



From the Acquisition Support Center Director

Like every Army organization, the Acquisition Support Center (ASC) continues to search for the most cost-effective means to meet our mission. In that vein, we've been moving forward to more efficiently provide customer service to the Army acquisition community. We're changing the way we do business. This includes the way we're organized and several of our processes for how we handle acquisition workforce procedural issues.



I'd like to run through some of the changes we're making here at ASC. In October, we conducted a beta test at Program Executive Office Combat Support and Combat Service Support that allowed workforce members to enter information in their Acquisition Career Record Brief (ACRB). Previously, an acquisition career manager (ACM) had to make any changes or enter new information into the ACRB. After reviewing results and implementing corrections from the beta test, ASC will begin offering all acquisition workforce members more capabilities to edit their ACRBs. These capabilities involve changes to how people can access, view and edit their own records. We are giving people more control over their own records and making it easier to access those records.

We have also implemented a single user name and password for Individual Development Plans and ACRBs. Users now have one password to access all their individual career development tools. In addition, we are in the process of automating the Acquisition Education and Training Experience applications.

As some of you might already know, the Corps Eligible (CE) status will soon be terminated. This program had value at the time it was enacted. The program's logical termination at the end of this calendar year was facilitated by the *Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act* revisions implemented in 2004 and 2005. Applications for boards and programs requiring CE status will remain in effect until the program is terminated and individuals who obtained CE status will retain that designation. If you have any questions, please contact an ACM for assistance (go to

<http://asc.army.mil/contact/acms.cfm> for a list of ACMs servicing your region).

We have also structurally reorganized ASC so that when people need our assistance we are better aligned to provide it. Civilians who worked out of the Acquisition Management Branch are now part of the National Capital Region Customer Support Office (CSO). Now, all ACMs are doing the same types of jobs. As of October 2005, Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) membership applications are accepted in all three regional CSOs. The CSOs now provide career management for any individual in the acquisition workforce, including AAC members.

ASC continues to employ initiatives to further the workforce and Army transformation. We're streamlining the organization to become less prescriptive and less bureaucratic. Most importantly, we welcome your ideas to help us provide better service. We welcome any and all suggestions that can save the U.S. Army time and money.

On a personal note, a longstanding member of our workforce and pillar at ASC, Maxine Maples Kilgore, recently retired. Maxine was Regional Director of ASC's Southern and Western Region and we wish her the best in her retirement. We welcome Shirley Hornaday, the new Southern and Western Regional Director.

Sadly, I have one final note to report. The ASC family has lost a long-time acquisition professional, colleague and friend. Janice Kurry succumbed to her battle with cancer Saturday, Nov. 12, 2005. A consummate ACM and dedicated Army civilian for more than 18 years, Janice will be dearly missed by her family, friends, co-workers and the hundreds of customers she supported on a regular basis. For more on Janice, please see the inside back cover of this edition. For those inclined, donations in her memory can be made to Manchester PBA 246, c/o Arielle, P.O. Box 52, Lakehurst, NJ 07833, or the Susan B. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, P.O. Box 650309, Dallas, TX 75265-0309.

Craig A. Spisak
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MILDEP Speaks to Natick Workforce

Military Deputy (MILDEP) to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (AL&T) and Director of Acquisition Career Management (DACM) LTG Joseph L. Yakovac Jr. visited the Soldier Systems Center (SSC) in Natick, MA, July 13, 2005. Yakovac addressed key workforce issues with different audiences throughout the day. He also met with Natick senior leaders, discussing technology's growing role in today's wartime environment, as well as government recruiting and hiring strategies. In the afternoon, Yakovac stressed to SSC's AL&T Workforce the importance of finding members who are willing and able to take on new, exciting challenges in product and project management and grooming these employees to truly "be all they can be."



MILDEP/DACM LTG Joseph L. Yakovac Jr. (center right) meets with ASC Director Craig Spisak, Natick ASC Customer Support Office Administrative Assistant Caitlin Fitzgerald and Natick Acquisition Career Manager Diane Nyren during a "Meet the MILDEP" visit to SSC. (U.S. Army photo.)

Yakovac focused on transforming the Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) and the mission to align and horizontally integrate the AAC with the overall Army Campaign Plan. He emphasized that the move from the current to the future AAC would be catalyzed by factors such as an increasingly agile and decisive U.S. Army, the rapid rate of technological change, new demands for full-spectrum acquisition and increasing dependency on global industry, commercial solutions and contractors on the battlefield. These factors will transform the core capability of the AL&T Workforce, one of the three main strategic objectives Yakovac addressed.

Yakovac's other two objectives related to the human aspect of the AAC mission, which he emphasized was a key to the success of the AL&T Workforce. Yakovac stressed that developing flexible, well-rounded leaders prepared to lead the AAC into the future was a critical objective. His goal has been to

make jobs in product and project management more appealing to those workforce members who show the potential to be outstanding leaders. To add weight to his plan, Yakovac eliminated mobility agreements from these positions, created monetary incentives for these key leadership roles and developed educational and training plans to provide workforce members a more thorough understanding of duties and responsibilities.

Actions such as these correspond directly to the final strategic objective: to develop an expert, relevant and ready workforce.

"The number one job is always to support our deployed forces," Yakovac noted. This last objective will allow workforce members to do so even more effectively.

As part of Yakovac's human-aspect vision for transforming the AAC, supervisor outreach was an important topic. "I can't manage 40,000 civilians from Washington," Yakovac said, explaining the importance of supervisors in grooming high-potential workforce members and acting as change agents within the workforce. The Acquisition Support Center's (ASC's) Supervisor Outreach program has emphasized the vitality of this role as well, assigning supervisors responsibility in helping to achieve the human resource objectives Yakovac outlined.

Yakovac provided the Natick AL&T Workforce with a snapshot of his goals for the AAC's and AL&T Workforce's future. Emphasizing the importance of revitalizing the human resources in the workforce and recognizing those with the potential to be outstanding leaders, Yakovac challenged supervisors and workforce members to "be all they can be."

Although he identified challenges, Yakovac certainly was not short on appreciation for all that the workforce has done in the past. He asked attendees to thank the person to the right and left of them for all that they do for our Soldiers, giving the Natick AL&T Workforce a balanced sense of past accomplishment and motivation to achieve even more in the future.

DAU Midwest Develops Systems Engineering Courses

Brian D. Sturdevant

Defense Acquisition University (DAU) Midwest has developed two systems engineering (SE) revitalization courses for the Army. Program Executive Office Ground Combat

Systems (PEO GCS), part of the Tank-automotive and Armaments Command Life Cycle Management Command community in Warren, MI, requested a 5-day SE course to revitalize SE use. The Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center's (TARDEC's) Advanced Concepts Team requested a 4-day SE revitalization course tailored for concept development activities.

Then Acting Deputy Under Secretary of Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Michael W. Wynne directed the SE revitalization in his Feb. 20, 2004, and Oct. 22, 2004, policy letters. While many people view SE as a specialized technical field, Dr. Donald McKeon, lead course developer and professor of systems engineering management at DAU Midwest's satellite campus in Warren puts SE in a different light. He says SE is "disciplined technical planning and management used to provide a balanced total solution for the warfighter." It has many common elements with program and business management.

Key objectives of the 5-day SE class developed for PEO GCS were to:

- Introduce an SE mindset into the PEO and the Army.
- Provide an overview of recent Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and DA SE policy changes.
- Define SE plan contents.
- Discuss how SE supports spiraling new technology to the Current Force.
- Discuss the role and responsibilities of government engineers with contractors in regard to SE plans.

The class was targeted for experienced systems planning, research, development and engineering (SPRDE) associates and other experienced career professionals, including those involved with logistics, program management, business, cost estimating and financial management. The lead SE for PEO GCS, Roberta Desmond, requested special emphasis on discussing the roles of logistics, analysis and cost estimating within the SE umbrella. As such, the course was developed for a wider audience than just SPRDE professionals.

Key objectives of the 4-day SE class for TARDEC's Advanced Concepts Team were to:

- Review recent OSD and DA policy changes regarding SE.
- Provide a top-level overview of the Army/DOD acquisition and requirements development processes.
- Show how SE is used during the Concept Refinement and Technology Development phases of the DOD Acquisition Framework.

- Show how to transition new technology to the warfighter.
- Present and discuss the SE process and systems analysis and control tools.
- Discuss the role of modeling and simulation in the process, especially in concept development.
- Discuss transitioning new technologies to demonstrators and into system development.
- Develop methodologies to innovate the acquisition process.



Professor Donald McKeon helps Elizabeth Schultz, a business analyst with the Stryker program, review systems analysis and control tools during a DAU Midwest SE revitalization course in Warren, MI. (Photo courtesy of DAU Midwest.)

Course planning started in November 2004 and memorandums of understanding were finalized in December 2004. Several hundred hours of preparation went into each course's development. The course content covers some of ACQ-201A/B, all of SYS-201A/B and most of SYS-301. Other sources of information for the classes included the Air Force Institute of Technology's SYS 282 course and numerous published papers from open literature.

The first class, piloted May 23-26, 2005, was for TARDEC's Advanced Concepts Team. Since then, two 5-day classes for PEO GCS have been held. Before the end of FY05, one 4-day and two more 5-day classes were held. A 1-day executive course is being developed for program managers, assistant program managers and supervisors.

High-level OSD and DA personnel in the SE community are invited to kick off each class to reinforce SE's importance. For example, Kevin Fahey, PEO GCS, discussed his views on SE's importance and how better SE will improve weapon systems acquisition for the Army. The class uses short, group-based case studies to allow students to practice key SE concepts and tools.

Student feedback has been impressive, and instructors are working to improve the lesson on writing SE plans because it is a difficult topic for most program offices and is still evolving, even at the OSD level. At least one SE class is planned for FY06.

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