

## AMCOM LCMC Black Hawk Multiyear VII Contracting Team Wins Award

The U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command Life Cycle Management Command (AMCOM LCMC) Acquisition Center Black Hawk Multiyear VII Contracting Team won the Contract Professional of the Quarter Award. The team was recognized for outstanding performance in planning, evaluating, negotiating, and awarding a complex multiyear contract with a potential value of approximately \$12 billion. This contract covered aircraft requirements, associated mission kits, and related support for production years 2007-2011 for the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, and a foreign military sales customer. This was a grueling assignment with initial planning for the Request for Proposal beginning 3 years earlier and the proposal submission, evaluation, and negotiation spanning 2 years.

The team faced numerous challenges. One very difficult issue was the prime contractor's reluctance to provide an adequate proposal. Previously, the prime contractor relied on providing estimates and quotes to the government for subcontracting, not requiring its subcontractors to submit complete proposals or cost or pricing data before the prime's negotiation with the government. The contracting officer refused to accept the initial proposal, which did not conform to the requirements in *Federal Acquisition Regulation, Part 15*, particularly regarding subcontract proposals. However, the contracts and cost team members insisted that the prime contractor obtain valid proposals and submit both the proposals and the results of their evaluations to the government team. Material dollars were a significant part of the total. The team's insistence on accurate bills of material, complete data, and a detailed review saved several \$100 million over the total procurement.

In addition to the aircraft production requirements, the team was responsible for evaluating and negotiating various support requirements, including new and refurbished tooling and 5 years of project systems management services for the Black Hawk program. The team focused on developing a definitive Statement of Work for these services that would support the program for the next 5 years.

The negotiated contract includes key special provisions that will benefit the government throughout the life of the contract and will establish a precedent for follow-on contracts. Recognizing that previously the contractor had changed its processes and manufacturing locations to maximize profits even at the expense of schedule, the new contract includes a negotiated Make or Buy Plan. This plan requires the contractor to notify the government of item status changes and submit annual proposals for a downward-only equitable adjustment if a make or buy decision results in cost savings that would be shared with the government. The contract also includes a negotiated amount that the government will recoup each time an option is exercised, allowing the fixed production costs to be shared equitably by each customer who uses the contract.

*For more information, contact Valeta Crandall, Director, Program Executive Office Aviation Utility Helicopters Directorate, AMCOM Contracting Center, U.S. Army Contracting Command, at (256) 955-8277/DSN 645-8277 or [valeta.crandall@us.army.mil](mailto:valeta.crandall@us.army.mil).*

## 2008 Readership Survey Results

As many of you know, we recently conducted a readership survey to gauge the ongoing value of *Army AL&T Magazine*, to solicit feedback on how to improve the publication, and to identify topics that readers would like to see covered in 2009 and 2010.

First, I would like to thank the 1,341 readers who responded to the survey. It took some time and effort to do so, and we sincerely appreciate the feedback, especially to our appeal for suggestions on how to improve *Army AL&T Magazine* and ideas regarding future articles. Second, I want to express my gratitude for the insight, creativity, and fresh perspective that each respondent brought to the table.



The AMCOM LCMC Black Hawk Multiyear VII Contracting Team was responsible for evaluating and negotiating various support requirements including 5 years of project management services for the Black Hawk program. Here, Soldiers from the 542nd Medical Co. (Air Ambulance) fly their UH-60A Black Hawk helicopter on a medical mission to Tal Afar, Iraq. (Photo by SSgt Jacob Bailey, U.S. Air Force.)

Of the 1,294 respondents who stated that they regularly read *Army AL&T Magazine*, 93 percent rated the overall quality of the publication between good and excellent. While proud of that response, we did not overlook the fact that another five percent rated the content as merely fair, and that almost two percent rated the content as poor. Nor did we fail to recognize that even the most congratulatory respondents made substantive recommendations for how to improve the publication going forward.

To keep *Army AL&T Magazine* informative, relevant, and compelling, we are committed to meeting as many reader concerns and recommendations as possible. Given the scope of the publication's mandate, the direction we receive from our Editorial Advisory Board, and the wide variety of professionals who read *Army AL&T Magazine*, we realize that we will never meet all requirements in a single issue. Over the course of a year, however, we intend to cover major topics of interest to our readers. Some of the more frequently recommended topics include the Future Combat Systems program and any changes that may be forthcoming; anything on new and emerging technologies; and updates on Base Realignment and Closure decisions and implementations.

We also received several editorial recommendations, from ways to better distribute the magazine to perspectives we might more frequently consider. Some of the more common include:

- Ensure that as many readers as possible have access not only to the online version, but also to printed copies of the magazine. Twenty-four percent of our readers stated that they did not have ready access to hard copies of the publication. Others stated that, while they preferred the online version, they had experienced some difficulty at one time or another with navigating through or downloading content from the site.
- Include more forward-looking articles that allow readers to anticipate new developments. In short, as one reader put it, include fewer articles "about things that have happened" and more "about what should happen in the future based on current and past events."
- Remember that members of the U.S. Army Research, Engineering, and Development Command; U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command; and program executive office and program manager communities are critical players in the Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology (AL&T) Workforce, and that they often look to *Army AL&T Magazine* to remain informed of trends, new developments, and changes in organization, processes, and procedures.

- Don't forget the role played by the Reserve and the National Guard in supporting the AL&T community. These organizations are a source of expertise in filling positions vacated by deployed personnel. Moreover, the experience and lessons learned that they bring to the Army from positions within the business community are often invaluable.

In addition, even with overall high scores, we noted several areas where we still have room to improve. These include our reporting on organizational, regulatory, and strategic changes within the AL&T community; coverage of training, educational, and professional development opportunities for both military *and* civilian professionals; and writing about lessons learned. To this last point, as one reader put it, "it's frustrating to see us reinvent the wheel." With more detailed articles that explain what has worked and what has failed to work, and by explaining why, we can play an even greater role in sharing best practices across the board.

Reader responses also reflected two important balancing acts that we must regularly perform. First are the roughly equal numbers of respondents who encouraged us, on the one hand, to "cut through the fluff" while emphasizing, on the other, the importance of the AL&T community to the Army, DOD, other federal agencies, Congress, and the general public. Not to mention *ourselves*. Going forward, we will continue to balance as objectively as possible these conjoined needs for detailed, instructive reporting and for demonstrating the value of our work to our constituents.

A second dichotomy in responses: the need to understand the vision of our leadership and the simultaneous desire for articles written from a "trench-level" perspective. One reader stated that, "it's good to see what management wants and thinks; the support we provide the warfighter is very challenging and anything that helps us do it better is worthwhile." Conversely, many readers encouraged us to "bring it down to the local level," to conduct "more interviews with folks down in the trenches," and to "interview more of the day-to-day workers and how they contribute to the acquisition process (not just executives or directors)." Here again, we will strive to present each of these perspectives as thoroughly as possible.

To all of our readers, then, and with a heartfelt "thank you" to those who participated in this survey, we pledge in the coming months to renew and redouble our efforts to remain your principal connection to all things Army AL&T.

*Cynthia D. Hermes*  
Editor-in-Chief