

Director's Message

January – April 2007

We begin 2007 by welcoming LTG N. Ross Thompson III to his new post as Military Deputy (MILDEP) to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (ASAALT) and Director, Acquisition Career Management (DACM). I encourage you to read *Army AL&T's* interview with LTG Thompson on Page 4 of this issue *LTG Thompson Interview*. LTG Thompson comes to ASAALT after serving as the Army's Director, Program Analysis and Evaluation (PAE). Prior to that assignment, he was Commanding General, U.S. Army Tank-automotive and Armaments Command in Warren, MI. He also brings field experience from numerous command positions including the 45th Corps Support Group (Forward), U.S. Army Pacific Command, Schofield Barracks, HI. I am looking forward to gaining knowledge as he shares his vast experiences in Army acquisition with us. I'm ready to follow his focus and priorities as he leads our workforce. We wish LTG Thompson Godspeed as he begins his journey as our MILDEP and DACM. Together, along with our workforce, we will continue to resoundingly answer our Nation's call to duty -- with boots on the ground -- serving our Soldiers with courage, professionalism and compassion as they stand in harm's way while fighting the global war on terrorism.

Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA)

Over the past several months, significant changes to *DAWIA* have brought policy modifications that you need to be aware of. I would like to clarify these changes and outline the work under consideration.

With significant amendments to *DAWIA* during FYs 04 and 05, it is now commonly referred to as *DAWIA II*. The amendments establish a single Defense Acquisition Corps, streamline obsolete or outdated provisions and provide greater management flexibilities for strengthening the professional acquisition workforce now and in the future. Additionally, an integrated management structure was created to implement policy guidelines and oversee acquisition workforce professional development, education, training and career management. This structure also features a Senior Steering Board (SSB) whose members include Service Acquisition Executives and is chaired by the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics. This management structure's working body is the Workforce Management Group (WMG), which is chaired by the Defense Acquisition University president and includes the service's Defense Acquisition Career Management leaders as its members. The WMG provides advice and recommendations to the SSB.

The current acquisition workforce focus is on critical acquisition positions (CAPs) and key leadership positions (KLPs). CAPs are not new, but the latest *DAWIA* requirements have significantly changed their designation. There is no longer a grade requirement for civilian CAPs. However, grade requirements for military acquisition positions remain unchanged, requiring all positions at the rank of lieutenant colonel and above to be designated as CAPs. Currently, there are approximately 9,000 GS-14 and above and military acquisition positions designated as CAPs.

Because of *DAWIA* changes, I am reviewing these positions and considering designating all acquisition General Officer (GO), Senior Executive Service (SES) and centrally selected list (CSL) positions as CAPs. Additionally, my proposal will include all GS-14 and GS-15 supervisor positions and GS-14 and above positions with significant acquisition authority or responsibility.

With this change in CAP designations, the total number of designated CAPs should drop to just under 5,000 positions.

KLPs, a subset of CAPs, have been established to identify positions requiring special Army Acquisition Executive (AAE) and Defense Acquisition Executive attention with regard to qualifications, accountability and position tenure. KLPs require a significant level of responsibility and authority and are integral to the success of a program or effort. The Army is reviewing all key acquisition positions for potential KLP designation.

Currently, U.S. Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) KLPs include AAC GOs and SES acquisition civilians, program executive officers (PEOs), deputy PEOs, program managers and their deputies, senior contracting officials and centrally selected project and product managers (PMs), including deputy project managers of all Acquisition Category I and II programs. The AAE may designate other positions as KLPs as deemed appropriate. I want to ensure that there is good KLP representation from each functional area. KLPs may also include selected staff positions as well as any CAP that, by the criticality of duties, warrants special management attention to qualification and tenure requirements. The Army KLP list continues to be a work in progress. When we have completed our efforts, the number of KLPs will likely total 400-500 positions. When the final designations take place, I will send out a memo to the workforce to keep everyone informed.

For more information regarding the Army's *DAWIA* implementation, please go to <http://asc.army.mil/info/dawia/default.cfm>. As additional acquisition career management policies are developed and/or updated, they will be distributed to the field and posted on the U.S. Army Acquisition Center Support Center (USAASC) Web site.

DCMA Key Billet Director Pilot Program

In July 2006, I signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) to start a pilot program for selecting the best-qualified (BQ) candidates from both the military and civilian workforce for acquisition key billet director CSL positions. The program's goal is to align DCMA's BQ selection process with the Army acquisition PM selection process that allows Army civilians to compete on equal footing with their military counterparts on acquisition positions identified as BQ. This pilot program is a head-to-head competition with the best individuals being selected for two pilot positions at DCMA offices in Sealy, TX, and Minneapolis, MN. This is the first time all DOD civilians working for DCMA will have an opportunity to compete for key billet director CSL positions. Previously, competition was open only to the uniformed acquisition professionals. When we first created the pilot program, our intention was to open it only to Army and DCMA civilians. But when we had our plan legally reviewed by the Office of the General Counsel, they informed us that if we wanted the DCMA civilians to compete for these positions, it must be open to representatives from all services. This changed a good plan to a great one. USAASC Program Structures Division Chief Wanda Meisner agrees. "We really believe in this program. If we truly want to find the BQ individual, it should be opened to all services, wherein, the BQ individual will come out on top."

By opening the pilot program to all DOD civilians, other services' workforces now have the opportunity to apply for "command" positions. Also, it's good for Army acquisition because we will be getting the best and the brightest from throughout DOD, and if a civilian from another service competes and is selected, she/he will become an Army acquisition civilian. I see this program as

a giant leap for us in the acquisition career development field and another opportunity for our workforce to give even better service to our warfighters.

“Five people have qualified, three of which are from other services,” said Cathy Johnston, Human Resources (HR) Specialist at the Army HR Command. “Acquisition is the only Army career field that competes civilians head-to-head with the military. I would like to see it [the pilot program] expand so that all of our [acquisition] positions are considered DOD-wide,” Johnston offered.

Competitive Development Group/Army Acquisition Fellowship (CDG/AAF) Program

If your goal is to become a PM, the CDG/AAF is a good place to start your journey. This 3-year program provides leadership training, professional development and the practical experience in the form of developmental assignments needed to successfully compete for PM positions. Also, it's one of the biggest tools used by acquisition leaders to find potential leaders. As with every goal, individuals wanting to become PMs must actively manage their careers. The most logical place to start your quest would be to work in a PEO or as an assistant PM. It takes a certain kind of a person to be a PM and encompasses hard work with the responsibility for cost, schedule and performance. It also takes motivation to ensure that you're tracking in the right positions and gaining adequate experience, education and training to be competitive, so when you go in front of the Centrally-Selected List (CSL) Project/Product Manager and Acquisition Key Billet Selection Board, you have gained the necessary tools to succeed.

There are many opportunities in place for you to get the cross-functional training needed to become a PM inherent in the CDG/AAF Program. I believe you need a “calling” to be a PM, and it's ultimately up to you to author your own success to achieve your goal. For more information on the CDG/AAF program, contact the CDG/AAF Manager, Joan L. Sable at joan.l.sable@us.army.mil, (703) 805-1240/DSN 655-1240.

Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) Acquisition Workforce Program

The AAC, in conjunction with the Quartermaster (QM) Branch, created the NCO Acquisition Workforce Program, which allows QM NCOs in Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) 92A to voluntarily participate in the contracting program. Additionally, it clearly identifies the Army's need for enlisted Soldiers during contingency contracting operations. In support of Army Modular Transformation, we participated in a force design update to create a new modular contingency contracting force structure defining and formalizing the Army's requirements for contracting NCOs. These positions will be in contracting support brigades/principal assistants responsible for contracting offices, contingency contracting battalions, senior contingency contracting teams and contingency contracting teams. These Table of Organization and Equipment units will be stationed worldwide and in every state and U.S. territory. The active force will be stationed at more than 30 different bases.

In addition to the force design update package, we simultaneously created an MOS classification structure proposal for contracting NCOs. The new contracting MOS 51C series for NCOs will be in the Active, National Guard and Reserve Components. The development and approval of a contracting MOS was the key component of the new modular contingency contracting force structure.

As a bridging strategy to the new modular contracting force structure, USAASC and the QM Enlisted Management Branch are filling the new modular contracting structure with NCOs from the workforce program. Additionally, we have selected some of those NCOs to be part of the first

wave of Soldiers to reclassify into MOS 51C. After this initial reclassification, Soldiers from every Army branch will be able to request consideration for classification into MOS 51C Contracting.

For more information about the NCO Acquisition Workforce Program, contact MAJ James Bamberg at (703) 805-2732/DSN 655-2732 or james.bamberg@us.army.mil.

In closing, I would like to wish the acquisition workforce a very prosperous and successful 2007. I'm looking forward to your continued professionalism, sacrifices and strong sense of duty in supporting our warfighters as they strive to make the world a better, safer and more peaceful place. Thanks for your unconditional support. I am extremely proud to serve with you.