

2013 Report on the Performance of the Defense Acquisition System

The first annual report on the Performance of the Defense Acquisition System is now available. It represents the beginning of an effort to assess how well the Defense Acquisition Workforce is doing at delivering products to the nation's warfighters, how the performance of the workforce is changing over time, and, most importantly, how the Defense Acquisition Workforce can improve the Defense Acquisition System process. View the entire report at http://bbp.dau.mil/doc/Report_on_the_Performance_of_the_Def_Acq_System.pdf.

People at Center of Defense Acquisition Process, Official Says

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (JUNE 4, 2013)

Jim Garamone

WASHINGTON—People are at the core of the Defense Department's Better Buying Power 2.0 acquisition program, the assistant secretary of defense for acquisition said in a recent interview.

"Our people want, and the department needs, a professionalized workforce with the tools and training needed to be successful," Katrina McFarland said.

Much has changed since the department introduced the original version of the program in 2011. At that time, the department was ending a decade-long run of significant budget increases, the war in Iraq was winding down, and DoD was facing downsizing. Then-Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates announced a \$450 billion cut in spending over 10 years.

The acquisition philosophy was to spend and allocate money. "The job was to get things to the warfighter as quickly as we could," McFarland said. Better Buying Power anticipated the end of that era. Now, DoD is downsizing, but "not really leaving war per se," she said.

The acquisition career field was decimated in the 1990s, and the "spend" culture of the post-9/11 era did not help the workforce learn. "Now we have to rebuild the force while at the same time getting more out of the dollars available to us to spend," McFarland said.

Better Buying Power seeks to refocus the workforce and to change the culture that has been embedded since the 1990s.

"We've got to get to the training, we've got to get to the skills, we've got to get to how we manage our people," the assistant secretary said.

She talked about her experience "growing up" in the Marine Corps acquisition community. "For every step I took, there was somebody there with me to help me to understand, to learn, and to tell me how I could have done things better," she said. "[It was] the best type of leadership I could possibly ask for. I thought that was the way everybody was trained."

She soon learned that was not the case, she said—not because people didn't want to mentor new people, but because it was taken out of their job descriptions.

The department lost critical acquisition competencies and skills "that we cannot regrow overnight," she said. Acquisition officials "decided that people could come off the street and be leaders and supervisors."

Acquisition supervisors, as part of their duties, were supposed to help to nurture and train new people. But that function was eliminated "as a savings construct," McFarland said. The assistant secretary likened this to throwing the baby out with the bathwater. "We really hurt ourselves," she said. "They closed the feeder path for the senior skills."

She said the Defense Contract Management Agency was downsized "horrendously" from 26,000 people to fewer than 10,000. Much of the reduction, she said, eliminated contractor oversight positions. "They were the folks who monitor, who sit at the contracting site and make sure the public gets the value for the dollars," she added.

Defense industries still deliver a superb product to the force, McFarland said, noting that the American military is the best-equipped force in the world. "But we lost sense of ourselves as a customer," she said. "Our expertise at being a good customer waned. We couldn't tell what was 'good enough' anymore. We lost a lot of the expertise that managed to get better value for the dollar."

Better Buying Power 1.0 started the change, she said. "We want people to understand we are not in agreement with the construct that they can't do this business, that they are somehow inferior and unable to deliver materials, on time, on cost, on schedule," McFarland said. "Rather, there is a huge effort out there to help them get those tools."

One of the drumbeats of the program is to shape the acquisition workforce into a professional, respected corps, she said.

Acquisition is a team sport, McFarland said, with engineers, logisticians, budget and finance experts, specialists in international programs, information technology leaders, and testers needing to cooperate.

But teams need leaders. "We get a lot of 'help.' Some of it well-intended, but a lot of this help misses," she said. "There is no checklist mentality that can succeed here. There has to be people with intellect to know what risks to take and not to take, and that requires learned people to work with those junior [personnel] to introduce them to the process and give them the room for failure."

Each acquisition is different and poses different challenges, she said. Each program is unique, and requires leaders to consult a list, but not be bound by it—"someone to take into account the risks," McFarland said.

She noted that getting a driver's license requires passing a written test and receiving driving instruction from an older, experienced operator. "In acquisition, we throw them the keys to a Maserati and tell them to tool around on [Interstate] 95," she said.

At its core, Better Buying Power seeks to help acquisition personnel think, McFarland said. "This isn't, 'Thou shalt do this,'" she added. "It's 'These are ideas that you need to consider as you engage in your daily business.'"

AF Officials Announce Fiscal 2014 Force Management Programs

AIR FORCE NEWS SERVICE (JULY 18, 2013)

WASHINGTON—In ongoing efforts to size and shape the force to current and future requirements, Air Force officials announced the fiscal 2014 force management programs.

The Air Force ended fiscal 2012 with 159 airmen over end-strength and anticipates ending fiscal 2013 at or marginally over end-strength. The fiscal 2014 budget requests active duty end strength at 327,600, which is a further reduction of 1,860 from fiscal 2013 active duty authorized end strength.

For enlisted airmen, voluntary programs from last year will continue. These include waivers for active duty service commitments, time-in-grade waivers, enlistment contract waivers, and expanded Palace Chase transfers to the Air National Guard or Air Force Reserve.

For officers, voluntary programs will continue. These programs will be offered to certain year groups and overage career fields to allow time-in-grade and Active Duty Service Commitment (ADSC) waivers. New for this year will be an ADSC waiver of up to 12 months for senior and intermediate developmental education. Likewise, Palace Chase and the 10 to eight years of commissioned service waivers will continue to be offered.

"The Air Force will be smaller in the future," said Col. Dawn Keasley, the Military Force Policy division chief. "Depending on end-strength requirements for fiscal year 2014 and beyond, we may be required to implement additional force management measures throughout the year to meet Congressionally-mandated end strength."

She added that the Air Force's goal will be to use voluntary measures first, offer incentives where needed, and use involuntary programs if required.

"Airmen are our most important resource, and we must do our best to live with the resources we've been given," said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III. "That requires having the right balance of skills to meet the needs of the current and future fight, which these force management actions will provide."

For more information on fiscal 2014 force management programs or to apply, please visit the myPers website at <https://mypers.af.mil> and enter "Force Management" in the search window.

Science, Tech Skills Increasingly Vital, Official Says

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (JUNE 11, 2013)

Nick Simeone

WASHINGTON—The Defense Department needs to be thinking now about how to best recruit a workforce skilled in science and technology, which will be increasingly vital to national security, a senior DoD official said here yesterday.

Reginald Brothers, deputy assistant secretary of defense for research, told a conference aimed at spurring more young Americans to take up such careers that the pace and adoption of technology are accelerating at such a rate that the department envisions a commensurate need to have a strong, technical, and scientific workforce for the nation to remain competitive and secure.

One problem, he said, is that minorities are not choosing those careers in great numbers, and within a few decades, they will be the majority in the workforce.

"We have to be thinking right now [about] how do we motivate, how do we train this population of underrepresented minorities and women?" Brothers said. "Most of these people are not going into these areas."

Brothers and representatives of other federal agencies and industry spoke at the conference, called the "Summit on Meeting the President's STEM Call to Action" to discuss the need for more people to pursue careers in science, tech-

nology, engineering and math, and to explain how federal agencies are responding to President Barack Obama's call to increase those numbers over the next decade.

Brothers said the Defense Department has invested \$150 million in 16 such programs. "We're trying to excite minorities and women," he told the audience, noting that part of the challenge is that people considering such careers don't often associate them with the Defense Department.

"We really don't brand ourselves in a way to let people see us," he acknowledged.

The lure of much higher paying jobs offered in Silicon Valley is another challenge the department faces in recruiting people with scientific and technological skills, Brothers said.

"When we see Google, Intel, etc., how do we attract people to our workforce?" he asked. The diversity of work offered at the Defense Department is key, he said.

"If you work at some of these companies, you will be well paid, but you will work on one thing for quite a while," he said. "If you work at the Defense Department, you will work on a variety of problems throughout your career."

Defense Contractors Will Share Burdens of Furloughs, Hagel Says

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (JUNE 11, 2013)

Jim Garamone

WASHINGTON—The Defense Department is reviewing all of its contracts, and DoD contractors will share the burden of spending cuts, including the furloughs facing the department's civilian workforce, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel told senators today.

Hagel testified before the Senate Appropriations Committee's defense Subcommittee this morning.

"Contractors are part of any institution," he said. "We need them—certain skills, certain expertise."

DoD Comptroller Robert F. Hale, who accompanied Hagel, told the committee that about 700,000 defense contractors work throughout the department. And they are in for some changes, he added.

"The furlough process does include contractors," Hagel told the Senate panel. "It includes companies, it includes acquisitions, it includes contracts."

The department is taking a \$37 billion sequestration spending cut in fiscal year 2013, which ends Sept. 30. "The majority of that is going to come out of contractors—about \$2 billion will come out of furloughs," Hale said. That means a drop in the number of contractors in the department.

"I don't know yet how much, because the year isn't over, but I think there will be a sharp drop," the comptroller said. The senators asked about contractors because of newspaper reports about alleged National Security Agency leaker Edward Snowden receiving a \$200,000 annual salary. Contractors generally receive more in salary than DoD civilian employees, Hale said.

"Whether or not a contractor or a civilian is cheaper or better really depends on the circumstances," he explained. "There are some cases where we simply don't have the skills in the Department of Defense that we need, or it's a short-term job and it wouldn't make any sense to grow them."

If it is a long-term job, he added, it makes more sense to hire a civil servant.

Official Explains Tuition Assistance Quality Assurance Program

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (JUNE 12, 2013)

Amaani Lyle

WASHINGTON—To increase stewardship and optimize service members' educational experiences, Defense Department officials have developed a multifaceted quality assurance program to improve tuition assistance, the assistant secretary of defense for readiness and force management said on Capitol Hill today.

In testimony before the Senate Appropriations Committee's defense subcommittee, Frederick E. Vollrath said new policies will mandate that all participating institutions sign a memorandum of understanding requiring them to adhere to specific principles of excellence.

"This will help end fraudulent recruitment on our military installations ... address other predatory practices by bad academic actors, and provide students with personalized, standardized forms outlining costs, financial aid, and outcome measures," Vollrath said.

The memorandum also requires that military students have access to a streamlined tool to compare educational institutions using key measures of affordability and value through the Veterans Affairs Department's E-benefits portal.

Vollrath told the panel that 3,100 institutions and more than 1,050 subcampuses have signed the memorandum of understanding. He also reported that DoD is part of an interagency team that is finalizing the development and implementation of a centralized complaint system to resolve concerns raised by students receiving tuition assistance.

The departments of Veterans Affairs, Education, Justice, and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau will have access to all complaints as they work to resolve issues, he added.

“Underpinning this effort is the requirement that all post-secondary education participating in the Tuition Assistance Program must be accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education,” Vollrath said.

Meanwhile, he said, the Defense Department will continue to provide lifelong learning opportunities through off-duty, voluntary education programs, noting that each year, a third of service members enroll in post-secondary education courses leading to associate’s, bachelor’s, and advanced degrees. In fiscal year 2012, more than 286,000 service members enrolled in nearly 875,000 courses, Vollrath reported, and more than 50,000 service members earned degrees or certifications.

“All service members enrolled in the voluntary education programs are nontraditional students, in that they attend school part-time while they are off duty, taking, on average, only three courses per year,” Vollrath said. But military missions, deployments, and transfers frequently impinge on the troops’ ability to continue their education, he noted, adding that this often results in breaks of months or, in some cases, years between service members taking courses and completing their degrees.

With that in mind, colleges and universities are delivering more classroom instruction online as well as on military installations around the world, Vollrath added.

“There are no geographical confines,” he said. “Courses are offered aboard ships, submarines, and at deployed locations such as Afghanistan—this is the kind of instruction our service members want.”

Vollrath also said more than 76 percent of the courses taken last year were delivered through distance learning. Still, he stressed, the rigors of military service will not relax strict requirements in place for participating service members.

“Prior to enrolling in courses using tuition assistance, service members must establish an educational goal and a degree

plan,” he said. An educational counselor must review tuition assistance requests outlined in the approved degree plan. Service members who either fail or do not complete the course must reimburse the Defense Department for tuition assistance received for that course.

“Service members failing to maintain a 2.0 undergraduate grade-point average or a 3.0 graduate GPA must pay for all courses until they raise their GPA sufficiently,” Vollrath explained. “Our voluntary education program is a key component of the recruitment, readiness, and retention of the total force—an all-volunteer force.”

To further illustrate the value of the education program, Vollrath cited an example of retired Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Eric Combs, who entered the military with a general education development certificate before earning his Community College of the Air Force and bachelor’s degrees with tuition assistance while on active duty. After retirement, he went on to earn his master’s degree in education in 2005.

Upon his retirement, he participated in the Troops to Teachers program and earned acclaim with his selection as the Ohio Teacher of the Year in 2006. He now serves as a principal in the public school system.

“The skills he learned and the education he received while serving in the Air Force ultimately benefited him, the Air Force, and the nation,” Vollrath said.

Carter Says DoD Doing All It Can to Minimize Sequester Effects

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (JUNE 12, 2013)

Jim Garamone

WASHINGTON—The Defense Department is doing all it can to minimize the effects of sequestration spending cuts, Deputy Defense Secretary Ash Carter told a “think tank” audience here today.

“We’re doing everything we can to manage our way through this very difficult and abrupt circumstance,” Carter said at the Center for a New American Security.

Carter said the \$37 billion in fiscal year 2013 spending cuts would not be so bad for any one area if they were spread over all DoD accounts, but they cannot be, though DoD exempted warfighting accounts from any cuts.

“We protect that. We have to,” Carter said. “It’s a war.”

The president exempted military compensation from sequestration, the deputy secretary said. “Then we exempted



Deputy Defense Secretary Ash Carter delivers remarks at the Center for a New American Security's annual conference in Washington, D.C., June 12, 2013.

DoD photo by U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Aaron Hostutler

a number of critical functions from sequester, for example, nuclear deterrence, our ability to respond to crises ... and on down the line, taking some things off the table entirely," he added.

The department then tried to protect those things critical to the execution of U.S. military strategy, Carter said, and applied the \$37 billion reduction to what was left.

"That hits particularly hard in the operations and maintenance accounts," he told the audience. "These are the accounts that support training, and as a result, military readiness plummets."

The Air Force has grounded 13 combat squadrons for the rest of the fiscal year. Navy officials have cancelled ship deployments and deferred maintenance. But the cuts hit particularly hard on the Army, Carter said.

"We protected the war, and it is the Army which is, in the main, bearing the burden of fighting the war in Afghanistan,"

he explained. "As a consequence, their accounts get hit particularly hard."

The Army has cancelled most of its major training events for the rest of the fiscal year. The deputy secretary said he does not know how long it will take to reconstitute this readiness following sequestration.

"At a minimum, [it's] embarrassing to be doing this, in the eyes of friends and foes alike, and at a maximum, [it's] unsafe," he said of the sequestration cuts.

The situation reinforces in the minds of national security leaders the necessity to be prepared for what might happen in the future, Carter said.

Research Analyst Named New Workforce Advocate

U.S. ARMY ACQUISITION SUPPORT CENTER (JULY 11, 2013)

Tara Clements

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md.—Diane Bullis, a supervisory operations research analyst for Program Executive

Office (PEO) Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives (ACWA), was appointed as Army's newest Acquisition Career Management Advocate (ACMA) who will now serve as an advocate for the acquisition workforce among those who support the Army's \$10.6 billion chemical weapons demilitarization program.

With more than 31 years of federal service, Bullis will serve as a key communications conduit for acquisition specialists assigned to PEO ACWA and to senior acquisition executives in the DoD and the Army.

An ACMA is a senior acquisition leader appointed to be a lead resource to acquisition, logistics and technology (AL&T) workforce members as well as Army organizations and commands in many regions that have a large acquisition workforce population. ACMA's are chartered by the director of acquisition career management (DACM), who is also the military deputy to the assistant secretary of the Army for AL&T. These individuals are responsible for command-specific issues and also serve as the communication link between the workforce and U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center.

There are currently 47 appointed ACMA's in 16 locations worldwide.

Each ACMA is presented with a charter to confirm their appointment. The charter outlines the ACMA's role and responsibilities to "serve as a principal advisor and assistant to the DACM" as well as "to perform as an advisor to the senior leadership within your command and surrounding acquisition communities for matters related to the execution and management of acquisition career development, policy, procedures, and programs."

ACMA's were initiated in accordance with the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act.

Officers, Enlisted Members Offered Early Retirement

AIR FORCE PERSONNEL CENTER PUBLIC AFFAIRS (JULY 25, 2013)

Debbie Gildea

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH, Texas—Technical and master sergeants, captains, majors, and lieutenant colonels in certain Air Force specialties may apply to retire with fewer than 20 years of active service under the Temporary Early Retirement Authority, Air Force Personnel Center officials announced.

Commonly referred to as the 15-year retirement, TERA is one of several force management programs the Air Force will



The acquisition of material and equipment to build and operate multimillion dollar chemical weapons disposal facilities requires a highly specialized and trained professional workforce. Helping to manage that workforce is newly appointed Acquisition Career Management Advocate Diane Bullis, shown here reviewing the charter for her new role. Bullis is a Maryland native with more than 31 years of federal service who will now act as a key communications conduit for acquisition specialists assigned to the Program Executive Office (PEO) Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives (ACWA), and to senior acquisition executives in the DoD and Army.

U.S. Army photo

implement during fiscal 2014 to meet end-strength goals, said Lt. Col. John Barlett, the AFPC operations division chief.

To be eligible for consideration, members must have at least 15, but less than 20 years of total active duty time as of Oct. 31, 2013. Applications will be accepted July 29 - Aug. 15, and those approved must be retired by Nov. 1, 2013.

Interested enlisted airmen and officers who have active duty service commitments or time in grade requirements may be eligible for a waiver, although some waivers may require the member to repay the government.

"ADSCs incurred from technical training attendance can be fully waived with no requirement for repayment, but if you transferred your post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to a family member and they have used part or all of the benefits, you may be required to repay those funds," Barlett explained.

Airmen must apply through the virtual military personnel flight, accessible via the Air Force Portal or the myPers website. After submission, applicants can check the status under "MyStuff" in the virtual Military Personnel Flight, the secure applications section of the Portal and myPers.

Airmen with an approved date of separation or a separation/retirement application pending prior to July 19 are not eligible for TERA. If an otherwise eligible member's separation or retirement application is disapproved, the member may be eligible to apply for TERA.

In addition, approved applicants who are subsequently selected for promotion will be allowed to withdraw their application, but they will only have 10 weekdays after their promotion notification to do so.

Approved applicants should immediately contact the local Airman and Family Readiness Center to register for the mandatory transition assistance program seminar.

"TAP is a great benefit for retiring and separating airmen, and because it is now mandatory, available slots may be limited. Members separating under a force management program should contact their base program managers to ensure that they aren't delayed by this requirement," Barlett said.

For full application instructions and eligibility requirements and a list of eligible career fields, go to the myPers website at <https://mypers.af.mil> and search for "PSDM 13-73" for the enlisted program or "PSDM 13-74" for the officer program.

AF Names Primary, Alternate DARPA Participants

*AIR FORCE PERSONNEL CENTER PUBLIC AFFAIRS (JULY 25, 2013)
Debbie Gildea*

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH, Texas—Twelve captains, majors, and lieutenant colonels have been selected as primary or alternate fiscal year 2014 Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency Service Chiefs Program participants.

The program begins in September and is designed to immerse outstanding military officers into an imaginative, innovative, fast-paced science and technology research environment. The SCP provides insight into cutting-edge technology

and aids in developing future DARPA technology, said Tech. Sgt. Jason Franklin, Air Force Personnel Center Officer Developmental Education.

Primary participants include Lt. Col. Tyler Morton, Air Force District of Washington; Majors Steven Leutner, AFPC; Christopher Gentile, Air Force Materiel Command; Christopher Cassem, Pacific Air Forces, and Rebecca Carter, Special Operations Command; as well as Captains Benjamin Donberg, U.S. Air Forces in Europe; David Cochran, Air Combat Command; and Steven Byrum, Air Mobility Command.

Alternates include Lt. Col. Shane Barrett, Headquarters Air Staff; Majors Nicholas Delcour and Jeremy Holmes, Strategic Command; and Eric Patton, Air Combat Command.

For more information about the DARPA SCP, go to <http://www.darpa.mil>, select "Opportunities," then "Military Services," and "Service Chief's Fellows Program."

Vouchers Streamline Officer Graduate Education

*NAVAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS
(AUG. 1, 2013)*

Ed Barker

PENSACOLA, Fla.—Naval officers unable to pursue full-time graduate studies have an additional education option with the FY-14 Graduate Education Voucher (GEV) program, announced July 26.

Detailed in Naval Administrative Message (NAVADMIN) 185/13, 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 difficult to maintain career progression and simultaneously schedule full-time education at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), Naval War College, or other institutions," said Cheral Wintling, Graduate Education coordinator for Naval Education and Training Command (NETC). "The GEV program offers a streamlined 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 in-

clude the cost of textbooks and course materials, and limited expenditures for transcript and entry fees, and final thesis production.

Lt. Gary Redman, a E-2C Hawkeye weapons and tactics instructor at the Airborne Command Control and Logistics Weapons School in Norfolk is a current GEV participant pursuing his Master of Science in Systems Engineering with George Washington University satellite campus in Newport News, Va.

"This degree will give me flexibility both inside and outside the Navy, as it helps me understand the technical aspects of research and development, including contracting and future technology," said Redman. "The GEV allows you to choose your school, on your own time. The instructors understand that you're working full-time and structure their assignments accordingly."

GEV applicants select a regionally accredited school and choose a specific course of study meeting community subspecialty requirements. The education plan is 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 list of officers in paygrades O-3 through O-5, in designators 111X, 112X, 113X, 114X, 131X, and 132X.

There are 130 planned quotas available for FY14 as follows: Surface Warfare - 44; Submarine - 34; Aviation - 49; Special Warfare/Special Operations - 3. Quotas by degree program and warfare areas are available in NAVADMIN 185/13, and additional information can be found on the Navy College Program's GEV Web page at: https://www.navycollege.navy.mil/gev/gev_general.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 ships at sea, applications via naval message containing the required information will be accepted.

Program-specific GEV questions should be addressed to Marjorie Dilworth at 850-473-6064, DSN: 753 or via e-mail at: marjorie.dilworth@navy.mil.

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.navy-college.navy.mil/>.

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

AF Looks to Collaborate with Public

AIR FORCE NEWS SERVICE (JULY 31, 2013)

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO - RANDOLPH, Texas—For the first time in its history, the U.S. Air Force is seeking input from the public to help solve three real-world, unclassified projects.

Known as "The Air Force Collaboratory," the educational online platform will offer the public an opportunity to engage with airmen.

"We are excited to showcase this newest initiative for open collaboration with the public," said Col. Marcus Johnson, Strategic Marketing Division chief. "The goal of this project is to inspire STEM-inclined students and educators to engage, collaborate, and solve real-world challenges faced by our airmen today."

This experience will also highlight the breadth and variety of technologies the Air Force works with.

"These real world projects will highlight current and future Air Force technologies," said Johnson. "Technology changes the way we fly, fight, and win. We want to illustrate the high-tech nature of the Air Force through this project."

The Air Force Collaboratory features three projects that will challenge participants to be creative and inventive as they work to find solutions.

- The first project, "Search and Rescue 2.0," which will be active for collaboration from Aug. 1 to Sept. 30, solicits participants to develop new technologies through rapid prototyping for search and rescue operations to help save lives trapped in collapsed structures.
- The second project, "Mind of a Quadrotor," which will be active for collaboration from Sept. 1 to Oct. 31, challenges participants to help build a system that allows a quadrotor

to navigate its surroundings with minimal human interaction.

- The third and final project, "Launch of GPS IIF," which will be active for collaboration from Oct. 1 to Nov. 30, tests participants to determine the most effective location within the GPS satellite constellation to launch the Air Force's newest GPS satellite.

"We seek the best and brightest to help the Air Force develop innovative and unique ideas that will enhance our airmen's capabilities to accomplish their missions," said Johnson. "Through collaboration, we can create solutions using creative thinking and problem-solving skills. There are no bad ideas, so we ask those involved to voice them. Your ideas can help save lives."

To be a part of "The Air Force Collaboratory," sign up at <http://www.airforce.com/collaboratory>.

APG Unveils Center for STEM, Education Outreach

U.S. ARMY RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND ENGINEERING COMMAND (JULY 30, 2013)

Dan Lafontaine

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md.—Aspiring scientists and engineers are now exploring their future careers at a unified APG facility dedicated to education outreach.

Aberdeen Proving Ground, or APG, ushered in a new era of partnerships in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, or STEM, for northeast Maryland with a ribbon-cutting ceremony July 30, 2013.

The APG STEM and Education Outreach Center brings tenant organizations together to pool resources that will enhance students' experiences in scientific and engineering disciplines. The facility accommodates up to 200 students.

Maj. Gen. Robert Ferrell, commanding general of the U.S. Army Communications-Electronics Command and APG senior commander, emphasized teamwork was necessary among organizations to make the STEM center possible.

"The new STEM facility has been a team effort across APG," Ferrell said. "Today represents our energy that we put behind that. Thank you for hard work and making this a reality."

Ferrell also stressed APG's commitment to STEM success for the region's students and teachers. Installation leaders signed an educational partnership agreement in December 2012 with Harford County Public Schools to formalize STEM outreach efforts.

"At APG, we have a saying: 'There may be a gate, but it's only a gate, and it's not a barrier to our great relationship that we've built over time and will continue to build.' Those words are especially true when it comes to providing STEM education opportunities," Ferrell said.

Based on the Army Educational Outreach Program initiatives that APG organizations currently support, just the first floor of the three-story Building 4508 was renovated. The building was previously used for soldier barracks.

About 100 soldiers, Army employees, educators, and local government officials joined senior APG leaders to mark the ceremony.

The facility opened to classes June 24 as part of AEOP's Gains in the Education of Mathematics and Science, a STEM summer program for middle- and high-school students. Four-hundred students and 29 teachers will use the SEOC this summer.

Dale Ormond, director of the U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command, said he has been impressed by the number of students participating in GEMS. He said the program sparked an interest in STEM for two of his children.

"What this facility brings to the education experience changes the way children think and use science and engineering. It is a critical thing to begin stimulating the way people think," Ormond said.

Jeffrey Singleton, director of basic research, laboratory management, and educational outreach for the assistant secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology, introduced three students who started in Army STEM programs in high school and continued during college.

"I can assure you that the Army is very heavily invested in our youth and specifically in promoting student interest and increasing their technical proficiency in STEM," Singleton said. "The STEM and Education Outreach Center is a visual symbol of that commitment."

The STEM facility houses classroom space; laboratories for computers, electronics, and chemistry and biology experiments; metal and wood shops; and a robotics staging area. The Army supplied equipment that is similar in functionality for students to use, but is less expensive than that used in real-world research laboratories. APG organizations can also use the classrooms for meetings and training.

Louie Lopez, chief of STEM education outreach at RDECOM, said the center benefits the Army's national and local programs that bring students into the laboratory for interaction with scientists and engineers. RDECOM provides technical oversight of AEOP and leads Team APG STEM efforts.

"The renovation of Building 4508 to a dedicated STEM facility enhances Team APG's role in STEM education regionally, state-wide, and nationally," Lopez said. "The joint commitment of major tenant organizations on APG to SEOC establishes a foundation of a coordinated and cohesive approach to installation-wide STEM initiatives, aligning with Army, Department of Defense and the federal STEM strategic plan."