

DCMA Commanders Meet in Houston



by Mr. Art Forster, Director, Congressional and Public Affairs,
DCMA Headquarters

“Enterprise Alignment & Execution: Customers, Performance and Human Capital” was the theme for the Defense Contract Management Agency’s (DCMA’s) Spring Commanders’ Conference in Houston, Texas, May 8-12. Contract management office (CMO) commanders and staff representatives from DCMA Headquarters and Divisions were in attendance. In his opening remarks, Mr. Keith Ernst, DCMA acting director, reviewed the Agency’s progress in adopting performance-based management and moving to a new product-based organization. He underscored the importance of focusing on customer needs as the means for measuring DCMA’s success. Mr. Ernst emphasized: “This is not about reorganization, it’s about realigning to improve our enterprise-wide support to our customers.” The details and timelines of these actions can be found on the realignment page of the DCMA internal Web site at: <http://home.dcmamil/dcma-dsl/realignment.htm>.

The conference included presentations, panel discussions and workshops that covered a wide range of subjects. The commanders of DCMA Lockheed Martin Fort Worth, Hartford, Chicago and Detroit provided operational overview briefings about their activities. Other workshops focused on earned value management, the new collective bargaining agreement, the Missile Defense Agency delegation model, and performance measurement and management.

Mr. Robert Schmitt, director of the new Aeronautical Systems and Naval Sea Systems Divisions in Boston, shared his criteria for a successful Division. He said the first step was to “define and execute a customer outreach strategy that results in the development, analysis and distribution of customer intelligence throughout the Divisional entity.” He also cited the need to “develop and execute integrated operational strategies that enable the enterprise to meet customer/DCMA memoranda of agreement performance standards.”

Ms. Patricia Kirk-McAlpine, director of the Space & Missile Systems and Ground Systems & Munitions Divisions, announced that the concepts of operations for these new Divisions were now posted on the realignment Web page. She summarized the results of a recent survey that indicated 98 percent of DCMA’s customers are aware of the services the Agency provides. Customers commented favorably on DCMA’s communication with them, source selection support and the “honest broker” perspective. Ms. Kirk-McAlpine also cited several challenges that DCMA must overcome, including obtaining more resources for software surveillance and focusing support based on customer needs.

Navy Capt. Walter Melton, International Division commander, and Mr. Ronald Youngs, Special Programs Division acting director, each provided attendees with an update on their respective organizations. Capt. Melton identified the continuing challenge of meeting the personnel requirements for overseas contingency contracting administration services and called on CMO commanders to encourage their employees to consider volunteering for these important assignments. Mr. Youngs outlined the organization and mission of the Special Programs Division that was publicly acknowledged last August. He underscored the Division’s top priority, which remains “protecting customers’ information and data.”

Mr. Ernst underscored the importance of focusing on customer needs as the means for measuring DCMA’s success.

Highlighting the conference was the presentation of DCMA’s Annual Military Awards at a banquet on the evening of May 10. Joining Mr. Ernst in presenting the awards was the Honorable James I. Finley, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology.

To view the Commanders’ Conference agenda and links to the respective PowerPoint slides, go to: http://home.dcmamil/command/commanders_conf_spr06_agenda.htm.