



From the Acquisition Support Center Director

At the Southeast Medical Command's Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) Symposium in Columbus, GA, Silver Star Medal recipient SFC Jose Blanco shared his account of the gallantry in action that earned him the prestigious award. Blanco, then a sergeant, was a gunner on a Bradley Fighting Vehicle during the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003 when he and his crewmates came under attack. After recovering from the initial blast that had knocked him out of the turret to the bottom of the vehicle, Blanco "shook off the cobwebs," treated his wounded crewmates, and took them out of harm's way.



Seeing that the turret gun had not been damaged, Blanco crawled back into the turret, placed the gun in manual mode, and started to engage the enemy, destroying an enemy recoilless rifle team and four rocket-propelled grenade teams before help arrived. "I didn't go out there to win a Silver Star," Blanco recounted. "I didn't do it to be a hero, I was doing my job—to stay alive and make sure that my battle buddies and crew were well taken care of."

This is just one example of the numerous heroic actions taken by our Soldiers. During this year of the NCO, we must remember as Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology (AL&T) Workforce members that our mission to keep our Soldiers well equipped with the best weapons, technology, and services is a crucial duty that enables our Soldiers to perform extraordinary and heroic actions in our Nation's defense.

Acquisition Reform

In the wake of Congressional concerns regarding DOD acquisition, several hearings were conducted to review and listen to recommendations on overhauling DOD's approach to procurement, acquisition, and contracting. In April 2009, LTG N. Ross Thompson III, Principal Military Deputy to the Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army for AL&T, and Director, Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) and Acquisition Career Management, testified at the U.S. House of Representatives Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee. Thompson discussed the overall state of the AL&T Workforce and plans for its future. "The Army is creating and sustaining a healthy acquisition workforce focused on getting products to the Soldier faster, making good products even better, minimizing life-cycle costs, and enhancing the synergy and effectiveness of the Army AL&T communities, while ensuring proper fiscal stewardship of taxpayer dollars,"

he said. "Our push toward a more integrated, holistic approach to product development and sustainment is driving changes in acquisition training and education to better prepare our workforce for the many challenges it will face in the 21st century."

In April 2009, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates announced in-sourcing plans to increase the size of the DOD acquisition workforce by converting contractors to government positions, hiring additional acquisition professionals, and reducing the number of service support contractors from 39 to 26 percent, the pre-2001 level. Thompson said the Army is "aggressively moving toward this important directive," and shared the Army's in-sourcing strategy. "The Army is using a comprehensive approach to comply with Congressional direction to give special consideration to civilian performance of contracted services. In-sourcing cannot be effectively implemented within a single stovepipe. It is not simply a contracting matter but also involves the civilian manpower authorization, hiring process, and budget. It requires identifying funding sources to hire civilians, along with the use of over-hires until an authorization is documented. We find that a practical in-sourcing schedule must be established in order to ensure continuity of service."

Thompson also emphasized the importance of recruiting people for the AL&T Workforce who are able to perform high-technology missions. "All of the acquisition career fields require highly trained people, not just scientists and engineers, but also business and financial experts to put together contract instruments. My strategic objective is to make the Army a very tough customer. I want the Army AL&T Workforce negotiating the best deal for the U.S. Army because that allows us to put the best capabilities in the hands of our Soldiers. Increased investment in our people, coupled with sufficient, predictable investment in our programs, will continue to give our Soldiers the equipment, services, and support they need for success on the battlefield," he concluded.

On May 22, 2009, President Barack Obama signed into law *The Weapon Systems Acquisition Reform Act (Public Law 111-23)* to strengthen accountability standards for DOD purchases for military operations. Please visit Defense Acquisition University's Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (AT&L) Knowledge Sharing System Web site at <https://akss.dau.mil/default.aspx> for a summary of this legislation.

Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund Program, Section 852, Catalog of Opportunities

Having successfully presented the Army's FY09 *Section 852* plan to the Acting Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for AT&L, the Army's *Section 852* requirement was increased to \$109.7 million. While the Army's throughput capability has been expanded for many AL&T Workforce training programs via *Section 852*, the following efforts have also been initiated through this capability:

- The first centrally managed and funded Student Loan Repayment Program with the pilot program attracting more than 1,200 applicants.
- New hires that include 91 Student Career Experience Program students, 345 interns, 24 system-of-systems journeyman engineers, and 3 highly qualified experts.
- Successful launching of the Civilian Incentive Program, bringing recruitment and retention incentives throughout the AL&T community.

The Army's Catalog of Opportunities, as well as instructions for submitting new requirement considerations, can be found at <http://asc.army.mil/career/programs/852/default.cfm>. For more information, contact Kelly L. Terry at (732) 414-1431 or kelly.terry@us.army.mil.

AAC Annual Awards Ceremony

There are some workforce members whose performance and contributions to the warfighter set them apart from their peers. These extraordinary people will be recognized for their achievements at the AAC Annual Awards Ceremony on Sunday, Oct. 4, 2009, at the Marriott Crystal Gateway Hotel in Arlington, VA. I invite all AL&T Workforce members to join us in "Celebrating Our Acquisition Stars" and recognizing the significant accomplishments and achievements of our research and development laboratories, life-cycle logistics and contracting communities, project/product managers and acquisition directors, acquisition NCOs, and other acquisition excellence contributors. For more information, contact Marti Giella at (703) 805-1095/DSN 655-1095 or usaasc.events@conus.army.mil.

AAC Celebrates 20th Anniversary

This year marks the AAC's 20th anniversary. On Oct. 13, 1989, then-U.S. Army Chief of Staff GEN Carl E. Vuono approved AAC's creation as "an organization of dedicated military and civilian acquisition specialists and leaders." Spanning four presidential administrations, two wars, and numerous contingency operations, the AAC has made a tremendous impact on the Army's ability to protect our country. To all AAC members past and present, as well as the entire Army acquisition community, I offer my congratulations and a sincere thank you for a job well done. My hope is that for future generations, the AAC will continue its dedicated service to our Soldiers by improving the Army's combat capability and developing critical systems and services that enable our Army to meet its non-negotiable contract to fight and win our Nation's wars.



Craig A. Spisak
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Acquisition Support Center

Contracting Community Highlights



Every day the Army's contracting workforce performs a critical mission under extraordinary conditions. Faced with incredible challenges of a 600-percent increase in workload in the last decade concurrent with a decreasing workforce, our community has succeeded largely as a result of a strong "can-do" spirit. As the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Procurement (DASA(P)), one of my roles is to provide you with the tools that will improve your day-to-day performance mission.

Some of you may be aware of the current Materiel Enterprise (ME) effort between Dean G. Poppo, Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology, and GEN Ann E. Dunwoody, Commanding General, U.S. Army Materiel Command. They are personally championing this process to bring together senior leaders from both organizations and identify the current challenges that affect the enterprise organizations' processes and boundaries. Over the past several months, the ME has identified opportunities for transformation, both at the enterprise level and within the operating domains. From this transformation analysis, I have identified two enterprise projects that will increase the efficiency and operating effectiveness between the DASA(P) and the contracting community.

The first project is to create a standardized communication process and procedure flow between my office and the contracting community. Creating and implementing this initiative will be a joint enterprise effort between DASA(P) and the U.S. Army Contracting Command (ACC), but the results will be felt across all contracting activities. This project will facilitate timely, consistent, and accurate information distribution; assign suspenses; and receive and process data. Once implemented, this initiative will provide a standardized way of doing business by reducing the burden at all levels, increasing data quality and accuracy, and reducing cycle time.

The second joint ME project is to establish an Army Procurement Policy Council for regulatory and policy issues. This team of representatives from DASA(P), ACC, and other major commands will meet regularly to address Army contracting-related processes, procedures, and new statutory and regulatory initiatives, as well as to incorporate revisions to the *Army Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement*. The council will provide the Army contracting workforce with a standard process for creating, distributing, and incorporating Army contract policies.