



FROM THE DIRECTOR,  
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## Growing the Acquisition Workforce to Meet THE NEEDS OF THE FUTURE

No doubt you've been hearing a lot about efficiencies and budget restraint, and about "doing more without more." But you may not know that a few years before they were a key topic of discussion in Washington among senior leaders in DOD acquisition, the Army was well on its way to implementing a program that increases efficiencies. This program also continues to ensure that the needs of our warfighters on the battlefield are met, and that we will have a viable and effective acquisition workforce into the future.

Section 852 of the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008* directed the establishment of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund (DAWDF), which permits DOD to recruit, hire, train, and retain its acquisition workforce. On April 6, 2009, former Secretary of Defense Dr. Robert M. Gates directed an increase of 10,000 civilian personnel in the DOD-wide acquisition workforce by FY15. The DAWDF was identified as the catalyst to achieve this initiative, and the Section 852 program was born.

In 2009, the Army established a task force specifically to scope out the details of growing the acquisition workforce, and before deploying to Iraq, I was honored to help establish the task force effort in support of Mr. Dean G. Pops and LTG N. Ross Thompson III.

The task force asked Army commands and organizations with acquisition

positions to list their hiring requirements. The information was used to finalize a strategic approach for meeting the Secretary of Defense's initiative. After the gathering of information was complete, the task force put in place the requirements by fiscal year and career field designation.

The Army is responsible for increasing its acquisition workforce by 1,885 new hires by FY15, with 1,650 of the positions reserved specifically for the contracting acquisition career field. Most of these new hires are interns and journeymen. In FY09, we added 550 new hires; in FY10, 551; and to date, we've fulfilled a total of more than 1,370 new hires. As you can see, we are well on our way to reaching the goal of 1,885.

Recruitment and hiring are highly specialized. Because the leaders of the individual organizations and commands know their needs best, they are tasked with hiring the new interns and journeymen to meet their specific needs. It is a decentralized process designed to find the people with the proper skills and experience.

When I testified on April 5 before the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Airland, a portion of my testimony was dedicated to this program and the caliber of our new hires. I reiterated to the members of the committee that we are looking at candidates coming out of colleges and universities who have the skills necessary to train in specific areas

of expertise. With the Army's high standards for recruiting and hiring interns today, we are finding candidates with incredible talent who, on average, have a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

The acquisition intern program is a two-year program that mimics the Army's intern program for non-acquisition fields. Section 852 provides the funding for us to train these interns for the entire length of the program. It even provides funding for a third year if necessary. We are developing in these talented and motivated interns the proper specialized skills and experience for FY15 and beyond. We want to ensure we are cost-effective in our acquisition programs, building the right systems and saving the taxpayers' money. Let me add that we are incredibly proud of our new teammates coming into the Acquisition Corps, especially the energy and skill that they bring.

While we are executing our plan to grow the workforce, we have concept plans for placement of these new hires in the future. The Army, along with DOD, has proven itself to be proactive. Thanks to the implementation of this requirement identified by leadership in 2009, the acquisition workforce stands ready to meet future objectives. We are doing the right things at the right time.

For more information on Section 852 hiring initiatives, please visit <http://asc.army.mil/career/programs/852/default.cfm>.