

NEW HORIZONS *of* EXCELLENCE

Training with Industry program brings best practices
from private sector to Army acquisition

by Mr. Robert E. Coultas

LTC Jay Ferreira had two objectives when he began his Training with Industry (TWI) assignment in June 2012 with EADS North America's Lakota Helicopter Program Office in Huntsville, AL.

"First, strategically, I wanted to broaden my awareness by gaining firsthand exposure to EADS North America's corporate business operations. Second, tactically, I wanted to gain project-level experience in the management, planning and execution of a large ACAT [Acquisition Category] I defense aviation program through daily involvement in the UH-72A Lakota Helicopter Program Office. This plan exposed me to both the corporate operations of EADS North America and several Lakota Helicopter Program Office integrated product teams."

Taken together, Ferreira's two objectives exemplify the purpose of the TWI program, which is offered through the U.S. Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) and administered by the U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center (USAASC). TWI is a 10- to 12-month rotational opportunity



IMMERSION EXPERIENCE

LTC Jay Ferreira, left, and Steve Ferguson, Station No. 4 production lead, inspect a tail boom on one of the UH-72A Lakota helicopters in production at the American Eurocopter Corp. facility in Columbus, MS, May 16. (Photo by Jodie Whittington, American Eurocopter Corp.)



THE BIG PICTURE

Ferreira visits the production floor at the American Eurocopter Corp. production facility. Ferreira spent a year working on the UH-72A Lakota program at EADS North America through TWI. (Photo by Jodie Whittington, American Eurocopter Corp.)

for acquisition officers in grades O-4 to O-5 to work and train at top civilian companies, with the objective of bringing back the latest commercial business practices, organizational structures and cultures, technology development processes and corporate management techniques—then translating these into better Army acquisition outcomes in future assignments.

SELECTION PROCESS

The application process begins when the TWI candidate consults with his or her assignment officer to discuss professional background and interests. Depending on the officer's previous assignments and educational background, the acquisition officer may be a good match for more than one company.

Participating TWI companies also provide information on what backgrounds

they are seeking—for example, an engineering degree, Lean Six Sigma training, an M.B.A. or specific experience gained in past assignments. USAASC's Acquisition, Education and Training Branch conducts a review board to select an officer for each of the 10 positions available each year. The Deputy Director for Acquisition Career Management approves the selections.

Companies that partner with the Army in TWI are developers of innovative, cutting-edge technologies as well as established leaders in their respective fields of business. Those currently participating are the Coca-Cola Co., Microsoft Corp., EADS North America, Lockheed Martin Corp., General Dynamics Land Systems, Intel Corp., Cisco Systems Inc., Computer Sciences Corp. and Boeing Co. The acquisition officers get a wide range of experience in their respective TWI

assignments, in contracting, logistics, program management and budgeting. They also get a different perspective from the Army way of doing business.

'COMPREHENSIVE EXPOSURE'

Ferreira worked at EADS North America's Lakota Helicopter Program Office from June 2012 to June 2013. The office is responsible for the management, production, training, fielding and sustainment of the Army's UH-72A Lakota helicopter program.

Ferreira's travels with EADS North America took him to a program management and design review at the Eurocopter Deutschland facility in Donauwoerth, Germany; a management visit to subcontractors American Eurocopter Corp. and Turbomeca USA in Grand Prairie, TX; participation in the delivery of new-production Lakota helicopters to



READY TO FLY

In his TWI tenure at EADS North America, Ferreira had the opportunity to be involved in multiple aspects of program management and design review for the UH-72A Lakota helicopter. Here, Ferreira stands by one of the newly produced UH-72A Lakotas at the American Eurocopter Corp. facility in Columbus, MS, May 17. (Photo by James Darcy, EADS North America)

an Army unit; a new material introductory brief and orientation at a National Guard aviation unit in Williamstown, WV; participation in the assembly-line build of new Lakota helicopters at the production facility in Columbus, MS; and a flight in one of the new-production helicopters.

“This comprehensive exposure provided me with a solid understanding and appreciation of the requirements and complexities associated with operating a large, unique ACAT I defense aviation program like the UH-72A Lakota helicopter,” Ferreira said.

His biggest challenges during the TWI assignment, he said, were a lack of experience with and understanding of the aviation defense acquisition “business” and unfamiliarity with the people, products, processes and organizations.

So this assignment was a perfect fit for Ferreira, allowing him to broaden his acquisition horizons.

“Overcoming this obstacle was not too difficult,” he added. “EADS North America took a very active role in my assignment. I had a very good sponsor, Mr. John Burke, vice president and program manager, UH-72A Lakota Helicopter Program, who interacted with me on almost a daily basis. He supported my training plan and any endeavors I wished to pursue. Additionally, I had the entire EADS North America Lakota Program Office team, plus the corporate team, who all went out of their way to educate and assist me. All the industry employees that I interacted with were more than willing to educate and involve me in this business.”

Ferreira’s follow-on assignment is as the director, Missile Test Division (MTD)

at Fort Bliss, TX. MTD is a subordinate organization of the Fires Test Directorate at Fort Sill, OK, which is part of the U.S. Army Operational Test Command.

Ferreira found his most rewarding TWI experience was working with the people of EADS North America, immersing himself in their culture and encountering a unique opportunity to grow and diversify his professional acquisition knowledge.

“As a Soldier, it was extremely rewarding to be part of an organization committed to supporting the Army by providing high-quality products like the UH-72A Lakota Helicopter to the warfighter, Ferreira said. “Our military careers can be somewhat predictable due to the pre-ordained requirements, qualifications and gates we must meet as acquisition professionals. Participating in TWI not only gives you the opportunity to broaden your abilities but also improves your profession.”

For information on AAC’s TWI program and the companies involved, go to <http://asc.army.mil/web/career-development/programs/aac-training-with-industry>. To apply for TWI, contact your assignment officer. For other inquiries about TWI, contact Marti Giella at 703-805-2700 or marti.a.giella.civ@mail.mil; or Scott Greene at 703-805-1229 or scott.m.greene14.civ@mail.mil.

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