

# Program Forges Next Generation Of Civilian DoD Leaders

NAVY JOURNALIST 1ST CLASS MICHAEL J. MERIDITH

**O**FFUTT AIR FORCE BASE, Neb. (AFP) — Two years ago, Christine Ott, primary assistant to the U.S. Strategic Command [USSTRATCOM] Executive Director of Operations and Logistics, became one of a handful of Department of Defense [DoD] civilian employees selected for an ambitious training program designed to mold the next generation of civilian DoD leaders.

The Defense Leadership and Management Program [DLAMP] was established in 1998, in response to what was seen by defense leaders as a shrinking pool of qualified upper management employees in the ranks of the civilian government workforce. The program brings together the DoD with major universities to provide mid-level civilian employees with six years of academic and practical experience in fields such as economics, resource management, international policy, intelligence, and media relations. The objective of the program is to prepare, certify, and continuously educate and challenge a highly capable, diverse, mobile cadre of senior civilians with DoD-wide capability.

“They [the DoD] saw that a great many of their senior managers were reaching retirement age, and they wanted a program that would help fill those ranks,” Ott explained. “But the belief was that not enough effort has been expended on the leadership and management training of mid-level civilian employees. This program provides that.”

A portion of the program involves a yearlong assignment to a different DoD component or occupational area. The assignment is meant to broaden the individual’s work. Ott, who is Director of Planning and Resource Management for the Western District of the Defense Contract Management Command, chose U.S. Strategic Command to “get broader and personal knowledge of the warfighting perspective.”

Since her arrival here in February, Ott has assisted

Al Buckles, USSTRATCOM’s Executive Director of Operations and Logistics.

Like most DLAMP participants, DoD chose Ott for the program based on her “Department-wide perspective, formed from having responsibility for people, policy, and programs.” Despite that perspective, she admits the program hasn’t been easy for her. In addition to the fast-paced nature of the training and the demands of travel, she was also challenged by the evolving nature of the curriculum. The program is open to all GS-13 and above civilian employees.

“I was in the first group admitted into the program,” she said. “At the beginning, we saw that the curriculum was too much like a business school and didn’t address the issues particular to the DoD. Fortunately, we were able to offer input that helped change it to better serve the Department’s needs.”

Currently, more than 800 civilians are enrolled in the program. DoD’s goal is to eventually fill more than 3,000 key leadership positions using DLAMP graduates. While the program can be demanding, Ott explains the rewards make it well worth it.

“This is not an easy or comfortable program to get through,” she explained. “But it gives you the opportunity to look at the Department in a more global context and find ways of doing the mission in a more efficient, focused, and competitive way.”

DoD civilian employees in grades 13 or higher who are interested in participating in the program must undergo a rigorous screening and nomination process, outlined in DoD Directive 1430.16.

**Editor’s Note:** Meridith is with the USSTRATCOM Public Affairs Office, Offutt AFB, Neb. This information is in the public domain at <http://www.af.mil/news>. To learn more about DLAMP, go to <http://www.cpms.osd.mil/dlamp/index.htm> on the Civilian Personnel Management System (CPMS) Web site.