

**STATEMENT BY**

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
ARMY CONTRACTING COMMAND  
U.S. ARMY MATERIEL COMMAND**

**BEFORE THE**

**COMMISSION ON WARTIME CONTRACTING IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN**

**ON**

**THE CONTINGENCY ACQUISITION WORKFORCE:  
WHAT IS NEEDED AND HOW DO WE GET THERE?**

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**Introduction**

Chairman Thibault, Chairman Shays, and distinguished members of the Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan, thank you for the opportunity to speak on the topic “The Contingency Acquisition Workforce: What Is Needed and How Do We Get There?” In this statement, my comments will be framed within the context of the five strategic priorities I established for the U.S. Army Contracting Command. The five priorities are (1) Grow and develop a professional civilian and military workforce, (2) Maintain superior customer focus, (3) Standardize, improve and assure quality business processes and policies across the organization, (4) Obtain and maintain needed resources, and (5) Enhance the working environment and quality of life of our personnel. My statement also contains an update on the progress made by the Command regarding the overarching recommendations of the Commission on Army Acquisition and Program Management in Expeditionary Operations, which released its final report, “Urgent Reform Required: Army Expeditionary Contracting,” on October 31, 2007. The report is commonly known as the Gansler Report.

**Background**

I was assigned as the Executive Director of the U.S. Army Contracting Command (ACC) in March 2008 upon the provisional stand-up of the organization. Prior to assuming my current position, I served as the Director of Contracting, Office of Command Contracting, Headquarters, U.S. Army Materiel Command (AMC). In addition to my responsibilities as the ACC Executive Director, I continue to serve as the Principal Advisor to the Commanding General of Army Materiel Command and her staff on all contracting matters and as the AMC Career Program Manager for the Contracting and Acquisition Career Program, with responsibility for the recruitment, training, education, and professional development of the civilian and military contracting professionals who are part of the acquisition workforce.

Prior to working for AMC, I served for 26 years in the Air Force before retiring as the Director of Contracting, Headquarters, U.S. Air Force Materiel Command. I believe my 33 years of combined Air Force and Army acquisition and contracting experience affords me a unique perspective on the issues the Commission will address today.

With more than 5,000 military and civilian employees working in 117 locations worldwide, ACC has a global reach and impact. The Command is organized, from an enterprise business approach, to serve as a vital partner with the Department of Defense (DOD), our sister Services and the Department of the Army (DA) in meeting the current and future needs of our Nation's warfighters.

A global organization with approximately \$97 billion in annual contract obligations, ACC is aggressively building the workforce capability and capacity to provide contracting support in an expeditionary and peacetime environment.

## **GROW AND DEVELOP A PROFESSIONAL CIVILIAN AND MILITARY WORKFORCE**

The Army Contracting Command's Human Capital Strategic Plan addresses our workforce needs over the 3-year period of Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 through FY2012.

### Our Major Challenges

The major challenges facing us over the next few years are the recruitment and training of a large number of new civilian contract specialists, the expeditionary deployment of our military and civilian personnel, the expected personnel losses from our aging Army workforce compounded by Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) relocations, mission migrations, and the increasing demands placed on the federal acquisition workforce overall. For our military workforce, the challenges are perhaps greater in terms of personnel availability and limited resources. From a human capital perspective, these challenges can be translated into three categories: recruiting, developing, and retaining our professional workforce, both civilian and military.

### Recruiting and Hiring Civilian Contracting Professionals

Bringing interns onboard is primarily a function of the funding available for entry-level programs. At the close of FY10, we will have over 800 interns onboard. This includes interns funded by the Command itself, the Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund (Section 852), as well as those funded by the Department of the Army (DA). This year, the Command is also piloting an Army Fellows Program for 25 interns. This is a 4-year program that starts at the GS-7 level with a target level of GS-12. These interns receive a fully-funded Master's degree at a local university during the last 18 months of their program.

While the market for hiring entry-level contracting specialists is favorable, the competition for contracting specialists with 4 to 15 years experience is intense. In areas such as the National Capital Region, Huntsville, AL and our remote locations, to include some overseas assignments, filling journeyman vacancies is particularly difficult.

In the spring of 2008, ACC received approval to use Expedited Hiring Authority (EHA) to recruit and appoint highly-qualified candidates to acquisition positions. Candidates must meet Office of Personnel Management qualification standards for at least the GS-9/YA-2 grade level and the educational requirements as mandated by the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA). The intent of the hiring authority is to address the need to hire experienced workers from outside government in order to address shortages at the mid and senior career levels. ACC has hired 155 employees, of which 140 were Contract Specialists, under EHA since March 2008. We have had some success in hiring experienced workers from outside the government, particularly in areas such as Detroit, MI.

In recognition of the intense federal competition for the best candidates, it is imperative that the Command establish a recognized reputation as a desirable place to work. One of the most effective recruitment methods is word of mouth referrals by friends and family members. Employees who enjoy their jobs and like ACC will encourage others to consider the Command as a career choice.

To support our recruiting efforts, we have developed an enterprise recruitment marketing plan with an emphasis on hiring mid-level contracting professionals. We have established a career opportunities web site [www.armyhire.com](http://www.armyhire.com) to facilitate our efforts. The intent of the website is to provide a plain language introduction to our jobs and the benefits of working for the federal government. We are also using this website to promote overseas assignments and positions in the CENTCOM Contracting Command.

#### Developing and Sustaining Civilian Contracting Expertise

The Contracting Career Program Office, under the Army Acquisition Support Center, manages the Army Contracting and Acquisition Career Program. The program office provides a comprehensive career management framework for contracting and acquisition professionals. The Army Civilian Training, Education, and Development System (ACTEDS) plan provides a road map for total career development. This framework is supplemented with guidance from the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) catalog of course requirements for certification levels and individual development plans. The Command actively tracks the timeliness of certification levels for its acquisition professionals. To date, the overall certification for our acquisition professionals is 70%, slightly below the Acquisition Support Center goal of 75%.

Interns and new hires receive their functional curriculum from DAU and leadership training through the Civilian Education System. More practical basics, such as an overview of the Federal Acquisition Regulations and acquisition systems, as well as local orientation training, are provided by our ACC-developed boot camps. The camps typically run 5 weeks and have been very successful in providing our new hires with a forum for learning and networking. Although the boot camps are developed locally, we are in the process of

capturing the best practices and determining the best way to standardize them across the ACC while continuing to ensure their success.

Because of the wide range of contracting work throughout the Command, we can provide challenging career-enhancing developmental opportunities at all career levels. Our strategic focus is to develop and implement a program to facilitate the movement of mid-career employees through developmental assignments.

The Command encourages and tracks participation in formal leadership and development programs, but we must do more to increase participation. Because we are a new organization, leadership development, developmental assignments, and succession planning are areas we need to address further.

As our development programs take shape, I recognize the immediate need to bring our entry-level and journeyman-level workforce members up to their full potential by providing training and on-the-job experiences in areas such as contract administration, cost-price analysis, market research, and source selection, among other areas.

#### Deployable Contracting Personnel

The Command continually seeks volunteer civilian contracting specialists for our Deployable Civilian Contracting Cadre (DC3), which is similar to the DOD Civilian Expeditionary Workforce (CEW) program. The DC3 is a career-enhancing program that is vital to the expeditionary contracting mission. The program was initiated to help meet the critical demand for skilled contracting personnel in Southwest Asia. The contracting function is vital to the success of our warfighters there and is part of the Army's goal to grow the acquisition workforce and improve Army contracting. Since 2006, 36 qualified contracting professionals have been matched and sent to Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Nine personnel are currently in the program. The Command has had limited success with the initiative although volunteers receive financial incentives for joining and remaining with the Cadre.

#### Retention

Retaining our skilled workforce is key to maintaining our needed skill levels as evidenced by the drop in overall contracting certification level as a result of the influx of new entry-level hires. Providing the best working conditions and a work-life balance are important tools for retaining our valued employees. This applies to all levels – entry, middle, and senior.

There are many avenues through which we can improve retention. Two of our contracting centers serve as examples of the retention efforts across the ACC enterprise. Our CECOM Contracting Center at Fort Monmouth, NJ has implemented the following initiatives:

- Incentives – bonuses, time-off, and team-building exercises

- Promotion from within where feasible and warranted
- Training and educational opportunities
- Increased training for new supervisors
- Mentoring at all levels
- Cross-functional training opportunities
- Increased emphasis on welcoming and socialization for new hires
- One-on-one HR assistance
- One-on-one career management counseling

At our TACOM Contracting Center in Warren, MI, the Acquisition Education Center (AEC) has proved to be a useful tool for helping with both continuing education and recruitment and retention. The AEC offers over 150 classes in a wide variety of contracting and business topics taught by subject matter experts.

All these efforts go hand-in-hand with an increased emphasis on human capital management, developing a new organizational culture, and keeping the focus on people.

#### Military Contracting Specialty

Our military strength was lagging at the end of FY09 due to limited inventory. To fill military positions, we are working closely with the Acquisition Support Center, Army Materiel Command and the Army Human Resources Command.

The Army plans to grow its military contracting structure in the Active force. We realize the need for members of the military to begin their acquisition careers early on. The Army has implemented an earlier accession point for military officers that immediately follows their Branch qualification at the Captain level (normally at the 4 to 5 year mark in their development). For Non-Commissioned Officers, the accession point occurs at the rank of Sergeant (P). Upon successful completion of the Army Acquisition Basic Course, the sergeants are automatically promoted to Staff Sergeant. We still have challenges in meeting these earlier accession points as the majority of our Captain positions are being filled with Majors.

#### Developing and Sustaining Military Contracting Expertise

The Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (ASA(ALT)) has implemented a policy stating that military members will not deploy during their first year in contracting. This will help ensure the requisite training is accomplished prior to deploying on an expeditionary contracting mission. The Army is also assessing opportunities to improve contingency contracting training at our Combined Training Centers.

A recent example of the ACC growing its military contracting capability along with demonstrating the integration of military and civilian training can be seen at one of our

Regional Contracting Offices (RCO) in Hawaii. An NCO, who was recently accessed into the contracting profession, completed his in-depth Contracting Level One Institutional Training at the Air Force Mission Ready Airman's Course. He arrived at his unit and began his 12 months of on-the-job training (OJT) in the RCO. In addition to writing contracts under the mentorship of a warranted civilian contracting officer, he will also complete the ACC 51C Level One Online Proficiency Assessments during his 12 months of OJT. The ACC 51C training strategy is designed to establish proficiency in contingency contracting, in a short amount of time, in order to provide a competent CCO to accomplish the expeditionary contracting missions. The ACC 51C training strategy is paying dividends as demonstrated by the comments from the NCO's civilian mentor: "No sooner do I assign him work, and it is completed and awaiting my review and release. He has excellent retention skills, and I rarely have to train him on anything more than once. He is learning quickly, and has a great grasp of acquisition concepts."

### Civilian and Military End-State

We are making great strides in revitalizing and growing our civilian and military workforce in Army contracting with the goal of growing a professional workforce skilled in supporting global contracting operations. Since the ACC's provisional stand-up in March 2008, we have hired over 800 entry level contracting personnel. These new contracting professionals will form the bench for future growth and will fall into leadership positions as current personnel retire from government service.

ACC recently received Army approval of a concept plan that provides an additional 594 civilian personnel. This additional growth will help us close a long standing gap in the post-award management of our contracts and will provide additional deployable capability to oversee contracts in support of contingency operations. By September 30, 2013, we expect to have a Command of 5,321 civilian and 834 military personnel which reflect an increase of 32% in our civilian workforce and a 165% increase in military contracting personnel.

## **MAINTAIN SUPERIOR CUSTOMER FOCUS**

### Contingency Acquisition Planning

The ACC is developing a comprehensive strategic sourcing business plan to manage our contracts and contractors efficiently, effectively, and in a manner consistent with the evolving mission requirements and Department of Defense business efficiency and affordability initiatives.

The Army Contracting Command contracting centers, co-located with their respective major subordinate command, such as AMCOM, CECOM, TACOM, and the Army

Sustainment Command (ASC), allow ACC to provide an enterprise approach to providing contracting support.

Planning documents and contracts are executed using a deliberate, phased approach to ensure the Army balances the correct number of personnel and skill sets on the ground with mission specific capability requirements.

Our contracting centers, especially the Rock Island Contracting Center (RICC), provide reach-back contracting capability and work in direct coordination with theater commanders to ensure we meet their contracting support needs. Although this will be a continuous effort that changes frequently, it will ensure that the capability and number of personnel deployed or performing reach-back contracting in support of Operation New Dawn (OND) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) will remain balanced.

### Customer Support

The Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1100.22, "Guidance for Determining Workforce Mix" and the Office of Management and Budget Memorandum (M-09-26), "Managing the Multi-Sector Workforce" provide complementing, governing guidance for our approach and strategy for a blended right-size workforce.

We believe contracted support is and will remain a critical component of Army logistics. As noted by the Congressional Budget Office's 2005 study on military logistics, contractors provide flexible, responsive support at a lower long-term cost than military forces. As a result, the Army has made a strategic shift from using contractor support as the last alternative to employing operational contract support, (OCS), as a strategic capability fully integrated into Army planning, training, and mission execution.

As mentioned earlier, to provide better management and oversight of OCS, the Command will strategically staff 594 civilians plus an additional 158 military members throughout our enterprise. Military personnel will be sourced during FY2011 and FY2012. The Army civilians will be hired during FY2011 through FY2014. With the addition of these contracting, quality assurance, and support personnel, we are confident the likelihood of repeating the contracting problems that occurred early in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait will be greatly reduced.

## **STANDARDIZE, IMPROVE AND ASSURE QUALITY BUSINESS PROCESSES AND POLICIES ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION**

### Contracting Tools Supporting the Workforce

In response to the Gansler Commission findings regarding training, Army leadership selected a suite of e-tools known as the Virtual Contracting Enterprise (VCE) to be fielded throughout ACC sites.

VCE is a virtual environment, comprised of electronic tools, that enables total visibility and analysis of all elements of the contracting mission by providing the ability to digitally manage and monitor the contracting process from cradle to grave. It enables our leaders to easily identify and correct contracting irregularities before they become consequential and makes it difficult for contracting professionals to overlook or misplace required documents, forms, and files. As a training and oversight tool, VCE is instrumental in adapting Army contracting to an environment of persistent conflict. It provides comprehensive oversight of ACC contracting at all of our sites to ensure our workforce is properly trained, qualified, and has the necessary tools to succeed in supporting our Warfighters.

The VCE was developed and is managed by contracting professionals. The four major components of the VCE suite are (1) Paperless Contract Files (PCF), (2) the Acquisition Resource Center (ARC), (3) the Contracting Officer Representative (COR) Application, and (4) the Acquisition Source Selection Interactive Support Tool (ASSIST).

- (1) Paperless Contract Files is a virtual contracting office. It is a secure, web-based application that is an internet connection away. Acquisition professionals store, edit, send for review and approval, and archive as official records the contractual files that they work with everyday. PCF's Turbo Tax-like Wizard is a series of questions designed to identify the requirements of specific contracting actions and present to the user the documents that must be completed prior to award. As a web-based application, it is convenient to use while on travel, in support of contingency operations, or for mobile workforce/telecommuting initiatives.
- (2) The Acquisition Resource Center is comprised of two tool sets. The first is a collection of automated/efficiency web-tools which streamline the data collection efforts while reducing the administrative burden on the workforce of entering data. These include the online management of COR, pre-award milestone tracking, Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA) audit assistance requests, manpower and training, as well as Un-liquidated Obligations (ULO). The second is a business intelligence tool set to include executive level dash-boarding. This tool provides business intelligence capabilities to all levels of the contracting community, providing real-time visibility into key metrics, obligation rates, employee development and workload.
- (3) The Contracting Officer Representative application allows the tracking and management of COR nominees and existing CORs. This tool allows prospective CORs to self-nominate and their supervisors and contracting officers to approve the nominations. It supports the file upload of documents such as training

certificates, monthly reports, termination letters, etc. The COR application is an essential tool for tracking and managing Army CORs.

- (4) The Acquisition Source Selection Interactive Support Tool is an electronic, web-based, source selection data management and workflow tool. ASSIST is a software tool used to aid Source Selection Evaluation Boards (SSEBs) in conducting competitive proposal evaluations at the unclassified level. It provides a means to electronically organize and manage complex, high dollar value, formal source selections.

### Current Government Initiatives

In March 2009, the President of the United States stated, “The Federal Government must have sufficient capacity to manage and oversee the contracting process from start to finish, so as to ensure that taxpayer funds are spent wisely and are not subject to excessive risk.”

The ACC acknowledges and fully supports the current Administration’s initiatives to improve and enhance the acquisition and contracting process, in addition to the following DOD and DA programs.

- (1) Secretary of Defense Efficiencies Initiative – The purpose is to reduce overhead, duplication, and excess in the DOD and over time, instill a culture of savings and restraint in America’s defense institutions. There are five initiative teams. The Army is the only Service in DOD that has a senior expert on each team, and the only one with an Army senior contracting civilian leading a team.
- (2) Under Secretary of Defense Affordability Initiative (*Better Buying Power: Mandate for Restoring Affordability and Productivity in Defense Spending*) – The purpose is to establish a culture of delivering better value to the taxpayer and improving the way the Department does business.
- (3) Secretary of the Army Business Transformation Plan and Initiatives – The overarching purpose is to create an environment where the Army will be able to align the generating force and business operations to support the agility and versatility of the operating force.

## **OBTAIN AND MAINTAIN NEEDED RESOURCES**

Our most valued resource is our human capital. The ACC’s number one strategic priority is to grow and develop a professional workforce. As I mentioned earlier, our Human Capital Strategic Plan details our internal initiatives and our endeavors to take advantage of current DOD and DA grow-the-workforce programs. For FY2010, we have targeted our new entry-level hires at the following levels: 60 DA Interns, 155 Section 852 interns, and 25 DA Career Program 14 (Contracting) Fellows. In support of the DOD and DA mandates, our

Enhanced Contract Management Capabilities (ECMC) Concept Plan details our requirement and staffing of 594 additional civilian authorizations.

## **ENHANCE WORKING ENVIRONMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE**

As we vigorously implement our human capital priorities, the Command is diligently working to develop a comprehensive and innovative work/home balance program to aid in retaining our valued employees. As I stated earlier, our contracting centers have ongoing initiatives in place that are addressing the needs of our workforce.

## **GANSLER REPORT UPDATE**

### Acquisition/Contracting Reform

Recent progress in Army contingency contracting operations is the direct result of our aggressive implementation of the recommendations in the Gansler Report. The Commission recommended the Army (1) increase the stature of military contracting personnel, (2) restructure and restore responsibility to facilitate contracting and contract management in expeditionary and CONUS operations, and (3) provide training and tools for overall contracting activities in expeditionary operations.

### Stature of Military Contracting Personnel

The Commission noted that operational commanders in the field require a better understanding and appreciation of the capability our contracting personnel bring to the fight. To that end, the Army has established five General Officer key contracting positions within the Acquisition Corps to provide the experienced, senior leadership critical to the future of our contracting efforts. The Army's selection of contracting officers to join the ranks of our General Officer corps is a visible demonstration of our commitment to increase the credibility of Army expeditionary contracting operations while enhancing the professionalism and career opportunities for our dedicated Army contracting personnel.

We now have a contingency contracting structure that consists of Contracting Support Brigades (CSB), Contingency Contracting Battalions (CCB), and Contingency Contracting Teams (CCT). Each CSB is commanded by a Board Selected Colonel who assists the Army Service Component Commander (ASCC), a three-star commander, in their contracting support by planning and coordinating contracting operations. These brigades oversee Contingency Contracting Battalions and teams in executing the ASCC's contracting support plan. The contracting brigades, battalions, and teams are being activated and will eventually total 7 brigades, 8 battalions, 14 senior contingency contracting teams, and 69 contingency

contracting teams. These brigades, battalions, and teams will coordinate and integrate their plans with Army Field Support Brigades.

These new brigade designs support the Army modular force in the development of a single, fully integrated organization to provide quick response and command and control of contracting activities needed to support and enable the full spectrum of operations.

#### Restructuring the Organization and Restoring Responsibility

In addition to the Gansler Report recommendations, the 2010 Army Posture Statement emphasizes the need to transform our Army's business practices. Army, AMC and ACC leaders are committed to supporting organizational restructuring initiatives that conserve resources, reduce waste and inefficiencies and facilitate improved Army CONUS and expeditionary contracting operations. Toward this goal, the most significant restructuring effort has been the establishment and full operational capability of the Army Contracting Command (ACC) and its subordinate commands, the Expeditionary Contracting Command (ECC) and the Mission and Installation Contracting Command (MICC). Each of these organizations is dedicated to ensuring professional, ethical, efficient, and responsive contracting within the Army. The ACC leverages approximately 70% of Army contracting assets and better prepares the Army to support expeditionary operations.

The one-star ECC is a deployable headquarters, enabling the proper oversight and structure for extended conflicts. This new contracting construct proved effective during the Haiti earthquake disaster. All the hard work to build the Army expeditionary and contingency contracting capability paid off as demonstrated in the ACC's rapid response to support Operation Unified Response in Haiti. The ECC 410<sup>th</sup> Contracting Support Brigade (CSB) was engaged with US Army South and the US Southern Command within hours after the earthquake and deployed a full spectrum of contracting personnel into Haiti within 48 hours to establish a regional contracting office.

In addition to the ECC and MICC, the ACC also has seven major contracting centers. These contracting centers provide contracting to a wide number of customers. The real power of these contracting centers has been demonstrated in the ACC's ability to provide reach-back contracting support to contingency operations that are enduring in nature. As an example, the Rock Island Contracting Center (RICC) established a reach-back team in early 2008 with 8 personnel executing over \$800 million worth of contracts in support of our Kuwait contracting operations. As of August 2010, the Reach-back Division is organized into 5 branches and is currently staffed with 62 Army civilians, 5 Air Force Contracting Officers, and 5 Army Contingency Contracting Officers. The division currently has 3 personnel deployed in support of the CENTCOM Contracting Command -- two individuals in Iraq and one in Afghanistan. The Reach-back Division is currently executing over 350 active contracts and task orders valued at approximately \$7.5 billion in support of our customers in theater.

## Training and Tools

The Army has enhanced the training of the contracting workforce and acquisition support staff to build the skills necessary to better support the Warfighter and better manage contracted support. To do this, the Army has added and improved multiple acquisition training courses including: adding acquisition instruction to 16 officer and non-commissioned officer courses, incorporating contracting operations and planning into the Battle Command Training Program and Combat Training Center training, and including operational contract support (OCS) scenarios for Contracting Officer Representatives during Mission Readiness Exercises prior to deployments.

In 2009, the Army Logistics Management University began the OCS Planning and Management Course. It is a 2-week course which trains logistics planners at every echelon in OCS management and oversight, requirements determination, and performance work statement writing. We are encouraged by the strong interest in this course, noting that Soldiers who successfully complete it are awarded an additional skill identifier allowing the Army to better manage OCS planner assignments.

In addition to the required Defense Acquisition University training for CORs, the Army has also added required ethics training. To better train CORs for deployment, ACC has developed and implemented a COR training program provided to units prior to deploying, a critical step in strengthening the Army's ability to oversee contractor performance.

The Army issued an Execution Order, referred to as an EXORD, to all commands requiring commanders to determine the number of CORs needed in theater *before they deploy* and to train sufficient CORs to fill those positions. The EXORD also requires COR training be added to Soldiers' electronic training records and requires reporting of all COR training shortfalls. Since the beginning of FY10, we have trained 2,755 CORs.

To improve our contingency contracting training and doctrine, we have taken several actions which include: (1) working with the Joint community on the final draft of Joint Publication 4-10, *Operational Contract Support*, (2) distributing the recently released *Joint Contingency Contracting Handbook*, (3) developing Field Manual 4-10, *Commanders Guide to Contracting and Contractor Management* and Field Manual Interim 4-93.42, *Contract Support Brigade*, (4) accelerating efforts to enhance leader education in contracting and contractor management, and (5) re-examining the training curriculum and timing for all newly accessed acquisition officers and civilians.

The aforementioned actions align with the tenets of our Military (51C) Training Strategy. Highlights of our 51C strategy are:

- (1) ACC 51Cs complete the initial Army Logistics University (ALU) classes prior to arrival. 51C Officers receive all required Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) Contracting Level I and II courses during the Army Acquisition Basic Course (AABC) and the Army Acquisition Intermediate Contracting Course (AAICC). 51C Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) receive all required DAWIA Contracting Level I courses during AABC or the Air Force Mission Ready Airman's Course. Both officers and NCOs also receive training on the Procurement Desktop Defense contracting software system.
- (2) ACC published the 51C Level One Proficiency Guide on September 2, 2009. The guide contains basic tasks that all ACC 51Cs should be proficient in and it applies to all ACC 51Cs and their assigned senior warranted civilian contracting officer mentors. The guide is applicable to all ACC 51Cs from SSG through LTC with the exception of Senior Enlisted Advisors at the Brigade level.
- (3) ACC 51Cs should spend the first 12 months of assignment fully integrated into an ACC Contracting Office gaining contracting experience and proficiency under the mentorship of a senior warranted ACC contracting civilian (1102 series). Combat deployments for initial ACC 51Cs, during the first 12 months of assignment, are restricted per the Director of Acquisition Career Management Policy #4.
- (4) Initial ACC 51C experience focuses on commercial item purchases under the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 12, and supplies, services and minor military construction using Simplified Acquisition Procedures (SAP) under FAR Part 13. More complex contracting requirements are only taught after the 51C is proficient on the basic tasks within the Level One Proficiency Guide. ACC 51Cs are also trained to use ACC reach-back offices to facilitate complex contracting requirements while deployed. The Joint Contingency Contracting Handbook is provided to all ACC 51Cs and used as a reference book during training and deployments.
- (5) ACC 51Cs also take the Proficiency Guide online assessments. When a Soldier has demonstrated experience in a task and has passed the online assessment the Soldier's mentor signs the tracking sheet to validate task proficiency. The mentor's signature is an administrative requirement only. The 51C chain of command remains responsible for the overall training status of each ACC 51C.
- (6) ACC 51Cs should continue their college education to meet the DAWIA contracting certification and accreditation requirements. NCOs without a bachelor degree should pursue one.
- (7) ACC 51C officers are required to obtain DAWIA Contracting Certification Levels: CPT = Level I, MAJ = Level II, and LTC = Level III. ACC 51C NCOs obtain Army Acquisition Corps Accreditation Levels: SSG = Level I, SFC and above = Level II. MSGs, SGMs, and CSMs should obtain DAWIA Contracting Level III Certification.

## **CONCLUSION**

The success of our warfighters and those who lead them is linked directly to the success of our contracting workforce. ACC is working hard to help facilitate a culture change in the Army to one recognizing the critical and complex role of contracting as an Army core competency. The Command is also moving aggressively to build, nurture, and sustain a corps of career Army contracting professionals. The ACC is actively recruiting interns, hiring experienced mid-level civilian contracting specialists, and developing an officer and NCO cadre of more than 650 active duty Soldiers – over 1,100 when Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers are added. Congress has provided the needed authorities to expedite hiring and incentivize retention of our acquisition workforce. Army contracting, however, is not fixed. We are on a journey that will take several years to grow and train an experienced contracting workforce.