

### Sheppard Officials Launch Nuclear Accountability Course

AIR FORCE NEWS SERVICE (OCT. 6, 2009)

George Woodward

SHEPPARD AIR FORCE BASE, Texas—Air Force officials took another important step in reinvigorating their nuclear enterprise here Oct. 5 with the launch of the Nuclear Accountability Course providing realistic, hands-on training to airmen assuming duties making them responsible for nuclear weapons.

Delivered by the 82nd Training Wing's 363rd Training Squadron, the four-week course targets squadron-level munitions officers and NCOs responsible for the day-to-day tracking, monitoring, and reporting of nuclear munitions.

"This is a completely new course," said Air Force Maj. Wes Adams, 363rd TRS Aircraft Maintenance and Munitions Officer Course director. "Previously, the officers and NCOs taking on accountability duties would learn on the job. This course provides a solid, academic foundation for these airmen and ensures the training is consistent across the Air Force."

At the heart of the curriculum is a computer system that mirrors the database used to track and account for nuclear weapons across the Department of Defense called Defense Integration and Management of Nuclear Data Services, or DIAMONDS.

The DIAMONDS Accountability Training System allows students to learn the exact procedures they will use on the job without interfering with the live database.

"It looks like DIAMONDS, it smells like DIAMONDS, and it tastes like DIAMONDS, but it's not DIAMONDS," Adams said. "That's important because it means students can learn the system and manipulate realistic data without any risk."

As the Air Force Program Manager for DIAMONDS, the 708th Nuclear Sustainment Squadron at Kirtland AFB, N.M., played a key role in working with the Defense Threat Reduction Agency to get the training hardware and software in place and ensure it accurately mirrored DIAMONDS.

Though the process was complex and sometimes challenging, Air Force Maj. Jordan Murphy, 708th NSUS project officer, said the end result was more than worth it.

"DIAMONDS is how we do nuclear accountability in the Air Force," he said, "so it's absolutely crucial that new accountability students learn the system. With the DIAMONDS

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Accountability Training System in place, the students will leave Sheppard with meaningful experience and a real understanding of how to track and account for the Air Force's nuclear weapons."

Of all the challenges involved in getting the course up and running, Murphy said the timeline was the toughest.

"There was a lot of timeline pressure on us, understandably given the nature of the course," he said. "In the end, we were able to field it three months earlier than planned."

A lot of the high-level intervention came from the office of Col. Stephen Williams, Nuclear Weapons, Missiles, and Munitions Division chief at the Pentagon.

"A lot of the heavy lifting on this came from the instructors and supervisors at Sheppard," he said. "But having been an operations officer at the 365th Training Squadron at Sheppard, I knew that a lot of great training ideas never get off the ground because people don't have access to the resources it takes to make them happen. That's where we came in—formally identifying the DIAMONDS training capability as a USAF Service priority to DTRA, then connecting the resources to the project. The rest is the program manager organizing the 82nd TRG subject matter experts and the DTRA computer experts to build and install the needed capability."

As the functional managers for the officer and enlisted munitions career fields, Williams' office had a strong interest in getting the course off the ground, and provided the money and influence that made it possible.

"Getting the course infrastructure, including DATS, set up cost about \$457,000, which is actually a pretty small number considering the importance of the course and the fact that we're dealing with nuclear accountability," he said. "It's money very well spent. We were giving our young munitions officers and NCOs critical responsibilities, but we owed them better tools to do the job well—specifically training. This course does that."

According to Williams, another benefit of the course is that it will help restore some of the culture and institutional knowledge the Air Force lost over the years—a loss identified in many internal reviews as a contributing factor to the serious breakdowns in 2007 and 2008.

It's a goal echoed by the person on the business end of the whole effort, Ed Wang, 363rd TRS course instructor.

"Of course our main goal is to provide the specific training our munitions officers and NCOs need to do their jobs today, and do them perfectly," he said. "But we're also looking at tomorrow—at building future leaders who know the nuclear business from the ground up and who understand the demands of managing the nuclear enterprise."

The Nuclear Accountability Course is the second nuclear-related course instituted at Sheppard this year. The Nuclear Fundamentals Course, launched in May, provides basic nuclear weapons training for all new munitions officers as part of their initial training. The 363rd TRS also provides Air Force Specialty Code-awarding courses for nuclear munitions officers and enlisted nuclear weapons specialists.

In addition to nuclear munitions experts, the 82nd Training Wing at Sheppard delivers 80,000 graduates annually in aircraft and aerospace ground equipment maintenance, conventional munitions, avionics, civil engineering, medical, logistics, telecommunications, fuels and vehicle operations.

*Woodward writes for 82nd Training Wing Public Affairs.*

### **Act Ends Controversial NSPS Personnel System**

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (OCT. 28, 2009)

*Jim Garamone*

WASHINGTON—With President Barack Obama's signature today on the 2010 National Defense Authorization Act, a controversial pay-for-performance personnel system is abolished.

About 220,000 Defense Department employees who had come under the National Security Personnel System will

transition back to the long-standing General Schedule system, but that will take time, a senior official said.

Tim Curry, acting program executive officer for NSPS, said the department could start transitioning employees in six months. The department has begun a comprehensive planning process, he explained, with the goal of ensuring a smooth and orderly transition of employees and organizations out of NSPS.

"The department is going to proceed deliberately and cautiously without unnecessary delay," Curry said during an interview today. The transition will take place organization by organization, he said, to minimize disruption. Meanwhile, employees under NSPS will remain in that system.

"It took three years to bring those 220,000 employees into the system," Curry said. "Congress recognized that it was going to take time ... to do it right."

The new law gives Defense Department officials six months to develop and submit a plan to Congress detailing the transition. The whole transition must be finished by Jan. 1, 2012.

"We will work under NSPS for the time being, while we are working on the transition plan," Curry said. "When we're at the point where employees come out of the system ... the law ensures that no employee's pay will be reduced when converting out of NSPS."

Employees outside of NSPS are not affected by the change.

Curry's office is also studying the new law's other civilian personnel ramifications. He said these include requirements for performance management, hiring flexibilities, training requirements, and the department's ability to go back to Congress for added personnel flexibilities.

"We're looking at what that means and how to proceed," Curry said. "We're just assessing the impact and how to move forward."

The major complaint about NSPS was that it was overly complicated and that no employee understood the pay pool process, Curry said, pledging that department officials will take the lessons from the NSPS experience as it moves ahead.

"We'll be particularly mindful of issues surrounding complexity and transparency," he said. "Those are certainly important considerations to ensure employees understand and accept and buy into any rules that will be put in place."

Civilian employees under NSPS finished a rating cycle at the end of September. These workers will receive performance ratings and payouts effective in January under NSPS, Curry said. A provision of the act requires that employees with Level 2 ratings or higher are guaranteed a pay increase in January that's at least equivalent to the pay increase that applies to General Schedule employees.

Employees are encouraged to frequently check the NSPS Web site for updates at <[www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps/](http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps/)>.

### **New Web Site Offers Supervisor Growth Through e-Learning Tools**

*AIR FORCE MATERIEL COMMAND NEWS RELEASE (OCT. 23, 2009)  
Kendahl Johnson*

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga.—Supervisors now have online access to a robust collection of continuous learning tools.

The Supervisor Resource Center is a Community of Practice site that offers an assortment of Air Force e-learning tools, such as training courses, books, simulations, exercises and job aids, and the resources to help supervisors guide the development of employees interested in a supervisory career path.

"The site provides a litany of excellent tools for both new and seasoned supervisors," said Mark Brotherton, resources and planning branch chief. "It's a really nice place to go to shop for information and gain experience and knowledge."

One of the highlights of the site, which can be found at <<https://afkm.wpafb.af.mil/src>>, is the Leadership Knowledge Center. This area provides numerous resources for supervisors including:

- **Featured Topic**—updated monthly, it contains a suggested reading, a course spotlight, a leadership challenge, a brief presentation of a situation or problem that asks the learner to think of a solution before consulting recommended solutions and more
- **Business Impact and Challenge Series**—a set of concise, scenario-based vignettes designed to engage the learner in rich content that enables problem analysis and solution definition
- **Practice Zone and Labs**—a variety of learning assets designed to meet the needs of different learners. Users can access hands-on, interactive assets that let them put growing skills to the test in realistic situations
- **SkillSoft Courses** — a set of courses and aids with specific focus areas such as building improved working relationships, leading the workforce generation, giving effective presentations, and effective use of feedback.

- **Books 24x7**—topical references from the books library on a wide variety of leadership subjects. Other highlights of the site include Knowledge Nuggets, where subject matter experts in various leadership areas impart wisdom via videos, a discussion forum, and access to mandatory first-time supervisory training.

Brotherton said one of the neat things about the site is that users are invited to submit content they feel will benefit others.

"There is already a great foundation, but the future is limitless," he said. "As more and more people get involved with it, I expect it to really continue to grow. There are endless possibilities."

Brotherton said he is impressed with the development of the site and expects it to have a major impact in helping supervisors improve and grow.

"The people behind this site are dedicated and sincere," he said. "It's not going to be one of those sites where they just float it out there and wish everyone good luck. They really want to groom this thing and help it grow in a positive and professional manner."

*Johnson writes for 78th Air Base Wing Public Affairs.*

### **Agency Continues with NSPS Performance Management**

*DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY NEWS RELEASE (NOV. 10, 2009)  
DLA Strategic Communications*

Despite the pending cancellation of the National Security Personnel System, the Defense Logistics Agency will continue with the performance-management process.

NSPS requires the establishment of a performance plan and communication to the employee within the first 30 days of the rating cycle.

"While we await the direction and guidance from the Defense Department on a future performance-management system, our goal here at DLA is to retain the 'goodness' achieved under NSPS through the alignment of performance objectives with mission goals, enhanced communication between supervisors and employees, and a focus on results," said Brad Bunn, DLA's director of human resources. "The repeal of NSPS does not mean we will lose our focus on results and accountability."

He said agency senior leaders plan to continue to develop and refine the leadership skills in the supervisory workforce

necessary for effective performance management because they recognize and appreciate the focus and momentum that NSPS achieved.

"An effective performance management system is an important tool in our pursuit of the agency goals and desired outcomes outlined in the 2010 Director's Guidance," Bunn said.

Even if the transition of DLA employees out of NSPS occurs within the coming year as anticipated, the time invested by employees in concert with their supervisors to create these performance plans will still pay dividends, officials said.

"There will be a need to have an established performance plan to ensure that employees can be rated in whatever successor performance management system is applicable after the transition," officials said.

NSPS was repealed as part of the 2010 National Defense Authorization Act, and most NSPS employees will revert to the General Schedule pay system. The entire transition must be accomplished by Jan. 1, 2012.

Officials in the Defense Department and the Office of Personnel Management are working to develop regulations, processes, and procedures to effect the requirements of the 2010 National Defense Authorization Act as they relate to NSPS, DLA human resources officials said; but they are not yet in a position to identify a specific path forward for transition from NSPS to the General Schedule.

### **Executive Order Seeks More Veterans in Government**

*AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (NOV. 10, 2009)*

*Jim Garamone*

WASHINGTON—President Barack Obama signed an executive order Nov. 9 aimed at hiring more veterans to work in the federal government.

A government-wide Council on Veterans' Employment will be chaired by Labor Secretary Hilda Solis and Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki.

The order calls on each federal agency to establish a veterans employment program office designed to help veterans get through the maze of paperwork as they apply for positions in the federal workforce and mandates that agencies train personnel specialists on veteran employment policies.

It calls on agencies to work with the Defense Department and VA to develop and apply technologies designed to help disabled veterans.

A smaller steering committee that includes the defense, VA, and labor secretaries and the director of the Office of Personnel Management, also was created by the order. The smaller committee will focus on the kinds of employment opportunities available to veterans and the assistance that they need to transition from the military to federal civilian jobs.

Marilee Fitzgerald, acting deputy under secretary of defense for civilian personnel policy, said the executive order is intended to promote and showcase opportunities for veterans. "The idea is to generate attention to the skills and capabilities that our men and women in the military possess across the federal government," she said.

The Defense Department has 750 career fields and employs about 350,000 veterans. "We're very fortunate in the Defense Department to understand how good our veterans are and how they train, what they do, and other federal agencies don't," Fitzgerald said in an interview. "The idea is to ensure we can leverage and coordinate our efforts across the federal entity to ensure they become as acquainted with our veterans as the Department of Defense."

The directors of the Office of Personnel Management and the Office of Management and Budget have placed special emphasis on improving the hiring process government-wide, Fitzgerald said, and the veterans initiative will benefit from that. The federal hiring process will be streamlined to make it easier for people to apply for federal jobs, she explained.

Noel Koch, deputy under secretary of defense for wounded warrior care and transition policy, said the executive order will make it easier for disabled veterans to gain federal employment. Medical advances have changed just what a disability is in the United States today, he noted.

"We have double amputees jumping out of airplanes, and they still are able to serve in the military," Koch said. "We have a different idea about what is fit to fight than we used to have."

The problems come with traumatic brain injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder. "There is still a stigma associated with that, no matter what we try to do to erase that," he said. "They don't want this on their record. Many of our people want to go into law enforcement, for example. If you've got this on your record, there is a prejudice against people who have this disorder from carrying weapons. These are just some of the obstacles these people face."

The president's order will go a long way toward solving many of these problems, Koch said, noting that the Defense Department and the VA hire many veterans.

"Department of Homeland Security could and should [hire veterans]," he said. "Where the real issue comes is with the domestic agencies—Department of Transportation, Health and Human Services, Education, and so on. There, the numbers [of veterans hired] are much lower, and we have to correct that."

### **Official Cites Benefits of Deploying Civilians**

*AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (NOV. 10, 2009)*

*John J. Kruzel*

WASHINGTON—A recent Facebook post by a U.S. soldier heading home from Iraq highlights some of the nonmilitary roles American troops often assume in today's counterinsurgency wars.

"My time in Iraq approaches its end," the junior enlisted soldier wrote, listing military duties he performed on tour, followed by the more unorthodox roles: "I've been a public affairs guy, mechanic, carpenter, custodian, business capital injector, and loan approval officer."

To relieve troops of these additional tasks, a Defense Department initiative known as the Civilian Expeditionary Workforce, or CEW, is training and equipping a civilian workforce of department employees capable of deploying overseas to support military missions.

"We call it a 'force multiplier,'" said Marilee Fitzgerald, the acting deputy under secretary of defense for civilian personnel policy. "It allows the military to do what they do best, and it relieves them, because we can do some of the things they don't need a warfighter for."

Currently, about 110 such civilian volunteers are participating overseas as part of the CEW, which the department officially established in January, and the program has received more than 7,200 resumes, according to defense officials.

In addition to a salary bump, one benefit of CEW is that when participants return to their domestic Defense Department jobs—which are guaranteed upon return—they do so with a broadened perspective, Fitzgerald said in an interview last week.

"They understand the mission better, they understand how to contribute better, and they have an understanding of what this Department of Defense is all about," she said. "It translates to some really powerful messages for them."

Jobs in highest demand at the CEW have been in the fields of intelligence and contracting, but the program covers a broad range of career fields, including engineering, acquisition, human resources, law enforcement, and logistics management. Employees in deployable-designated positions will be trained, equipped, and prepared to serve overseas in support of humanitarian, reconstruction and, if absolutely necessary, combat support missions.

Certain duty positions may require compulsory deployment, but eligible employees will be asked to sign an agreement at the time of hire, officials said, adding that all participants to date have been volunteers—none of whom were directed by the department to deploy.

The CEW comes to fruition as the military's focus on the counterinsurgency approach in Iraq and Afghanistan places an emphasis on "soft power," or means of government influence traditionally carried out by nonmilitary personnel. Counterinsurgency—known as COIN in military circles—is a form of warfare in which a civilian population is in the center of a tug-of-war between an insurgency and the forces attempting to stop it.

According to the U.S. military's COIN doctrine, military operators have assumed these typically civilian roles because the military often possesses the only readily available personnel capable of meeting a local populace's needs.

"Military forces can perform civilian tasks, but often not as well as the civilian agencies with people trained in those skills," the manual reads. "Further, military forces performing civilian tasks are not performing military tasks. Diverting them from those tasks should be a temporary measure, one taken to address urgent circumstances."

Fitzgerald said one change that could help draw attention to the civilian talent pool at CEW is the fact that the civilians increasingly are considered in the policymaking decision process.

"It is both in theater at the [combatant command] level and here at the expeditionary cell that they begin to talk about which [job] could be civilian and which one needs to be military," she said, referring to military command centers where personnel needs are first formulated.

"We are building the capability to continue the conversation at [U.S. Joint Forces Command] so that we get it at all three spots," she said of the combatant command responsible for tracking and allotting forces for U.S. operations. "This no-

tion of the combatant commands having the capability to consider the civilian talent is a major paradigm shift.”

Fitzgerald, who returned recently from a trip to Iraq where she got an up-close view of CEW participants on the job, said those interested in joining the workforce are well served by a “pioneering spirit.” But she added that participants can deploy with assurance that their former job will be there upon their return.

“Know that when you leave, you leave with the tremendous support and care and concern of the organization that you left, and your job will be waiting,” Fitzgerald said. “We tell them the coffee cup will be where you left it.”

### **AMC Fellows Program Accepting Applications for Engineers Until Feb. 24, 2010**

The Army Materiel Command Fellows Program is a four-year program (five years for engineers) designed to build a multifunctional, mobile team of highly qualified civilian employees for AMC.

The first 13 months of the program include coursework conducted at AMC’s Logistics Leadership Center in Texarkana, Texas, and at Texas A&M University–Texarkana, resulting in a master’s degree in business administration.

AMC Fellows are federal employees with full benefits and are compensated at a GS-7 grade level with full promotion potential targeted to the GS-12 for non-engineers and GS-13 for engineers.

Once participants have completed their graduate degree, they begin a series of rotational, on-the-job training assignments over the next 47 months. In the five-year training period, Fellows have the potential to advance based on successful performance.

Fellows are required to sign the DA Employment and Mobility Agreement, and future assignments are based on DA mission requirement.

Applications for engineers will be accepted until Feb. 24, 2010. For consideration, complete and submit the form at <<http://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?formkey=dE53Ym1waVnKV1YzNTFCT2gwMGk1dGc6MA>>. For further details about the AMC Fellows Program, including a brochure, flyers, feature story, and video, go to <[www.amc.army.mil/pa/amccareers.asp](http://www.amc.army.mil/pa/amccareers.asp)>.