

White House Publishes Innovative Contracting Case Studies, Launches U.S. Digital Service

In a joint announcement on Aug. 21, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released the first version of *Innovative Contracting Case Studies*. Similar in configuration to the Defense Acquisition University's online *Defense Acquisition Guidebook*, Innovative Contracting is an iterative, evolving document that can be regularly added to or updated by its users. Actual contracting case studies ranging from agencies as disparate as NASA and the Department of Defense, to the Veterans Administration offer case studies describing a number of ways federal agencies are getting more innovation per taxpayer dollar—all under existing laws and regulations.

Officials at OSTP and the Office of Federal Procurement Policy are encouraging private sector stakeholders and public servants to engage in sustained public discussion, identify new case studies, and improve the document's usefulness in future iterations. They can do so, officials said, by joining a community of practice around innovative contracting--the new "Buyers Club" e-mail group, which is open to all government and military e-mail addresses. "Buyers Club" will serve everyone from contracting officers with proven expertise in the Federal Acquisition Regulation, to program managers and their deputies looking for new ways to achieve their contracting objectives.

The announcement follows launch of the U.S. Digital Service (USDS) the previous week. USDS represents a new team of America's best digital experts dedicated to improving and simplifying the digital experience that people and businesses have with their government. The USDS team has already begun to make progress by releasing for public comment the Digital Service Playbook and the TechFAR Handbook, aimed at leveraging best practices and using agile processes to procure digital services, respectively.

All of these innovative digital and contracting efforts are aligned with President Obama's management agenda to deliver a 21st century government that is "more effective, efficient, and supportive of economic growth, including specific cross-agency initiatives on

Smarter IT delivery, strategic sourcing, and shared services."

See:

Defense Innovation Marketplace

<http://www.defenseinnovationmarketplace.mil/>

OMB: Buying What Works: Case Studies in Innovative Contracting

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/08/21/buying-what-works-case-studies-innovative-contracting-0>

Innovative Contracting Case Studies

http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/innovative_contracting_case_studies_2014_-_august.pdf

Public Discussion, Innovative Contracting Case Studies

<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/procurement-innovation>

Public Discussion, Buyer's Club LISTSERV

<https://listserv.gsa.gov/cgi-bin/wa.exe?SUBED1=BUYERS-CLUB&A=1>

U.S. Digital Service

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/08/11/fact-sheet-improving-and-simplifying-digital-services>

TechFAR Handbook

<https://playbook.cio.gov/techfar/>

U.S. Digital Services Playbook

<https://playbook.cio.gov/>

President Obama's Statement on 21st Century Government

http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2015/assets/fact_sheets/creating-a-21st-century-government.pdf

Smarter IT Delivery

<http://www.performance.gov/node/3403/view?view=public%20-%20overview#overview>

DoD to Implement 3-Tier Civilian Performance Appraisal System

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE NEWS RELEASE (JULY 30, 2014)

Jim Garamone

WASHINGTON—Pentagon officials yesterday delivered a report to Congress on the progress the Defense Department has made over the last six months in redesigning personnel authorities.

The biggest change is in designing a new civilian employee appraisal system and putting in place steps to implement it, officials said.

The vast majority of the department's 748,000 civilian employees will come under the system. "An implementation timeline has not yet been determined," a defense official said, "but the department anticipates a phased implementation."

Congress ordered the department to examine the system as part of the fiscal 2010 Defense Authorization Act. That act abolished the National Security Personnel System.

The legislation calls for DoD to develop a new performance appraisal system that is "fair, credible, and transparent." Appraisals would be directly linked to awards of employee bonuses and would be the basis for regular, ongoing feedback throughout the appraisal cycle.

Currently, a myriad of systems is in place for the department's different Services and agencies. Some are pass/fail, and others use three- or five-tiered rating systems. Some tie bonuses to appraisals, while others do not.

The Defense Department has opted for a three-tiered performance appraisal system, officials said. The system will be characterized by a uniform appraisal period for covered employees, they added, and it will strongly link the employees' appraisals to mission and organizational goals.

A key to the system will be the ability to make meaningful distinctions in levels of performance. Officials said the appraisal system will have "an integrated, automated tool that will facilitate performance planning, communication, and the appraisal cycle processes."

DoD officials have notified unions of the three-tiered appraisal system.

The new system will not apply to Senior Executive Service employees, those in the Defense Civilian Intelligence Per-

sonnel System, and employees in the Demonstration Lab system, officials said.

U.S. Strategic Command Launches Nuclear Commanders Course

U.S. STRATEGIC COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS (AUG. 1, 2014)

Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Byron C. Linder

OFFUTT AIR FORCE BASE, Neb.—U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) leadership welcomed more than 20 Navy and Air Force officers to the inaugural Nuclear Commanders Course at USSTRATCOM, July 31.

The new two-day course provides a series of briefings and tours of USSTRATCOM's nuclear deterrence assets. It expands upon the existing training given to nuclear commanders and instills a foundational understanding of USSTRATCOM's role in building and maintaining the nuclear war plan, its nuclear command and control capabilities, and their unit's role in the deterrence mission.

The course traces its origins back to the USSTRATCOM Strategic Weapons Command course, which was established in 2009 and focused toward the Navy ballistic missile submarine commander and executive officer communities. The current Nuclear Commanders Course expands the audience, course curriculum, and scope to include Air Force intercontinental ballistic missile, bomber, and refueling tanker squadron commanders.

Commander, USSTRATCOM Adm. Cecil D. Haney has prioritized the enhancement of up-and-coming nuclear commanders' professional development by providing them with a headquarters-level perspective on the nuclear deterrence mission.

"Adding a senior leadership perspective will give participants a broader strategic view of how everything for our critical deterrence mission fits together—from priorities and current operations to the planning process, future requirements, and funding," Haney explained. "I also firmly encourage our leaders to personally reinforce the importance of integrity and ethics throughout the entire DoD nuclear enterprise. To accomplish this goal, we must all weave integrity into the fabric of everyday life within our organization."

Robert Shindel, action officer for planning and developing the Nuclear Commanders Course, explained how this was achieved.

"The headquarters perspective provides more insight into their relationship to the nuclear enterprise. In addition to some of the normal courses, we went into the Global Opera-

tions Center to show them an exercise on the commander's decision brief and show where their particular units interface with the decision the commander makes," he said. "The idea behind this course is to show that USSTRATCOM is in line with [Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel's] emphasis on the nuclear deterrence force structure."

Patrick A. McVay, director of Joint Exercises and Training at USSTRATCOM, emphasized the benefits of the Nuclear Commanders course extend beyond the course participants.

"This really is a win-win situation," he said. "The prospective commanders get to see the importance of what they do every day for the security of the nation. They also get senior leadership's perspective and guidance. The command gets better leaders in the field because they have a better understanding of their mission—it helps them connect the dots."

Lt. Cmdr. Bryan Christiansen, prospective executive officer of Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine *USS Tennessee* (SSBN 734), expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to have personal interaction with USSTRATCOM leadership.

"It's great to be briefed by the admiral himself. In past courses, I haven't always had that opportunity, so it was great to hear his thoughts on our position and what's coming up and how important our role is," he said. "Making sure the [commanding officers] and [executive officers] are aware of our role and how vital it is in the success of the nuclear enterprise and how focused the government and the DoD are on the nuclear deterrent force is crucial to our success."

Lt. Col. Maria Hatchell, Commander, 92nd Force Support Squadron at Fairchild Air Force Base, Wash., added her accolades and praised the larger view the course provides.

"It's very eye-opening—as I thought it would be. This helps expand my knowledge base on how to better support operations. If you don't know what you're supporting, how do you know if you're doing a good job or not?" she asked. "I'm going to recommend this course to some of my peers when I get back. This is going to be very valuable as we move forward."

McVay noted he was looking forward to future iterations of the course.

"This course will certainly evolve and progress—the quarterly format and student feedback will help us to continuously improve," he said.

USSTRATCOM is one of nine DoD unified combatant commands and is charged with strategic deterrence; space op-

erations; cyberspace operations; joint electronic warfare; global strike; missile defense; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; combating weapons of mass destruction; and analysis and targeting.

For more information about U.S. Strategic command, visit <http://www.stratcom.mil/>.

Work: NDU Students Should Become 'Strategic-level Leaders'

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE NEWS RELEASE (AUG. 5, 2014)

Terri Moon Cronk

WASHINGTON—Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work urged National Defense University students to become strategic-level leaders, telling them that "this exceedingly complex and potentially more dangerous world" demands critical and creative thought.

In remarks prepared for delivery to the Class of 2015, Work called on students to "develop critical ways of thinking, to question assumptions, to come up with new ideas, fresh insights, and answers to the world's most vexing security challenges."

Work noted that Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel has emphasized that while U.S. military involvement in conflicts overseas during the past decade has wound down, service members instead face "... a fractured global security environment, characterized by great uncertainty, rapid change, new and sophisticated threats, and continued political turbulence."

He also addressed the challenges DoD faces in budgetary turbulence in the coming years.

"This is an unprecedented time of maximum challenge for [DoD]," he added, noting that DoD's future decisions will determine the size, shape, and composition of the U.S. military "for decades to come."

"We need creative ideas on how to posture our forces globally to accomplish the greatest strategic effect, how to fight more effectively in new domains with possibly game-changing technologies, how to protect U.S. interests and enhance our security in new areas. And we must do all this with fewer resources and what will no doubt be a smaller military," he said.

U.S. forces face the possibility of arriving in a future combat theater to confront an arsenal of advanced, disruptive technologies "that could turn U.S. previous technological advantage on its head," Work said, where the nation's mili-



Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work delivers remarks at the convocation ceremony for the National Defense University on Fort McNair in Washington, D.C., Aug. 5, 2014.
DoD photo by Glenn Fawcett

tary no longer has uncontested theater access or unfettered operational freedom of maneuver.

And that is a future in which he, Hagel, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey are determined to avoid, Work said.

“To maintain our technological superiority as we transition from one warfighting regime to another, we must begin to prepare now,” the deputy emphasized. “In addition to new technologies, a new offset strategy will require innovative thinking, the development of new operational concepts, new ways of organizing, and long-term strategies.

“As future strategic leaders, you need to ask how we should prepare for a future where new and disruptive technological developments are continuously occurring,” Work continued. “What policies are needed? What investments are warranted?”

Such creative ideas, he said, often come from students and their networks outside the military, and from allies and partners in the interagency community.

And with a “sense of urgency,” the deputy said, the nation’s entire national security community needs to stimulate new critical thinking and research on how the nation maintains

its technological dominance, and to enable a smaller force to maintain overmatch against any potential adversary.

Dempsey Sets Expectations for Defense University, Students

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE NEWS RELEASE (AUG. 5, 2014)

Jim Garamone

WASHINGTON—Change is coming to the National Defense University, but one thing that won’t change is that it will remain the “pre-eminent leadership school in the nation,” Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said recently.

The chairman said changes at the school will look to prepare senior officers for the challenges ahead, while incorporating the latest lessons from the battlefields.

A total of 619 students from around the Services, around the government, and around the world are in this year’s class.

“The talented men and women attending the ‘Chairman’s University’ have an exciting year ahead of them and will be the first to benefit from a new Strategic Leadership course, which will challenge them to reflect upon and debate the attributes required of successful strategic leaders,” said Ambassador Wanda L. Nesbitt, the interim president of the university. “I am excited about the upcoming year and

privileged to have the honor of leading NDU as we launch the Class of 2015 on its way."

Dempsey spoke about the role of the institution in the military profession and its mission to shape excellent tacticians into strategic thinkers. Students at the war colleges are selected for their excellence in tactical operations, but they also have demonstrated the potential for senior leadership. That requires a change in thinking, the chairman said.

"First, as a tactical commander, you seek simplicity," he said in a Pentagon interview. "As a strategic thinker, your instinct has to be to actually seek out complexity, because nothing at the strategic level is simple." Strategic thinkers must alter their mind set from the intense desire to simplify things and try to begin by finding the complexity of issues, he added.

Second, Dempsey said, leadership at the tactical level is largely focused from the top down. "You succeed because you empower your subordinates, you resource them, you give them the proper guidance, you lead by example, but it's all down," he said.

Now, he added, the students at the war colleges are at a point where they will have to lead laterally. "Ultimately, when you become a strategic leader, you actually have to lead up," Dempsey said.

He used his own job as a case in point. "In my case, if I can help our elected leaders understand complexity, provide options for them to deal with that complexity, and achieve our national interests, then I'm doing my job," he said. "More important, I'm also helping those who are subordinate to me, because I can manage their resources in a way to help them fulfill missions."

The students "need to take this year [at the university] and seek out complexity, build relationships, understand the systems of government in which we operate, and be prepared to lead up when they graduate," he said.

Dempsey urged students to approach the year-long course in two ways.

He spoke first as "the Bayonne, New Jersey, Irishman that's always lurking beneath the surface," and later as chairman.

"They've been running hard," he said. "Part of this year is for them to take a breath. Inside of their seminar rooms or as a class, they should enjoy each other's company."

He said he wants them to take time to be with their families.

"This is going to drive the faculty nuts, but when I was in school, I would deliberately make decisions about whether to do a particular assignment, and if I had a son or daughter that had a basketball game or a parent-teacher conference, I went to those things," he said.

On the more erudite level, Dempsey said, he wants the students to use the year to indulge their curiosity.

"They have to achieve the goals of the course," he said, "but I also hope they become broadly curious about what makes the world work, because the jobs they will have in the future will require them to not just understand the military instrument of power, but actually how our government functions."

The National Defense University is in the middle of a significant curriculum change to adapt to the challenges ahead and to learn the lessons of a decade at war.

The faculty can help by refreshing their understanding of how people think and how people learn, Dempsey said.

"I graduated from the National War College in 1996," he added. "I would venture to say that the students who graduate in 2015 probably have a different sense of the use of social media or virtual environments. Faculties have to keep up with that. They have to keep up with the way students learn."

Dempsey said he wants the faculty to look at ways to engage with their students and to provide different learning environments. "In the past, there was the sense that the professor was the 'sage on the stage,'" the chairman said. "What I'm looking for from the faculty is the 'guide on the side.'"

Being on the faculty of these institutions is an important post, the chairman said.

"If we are going to be the profession we think we are, and need to be, then it's got to be because the young men and women who matriculate through these schools, leave them more committed to being professionals than when they got there," he said.

Air Force Improves Nuclear Force Manpower Levels *SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS (AUG. 7, 2014)*

WASHINGTON—The Air Force will increase nuclear force manning at Air Force Global Strike Command missile and bomber wings beginning this fall, officials announced Aug. 7.

The Air Force will plus-up nuclear enterprise manning levels by hundreds of positions at select bases, with the first wave

of airmen expected to arrive through the next few assignment cycles.

As outlined by Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James, the manning plus-up is part of a broader series of measures and incentives designed to improve the culture and mission effectiveness of the Service's nuclear force.

"We've been saying that the nuclear enterprise is the number one mission, and the Air Force is putting its money where its mouth is," James said. "We must show airmen that there's value in this mission by making the appropriate investments in people, weapon systems, and infrastructure. The Air Force has worked and will continue to work to identify and rearrange funds to make important improvements within our missile and bomber forces."

The wholesale changes being made in the nuclear enterprise are designed to empower airmen, and ensure they have the resources they need for this priority mission, said Lt. Gen. Stephen Wilson, the commander of Air Force Global Strike Command.

"We have great airmen serving on our team and we owe it to them to make things better," he said. "It's important to recognize that we are just at the beginning of this process. Raising manning levels is one in a series of immediate changes."

The increase in nuclear force manpower by installation is as follows:

- Barksdale AFB, Louisiana: The 2nd Bomb Wing at Barksdale AFB will gain 31 positions, filling jobs primarily in areas such as maintenance and munitions.
- F.E. Warren AFB, Wyoming: The 90th Missile Wing and 20th Air Force will gain 242 positions to improve manning primarily in the operations, maintenance, and security forces career fields.
- Malmstrom AFB, Montana: The 341st Missile Wing at Malmstrom AFB will gain 216 positions to improve manning primarily in the operations, maintenance, and security forces career fields.
- Minot AFB, North Dakota: Minot AFB will gain 303 positions. The 5th Bomb Wing host unit is expected to increase by 69 positions in areas including operations and maintenance. The 91st Missile Wing will grow by 234 positions. Those airmen will primarily serve in jobs such as operations, maintenance, and security forces.
- Whiteman AFB, Missouri: The 509th Bomb Wing at Whiteman AFB will gain 56 positions, primarily filling jobs in the maintenance career field.

Nominations Open for 66th Annual Arthur S. Flemming Award

AIR FORCE PERSONNEL CENTER PUBLIC AFFAIRS (AUG. 14, 2014)

Janis El Shabazz

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH, Texas—Air Force officials are accepting nominations for the 64th Annual Arthur S. Flemming Award.

The award is sponsored by George Washington University in conjunction with the Arthur S. Flemming Awards Commission. It honors outstanding federal employees who have made significant and extraordinary contributions to the federal government.

The Air Force may nominate 10 federal civilian employees or military members—two in each of the following five categories:

- Leadership and/or management
- Legal achievement
- Social science
- Clinical trials and translational research
- Applied science and engineering, and basic science

Each major command, field operating agency, and direct reporting unit may only nominate one person in each category. Individuals previously nominated, but not selected for a Flemming Award, may be re-nominated. Previous award winners may not be re-nominated.

Nominees can be any career federal civilian employee or member of the uniformed services who has at least three but no more than 15 years of total service—cumulative of military and civilian—as of Dec. 31, 2014. The awards will be made for outstanding contributions to public service on either a sustained basis or through a single exceptional accomplishment achieved or completed during 2014.

Completed nomination packages are due to the Air Force Personnel Center by Nov. 19. For more information on Air Force recognition programs and other personnel issues, visit the myPers website at <https://mypers.af.mil>.

2015 AFA Aerospace Award Nominees Sought

AIR FORCE PERSONNEL CENTER PUBLIC AFFAIRS (AUG. 14, 2014)

Janis El Shabazz

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH, Texas—Nominations for the 2015 Air Force Association Aerospace Awards for outstanding contributions to national defense in a variety of fields are being sought, Air Force officials said.

Available awards include the following:

- Theodore Von Karman Award—for contributions in the field of science and engineering relating to aerospace activity by an Air Force military member, Air Force civilian, unit, or group of individuals.
- David C. Schilling Award—for contributions in the field of flight, in the atmosphere or space, by an Air Force military member, Air Force civilian, unit, or group of individuals.
- Gill Robb Wilson Award—for contributions in the field of arts and letters covering a wide range of activities, such as writing, speaking, media relations, sculpting or painting, by an Air Force military member, Air Force civilian, unit, or group of individuals.
- Citation of Honor—for contributions significantly exceeding the standard performance by an Air Force military member, Air Force civilian, unit, or group of individuals.

Each major command, field operating agency, and direct reporting unit may nominate one person for each award. Previous award winners may not be nominated for the same category. Organizations and base-level personnel must contact their major command, field operating activity, or direct reporting unit for applicable suspense dates and additional information regarding nomination procedures.

Completed nomination packages are due to the Air Force Personnel Center Recognition Programs office by Jan. 7, 2015.

For more information on Air Force recognition programs and other personnel issues, visit the myPers website at <https://mypers.af.mil>.

Changes to Academic Degree and Developmental Education Expectations

SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS (AUG. 19, 2014)

WASHINGTON—Air Force officials announced actions designed to set clear expectations, restore airmen's time, and refocus officer promotions on job performance.

The Air Force has addressed long-standing perceptions that to be promoted, officers must complete an advanced academic degree, and those officers selected by a promotion board to attend developmental education in-residence, are expected to first complete that same level of developmental education by correspondence.

"My number one priority is taking care of people, and these initiatives aim to do just that," said Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James.

"Our intention is to set clear expectations and ensure that, where possible, we give time back to our officers," continued Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III.

Effective Dec. 1, advanced academic degrees will no longer be considered for officers meeting line of the Air Force promotion boards below the grade of colonel. Additionally, information provided to all promotion board members will only show the "completed" level of developmental education or whether the officer is a "select" to attend in-residence. The method and year of completion will no longer be displayed.

"The change does not prevent officers from completing an advanced academic degree, which is important to officer development," Welsh said.

In fact, officers are expected to have an advanced academic degree for promotion to colonel. The changes allow the officer to focus on job performance and acquire an advanced academic degree at a time best suited for their life, career, and family without worrying about possible effects of not having an advanced academic degree at ranks lower than colonel.

"Since job performance is the most important factor when evaluating an officer for promotion, the decision to delay completion of an advanced academic degree will not affect their ability to serve a full career in the Air Force," Welsh said.

Another long-standing perception is that officers selected to attend professional military education in-residence must also complete the same level of professional military education by correspondence. This perception was based on the belief that officers who complete PME by distance learning early are demonstrating more initiative and are therefore more competitive for future opportunities and/or promotion.

The Air Force wants to debunk this perception by refocusing on job performance and airmen's time.

"We realize how valuable time is and want to give that time back to our officer corps," Welsh said.

Officers chosen as "selects" on promotion boards will be prohibited from completing the distance learning course unless they are subsequently designated to attend a program requiring the distance learning course to obtain full Joint PME credit. In addition, boards will be instructed to consider those with "select" status as having completed PME, thereby eliminating any timing concerns for those "selects" meeting promotion boards prior to attending PME in-residence.

The Air Force also enacted an important change for captains. Every active-duty captain will have an opportunity to attend Squadron Officer School in-residence, and criteria for

selection to attend will be based on the officer's date of rank, duty requirements, and family situation rather than whether or not they have already completed the distance learning course. In fact, they will no longer be allowed to complete the distance learning course unless operationally deferred and within one year of meeting the promotion board to major. The distance learning course will remain available for Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve officers.

"We understand our airmen are challenged every day to accomplish the mission with limited time, manpower, and resources," Welsh said. "By eliminating these perceived expectations, we hope to remind our officers that job performance is what we value most and that we want them to have a life away from work."

"A balanced force is a healthy force, and these changes strive to promote equilibrium in our airmen's lives," James said.

The new policy modifications will be captured in the Air Force Guidance Memorandums to Air Force Instruction 36-2301, *Developmental Education*, and AFI 36-2406, *Officer and Enlisted Evaluation Systems*. The first promotion board to implement the new policy will be the Major's (LAF) Central Selection Board scheduled for Dec. 1.

Tuition Assistance Policy Changing in FY-15

NAVAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE (AUG. 21, 2014)

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va.—Effective immediately, commanding officers and officers-in-charge may approve waivers to the one-year requirement that sailors must be on board their first permanent duty station (PDS) to be eligible for Tuition Assistance (TA) according to NAVADMIN 190/14 released Aug. 21.

In addition to command triad waiver approval, sailors must meet all existing requirements for participation eligibility.

The NAVADMIN also detailed changes to the grade and fee policy for TA for courses starting after 1 Oct. to align with recent Department of Defense TA policy.

Successful course completion will be defined as a grade of "C" or higher for undergraduate courses, a "B" or higher for graduate courses, and a "Pass" for "Pass/Fail" grades, and must be attained to avoid reimbursement of TA funding. Reimbursement will also be required from sailors who don't make up a grade of "I" (incomplete) by the educational institution's deadline or six months after the completion of the class, whichever comes first.

Also changing Oct. 1, only tuition directly related to the course of instruction—and not including fees—will be paid with TA funds. Fees no longer covered by TA include equipment, supplies, books/materials, exams, admissions, registration, fines, and costs associated with distance learning.

These changes align the Navy's policy with Department of Defense Instruction 1322.25 for Voluntary Education (VOLED) programs covering policies for service members' use of TA.

"Historically, more than 85 percent of sailors satisfactorily complete and pass their undergraduate and/or graduate level classes; this is a tribute to the focus and dedication of the sailors using VOLED programs," said Ernest D'Antonio, the Center for Personal and Professional Development's (CPPD) Navy VOLED program director.

In Fiscal Year 2013, approximately 89 percent of courses paid for by TA were successfully passed, with 72 percent of those courses resulting in an "A" or "B" grade, according to D'Antonio.

Sailors not successfully completing courses using TA must reimburse the Navy for TA funds.

For more information sailors can contact their local Navy College Office, Virtual Education Center (VEC), or the Navy College Program website at <https://www.navycollege.navy.mil/>.

For more information about the Center for Personal and Professional Development (CPPD), visit: <https://www.netc.navy.mil/centers/cppd/>.

For more news from the Center for Personal and Professional Development, visit: <http://www.navy.mil/local/voledpao/>.

For more news from Naval Education and Training Command, visit <http://www.navy.mil/local/cnet/>.

Vouchers Enable Accelerated Officer Graduate Education

NAVAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS (AUG. 25, 2014)
Ed Barker

PENSACOLA, Fla. (NNS) -- Naval officers unable to pursue full-time graduate studies now have an additional education option with the FY-15 Graduate Education Voucher (GEV) program, announced Aug. 25.

Detailed in Naval Administrative Message (NAVADMIN) 191/14, the GEV program offers eligible officers the opportunity to receive funded graduate education during off-duty hours. Through GEV, unrestricted line (URL) officers can apply to receive funding for Navy-relevant graduate education meeting the requirements of at least one subspecialty code as specified by the Navy Subspecialty System.

"Many officers find it challenging to maintain their career progression and simultaneously schedule full-time education at Naval Postgraduate School [NPS] or other institutions," said Dr. Cheral Cook, graduate education coordinator for Naval Education and Training Command (NETC).

"The GEV program offers an accelerated path to an off-duty master's degree with financial support of up to \$20,000 per fiscal year, with a total limit of \$40,000 for the entire course of study."

All required fees normally charged by the university relating directly to student application and enrollment, including mandatory health fees and health insurance, laboratory fees, vehicle registration and identification cards, and computer fees are reimbursable. Other reimbursable expenses include the cost of textbooks and course materials, and limited expenditures for transcript and entry fees, and final thesis production.

Lt. Jeffrey Cornielle, a submarine officer and instructor at the Naval Submarine Training Center Pacific at Pearl Harbor, recently completed his master's degree with Pennsylvania State University.

"This degree program has enabled me to approach problem solving from more than the traditional methods that I learned through Naval training," said Cornielle. "It provided me more insight on personnel management and its important role in the overall engineering project management process. I now have the tools to take a step back from a problem and understand how to evaluate all facets of that problem before making an educated decision, which could make a strong impact on my mission's success. This is definitely a great tool to have available for my post-Navy career when that time comes."

GEV applicants select a regionally accredited school and choose a specific course of study meeting their community's subspecialty requirements. Education plans are reviewed and approved for the Navy subspecialty code by NPS.

The GEV program is targeted at officers with demonstrated superior performance and upward career mobility who are

transferring or have recently reported to shore duty, in order to allow sufficient time for completion of a graduate program. The GEV program is open to URL active-duty officers in pay grades O-3 through O-5, in designators 111X (Surface Warfare), 112X (Submarine Warfare), 113X (Special Warfare/SEAL), 114X (Special Operations), and 13XX (Naval Aviator/Naval Flight Officer).

There are 120 planned quotas available for FY-15 as follows: Surface Warfare - 42; Submarine - 27; Aviation - 49; Special Warfare/Special Operations/Explosive Ordnance Disposal - 2. Quotas by degree program and warfare areas are listed in the in the NAVADMIN, and additional information can be found on the Navy College Program's GEV Web page at: https://www.navycollege.navy.mil/gev/gev_home.aspx.

Some restrictions apply and enrollment in the program carries a service obligation of three times the number of months of education completed, with a minimum of 24, and a maximum of 36 months' obligation. Officers completing a degree using GEV should expect to serve one tour in a subspecialty billet not later than the second tour following graduation. OPNAVINST 1520.37B contains additional information on specific program requirements. Interested officers should submit written requests to their detailer, per the NAVADMIN and OPNAV instruction.

For those with Program-specific GEV questions, call 850-473-6064, DSN: 753.

For those not qualifying for the GEV program, educational assistance may be available through the Tuition Assistance program, G.I. Bill, or other graduate education programs, as listed on the Navy College Web site at <https://www.navycollege.navy.mil/>.

For more information on the Naval Education and Training Command, visit <https://www.netc.navy.mil> and <http://www.navy.mil/local/cnet/>.

AFRL Internship Program Inspires Innovation, Service

AIR FORCE RESEARCH LABORATORY HEADQUARTERS (AUG. 27, 2014)

Derek Hardin

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio—An honors student/student body president, a Ph.D. student at the University of California-Berkeley, and a recently hired mechanical engineer at Robins Air Force Base, Ga.: What do all of these people have in common? They are all former participants of the Thurgood Marshall College Fund Internship Program at the Air Force Research Lab who credit the program as a key component of their successes.



Air Force Research Laboratory Thurgood Marshall College Fund intern, Donyai Moffatt, creates copper engraved patterns on a copper plate for use in an antenna measurement system.

U.S. Air Force photo/Mikee Huber

AFRL has been involved in the TMCF program for 15 years, and 300 student interns have participated to date. Each year, this national scholarship internship program offers students attending the 47 publically supported Historically Black Colleges and Universities, including law and medical schools, a first-hand professional development experience. The program focuses on developing leadership skills, introducing various career opportunities, creating a community of scholars, providing companies access to a talented and diverse student population, and helping students make connections that lead to internships and full-time positions.

“Our goal for the program is to establish and foster effective practices by promoting elite workforce initiatives,” said Justin Lee, AFRL program manager for the TMCF Internship Program. “By focusing on exclusive workforce initiatives to build morale, we explore revolutionary new ideas through basic science that delivers new capabilities to the warfighter. AFRL is a place where diverse cultures are accepted and all students and employees strive to foster an environment of acceptance, inclusion, and cooperation. AFRL is focused on acquiring and retaining a unique workforce.”

This year, 30 TMCF interns gained knowledge and experience in many of AFRL’s technology directorates, including Materials & Manufacturing, Sensors, Munitions, Information, and the 711th Human Performance Wing. Interns were involved in such projects as autonomous air vehicles, Shape Deposition Manufacturing, and other rapid prototyping techniques, and the development of novel diagnostics of material properties. There was also an intern who served at AFRL headquarters, as part of the communications team within the Commander’s Action Group.

This intern, Maso Cotton, is a recent political science graduate of Virginia State University, and he is another program participant who feels the TMCF internship program has positively impacted his young professional career.

“The TMCF Internship program was able to place me in an internship where I would be able to apply skills that pertain to my major,” said Cotton. “I am thankful that this opportunity was presented to me because it definitely exposed me to a division of public service work that I may not have otherwise considered as a possible career choice.”

Cotton adds, “I would certainly recommend the program to other students. Both AFRL and TMCF provided me with

the necessary tools to be productive in this internship opportunity, and I believe that both organizations are helping me improve my work ethic and abilities, professionalism, and overall preparedness for my career.”

Donyai Moffatt, a senior at Elizabeth City State University in North Carolina, recently participated in his second TCMF internship at AFRL, within the Sensors Directorate. One of his projects this year was the creation of engraved patterns on a copper plate for use in an antenna measurement system. Moffatt states that interning with AFRL has provided him with valuable experience.

“I have capitalized on my opportunities with my AFRL internship experience by working in a diverse workforce and gaining knowledge in cutting-edge software, setting myself as a contender for a government job post-graduation,” said Moffatt.

Michael McConkey, RF Technology Branch Chief of the Sensors Directorate at AFRL and TCMF program mentor, believes the benefits of the TCMF internship at AFRL are two-fold.

“It provides AFRL the opportunity to discover talent from colleges/universities that may not normally participate in summer intern programs,” McConkey said. “The program then provides valuable professional and real-world experience to those interns who participate. That experience is taken back to their respective institutions, and hopefully shared with others.”

The 2014 TCMF internship program at AFRL has come to a close. As AFRL surges into the future, it will continue to seek out the best and brightest workforce. AFRL leaders noted the TCMF Internship is one investment program that will help AFRL accomplish this goal.

“Many of these young people had no knowledge of AFRL or the science and technology research opportunities we offer for both military and civilian employees,” said Ricky Peters, AFRL executive director. “I believe this exposure will excite their interest and provide a pipeline for recruitment and innovation that will serve the nation well in the future.”

Office of Personnel Management Announces eOPF Upgrades

AIR FORCE PERSONNEL CENTER PUBLIC AFFAIRS (SEPT. 3, 2014)

Janis El Shabazz

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH, Texas—The Office of Personnel Management has announced recent up-

grades to their electronic personnel filing system to provide smarter and more efficient service to employees.

The OPM eOPF is a secure electronic personnel folder that provides civilian employees virtual access to their personnel records. This includes notifications of personnel actions and benefit election documentation such as Thrift Savings Plan contributions, life insurance, and health benefits.

“This upgrade provides substantially improved navigation,” said Chuck Zedek, the Air Force Personnel Center eOPF project manager. “Employees who have not done so should set up an eOPF account and review their records to ensure they are correct and up to date.

“Ultimately, we’re all responsible for managing our own future and professional development,” he said. “Ensuring our records are correct will help us achieve our professional goals.”

To help employees do that, AFPC sends all employees an annual email reminder during their birth month.

To create an eOPF account, go to myPers at <https://mypers.af.mil>. Under the “I would like to...” section, select “Learn how to access my Electronic Official Personnel File.” Scroll down to the “Creating eOPF Account” section and follow the instructions.

Employees must have a valid work email address in the eOPF in order to create their user account. The eOPF email data field is updated from the employee’s email address in MyBiz. Therefore, employees should check their MyBiz email address to make sure it’s accurate. To do so, go to <https://compo.dcpds.cpms.osd.mil/>. It takes approximately 24 hours for MyBiz email updates to flow to the eOPF.

The eOPF can only be accessed from a government or military computer network. The eOPF and MyBiz are secure applications, so employees do not need to worry about their data being compromised, Zedek said.

“Using the myPers self-service applications and the eOPF puts employees’ personnel information at their fingertips,” Zedek said. “They can now complete actions, which previously took an inordinate amount of time out of their day, with the click of a mouse.”

Employees can initiate requests for corrective action for certain eOPF errors or omissions such as date of birth correction, name change, and social security number correction.

To learn more about self-service updates, visit the myPers self-service page, accessible via the home page “I would like to” section.

For more information about other personnel issues, visit the myPers website.

Credentialing Effort Helps Troops Enter Private Sector

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE NEWS RELEASE (SEPT. 3, 2014)

Cheryl Pellerin

WASHINGTON—A Defense Department initiative is helping service members who plan to leave the military acquire civilian credentials for technical professions so they can move more quickly into the private sector, the department’s director of force readiness and training said in a recent DoD News interview.

Frank DiGiovanni said the initiative was helped along substantially by a change Congress made in 2012 in a section of Title 10 of the U.S. Code.

Title 10 outlines the role of the military in the U.S. Code, and in the change Congress gave DoD the authority to let separating service members have job-skills training programs, internships, or apprenticeships as part of their duty assignments.

“It’s a pretty significant change in Defense Department authorities,” DiGiovanni said, “and meant to assist in transition. It’s not only for career fields the service members are in, but for any kind of training. Several programs now are leveraging that new authority.”

Credentialing in Multiple Professions

DoD and the Services have implemented pilot credentialing programs in seven major professions: truck driving, medical, supply, automotive mechanics, aircraft mechanics, information technology, and manufacturing.

Whether military training exactly matches the skill levels needed for civilian licensing or certification depends on the career field, DiGiovanni said.

“There are many military career fields where, with just a little bit of gap training, you can step right into a civilian job,” he said, adding that an Army or a Marine Corps allied trade specialist career is one of these.

“At Fort Lee [in Virginia], right after you graduate the Allied Trade Specialist Program—they were third-party certified by the American Welding Society—an instructor could take you out, you’d do your weld, and if you passed, you’d get Ameri-

can Welding Society certification,” DiGiovanni said. “That’s one example where there isn’t much difference between the training they did in the military and what a service member would need to be successful on the outside.”

In other professions, service members would need what DiGiovanni calls “gap training.”

“In truck driving, for example, ... there are a couple of major differences,” he explained. “Most [military] trucks are automatic, and most of the large [commercial] trucks and trailers on the road are manual transmissions. Most of our trucks don’t have air brakes, and most of the large tractor-trailers do.”

The director said DoD focuses its credentialing efforts along three lines across a service member’s career:

- At the beginning, when he or she completes initial occupational training;
- Mid-career, when credentialing often requires time in the field or higher skill levels in addition to technical training; and
- End of career, as a service member plans his or her transition into civilian life.

Working with Private Sector

DiGiovanni said DoD has taken unique approaches to working with the private sector to find credentialing opportunities for service members. In the manufacturing sector, he said, DoD has worked closely with several accrediting bodies, mostly focusing on logistics.

“We’ve also worked with the American Welding Society, we work with CompTIA, a certifying agency for information technologies, we work with the American National Institute of Standards—ANSI—we work with the American Society of Engineers, and we work with an automotive organization,” the director said.

DoD works with the power industry for credentialing and licensing, and at Fort Stewart in Georgia 10 service members graduated recently from a free three-week training session provided by Georgia Power, DiGiovanni said. “And those folks are going to step right into jobs in the power industry,” he added.

Others who have done free training of service members include General Motors, the Teamsters, and the United Association’s Veterans in Piping program. The United Association’s full name is the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States, Canada, and Australia.

Getting the Word Out

To promote the credentialing initiative, DoD has done what DiGiovanni calls a “cold rollout” of a mobile application known as the DoD Skill Bridge, available online at <http://www.dodskillbridge.com>.

The app uses a Twitter-like 140-character tweet and hashtags, SMS texts, and emails to alert users to new jobs and training opportunities. And potential users can follow @DoD_SkillBridge on Twitter.

DoD’s SkillBridge allows industry to post job-skills training opportunities categorized by hashtag, DiGiovanni said. “So if you’re interested in jobs in welding,” he added, “you say, ‘I want tweets when there’s a new job or training available in #welding or #heavyconstruction.’ And you can say what geographic area you’re interested in.”

Even the SkillBridge Twitter feed offers opportunities to #TrainInEscondido or #TrainInJohnstown.

“We think this connection tool will help get the program out there and get it more recognized and understood,” the director said. “It’s also being incorporated into the Transition Assistance Program,” established to help separating service members transition into civilian life by offering job-search assistance and related services.

On the front end, DiGiovanni said, “we’re asking the Services to talk to their service members about licensing and credentialing opportunities. There’s benefit for the service member and for the force to broaden their foundational understanding of the occupational area they’re in. We are looking at institutionalizing this across the entire continuum of military service.”

Balancing Career Opportunities

The director characterized the initiative as a way to balance opportunities long offered to service members in higher education with other kinds of educational options.

“Not everyone wants a four-year degree,” DiGiovanni said, adding that the careers in which training is offered—health care and medical, information technology and cyber security, logistics, manufacturing, and others—require people who have high degrees of technical competence.

“I think this program is going to take us to new ground,” DiGiovanni said. “It’s focused. There’s an authority now that wasn’t there before. And last year 298,000 people got out of the military. The average number is around 250,000. So this is an enduring issue and this new authority and new

emphasis certainly helps our service members transition back to civilian life.”

SecAF Announces Incentive Pay for Nuclear Career Fields

SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE (SEPT. 15, 2014)

Air Force Capt. Chris Sukach

WASHINGTON—Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James announced assignment incentive pay and special duty assignment pay for officers and enlisted members assigned to certain career fields in the nuclear enterprise, Sept. 15.

As part of the Air Force’s continued commitment to the nuclear mission, both officers and enlisted members serving in certain career fields in the nuclear enterprise will receive up to \$300 per month.

“People assigned to these demanding and exclusive nuclear positions take on an extraordinary amount of responsibility, workload, and inspection rigor for the world’s most lethal weapons,” James said. “The nuclear mission is our number one mission and we’re going to compensate our airmen accordingly.”

The assignment incentive pay is open to officers assigned to and working in critical nuclear billets, with primary duty in the missile fields.

Special duty assignment pay will apply to certain enlisted career fields in the nuclear enterprise with details to come soon.

The incentive pays are effective Oct. 1, 2014.

Hiring Program Celebrates 10 Years of Syncing the Right Veteran with the Right Job

U.S. ARMY MATERIEL COMMAND NEWS (SEPT. 25, 2014)

Lisa Simunaci

REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala.—The U.S. Army Materiel Command’s Always a Soldier program recently celebrated 10 years of hiring and placing veterans in government positions.

Kimberly Reese is one of 532 veterans placed in a position since the program’s inception in 2004. Now an executive assistant for the U.S. Army Security Assistance Command’s deputy commanding general, Reese says she is happy to be surrounded by soldiers and working for the Army. “I love the military and with this job, I’m still with the military,” Reese said. “That’s very important to me.”



Kenya DelMar and Latishia Sessions, both employees who were hired through Always A Soldier, explain the program to a soldier who attended the Team Redstone Job Fair Sept. 25, 2014, at the Overlook.

U.S. Army photo by Cherish Washington

She spent more than 20 years in uniform and retired as a non-commissioned officer. She worked contract jobs that took her overseas before the Always a Soldier program helped her land a Department of the Army civilian position.

Always a Soldier is an initiative that helps veterans like Reese find jobs both within the Army Materiel Command and outside the organization.

“We provide a continuity of support for service members as they transition to civilian life,” said Debra Coleman, the program’s director.

As one of three Army command’s, AMC has a presence in all 50 states and 144 countries. Ten Major Subordinate Commands, including the U.S. Army Security Assistance Command where Reese now works, report to the headquarters. This broad reach provides access to various professional positions.

Always a Soldier launched under the direction of Gen. Paul J. Kern, who was commanding general of AMC from October 2001 to November 2004.

“At that time, warrior transition programs were effective in placing veterans, but they didn’t reach everyone,” Coleman

said. “The idea for the Always a Soldier program was to assist veterans who didn’t have a targeted disability.”

In 2011, the program expanded by joining forces with the Naval Sea Systems Command’s veterans hiring program. The two commands combined employ a total of more than 150,000 civilians, Coleman said.

Honorably discharged veterans from any U.S. Armed Services who served during a conflict, or veterans with at least a 30 percent disability rating qualify for the program. The program allows a non-competitive hiring action for selected positions. Always a Soldier also partners with outside agencies and contractors to help place qualified veterans.

“Candidates must be fully qualified for the position,” Coleman said. Civilian personnel officials evaluate candidates resumes for government positions like any other applicant.

Not only has she seen the program’s achievements for veterans, Coleman has experienced its success on a personal level. As a disabled Air Force veteran, Coleman applied to the program while she was serving in a temporary civilian position in Alaska.

Coleman was hired as the program’s director in October 2008. At that time, the program had about 60 participants.

She began attending career fairs and advertising on the Internet to raise awareness about the program and to help it grow.

"I started educating hiring officials and reaching out to all the major subordinate commands to establish contacts," Coleman said. Now each major subordinate command has an Always a Soldier representative. Those representatives are volunteers who take on the role as an additional duty.

"We have quarterly meetings and I encourage these representatives to go to career fairs and spread the news about the program," Coleman said. "A lot of our advertising is by word of mouth."

As she educates hiring officials, Coleman helps them understand that using the program can speed the hiring process. Positions hired through the program can often be filled in three to six months, she said. Hiring officials also have the prerogative to expand the position descriptions making them developmental positions. Doing so often allows them to provide training and advancement to the new employee.

Part of the program's success is the database that tracks the candidates. Coleman said the Office of Personnel Management and the Department of the Army have expressed interest in replicating AMC's tool.

"Our database has evolved over the years," Coleman said. "We now have a searchable system that makes our process easier and more effective."

Mike Mullins, deputy chief of AMC's Commanding General's Initiative Group said he used the program to fill a position in his office. "The program helped us match a veteran's skill-set to our position," Mullins said. "Veterans do well in this environment because they come with a solid understanding of the military and how we operate."

Besides being an asset for the organization, that military understanding is also good for the veterans who are placed through the program.

As she wraps up another day on the job, Reese said she is glad she connected with the Always a Soldier program. "For me, it's a great way to use what I know to continue my Army service," said Reese.