

# Military Personnel — Essential to DCMA's Role as a Combat Support Agency

by Ms. Dianne Ryder, Editor in Chief

*Army Lt. Col. Reginald Terry became the new military personnel director at the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) Aug.*

*15, 2006. Recently, we asked him about his new responsibilities.*

"I manage military manpower, assignments, reassignments, evaluations, awards, decorations, training and readiness for all military personnel in DCMA," said Lt. Col. Terry. So, what does

all that mean? "Getting the right people in the right places at the right time and making sure that they are adequately trained and that all their personnel processing is done in a timely manner."

When Lt. Col. Terry assumed his new position, he looked for ways to improve operations. "My major customers are the DCMA director, the division directors and the individual service members," he said. "Number one [concern] is that they aren't always getting the military personnel they need." According

to Lt. Col. Terry, DCMA presently has only 82 percent of its military authorizations filled because of priority needs in the global war on terrorism. "Some people are not going to get a position filled," he said. "One thing we are working on is a prioritized listing for fills. If you're number 100 on a list of 100, it's readily apparent that you're not going to get your fill, so commanders can examine other options for accomplishing the mission."

"Number two," said Lt. Col. Terry, "our Military Online Personnel System [MOPS] database is not accurate. The first thing I did was to tell Mr. Ernst, 'We've got to clean up this database and get one that is 100 percent operational for our purposes.' So we're working with [information technology] to upgrade our system and clean up our database."

"Number three, we're going through a huge reorganization — we're now a center, so we own all the military personnel folks in both Boston and Carson [Calif.], but we need to make sure that we can effectively support every division out there."

"Another thing we're lacking, but getting a handle on, is tracking every action that comes in here — what and where it is and its status for the entire time it's here. We weren't doing this well, and some actions were processed late. We must fix this problem, and we're building

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an automated system to help us get visibility of every action we do.”

“Something else that’s hot is processing awards for personnel returning from deployment. Some people were not getting awards for six months to a year following their return. That is not the way to care for our people. We’ve created a system for sending electronic versions of award nominations directly to our inbox. As soon as we get a thumbs up from the appropriate commanders, we can process them within 72 hours to one week.”

“The final piece that was not working well, but we’re trying to fix, is in and out processing,” continued Lt. Col. Terry. “Sometimes, people are assigned here and don’t know where they’re supposed to go for support. If people don’t complete a proper in or out processing, we can’t do the things we must do to support them. We owe it to our military personnel to make the process simple and to make it readily apparent where they are to go for support.”

I also addressed with Lt. Col. Terry the perception that DCMA is an undesirable military assignment because many service members seem to believe they will not be competitive for promotion.

“Promotions in DCMA have been equal to or exceeded the Air Force and Army rates, so it’s an erroneous perception,” he said. “I think many people see DCMA as a ‘dead-end assignment’ because most military personnel report here as O-4s, O-5s or O-6s. Many of them are retiring and have come to DCMA as a final assignment.”

“The story we need to tell is that we are competitive for promotions, but we’re not a

retirement home. We change that retirement home perception by not permitting military personnel to homestead here for multiple tours until retirement.”

Since it appears the number of military personnel assigned to DCMA is decreasing, we also asked Lt. Col. Terry if this meant the Agency will eventually lose its military presence.



“We are a combat support agency. Our military personnel are essential to that support. While our military presence has decreased, and I think it will decrease further, military members are essential to what we do. I don’t think we are the same agency without our military personnel. The reality is that agencies like DCMA will have fewer military personnel, but they will never go away entirely. I don’t think that’s an option.”

**(Above)** Army Lt. Col. Reginald Terry, DCMA's military personnel director, manages military manpower, assignments, reassignments, evaluations, awards, decorations, training and readiness for all military personnel at DCMA. (Photo by Ms. Julia Wyant, DCMA Public Affairs)