



# DACM NEWS

**DIRECTOR, ACQUISITION CAREER MANAGEMENT OFFICE**

*The Army DACM Office is responsible for talent management, career/leader development, Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act certification, policy, and advocating for the professionals who are members of the Army Acquisition Workforce.*

## FROM THE DACM: THE ARMY ACQUISITION TEAM—PARTNERSHIPS TO UNDERSTAND INDUSTRY

Rob Richardson Jr., Director, Acquisition Career Management (DACM)



During a recent Army Aviation Hot Topic event hosted by the Association of the United States Army, the Honorable Douglas R. Bush, assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics and technology, said, “The Army’s a team sport, a team effort. Acquisition is a supporting function. What really matters is having units of Soldiers equipped with equipment they can go to combat with and win.”

And he’s spot on, especially regarding the Army being a team effort. And that team includes our industry partners.

### CHANGING ROLES

The role of acquisition in the Army has evolved over time. Since the establishment of the Army Acquisition Corps in 1989, the Army has shifted and improved the way it contracts and procures defense acquisition programs. We streamlined our workforce and the intent of Army acquisition further in 2022 with Back-to-Basics and really defined acquisition’s role as developing, acquiring and sustaining operational capability. Today, our Army acquisition professionals are integrators, responsible for managing and building requirements, providing Soldier touch points, basically making sure everything is moving forward.

Our relationship with industry has evolved, too. Today, our success depends on industry’s capability to deliver .

Pick any one of the Army’s priority programs and it is largely dependent on industry. Our Army acquisition professionals are in the driver’s seat, but we rely on the expertise found in industry, along with their business practices and agility. These relationships give us more trade space, ability to innovate and an architecture that we can more easily plug into when we have enhancements. Through these partnerships and the enhanced tools Congress has authorized, such as other transaction authority and rapid prototyping, we’re able to get the best capability that we can as rapidly as we can.

But we can’t fully leverage these partnerships if our Army acquisition professionals and leaders don’t have a deeper understanding of how industry functions. Therefore, it’s critical that we deliberately develop and execute opportunities for our acquisition professionals to embed with industry to gain that deeper understanding.

### TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE

At the Director of Acquisition Career Management (DACM) Office, we manage a Training With Industry (TWI) program for our military officers in grades O3 through O5. This one-year work experience program embeds the military officer with the industry partner and provides extensive exposure to managerial techniques and industrial procedures within corporate America. Following the participants’ tenure at the industry partner’s worksite, they are placed in a validated utilization assignment.

TWI includes industry partners across the country. During their tenure, participants will be exposed to the latest commercial business practices, organizational structures and cultures.

For our civilian workforce, the DACM Office partners with the Office of Human Capital Initiatives in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment to leverage their Public-Private Talent Experience (PPTe) program. PPTe is a six-month program that promotes increased communication between government and industry, enables participants to gain a better understanding of industry’s business operations and challenges, and facilitates the sharing of innovative best practices. Applications for PPTe open in the fall.

For our more senior acquisition leaders, it’s even more imperative that they enter positions of authority already equipped with

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the knowledge and experience necessary to assume a project management position. Two years ago, we implemented the Enhanced Command Preparation (ECP) program. Those leaders who are selected to lead project offices within a program executive office now go through the ECP program before assuming those duties.

We also support the Army Senior Fellowship, which is part of the Senior Enterprise Talent Management program. This program is for those who have graduated from Senior Service College and who are looking to strengthen their enterprise-wide perspective. Through this program, fellows engage in a 12-month training program designed to build on executive core qualifications, preparing the participant for senior executive positions.

In addition to sending our civilian and military workforce professionals out to industry, we are proactively looking to recruit those with extensive industry experience. After a few years of research and feasibility studies, I'm excited to share that we have successfully implemented an acquisition direct commissioning program.

Implemented by the Army Talent Management Task Force, the new acquisition Direct Commissioning Program enables us to directly commission outstanding acquisition talent into the Army

Acquisition Workforce. The intent is not only to bring in individuals with advanced technical degrees, but also those with a wealth of industry experience. Our first acquisition direct commission is scheduled to come on board next year in the rank of major.

While all of these programs are available to our workforce, their impacts on our success depend on proper planning and employee and supervisor engagement.

Back-to-Basics empowered our workforce professionals to take charge of managing their individual careers. Supervisors play a key role in building out a meaningful employee Individual Development Plan through Army Career Tracker and encouraging a culture of lifelong learning. My office has developed career models for each acquisition functional area to assist in this effort.

CONCLUSION

To those Army Acquisition Workforce professionals who have attended any of these programs, I encourage you to pay it forward and be advocates. Share your story and help identify others to attend in the future. Encourage your people to leave the organization to gain new experiences and skills.

Like Mr. Bush said, "The Army's a team sport, a team effort."



TRAINING ON LOCATION

The Training With Industry program allows acquisition officers to complete a one-year work assignment embedded with an industry partner at locations around the country. (Graphic by U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center)



# SERVING THE DIGITAL SOUP



## UDEMY TRAINING PROVIDES A DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION SOLUTION FOR THE ACQUISITION WORKFORCE

by Brianna Clay

What does the future acquisition workforce look like? Tech-savvy, agile and digital.

A digital transformation of the acquisition workforce is necessary for the future, but this change can be difficult when the library of digital buzzwords grows more confusing every day, from “AI” and “machine learning” to “agile contracting” and “DevOps.” To many, these terms are just another ingredient in the digital alphabet soup, yet this soup will sustain the future of our workforce.

With a plethora of information being thrown at them, how do acquisition professionals begin to make sense of this digital soup?

Just look toward Udemy and the new digital foundations pathway training designed to digitally upskill the acquisition workforce. The training includes three prioritized courses required for all acquisition-coded employees under the assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics and technology (ASA(ALT)), including the U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center (USAASC) and all program executive offices. The three courses are: **Digital Transformation 2023 - Masterclass**, **The Agile Samurai Bootcamp** and **The Product Management for AI & Data Science Course**. The training will require approximately 14 hours to complete. Three additional subjects are also recommended—take beginner or foundation courses in agile; DevOps and cloud foundations; data foundations and

human-centered design foundations. Together, these courses are designed to help digitally transform the acquisition workforce.

### FINDING THE RIGHT RECIPE

Digital transformation first came to the fore of acquisition in 2019, when the Army began a major push to modernize the Army of 2035. “As an Army, we are going to go through this cultural shift,” said Maj. Megan M. Pekol-Evans, functional area 51 proponent officer at the Army Director of Acquisition Career Management (DACM) Office. This shift involves not only employing artificial intelligence, or AI, and machine learning into the development of weapons, but also figuring out a way for people to apply that in their daily lives to make work easier and more efficient. To do this, people need these new tools, but “you can’t use these new tools if you don’t understand them,” said Pekol-Evans. “That’s what digital transformation, especially at the human capital level, is trying to get at. You have to understand these concepts to apply them.”

The Army needed a training solution to prepare the acquisition workforce for this shift, and Young Bang, the principal deputy to the ASA(ALT), led the search for a solution. Bang tasked the deputy assistant secretary of the Army for data, engineering and software (DASA(DES)) and the DACM Office with ensuring the acquisition workforce remains digitally relevant, with the DACM Office taking responsibility for upskilling workers. Working together, the team was able to identify the skills most important for digital transformation and the suitability of the Udemy Business platform. Read more in the Fall 2023 edition of **Army AL&T magazine here**.



**DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION** The Army’s ambitious goals for the future require a digital transformation across the service. To make this possible, civilians will take training focused on agile software development, DevSecOps, cloud foundations, data science, machine learning, human-centered design, artificial intelligence and cyber security. (Photo by Pixabay, Pexels)

# AWARDS

## ACQUISITION PROFESSIONALS INDUCTED INTO ARMY ACQUISITION HALL OF FAME



The story of the Army Acquisition Workforce has been one of continuous innovation and evolution with one constant—dedicated professionals who are focused on delivering capabilities to our Army and the joint force.

On the opening day of the Association of the United States Army's Annual Meeting & Exposition in Washington, two Army acquisition professionals were inducted into the 2023 class of the Army Acquisition Hall of Fame: James "Jim" Shields (posthumous) and Jeffrey "Jeff" Parsons.

"Nominees were evaluated for their significant and enduring contributions to the Army acquisition community's historic and ongoing mission," said the Honorable Douglas R. Bush, assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics and technology and the Army acquisition executive, who gave opening remarks. "They were examined specifically in light of three main questions: Have they made enduring contributions to our mission; have they demonstrated the respect of peers, subordinates and supervisors; and have they proven a commitment to the acquisition career field. The answer, by a very great measure, was a resounding 'yes.'"

Bush said he was humbled by the opportunity to recognize these two Army acquisition professionals and emphasized the importance of public service.

"There is a nobility of public service that's really important to remember. And today, through honoring these two outstanding gentlemen, we get to uphold that value and applaud it and rededicate ourselves a little bit more to that hard work we do every day to make things happen for our Army," Bush said.

Shields was the first to be inducted. His wife, Christine Shields, accepted on his behalf.

"He was dedicated to delivering the most effective and reliable munitions and ammunition to the American Soldier and joint forces when and where they were needed," Shields said of her husband, Jim. "The logistics he managed were complex and dynamic—constantly ongoing. Honors such as this will keep his name and his accomplishments alive and motivate others to continue pushing the envelope and going above and beyond in their commitment to this country and our warfighters."

Jim Shields shaped what is now the **Joint Program Executive Office for Armaments and Ammunition** (previously the Program Executive Office for Ammunition).





“The [Joint Program Executive Office for Armaments and Ammunition] that Mr. Shields shaped so strongly is now at the very center of our efforts to support Ukraine and its war to defend its people and democracy against Russia,” said Bush. “I couldn’t be [prouder] of that team, which is doing remarkable things at remarkable speed in full partnership with our [Army Materiel Command] teammates. The current team’s outstanding work is part of Jim’s legacy.”

Following Shield’s induction was the induction for Parsons, who was in attendance. Parsons served in the Senior Executive Service and concluded his dedication to public service as the director of contracting at the Office of Command Contracting Headquarters for Army Materiel Command.

“While we honor Jeff Parsons today, for his long career, I’m glad we can also recognize through his induction the outstanding work of Army contracting professionals that he led for so many years with such distinction,” Bush said.

Army contracting professionals “worked miracles, frankly, to get the nation its COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and other supplies. They are working more miracles now with Ukraine, placing tens of billions of dollars of replenishment supply contracts, on contract at lightning speed, all while doing their day job of executing more than 180,000 contract actions in fiscal year 2023, just to keep the Army going day to day.” Parsons also recognized those he worked with in his remarks, reiterating the importance of teamwork in acquisition.

“No single individual does this on their own. Without the team, I wouldn’t have been successful,” Parsons said. Pointing out the importance of senior leader support as well, Parsons said, “We set the foundation for the future. We have got a contracting force, civilian and military, supporting the Army in any type of operation.”

The Army Acquisition Hall of Fame was established in 2022 and is designed to recognize and honor former members of the Army Acquisition Workforce who have made significant and enduring contributions in support of the Army acquisition community. Sheilds and Parsons join last year’s inaugural inductees—Hon. Claude M. Bolton Jr., Hon. Kevin M. Fahey, Maj. Gen. Harold J. “Harry” Greene and John L. Shipley—and represent the outstanding contributions made over many years to the mission to provide our finest men and women the very best equipment so they can do their missions for the nation.

<https://asc.army.mil/web/news-army-acquisition-professionals-inducted-into-army-acquisition-hall-of-fame/>

For more information, a recording of the 2023 Army Acquisition Hall of Fame ceremony is available on DVIDS. Go to <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/899784/ausa-2023-army-acquisition-hall-fame-induction-ceremony>. For additional information regarding the Army Acquisition Hall of Fame, along with detailed biographies of the recipients, go to <https://asc.army.mil/web/hall-of-fame>.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### EMERGING LEADERS SELECTED FOR FY24 DOD PROGRAM

Congratulations to the five Army Acquisition Workforce members who were selected for the Defense Civilian Emerging Leader Program (DCELP). Participants will attend classes between March and May 2024 in Norman, Oklahoma, at the National Center for Employee Development.

DCELP is DOD’s leader development program for civilians in grades GS-07 through GS-12 (and equivalent broadband). Participants attend four one-week residential seminars and are immersed in a variety of activities that promote self-awareness, enhance communication skills and strengthen overall leadership capabilities.

Activities include peer coaching, team and individual presentations, and the development of a personalized leadership road map and action plan. At the conclusion of the program, participants come away with tools they need to thrive in today’s DOD environment.

For more information about DCELP, visit <https://asc.army.mil/web/career-development/programs/dcelp/>.

#### THE DCELP SELECTEES ARE:

- Army Futures Command  
**MARY FALCIGNO**
- Army Test and Evaluation Command (ATEC)  
**KAYLA GONZALEZ**
- ATEC  
**ARCHIE KINNEBREW**
- Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Data, Engineering and Software  
**HEMA MANIVANNAN**
- Army Materiel Command  
**MEGAN MERKWAN**



FACES of the FORCE

# SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS

The Spotlight feature is your chance to highlight the interesting work you or your AAW teammates are doing in support of the warfighter. Don't be shy—tell us what you're working on. Fill out a nomination form and we'll help get the word out. Details are at: <https://asc.army.mil/web/publications/army-alt-submissions/>.



# SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS

**Meet Joseph Kornhoff**, an assistant product manager with the Program Executive Office for Intelligence, Electronic Warfare and Sensors (PEO IEW&S). Holding a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree from the College of William & Mary, and two DAWIA certifications: Practitioner in program management and Foundational in life cycle logistics, Mr. Kornhoff graduated from the Army DACM Office's **Inspiring and Developing Excellence in Acquisition Leaders (IDEAL)** program in 2022. IDEAL is a leadership development program geared toward GS-12/13s (and broadband equivalent). The program focuses on training and equipping new and future Army supervisors through studies in self-development,

**What program did you participate in and when?**

I graduated from the 2022 Cohort A Inspiring and Developing Excellence in Acquisition Leaders (IDEAL) program in Huntsville, Alabama.

**What was your primary motivation for participating in the IDEAL program?**

I applied for this program as a professional development and networking opportunity. As a leader, I am constantly looking for educational and developmental opportunities that can not only bolster my resume, but also provide me with the needed skills and experience to advance. Secondly, these programs bring acquisition workforce personnel from all over the globe to one classroom. These are great opportunities to network and share lessons learned with your colleagues.

**What were your expectations of IDEAL before you started, and how did they change as the program proceeded?**

As a former Army officer, I have had numerous classes in leadership and different styles and philosophies. As an acquisition workforce professional, it felt like much of the career and professional development was a rehash of the material I had already learned. Going into this course, I was expecting much of the same. However, in my IDEAL program as I progressed through the course, we were constantly challenged with new topics that I enjoyed exploring.

Topics such as conflict management, crucial conversations and emotional intelligence led us to practice and challenge each other to find new ways to deal with opposing opinions when the stakes are high.

**What were your takeaways from IDEAL?**

As alluded to above I thoroughly enjoyed the conflict management, crucial conversations and emotional intelligence portions of this course. As a leader, all of these topics blend into each other and provide needed skills to control and manage the other. For example, leaders need emotional intelligence during a crucial conversation. Crucial conversations are a conflict management tool that allows leaders to express differing opinions when stakes and emotions are high.

**What skills, knowledge, or experiences from IDEAL do you apply most in your job or outside of work?**

During one of my (college) classes on leadership, the instructors discussed the importance of crucial conversations as a conflict management tool. I had recently gone through the first week of IDEAL in which they provide us the materials and instruction. I was asked to give a quick presentation on what I had learned and how it can be applied towards your professional and personal communication skills.

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**How has IDEAL affected your career?**

The network and relationships of acquisition professionals and colleagues you are able to build by attending one of these courses is amazing. This course has provided me with a rolodex of resources, lessons learned and feedback from a vast array of professionals from different career fields within the acquisition workforce. I now have the ability to call or email a classmate of mine that perhaps has already tackled the problem or issue I am experiencing or planning for.

**Who would you recommend IDEAL to, and why?**

I would recommend this course to any acquisition professional that is pursuing leadership and supervisory positions. The topics

discussed throughout this course are valuable tools for supervisors, team leaders and even working group leaders. Learning to utilize your communication skills and emotional intelligence to influence others and exact an outcome that benefits all and the mission is a vital tool for any leader's toolkit.

Read more about Joseph Kornhoff in Army AL&T magazine's "Faces of the Force" at <https://asc.army.mil/web/news-live-and-learn/>.

Would you or someone you know like to be profiled in our Faces of the Force and Spotlight on Success series? Download the nomination form and submit at <https://asc.army.mil/web/publications/army-alt-submissions/#submissions>.



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