

### **CESL Keeps Army Civilians Engaged and On Point**

U.S. ARMY TRAINING AND DOCTRINE  
COMMAND (AUG. 12, 2011)

Skye Marthaler

FORT BELVOIR, Va.—The Continuing Education for Senior Leaders course opened with wounded warrior, Spc. Rory Dunn discussing his combat experiences and struggle to survive at Walter Reed Army Medical Center after he was wounded in Iraq in 2004. For the 61 students listening to his story, it was eye-opening and stressed the importance of the coming week.

For Debra Jordan, a current CESL student and the Department of the Army liaison for continuous process improvement at the Installation Management Command, Dunn's story was a revelation.

"It was absolutely necessary to hear his story. He is the voice of our customers and how we provide services to our wounded warriors. It focused us on why we are Army civilians," Jordan said.

CESL, created in 2008 and taught by the Army Management Staff College, provides further education opportunities beyond the Civilian Education System for senior Army civilians, GS-14s and 15s, after they have graduated from AMSC's advanced course. It combines a 40-hour, online portion and a weeklong resident portion.

"CESL allows senior-level, Army civilians the opportunity to come back into an educational atmosphere, learn about the newest initiatives, and get a refresher on what is happening throughout the Army," said Jacqueline Wilson, CESL acting director. "We want to emphasize that an educated and informed Army civilian is necessary and essential to the workforce. The information they gain here, they can share with their organization and people when they return."

"CESL is providing us the insight we need as senior leaders to know what is going on at higher levels," said Jordan. "It deals with the latest issues, such as resource and shortage issues; the gap between military and civilian leadership training; bringing into focus national strategy issues; and how we, as senior leaders, can define our role and better help the Army meet its objectives."



Army Lt. Gen. Daniel P. Bolger, deputy chief of staff, G3/5/7, emphasizes the importance of the Army Civilian Corps and the value of civil service for the success of the Army and the nation to senior Army civilians attending the CESL course at Fort Belvoir, Va.  
U.S. Army photo

Over the course of the residency, students receive briefings and lectures on a variety of "big picture" items impacting the Army, from an array of guest speakers including general officers, senior executives, and subject-matter experts. These items run a gamut of things from wounded warrior care; civilian workforce transformation; Army budget issues and media relations; to China's culture and geo-political impact on the West. In addition to briefings and lectures, students, in smaller groups have to develop, write, and brief recommendations for Army issues. In the case of Class 11-501, those problems focused on civilian workforce transformation and civilian leadership development.

While CESL has an impact on the students, guest speakers and course visitors also see its advantages. Joseph McDade, Army assistant deputy chief of staff G-1 and a guest speaker on the Army's Civilian Workforce Transformation initiative, stressed the value of CESL for him as a senior Army leader.

"It is a two-way street, I learned as much from them as I hope they learned from me. It was very beneficial to get the students' insights and their feedback," said McDade. "I can take that back immediately as a senior leader and make sure that we, at headquarters, are addressing the concerns I heard here today."

For Dunn, it allowed him to emphasize the impact Army civilians can have addressing the challenges and struggles faced by wounded warriors.

"The Civilian Corps can be great if they extend themselves," said Dunn, "Listen to our wounded warriors, and be there to listen when they have an issue. If you can't solve it, then be there to advocate a solution."

The next iteration of CESL is scheduled for December 2011. More information on the course and eligibility requirements is available from AMSC's website, [www.amsc.belvoir.army.mil/academic/cesl/](http://www.amsc.belvoir.army.mil/academic/cesl/).

*Marthaler is with U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command.*

### **Foreign National Contracting Officers Bridge Gap Between U.S., Foreign Vendors**

ARMY CONTRACTING COMMAND (AUG. 22, 2011)

*Edward G. Worley*

REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala.—For the average person, understanding the rules and regulations involved in securing a government contract can be a daunting task. Add understanding those rules and regulations and those of a foreign country and the challenge becomes twice as difficult.

That's where Expeditionary Contracting Command's foreign national warranted contracting officers and contracting specialists come to the rescue. ECC has 144 foreign national contracting officers and contracting specialists in Belgium, Germany, Italy, South Korea, and South America, according to Dan Gallagher, ECC's director of contracting operations.

"For us, you really have to understand the laws and customs of each country we operate in," he said. "Every country and every state within a country has its own rules and processes. Our foreign national contracting officers know those rules and know who to contact to accomplish the mission."

Most of ECC's foreign national contracting officers support the 409th Contracting Support Brigade, Kaiserslautern, Germany. Tony Baumann, 409th CSB deputy director, said the brigade has just over 100 foreign national contracting specialists—26 warranted contracting officers—serving in Belgium, Germany, and Italy. Baumann said knowing the language is one key advantage.

"For example, in Germany, a significant amount of contracting is done for construction and utilities requirements where all documents are required to be in German," Baumann explained. "In Italy, many vendor employees—like much of the Italian public—do not speak English. Although contracts in

Italy are written in English with Italian translations, native Italian speakers are invaluable in bridging language barriers. U.S. civilians are at a distinct disadvantage due to language skills."

Baumann described how Marius Fara, a German national who serves as the only contracting officer managing acquisition cross-service agreements, helped negotiate an agreement with a Middle East country. ACSAs are country-to-country agreements for exchange of services in-kind or money for services.

"The 409th CSB was managing a high-profile regional security mission in a Middle Eastern country that required significant support services provided by the host nation," Baumann explained. "Mr. Fara traveled with 409th CSB contingency contracting officers to meet with the host nation and negotiate the ACSA. Despite having to be excluded from various meetings due to mission classification [as a German, he is not eligible for a U.S. security clearance], Mr. Fara was able to assess the information provided and develop the appropriate agreement.

"As no other 409th CSB contracting officer has ACSA experience, we could not have executed the mission without him, which would have jeopardized regional security and U.S. national interests."

Baumann said foreign nationals make up 55 percent of the brigade's civilian workforce. They have an average of 24 years' experience and "are the stabilizing backbone of our capability." They offer continuity in an environment where Army civilians serve normal tour rotations of three to five years. Foreign national employees have a better understanding of the local laws, applicability, and consequences, he explained.

Gallagher said foreign national contracting officers must obtain the same Defense Acquisition University certifications and on-the-job training as U.S. contracting officers.

"It would be very difficult for us to accomplish our mission without them," Gallagher said.

*Worley is with Army Contracting Command.*

### **Career Program 15: Ensuring Quality Goods and Services for the Warfighter**

ARMY CONTRACTING COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS (AUG. 23, 2011)

*Ellyn Kocher*

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## Career Development

FORT BELVOIR, Va.— On Nov. 1, 2007, then-Secretary of the Army Pete Geren accepted a report from an independent commission on Army acquisition and program management in expeditionary operations.

The commission—under the leadership of former Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Dr. Jacques Gansler—cited structural weaknesses and organizational shortcomings in the Army's acquisition and contracting systems. The commission's recommendations led to major changes within the Army acquisition structure, to include the stand-up of the U.S. Army Contracting Command Oct. 1, 2008.

As one of his first initiatives, ACC Executive Director Jeff Parsons established a training program for quality assurance experts, Career Program 15, to provide oversight and ensure contract compliance for services and supplies procured through Army contracting.

The earliest incarnation of the training program began in 2009 at Fort Dix, N.J., where training continues today.

"Initially there were only five of us on staff at the time," said Jim Rodden, ACC quality assurance intern training manager, "and we stood the program up from scratch."

Rodden and Rochelle Riebau, the quality assurance division training chief, determined that Fort Dix would be the most cost-effective location for the program due to space shortages at other major ACC locations as a result of Base Realignment and Closure relocations, and because of the proximity to ACC's Mission Installation Contracting Command element at Fort Dix. They located a classroom and equipment at low cost, and two permanent instructors—Rodden and Robert DiFazio—were brought on board, with ad hoc instructors added as needed.

Students take industry field trips to companies involved in military contracting, where they experience on-the-job instruction and scenarios. The curriculum also includes training in quality assurance practices, contracting, the DoD acquisition process, applicable acquisition regulatory requirements, configuration management, and contracting officer representative comprehension.

"Even though I have both military and civilian experience in quality assurance, I was still very impressed with the depth of effort that the government quality assurance specialists go to in ensuring that the products being built for our military forces are as good as they can be," said Charles Smeltzer, a quality assurance graduate intern at Fort Hood, Texas.

Mark Mohler, a recent graduate of the program and current intern stationed with the Expeditionary Contracting Command's 413th Contracting Support Brigade at Fort Shafter, Hawaii, also appreciated the on-the-job training he received in his coursework.

"The program is a great way to start," said Mohler, "You bring a group of people in who aren't necessarily familiar with the Army, and the instructors do a really good job of covering all bases and getting us out in the real world, as well as using in-class exercises to [give students] an idea what to expect once we get in place."

Upon completion of six months of classroom training and six months of on-the-job training at their duty locations, students earn their Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act Level I certification. At their duty location, they are placed in a quality assurance position and assigned a mentor who works with them for the next 18 months. After successful completion of all training and the mentoring period, the CP15 interns complete Level II certification and become QA journeymen.

"At my office, I was really able to hit the ground running, combining what I learned [in the classroom] with what was already in place at the Regional Contracting Office-Hawaii," continued Mohler, "and [our training] was beneficial to the receiving commands also, as we can bring new ideas and outside experience into our commands."

Added Smeltzer: "I've got to admit I was surprised when several of the contracting officers told me how glad they were to see more QAS people. They sometimes just don't have the time to adequately interface with their contracting officer representatives. They really need us."

ACC's first CP15 class began its coursework in August 2010 and graduated in December 2010, producing eight graduates. The program currently boasts 11 full-time students and projects 28 students for the 2011 class, made up of a demographic of recent college graduates and Army civilians from ACC and the Army Corps of Engineers. The program is attractive to career professionals and those looking to enter civilian service alike because of the accelerated promotion potential upon completion of training requirements.

"The CP15 program is a fantastic opportunity for students to jumpstart a career as an acquisition professional," said Mohler.

According to Rodden, students enter the program in mid-level positions and normally are promoted to higher jour-

neymen positions once they have completed Level II certification. Journeymen may be deployed to worldwide locations where acquisition overview is critical: Fort Polk, La.; Picatinny Arsenal, N.J.; Fort Hood, Texas, to name a few; as well as many overseas locations such as Germany, Italy, and Korea.

The CP15 program is a critical element to ACC's efforts to improve the acquisition process initiated by the Gansler Report, and it doesn't go unrecognized. "This program is Mr. Parsons' initiative," said Rodden, "and we're very proud of the work we're doing here."

*Kocher writes for Army Contracting Command Public Affairs.*

### **Army Logistics University Educates, Builds Bridges**

ARMY NEWS SERVICE (AUG. 25, 2011)

*Kathryn C. Weigel*

FORT LEE, Va.—Education has long been a tool for building understanding, cooperation, and respect between individuals and groups. America's military, through the International Military Education and Training program, has done this for 50 years. At the Army Logistics University at Fort Lee, the International Military Student Office oversees the training of more than 120 students from 52 countries.

Here in Central Virginia, the international students' focus is on logistics. They are enrolled in the ordnance, quartermaster and transportation Basic Officer Leaders Course, Combined Logistics Captains Career Course, Theater Logistics, and a master's program with Florida Institute of Technology among many other instructional programs.

International students from as near as Jamaica and Canada are studying side by side with students from as far away as Thailand and Afghanistan. Saudi Arabia, with 22 students, has the largest contingent. The nations currently with only one student here are Armenia, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Ghana, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Pakistan, Portugal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, St. Kitts, Swaziland, Switzerland, Taiwan, Tunisia, Ukraine, and Yemen.

"Providing educational opportunities for military members from allied and friendly countries benefits military-to-mil-



From left: Maj. Jafar Alnizami of Jordan, 1st Lt. Onut Enver of Turkey, Maj. Changhee Kim of South Korea, and 2nd Lt. Kamentip Juctong of Thailand represent four of the students from the 52 countries associated with the Army Logistics University.

U.S. Army photo

itary relations," said Richard Helfer, director of IMSO. "It increases the understanding and defense cooperation between the United States and foreign countries. Our program also boosts the ability of foreign national military and civilian personnel to absorb and maintain basic democratic values and protect internationally recognized human rights."

Fort Lee's IMSO is one of about 150 military schools and installations that provide formal military and technical instruction in more than 4,000 courses to roughly 7,000 foreign students a year, according to IMET's website. Mobile education teams also take curriculum to host countries. Key senior military and civilian officials may be offered orientation tours in the United States. On-the-job training opportunities are part of the program as well.

In fiscal 2008, the U.S. Department of State provided about \$85 million to fund students from more than 140 nations. IMET's training is professional and non-political. Foreign students are exposed to U.S. professional military organizations and procedures as they have an opportunity to observe military organizations functioning under civilian control. IMET also introduces participants to elements of U.S. democracy such as the judicial system, legislative oversight, free speech, and equality issues.

The IMSO is responsible for monitoring academic progress as well as providing any assistance a student may need with courses. Helfer's staff also provides socialization, recreation, and cultural enrichment opportunities for the students. "The IMSO's Field Studies Program seeks to ensure that students return to their homelands with an understanding of the responsibilities of governments, militaries, and citizens to protect, preserve, and respect the rights of every individual," said Helfer.

IMET's objectives are supported by the volunteers who serve as social sponsors for international students. "Since most international students are in the U.S. for the first time," Helfer said, "it is important to experience America and Americans as they really are rather than as what the students may have heard before coming to Fort Lee."

Becoming a social sponsor means volunteering to provide one or more international students, and possibly their families, with an opportunity to become acquainted with American life in the broadest sense. This could be including them in a family cookout, taking them to a religious service with you, or playing a game of tennis in the community. "This is a great opportunity to broaden both your and the international student's horizons and to make the world a smaller place," said Helfer.

Rebecca Freeze, a retired colonel and one of IMSO's volunteers, said sponsorship is "such a great opportunity to share the really neat parts of our culture." It also gives her a chance to learn about other cultures.

Freeze lives on a small farm near Fort Pickett so she has an opportunity to introduce international students to rural life on Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. She also includes students in her informal Saturday morning coffee gathering for local women.

A bit of serendipity brought 2nd Lt. Leah Dissek to sponsorship. She arrived for her Basic Officers Leadership Course several months early and was assigned to IMSO for the interim. Dissek had traveled quite a bit as part of her work before joining the Army, so she felt right at home at IMSO whether she was making coffee or escorting international students around post or on trips to the nation's capital city. She has become a sponsor so that she can continue that involvement while she's a BOLC student.

Dissek enjoys learning about different cultures and spending time with the students. "[Sponsorship] will not only benefit my career, but it has allowed me to forge lasting personal relationships that I hope will continue a lifetime," she said.

To volunteer as a social sponsor, call Field Studies Program Manager Becky Joyner at 804-765-8159 or e-mail [lee@almscimso@conus.army.mil](mailto:lee@almscimso@conus.army.mil). Freeze and Dissek, said Joyner, "have been invaluable to the mission of this office in fostering a friendly relationship that has helped us in our efforts to achieve international understanding and world peace. I would take a million just like them."

### **Efforts Underway at Fort Hood to Reduce Civilian Workforce through Voluntary Programs**

*III CORPS AND FORT HOOD PUBLIC AFFAIRS (AUG. 25, 2011)*

*Dave Larsen*

FORT HOOD, Texas—The Army announced Aug. 4 a reduction in its civilian workforce by more than 8,700 employees no later than Sept. 30, 2012, to meet a projected decrease in funding levels.

"We are in a very challenging fiscal environment and understand the impact these cuts will have on our civilians and their families," Thomas Lamont, assistant secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs said following the announcement.

At Fort Hood, Deputy Garrison Commander Rod Chisholm said any impact on the garrison's current workforce is not so much the product of a yet-to-be-determined fiscal year 2012 budget, than it is a cut in authorized positions.

Even before the Army announced its reductions in early Aug., Chisholm said Fort Hood leaders met with Installation Management Command in June to determine its future force structure.

"We haven't been provided any final funding levels for next fiscal year," he said, "but, what we have been given is a garrison ceiling for the number of permanent employees we can have."

That ceiling for the garrison command, Chisholm said, will be 1,700 permanent employees by FY 2013—less than a 10 percent reduction from the 1,870 employees the garrison had in June.

He said he's hopeful that the garrison command can reach the 1,700 end state through normal attrition and by employees taking advantage of several programs, like the Voluntary Early Retirement Authority and Voluntary Separation Incentive Payment, and reassignment opportunities that managers may offer.

"Apart from any formal reduction in force, there are things we can do to fine-tune our workforce to fit our structure," Chisholm said.

"We want to move forward with those measures now so that we can avoid, or minimize, the impact of any formal reduction in force."

Chisholm said the garrison command has informed its civilian workforce that they are canvassing those interested in, and qualified for, voluntary separation and early retirement programs.

He said garrison directors have been asked to meet with their employees to discuss the new civilian force structure in the coming weeks.

"At the level of the directorates—and I will be addressing the separate offices—we want to have mini town halls," Chisholm said, "just to keep employees informed on some of the latest guidance." He said those meetings are being scheduled now, and should be completed throughout the command before Labor Day.

"We want to tell the employees what we know," Chisholm said. "We don't necessarily have all the answers to every question, but we want to keep them informed."

Since June, the installation command has already seen a slight reduction in its workforce.

"We're already seeing some attrition," Chisholm said, noting a drop to 1,840 employees due to normal attrition, since the process began in June. He said despite losing positions, there will be no loss in family support programs provided by the garrison command. In fact, Chisholm noted, Army Community Service will actually grow slightly under the new civilian force structure.

"No family support program will fall off due to restructuring," he said.

"Two of the directorates hardest hit by the restructuring of the civilian workforce are the directorate of emergency services and the directorate of logistics," Chisholm said, "and as we looked at the restructure, the garrison commander recommended to the Fort Hood senior commander a plan to use military augmentation to maintain the installation's full operating hours at its access control points and welcome center.

The other directorate hardest hit by impending workforce reductions, DOL, is in a unique situation as it is projected to move from IMCOM and be aligned under Army Materiel Command by FY 2013. Despite the shift to AMC, DOL is still looking at personnel cuts.

Chisholm said that DOL Director Robert Bishop and Directorate of Public Works Director Brian Dosa, have already met with their employees to discuss the road ahead.

"There is uneasiness about the process," Chisholm conceded, "but my expectation is that if you work with management, and you're willing to be flexible, that in the end, we can get to our goal and we can take care of those folks who want to maintain their career and maintain their livelihood as civil servants."

### **Leadership Training Builds Workplace Relationships**

*ARMY NEWS SERVICE (AUG. 25, 2011)*

*Kari Hawkins*

REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala.—Leadership in the workplace might involve technical knowledge, system know-how, and group management. But the real key to successful leadership is the relationships that leaders build with the employees they lead.

"I've learned that there are certain things that are important as you go up through leadership training. But the most important thing I've learned is about building relationships," Sue Engelhardt, the director of human resources for the Corps of Engineers, said at a Civilian Education System basic leadership course offered by the Army Management Staff College at the Tom Beville Conference Center on the University of Alabama-Huntsville campus.

Engelhardt, appointed to the senior executive service in May 2009, is responsible for the staff direction and administration of a comprehensive human resources management and family readiness program for 35,000 civilians and 500 servicemembers.

The executive told the 34 basic leadership students, who work either at a Redstone Arsenal organization or for the Corps of Engineers in Huntsville, that development of employee leadership skills is essential to the Army's and the Corps of Engineers' missions, and that formal education is part of that development.

"The Civilian Education System is a very, very important part of the development of our employees," she said. "Managers will say 'I can't just afford to let my employees go to class.' I tell them 'You can't afford not to let them go to class.'"

Information—gleaned from class lessons, projects, and exercises—combined with networking opportunities provided by formal education create employee leaders who understand the leadership process, the styles of leadership, the interactions and collaborations of teams, and the ways to motivate and understand co-workers and subordinates.

Engelhardt herself has benefited from formal leadership education. In 1998, she was selected for the Defense Leadership and Management Program, which is a competitive, systematic program of “joint” civilian leadership training, education, and development with the Department of Defense. Under that program, Engelhardt completed numerous graduate courses toward her master’s in business administration. Additionally, Engelhardt was competitively selected for the DISA Executive Leadership and Development Program. She has received numerous achievement and honorary awards throughout her federal career, including the Federal Aviation Administration Office of Human Resource Management’s Executive of the Year.

While formal classes offered by the Civilian Education System is the first step toward understanding and developing leadership, Engelhardt also said federal employees who want to be promoted into leadership positions should also seek out development assignments, participate in mentoring activities, and practice lifelong learning.

“Working in development assignments gives you experiences in working in other places, and they broaden your horizons,” she said.

Development assignments stretch and grow technical and leadership competencies, cause an employee to consider different organizational levels and functional areas, and show that an employee can take calculated risks and work outside their comfort zone.

By description, mentoring should be a voluntary relationship between two people, causing Engelhardt to question whether formal mentoring programs actually work. But,



Sue Engelhardt, the director of human resources for the Corps of Engineers and a member of the senior executive service since 2009, makes comments about leadership recently during the Civilian Education System basic leadership course offered by the Army Management Staff College at the Tom Beville Conference Center on the University of Alabama-Huntsville campus. Engelhardt is responsible for the staff direction and administration of a comprehensive human resources management and family readiness program for 35,000 civilians and 500 servicemembers.

Photo by Kari Hawkins

whether they are formal or voluntary, mentoring is worthwhile, even for leaders, she said.

“I learn more from the people I mentor than they can possibly learn from me,” she said. “Forced mentoring is not beneficial. It should be that mentoring is just in the culture, that you want to mentor. There are pros and cons of formal mentoring programs. I think you should find your own mentors and also find those you can mentor because it’s so important to give back.”

Mentoring enhances career development, promotes opportunities for success, and encourages building the Army’s bench of leaders. Engelhardt added that today’s younger generation expects to have mentoring relationships in the workplace, and that they look toward these relationships to help them learn from the experience of more mature employees.

“But mentoring is not going to help you with a promotion. It’s to broaden your perspective on things,” she said.

Fourth, lifelong learning should include individual development plans that reflect the employee's—the future leader's—desires to grow professionally and personally.

"The IDP should be on you. It should answer questions 'Where do I want to go?' and 'Where do I want to be when I grow up?' You need to think about where you want to be in your future," Engelhardt said.

Employees who have their own ideas about their individual development plans show they have initiative and ownership over their future, and, in the end, make the supervisor's management responsibility easier to accomplish.

"Supervisors are busy people just like we all are," Engelhardt said. "They are going to need all the help they can get when you come in to talk about your IDP."

Before talking to supervisors about their individual development plan, employees should do their own self-assessment of their goals and aspirations, and review resources and opportunities for growth.

"It's really about what you are going to find for yourself," she said. "If you don't try, no one else is going to do it for you."

In her own career progression, Engelhardt, who has more than 25 years of experience in the human resources profession with the federal government that includes positions with the Navy, Army, Defense Logistics Agency, Defense Information Systems Agency, and the Federal Aviation Administration, has had to develop from a human resources employee working on the operational/tactical level to a human resources leader who thinks strategically.

"I'm a strong doer. I believe in getting stuff done. I want to check off that to-do list," she said, adding that she has had to learn how to balance her "doer" side to being a leader who communicates a vision and provides a strategic path for employees.

"I think as leaders, as you move up in the organization, you're going to find that you will do more with relationships than with anything else," she said. "When you become a supervisor, you give up some of the technical. It's less technical and more about relationships and mentoring."

Some of the strategic issues that Engelhardt faces in her job include determining how to recruit smartly and how to retain employees, deciding how to operate amid budget and environment turbulence, working on ways to measure return on investment in employees, and deciding what actions need

to be taken to engage employees and keep them motivated in the work environment.

Although managing people is a lot more challenging than managing projects, Engelhardt said it's "also the most rewarding thing, too, if you can make a difference and see others growing in leadership ... I want to make more of a difference."

### **Leaders Outline Projected Senior Officer Cuts**

*AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (SEPT. 15, 2011)*

*Karen Parrish*

WASHINGTON—The nation's military services will reduce their general and flag officer ranks by 103 by the end of 2014, senior Defense Department officials told members of Congress yesterday.

Clifford L. Stanley, under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness, led the witness slate for a two-part hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee's personnel subcommittee on general and flag officer requirements. He was joined by Navy Vice Adm. William E. Gortney, director of the Joint Staff, and Benjamin J. Freeman, a national security fellow for the Project on Government Oversight Location. Stanley and Gortney led a study group tasked by then-Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates to identify at least 50 active duty general or flag officer positions to be eliminated as part of Gates' efficiency initiatives launched in 2010, Stanley said. "In addition, the secretary directed that we seek every opportunity to eliminate bureaucracy, reduce overhead, and develop policies to better manage future general and flag officer growth," he added.

The study group reviewed the 952 authorized one- to four-star active duty flag and general officer positions across the Services authorized in 2010, Stanley said, and it recommended that 110 positions be eliminated.

Gates approved 103 for elimination, 23 for reduction to a lesser grade, and 10 to be reallocated to joint organizations such as U.S. Cyber Command, he said.

Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta, who succeeded Gates, has accepted the policies put in place by his predecessor, Stanley said.

The eliminated flag officer positions will remain authorized, which gives DoD flexibility to meet emerging requirements, the under secretary said.

Similarly, Stanley said, the military departments have identified positions they can eliminate or transfer to the senior

executive service, the civilian equivalent of flag officers, to gain that same flexibility.

"We refer to this as a Service buffer," Stanley said. "This buffer serves as a shock absorber against new requirements, allowing an offset position to be eliminated without negative impact on the mission or personnel caused by ill-timed action."

Gortney said weeks before the study group set to work, the Services evaluated their general or flag officer positions as "must have, need to have, good to have, and nice to have." The study group included members of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, and representatives from each Service's general and flag officer management offices, the vice admiral noted.

"The study group went after growth, and the majority of the growth was in overseas contingency operations," he said. Gortney noted that of the 103 positions approved for elimination, 47 are from overseas contingency operations including those in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Freeman testified on the Project on Government Oversight's investigation of general and flag officer numbers in the U.S. military.

"In the decade since the war in Afghanistan began, higher ranks grew at a much faster rate than lower ranks," he said. "The top officer ranks ... have grown faster than enlisted and lower officer ranks, and the three- and four-star ranks have increased faster than all other components of the DoD's force structure."

Marine Corps Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., assistant Marine Corps commandant, and the Service vice chiefs of staff, Army Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli, Navy Adm. Mark E. Ferguson III, and Air Force Gen. Philip M. Breedlove, made up the panel for part two of the hearing.

As operations in Iraq and Afghanistan draw down, Chiarelli told the subcommittee, Pentagon leaders "recognize the military services will be required to make reductions to end strength to include within our flag and general officer ranks." By 2014, the Army will reduce the number of its internal general officers by 11 and its joint pool from 102 to a minimum of 82, Chiarelli said. The Army's general officer end strength, he added, will then be 301—one less than the number in place from 1995 to 2008.

"We believe this projected end strength will be sufficient to meet our need [for] senior leadership, both internal to the

Army and across the Department of Defense," Chiarelli said. "That said, any further reductions or acceleration of planned reductions would jeopardize our ability to effectively meet those requirements."

Ferguson said the Navy will change some 25 positions, for an end strength of 149 flag officers assigned to the Service and 60 in the joint pool.

"In addition, we downgraded 50 officers," he said. "Flag positions were converted to senior executive service. We fully support these reductions and believe that we're appropriately sized for our current tasking."

Dunford said the Marine Corps will reduce its joint general officer pool from 26 to 21 by 2015, and has already eliminated one senior executive service position.

"The current mix of Marine Corps general officers represents the proper balance to support Marine Corps operating forces in supporting element demands across the globe, and we're satisfied with our joint representation," he said.

Breedlove said the Air Force has targeted 39 general officer positions and nine SES positions for elimination.

When the reductions are complete in 2014, the Air Force will have 261 general officers and 188 senior executive service positions, he said.

"Ultimately, we believe that we [will] have the correct mix of military officers and civilian executives to provide the Air Force with the best leadership team," Breedlove said.

### **Air Force Officials Announce Civilian Early Retirement, Separation Incentive Options**

*AIR FORCE PERSONNEL, SERVICES AND MANPOWER PUBLIC AFFAIRS (SEPT. 19, 2011)*  
Debbie Gildea

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas—The Air Force is implementing civilian Voluntary Early Retirement Authority and Voluntary Separation Incentive Pay programs, Air Force officials announced today.

"Our goal with these programs is to mitigate the impact of reduced fiscal year 2012 funding on our permanent civilian workforce," said Maj. Gen. Sharon K. G. Dunbar, the Air Force director of force management policy.

Reduced Air Force funding starting in fiscal 2012 is the result of a Secretary of Defense efficiency initiative that holds civilian manning at fiscal year 2010 levels Department of

Defense-wide. This initiative reduces previously planned growth in the Air Force civilian workforce by nearly 9 percent. Air Force officials estimate that reduced funding levels are sufficient to support just over 180,000 civilians as of Oct. 1.

“Complying with lower civilian funding levels requires adjusting the size of our civilian workforce by about 1 percent this next fiscal year,” Dunbar said. “To do this, we’re postured to approve up to 6,005 VSIP applications along with implementing VERA. These voluntary programs will also help generate flexibility to balance positions with mission priorities.”

Air Force officials also implemented hiring controls in May, followed by a 90-day hiring freeze that went into effect last month. Much like the voluntary programs, the temporary hiring freeze and ongoing hiring controls are designed to reduce the size of the civilian workforce and generate vacancies for permanent employees whose positions may be restructured, transferred, or eliminated, the general explained.

“Our civilians have been asking about VERA and VSIP options, so we worked to make these voluntary programs available early in the fiscal year,” Dunbar said.

Servicing civilian personnel offices have already started surveying eligible civilians for their interest in these programs. Surveys are targeted to those in job series that may be affected by downsizing or restructuring.

Targeting the surveys requires balance, the general explained.

“If we target too narrowly, the number of volunteers may fall short of what we’re seeking. At the same time, an overly broad survey may cause angst among employees in positions that will not be affected.

To be eligible for VERA, employees must be at least 50 years old with 20 years of creditable service, or have 25 years of creditable service at any age.

Whereas VERA is a temporary measure to increase retirements, VSIP is a financial incentive to encourage eligible employees to voluntarily separate from civil service. A VSIP payment is equivalent to an employee’s severance pay entitlement, up to a maximum of \$25,000, before taxes.

Officials are authorized to approve a maximum of 6,005 VSIP applications from eligible civilians. VSIP applications may be approved if there is a direct link between an em-

ployee’s separation and avoiding adverse personnel impact elsewhere.

“Employees who received surveys should familiarize themselves with the VERA and VSIP material on the Air Force Personnel Services website at <https://gum-crm.csd.disa.mil>,” the general said.

Specific VERA and VSIP information can be accessed via the News and Announcements link. In addition, servicing civilian personnel offices are postured to assist interested civilians.

Employees should thoroughly consider all options before submitting an application for VERA or VSIP. *Most employees who apply for VERA and/or VSIP make a commitment to separate Dec. 31, 2011, if their application is approved.* This commitment cannot be withdrawn except for extreme hardship or extraordinary circumstances. Civilians at Air Force Materiel Command bases, however, may be allowed to opt out even if their application is approved, depending on local guidelines established for their particular base.

“We’re grateful for the immense contributions of our civilian workforce, and are committed to providing support through the changes ahead,” Dunbar said. “We’ll move through these changes and challenges together as a team.”

The Air Force Personnel Services site includes a link to all secure applications (top right corner of the home page), as well as a VERA/VSIP link that will take users to a one-stop-shop of related links and information sources.

For specific eligibility information and guidance, employees who have been surveyed should go to their local civilian personnel strategic advisors in the civilian personnel section.

For information about other personnel issues, visit the Air Force personnel services website at [www.afpc.af.mil/](http://www.afpc.af.mil/).

### **Civilian Contracting Opportunities Available Downrange**

U.S. ARMY MISSION AND INSTALLATION CONTRACTING  
COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE (SEPT. 20, 2011)  
Ryan Mattox

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas—Large contingency operations such as New Dawn in Iraq and Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan magnify the need for delivering materiel and services in a timely manner to meet urgent wartime needs. Included in those requirements is the need for civilian contracting experts to sustain the limited cadre of active duty contracting officers and specialists.

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## Career Development

Among the Army Acquisition Corps employees supporting the warfighter and ensuring soldiers are able to execute the mission efficiently are three Mission and Installation Contracting Command contracting specialists. Faye Shepherd-Brennen, Daniel Portillo, and Tim Whitt volunteered to temporarily work overseas and have been or are currently deployed to either Iraq or Afghanistan to assist with the Army's contracting requirements.

All three agree the decision to volunteer to deploy offered an opportunity to enhance their professional development and experience contracting in a way not typically found in their stateside positions.

"We worked six 12-hour days and one eight-hour day," said Shepherd-Brennen, who worked in the acquisition support branch responsible for contract close-outs, claims, and litigations while deployed to U.S. Central Command Contracting, Regional Contracting Command Central in Baghdad, Iraq. "The work day began at 6:30 a.m. and ended at 6:30 p.m. All of the contract files for forward operating bases in Iraq that had closed were sent to us for close-out. There were several thousand contracts needing to be de-obligated, invoices needed to be paid, contracts needed to be closed-out, and claims needed to be settled. So there was never a shortage of work."

The long hours by Shepherd-Brennen are helping ensure the process of withdrawing operational forces from Iraq runs smoothly.

"The presence of deployed civilians helped the soldiers accomplish their mission of shutting down the forward operating bases and getting troops out of Iraq in the prescribed time frame," said Shepherd-Brennen, who is a contracting officer with the MICC Contract Support, Plans and Operations Division at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

While operations in Iraq are winding down, the mission is in full swing in Afghanistan, and Whitt and Portillo have found little change in the operations tempo there.

"The job is demanding in terms of workload and hours," said Whitt, a contract specialist with the MICC Installation Contracting Office-Fort Carson deployed to Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan. "I don't think anybody here works under 85 to 90 hours a week. But as time passes, I find that I actually enjoy coming to work, and it's getting better every day."

Whitt works construction contracts to build new facilities and upgrade existing structures at Camp Leatherneck and throughout the Helmand province in Afghanistan for use

by servicemembers and Afghan partners to enhance their wartime capabilities.

"The difference from serving stateside would be just the sheer volume of work, the long hours, and knowing that at anytime you could come under fire," Shepherd-Brennen said. "Also interesting was the vast number of people from all different countries working in Iraq to support the warfighters."

All believe they have gained a new perspective of the soldiers they support and the mission they perform by taking advantage of civilian deployment opportunities.

"At times you feel guilty because you volunteered, whereas they didn't have a choice," Shepherd-Brennen said. "The whole experience gives you a better understanding of what soldiers have to go through, and you really have a greater appreciation for them."

"I believe it makes us better civilian employees. Since we are in an enclosed compound, we get to know each other better," said Portillo, a contracting officer from Fort Bliss, Texas, who is deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan. "We see our soldiers exposing themselves to very dangerous situations to protect us and carry out their missions. In our own way, we contribute to their success by working until the job gets done no matter how hard, how long, or how complicated. I believe that because we are in a war zone, everything you do means a lot more."

Whitt also believes that the close quarters environment of deployments help build camaraderie with those they support.

"I think of all of the servicemembers that I work with as friends," he said. "They are a great, fun-loving group with constant jokes. Of course, they all have the usual bravado, but during the day we have a great time."

Following a long day, each still finds time to a break away from the mission to decompress.

"We all take our own breaks to go work out or just relax," Whitt said. "We talk with family and friends back home. We usually travel to the dining facility in groups, and the chit chat is about home, family, or a friend, our cars or trucks. We grumble about the heat every day, and it never gets old. We all act like children in a candy store when a new care package comes in."

Shepherd-Brennen and Portillo described the deployment as a very sobering experience and a time for them to reflect.

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## Career Development

"I missed my family the most while deployed. And I also missed all the freedoms we take for granted such as eating out at a nice restaurant or driving my car," said Shepherd-Brennen, adding that she'll miss the friendships that developed during the deployment.

"Looking at Kabul is like looking at Mexico 40 years ago," said Portillo, who was born in Juarez, Mexico. "It brought memories of my youth. In Afghanistan, people are very friendly and humble, much like the Mexican people."

Despite the long hours, temporary living arrangements, separation from families, and other hardships that a deployment brings, these contract specialists value their experiences and take away a greater understanding of their impact to the war.

"I knew there was a need," Shepherd-Brennen said. "A need for the experience, for the financial gains, and knowing I was on the frontline providing a service to the military."

To learn more about deployment opportunities, visit the Army Contracting Command Deployable Cadre website at [www.armyhire.com/cadre](http://www.armyhire.com/cadre). The program is the command's primary source for civilian employees interested in deploying in support of critical, highly visible requirements around the globe.

The program matches an individual's expertise and experience with the deployed mission needs of the Army Contracting Command with a goal of building a pool of qualified, well-trained volunteers willing to deploy. It is available to employees of ACC and its contracting centers and subordinate commands.

*Mattox writes for Mission and Installation Contracting Command Public Affairs Office.*