

FROM THE COMMANDANT

In the two months that have elapsed since I last spoke to you from this column, we've participated in and observed several noteworthy events. Acquisition Reform Day II (detailed in a series of articles beginning in our May/June issue, and continuing in this issue, p.34), allowed all of us, working as a team, to step back and really take a hard look at what we and others are doing to promote acquisition reform.

Our cover story (p. 2) announces an exciting event for the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) and the Defense Systems Management College (DSMC)—the opening of our new Mid-Atlantic Region at Fort Monmouth, N.J., on April 11. Please join DAU and DSMC in welcoming the Region's new Director, Suellen Phair-Back.

This permanent classroom provides DSMC, and other DAU consortium schools that teach courses at Monmouth, a quality teaching environment for the large acquisition workforce population in this area. This is also the first step in the DSMC Corporate Plan to take more acquisition education and training to the workforce, making it more accessible to them.

We've also hosted a number of activities around campus that provided our acquisition workforce the opportunity to network and broaden their skills. During April 22-23, we once again hosted the semi-annual PEO/SYSCOM Commanders/PM Conference, sponsored by the Chairman, Defense Manufacturing Council, R. Noel Longuemare (p. 88).

On April 24, we were invited to Dr. Kaminski's Online Session with the Worldwide Media (p. 42). It was a great opportunity to share his perspectives on defense acquisition and technology issues as he prepared to leave office. Also, it marked the first opportunity for the worldwide media, using Internet technology, to electronically question Dr. Kaminski on a wide range of topics.

The DSMC Alumni Association's 14th Annual Program Managers Symposium, May 5-7 (see p. 82), along with its Acquisition Display, Job Fair, and popular guest speakers, achieved record attendance (over 280 participants).

Also included in this issue are the first two in a series of articles concerning our DAU consortium schools. This issue highlights the Naval Warfare Assessment Division (p. 72) and the Naval Facilities and Contracts Training Center (p. 78).

Our senior acquisition leaders have also been busy promoting the acquisition reform initiatives before Congress that we need to "sustain the momentum." Let me briefly discuss Dr. Kaminski's recent testimony before a House Armed Services Committee acquisition subcommittee.

Dr. Kaminski testified that because our DAWIA acquisition workforce is going to be smaller, we need to improve their training. He is not yet satisfied with the amount of training we're providing the professional acquisition workforce. He is, however, our strongest advocate and ally in pushing hard for the resources and legislation we need. He's fighting this battle on four fronts:

- First, bigger overall budgets for our educational institutions (train our workforce to think on their own "outside of the box"), to use their good judgment based on sound acquisition management knowledge.
- Second, expand distance learning and continuing education. DAU is already heavily involved in the move toward distance learning and

continuing education. They're working hard to put in place the delivery systems and technology that will drive distance learning, both classroom via Video Teletraining (VTT) and computer-based training. Educational hubs and satellite locations like our new Fort Monmouth Mid-

Atlantic Region will be vital to the overall efforts to provide continuing education for the workforce. Working with DAU, the consortium schools will package these courses into modules appropriate for distance learning and improve the availability of acquisition management training materials at the work sites.

- Third, Just-in-Time (JIT) training—send people to training (or vice versa) just before they begin work on a major acquisition event).
- Fourth, institutionalize long-term acquisition reform, including continuing education.

I believe this College and the other consortium members are equal to the challenge. We're going to not only meet increased demand for acquisition courses in our Regions but also, through distance learning and continuing education, save TDY costs for that large segment of the acquisition workforce located in close proximity to our Regions.

Several other events are happening around campus. Look for articles in future issues covering the 1997 Acquisition Research Symposium, June 25-27; and the Ninth Annual International Acquisition/Procurement Seminar in Mannheim, Germany, July 7-11.

Bridging the gaps between RD&A and O&S; RD&A and T&E; and RD&A and technical base/combat development communities is another article we're developing. We'll also feature an article on Task Force XXI and the TFXXI AWE (Advanced Warfighting Experiment) at the National Training Center. (See p. 77 for an update on the status of OPTEC's final assessment.)

Other upcoming topics will include an update on program stability from Daniel Czelusniak, Director, Acquisition Program Integration, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Technology), as well as interviews with senior leaders selected to fill key positions vacated by Dr. Kaminski and members of his staff.

Dr. Kaminski said it best in his speech to the professional acquisition workforce on Acquisition Reform Day II, March 17, 1997. "In this world, you're either moving ahead or you're falling behind. We can't stop where we are and rest on our laurels." They've done a great job, and now we've got to carry forth with implementation and institutionalization of their initiatives and programs.

Our challenge in the face of all the personnel changes is to truly "sustain the momentum" and keep acquisition reform moving "full speed ahead."



— Brig. Gen. Richard A. Black
U.S. Army
Commandant