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NewsBLAST

U.S. Army Contracting Command

"Providing global contracting support to war fighters."

Contracting brigade stands up at Fort Hood

By Daniel P. Elkins

MICC Public Affairs

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Officials from the Mission and Installation Contracting Command activated the 418th Contracting Support Brigade during a ceremony July 10 at Fort Hood, Texas.

The activation follows attachment of stateside contracting Soldiers from the Expeditionary Contracting Command to the MICC in April as part of an integration with contracting centers and offices throughout the Army Contracting Command.

Leading the 418th CSB is Col. Timothy Starostanko, who assumed command as part of the ceremony.

"I am both humbled and excited about the opportunity to lead this brigade," Starostanko said. "Activating a new brigade is exciting in and of itself. Not many individuals can say that they have activated a brigade from day one."

The attachment of Soldiers to the MICC and activation of the brigade signal important milestones in the professional development efforts of contracting Soldiers who work alongside civilian acquisition professionals and benefit the Army contracting workforce.

"We have a great group of professional Soldiers at Fort Hood, and they bring a different perspective," Starostanko said. "Soldiers bring a contingency contracting perspective because of deployments around the world. We, as a whole, bring a fresh perspective on how to accomplish the mission."

The 418th CSB will be made up of more than 50 Soldiers assigned to the



(Photo by Daniel Cernerio/III Corps & Fort Hood Public Affairs)

Col. Timothy Starostanko, 418th CSB commander, (left) and Brig. Gen. Kirk Vollmecke, commanding general, MICC, unfurl the colors during the brigade's activation and assumption of command ceremony July 10 at Fort Hood, Texas.

901st Contingency Contracting Battalion as well as subordinate contingency contracting teams and a senior contingency contracting team.

Training and accomplishing contracting operations alongside MICC civilian contracting members day-to-day, these teams are also called upon to perform contracting in a contingency environment including military and stability operations as well as natural disasters and humanitarian events.

Starostanko also leads the MICC field directorate office at Fort Hood, which is

responsible for subordinate contracting offices aligned to support customers throughout the country. Those include offices at Fort Hood; White Sands Missile Range, N.M.; Dugway Proving Ground, Utah; Yuma Proving Ground, Ariz.; Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico; Fort McCoy, Wis.; and Moffett Field, Calif. Among the major customers supported by the MICC FDO-Fort Hood are the Army Reserve Command and Army Test and Evaluation Command.

See ACTIVATION, page 4.

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Spotlight on...

For Spotlight submissions, click on the icon.

Staff Sgt. Jeanmarie Alexis

Headquarters, Expeditionary Contracting Command

Staff Sgt. Jeanmarie Alexis is the chaplain assistant for the Expeditionary Contracting Command at Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

Describe your current position

For the past 15 years, this is the first time I had the opportunity to work with a unit such as this – Expeditionary Contracting Command. This is a unique assignment that offers me the opportunity to work with both military and civilians.

My day-to-day activities comprise the following: coordinate religious support in the absence of the chaplain; maintain reports, files and administrative data for religious operations; assess unit morale; and manage religious support resources to include property, ecclesiastical equipment, section material/supplies and non-appropriated funds.



Staff Sgt. Jeanmarie Alexis

What is your educational/professional background?

As for education, I am currently working on a bachelor's degree in accounting and I'm within approximately 24 credits from achieving it.

Describe your passion for the job.

Because I was raised in the Christian faith (Catholic), I was convinced that I needed a position where I can help people. After completing the entrance examination to join the military, it was amazing that one of the offers presented to me was chaplain assistant. Since then, I have been serving faithfully for the past 15 years with great chaplains who make a difference in Soldiers' lives.

As for passion, I love being a chaplain

assistant. It gives me the opportunity to assist some of the finest men and women in our ranks and their families.

Where do you call home? Tell us about your family and what you enjoy doing during your spare time.

For now, home is where the Army sends me. I haven't even considered a place to settle when I retire, given the fact that I was born in Haiti, my wife is Canadian and two of my children were born in Canada as well.

My wife, Jolene, and I have three children: Jagger, 13; Jaden, 9; and Jake, 4. We have been married for 14 years.

During my spare time, I enjoy reading, watching soccer and spending time with my children.

How does your job support the Soldier?

Besides my daily routine, I support Soldiers in a variety of ways. For instance, one of the programs that we offer to Soldiers and their families is the Army Strong Bonds. Since I have been with the unit, we've conducted more than three events. Earlier this year, the chaplain and I were at Fort Bliss, Texas, to provide counseling and religious coverage for Joint Contracting Readiness Exercise 2013.

What would you like others to know about you?

The highlight of my life occurs every four years when the World Cup of Soccer takes place.

U.S. Army Contracting Command

Commanding General
Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols

ACC Command Sergeant Major
Command Sgt. Maj. John L. Murray

The NewsBlast is a weekly newsletter authorized and produced by the U.S. Army Contracting Command's Office of Public and Congressional Affairs editorial staff in accordance with AR 360-1 (The Army Public Affairs Program) to inform, educate and entertain the ACC community on people, policies, operations, technical developments, trends and ideas of and about the Department of Defense, the Department of the Army and this command.

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NEWSBLAST

Army couple aids victim of motorcycle accident

By Rachel Clark

*409th Contracting Support Brigade
Kaiserslautern, Germany*

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany-

During a leisurely motorcycle ride through the Bavarian Alps, Sgts. 1st Class Cathleen Stadler-Frazier and Robert Frazier never expected their military training would be a crucial part of their weekend.

Cathleen Stadler-Frazier, an operations noncommissioned officer, 409th Contracting Support Brigade, and husband Robert Frazier, operations NCO, 5th Military Police Battalion, were part of an organized annual motorcycle ride through the Bavarian Alps. During their ride, they noticed a wrecked motorcycle lying on the ground with fluid leaking from it.

"I saw the scene and I thought that could be one of our own. I knew I had to help because I didn't see any medical people," Stadler-Frazier said. She had served in the medical field prior to transitioning to contracting.

As others moved the accident victim off the street of the small village in which the accident occurred, the NCOs rushed to the scene to help.

Stadler-Frazier's military medical training kicked in as she got to the accident victim, while her husband took control of the pedestrians and traffic to secure a safe scene.

"When I first arrived, I thought of the worst-case scenarios," she said. "I immediately began thinking head injuries, bleeding and fractures. I had no idea what to expect. I began taking control of the person's medical needs. I checked him for major injuries, and stayed with him until he was able to contact his riding

partners and medical paramedics were able to get to the scene."

The accident victim, whom the Frazier's did not know personally, was an American Soldier and part of a 15-person organized bike ride. He sustained minor cuts to the face and bumps and bruises after running into a pole and being ejected from his bike.

The Fraziers stayed with the victim until local authorities arrived on the scene.

"We felt it was our duty to stay with him," she said. "We are in a foreign country and this was one of our own."

The patient was admitted to a local hospital and released two days later.

"It was a good thing he was wearing all of his motorcycle gear, or else this situation could have been a lot worse," she said.



**Sgt. 1st Class Cathleen Stadler-Frazier
Sgt. 1st Class Robert Frazier**



(Courtesy photos)

During a leisurely motorcycle ride through the Garmish area of Germany, Sgt. 1st Class Cathleen Stadler-Frazier (kneeling and wearing helmet at left) renders first aid to an accident victim who was thrown from his motorcycle, while her husband, Sgt. 1st Class Robert Frazier secures the accident scene.

Readers are encouraged to submit comments or suggestions to the editorial staff via the mailbox icon to the right. Responses will assist the NewBlast staff in producing a publication to better meet readers' expectations and information needs.



ACTIVATION

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With its activation, the brigade assumes an initial operational capability and will work with MICC officials this summer to fill several key positions with military personnel who will help lead the unit to full operational capability. The 418th is one of two brigades activated as part of the integration of Soldiers with the MICC. The 419th CSB was activated at Fort Bragg, N.C. in a ceremony June 7.

The 418th activation ceremony was officiated by Brig. Gen. Kirk Vollmecke, the MICC commanding general, who helped uncased the organization's colors with Starostanko.

Starostanko entered the Army in 1989 as an infantry officer. He became a military intelligence officer in 1994 and served in a variety of intelligence positions before joining the Army Acquisition Corps in 1996. His acquisition experience spans assignments as a contracting officer and program manager to leadership positions stateside and in forward deployed areas.

Having completed all necessary levels of professional military education, Starostanko also holds a Bachelor of Science degree in political science from Washington and Jefferson College, and a Master of Arts in procurement and acquisition management from Webster University.



(Photo by Ed Worley)

ACC commander hosts town hall meeting

Maj. Gen. Camille M. Nichols, commanding general, Army Contracting Command, hosted a town hall meeting at Redstone Arsenal, Ala., July 10 to update the command on civilian furloughs; the anticipated relocation of the ACC and Expeditionary Contracting Command headquarters to temporary facilities; and the command's intolerance of sexual harassment and sexual assault behavior. In addition, Nichols took the opportunity to present Sgt. Maj. Samuel D. McCray with a Legion of Merit upon his military retirement as well as to recognize several civilian employees for length of federal service and for special commendation.

July marks 40th anniversary of all-volunteer Army

By Alex Dixon
Army News Service

WASHINGTON – When newly elected President Richard M. Nixon requested the Department of Defense eliminate the draft and create an all-volunteer force, Army leaders knew there would be some hurdles.

Instead of drafting young men to fill the ranks, the Army would need to spend money to ramp up recruiting efforts and portray military service as an attractive career choice.

By July 1, 1973 – now 40 years ago – the draft had been eliminated. But the Army started working on developing the all-volunteer force well before that.

In April 1971, Project VOLAR, for “volunteer Army,” was implemented nationwide at select Army posts. The project was an experiment designed

to increase retention rates and morale among Soldiers and to attract new recruits.

At Fort Meade, Md., retired Sgt. Maj. Ray Moran was assigned to the 1st Recruiting Brigade under VOLAR. He said the project brought changes to life at the post.

Comfortable furniture soon filled the open-bay barracks, which were divided into sleeping rooms. Beer, once prohibited, became a popular beverage and grooming standards were relaxed. But Army leaders soon realized some changes caused more problems than they solved and new initiatives were introduced focusing on instilling professionalism and pride for the Army.

The all-volunteer force initiative has proven a success, he said. I am proud to have been part of it.

“We built a volunteer Army that

really proved itself in Desert Storm,” said Moran. “They were just a marvelous bunch of Soldiers, and they have done it right through to Iraq and Afghanistan today. We are very proud of the all-volunteer Army.”

Maj. Gen. Thomas C. Seamands, director of military personnel management, Army G-1, has served in the Army for 32 years. As he grew up on a military post, he saw how the services transitioned from the draft to the all-volunteer force.

Now 40 years after the transition, Seamands says he continues to see the Army improve as a result of the all-volunteer force.

“Everybody in the Army wants to be in the Army,” Seamands said. “Everyone’s volunteered to come in and be a part of something bigger than themselves.”

See VOLUNTEER ARMY, page 8.

Pentagon releases first annual acquisition report

By Karen Parrish

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – A recently completed defense acquisition program report, which is now before Congress, is part of a data-driven effort to find out what's working best in equipping the nation's military and to fix what isn't, the Pentagon's undersecretary of acquisition, technology and logistics said in an interview with American Forces Press Service.

Frank Kendall said the report, the first in what's expected to become a series of annual reviews, evaluated major programs across the department. The study is a step toward mastering the mountain of data military acquisition generates.

"Even our best performers have room for improvement," the undersecretary said. "Figuring out what to do to improve, I think, is the next question."

Kendall often references the large, engraved wooden sign outside his office door bearing a quote from the late American statistician and professor W. Edwards Deming: "In God we trust; all others must bring data."

"I'm a firm believer that improvements to policies and processes must be driven by data and objective analysis rather than conjecture and opinion," he said, adding the report "begins to share (that) kind of objective analysis."

Kendall added an institutional-level view of defense acquisition – a field that includes research and development, testing and evaluation, fielding and maintenance of virtually all U.S. military equipment – is important because "our processes tend to come from our institutional cultures and norms."

Acquisition underlies all military operations, he noted.

"If you're serving out there and you're waiting for the next generation of whatever piece of equipment, this is the system that's producing that for you," he said. "There are a lot of very hard-working people in government and industry trying to do that."

The point of the report, Kendall said, "is to help us all figure out ways to do a better job with (acquisition)" and ultimately to ensure more and better products.

The report doesn't make judgments or



(U.S. Army photo)

Frank Kendall

excuses, he said. "I want each institution to look at how well they are performing compared to others and ask themselves how they learn from one another to improve performance."

Kendall said the report shows that, in some measures, program and organizational performance across the department has improved, but more progress is needed.

"Very recent data show statistically significant improvement, but only time and further analysis will tell if these trends continue into the future," he said. "For example, comparing the last two decades, the Army and Air Force have reduced total cost growth on contracts, and the Army has reduced contract costs-over-target. The Air Force also has lowered contract schedule growth."

Kendall said despite such trends, "The magnitude of absolute performance issues leaves considerable room for additional improvement. Due to the nature of pushing the state-of-the-art in weapon systems, we will never have zero cost and schedule growth. But, we can certainly do better and have recent indications that this is possible."

One major finding from the report is that "a lot of the things we thought were important may not be as important as we believed," he said. "Fixed-price versus cost-plus contracting, for example."

Fixed-price contracts are let at a set price for the work, while cost-plus contracts reimburse the contractor's expenses and also add other funds, which can include award, incentive and performance fees.

Statistics for the two kinds of contracts were more similar than he expected, Kendall said.

He added he's never thought fixed-price contracts were "a panacea," and while conventional wisdom is that fixed pricing solves a lot of problems, "I don't think that's the case, and the data shows that."

Unsurprisingly, the review found that undefinitized contracts show the highest cost growth, the undersecretary said. The department can use these types of contracts to meet urgent needs, as they authorize contractors to begin work before contract terms are set.

"We tend to overrun our development programs by about 30 percent," Kendall said. "We tend to overrun our production programs by about 10 percent. So there's a lot more variability and uncertainty and risk on the development side of the house."

If the buyer hasn't defined requirements or projected costs, he said, "You're going to start a lot of people doing a lot of work that they're not really ready to do, and that leads to huge inefficiencies. The data shows that very strongly."

Kendall added that the data also surprised him by showing that "undefinitized contract actions do not generally correlate with total cost growth on early procurement contracts. We found that it is a factor in development, but we were worried that the effect was also statistically measurable in procurement but is, in fact, not."

The undersecretary said he wants to do more work on understanding which factors matter and how they correlate, but that all analysis to date points to the importance of good management.

"It wasn't a surprise to me," he said. "I've been emphasizing the professionalism of the acquisition workforce ... it's been a constant theme of mine."

See **ACQUISITION**, page 6.

Tool proves valuable tracking, resolving unauthorized commitments

By MICC Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – A database tool for tracking and managing unauthorized commitments throughout the command has led to a significant decrease in unresolved commitments in its first year of use.

Field support and information technology members from the Mission and Installation Contracting Command teamed last year to develop the database that would replace a shared spreadsheet for managing the command's unauthorized commitments, or UACs.

"The MICC takes UACs very serious and tracks them by activities to ensure they are being handled properly, identify trends and brief occurrence through command channels," said Terry Lazenby, a procurement analyst with the field support directorate.

Fielded at the start of this fiscal year, the database available through the MICC SharePoint site has proven to be a successful tool for real-time reporting of UACs as well as critical in reducing the backlog of open unauthorized commitments from 172 to 41 – a 76-percent reduction. An additional 32

UACs were also identified in the past year.

"The estimated value of unresolved UACs likewise went from \$4.8 million to \$2.2 million over the same time period," Lazenby said. "The increased visibility afforded by the UAC database served as a catalyst for significant progress in reducing the backlog."

She said contracting officers can input new UACs into an easy-to-use, fill-in form with drop-down menus and make status changes with only a few clicks of the mouse. The database also serves as a management tool that gives field directors insight into detailed information on every UAC within their responsibility. It also allows MICC headquarters personnel the ability to run reports and gather data in minutes versus the manual counts from the antiquated Army Knowledge Online site reporting system.

The database also contributes to the reduction of UACs by offering users the ability to quickly recognize cancelled or duplicate entries as well as UACs that had been ratified without being marked closed.

An unauthorized commitment is an act by an employee or military member who accepts or otherwise obligates the government to pay for goods and

services without authority. On occasion, government representatives make agreements to buy goods or service on behalf of the government without the proper authority.

These non-binding agreements must be ratified in order for a vendor to receive payment. Ratification is the act of approving a UAC by an official who has the authority to do so.

"Failure to track and process unauthorized commitments for ratification in a timely manner can result in difficulty in assessing the circumstances and properly documenting the action, lost funding, congressional inquiries and law suits," Lazenby said. "Additionally, the person responsible for committing the UAC may be liable for the commitment until the action is ratified."

Until last year, the log for reporting UACs was a vast spreadsheet residing on the AKO site that MICC personnel across the country were required to update monthly.

Lazenby said the AKO system of reporting was not user friendly for uploading new or revised reports, and personnel would routinely upload outdated reports over newer reports, resulting in lost data and frustration.

ACQUISITION

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Any project benefits from better management, Kendall noted. "We could avoid a lot of our disasters, and we could do much better in the margins in all of our programs, the better we are at managing programs and making sound decisions."

Examining factors in cost growth always leads to "a whole host of additional questions you have to ask," he said. Future reports will examine more and different defense acquisition data and institutions, both government and industry.

"It will also expand on the analysis," he said. "I'm very open to ideas about how we get at understanding what's really going on in the acquisition system."

Two key takeaways from the report, Kendall said, are first, that the United States has a decisive strategic edge in its military, which is the best in the world;

and second, "the fact that it may cost us too much and take us too long to get there shouldn't be neglected, either."

Kendall said he had expected many of the report's findings.

"We knew that cost growth has been high and that the recent wars have placed a premium on technical performance and schedule at the expense of cost growth," he said. "The report reinforces the importance of our Better Buying Power initiative that (Deputy Defense Secretary Ash Carter) and I began in 2010 and I have continued to expand."

Kendall told reporters during a Pentagon briefing in May that BBP 2.0 is a step forward in "a very, very complicated business."

Kendall said BBP 2.0 covers a wide range of products and services that defense acquisition requires. There were 23 initiatives in Better Buying Power 1.0,

34 in 2.0 and "another 100 things, at least, that we're working on," he said during that briefing.

This new report, Kendall said, offers an analytic basis for further action.

"For example, the finding that fixed-price contracts are not a 'magic bullet' to controlling cost has reinforced my experience that we need to consider and select the most appropriate contract type given the maturity, system type and business strategy for each system," he said. The report's findings should help "reinvigorate cost consciousness in our culture."

"This is especially important now that we are winding down the wars and have such intense fiscal constraints on the department," he said. "We all must weigh not just the benefits of a particular capability, but also its benefits given the cost to the taxpayers."

Team Chinook signs multi-year contract, saves \$810 million

By **SOFIA BLEDSOE**
PEO Aviation Public Affairs

In a true celebrated team effort, representatives from the Army and the Boeing Company signed a five-year multi-billion dollar contract for the production and delivery of 155 CH-47F Chinook helicopters with options for 60 additional aircraft, during a signing ceremony June 10 at the Boeing production facility in Ridley Park, Pa.

The five-year, \$4.9 billion total contract value of the multi-year agreement cements the \$810 million in cost savings for the U.S. government.

The signing ceremony was attended by several local community leaders, but the true VIPs who were recognized at the event were the production workers who seldom see the end result of delivering their product.

"This team effort in which you are a part, 18,000 strong across the country in 38 states, with over 200 suppliers, we count on you to do what you do every day for our Soldiers and for Army aviation," said Col. Robert Barrie, project manager for Cargo Helicopters. Hundreds of shift workers participated in the ceremony and had an opportunity to meet their customers and leaders behind the team.

"If you ever wonder if what you do is important, I'm here to tell you, there are crews in Afghanistan returning safely from a mission right now because of what you do," he said.

Barrie, who assumed responsibility as Cargo Helicopter's PM on May 16, credited much of the multi-year accomplishment to his predecessor, Col. Bob Marion; Lt. Col. Reese Hauenstein, product manager for CH-47F, and Cathy Dickens, deputy to the commanding general, Aviation and Missile Command.

Dickens' previous role was executive director for the Army Contracting Command-Redstone.

"I commend this team for staying focused," said Dickens. "When I look at this great workforce, I see that the historic savings for the Army is a culmination of all the initiatives over the past decade that you have been part of, in shaping an affordable program for the Army. So thank you so much for what you do every day."



(Photo by Sofia Bledsoe)

Cathy Dickens, deputy to the commanding general, Aviation and Missile Command, speaks at the CH-47F Chinook Multi-Year II signing ceremony June 10. The five-year, \$4.9 billion contract cements the \$810 million in cost savings for the U.S. government.

A mixture of U.S. and Foreign Military Sales aircraft were also procured using 22 of the aircraft options exercised with the first year base for a total obligation value of \$1.3 billion.

Much of the savings is attributed to the MYII Contract Evaluation Team relying on updated actual cost data provided by Boeing. Team members responsible for the success in the negotiations process are representatives from the Defense Contract Management Agency, Defense Contract Audit Agency, Project Office for Cargo Helicopters Technical, and ACC-Redstone Pricing and Cargo Contracts divisions.

Production began on the F model Chinook in 1996, and on October 2011, Boeing submitted the multi-year proposal to the Army.

The CH-47 is the Army's only heavy-lift helicopter and is a critical asset for transporting troops, supplies, and providing various combat support and combat service support operations.

The CH-47F incorporates key reliability and maintainability improvement modifications such as a new machined airframe, vibration reduction, corrosion protection, digital source collectors, T55-GA-714A engine, Common Avionics Architecture System, Air Warrior, Common Missile Warning System, Infrared Suppression System, enhanced air transportability, Digital

Automatic Flight Control System, an Extended Range Fuel System II, and is compatible with joint digital connectivity requirements.

The Army's current procurement objective for the CH-47F is 464 aircraft. Current modernization programs include the new Cargo On/Off Loading System that will provide a way to quickly load and unload aircraft and is easily reconfigurable in flight. The project office is also working on the Advanced Chinook Rotor Blade that will add about 2,000 pounds of lift capability in high/hot conditions and will be interchangeable across all Chinook platforms.

"Every day, we know that the Chinook is making a big difference in saving lives," said Dickens. "There are a lot of people that will look at the press releases and see the savings, and they will be very impressed. But what they won't realize is that in order to achieve this kind of a deal, it requires a team of dedicated people, working countless hours over the past several years to make this happen.

"I call this team the model for proposal development and evaluation because what really happened is you came together and every aspect of what you needed to do, you did it in a true partnership, and that's really what made the difference," Dickens added. "I know that this is a culmination of the total dedication of this team, and I'm very proud of each one of you."



ACC in the News

These articles mention Army Contracting Command.

Former Army Contracting Command chief of staff selected for star

By Leada Gore

(Posted on AL.com July 5, 2013)

The former chief of staff for Army Contracting Command at Redstone Arsenal has been nominated for appointment to brigadier general.

Col. Jeffrey Gabbert was among 34 other Army colonels nominated for the promotion by Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel. The nomination was announced July 2 by the Department of Defense.

http://www.al.com/business/index.ssf/2013/07/former_army_contracting_comman.html#incart_river

Contracting Command's first commanding general said Army made good choice in selecting her replacement

By Leada Gore

(Posted on AL.com July 3, 2013)

Army Contracting Command's first commanding general said the person tapped to take her place is perfect for the job.

"It has been an honor to serve in the ACC," Major Gen. Camille Nichols said. "The soldiers and civilians are inspirational in their total commitment in support of our Army. I thank them all for their unconditional support and know they will give Brig. Gen. Harrison the same. There is no better choice to replace me than Ted."

http://blog.al.com/breaking/2013/07/contracting_commands_first_com.html

Opportunity to lead Garrison 'truly a blessing'

By Kari Hawkins

(Published in The Redstone Rocket July 10, 2013)

Col. John Hamilton knows what it takes to lead a high-performance team.

He's been at the helm of the Garrison's team of customer-oriented professionals since late 2010, coming into command at a time when Redstone Arsenal was realizing tremendous growth opportunities associated with the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure.

http://www.theredstonerocket.com/news/article_e5ed9552-e90d-11e2-9637-0019bb2963f4.html

VOLUNTEER ARMY

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Seamands says the all-volunteer force creates a longer term of service, allowing for more complex training and cohesion-building for units.

Under the draft system, draftees usually served for two years. Now, Soldiers enlist to serve for up to five years.

Only 20 percent of Americans are qualified to join under the Army's standards of health, behavior and intelligence.

Seamands said recruiting still remains a challenge.

"We are very selective because we know what's at stake," he said. "What's at stake is having a professional force that's capable of fighting and winning our nation's battles."

Following and during the Vietnam War, public trust in the Army was at an all-time low, Seamands said. A significant number of draftees didn't want to serve and faced hostile environments when they returned home.

The transition to the all-volunteer force changed the national dialogue about the Army when it was implemented, he said.

"Americans have a lot to be proud of and one of them is the all-volunteer force," Seamands said. "It's unprecedented. And now, the American people realize the national treasure we have in our sons and daughters serving in uniform."

NewsBlast publication dates change

REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala. – The *NewsBlast*, Army Contracting Command's weekly newsletter, is changing its publication schedule during the 11 weeks of furlough.

Beginning with this issue, the *NewsBlast* will be published every two weeks, explained Art Forster, ACC's director of Public and Congressional Affairs. The publication day will move from Wednesday to Thursday.

"Like the rest of the workforce, we'll lose 20 percent of our production capability due to furloughs," Forster said. "We examined several alternatives and determined that moving to biweekly publication was the best approach to address our shortfall and still produce the quality product our readers deserve."

News and information will continue to be posted on ACC's public and SharePoint websites, and on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and YouTube, he said.

The *NewsBlast* will resume weekly publication on Thursdays in October.

Story ideas can be submitted to the *NewsBlast* at acc.pao@us.army.mil.



Click on the image for ACC safety messages.

