



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

PROGRAM EXECUTIVE OFFICE
GROUND COMBAT SYSTEMS
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SFAE-GCS

25 July 2018

MEMORANDUM FOR Mr. Craig Spisak, Director, US Army Acquisition Support Center, 9900 Belvoir Road, Building 201, Suite 101, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-5578

SUBJECT: 2018 Army Acquisition Executive's Excellence in Leadership Award for Product Management/Product Director Office Team of the Year (O5 Level)

1. I strongly recommend the nomination of the 15th Armored Brigade Combat Team – Product Team for Product Management/Product Director Office Team of the Year (O5 Level).
2. This O5 team award is recommended to a non-traditional O5 Product Office Team. This team was a combination of resources to meet the needs of Army Senior Leaders when asked to increase combat capability for the entire US military. This highly competent team quickly assembled together from multiple organizations to develop a strategy and way-ahead that was executable for converting an Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) to an Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT). From the success of this effort, additional capabilities have been provided to our Soldiers that will enable them to fight near-peer adversaries in the current threat environment. The Product Offices collectively executed over \$113M in FY17 and FY18 and saw a savings of approximately \$132M. The combined work of the 15th ABCT - Product Team has set the conditions of success for the 16th ABCT and the latest Echelons Above Brigade (EAB) M113/Bradley replacement effort as well as set conditions for any future additional combat capability requirements.
3. I am privileged to have the 15th ABCT Product Team represent the Program Executive Office Ground Combat Systems as the nominee the 2018 Product Management Team of the Year Award.
4. Point of contact for this nomination is Ms. Kimberly Catrinar at 586-282-0593 or kimberly.r.catrinar.civ@mail.mil.

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BRIAN P. CUMMINGS
Major General, USA
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Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology

2018 Army Acquisition Executive's (AAE) Excellence in Leadership Award

***PRODUCT MANAGEMENT/ PRODUCT DIRECTOR OFFICE
TEAM OF THE YEAR (O5 LEVEL)***

Administrative Information

Nominating Organization

Organization's Name: Program Executive Office Ground Combat Systems

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Team Name: 15th Armored Brigade Combat Team – Product Team

Program Executive Office (PEO)	Product Manager (PdM)/Product Director (PdD) O5	Email Address
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PEO Ammunition (AMMO)	LTC Patrick Farrell, PdM Precision Fires and Mortars Mr. Rene Medina, PdL Support Systems (Volcano)	patrick.d.farrell4.mil@mail.mil rene.medina.civ@mail.mil
PEO Simulation, Training and Instrumentation (PEO STRI)	LTC Steven D. Gutierrez, PdM Virtual Training Systems	steven.d.gutierrez.mil@mail.mil
PEO Command Control Communications Tactical (C3T)	LTC Shane Sims, PdM Joint Battle Command-Platform	shane.d.sims2.mil@mail.mil

Award Narrative

Background: 15th Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) – Product Team

The changing strategic environment and updated defense planning guidance increased Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) contingency operational demands. The Army directed conversion of the 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division (2/3ID) stationed at Ft. Stewart, GA from an Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) to an ABCT in FY18. HQDA EXORD 027-17 directed multiple Product Management Offices to convert the 2/3 ID to a 15th ABCT, resulting in a team from several product offices, the 15th ABCT – Product Team. The structure change modified the Army force structure to reduce risk to meet contingency operational demands. The Brigade was equipped with (87) M1A1SA Abrams, (138) Bradley A2s/BFIST, (18/18) Paladins/FAASVs, (131) M113s, (35) M88A2s, (3) Stryker NBCRVs, (6) ABVs, (4) AVLBs, (2) ACEs, (2) Volcanos, and (39) Mortar Systems. The operation was conducted in three phases.

Phase I (foundational actions) began with guidance to initiate planning to convert an IBCT to an ABCT and ended with the Secretary of the Army's stationing decision. This phase included a series of operational planning teams, councils of Colonels, General Officer Steering Committees, and senior leader updates. Critical to this phase was the collective planning by geographically separated product offices to equip the 15th ABCT with displaced equipment such as PM owned vehicles, displaced ARNG equipment, new production, and depot vehicles. Decisions made during this phase included determining critical requirements, resourcing, and a funding strategy.

Phase II (reorganizing) began with the Secretary of the Army's stationing decision and ended with the 2/3ID attaining Initial Operational Capability (IOC) February 2018. IOC was defined as 80% aggregate manning and the initiation of displaced equipment fielding/displaced equipment training (DEF/DET) for M1, M2, M109, M113, and M88. Critical to this phase was the publication of a Modified Table of Organization and Equipment for the 2/3ID; effective date of 16 October 2017. The 15th ABCT Product Team had to determine and order authorized stockage list (ASL); special tools and test equipment (STTE), test, measurement, and diagnostic equipment (TMDE); and all other associated support/training items and devices.

Phase III (Training) began with the attainment of IOC in February 2018 and will end with the 2/3ID attaining Full Operational Capability (FOC) in June 2019. DEF/DET was initiated by the 15th ABCT - Product Team in September 2017 with the fielding of M88A2 recovery vehicles. This fielding represented the first successful execution of Total Package Fielding (TPF) from Logistics Modernization Program (LMP). Between September 2017 and September 2018, the Brigade received field level maintenance and operator training for all platforms. DEF/DET was required to be completed by September 2018 in order to allow for sufficient time for unit collective training ahead of their planned Combined Training Center (CTC) rotation.

Talent Management

Incremental resources were not authorized, so the 15th ABCT Product Team had to determine how to allocate resources internally and balance competing program requirements. In the case of the M113, there were no existing resources, as that vehicle had transitioned to sustainment in 2007. As a result, PM AMPV assumed responsibility for the M113 and worked with BAE to reestablish DEF/DET programs of instruction and Anniston Army Depot to perform reset/repair.

All of the institutional knowledge regarding M113 DET/ had been lost over time and the PM reached out to all previous known M113 program employees in an effort to track down historical knowledge. Technical Manuals (TMs) had not been updated and were not able to be updated in time for the 15th ABCT DEF/DET but will be updated for the 16th ABCT DEF/DET.

PEO GCS hosted an external stakeholder meeting at the Detroit Arsenal on 01 March 2017, to provide a forum for key stakeholders to discuss integration requirements for system of systems in support of the 15th ABCT – Product Team. The goal of the meeting was to allow for a shared understanding and common operational picture in support of the PEO GCS, PEO AMMO, PEO STRI, PEO C3T and PEO CS&CSS equipping requirements focused on: resources, funding, schedule, integration, and training. The 15th ABCT Product Team identified five objectives:

- a. Shared understanding of 15th ABCT equipping requirements, maintenance and system integration schedule, and Execution Order (EXORD).
- b. Shared understanding of mission command & network configuration requirements/capabilities/integration across the fleet
- c. Provide a forum to ensure continued communication across key stakeholders
- d. Shared understanding of ammunition requirements/gunnery/training
- e. Identification of “at risk” Line Item Numbers (LINs)

Team Leadership & Knowledge Transfer

During the course of the equipping effort, there were several critical personnel retirements and duty station changes necessitating knowledge transfer within organizations. In order to ensure continuity of operations, departing personnel identified replacements in advance to facilitate overlap of responsibilities and to allow for mentorship. Program updates were captured in published bi-weekly charts, minutes, and Executive Summaries (EXSUMs).

In early 2017, HQDA identified the requirement for a 16th ABCT which became a parallel effort to the 15th ABCT effort. Given the success of the 15th ABCT – Product Team, the Project Management Offices (O6-Level) requested HQDA replicate the 15th effort as they developed the 16th ABCT EXORD in order to capitalize on the streamlined process used for the 15th. Cost estimates for the 16th were based on the actual execution of the 15th effort as were resource, schedule and DEF/DET requirements. Although the source of the 16th equipment will be different than the 15th, the underlying organizational planning and execution will be similar and thus the PMs have implemented best practices from the 15th ABCT effort. Specifically, external stakeholder planning, bi-weekly IPTs, centralized planning with decentralized execution, coordinated funding through Budget, Requirements, and Program (BRP) requests, and synchronized fielding schedules.

Supporting ASA(ALT) Priorities

During phase II, the 15th ABCT – Product Team organized resources, established productions schedules and refined estimates. The team had to identify sourcing solutions for the equipment along with repair locations. While the M88A2 vehicles were new production, all other vehicles were a mix of vehicles from theater provided equipment, storage, ARNG turn in, or vehicle modernization seed stock. Each platform was sourced from multiple locations with varying stages of readiness -necessitating multiple levels of vehicle repair standards.

In order to fund bringing combat vehicles to 10/20 maintenance standards, the BRP recommended resourcing the 15th ABCT critical requirements in FY17, and subsequently in FY18. However, as the requirements had not been built into the Program Objective Memorandum (POM), and execution was during a continuing resolution, PEO GCS frequently appeared before the BRP to request allocation of approved funding; the 15th ABCT – Product Team collectively executed over \$113M in FY17 and FY18. PEO GCS, along with ASA(FM&C) tracked execution of all funding on behalf of all PEOs and consolidated requirements for the BRP and Logistics Innovation Agency (LIA) to ensure that the 15th ABCT product teams were represented. Receipt of funding proved to be a critical obstacle for the entirety of the project. The team also saved over \$132M through innovative approaches taken for completing 10/20 work to meet critical fielding timelines.

The 15th ABCT – Product Team has supported each of the ASA(ALT) priorities: (1) focus on delivery of timely capability, (2) streamline acquisition and business processes, (3) proactively inform program requirements, and (4) develop innovative solutions for acquisition problems. The 15th ABCT – Product Team synergies resulted in successful completion of the aggressive repair and fielding schedules in a synchronized coordination of resources, equipment and personnel.

Product Management/Product Director Office Specific Criteria

Given the large number of O5 PdMs involved in the conversion of the 2/3ID, as well as the significant number of external stakeholders, PEO GCS established a bi-weekly 15th ABCT – Product Team meeting. Initially, PEO GCS met with their own respective PdMs and external stakeholders that included FORSCOM, AMC, ASC, ASA(ALT), HQDA, 2/3ID, and the XVIII Airborne Corps. However, as there was no centralized oversight for the effort, PEO GCS proactively changed the Integrated Product Team into an overall 15th ABCT – Product Team effort and invited each PDM with equipping requirements to participate. Thus, all requirements were consolidated into this working group along with support from each LCMC partner. Repair schedules and DEF/DET timelines were synchronized with the 2/3ID training schedules and Human Resources Command (HRC) personnel fill timelines. During the bi-weekly calls, the 15th ABCT – Product Team reviewed the build status of platforms and friction points were also identified for resolution.

The funding constraints mentioned previously, forced the 15th ABCT – Product Team to develop proactive solutions to ensure that the program schedules were not negatively impacted. Monthly spend plans were submitted to ASA(ALT) and constraints were identified routinely to the BRP which provided significant challenges to the execution of the programs. The 15th ABCT – Product Team worked with each other to balance competing priorities across all PEOs to ensure that limited funds were distributed based on urgent need. Some offices, such as PDM Abrams, had workforce instabilities due to inconsistent funds received.

The 15th ABCT – Product Team collectively developed innovative solutions for acquisition problems and obsolescence challenges. In order to reduce funding requirements both the depots and 15th ABCT – Product Team leveraged existing inventories of excess Class IX (CLIX) repair parts, resulting in significant overall savings. Anniston Army Depot had several reclamation projects that were used for the M113 which allowed funds to be redirected to the Paladin repair. When possible, common components, such as Combat Vehicle Crewman (CVC) helmets, were

cross-leveled between organizations with excess inventory, resulting in a savings of \$600k for M113.

PdM SPHS initially planned to field PIM A7 variants but was forced to develop an alternate sourcing solution when the A7 experienced test issues during IOT&E. The PdM worked with Anniston Army Depot to identify older A6 versions in storage that could be overhauled in time to support the 15th ABCT. They faced production constraints due to European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) priorities and had to work through product quality issues. In spite of the equipment challenges, the PdM and the depot were able to work through the issues and ensure support of the 2/3ID fielding schedule and collective field training exercise.

PM (O6 Level) Close Combat Systems (CCS) - had no Code A or B Volcano systems available to send to the field. The only way they were able to get serviceable systems to the 2/3ID was to conduct a full-up, or small-scale Service Life Extension Program (SLEP)/refurb, on all of some of the systems that were sitting in Depot in Code F (59 systems) or G (97 systems). This had been a major problem for the 15th ABCT – Product Team whereby the systems essentially went dormant during the counterinsurgency years, which had very detrimental effects on demand, the Original Equipping Manufacturer (OEM), and equipment availability. As units began to do Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services (PMCS) and try to use the systems, there were few, to no parts, available to conduct repairs. In order to support the 2/3ID, the 15th ABCT – Product Team sent a small team to the depot to harvest parts off of the Code F/G systems for use as a de-facto source of supply for current and future parts requests. Additionally, the safety certification for the Volcano had stalled due to lack of funding, however, the 15th ABCT – Product Team was able to work with ATEC to conduct an abbreviated comparison between 977 and 985A4 platforms w/o doing live load testing. Previous best practices were to send the units the items out of the pilot reset program without training or formal fielding accompanied the items. Units had been working to train themselves.

PdM Precision Fires and Mortars employed a three phased approach to provide M121, M95/M96 systems to 2/3 ID by March 2018. (1) ARDEC conducted recovery of available turned in components, (2) the PdM requisitioned components from TACOM Mortar Item Manager, and (3) leveraged PdM GPM2S to fill remaining gaps with existing stock. The results of their effort saved approximately \$6M that would have been required for new procurement.

There are myriad examples where the 15th ABCT – Product Team overcame challenges that ranged from obsolescence to funding in order to successfully convert the 2/3ID within less than 20 months from receipt of the EXORD. However, overall mission success is defined by the trained readiness of the Soldiers to operate and maintain their equipment. From April 30 – May 4, 2018, four-person tank crews from across the U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps and partner nations met at Fort Benning, Georgia, taking part in the Sullivan Cup - a biennial competition to determine the best tank crew through a series of scored tests. The newly trained crew from the 2/3ID, B 3-67 AR won the Sullivan cup on the M1A1 SA tank that PM MBTS had just fielded with NET training through gunnery on 11 April. This crew was a brand new crew and beat out 11 US Army Divisions, the Army National Guard, the US Marine Corps, and foreign crewman from the Australian Army and Kuwaiti Land Force.

Award Citation

15th Armored Brigade Combat Team – Product Team

For exemplary performance by multiple O5 Product Management Offices in support of the 2/3ID conversion from an Infantry Brigade Combat Team to an Armored Brigade Combat Team, 01 August 2017 – 31 July 2018. Collectively, the Product Management Offices made significant contributions to the repair, equipping and training of the 15th Armored Brigade Combat Team while providing outstanding leadership in support of the changing strategic environment and updated defense planning guidance to increase Armored Brigade Combat Team contingency operational demands. Providing unparalleled support to the Warfighter achieving mission success in accordance with published Execution Order timelines while facing fiscal constraints and equipment resourcing and repair challenges. Over 483 pieces of equipment were repaired and fielded to the 2/3ID in less than 20 months, with an overall executed budget of \$113M and estimated savings of \$132M for the 15th Armored Brigade Combat Team alone. This team was dedicated to providing Soldiers with a decisive advantage in any mission by developing, acquiring, fielding, and sustaining the world's best equipment and services to meet current and future Army needs. This team's achievement reflect great credit upon the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics and Technology) and the United States Army.