generators, all which are standard for Army ACPs," she said.

"Even though the agreement between the agencies stated NCDOT would provide infrastructure upgrades at the gates and was a 20 year old agreement, I felt NCDOT would come through."

At that point, Wilburn picked up the phone, called NCDOT, and asked if they would provide support. Their reaction was 'yes.'

"Sometimes you just have to ask," Wilburn said. "After the negotiations were complete, NCDOT agreed to provide necessary conduit to run power and communication lines and they agreed to provide roadway lighting and relocation of utilities. That's where the big savings are," Wilburn said.

With NCDOT providing assistance with the infrastructure upgrades, Wilburn said the cost savings for Fort Bragg could reach as high as \$2 million.

"Putting in lighting and moving existing utilities around is an expensive

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Call

Continued from page 10
undertaking,” she said.

Ron Brook, Huntsville Center ACP program manager, said that Wilburn asking NCDOT to meet their portion of an agreement made decades ago is resulting in many advantages to Fort Bragg’s budget and mission.

“Army Installation Management Command asked us (Huntsville Center ACP Program) to provide project management so that

the right questions were asked and to ensure we were meeting Army standards. Part of good project management is oversight and coordination of multiple agencies to save taxpayers money and ensure compliance with Army ACP standards that are vital to protect Fort Bragg personnel and residents,” Brook said.

“The Outer Loop has taken years to complete. All these individual project management pieces require oversight, coordination and

management by a competent PM with access control point experience to ensure that design requirements and input from the various parties are integrated, coordinated and scheduled to meet NCDOT restrictions. Heather Wilburn did a great job,” Brook said.

Fort Bragg officials were so pleased with ACP team’s work that the Fort Bragg Department of Emergency Services, Physical Security Division awarded

a Commander’ Award for Civilian Service to Wilburn for her management of the design build construction and Brook and Lisa Cass, ACP project manager, for their maintenance and services support on the effort.

Col. Eugenia Guilmartin, Director of Emergency Services at Fort Bragg, stated the team “greatly enhanced Fort Bragg’s Force Protection and ACP Operations Program and represents the very best of Civilian service.

Elliott retires after 37 years’ service to USACE

By William S. Farrow
Public Affairs Office

After 37 years of service to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gina Elliott has retired.

Throughout her career, Elliott successfully managed complex, high priority projects spanning design, procurement, construction and service acquisitions.

While attending Tulane University Elliott began her Corps career in 1980 as a student intern at the New Orleans District. After she received a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering in 1982 she worked full time with the district as a civil engineer in construction administration.

In 1985 Elliott moved to Huntsville, Alabama, and began working at what was then the Huntsville Division. Elliott filled various positions here to include cost engineer, value engineer, quality engineer, and project/program manager.

Her leadership positions began in the Utility Monitoring and Control Systems Program where she served as branch chief. Elliott also served as the civilian deputy commander for Huntsville Center for four months in 2014, a position normally held by an Army engineering officer.

“As a commander who has been

involved with three or four major support commands, I know they don’t ask any civilian to be a deputy commander—I really takes someone special to do that,” Col. John Hurley, Huntsville Center commander, said during Elliott’s retirement ceremony.

After serving as deputy commander, her last career assignment was as chief of the Facilities Division with a program portfolio that included information technology services, facility repair and renewal, facility reduction, access control points, base operations, and DLA-Fuels maintenance and service.

During the ceremony Hurley said he had emailed several of her peers prior to the ceremony asking them to give him a couple of words to describe Elliott.

“There were four words repeated three or more times completely independently and those words were dedicated, passionate, knowledgeable and professional,” Hurley said. “If there’s anything to remember about Gina, it’s that list of words.”

Addressing the audience during the end of the ceremony, Elliott said that through all the programs and projects,



Photo by William S. Farrow

Col. John Hurley, Huntsville Center commander, presents Gina Elliott with a Meritorious Civilian Service Award during Elliott’s retirement.

it’s the friendships and relationships that matter the most, but the mission is important too.

“Hopefully I left something behind for each one of you because each one of you has certainly left a mark on my heart,” Elliott said.

“What USACE and Huntsville Center does for this country truly matters, so come to work each day knowing that you and what you do matters and give all you have to the job.”

After retirement, Elliott and her husband, Allen, plan to relocate to Florida, spend time with family and friends, and travel.

FRP achieves Best in Class designation

By Amy Newcomb
Public Affairs Office

Outside of the General Services Administration, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the first agency to deliver a usable/active acquisition vehicle to the Category Management Leadership Council for evaluation and designation of Best in Class.

The Office of Management and Budget awarded this designation to Huntsville Center's Facilities Reduction Program Dec. 15, 2016.

To earn the award, Huntsville Center had to prove itself as a government wide solution provider resource by meeting rigorous criteria under Category Management business practices.

Earning this designation included the scrutiny of the CMLC that is chaired by the Office of Federal Procurement Policy administrator and representatives from several federal agencies that reviewed and evaluated everything from the FRP's planning processes to its performance management practices.

The CMLC established five major criteria with a total of 16 major and sub-category criteria that acquisition vehicles must meet to be considered Best in Class. Meeting and surpassing the process in order to be awarded the Best in Class designation, put the FRP in the ballpark to obtain work from any federal agency, said Chris Shepherd, FRP program manager.

"When looking at who to pick, this kind of puts us on the top of the list," Shepherd said.

Category Management involves breaking down different areas of federal spending into categories of commonly purchased products and services to enable more efficient management of government dollars.

"This is a common theme in industry, and the federal government is now adopting the philosophy on how



Photo by Leanne Bledsoe

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was presented the Government-Wide Category Management Best in Class Solution award in a ceremony at the USACE headquarters in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 27. From left to right: Jacqueline Woodson, USACE acting deputy director of Contracting; Mary Ruwwe, GSA Facilities and Construction Category; Lloyd Caldwell, USACE director of Military Programs; Charles Ford, Huntsville Engineering and Support Center programs director; and Stacey Hirata, USACE chief of Installation Support.

to better handle acquisitions from the perspective of Category Management," said Steve Goolsby, Base Operations, Facilities Repair and Renewal and FRP branch chief.

Within Category Management, the FRP falls under one of the 10 category management hallways called Facilities and Construction that has the largest of all spend categories at \$75.7 billion (total FY14). This annual budget covers construction-related materials and services, facility-related materials and services and facilities purchase and lease.

"I am excited that the Facilities and Construction Category was able to provide its Best-in-Class stamp of approval for the FRP contract vehicle. In addition to meeting the standardized criteria imposed on all BIC candidates, this BIC determination recognized the role the FRP contract has played in streamlining facility removal efforts within multiple federal agencies," says Facilities and Construction Category Manager Mary Ruwwe.

"The F&C Category will now begin marketing the solution so that all federal

agencies will be aware of the Best-in-Class demolition solutions available through the Huntsville USACE office."

Benefits on the saving solutions of the FRP include:

- FRP eliminates excess facilities and structures to reduce fixed installation costs and achieve energy savings. In fiscal years 2004 through 2015, FRP removed more than 22 million sq. feet from real property inventories with an overall landfill diversion by weight of 70 percent.
- The FRP focuses on doing stand-alone demolition work without follow-on construction projects. This allows the program to use a specialized contractor base that can drive substantial savings on the cost of removal per square foot.
- Though the customer agency can alter FRP's approach to fit their needs, typically everything under \$500,000 is awarded to the 60 percent of contractors who are 8(a) set-asides. This helped the program exceed its small business utilization goals every year.
- FRP heavily leverages re-used, recycled, and re-purposed materials and is currently at 72 percent, exceeding the EPA's goal by 12 percent. This is a benefit to the environment and lowers project costs.

BASEOPS virtual industry day successful

By William S. Farrow
Public Affairs Office

Huntsville Center’s Base Operations Program sponsored a virtual industry day Feb. 2 providing information and assistance to small businesses interested in submitting proposals for performing work for the Army Reserve’s 88th Regional Support Command.

With support from the Colorado Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), six representatives from Huntsville Center set up shop at the El Paso County, Colorado, Regional Municipal Center and met with vendor representatives not only in person, but also virtually through internet broadcasting capabilities.

The Center’s representatives explained customer requirements, bid processes and answered questions in real time for more than 150 vendor representatives spread across 32 other PTAC sites in 19 states attended the event virtually.

“This event was an absolutely phenomenal achievement for Huntsville Center and USACE as forerunners in promoting industry awareness and interaction, all while maximizing opportunities for increased competition,” said Rebecca Goodsell, the Center’s Small Business Office chief.

Laura Lokey-Flippo, Base Operations Program manager, said the idea for the virtual event came from the realization that the 88th RSC provides services and base operations support to more than 55,000 Army Reserve Soldiers, families and civilian employees dispersed across states in the northern U.S. from the Ohio River to the Pacific Ocean.

She said many of the firms interested in supporting the 88th RSC’s janitorial, grounds maintenance and waste removal services are small businesses in areas with close proximity to 88th RSC facilities.

“We knew there were challenges associated with this acquisition because of the geographic range: it spans 19 states and five time zones,” Lokey-Flippo said.

“We started discussing ideas about how to reach such a broad area, and still encourage teaming opportunities because it’s so important potential vendors have networking capabilities.”

With a challenge of reaching an audience over a large area, Karen Baker, Huntsville Center Small Business Office, reached out to Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs) throughout the region and led the planning and coordination of the event.

“PTACs are a local resource available at no or nominal cost that can provide assistance to business firms in marketing products and services to the federal, state and local governments,” Baker said.

“There are PTACs in every state. I made contact with the Colorado PTAC—they were geographically in the middle



Courtesy photo

Representatives from potential vendors attend Huntsville Center Base Operations Program’s virtual industry day Feb. 2. The vendors are at the Mahoning Valley Procurement Technical Assistance Center in Youngstown, Ohio, while the Center representatives are in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

of the area the 88th RSC covers—and I spoke with Dennis Casey, Colorado PTAC executive director, and explained what we wanted to achieve. I asked if they were willing to collaborate and work with other PTACs in the region and he responded very favorably. It was a real team effort by everyone involved.”

Goodsell said this is the first time Huntsville Center has sponsored an industry day “virtually,” and streaming the event live allowed smaller firms to participate that otherwise may have been excluded due to prohibitive expenses associated with travel to Huntsville. She said by making the event virtual it saved taxpayers money too.

“We realized that reaching out to vendors over such a large geographical area was going to be expensive, and we certainly wanted to keep costs down for the government and interested small businesses,” Goodsell said.

“If we took the industry day to a single location in each of the 19 states, we would have had to rent facilities there and incurred personnel travel costs, and if we’d held the event here in Huntsville, we still would have had costs associated with renting a facility and all the support that goes with an industry day. We also understood many of the smaller vendors would likely not attend due to travel expenses too.”

Goodsell said participant survey results are positive in support for the first virtual industry day, and attendees say the event provided them with the right information they need to move forward with their business plans.

“I really enjoyed the format and was happy that it was made available across PTACs,” said Christine Chase of Chase Consultants, Kansas City. “I think it was a convenient approach, and I’m fully supportive of future virtual events.”

Negotiations reduce utility cost for Tensas-Cocodrie Pumping Station

By Debra Valine
Public Affairs Office

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Vicksburg District is saving nearly \$34,000 monthly in costs to operate the Tensas-Cocodrie Pumping Plant in Monterey, Louisiana, thanks to the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville's Commercial Utilities Program (CUP).

The program negotiates with utility providers to ensure reliable utility services for Army installations and facilities at the lowest possible cost.

Over the course of the 10-year contract period, USACE will save \$402,000 annually or \$4 million.

Vicksburg District contacted CUP Program Manager Bernard Givan in August 2014 requesting assistance to find a way to reduce the \$54,000 monthly power bill it had been paying for electric power at the pumping plant since 1993, with slight adjustments based on actual operations.

The plant controls water levels in a basin near four major rivers including the Mississippi River. The plant consists of five very large three-story electric pumps. Other than routine testing, the pumping plant does not operate until a flood event occurs.

"USACE greatly needed to reduce this high cost of electric service due to budget constraints and because it was shown to be above average," Givan said.

"The district decided to take the following steps: 1) terminate the existing contract for electric service, 2) implement a temporary agreement for up to 6 months and 3) negotiate a more cost effective permanent contract. The contracting officer could execute step 1, but steps 2 and 3 would require subject matter expert support."

Givan said he used his prior experience with the Alabama Public Service Commission and Alabama Power Company to develop a strategic



Courtesy photo

The Tensas-Cocodrie Pumping Plant in Monterey, Louisiana controls water levels in a basin near four major rivers. Huntsville Center's Commercial Utilities Program negotiations will save Vicksburg District \$4 million over 10 years.

approach to reduce the monthly rate to more accurately reflect pumping plant operations and to provide and calculate rate components that allowed the contracting officer to productively lead negotiation discussions with the utility provider.

Army Regulatory Law was also added to the team to provide advice, to serve on the negotiation team and, if necessary, to go before the state public utility commission for resolution.

"The team negotiated with the utility provider over a six-month period," Givan said. "CUP provided rate analysis and transmission line service cost estimates. USACE invested only \$16,771 for CUP labor and travel."

To further clarify technical support, the utility said maintenance and operation (O&M) expenses of the transmission line serving the pumping plant were substantial and could not be reduced.

Givan found a generally acceptable method to calculate the cost to operate and maintain the transmission line that demonstrated the O&M cost should be

only \$12,000.

This transmission line cost combined with the calculated minimum monthly usage cost of \$10,000 helped establish a new total monthly rate of \$22,000 that still allowed the utility to comfortably recover all costs.

"Since this was the first negotiation for the program, the experience and team building approach for this project helped establish the ideal Army utility negotiation team model," Givan said.

"The model team consists of the CUP program manager, contracting officer, utility regulatory law attorney and one or more representatives of the supported facility. A utility consultant will be added to the team as required.

"This effort can be replicated by any agency or department that owns large facilities," he said.

Utility contracts are generally 10-year agreements that should be reviewed for utility market or industry changes as well as outdated facility requirements. A similar negotiation team will provide the depth, knowledge and flexibility to arrive at a 'win-win' negotiation."

Center ‘engineering solution’ tracks OPORDS

By David San Miguel
Public Affairs Office

When Russ Dunford sketched his idea onto a napkin, little did he realize that it would take two years and an engineering solution to bring it to fruition. There were times, he admits, when he questioned whether a solution was even possible. There had to be some sort of process to track and update operation orders, taskings and follow-on responses.

At the time, Dunford was Huntsville Center’s chief of operations. He explained how prior to 2000, the Army Corps of Engineers used email messaging to collect and process information. This would entail numerous man-hours and constant communication up and down the chain to manage the status and completion of tasks and suspenses. That, coupled with personnel leaving the organization, either through attrition or reassignment, left an information void and made this process even more daunting.

“I wanted to build something so that when I left, for whatever reason, there would be continuity,” he said. “When an individual leaves the Center, others should be able to pick up and find the information they need to monitor the status of the inordinate number of OPORDs I get on any given day.”

Taking a page from the Army’s playbook, USACE adopted the use of OPORDs to disseminate guidance, manage and monitor mission or project status.

According to Dunford, the Army has always used OPORDs. Its format breaks down and organizes information into five paragraphs, i.e., situation, mission, execution, administrative/logistics and command/signal, making it easier to identify, understand and execute mission tasks.

Though more effective, Dunford said, there had to be a more efficient way. USACE publishes 50-100 OPORDs a year. Add in fragmentary orders and that number quickly increases to 200.

“So about every day and a half, you’re cranking out new guidance to the entire USACE enterprise of 36,000 people,” he said. “I’m one deep. There’s no way on God’s green Earth that I can keep up. It’s crisis management at best.”

That, he said, was the impetus to seek out and establish a viable system to track report documents, especially OPORDs.

Realizing that a solution could not be achieved without collaboration, Dunford teamed up with Daniel Shepard, chief, Information Assurance and Information Technology Branch; Angela Rackard, operations officer; and later Andrew Spear, who at the time was a Pathways intern and is now employed as an information assurance specialist.

Established by Executive Order 13562, the Pathways Internship Program was adopted by the Center in 2012 to

afford high school/college students and recent graduates paid employment as well as the opportunity to explore federal career possibilities.

Though new to the Center, it was not unusual that the intern was included on the team. He, Spear commented, had an “extensive knowledge in web application development and database management.”

That collaboration got the team off on solid footing. Shepard’s experience working with OPORDs while employed with the U.S. Army Network Enterprise Technology Command, Spear’s unique skillset and Rackard’s experience with document tracking would prove instrumental in finding that solution.

Shepard contacted his NETCOM “buddies” and connected them with Spear to work with and obtain the necessary permission codes and standard operating procedures needed to lay the groundwork in developing an OPORD tracking solution.

By that time, Dunford had already built the framework for what he was looking for, Spear said.

“He just needed the application, and that’s where Dan and I came in.”

That application was Microsoft SharePoint, he said.

“There were other software programs that could have been used, but SharePoint is really the direction the Corps is trying to move for its web applications.”

Dunford reached out and contacted the North American Aerospace Defense Command who used SharePoint extensively, then to USACE Headquarters for access to its database for input.

“NORAD showed us how they used SharePoint,” he said.

That, and Spear’s extensive knowledge of the program allowed us to move forward.

With assistance from NETCOM, NORAD and buy in from USACE, the team developed “a working product.”

“If we would have outsourced this to someone – contracted it out – it could have cost hundreds of thousands of dollars,” Shepard said. “We did it with inside labor for 10 percent of the cost.”

Dunford saw value in the product and forwarded it to USACE Headquarters where, according to Shepard, “they took our mold and created their own to meet their requirements.

“It’s just a prime example of what started out as just an idea to address a challenge, then having the foresight to think – well, if I’m having a problem I know someone else is,” he said.

“We’ve used our own internal resources, but it wasn’t just in a stovepipe, we actually brought in functional areas of expertise into that whole integrated product. Now, we have something that can be sustained,” Shepard said.

Project manager joins list of many who sojourned to Afghanistan

Commentary by Quyet La Huntsville Center

Afghanistan has served as temporary homes for many throughout history: Persians, Alexander the Great, Kushans, Russians and Americans (to name a few) ... I have been added to the list of people to experience a sojourn in Afghanistan (April '16 to April '17).

While in theater (as we call it here), I serve as the project manager and contracting officer representative for the congressionally mandated Task Force Protect Our Warfighters and Electrical Resources (TF POWER) program.

As the electrical safety surveillance arm for the military, TF POWER's mission is to ensure that all Department of Defense occupied facilities in Afghanistan are electrically safe for more than 30,000 U.S. Soldiers and civilian personnel.

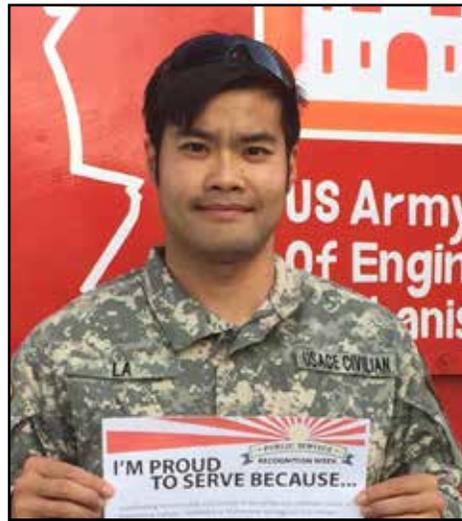
The deployment atmosphere offers a unique challenge when compared to that of the states, with its strict electrical policies.

Until recently, Afghanistan (for U.S. Forces) was considered an expeditionary establishment where facilities were constructed with limited long-term considerations of electrical regulations.

Afghanistan has now solidified itself as an enduring location and demands that abiding by established National Electrical Code and British Standard must be at the forefront of operations.

Despite being a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers civilian, interaction with military officers is frequent.

This interaction included briefings to top level military officers such as colonels and generals. Being in the military environment offers the vantage point to appreciate the challenges



Quyet La

accompanying these respective officers; it isn't an easy job being in leadership, especially in Afghanistan.

As a denizen of Afghanistan, there are certain experiences that "induct" you to Afghanistan ...

Surviving a missile attack, shopping at the bazaar and flying on a military helicopter (to name a few). Sometimes, it is easy to forget that Afghanistan is, indeed, a war zone. Just before impact, the blaring sound of "Incoming! Incoming! Incoming!" warns of the indirect fire zipping through the air before that climactic "bang."

The sirens scream with urgency; alerting us to don our interceptor body armor and make haste to the bunkers – a concrete cell with green and brown sandbags surrounding it.

Helicopters patrol the air to perform searches. Instinctively, that frenzied feeling captures the mind and countenance; both unease and excitement takes over. Welcome to "Rocket City."

The market, or bazaar, is filled with merchants selling goods out in the open as Soldiers pass by.

One can hear the shopkeepers enticing the possible buyers, "My friend,

please come in. For you, 40 percent discount." The local Afghans (sell a variety of things such as handmade Persian rugs, cashmere scarfs, scintillating gemstones, lapis lazuli (blue spiritual stones native to Afghanistan) and patches for the servicemen's outfits. The shop keepers also offer services that included making suits, tailoring, engraving and many others.

Beyond the authentic Afghan products, there are lots of knockoff items that are made in China, sold in Afghanistan, purchased by Americans, Georgians, Mongolians, Germans and other coalition forces.

At the helicopter flight counter, a sign reminds everyone of the requirement for air mobilization from base-to-base: helmet, long-sleeve shirts, eye protection, and 40 pounds-worth of bulletproof Kevlar gear.

As one approaches the helicopter, the force of the wind pushes you back slightly before the heat hits you while forging into the body.

Midflight, the altitude's slightly chilled air grazes your body, offering a tranquilizing feeling.

One's eyes may lower directly downward at the countryside through the back entrance and the gunner's opening – a converse to the familiar commercial airplanes behind a window of a pressurized cabin.

There are few things more august than being on a Black Hawk between the snow covered mountains and the celestial glistening of the valley and river below.

Afghanistan military deployment ... An experience like no other.

(Editor's note: *People interested in serving overseas/contingency operations can contact Jeffrey Davis, Huntsville Center deployment coordinator, at 256-895-1329.*

Arthur Martin III – Road to Success

By David San Miguel
Public Affairs Office

Arthur Martin III, Installation Support and Programs Management Directorate, at the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville was one of only two individuals from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers selected in November to participate in the “very competitive” senior executive program at Harvard University.

Growing up in the coastal city of Mobile, Alabama, it’s a career opportunity, even he, though once the valedictorian of his alma mater, Williamson High School, could not have imagined. Something, Martin attributes to a solid foundation and upbringing in a blended family with three brothers and two sisters.

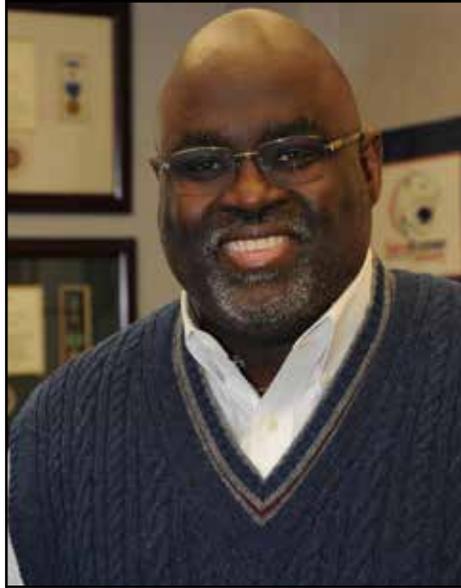
My parents and grandmother, as well as the Optimist Boys Club where I spent a good portion of my free time, played a huge role in that success, he said.

“My grandmother, the late Mary Posley, was one of my sources of inspiration,” he said. “She, along with my parents, valued education and made sure we all graduated high school and college. They wouldn’t allow any of us to strive for anything less.”

At the Boys Club, Martin recognized individual leadership and developed his desire to be the best.

“The Boys Club pushed us to strive for excellence at all levels – home, school, sports, etc.,” he said. “There was no saying ‘I can’t’ at the club. We had to try and give our best.”

That mind-set carried Martin to the University of South Alabama where he earned a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering, followed with a master’s degree in business administration from the University of North Alabama and a master’s degree with a focus in project management from New England College.



Arthur Martin III

“I consider myself a life-long student,” he said. “I’m always looking for new and interesting ways to do that, and I saw this (the Harvard Senior Executive Fellows Program) as an opportunity to further my leadership skills. The things that I’ve learned through raw experience as a division chief and my dealings with various senior leaders in my current role as deputy director, as well as those academic opportunities that I’ve already had, made this a challenge that I wanted to try and conquer.”

Martin said the four-week program, which ended Feb. 10, immersed participants in a series of scenarios and leadership challenges at a national or strategic level.

Citing his previous experience with the senior civilian education system, he explained that courses like these often present participants with scenarios that Fortune 500 companies – for profit businesses – face with staffing, retention, economic factors, the evolution of the new millennial workforce, and the shift in the overall workforce dynamic – the number of people eligible to retire and losing the expertise that has accumulated over the

past several decades.

“These are some of the problems government agencies face too,” he said. “These scenarios are designed to force us to collaborate; force us to look at problems outside our normal operational mind-sets. It’s going to introduce us to the strategic decision-making process as well as help us think with a more strategic mind-set as a practice of our everyday execution of duties process.”

Martin added that it’s a “strategic filter” and a new way of thinking that could benefit the Huntsville Center. “As we consider the change in the workforce dynamic, we’re going to have to be open to new ways of approaching problems, new business line opportunities,” he added.

“There has to be a way to sustain ourselves and consider managed growth that we may not have thought of yet. How do we approach that? How do we sustain what we have as we look to the future?”

Martin said that this new way of thinking, coupled with the knowledge and work experience he gained in federal service can help inspire younger generations.

“The bottom line is that I want to be of more value to the organization,” he said.

“First and foremost you have to take care of home, and I want to apply those strategic principles here within the Huntsville Center. If at all possible, I intend to seek the opportunity to apply what I have learned at the senior executive service level with the goal of making this organization the best agency possible. I want to do my part in that endeavor.

“I want to take my leadership, my training and the knowledge gained over 30 years of federal service, and parlay it to a new generation of workers,” he said. “I’m young enough, energetic and willing to stay around long enough to do it. That’s my goal.”

Center continues closing books on contracts

By Mark Thompson
Public Affairs Office

Alec Baldwin's character in the 1992 film "Glengarry Glen Ross" said it best, "A, B, C; A – always, B – be, C- closing. Always be closing." And when it comes to open contracts, employees with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville have made the movie mantra a reality.

Since December 2015, Huntsville Center Closeout Manager Steven Pautz has worked with contract stakeholders, from project managers to branch and division chiefs, to dramatically reduce the number of contracts clinging to the books by almost 35 percent. During the 12-month span, contracts were closed at a rate of more than two a day.

Contract closeouts are more than a check in the box or a meaningful metric of Huntsville Center's project efficiency and sound management practices. Contracts that fail to find fruition in a timely or scheduled manner can result in a breach of faith with those the Corps seeks to serve first.

"Ultimately, not performing closeouts results in the warfighter not receiving a required facility, product or service when it is needed," Pautz said.

Pautz says a contract closeout is in part defined by disbursement of all funds to contractors for performance and the return of unused funds to the treasury. Most importantly a completed contract ensures the contractor delivered all required items and any real property was transferred to end users.

Unsuccessfully closing contracts also causes issues beyond failing to meet the needs of service members. Unfulfilled contracts can have a fiscal domino-like effect on other current and future projects.

"If closeouts are not performed, it can result in contract funds expiring and not being used for their intended purpose," Pautz said. "Funds that expire may also need to be replaced, and in most instances the funds will be replaced with current fiscal year funding, which means less funding for other contracts."

According to Pautz, closing contracts is an agency-wide effort requiring the assistance of almost everyone working at Huntsville Center. But Pautz had special praise for several divisions and managers instrumental in the recent closeout success.

"I would like to recognize the work of ITS (Information Technology Services), down by 120 (contracts); Military Support, down by 60; Energy, down by 30; and Engineering, down by 25," Pautz said. "These four divisions reduced their total closeouts by 235, which represents 52.81 percent of the total reduction of 445 closeouts from December 2015 to December 2016."

Pautz cites Huntsville Center personnel Steve Goolsby, Betina Johnson, John Nebelsick and Terry Patton among those who provide particular aid in the ongoing closeout efforts.

"Working internally within each organization, we were able to close out the majority of our contracts," Huntsville Center Chief of Military Munitions Nebelsick said. "This also led to future discussions on how to improve the closeout

process over time and make this a routine procedure that everyone would follow."

But Pautz says the road to a steady closeout reduction rate began with his predecessor, Michael Bosley, and the framework for reports he developed.

"He (Bosley) was instrumental in developing the process by which we assign contracts to the individual directorates, divisions, branches and programs," Pautz said. "Without his efforts, I can confidently say that HNC would not have enjoyed the large reduction in closeouts that we have experienced to date."

Pautz says he's looking to build on Huntsville Center's momentum in the new calendar year.

"Some ideas being considered include instituting an award system for the number of closeouts completed in a year and the number of late closeouts completed in a year," Pautz said.

Other possible initiatives include increased training in completing closeouts in a timely manner, standardizing closeout check lists to make the entire process easier and instituting the Lean Six Sigma process to further streamline work flows.





Courtesy photo

Army Reserve Capt. Richard Locklair says good-bye to his family prior to deployment in 2013. Currently deployed to Kuwait, Locklair's previous assignments have included deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan and Jordan.

Project manager goes where he's most needed

By Debra Valine
Public Affairs Office

Though not an engineer by occupation, he likes helping to solve complex engineering problems – something that attracted him to a career with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"I'm an engineer captain with the Army Reserve and a project manager for the Huntsville Center," said Richard Locklair. "I have enormous respect for degreed engineers and professional engineers."

A native of Conway, South Carolina, Locklair earned a master's degree in engineering management from George Washington University and has been with Huntsville Center, for eight years.

During a deployment to Afghanistan, he illustrated one such complex engineering problem that needed resolution.

"During the drawdown in Afghanistan, we were closing and reducing bases in the Kabul area," Locklair said. "Camp Phoenix is surrounded by hundreds of concrete

T-Walls, each weighing in excess of 10,000 pounds. Our team had to return a section of the base to the Afghan government. To do this, we had to open a hole in the wall between Camp Phoenix and a major highway through Kabul, and emplace a new wall without endangering the camp."

He said it was a coordinated effort between U.S. troops, Afghan National Police, the Corps of Engineers and the contractor.

When Afghan crowds realized the wall was opened, they rioted and looted in what was no longer part of Camp Phoenix, he said. The Afghan National Police disbursed the mob with gunfire and had mistakenly detained some contracted employees. In the end, Camp Phoenix wasn't damaged. The land was returned to Afghanistan and the detained employees were released.

Locklair, who is currently in Kuwait, is not new to deployments. Previous assignments have included deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan and Jordan.

He said he accepts these assignments because he enjoys working on contracted technical solutions that

support warfighters.

"I'm just glad I get to help," he said.

"The Ordnance and Explosives Global (OEG) team that I work with has a lot of talented and dedicated people who have been doing this work for decades. That gives our team the continuity that units rotating in and out of theater just don't have. They are great people to work with. OEG is currently executing projects including Unexploded Ordnance Removal, Fire and Electrical Safety, Environmental Remediation, Base Reduction, Depleted Uranium Removal and Munitions Disposal throughout the world.

Locklair admits, however, that the hardest part about being deployed is being away from family.

"I have two daughters and a son due in June," he said. "My wife is incredible and keeps the family running while I'm out here. Thanks Melody. I love you."

Nonetheless, it's a sacrifice he's willing to accept.

"I like knowing that I've been a small part of a massive mission that affects the global balance of power," he said. Not many jobs let you do that.

Center contracting officer receives Secretary of the Army award

By Debra Valine
Public Affairs Office

Working on contracts supporting Huntsville Center's Energy Savings Performance Contracting and Utility Energy Services Contracting programs presents unique challenges in that it can take up to two years to award a contract.

Finding innovative solutions to the challenges not only contributed to the success of the Huntsville Center programs, but also led to the Department of Energy's Federal Energy Management Program and other government agencies seeking out Oksana Joye, the lead contracting officer for the programs, for her help in expanding and improving their energy savings programs.

For these reasons, Joye was awarded the 2016 Secretary of the Army Award for Excellence in Contracting for Specialized Services and Construction Contracting.

Joye, who no longer works for Huntsville Center, managed contracts for the third-party financing programs (ESPC and UESC) and conventional funded programs (Resource Efficiency Managers/Commercial Utilities Program) and Energy Information Management).

ESPC and UESC projects are highly complex and unique in that each contract for an energy savings project can take up to two years to award based on the number of energy inefficient facilities identified on an installation, said Adam Sunstrom, contracting officer for the Energy Branch.

"Furthermore, the contractor or utility company obtains third-party financing or up-fronts the initial capital investment costs, only getting reimbursed when actual energy cost savings are realized during the up-to-25 year performance period," Sunstrom said. "Under each contract, the energy savings contractor or utility company provides the expertise to assess the energy savings opportunities for the government, designs and installs the improvements or employs new renewable energy technology for the energy and water efficiency improvements on government facilities."

These programs aid in meeting the Army's 30 percent energy and 15 percent water reduction goals and the President's Energy Savings Performance-Based Contracting Investment Initiative of \$4 billion by the end of 2016.

"Joye oversaw the administration of three separate ESPC contract suites totaling \$3.1 billion that have 25-year performance periods and just under 20 UESC awards totaling \$465 million that may have 10-year to 25-year performance periods," Sunstrom said.

"She also supervised, mentored and trained a team of



Oksana Joye

contract specialists identifying and implementing improvements for the acquisition process and administration of these unique contracts.

"She identified and resolved numerous complex contractual issues that had plagued the ESPC and UESC programs," Sunstrom said.

"Because the contracts have up to a 25-year performance period, administration and oversight is a significant challenge. Ms. Joye continuously identified lessons learned and developed new processes and procedures to help ensure every phase of the ESPC and UESC contracts are executed consistently. Her procurement processes and procedures have been adopted by the U.S. Air Force and DOE."

Joye attributes her success to a great team.

"My success would not be possible without my team – basic human trust, our positive thinking and all of our hard work," said Joye, who is now the team lead contracting officer for the PATRIOT Systems Division, Army Contracting Command, Redstone Arsenal, Alabama.

"We are only as good as the people around us. I would not be able to overcome the everyday obstacles without my team supporting me, my supervisors believing in me, without focus on the mission, without trust and without everyone's commitment," Joye said.

"When leadership has a positive attitude, it affects everyone on the team. I got to achieve the objectives and the mission of my program because I genuinely believed in every single individual on my team, and they believed in me."

Local contract specialist selected for Defense Civilian Emerging Leader Program

By Amy Newcomb
Public Affairs Office

One of the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville's own was selected to represent the Army Acquisition Workforce in the 2017 Defense Civilian Emerging Leader Program.

Lourdes Roman, an Electronic Security Systems contract specialist, was one of two dozen acquisition professionals Army-wide, and one of three U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' employees, selected to attend four, one-week seminars starting early this year.

The seminars will be held over a six-month period at the Department of Defense Executive Management Training Center, Southbridge, Massachusetts, and are designed to develop the next generation of innovative leaders with the technical competence to meet the future leadership needs of the Department of Defense.

"I am constantly seeking opportunities for improvement and self-actualization from both a career and personal standpoint," Roman said.

"I knew this program would provide a great foundation for me in terms of honing my leadership and interpersonal skills. It's challenging environments like these where we grow as people as well



Lourdes Roman

as professionals."

Leadership programs, like the DCELP, should be taken advantage of because it allows employees to expand their knowledge of how the federal government works at different levels, said Chip Marin, programs director.

"Many times, we do not understand the decrees from higher headquarters, but when you go to these kinds of classes, you then understand why they are asking for that information," he said.

"It's perfect for anyone who is going to be a future leader."

Roman, who came to Huntsville Center in March 2016 from the Defense

Contract Management Agency where she worked as a contract administrator, was interested in the program long before she arrived at Huntsville Center.

While at DCMA, she filled out an application for the 2015 Defense Civilian Emerging Leader Program. However, not long after submitting the application she accepted a job with Huntsville Center. It was then she found out that she would have to give up her seat in the program in order to fulfill her obligation to the Corps of Engineers, she said.

Once onboard at Huntsville Center, Roman was encouraged to resubmit her application for the 2017 Defense Civilian Emerging Leader Program, which she did in May. Roman was notified of her selection in October.

Roman is excited about her second chance at the program, and has already started looking into the requirements and preparing herself for the road ahead.

"The most rewarding and challenging aspect of the program for me will be the 360-degree evaluations where I will receive honest and objective criticism based on my performance of the given training exercises. That kind of impartial assessment is rare and immensely invaluable, and it will influence me throughout my career for years to come," she said.

- **The Defense Civilian Emerging Leader Program (DCELP) is designed to develop the next generation of innovative leaders with the technical competence to meet the future leadership needs of the Department of Defense (DOD). All acquisition Army submissions will be collected by the United States Army Acquisition Support Center (USAASC).**
- **This DOD program focuses on developing emerging leaders in the Acquisition, Financial Management, and Human Resources communities. It consists of five residential courses focused on: Leadership Assessment Team Development I & II, Effective Writing in the Federal Government, Conflict Resolution and Leadership for Non-Supervisors.**
- **Participants will also complete an online course of instruction on the Mission and Culture of the DOD. Additional courses of instruction provided by the DCELP Program Office will include Effective Writing and Research in the DOD, Leadership Theories and Principles and a course of instruction on Emotional Intelligence.**

For more information, contact Randy Barbour, Huntsville Center workforce training specialist at 256-895-1122.

Fearns helps find solutions for energy program, recognized with USACE procurement award

By William S. Farrow
Public Affairs Office

A Huntsville Center contracting officer received the 2016 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Excellence in Contracting Awards Program Procurement Contracting Officer of the Year Award.

Alan Fearns, contracting officer with the Center's Energy Savings Performance Contracting (ESPC) team, took the award that recognized his assistance with the revision of the ESPC procurement process. Fearns has been with the Center five years, with the last year spent as a contracting officer.

The \$300 million ESPC program helps the nation meet its energy savings requirements by partnering military installations with energy service contractors (ESCOs) who provide the capital and expertise to make comprehensive energy and water efficiency improvements on facilities or implement new renewable energy capabilities and maintain them in exchange for a portion of the generated savings.

Fearns' award is based on his close collaboration with multi-functional teams and facilitating information sharing that bridged gaps between operational technology and information technology, both used in energy systems.

Fearns discovered how to create competition in a market of proprietary cybersecurity products. Because of Fearns' work, Huntsville Center awarded its first ESPC task order meeting all Department of Defense cybersecurity milestones while establishing a benchmark for how to reduce risk and increase savings for up to 25 years.

Adam Sunstrom, Energy Division Contracting Support Branch chief



Alan Fearns

and Fearns' supervisor, said Fearns' acquisition knowledge and leadership epitomized the role of the contracting officer as a business adviser.

"Alan's inspiring, energetic leadership within the EPSC project delivery team drove several improvements of lasting impact," Sunstrom said. "The most innovative and notable improvement was the award of USACE's first ESPC task order that fully implements Department of Defense's Risk Management Framework (RMF)."

In 2014, the DOD released an instruction regarding risk management for information technology. In 2015, Fearns began meeting with Huntsville Center's program managers and subject matter experts (SMEs) to see how to meet the DOD Instruction mandating industrial control systems (ICS) meet the cybersecurity risk management framework.

"A steep challenge for us were

concerns that RMF's costs would prevent ESPC projects from being paid through energy savings or 'cash-flowing'; and yet compliance still had to be met," Fearns said.

Shortly after joining ESPC in November 2015, Fearns met with Tonnie Drummond, Engineering Directorate information technology (IT) network engineer.

Drummond's job focuses on integrating legacy IT systems with new IT systems while reviewing system functionality and promoting defense-in-depth, an information assurance (IA) concept in which multiple layers of security controls (defense) are placed throughout an IT system.

"Tonnie made me more aware of security threats and introduced me to subject matter experts in several fields supporting the Energy Division," Fearns said.

"Our team began researching the

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Photo by William S. Farrow

Listen up

Juan Pace, Huntsville Center Engineering Directorate architect, speaks with Lee/New Century High School cadets during the Redstone Arsenal JROTC Day March 23. Pace took the opportunity to explain the importance of taking Science, Technology, Mathematics and Engineering courses in high school and explained the role Huntsville Center and the Army Corps of Engineers plays in national interests. More than 700 Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets descended upon Redstone Arsenal for the JROTC Day, an annual opportunity for Team Redstone to open its gates to the high school students, encouraging them to consider a career in uniform or as a civil servant. Held on the MWR Activity Field, the day's activities include panel discussions on leadership, physical fitness competitions, opportunities to hear from Redstone's general officers, as well as stations showcasing the many tenants, including Huntsville Center, that make up Team Redstone and the work they do.

Fearns

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situation and soon found controls systems to increase energy savings via equipment micro-adjustments and diagnostics; however, these systems still did not pay for themselves and more value was needed.”

Fearns said a breakthrough came when SMEs speaking directly with industry learned of two manufacturers that were in the process of completing open-protocol ICS, which could enable competitive sourcing.

The final major breakthrough occurred when Fearns conveyed the vision of Huntsville Center's Energy Division to the ESCOs with a keen interest in seeing the ESCOs' performing well in future competitions.

“ESCOs are becoming much more willing to demonstrate

how their non-proprietary, lower-cost ICSs will meet RMF compliance standards. By working through program leadership, and then guiding ESCOs to understand the procurement process used to implement the Energy Program's goals, manufacturers began responding with standardized cybersecurity solutions,” Fearns said.

“This fantastic combination improves energy grid security, reduces procurement costs through full and open competition, and improves energy use diagnostics to extract all possible energy savings.”

Fearns said he is very grateful to receive the recognition the USACE award brings, but is quick to recognize it took a team to find solutions including leadership and support from his branch chief (Sunstrom).

Beware the casual conversation

By **Melanie Braddock**

Office of Counsel

Conversation overheard on an airport transport bus returning from a site visit:
“Hey, Susan, so good to see you. I thought you were on leave.”

“No, I have been stuck at the Bradford on a board – you know that ABC acquisition. It’s finally done though.”

“Really? I thought that award was months out?”

“Oh it is, we just finished the evaluations, and I’m glad to be away from Alex. He was the most difficult board member I have ever worked with. Contradicted everything everyone else said and disagreed on everything. On Bid Right’s proposal, he claimed that he knew they did not do the work on a project they had in their proposal and refused to listen to the other board members. Consensus took forever.”

“Wow. Sounds stressful. It will be good to have you back in the office.”

Sounds harmless, right? Wrong. First, the speakers are talking in a public location and cannot be sure who else is hearing their conversation. If one of the speakers is returning from a site visit, it is possible that the contractor or potential contractors are on their same route. Maybe Bid Right has an employee on the same bus. Second, the speakers are discussing the source selection process for an ongoing acquisition.

The Procurement Integrity Act, 41 U.S.C §§ 2101 – 2107, is implemented through FAR 3.104. Specifically, FAR 3.104-4 states that “no person or other entity may disclose contractor bid or proposal information or source selection information to any person other than a person authorized, in accordance with applicable agency regulations or procedures, by agency head or the contracting officer to receive such information.” For purposes of this investigation, none of the exceptions apply.

According to FAR 2.101, “source selection information”

means any of the following information that is prepared for use by an agency for the purpose of evaluating a bid or proposal to enter into an agency procurement contract, if that information has not been previously made available to the public or disclosed publicly:

(1) Bid prices submitted in response to an agency invitation for bids, or lists of those bid prices before bid opening. (2) Proposed costs or prices submitted in response to an agency solicitation, or lists of those proposed costs or prices. (3) Source selection plans. (4) Technical evaluation plans. (5) Technical evaluations or proposals. (6) Cost or price evaluations of proposals. (7) Competitive range determinations that identify proposals that have a reasonable chance of being selected for award of a contract. (8) Rankings of bids, proposals, or competitors. (9) Reports and evaluations of source selection panels, boards, or advisory councils. (10) Other information marked as “Source Selection

Information – See FAR 2.101 and 3.104 based on a case-by-case determination by the head of the agency or the contracting officer, that its disclosure would jeopardize the integrity or successful completion of the federal agency procurement to which the information relates.

So here, the speakers divulged the names of individuals on the selection board, the name of one of the offerors, internal board discussions as well as specific information about one offeror. This casual conversation amongst colleagues could end up causing a protest on this action by the named offeror as well as any offeror not selected who believes that what the “rogue” board member discussed may be why they were not selected – protests that cost our programs both time and money. Before you chat with your colleagues at lunch, on a plane, in line at the store, etc., carefully consider that anyone can overhear your discussion.

Beware the casual conversation.

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