



CONGRATULATIONS to Steve Cooper!

By: Jessica Rigdon, APG—In May 2011, the Aberdeen Proving Ground Senior Service College Fellowship (SSCF) celebrated a milestone in the world of training and education; graduating its official second class. Included in this prestigious group was Software Engineering Center's (SEC) Steve Cooper, who not only received his diploma but also, along with three other members of the program, earned his Master of Arts degree from Webster University by completing an additional five courses.

SSCF is a ten month educational opportunity available to Army Acquisition Corps members at the GS-14/15 level (or equivalent). It was developed by the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) to prepare leaders for roles in product or project management, program executive roles as well as other positions in key acquisition areas and the senior executive service.

The program focuses on leadership (both personal and executive level), mentoring, national security, research, public speaking, and program management (including a PMT 401 certification).

Successful completion of the program leaves the fellow equipped to apply their knowledge and leadership to advance to higher levels of the government, lead and guide others within the highest levels of DoD, and to mentor and operate at the most senior levels of government service.

Fellows are not restricted to only classroom experiences; in fact it's the real-world experience that sets this program apart. The program includes visits to industry and government organizations including Aberdeen Test Center, Army Research Laboratory, BAE Systems, Boeing, Edgewood Chemical and Biological Center, and Northrop Grumman.

The fellows heard from a distinguished group of speakers including senior executive service, general and flag officers; and have traveled throughout the US and Europe to get a first-hand look at various training centers and commands. Mr. Cooper enjoyed seeing how, in his words, the "leadership interacts in these environments; how they relate to staff and how they must operate in order to accomplish the mission." Cooper found these off-site trips to be "absolutely phenomenal."

The fellowship is physically hosted in three different sites, Huntsville, AL, Warren, MI, and Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD. Each has its own grouping of fellows from different backgrounds within the government. At several points during the program the three groups get together via high-level VTC for course work. Cooper found that during these interactions, "you get to know the challenges associated with managing programs."

Along with completing the challenging course work offered in the program



Cooper decided to pursue his Master's of Arts in Management and Leadership from Webster University, which is an option of the program.

He already holds a Masters of Business he achieved in 1980 but says he was more focused on finishing the degree and "getting the shingle" to hang on his wall. This time around he decided he would relate what he was learning with his life and really get the most out of it. "I could start relating what I was learning at DAU to his master's work with Websters." stated Cooper.

Cooper plans on taking the knowledge gained from his experiences and putting them to good use in the Field Support Directorate.

