



DATM Corner

NEWSLETTER FOR THE ACQUISITION WORKFORCE

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DATM Things That Matter

By Ms. Marianne Lyons, Director of Acquisition Talent Management

As we enter a new year, what comes to mind is how our workforce has experienced such extraordinary challenges in our personal and professional lives, and shown such incredible resilience through it all. I consider the tools we've learned to apply to the challenges, and the ways we've stretched our minds to encompass new ways of achieving results and the pace of our learning. It's incredible, when you think about it. The pandemic has made some things easier, and some things more difficult, but the DON Acquisition Workforce continues to find ways to solve problems and move forward!

The DATM office continues to work with OSD as the Back to Basics framework takes shape. Today's longstanding acquisition training structure has served the acquisition workforce community well, but we must continue to evolve and adapt to ensure we have the most effective structure in place to support our future acquisition workforce the Navy needs. There are still a lot of details in play, so whatever your career field, keep working toward your certification. Also know that the National Leads are working hard to ensure the final implementation plans take into account the nuances associated with each community. Remember the focus of Back to Basics is to streamline the workforce framework while targeting training to the workforce at the right time in their career, rather than all the training "up-front" in the first two years in a position. The framework will also identify specialized experiences and training depending on what aspects are needed for specific positions.

This edition of your DATM newsletter spotlights our United States Marine Corps programs and people. Inside you'll find articles on Marine Corps Systems Command program offices, a unique testing platform used at the Marine Corps Tactical Systems Support Activity, and recent leadership changes in the Engineering and Financial areas. You'll also find articles on mentoring during



the pandemic, as well as insight into our Naval Acquisition Career Center up in Mechanicsburg, PA.

As we enter this holiday season, I encourage each of you to reflect on just how much you've achieved in the past year as a workforce professional, and what areas you want to focus on this year in 2021. Take the time to write down your short-term and long-term professional goals, and decide on a step you can take each month toward them in 2021. That step could be reading a book, taking a course, or tackling that project your supervisor has mentioned would be "nice to have". Take the initiative to make 2021 successful for you and your team right from the start!



USMC Spotlight

Virtual military expo focuses on supporting future Marine

By Matt Gonzales, MCSC Office of Public Affairs and Communication



“Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year’s Modern Day Marine Military Exposition had a different look from years’ past. Instead of large crowds gathered aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia, the 2020 MDMME—held Sept. 22-24—was a virtual affair with nearly 2,500 viewers.”

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va.—Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year’s Modern Day Marine Military Exposition had a different look from years’ past.

Instead of large crowds gathered aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia, the 2020 MDMME—held Sept. 22-24—was a virtual affair with nearly 2,500 viewers. The event featured virtual exhibits of the latest Marine-relevant products pre-recorded presentations from Department of Defense strategic leaders covering a range of topics in the context of the 2020 expo theme: The Force America Needs.

“The beauty of [MDMME] going virtual is that we’re adapting and overcoming,” said Lt. Gen. Eric Smith, deputy commandant for Combat Development and Integration. “We’re fighting through the pandemic because we don’t stop for anything. We don’t stop for bad weather, we don’t stop for pandemics and we certainly don’t stop in the face of hostile forces.”

Gen. David Berger, the 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps, talked about the importance of meeting Force Design 2030, a

section of the Commandant’s Planning Guidance that outlines the Marine Corps’ need to conduct full-scale, empirically-based experimentations of the future force in realistic maritime and littoral terrain.

“The Marine Corps has to prepare for the operating environment a decade from now so that we can compete,” said Berger. “If deterrence doesn’t work, then we’re ready for crisis or conflict if that happens. And we will be ready.”

Meeting Force Design 2030

MDMME included a panel discussion comprising senior leaders within the experimentation, requirements and acquisition sectors of the Marine Corps. Each spoke about their plans for achieving Force Design 2030.

Brig. Gen. Ben Watson is commanding general of the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab, the organization responsible for generating and examining capabilities and providing analytically-supported recommendations to inform subsequent force design and development activities. Watson spoke about MCWL’s efforts to meet Force Design 2030.

“What we’re trying to develop is the Marine Corps as a Naval Expeditionary Force in

readiness that is capable of deterring malign behavior and, when necessary, fighting inside the adversary weapons engagement zone,” said Watson.

He said MCWL intends to validate and refine Force Design 2030 through concept development, wargaming, live-force experimentation, and coordinating and collaborating with the Office of Naval Research, partnering on experiments and technology development.

“We’re focused on a service-level experimentation campaign plan to support the Commandant’s Planning Guidance,” said Watson.

“We made a conscious decision to do a majority of our experimentation by working by, with and through our Fleet Marine Forces—primarily I, II and III Marine Expeditionary Forces.”

Brig. Gen. Eric Austin is the director of the Capabilities Development Directorate, in charge of validating, integrating, prioritizing and producing Marine Corps requirements. Austin talked about the importance of designing and developing a lightweight, maneuverable and sustainable force relevant in any competition or conflict on land or sea.

“We need to remain sustainable, affordable and leverage risk-worthy platforms, principally unmanned, and we need to be thought-

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ful and creative in our approaches,” said Austin. “This is an exciting time to be in the requirements business. This certainly isn’t the Marine Corps we grew up in, and that’s a good thing.”

Brig. Gen. A.J. Pasagian, commander of Marine Corps Systems Command, outlined MCSC’s organizational structure as well as its Lines of Effort for future Force Development. These Lines of Effort highlight capability areas on which the command is focusing, including command and control in a degraded environment, air defense, precision fires and more.

“These are very clear, healthy priorities provided to us from our commandant,” said Pasagian. “This is foundational guidance provided to Marine Corps Systems Command as we execute Force Development.”

John Garner, the Program Executive Officer Land Systems, spoke about the early fielding of the Amphibious Combat Vehicle, which will replace the Assault Amphibious Vehicle. He also spoke about the shifting of programs between PEO LS and MCSC to better align the organizations to support Force Design.

“All these programs over the next few years are tremendous opportunities for improvements and getting ahead of threats,” said Garner.

Better naval alignment is a major goal for the Marine Corps moving forward. Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition James Geurts, the event’s keynote speaker, talked about the importance of the Marine Corps and Navy working together to meet goals.

“It is notable how [the Marine Corps and Navy] are changing together, moving past two services synchronizing operations to two services that are truly codependent, each coming up with new ways to enable the other,” said Geurts. “This is truly a naval force, with everybody moving together toward this great power competition.”

Industry’s role

MCSC had an opportunity to speak directly to industry representatives during the Advance Planning Brief to Industry on the final day of MDMME.

The APBI allowed MCSC portfolio managers to inform industry of the Marine Corps’ acquisition needs in the next several years and answer industry’s questions. Representatives of MCSC’s portfolios, Small

Business Office and Contracts team, as well as PEO LS addressed some of their goals in the coming years and how industry can help.

Pasagian specifically mentioned several focus areas where industry could provide assistance, including close-combat lethality, information warfare systems and more. He encouraged industry representatives to ask questions and promoted continued dialogue moving forward.

“We want to maintain a close relationship with you and open up communication with our industry partners to let you all know what we need to get there,” said Pasagian. “Your responsiveness to the needs of our Marines makes our success possible. We could not do this without you.”

Berger believes industry can help the Marine Corps reach its long-term goals. The commandant explained that MDMME is not about the art of the possible today or what is currently modern. It is about what will be modern in the next decade—future technologies that will increase the future Marine’s readiness.

“[Industry] is helping catapult us forward, five, six, 10 years into the future to say, ‘this is what is possible,’” said Berger. “[MDMME] is about industry helping us prepare for where we’re going to be, which is really powerful.”



Sept. 17, 2019 at the Modern Day Marine Military Exposition, aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year’s MDMME was a virtual affair featuring pre-recorded presentations from strategic leaders covering topics that involved supporting the future Marine.

USMC Spotlight

MCSC bids farewell to sergeant major, welcomes replacement

By Matt Gonzales, MCSC Office of Public Affairs and Communication



“When I take this uniform off today, I know for a fact I’m not leaving the Marine Corps, because I’ll always be a Marine. I’m going back into society a better person, a better citizen, because of the Corps.”
- Sergeant Major Robin Fortner

“[Sgt. Maj. Robin Fortner]...was hand-selected to serve as a senior enlisted advisor for the first unit integrating women in combat roles.”

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va.—On Aug. 14, Marine Corps Systems Command celebrated the illustrious career of Sgt. Maj. Robin Fortner, who retired after 30 years of service.

MCSC bid farewell to Fortner, the command’s sergeant major from January 2018 to August 2020, and welcomed Sgt. Maj. Michael Cato in a ceremony aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia, that adhered to recommended social distancing guidelines.

Brig. Gen. A.J. Pasagian, MCSC commander, opened the ceremony by thanking those in attendance, including previous sergeants major. The commander spoke about Fortner’s strengths as a Marine, and how her unyielding support to Fleet Marines over the years should be commended.

“She invited a diverse and wide array of opinions from Marines, Sailors, civilians and executives,” said Pasagian. “It’s important to harness human talent, and Sgt. Maj. Fortner has done that. She has a rare ability to draw talent and conversation.”

Lt. Gen. Lori Reynolds, the Marine Corps’ deputy commandant for information, served as the event’s retiring official. She spoke about her interactions with Fortner. Years ago, Reynolds and Fortner worked together while stationed in Parris Island, South Carolina.

“If you look at her career, it’s job after job of transforming young people into Marines, and then loving them and taking care of them,” said Reynolds. “Many Marines who’ve interacted with her are trying to meet the standard she has set. Robin Fortner is leaving behind a better Marine Corps.”

A Brooklyn, New York, native, Fortner enlisted in the Marine Corps in August 1990. During her career, she has held various billets, including supply chief, drill instructor, primary marksmanship instructor and others. Fortner supported Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Fortner took an active role in preserving the legacy of female Marines through two monumental ceremonies celebrating women in the Corps. She also represented the Marine Corps in several diversity efforts and was hand-selected to serve as a senior enlisted advisor for the first unit integrating women in combat roles.

She served MCSC as an exceptional leader, advocate, mentor and teammate, according to Pasagian. Fortner’s inspiring leadership and communication skills built and sustained a solid foundation of trust, mission improvement and success within the command.

While at MCSC, Fortner made an effort to increase communication between the Fleet Marine Force and MCSC. She’d travel to military installations across the globe to interact with Marines, inform them of the command’s mission and educate them on ways to be part of the acquisition process.

Fortner was also a driving force behind the launching of Equipment Feedback Portal.

“If you don’t know what SYSCOM does, you’re in the dark,” Fortner said. “This command is a well-kept secret. If you want to make a difference, that’s one of the command’s to do that with. SYSCOM is my heart and will always be my heart.”

In her speech, Fortner also commended her family for their support over the years. As she explained, she wouldn’t have made it to this

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point without the love and support of her children, and the inspiring advice of her late mother. She also spoke to her emotions of retiring from the Marine Corps.

“When I take this uniform off today, I know for a fact I’m not leaving the Marine Corps, because I’ll always be a Marine” she said. “I’m going back into society a better person, a better citizen, because of the Corps.”

Cato assumes the role of MCSC’s sergeant major. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in April 1994 and has served in roles ranging from drill instructor at Marine Corps Recruiting Depot in San Diego, California, to sergeant major of the Marine Air Control Group 18 with 1st Marine Aircraft Wing in Okinawa, Japan. Like Fortner, Cato also supported OIF and OEF.

“I am humbled, honored and excited to serve as sergeant major of Marine Corps Systems Command,” said Cato. “I look forward to ensuring that the systems, equipment and ammunition makes its way to the warfighter so that we can continue to engage the enemy. I look forward to meeting each and every one of you, and I also look forward to the continued success of Systems Command.”



Brig. Gen. A.J. Pasagian, Marine Corps Systems Command’s commander, passes the Non-commissioned Officer Sword to Sgt. Maj. Michael Cato, signifying the transfer of sergeant major duties from Fortner to Cato, during MCSC’s Sergeant Major Relief and Appointment/Retirement Ceremony Aug. 14 aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia.

A team effort: MCSC keeping workforce safe during COVID-19

By Matt Gonzales, MCSC Office of Public Affairs and Communication

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. —In April, nearly the entire Marine Corps Systems Command workforce began teleworking full-time as the COVID-19 pandemic spread its roots across the United States.

During this time, the command’s AC/S G4 department—which includes Facilities, Services and Supply—continued on-site work with a primary mission at hand: purchase supplies, disinfect the premises and prepare the workforce for a safe return.

“All of G4 was involved during this process,” said Dean Kleveno, deputy AC/S G4.

“During the COVID-19 pandemic, Supply didn’t close up shop. Facilities was here the whole time. The warehouse was still open. It

was a complete team effort.”

In March, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. By the end of the month, the Virginia Department of Health reported more than 134,000 positive cases throughout the state. Around this time, G4 began the challenge of preparing to keep the pandemic from spreading to its workforce.

The department started researching necessary items to prevent the spread of COVID-19 germs within MCSC. They purchased in bulk masks and disinfectant wipes to disperse to employees as needed. They also bought more than 1,000 gallons of hand sanitizer and distributed them throughout MCSC buildings on

Hospital Point and in Stafford, Virginia.

“Our department is responsible for all things involving emergency management,” said Anthony Parker, MCSC’s Facilities manager. “Part of the job is to ensure the workplace is safe for our employees, so we’re doing everything we can to protect them from the spread of COVID-19.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the coronavirus can be spread by touch in public areas such as bathrooms. Upon learning this, Parker’s team acquired and began installing new, touchless toilets and faucets in bathrooms throughout MCSC facilities on Hospital Point.

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Additionally, G4's Services branch worked with Naval Facilities Engineering Command Washington and Washington Headquarters Services to coordinate the preventative cleaning and installation of touchless soap dispenser, faucets and toilet fixtures at all leased MCSC facilities in Stafford, Virginia.

Chris Cooper, Facilities supervisor at MCSC, said the touchless appliances will reduce the workforce's and visitors' risk for contracting the virus, which benefits the entire command.

"Touchless fixtures not only minimize the risk of contracting COVID, but also keep people from having to use fixtures that thousands of people touch every week," said Cooper. "It also allows the command to mitigate the risk further than the previous status quo, which falls in line with the commander's direction on ensuring we are taking care of our people."

Cooper and the team brainstormed solutions in the event a person who unknowingly car-

In June, the Facilities department acquired multiple "fogger" machines designed to eliminate COVID-19 germs from an area within hours. Approved by the Environmental Protection Agency, the machine allows employees to return to their workspaces within hours rather than having to wait several days.

ries the virus enters the building. The CDC states that U.S. facilities typically close for at least 24 hours after disinfecting an area occupied by someone with COVID-19. In some cases, the areas are closed off for several days or even as long as a week.

Upon pressing a button, the machine pulls a healthcare-grade, all-purpose disinfectant through a pump and converts the substance into a hydrogen peroxide-based mist that destroys bacteria and viruses related to COVID-19, swine flu, and other infectious diseases.

"It gets ultimate penetration in a room, in every nook and cranny that sprays and wipes cannot reach," said Cooper.

If a room is larger in size, multiple machines are deployed as necessary. The system delivers complete surface disinfection throughout a

room, delivering a precise amount of disinfectant to treat every exposed surface.

"We are constantly developing solutions to [resolve] ongoing issues involving every aspect of MARCORSYSCOM workspaces and employee well-being," said Cooper.

Preparing the workforce for its return to campus wasn't easy. G4 encountered challenges, especially when the pandemic began spreading in the United States last spring. For example, hand sanitizers and disinfectant wipes were difficult to purchase, as they were in high demand and

short supply nationwide.

"We had to do a lot of market research," said Kleveno. "We were traveling to get the products we needed and finding ways to disinfect facilities. Ultimately, we got the job done."

Kleveno called March and April "a hectic time," as COVID began to spread and G4 were trying to find solutions to problems the pandemic presented to the command. He said the department is ready to cleanse the premises whenever needed, and will continue to answer the call whenever the requirements come in.

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ported the command as expeditiously as possible," said Kleveno. "We answered the call during a stressful, urgent period, and we're prepared to support them right now."size, multiple machines are deployed as necessary. The system delivers complete surface disinfection throughout a room, delivering a precise amount of disinfectant to treat every exposed surface.

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USMC Spotlight

“USS MCTSSA – Haze Gray and Underway”

By Amy Forsythe, MCTSSA Public Affairs



The Naval Integration Team at Marine Corps Tactical Systems Support Activity (MCTSSA), aboard the USS America, poses in front of an F-35B Lightning II aircraft Jan. 18, 2020, in Okinawa, Japan. The team conducted a System of Systems Operability Test aboard USS America to validate the interoperability of Marine Corps communication systems within the shipboard network environment.

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Marine Corps Tactical Systems Support Activity (MCTSSA) is home to the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Afloat Integration Environment (MAIE) that was designed by engineers to provide program offices and operational units a venue for exercising and testing C4I systems in a realistic afloat environment.

Created in the Fall of 2017 by engineers at MCTSSA, the MAIE consists of the Landing Force Operations Center (LFOC), Supporting Arms Coordination Center (SACC), Tactical Logistics (TACLOG), and JIC (Joint Intelligence Cell). It is a one-of-a-kind simulations center equipped with similar network infrastructures – the Consolidated Afloat Network and Enterprise System (CANES) and Automated Digital Network System (ADNS) – that are found on an amphibious ship, as well as workstations, radios, speakers and even wires and bulkheads that replicate the afloat center’s dark and cramped spaces. The LFOC, nicknamed the “USS MCTSSA,” was designed with the intent to look, feel and even smell like a ship.

The MAIE is constructed out of portable containers and located at the MCTSSA compound which is just yards away from where the ‘surf meets the turf’ of the Pacific Ocean on Camp Pendleton’s sprawling base in north San Diego County. The LFOC is modeled after what is aboard a U.S. Navy landing helicopter dock (LHD) with respect to form, fit and functions unique to shipboard configurations. These attributes emulate the complex technical network, communications constraints and challenges that exist when embarked on a ship.

The LFOC replicates sea-based systems normally seen on U. S. Navy ships, allowing Marines to improve their understanding of command and control (C2) mediums by testing them in a simulated environment.

“The LFOC is a reliable and relevant environment for Marines to test their abilities before stepping aboard ship,” said Maj. Ryan Ackland, MCTSSA Naval Systems Integration Officer.

“A virtual CANES representation allows MCTSSA to test this shipboard network without the high costs of procuring and maintaining a physical one,” said Ackland.

“Integration continues to evolve as new C2 systems are fielded and old systems are upgraded,” said U.S. Marine Corps Capt. Caleb Wu, MCTSSA Assistant Naval Systems Integration Officer. “As our proficiency and experience increase, we can troubleshoot more rapidly.”

Testing and Training on Ship

The MCTSSA naval integration team is continuously supporting Marine Expeditionary Units (MEU) as they prepare for deployments every six to eight months. The System of Systems Operability Test (SOT), as it’s called, is a valuable opportunity to learn lessons that could be applied on future MEU testing, said Wu.



U.S. Marine Sgt. John Cyr, from Marine Corps Tactical Systems Support Activity (MCTSSA), performs a functions check on the communications equipment inside the Landing Force Operations Center (LFOC) Oct. 29, 2020. MCTSSA, an elite, full-scale laboratory facility operated by the Marine Corps, is a subordinate command of Marine Corps Systems Command. MCTSSA provides test and evaluation, engineering, and deployed technical support for Marine Corps and joint service command, control, computer, communications and intelligence systems throughout all acquisition life cycle phases.

USMC Spotlight

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When Marines embark on a ship, there have been a number of connectivity and interoperability issues that needed to be resolved. “Having an LFOC and a representative CANES shipboard network means we can test and resolve these issues or provide guidance so that when the Marines embark they can get their systems up and running quickly,” Wu said.

Wu and his team are continuously supporting familiarization training by using the LFOC or traveling to the ships, wherever they may be. In January 2020, Ackland and his team traveled to Okinawa, Japan, to facilitate a SOT for the 31st MEU on USS America.

This was the first event to incorporate Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) shipboard integration, as well as Task Force Ellis aboard USS Comstock. MCTSSA Naval Integration has continued to conduct SOTs for deploying MEUs, despite the restrictive COVID environment.

“We were able to develop good working relationships with both the MEU and the ship’s crew,” said Wu. “The more bonds that MCTSSA builds with the operating forces, the greater our impact and the more desirable our services become.”

The primary objective for the MCTSSA team was to assist the 31st MEU in integrating tactical command, control, communications and computers—or C4—systems into the afloat environment.

Although now a standard event for deploying MEUs, the MCTSSA SOT continues to evolve to incorporate new systems and capabilities to keep pace with an emerging threat environment and align within the 2018 National Defense Strategy and the Commandant’s Planning Guidance released earlier this year.

With added COVID restrictions, Ackland and Wu’s team also managed to conduct two additional SOTs during 2020. They supported the 15th MEU, as part of the USS Makin Island Amphibious Ready Group (ARG), and the 24th MEU, as part of USS Iwo Jima ARG.

“Haze Gray and Underway”

The USS MCTSSA has hosted several hundred training events since it first opened more than three years ago. From MEU pre-deployment exercises to evaluating MUOS (Mobile User Objective System) radio operations to testing the long-range reach of the ship’s antennas.

For example, on Aug. 3, 2020, the “USS MCTSSA” simulated an at-sea period and ‘set sail’ with the LFOC providing position, navigation, and time (PNT) information showing the “ship” miles offshore from MCTSSA with operationally realistic track, heading, and speed.

The simulated training connected to Marine Corps C2 applications in the LFOC, providing realistic track messages for supporting MEU pre-deployment training as well as engineering, test, and experimen-



Marine Corps Tactical Systems Support Activity (MCTSSA) is home to the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Afloat Integration Environment (MAIE) that was designed by engineers to provide program offices and operational units a venue for exercising and testing C4I systems in a realistic afloat environment. The Landing Force Operations Center (LFOC) is modeled after what is aboard a U.S. Navy landing helicopter dock (LHD) with respect to form, fit and functions unique to shipboard configurations. These attributes emu-

lation events for Naval Integration programs.

This was achieved using a GPS simulator to generate desired track scenarios that can generate tracks anywhere in the world, which connected to the DAGR external antenna port. Because the DAGR is “hardware-in-the-loop,” users will have the exact same hardware connections between the DAGR and their C2 systems. This is another example of MCTSSA engineering efforts to make the “USS MCTSSA” as operationally realistic as possible.

The LFOC can also provide connections to an external GPS antenna supporting Defense Advanced GPS Receiver (DAGR) operations and two Enhanced Manpack UHF Terminal (EMUT) antennas for line-of-sight VHF/UHF radio and UHF SATCOM communications.

MCTSSA was established in 1970 as one of the first computer-based command and control testing sites and has evolved to become an elite, full-scale laboratory facility. MCTSSA provides test and evaluation, engineering, and deployed technical support for Marine Corps and joint service command, control, computer, communications and intelligence systems throughout all acquisition life-cycle phases.

USMC Spotlight

New chief engineer talks goals, vision and COVID-19

By Matt Gonzales, MCSC Office of Public Affairs and Communication

Editor's Note: In April 2020, Mr. Edwin Stewart took the helm as the Marine Corps' chief engineer and Marine Corps Systems Command's Deputy to the Commander, Systems Engineering and Acquisition Logistics. Stewart recently took a moment to share his thoughts about his career, his goals for MCSC and how the COVID-19 pandemic affects his work.



What are some of your goals over the next several months?

Upon my arrival, I was given an immediate, important assignment to help address technical authority in the [Marine Corps] information technology domain to help affect the standup of a single engineering information technology construct that could bring technical authority to bear in this area of our business. My goal is to have that ready as an initial capability on Oct. 1. That is an initial goal that is very important to the Marine Corps.

My second major initiative was to conduct an overall health assessment of SEAL as an organization to help me understand our mission responsibilities. Then I can use that information to assess how well we're meeting those responsibilities.

What are we doing well? What are we not doing so well? What are some of the things we should be doing but are not? We're trying to identify some of those gaps and then formulate a set of recommendations that I can bring to the commander and executive director to help address the findings.

That is a major initiative I'd like to wrap up by the end of fiscal year 2020, so we can head into the next fiscal year with some strategic objectives and priorities to help make this organization as strong as it can be and better aligned to help make our programs successful.

I also have a personal goal. I want to try to be worthy of those who saw fit to give me this responsibility and be deserving of that. I will do my best to support those working on behalf of Marines and to make sure they have

every opportunity to serve our Marines every day.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your job?

As the COVID-19 pandemic started to ramp up, I was due to move from my residence in Panama City, [Florida]. The movers and packers were supposed to come in the last week of March. The Saturday before that date, a no-move order went into effect that jeopardized my start date.

I was supposed to start work at SYSCOM on April 1. Fortunately, Gen. Pasagian was able to submit a waiver to Marine Corps leadership that enabled the packers to show up as scheduled. They packed me up, shipped me out and I was able to start work on time.

That was the initial impact of COVID, but there's also an enduring one. The crisis has eliminated my ability to meet all the engineers and logisticians who are part of the SEAL organization, which I wanted to begin doing on my first day. I wanted to look them in the eye, shake their hands and thank them for all they do for Marines every day.

I wanted to begin developing a relationship with all the folks in the competency and, unfortunately, I've not been able to do that. With that said, we still try to make the best of this situation and continue to keep the mission moving forward. I look forward to the opportunity when I can meet everyone and thank them for what they do

Can you talk about your role as Chief Engineer and Deputy to the Commander, Systems Engineering and Acquisition Logistics? What does this role entail?

As chief engineer, my role is to help embed technical authority across the portfolios and programs of the command. I'm responsible for ensuring our Systems Engineering and Logistics competencies are strong, which will increase the success of programs and move them forward through the acquisition process and through a successful lifecycle sustainment.

I must also say, I feel very proud to be here. Never in my wildest dreams would I have ever expected that my career experiences would lead me to be the chief engineer for the Marine Corps. I'm very humbled and honored to have been given this responsibility.

“Well before COVID, I authorized maximum use of teleworking and flexible work schedules to allow employees to balance their work-life requirements.”

USMC Spotlight

New chief engineer talks goals, vision and COVID-19

By Matt Gonzales, MCSC Office of Public Affairs and Communication

What does it mean to you to work for Marine Corps Systems Command?

My 36 years of experience has been with the Navy. The Navy has multiple SYS-COMs they use to get products and new capabilities to the Fleet. The Marine Corps has one Systems Command that carries out those responsibilities.

It is an honor to be part of the organization that is working to make sure our Marines are never in a fair fight and that they're always assured a victory if they're ever put in a warfighting situation. That is what makes me very proud to be here.

You've had an extensive, illustrious career as an engineer and a leader. What are some of your most memorable career moments?

I started my career in an engineering organization with the Navy in Norfolk, Virginia, where I had an opportunity to do hands-on engineering. My goal was to get some hands-on engineering experience, work for about five years and then do something else.

However, I became a believer in the cause—making sure we get the best capability in the hands of our warfighters so they're always assured a victory. That became my cause. I haven't found a cause bigger than that.



I stayed the course for 36 years. As I matured in my career and wanted to take on greater responsibilities, I was given the opportunity to be a part of the working group that stood up the Naval Surface and Naval Undersea Warfare Centers. That cause became my next rallying cry.

We took these Science and Engineering organizations that up until then had been working as independent entities often competing with one another, and we integrated them into

a single organization where they'd work collaboratively instead of competitively to better support our warfighters. That became my next cause.

I spent a significant amount of time to achieve that outcome, to get us working as one team. I found that very rewarding. Then, I was given the first surprise of my career: to lead one of those organizations and become the technical director for Naval Surface Warfare Center in Panama City.

Q MCSC Commander Brig. Gen. A.J. Pasagian has commended the workforce for its efforts during this crisis. What are your thoughts on the SYSCOM workforce continuing to exhibit maximum effort and accomplish their mission despite the COVID-19 pandemic?

A I continue to be amazed by the workforce and what they've been able to achieve during COVID-19. It truly is amazing. It's a testament to the dedication of our workforce and their commitment to our Marines. It's extraordinary what they've been able to accomplish.

We thought COVID was going to be short-term, but it's not. It's enduring. We've had to operate in this environment longer than expected. Yet, the workforce hasn't complained. We haven't missed a beat and continue to meet our commitments. We truly have a tremendous, high-quality workforce.

USMC Spotlight

New chief engineer talks goals, vision and COVID-19

By Matt Gonzales, MCSC Office of Public Affairs and Communication

Panama City had two challenges during that eight-year period while I was there. The first issue involved branding and quality-issue problems the command was facing. Rebranding and facing those quality issues was my first challenge.

My second challenge was to rebuild NSWC Panama City in the aftermath of a Category-5 hurricane. In October 2018, Hurricane Michael ravaged Panama City, causing \$200M in damage to 52 of 58 buildings and displacing more than 400 employees.

I walked every inch of the command spaces, assessing the damage. I worked to secure funding to enact repairs and to build new, hurricane-resistant buildings with state-of-the-art labs to replace many damaged, worn out, end-of-life facilities.

Well before COVID, I authorized maximum use of teleworking and flexible work schedules to allow employees to balance their work-life requirements. I walked the base regularly to talk with employees to get direct feedback, and I stood up Operation Home Again to help displaced employees find alternative residences and reputable builders in the community. Today, NSWC PCD is still on the mend, but remains #850-STRONG and ready to meet the challenges of the future.

It's rare to go into an organization and have to take on two major initiatives, but that is what I had to do. But I did not do it alone. The entire command was with me, helping to lead the way. That was a very rewarding experience.

Up until that time, that was the career pinnacle. Then, out of nowhere came this opportunity to be the chief engineer for the Marine Corps. Being here, serving in this role, has been the pinnacle achievement in my career.

What are some of your hobbies? What do you like to do in your free time?

If there's something that has strings on it, I'll probably try to play it. I do enjoy playing guitar. I'm not very good, but I hope to one day have a little more free time to be able to improve in that area.

Otherwise, I really enjoy being out on the water. If I have a day off, I like to go fishing. But I usually want to be with my family, so I spend most of my free time with them.

Who is the most influential person in your life and why?

That is a tough question. When you're as old as I am, you're affected in a positive way by so many people. But I have to give that honor and distinction to my wife. When you spend 30 years with someone, they will have an impact on you. She's certainly had a very positive affect on me.

I'm certain that I wouldn't be a senior executive in the Marine Corps today without her. She helped me sit up a little straighter and aspire to greater things. She cut my hair, so to speak, put me in a better suit and gave me the confidence to take on more challenges and responsibilities. She could have married anybody, and she chose me.

I try each day to run a little faster, stand a little taller and work a little harder to make her proud of me. She's the most influential person in my life.

Q

As the Marine Corps' chief engineer, do you have a message to the SYSCOM workforce?

A

I'm proud to be here. I'm here to serve you. I know you are the ones who are supporting our Marines every day. I'm here to make your jobs easier and remove any impediments to success. Please feel free to reach out to me so I can learn how to better serve you.

I want to do my part to help support our nation's Marines. I'm so proud to represent Marine Corps Systems Command.

DCRM discusses the importance of innovation, workforce feedback and diversity By Matt Gonzales, MCSC Office of Public Affairs and Communication

Editor's Note: In March 2020, Ms. Leslie Ferguson began her role as the Deputy to the Commander for Resource Management with Marine Corps Systems Command. Ferguson recently took a moment to share with the workforce her vision, and why innovation and the inclusion of ideas are critical for mission success.

Can you talk about what your role as the Deputy to the Commander for Resource Management entails?

As Deputy to the Commander for Resource Management, I'm the senior official for all financial matters and the comptroller for Marine Corps Systems Command.

The scope of my duties includes the fiscal oversight of all acquisition programs for Ground Combat and Information Technology, which includes a portfolio of approximately \$37 billion and 517 programs.

I also am the lead human capital manager, responsible for leading the Human Capital Management staff and the HCM strategy for the command.

I'm a member of the command's Executive Steering Group and Personnel Policy Board. I'm also the chair of the Risk Management Council, responsible for the manager's internal control program and the Financial Improvement and Audit Readiness plan for the command.

What is your vision moving forward? What do you hope to implement or change over the next several months?

This is a pivotal time in the command and the Marine Corps. With the National Defense Strategy and the Commandant's Planning Guidance, we're pivoting to Force Design. All of those efforts require many changes to our programs, which may involve divesting of some programs and investing in new ones.

Also, the current fiscal environment has been dynamic and challenging for quite a while, with continuing resolutions, budgets and congressional marks. All of those challenges require us to position ourselves to be adaptable.

As DCRM, my vision is to deliver a world-

class financial and human capital management to optimize resources for the Marine Corps to fight and win our nation's battles. I am a future-focused leader, balancing the efforts of today while also looking to the future and what we can do to be more adaptable and innovative moving forward.

I am implementing a framework of people, processes and technologies to help us set ourselves up for success moving forward. From a people standpoint, I'm looking to improve our analytical capabilities within the financial and human resources communities. We have a lot of data, but in order to make good, informed decisions, we need to spend more time analyzing that data.

Some of this requires training our workforce to be more analytical. At the same time, we should look at how we can optimize our processes so we are not spending time on things that aren't value-added.

Also, we should refine and document our processes for our full financial audit. Our full financial audit is a key effort and focus area for the department, especially for the Marine Corps, as we are the only service going for a modified audit opinion for this fiscal year.

In the area of technology, there are so many capabilities and visualization tools, which we can leverage to make our decision-making process more effective. Those are some of the areas I'm focusing on initially to set us up for success.



You've come to SYSCOM in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. What specific challenges has this presented? How are you and the DCRM team working to overcome them?

It's been interesting coming in as a new leader to the command in the midst of the COVID pandemic. Fortunately, I've worked for the command before so I know some of the people and I can put some faces with names. But not being able to see people has made that a bit challenging.

However, I have had the full support of [Brig.] Gen. [A.J.] Pasagian and the executive director, Mr. [William] Williford, and honestly the whole leadership team to help me navigate through this current work environment.

We have an incredibly dedicated and resilient workforce across SYSCOM. This is such a difficult time and, even as many of us are facing personal struggles, the Marine Corps ethos and values remain strong for our civilian Marines as well: Semper Fidelis, Honor, Courage and Commitment.

Within DCRM, we have some pretty mature

DCRM discusses the importance of innovation, workforce feedback and diversity (cont.)

By Matt Gonzales, MCSC Office of Public Affairs and Communication

processes in place. We have an amazing team that is really mission-focused and able to get work done. We've been meeting the demands of our work. However, I think people are starting to get tired of teleworking to a certain extent, especially not being able to collaborate in person. We've started using collaboration tools, like Microsoft Teams, and that has really helped. And we're doing some team-building events.

We conducted a [virtual] event [in August] and recognized people who had won awards and took the time to re-engage. We'll be doing that again in October. What's really important in this environment is the engagement and making sure we're reaching out and working together using the collaboration tools available to us.

Since I left, there have been new acquisition authorities. We've been given a lot of oppor-

What is your favorite aspect of your job thus far?

My favorite part of this job is the people. Gen. Pasagian's Commander's Intent talks about putting people first. People energize me. I love being able to call people up and talk to them.

I'm new to this position. People help me acquire a better understanding of different aspects of SYSCOM, because I was away from the command for six years. A lot has changed. But the people I've worked with are so smart and professional. I really enjoy working with everyone.

Getting to work with new people, sharing with them, learning from one another, building relationships, building trust, helping them while also teaming to achieve positive results for the Command has been an enjoyable experience.

As you just mentioned, you worked for SYSCOM in the past. What made you want to come back?

I always knew I would come back to Marine Corps Systems Command. I spent most of my federal career in acquisition. Years ago, I was an acquisition intern. I really enjoyed working at the headquarters level, but I did want to come back to acquisition and see what changed.

tunity to innovate. Also, with everything going on with the audit, I was looking forward to the opportunity to be more hands-on with the Full Financial Audit efforts.

In 2014, I left the command to take a senior executive position at Headquarters Marine Corps, working for the director of intelli-

You had a couple different assignments between your first SYSCOM tour and this one. How did those assignments prepare you for this leadership role?

gence. A whole new world opened up. I worked within the intelligence community. I was working with the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, the director of National Intelligence, and an alphabet soup of new organizations and processes to me.

From a resourcing point of view, it gave me a new perspective. I was exposed to excellent leadership training. The exposure to other senior executives within the intelligence community was very challenging but also beneficial.

After working there for four years, the commandant stood up a new deputy commandant, the Deputy Commandant for Information. Since I was the senior financial representative in this new organization, I took on the role to merge and stand up this financial organization at the three-star level. It was quite an experience. The merger of existing organizations that had different processes and cultures.

In addition to intelligence, I was also responsible for the IT budget, C4 organization, Information Operations and Cyber. It was a new, expansive role. In addition to building a staff and establishing a new information portfolio, I took on additional senior-level initiatives—including implementing technology business management, or TBM, which gives us better transparency in our IT costs.

The opportunity to start from scratch to build an all-new organization, define roles and responsibilities, and lead that through a difficult transformational change for many people really prepared me for my current position with SYSCOM.

I am very grateful for the amazing opportunities I have had as a civil servant, but I am also

very humbled by the great service and sacri-

What has changed about the command since your last stint with SYSCOM?

SYSCOM has completely reorganized since I left in 2014. Coming in, it was a bit confusing. I had to get accustomed to the new construct of the organization. There are a lot of the same people and some new people.

I've been encouraged by some of the positive changes as a result of the reorganization. I see how it optimizes the management of our portfolios. It also helps align us better to the other external organizations with whom we work.

I also see an improved relationship between Program Executive Officer Land Systems and SYSCOM. From a resource perspective, being able to coordinate across SYSCOM and the PEO is beneficial. We're also establishing relationships with other external Navy PEOs. That is all new to me, but I'm really excited about it.

Can you talk about some of the highlights of your career thus far?

fices made by the uniformed men and women of our military. I am forever grateful for their service.

The highlight of my career occurred in 2007, when I first came to Marine Corps Systems Command and worked on the [Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle] program. Even though many years have passed, it remains difficult for me not to get emotional when I talk about that experience.

I, like many other dedicated men and women, put my heart and soul into the MRAP mission: to deliver life-saving vehicles to counter the [improvised explosive device] threat in the Iraq War. It was the greatest contribution of my career.

Prior to coming to SYSCOM in 2007, I worked for the Navy on classified programs, so I can't really speak to that. At SYSCOM, I worked on Intelligence programs and then in the Directorate of Financial Management. When I left in 2014, I was the Director of Financial Management.

I already mentioned my time at the Pentagon working at the senior level for the DIRINT

DCRM discusses the importance of innovation, workforce feedback and diversity (cont.)

By Matt Gonzales, MCSC Office of Public Affairs and Communication

and the Deputy Commandant for Information. What I didn't mention was my passion for financial management training and career development.

Nothing brings me more gratitude than being able to give back, after a long career of great training, mentors and experiences. But also, I continue to learn and grow from others with fresh perspectives. It amazes me what great talent we have all around us; we just need to tap into this talent.

Last year, I was the president for the Washington Chapter of the American Society of Military Comptrollers with a membership of over 3,000 people. The ASMC is focused on providing professional development in all aspects of defense financial management, and provides test-based DOD financial management certification, the CDFM-A certification. This was an incredibly rewarding experience, and I am now continuing to serve the ASMC on the board at the national level.

I think regardless of what generation you are from, change and uncertainty are uncomfortable.

We have several generations of people in our workforce – from Boomers to Generation Z, as many of them graduated college this year and are entering the workforce. As the DCRM, what are your thoughts about leading today's workforce?

able. Even though we have many different generations of people, everybody is an individual. Everybody comes from a different background and has different experiences.

In some cases, the reward system might be a little bit different for different generations. But, ultimately, we're all humans, we are all in this together and we are definitely at a pivotal point. As a leader driving change, I think it is important for people to see the end state and specifically see themselves.

I think everybody likes to understand how they fit within the organization, that they're valued and also that they're all going through this transformational change together. That requires us to work together and be more innovative. As long as we have a common understanding of where we're going,

that makes people a lot more comfortable.

We're reviewing our employee surveys to recognize what works within the command. We have the 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey that came out in September. That is a critical survey for workforce participation. It helps leadership understand where we need to focus and gives us a chance to compare the results with previous years to evaluate the effectiveness of previous initiatives that have been implemented. We use that survey to our advantage.

We also need to understand innovation from the bottom-up. We need to understand that we're interested in listening and hearing the creative ideas from the people, which helps

In his Commander's Intent, Brig. Gen. Pasagian emphasizes the importance of diversity and inclusion. In your opinion, what value do diversity and inclusion bring to the organization and its mission?

them see that leadership is interested in their ideas. We're always looking for ways to be more efficient as an organization.

Diversity and inclusion are very important and are critical to achieve mission success. An inclusive environment includes fairness, openness, cooperation, support, empowerment and value. It goes back to our core values. We're making sure that we trust and respect others, and we help others to reach their full potential.

We're doing a lot of training. We've added diversity and inclusiveness to our mandatory supervisory training. Diversity is important to the commander and to me as a leader. We have to work together. Diversity of ideas is what keeps the organization going. We promote that and continue to drive that message.

What has been the most influential piece of advice you've received?

My parents were the most influential people in my life. They always were supportive of me. The most influential advice they gave me was to continue to press forward with whatever I wanted to do and not to let anything hold me back.

They encouraged me to overcome any barriers I came up against. They also were concerned about others and made an effort to

help others. That value system was important to me growing up. Also, I took to heart advice from some of the general officers with whom I've recently worked. They've told me to be myself and trust my instincts.

I think that in leadership, you attend different trainings and learn new approaches to leadership. Ultimately, leadership comes from what has brought you there. It's important to trust your gut, even when that's hard to do.

What are some of your hobbies? What do you like to do in your free time?

My newest hobby is golf. I enjoy golfing with my husband, family and friends. I really enjoy being outdoors. In my free time, I like to spend time with family. I have a lot of family close by so I try to spend as much time with them as possible.

What is the one thing you cannot live without?

From a personal perspective, I would have to say my faith in God. From a professional perspective, it's the people. It's human connection and being able to interact with people.



Do you have a message for the SYSCOM workforce?

I am really excited and energized to be here at the command. I look forward to working with everybody. I'm a future-focused leader who always has an eye on where we're going. We're in the middle of a lot of change, and I just want everybody to understand that the best is yet to come. We have a lot of great opportunities with this change. I'm excited to be here and take that journey with you.

MCSC structural changes enable better naval alignment, acquisition support to Marines

By Matt Gonzales, MCSC Office of Public Affairs and Communication

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va.—Between July and October, Marine Corps Systems Command underwent several structural changes to better align the Marine Corps with the U.S. Navy and to meet the Corps’ Force Design 2030 efforts.

Commandant’s Planning Guidance—MCSC’s Portfolio Manager Supporting Establishment Systems programs were reassigned under the two new Navy PEOs. PEO Digital and Enterprise Services absorbed the Program Manager for Customer Support and Strategic Sourcing as well as the Program Manager for Network and Infrastructure. The Program Manager for Applications moved to PEO MLB.



“We are fundamentally re-designing the Marine Corps for the next 10 years,” said Brig. Gen. A.J. Pasagian, MCSC commander. “The world around us is changing dramatically, and that requires some changes on our end.”

“Our organization is undergoing what we call a ‘lift and shift,’” said Col. Ross Monta, former PFM SES and current military deputy for PEO Digital. “We’re going to pick up our organization as it is, with some minor modifications, to align with the Navy.”

Pasagian said the Marine Corps is taking advantage of the realignment under the Navy PEOs to pursue economies of scale and better buying power with the Marine Corps and naval force.

In the Commandant’s Planning Guidance, 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. David Berger said significant change is required to meet the demands of the naval fleet in executing current and emerging operational naval concepts. He emphasized the importance of naval integration in modernizing the Marine Corps.

“We have a leaner and more focused set of talent and professionals in the acquisition environment that are getting after our force design efforts,” said Pasagian during the recent Modern Day Marine Military Exposition. “I believe these changes are critical as we continue our command’s deliberate planning and resource allocation in support of the commandant’s Force Design 2030 efforts.”

Pasagian said the Marine Corps intends to meet Berger’s vision of creating a true Fleet Marine Force. To achieve this goal, MCSC has restructured several of its portfolios and programs to better align with the Navy.

“The realignment allows us to better focus on digital transformation and IT application delivery, as technology evolves,” Geurts said in a statement. “With these two PEOs, we can better align our resources to meet mission requirements and deliver capabilities to the fleet customers more effectively.”

August 15, 2019—Marine Corps Ground Acquisition Award Dinner

James. F. Geurts, the assistant secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition

Transition of Supporting Establishment Systems

In May 2020, Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition) James Geurts directed the disestablishment of the Navy’s Program Executive Office for Enterprise Information Systems and directed its programs to be reassigned under two new Navy Program Executive Offices: PEO Digital and Enterprise Services, and PEO Manpower, Logistics and Business Systems.

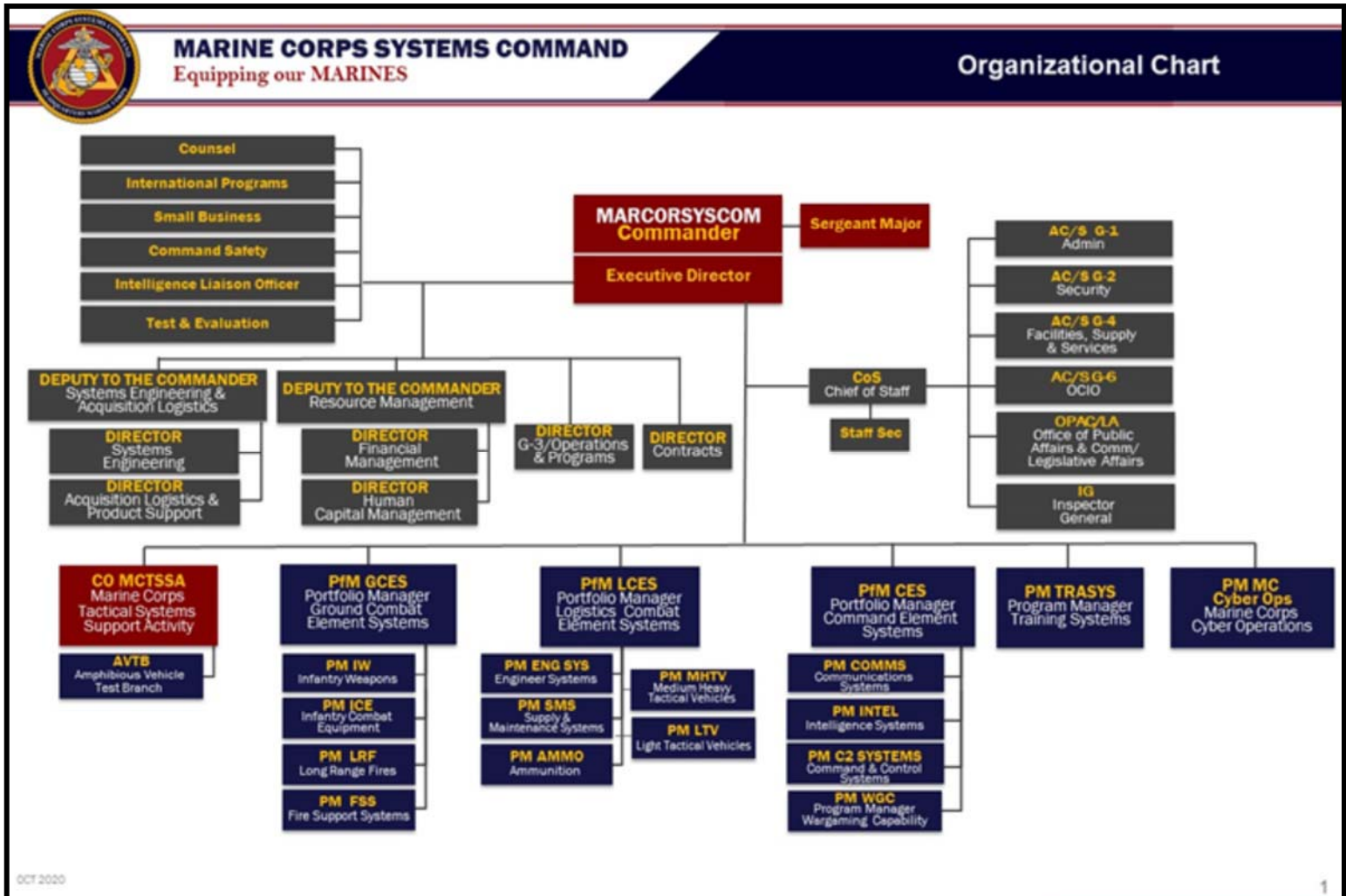
The new PEOs will enable more agile delivery of information technology across the Navy and Marine Corps.

On October 1—per Geurts’ direction and in accordance with the



MCSC structural changes enable better naval alignment, acquisition support to Marines

By Matt Gonzales, MCSC Office of Public Affairs and Communication



How changes affect industry

Monta said he does not expect MCSC’s structural changes to affect the command’s communication with industry. Current requirements and existing contracts will remain the same.

“As we integrate Navy and Marine Corps requirements, there may be bigger efforts—bigger opportunities for industry to work at a broader naval perspective,” said Monta.a

MCSC senior leaders expressed excitement for the structural changes, as the alignment of programs to a naval construct also helps the Marine Corps fulfill Gen. Berger’s vision. However, the Corps’ primary mission remains the same: equipping Marines.

“Our primary customer is still the United States Marine Corps,” said Monta. “It is still the Marines who are out there executing day-to-day. We’re still delivering cutting-edge capabilities to our Marines, to our service, so that we can complete our mission.”

MCSC structural changes enable better naval alignment, acquisition support to Marines (cont.)

By Matt Gonzales, MCSC Office of Public Affairs and Communication



Col. Ross Monta, military deputy for Program Executive Officer Digital and Enterprise Services, addresses the audience during the Innovation Symposium, April 2, 2019 aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia. Between July and October, Marine Corps Systems Command underwent a structural shift to better align the Marine Corps with the U.S. Navy. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Matt Gonzales)

MCSC and PEO LS shifting programs

Force design efforts also required MCSC and Program Executive Officer Land Systems to swap several programs. In July 2020, Program Manager Motor-Transport, which consisted of light and medium/heavy tactical vehicles, transitioned from PEO LS to MCSC.

Now two separate program offices, PM Light Tactical Vehicles fields and sustains systems such as the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle and trailer systems, while PM Medium/Heavy Tactical Vehicles manages systems such as the Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement and P-19R firetruck.

Conversely, the Program Manager for Light Armored Vehicles, moved to PEO LS, as will the future Advanced Reconnaissance Vehicle program.

Finally, the Program Manager for Towed Artillery Systems moved from PEO LS to MCSC. This is a joint program with the Army that provides direct, reinforcing and general support towed artillery fires to maneuver forces field artillery brigades, Army light forces and Marine Corps units.

“We’ve adjusted and positioned the command to best support force development and design by transferring programs back and forth between our Program Executive Office and our command,” said Pasagian.

Wargaming Capability and PM LI2S

MCSC’s Wargaming Capability program office moved to the Portfolio Manager for Command Element Systems, a portfolio that provides and sustains command, control, communications and intelligence capabilities. The Wargaming Capability will provide acquisition support to an innovative wargaming center to be built aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia.

In April 2020, the Program Manager for Global Combat Support Systems-Marine Corps became the Program Manager for Logistics Integrated Information Solutions. PM LI2S delivers a deployable, single point-of-entry for all logistics requirements and advances cutting-edge enabling technology in support of logistics operations.

PM LI2S comprises sustainment and modernization of the GCSS-MC system, modernizing aged logistics processes and procedures, and dedicating resources to evaluating cloud services, data analytics and other emerging tech-

nologies in support of tactical logistics.

“The associated realignment of projects and personnel enable PM LI2S to advance planning and preparation of technology offerings to continue to align with Department of the Navy and Marine Corps enterprise information technology roadmaps,” said Col. Devin Licklider, the Program Manager for Logistics Integrated Information Solutions.

Similar to the Program Manager for Applications, PM LI2S personnel are administratively assigned to MCSC, but the portfolio falls under the Navy’s PEO MLB.

Part of supporting force design efforts involve realigning the Marine Corps Cyber Operations program portfolio as a direct reporting program management office. In a Sept. 28 memo, Pasagian said the acquisition and sustainment responsibilities of this program office will report directly to him.

Mentoring During a Time of Pandemic

By Ken Smith, Transformation Systems, Inc.

We often think about mentoring as a critical tool for those in their 20s, 30s and 40s who need help navigating the ins and outs of career path planning. Consider how this might change for the better during COVID-19.



Who needs a Mentor?

Because mentoring is so focused on career planning, over the years, for better or worse, we've come to culturally think of it as best for the junior workforce as opposed to the rest of us. Understandable because the rest of us are often at the pinnacle of our careers and are satisfied with where we are or will be headed. For the rest of us, the benefits of

asked and no one will fault you for doing it. Most senior folks are eager to share their knowledge and will find the time or a suitable substitute if they are unavailable. While it's best for your Mentor to be more senior, that does not always equate to a leadership position. Some of the best Mentors are thought leaders who supervise no one but have a wealth of experience. If you are stumped regarding who you might ask to be a Mentor, ask a colleague or your supervisor to recommend someone. Take a look at the following Four Essentials for Effective Mentor-Mentee Conversations for additional tips on picking a Mentor.

Mentoring has long been determined to be a great way to foster individual development and career planning among employees. When asked, most successful people will tell you that mentors, whether formally or informally arranged, were very influential in their success. Fundamentally, Mentoring is a method intended to foster senior and junior employee conversations around achieving goals that benefit the employee and the organization.

“mentoring” are achieved by different means, e.g. lunch/coffee with a colleague, informal drive-bys, planned one-on-ones, a phone call to an experienced retired government support contractor, and dinner together on travel, among others.

Truth is, everyone could benefit by a Mentor at various points of their career and more-so in today's unusual working environment.

COVID-19 is causing us to reimagine how we approach daily work especially around traditional interaction. Regardless of where one is on their career path, the ease of having informal conversations is not the same as before. Maybe we need to be thinking about how to broaden the concept of Mentoring to encourage these conversations, even though they may be virtual.

How to connect with a Mentor?

Some Commands have programs intended to connect Mentees to Mentors. But there is no requirement to use them. What's clear is that the burden of creating such a relationship almost always falls on the Mentee, or the person seeking the conversations. It's understandable that some might feel uncomfortable seeking a Mentor, but the good news is that almost everyone is flattered at being

For junior members of the workforce, the most obvious topic relates to career paths. But that's not the only thing, especially if we use a broader definition of who benefits from a Mentor relationship.



What can Mentors and Mentees talk about?

Here's a list of potential topics appropriate for everyone:

1. Command goals and objectives
2. Career stories
3. Critical skills, haves and needs
4. Situational issues and related advice
5. Measuring individual success
6. Health and wellness
7. Personal life goals and objectives
8. Leadership

Mentoring During a Time of Pandemic

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Four Essentials for Effective Mentor-Mentee Conversations

Many believe that the Mentor-Mentee relationship's primary value is directed toward the Mentee, but that should not be the case. The most effective relationships are the result of a value exchange "partnership" between the two participants, with the Mentor often benefiting as much as the Mentee. Indeed, the most successful mentoring sessions are those which when over, both participants can say their time was well spent and that

Whether during a time of Pandemic or not, and regardless of where the participants are in their careers, here are four things for the parties to consider to ensure an effective outcome ...

1

Compatibility & Trust

Mentors and Mentees must be compatible. Mentees must be able to trust sharing what may often be sensitive information and Mentors must be empathic in their response while maintaining confidentiality. Likewise, in the absence of something clearly nefarious, the participants must agree that what is said in these encounters, stay in these encounters. The ability for both parties to feel comfortable during these conversations is a key and early measure of success to come. During a pandemic it's even more important because the connection is often virtual. Using MS Teams or ZOOM is far better than a phone call.

Devoting time during the first session for each participant to introduce themselves will help break the ice. While our careers are important, it is not the only way in which we are defined. Spending some appropriate amount of time to share items of interest outside of work can often add context to future discussions. To further break the ice, some Mentors and Mentees have been known to share their Meyers, Briggs Type Indicators (MBTI) or other comparable personality trait measures.

With the ice broken, be sure early on to set agreed to objectives. What does the Mentee want and what does the Mentor believe they can provide during the time together? In some cases the objective may be a tangible product such as a career path options map. In other cases, it may simply be a need to gain a new perspective on how to address work related challenges and/or specific situations. Reasonable clarity here, even if the objectives change or evolve, is a good way to ensure an effective outcome.

2

Contrast & Differences

It's fair to say that nearly all of us have had many Mentors in our lives, most of them very informal. Some may have been family members and others have even been peers. Some may have been around for decades while others just a few weeks. All of these relationships are important and all contribute to our evolution. But when thinking about entering into a Mentor-Mentee relationship, the value improves when the Mentee selects someone who brings something different to the table. Specifically, Mentees should be looking for Mentors who have achieved some level of success through time spent and expertise accrued. Similarly, Mentors should be looking for Mentees who can gain from their tutelage.

Because of the types of conversations that occur, the best Mentor and Mentee relationships are not part of the same supervisory chain and perhaps not even within the same organization. That of course does not mean that employees and their supervisors are off the hook regarding individual and career development discussions.

Mentoring During a Time of Pandemic

Ken Smith, Transformation Systems, Inc.

3

Positivity & Challenge

The best Mentor-Mentee conversations are those that not only analyze the Mentee's current state but also envision one or more future states. Mentor-Mentee conversations work best when the Mentor challenges the Mentee and the Mentee is open to different future paths and possibilities. This type of disciplined analysis pretty much works for any type of challenging topic that could come up during a Mentor-Mentee conversation. When the topic is about career paths, there are tools that can help bring structure to the discussion including the DATM's Career Path Navigator.

DATM's Career Path Navigator

<https://www.secnav.navy.mil/rda/workforce/Pages/index.aspx>

See: Resources Tab

4

Reliability & Availability

Effective Mentor-Mentee conversations work best when the parties have a clear understanding of when they intend to visit. There is no hard and fast rule for how many visits to have. Most arrangements are able to produce good results between two and six sessions. Likewise, there is no hard and fast rule for how long a session should last but again, most sessions tend to last no more than 45 minutes with the possible exception of the introductory session which may need an hour.

Time slots should be agreed to in advance, normally at weekly intervals, but always with enough time for any agreed to "homework" to be accomplished. It's best to pick a standard reoccurring time during a day when the odds of having to change the appointment are low. Visits which end up constantly being rescheduled will definitely affect their quality over time.

Provided agreement in advance, it's perfectly acceptable to communicate by phone or email in-between visits especially if there's a need for clarification. Periodic Mentor "check-ins," like virtual coffee breaks, after the sessions are over is always a nice touch.

To conclude, during these extraordinary times, the concept of Mentoring may take on a whole new level of importance regardless of where one is in their career. Consider whether or not a Mentor would be helpful and if so, don't be afraid to reach out.

Mentoring During a Time of Pandemic

By Ken Smith, Transformation Systems, Inc.

Cyber Information Technology Exchange Program (CITEP)

The Cyber Information Technology Exchange Program (CITEP) provides a unique opportunity for DoD components and private sector organizations to share best practices, gain a better understanding of cross-sector cyber/IT operations and challenges, and partner to address these challenges. It was authorized under Section 1110 of the FY 2010 National Defense Authorization Act, as amended by the NDAA's of 2014 and 2017. The program provides for the temporary detail of DoD and private sector employees who work in the field of cyber operations or information technology and is an opportunity for the exchange of knowledge, experience, and skills between the DoD and private sectors.

The Navy is the largest participant in CITEP with nine employees participating in 2018 and nine employees participating in 2019. The 2020 CITEP Cohort consists of 6 employees. The employees are currently assigned to Amazon, Microsoft, VMWare and M&T Bank.

Prior to starting their rotational assignments, the participants virtually met with Mr. Geurts, ASN RD&A. Each participant was given the opportunity to confer with ASN RD&A. Mr. Geurts gave them advice on staying resilient, starting a journal with notes of their observations with private industry, and recommended that they fully immerse themselves in the industry's culture in order to further their knowledge and education.

Congratulations to the 2020 CITEP Cohort!

NEW LOGO ALERT!

The new logo's font is more modern and narrower. This parallels certification training for the acquisition workforce—DAU is paring down bulky, required certification training and increasing learning options. With a lean set of core learning complemented by specialty credentials, workforce members will be better prepared to perform their job and more quickly get the additional training they need when job requirements change. The forward slant illustrates 's emphasis on speed and agility—moving forward quickly to meet the needs DAU's of the Defense Acquisition Workforce. The identifiable DAU red remains consistent, bold and commanding, as an homage to DAU's embrace of its history and ensuring the workforce that the world-class products, services and training they expect will continue to meet high expectations.



To better meet the workforce's changing needs, DAU is transforming into a modern learning platform delivering continuous learning and support tailored to the needs of the acquisition workforce.

Congratulations to the 2020 CITEP Cohort!

Ruth Rodriguez



Ms. Rodriguez currently works for NAVSEA Naval Surface Warfare Center, Port Hueneme Division (NSWC PHD) and serves as the Configuration Management Specialist for multiple programs such as Littoral Combat Ship Seaframe (LCS SF), Guided Missile Frigate (FFG(X)), USCG Aegis Athena, Large Unmanned Surface Vessel (LUSV), Multi-Mission Surface Combatant (MMSC), and DDG1000 Zumwalt. Ms. Rodriguez is on rotation with Microsoft. She has been assigned to work with the Cloud Provisioning Operations & Decommissions (CPOD's) Process Engineering team. During her rotation, Ms. Rodriguez will be supporting CPOD's Process Engineering team where she will help with incident management practices, driving root cause analysis, repair item accountability, and data driven analysis for development of innovative solutions (process and technology).

Clarence Chew



Mr. Chew currently works for NAVWAR and serves as lead developer for Robotic Process Automation (RPA) team where he designed and developed two attended robots centered on SAP data extraction processes saving the customer an estimated 32 labor hours per month. Mr. Chew and his team received NAVWAR innovation award for Robotic Process Automation under the category Business Model or process winner. He also serves a vital role in the NAVWAR Data Warehouse Business Intelligence Systems team as a developer/designer of SAP business intelligence reports. Mr. Chew is on rotation with Amazon, where he will provide program and project management expertise for Amazon Web Services (AWS) ProServe Business Intelligence & Analytics team. He will also utilize AWS tools to help support enhancements to an existing data and analytics platform.

Zachary Sherry



Mr. Sherry currently works for NAVSUP and is an application and security specialist who has worked for the Navy since 2014. He is currently the technology lead and head programmer for the Navy's data transformation program (DLMS). Zachary is a certified information systems security professional and focuses on modernizing systems within the Navy supply chain. Before working for the Navy, Zach was a Cavalry Scout Platoon Sergeant in the US Army and served as a NATO training advisor, weapons instructor, and drone master trainer. Mr. Sherry is on rotation with VMware. He is currently working with the innovation team at VMware on their cybersecurity learning platform. He is also working on developing an integrated network with intrinsic security in coordinating with the various DoD agencies and private sector partners.

Congratulations to the 2020 CITEP Cohort!

Christopher Solis



Mr. Solis currently works for NAVSUP and serves as a senior systems analyst and customer support specialist for the maintenance and troubleshooting of multiple NAVY systems and applications including Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and Navy Mobile Computing/Automated Identification Technology (NMC/AIT). Mr. Solis is on rotation with Microsoft. He was initially assigned to the Microsoft Detection and Response Team (DART). This team responds to security compromises and helps their customers become cyber-resilient. The Detection and Response Team provides onsite reactive incident response and remote proactive investigations. His next assigned will be with Azure Cloud Security team for 2 months.

Micah Farrer



Mr. Farrer currently works for NAVWAR and is a business system developer serving as an Administrative Specialist for HQ 11510 (Financial Systems) specializing in Data Analytics Systems Architecture. He has experience in Business Intelligence systems development in SAP Business Warehouse, SAP Business Intelligence (BOBJ), and Microsoft Office, using Oracle, MySQL, and Teradata databases with data sourced from multiple ERP functional areas. Mr. Farrer is on rotation with M&T Bank. He is working with the Enterprise Data Architecture team with cloud migration and implementation of a data lake. He is also working with the cybersecurity team on the Pilot Business Intelligence solution for Incident Response Processing KPIs. He is assisting the Security Engineering team to compile industry best practices for Cybersecurity incident data collection, integration, storage, and analysis.

Frank Cundiff



Mr. Cundiff currently works within PEO Aircraft Carriers as the In-service Carriers group on Digital Lifecycle Sustainment. He is responsible for managing information technology programs in the areas of data and configuration of engineering processes for Ford Class Aircraft Carrier introduction to the in-service fleet. He is also responsible for developing the digital engineering strategy for PEO Aircraft Carriers, to coordinate cradle-to-grave and lifecycle needs with all end users and stakeholders, and associated timeline and budget requests in accordance with ASN RD&A policies and OPNAV Digital Engineering Strategy. Mr. Cundiff is on rotation with Amazon. He is working with the Technical project manager for new projects to better effectively execute cloud environment rollout.

Naval Acquisition Career Center Division in the Spotlight: Recruiting Division Naval Acquisition Development Program: Recruiting Operations in a Corona Virus-19 (COVID-19) Environment By Dave Mailander, Recruiting Division Director, NACC

In early March 2020, the entire world was struck by a new global threat, the Corona Virus-19 (COVID-19). As a result, many commercial and Department of Defense (DoD) activities, including the Naval Support Activity Mechanicsburg, PA (NSA-Mech), began to shut-down commercial and base facilities. To ensure support continued for the warfighter, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), in concert with DoD, issued policy and guidance to maximize telework and maxi-flex for civilian and military personnel. NSA-Mech hosts several tenant activities to include the Naval Acquisition Career Center (NACC) whose mission is to centrally manage the Naval Acquisition Development Program (NADP).

All of the divisions at NACC had to make adjustments to execute its functions in this new environment while minimizing disruptions to customers' support for NADP. Recruiting, Acquisition Workforce, Career Management and Budget Divisions worked tirelessly to develop methodologies and the use of information technology to ensure customer's requirements continued to be met. This new austere environment presented a number of challenges; however, NACC continually focused on providing outstanding support to its internal and external customers. This article will focus on the actions conducted by the Recruiting Division as they are this quarter's Division in the Spotlight and follow on articles will look at the actions of the remaining divisions.

incoming personnel despite the obstacles as a result of the virus. They capitalized the use of telework and maxi-flex, along with a number of IT programs to keep the recruitment pipeline flowing. Their quick, out of the box thinking is credited for processing more than 600 recruitment actions, resulting in the hiring 280 Entry and 34 Associate personnel for Fiscal Year 2020 (FY 20). This would not be possible without the exceptional assistance and support from a



number of internal and external partners.

Maintaining and sustaining relationships proved critical in assisting the NACC in meeting its recruiting goals. The Recruiting Division worked with a number of organizations such as the Office of Civilian Human Resources (OCHR), Stennis MS, NADP recruiting working

group members and Human Resource Offices (HRO) to facilitate a centralized approach to staffing NADP requirements. Due to the widespread impact of COVID-19, these organizations were faced with the same challenges as the NACC and developed methodologies to continue to provide support in meeting customers' demands. Teamwork was critical with all of our partners and as such, communication and an enhanced sense of creative support were necessary to ensure we met our FY 20 goals.

“[The Recruiting Division’s]... quick, out of the box thinking is credited for processing more than 600 recruitment actions, resulting in the hiring 280 Entry and 34 Associate personnel for Fiscal Year 2020 (FY 20).

The Recruiting Division made a number of adjustments to meet this challenge head on and continues to maintain a robust throughput of

Naval Acquisition Career Center Division in the Spotlight: Recruiting Division Naval Acquisition Development Program: Recruiting Operations in a Corona Virus-19 (COVID-19) Environment By Dave Mailander, Recruiting Division Director, NACC

Key challenges were evident in four distinct areas: communication, documentation, security processing and entry on duty requirements.

Even in the best of environments, communication can be challenging and is one of the most difficult aspects of task completion amongst a group of people. Effective communication for the NADP working group was established via e-mail, desktop support and weekly regularly scheduled telephone conferences. Moreover, cell phone use proved to be valuable and a crucial aspect of accounting for quick NACC staff communication. The team also continue to rely upon landlines to discuss scheduled tasks. Furthermore, these previously and newly established networks with our partners provide the backdrop for what has become our current way of doing business with people.

The HRO documentation that binds and validates hiring functions have evolved in a way that allows most required artifacts to be uploaded into USA Staffing and Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS) without hard copy handling and printing. Additionally, the NACC accounts for and stores local forms/templates, which are critical to be NADP recruitments. During periods of heavy usage, these systems could be extremely busy which slows down processing and hence logging on either early or late in the day was an effective work around. Any requirement to handle or print material was typically a shared task amongst the team members as they rotated into the office to refresh laptop with patches and updates.

A program requirement for NADP is the issuance of an interim Secret Security clearance before entry on duty (EOD). Late in 2019, the Security Team took positive action to streamline and digitize the flow and handling of documentation. Digitizing hard copy material

was the first step that ultimately set the stage for distributing support after the pandemic began. The document process flow from Placement Representative

to Security Analyst was converted to an electronic transfer thus reducing hard copy Personally Identifiable Information (PII). Additionally, remote access to the Joint Personnel Adjudication System (JPAS) and Defense Information System for Security (DISS) facilitated processing from a telework location allowing security personnel to remotely process security documents.

When new NADP personnel report to the host command, the process to properly onboard the new personnel is accomplished through a team effort between NACC and the host command's HRO. A critical part of this is fulfillment of the Employment Eligibility (I9) form whereby an employee's credentials are validated with Homeland Security. Additionally, completion of the Oath of Office (SF 61) is completed which binds the member to their new federal appointment. In March, OCHR announced a flexibility to remotely process EODs via SKYPE or similar platforms thus removing the requirement for a new employee to physically report to an HRO for processing. Through coordination with command HRO points of con-

The phrase, "Necessity is the Mother of Invention" best describes the motivation and changes we have experienced in the world of NADP Recruiting since March 2020.

tact, NACC staff were able to process EODs for newly reporting personnel when conditions precluded them from entering a base. Furthermore, arrangements were made in advance to issue laptops and common access cards (CAC) to enable remote training in the first few weeks of duty.

The phrase, "Necessity is the Mother of Invention" best describes the motivation and changes we have experienced in the world of NADP Recruiting since March 2020. It has been challenging, fruitful and rewarding in the realization that efforts created immediately or within months after the announcement of COVID-19 have allowed our critical work to continue without interruption. As such, this is fulfilling the strategic goals for our customers and the Acquisition Workforce at large. In order to continue to provide the required support to the warfighter, NACC will continually look for ways to increase its effectiveness and efficiency to meet customer requirements.



Program Manager's Workshop is Back in Session!

After a brief hiatus driven by COVID-19 restrictions, the ASN (RDA) Program Manager's Workshop is back up and running. The Workshop, sponsored by the Navy Director, Acquisition Talent Management (DATM) Office, successfully executed workshops at their Crystal City location in July and August. New protocols are in place to reduce the number of students in the teaching War Rooms to maintain proper distancing and ensure student and instructor safety.

The Workshop was designed and implemented almost five years ago to instruct Navy Program Managers, Deputies, and other senior members of the Acquisition Work Force in the history of Navy acquisition through examples of successful program management. It is an intensive five day course of instruction that exposes students to a wealth of information gleaned from historical examples of successful Navy acquisition practices and programs. Since its inception, over 350 students from over 100 different Navy Program Offices and organizations have taken advantage of this unique opportunity to broaden their outlooks and gain a new perspective on why we do things the way we do in Naval Acquisition.

In addition to the instruction provided in seven "War Rooms", where the student are exposed to a wide variety of historical narratives detailing how the Navy Acquisi-

tion Community organized and executed through the years, guest speakers provide relevant, topical presentations during the week.

The course will be offered monthly through March, 2021, with all the dates referenced in the illustration available in eDACM. Additional dates running through the remainder of 2021 will be available for registration soon. In addition to a great learning experience, Workshop graduates receive 38 Continuous Learning Points (CLPs).

Please contact Ralph Lee (ralph.lee@gdit.com/240 538-3235) or King Dietrich (king.dietrich@gdit.com/703 999-6905) with any questions and to learn more about the course.



ASN(RDA)

PROGRAM MANAGER'S WORKSHOP

WORKSHOP DATES:

FY21		FY22
25-29 JAN	3-7 MAY	18-22 OCT
8-12 FEB	7-11 JUN	15-19 NOV
22-26 MAR	19-23 JUL	6-10 DEC
		24-29 JAN
		7-11 MAR

Navy Acquisition Professionals: to attend please contact

king.dietrich@gdit.com Workshop Coordinator 703.999.6905	ralph.lee@gdit.com Program Manager 240.538.3235	kbrandquist@stratsight.com Technical Director 703.413.0700
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or log into the eDACM CL and look for PM Workshop.

...recommend that coworkers and peers alike take it as soon as possible.'

'This has been the most valuable and influential training I have ever had during my 23 years in the Navy.'

'Provided a wealth of information that cannot be provided anywhere else.'

TO SIGN UP:

- Log into eDACM
- Go to the DON CL Learning Module >> Manage Career >> DON Continuous Learning
 - Search for DON CL Training in the Search Catalog
 - "Enter" in the Event Name Program Manager Workshop
 - Under "Location" select "Any Distance" and click Search. (You should see a listing of multiple dates for this CL Event)
- Click on the Location Name "Arlington, VA" on the date you wish to attend and the Event Information screen will populate
 - At the bottom of the page click "Submit Registration Request"
- Ensure your supervisor approves you request so it will be forwarded to the event POC for review and approval



Director Acquisition Talent Management

<https://www.secnav.navy.mil/rda/workforce/Pages/index.aspx> Ph: (703) 614-3666 Fax: (703) 614-4262

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