

Recruiting and Developing the Best Enlisted Personnel for DCMA



by Ms. Julia Wyant, DCMA Public Affairs

Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Terrence Woodley is the Defense Contract Management Agency's (DCMA) senior enlisted advisor (SEA) to the director. Prior to assuming duties as SEA, Chief Woodley served as chief enlisted manager for DCMA's Procurement Center. He came to DCMA from the Pentagon, where he was the Headquarters Air Force first sergeant. Chief Woodley's 24 years of active service give him an invaluable perspective, enabling him to serve as the director's eyes and ears on enlisted matters. As SEA, he oversees the utilization, morale, welfare and career development of all DCMA enlisted personnel worldwide.

Q: You're coming up on your first anniversary as the Agency's SEA. What has it been like, and what has been happening over the past year?

Chief Woodley: It has been truly remarkable. I've done quite a bit of travel visiting our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines where they live and work. So far, I've visited about 65 percent of the enlisted members. We discuss their personal and professional development, current jobs assigned and issues that affect their quality of life ... for them and their families. They are proud of what they do, and you can't help but sense their commitment to delivering the best weapons systems to the warfighters on the frontlines. Those American heroes on the frontlines that we often hear about are our peers and friends; they're our second family.

We have gained a lot of mileage from our efforts to ensure that our enlisted billets are properly coded so as to be filled with personnel from the proper acquisition career fields. We should see some visible results from that effort in the near future. Also, as an Agency, we are transforming the way we do business with performance-based management [PBM], and we are continuing to emphasize the professional development of our people.

Q: Do PBM and professional development affect our enlisted folks?

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CW: Absolutely. Military members chart their courses of professional development early in their careers. Courses in leadership and management are integral and recurring elements of all military training and education. By the time we become [senior non-commissioned officers], we should be engaged in strategic thinking and seeking managerial and leadership opportunities. When those opportunities are not readily available, we adapt and lead from where we are ... but that doesn't get us off the hook with seeking to learn those more broad and strategic concepts and applications. When it comes to PBM, the assumption of our leadership is that the enlisted force is intrinsically woven into the operations of the [contract management offices] and the success of this Agency, just like everyone else ... no exclusions, no special categories. That means they should be doing

everything they can to learn about PBM and where they fit in, Agency-wide, and each and every member of our organization has a personal responsibility to make it happen.

Q: How is this accomplished?

CW: There's lots of materials and literature available on the Internet. The DCMA Web site has a wealth of information on PBM as does the Defense Acquisition University. Not to be overlooked is our own organization's wealth of talented personnel who can also provide the information personally. That adds enormous value to our enlisted members' professional growth and development and directly relates what we do to the bigger picture.

Q: So, do you seek advice and learn from Mr. Keith Ernst, DCMA's acting director?

CW: Without a doubt ... every chance I get. I've always tried to learn as much as I can from my supervisors as well as others around me in positions of leadership. ... Most times I attentively listen and observe ... and I'll bank questions in my head until an opportunity presents itself. This not only provides me with knowledge and perspective on issues and topics that are relevant but gives me insight ... and that's what I wish to gain the most.

Q: Based on your visits, how would you describe the overall quality of our enlisted force?

CW: Overall, we've been very fortunate. I feel that we've recruited the absolute best the services have to offer and that it's our Agency's challenge to continue their development

(Above) Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Terrence Woodley, DCMA's senior enlisted advisor to the director, in his office at DCMA Headquarters in Alexandria, Va. (Photo by Ms. Julia Wyant, DCMA Public Affairs)

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to make them even better. Any individuals finishing their DCMA tours and returning to their services should possess a tremendous amount of knowledge and credibility.

Q: Let’s talk about delivery of services. Have we made any improvements in that area?

CW: There have been some leadership changes in military personnel management, which I believe will improve how we do business and deliver service to our military personnel. Improved customer response and focus on what’s important to our military members are necessities and are the expectations of the Agency’s leadership. As I say that, there’s a lot of consternation occurring within our services in the personnel arena. Necessary adjustments to win the global war on terrorism over the long haul have prompted new personnel changes and rules that impact everyone in uniform.

Q: What’s the best advice you can give to our enlisted force?

CW: Stay connected. There is a tremendous adjustment for military members that come into the Agency. Most have never heard of DCMA, and trying to grasp the details of our mission takes some time. [Air Force] Chief [Master Sgt. Don] Collins, [DCMA’s former SEA], once told me, “Don’t try to figure it out in one day because you won’t.” And he was right. I’m learning more and more every day. The mission of this Agency is vast. Back to my point ... we are first and foremost soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines — we must never forget that. We bring our own respective service cultures and vast field experiences, which are essential elements of DCMA’s success. ... Thanks to all of our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines out there making a difference.



(Above) From left: Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Terrence Woodley, DCMA’s senior enlisted advisor to the acting director, Mr. Keith Ernst, and Army Sgt. Maj. William J. Gainey, senior enlisted advisor to the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff. (Photo by Ms. Julia Wyant, DCMA Public Affairs)