



From the Acquisition Support Center Director

I want to wish the Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (AL&T) Workforce the very best for the New Year. In 2008, the U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center (USAASC) will renew our commitment to keeping a well-trained, efficient and educated workforce to support any new challenges or contingencies our Soldiers may meet in an uncertain world. We will also continue keeping our Soldiers *Army Strong* by providing the best weapons, technology and logistics, as quickly as possible, to support persistent conflict and the continuing global war on terrorism.



Achieving Certification Requirements

Now is a good time for supervisors to complete a review of their organization's positions for proper coding and submit any changes through the local Civilian Personnel Advisory Center. Supervisors should also review their employees' Individual Development Plans (IDPs) to ensure every employee has a strategy to meet their certification and continuous learning requirements. With the release of *Director Army Acquisition Corps Guidance Memo #3*, supervisors are required to have 100 percent of their employees' IDPs updated within the last 6 months. It is essential that employees and supervisors include all the courses required for employee certification in IDPs so we can obtain the much needed quotas for required Defense Acquisition University (DAU) training courses. This needs to be projected 8-18 months into the future. The certification process, like any well-built structure, requires a strong foundation. Along those lines, things like continuous learning and developing leadership competencies are important to career and professional development and must be accomplished concurrently. But, if there is a "requirement" to complete training sequentially, certification courses must come first.

CAPPMIS Position Scrubs

Beginning in March 2006, USAASC conducted a manual scrub of all AL&T Workforce positions in the Civilian Acquisition Personnel and Position Management Information System (CAPPMIS) based on input from acquisition organizations identified by the Refined Packard Definition. The scrub results were loaded into CAPPMIS in April 2007, and then

top-loaded into the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS). After this was accomplished, organizations were advised to review the CAPPMIS data and make corrections, additions or deletions through DCPDS. This process should be repeated annually as directed by the *DOD Desk Guide for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Workforce Career Management*, Chapter 5, Pages 5-13, Position Maintenance/Review.

Likewise, the *DOD Desk Guide* states that "supervisors are responsible for reviewing AL&T position information during the employee's annual appraisal and initiating appropriate actions within their component should changes be required." This review should also be done before recruitment, during reorganizations or when an incumbent's duties change. For more information, contact Shirley Hornaday at (256) 955-2764/DSN 645-2764 or at shirley.hornaday@us.army.mil.

Program Managers (PMs) Empowerment and Accountability Report

Section 853, John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for FY07, Public Law 109-264, requires the Secretary of Defense to develop a comprehensive strategy for enhancing the roles of DOD PMs in developing and implementing defense acquisition programs. One initiative requires that DOD revise major defense acquisition program guidance to address qualifications, resources, responsibilities, tenure and PM accountability. Each Service Acquisition Executive has been provided the following guidance:

- Formulate a performance agreement between the PM and the program's milestone decision authority (MDA) on expected parameters for cost, schedule and performance, as well as appropriate PM and MDA commitments to ensure the parameters are met.
- Expand PM authorities including, to the appropriate extent, the right to object to additional program requirements that would be inconsistent with parameters established at Milestone B and reflected in the performance agreement.
- Adhere to PM-specified tenure lengths based on their acquisition category level.

The Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) will prepare a program management and tenure agreement for centrally selected project and product managers. The process is under discussion in the program executive office (PEO) community. When the PEO requests a charter for a PM, a program management and tenure agreement will be prepared and signed by the Army Acquisition Executive, PEO and PM. For more information, please contact Joan Sable at (703) 805-1240/DSN 655-1240 or joan.l.sable@us.army.mil.

Acquisition Key Billet Competition

After an open competition pilot in FY08 to all DOD employees to vie for two Acquisition Key Billet positions in the Defense Contract Management Agency, the Army has now expanded availability to all “best qualified” positions for the FY09 Acquisition Key Billet Board. To reach the entire acquisition community across the services, an announcement was posted on the USAJOBS® Web site (<http://www.usajobs.gov/>) outlining basic eligibility with specifics identified via the U.S. Army Human Resources Command (HRC), Acquisition Management Branch (AMB) Web page. Applicants from the other services must meet the same requirements as Army employees and include the Senior Rater Potential Evaluation (SRPE) and the Acquisition Career Record Brief in their applications. Acquisition Career Managers (ACMs) will help non-Army applicants, supervisors and senior raters prepare SRPEs.

Army employees are encouraged to have an ACM review their application before submitting it. There have been significant reductions in application errors for this announcement with no incomplete application rejections. Another change this year was that senior raters were given extra time after the closing date to complete the SRPE in the Career Acquisition Management Portal/CAPPMIS. There were 58 eligible applications for the Key Billet Announcement, 41 LTC/GS-14 and 17 COL/GS-15. For more information, contact Catheryn L. Johnston, HRC/AMB, at (703) 325-2764/DSN 221-2764 or at cathy.johnston@us.army.mil.

SPRDE Career Field News

Effective Oct. 1, 2007, a new Acquisition Career Field (ACF) was established called Systems Planning, Research, Development and Engineering-Program Systems Engineer (SPRDE-PSE). Army AL&T Workforce members who, on Sept. 30, 2007, were certified Level I or Level II in the SPRDE-Systems Engineering (SE) will receive a corresponding level certification for the new SPRDE-PSE ACF. The letter designation for this new ACF is “W” and will be displayed in Section X of the ACRB and will also be captured in the official CAPPMIS database.

AL&T Workforce members who, on Sept. 30, 2007, possessed a Level III certification in SPRDE-SE (code S) will receive a Level II certification in SPRDE-PSE (code W). To be certified at the next highest level in the SPRDE-PSE ACF, individuals must comply with the SPRDE-PSE certification standards as posted in the DAU catalog at <http://www.dau.mil/>.

In closing, my congratulations to the 2007 AAC Annual Award winners and nominees. Thank you for a job well-done. For a list of award winners, along with ceremony highlights, please see the article published in our sister publication *Army AL&T Online Monthly* November 2007 issue at <http://asc.army.mil>.



Craig A. Spisak

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Competitive Development Group/Army Acquisition Fellowship Program (CDG/AAF) — Developing Future Civilian Senior Leaders

Richard A. King

In August 2000, the first year group of 21 Army acquisition civilians graduated from a new program called the CDG. This program was an Army Acquisition Executive/Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (ASAALT) and Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) initiative to transform staff-level Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (AL&T) Workforce members into successful senior leaders. Since that time, more than 100 additional acquisition leaders have graduated from the program, and there are 34 currently enrolled. Among the graduates are Project/Product Managers (PMs), Deputy PMs, Division Chiefs, a U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center (USAASC) Regional Director and the USAASC Director/Deputy Director for Acquisition Career Management.

What is the CDG/AAF Program?

Established in 1997, the CDG (renamed in 2006 to CDG/AAF) is a 3-year Acquisition Program Management Senior Leader Position development program. The program's primary purpose is to develop civilian leaders for the future Army. With the “graying” of the AL&T Workforce, the Army is facing the reality of losing a large percentage of its most experienced leaders to retirement. The CDG/AAF program offers a cross-functional work experience opportunity, as well as a priority status on many leadership education and training courses, to develop the leaders that will fill the gaps in the AL&T Workforce.



The CDG/AAF program offers AFs cross-functional work experience opportunities, executive leadership training and intermediate coursework as part of the 3-year training curriculum. (Army AL&T Magazine file photo.)

Program members, known as Acquisition Fellows (AFs), rotate through at least three different developmental assignments chosen specifically to broaden their scope of the Army's acquisition processes. Numerous positions are available — from Assistant PMs (APMs) to logisticians, business officers, contract specialists, program integrators and others. By selecting positions in career fields outside of their current knowledge bases, AFs will develop into stronger, more-rounded leaders.

In addition to the experiential opportunities, members are required to complete developmental curriculums designed specifically to increase their acquisition knowledge and leadership skills. These curriculums include the Program Management Office course (PMT 352 A and B), two executive leadership courses, the Intermediate Qualification Course, Congressional Operations, National Training Center and the Civilian Education System courses. By combining these courses with varied work experiences, the CDG/AAF program is committed to producing acquisition civilians fully capable of leading product teams and eventually becoming PMs.

Time for a Change

ASAALT Military Deputy LTG N. Ross Thompson III stated in his vision statement that the AAC should “develop flexible ... civilian leaders who possess diverse and well-rounded backgrounds.” Army officers entering active duty are provided timelines that lay out their career expectations. From developing leadership skills as platoon and company commanders, to broadening their acquisition knowledge as project officers and APMs, and finally culminating their progression as PMs, Army officers have a clear path in their acquisition careers.

In contrast, most of the civilian workforce has spent a large portion of their careers caught up in stovepipes that limit their progression, and fail to develop the broad skills required to be effective senior acquisition leaders. While this scenario would quite assuredly produce employees who are highly competent in their specific fields, it falls short in creating diverse and well-rounded leaders.

When the selection boards convene to determine who will fill Critical Acquisition Positions such as program managers, the decisive advantage will usually be in favor of the Army officer. Rarely will a civilian's work history and developmental progression be capable of rising above that of numerous Army officers.

The CDG/AAF Program is for the Employee

The program was created to attract the most elite acquisition professionals who wish to advance their careers in program management and Army senior staff fields. AFs are board-selected from this group of highly qualified professionals to maintain the program's integrity and protect its reputation for producing successful leaders.

However, selecting these highly qualified individuals is only the beginning of the process. Transforming the potential these members already possess into well-defined skills that will advance them into senior leadership positions is the program's endgame. The CDG/AAF program has excelled at determining what these steps are and incorporating them into the program while continually evolving to meet the Army's needs.

Upon entering the program, AFs are assigned to a centrally funded training position for 3 years. This, in combination with rotating developmental assignments, is very beneficial to members. While most organizations might balk at allowing one of their best and brightest employees to attend training of 6 weeks to 3 months, the CDG/AAF program can easily schedule the longer-term training between rotational assignments. Not only is it possible, but it is required for members to attend the 6-week Defense Acquisition University PMT-352-B course, 5 weeks of Civilian Education System courses, 1 week of Congressional Operations, two week-long Executive Leadership courses at the Darden School of Business at the University of Virginia and the 4-week Intermediate Qualification Course at the University of Texas-Austin. This training is scheduled by the CDG/AAF program's manager — in conjunction with the Regional Directors and Acquisition Career Managers — either in between or within individual assignments.



The CDG/AAF program's goal is to produce high-performing, agile and ethical acquisition leaders with a wide range of experience, knowledge and skills. (Army AL&T Magazine file photo.)

In addition to the training provided to the AFs, the developmental assignments have a great deal to offer. Most civilian employees, even AAC members, will spend an entire career attempting to progress within a single acquisition career field. Whether they are working in business/financial, engineering, contracting or logistics, very few employees are "cross-trained." The CDG/AAF program opens the doors, allowing AFs to cross the boundaries between career fields, thereby becoming better-qualified program managers. Successful senior leaders should understand the functions and purpose of each division within their respective organizations, and there is no better method of gaining that understanding than through actual work experience.

The CDG/AAF Program is for the Organization

The benefit to the receiving organization is highly qualified temporary support at no cost. With developmental assignments of only 6 months to 1 year, some organizations are hesitant to rely on AFs and refrain from placing too great an amount of responsibility on them. The fact is, however, if members were not capable of accepting that amount of responsibility, they would not have been board-selected into the CDG/AAF program. For example, the PM for Apache Sensors has been using an AF as an APM for the Fire Control Radar and Radio Frequency Interferometer for more than 4 years. In this position, the APM was given responsibility to manage the budget, inventory, production schedule and upgrades, and to lead the Integrated Product Team for the Apache radars. He will be the government interface

with the prime contractors and take the lead during negotiations for new production contracts. In attempting to forecast the future requirements for the radar based on battle losses and scheduled fieldings, a previous AF effected change in the program by convincing Army Headquarters to increase the Army Acquisition Objective allowing for increased Apache radar production. The Apache PM Office is reaping the benefits of effectively using an AF as an APM when it does not have a position on its table of distribution and allowances to fulfill this requirement.

In addition to receiving the efforts of an effective and assertive acquisition employee, the organization is also complying with the ASAALT Balanced Scorecard by helping shape a high-performing AL&T Workforce.

The CDG/AAF Program is for the Army

The Army realizes that a shortfall is approaching. Whether it is called "critical mass," "the perfect storm" or any other cliché of the day, building an AL&T Workforce capable of withstanding the personnel losses associated with the massive "baby-boomer" retirements is certainly an issue causing great concern for Army strategic planners. This is not something that was overlooked though, as plans have been formulated that include the CDG/AAF program.

By investing 3 years in developing CDG/AAF program members, the Army will see returns in the form of efficient and effective senior leaders. The ASAALT strategy map's single overarching objective is to "shape a high-performing, agile and ethical acquisition workforce." By enhancing the careers of its civilian AAC members to create more qualified PMs, CDG/AAF is a key program toward achieving that objective.

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