



# *“A huge step forward on that journey”* Director Promotes Human Capital Initiative

By Dick Cole,  
Chief Public Affairs

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates told the Senate Armed Services Committee in January that acquisition was “chief among the institutional challenges” at the Pentagon. A risk-averse culture with an unwieldy and litigious acquisition process, excessive and constantly changing requirements, and budget instability all affect the acquisition process and must be addressed, Gates said. Additionally, a grossly understaffed acquisition workforce is trying to “nail down purchasing priorities that are constantly in flux,” said the secretary.

During the last eight years, the Defense Department has operated with key acquisition positions unfilled. Further, during this eight-year period, the size of the Defense Contract Management Agency’s budget and workforce has dropped by half. Gates explained

this is due, in part, to reductions in department-wide procurement staffing after the Cold War but that the cuts went “too deep.”

The secretary committed to building a strong foundation for major acquisition programs and revealed that the military services and the department’s components — including DCMA — have committed to boosting acquisition staffing. The Defense chief stated that DCMA would hire some 2,300 additional people by July 2010 and that the Army would be adding 1,000 civilian and 400 military acquisition officials to its ranks. Lawmakers have signed on to the secretary’s efforts to push acquisition reform, rebuilding the department’s acquisition and contracting corps.

As part of this department-wide effort, DCMA undertook the “Human Capital Solutions

Initiative.” With assistance from the Office of Personnel Management and contractor support, DCMA is not only seeking to grow its corps of professional acquisition and contracting employees, but also to accomplish better and more effective workforce planning, succession planning, leadership development and examine and revise training and assignment plans and practices.

“It’s all about the people,” said human resources director Randy Sawlsville. “We will need the support of all our employees in building the right human capital policies and infrastructure to build and retain a talented workforce at the appropriate levels to be able to accomplish our mission.”

To achieve this goal, HR has focused its efforts on aligning human capital priorities — from training and career development, to policies and procedures, to recruiting and retention — to support job satisfaction, job performance and DCMA mission accomplishment.

Most immediately, DCMA seeks to attract more than 2,000 employees to the agency over the balance of

**The Defense chief stated that DCMA would hire some 2,300 additional people by July 2010 and that the Army would be adding 1,000 civilian and 400 military acquisition officials to its ranks.**

//

# Initiative as Solution to Rebuilding DCMA

the year. This recruiting effort will provide the workforce needed to ensure that DCMA can give its customers the acquisition and contracting management they expect, according to Sawlsville. “But we must focus on more than just recruiting,” he said. “The advanced age of our workforce means a large number of retirements over the next few years, and we must ‘grow’ the replacements for these talented people by having a succession plan in place.”

“At DCMA, we have an unparalleled, talented workforce,” said agency director Charlie Williams, Jr. “In the coming years, we will face a great challenge as we anticipate a shift in our workforce. We must be prepared to respond to that challenge by replacing critical skills and having ‘world-class solutions’ that will continue to build and retain our workforce.”

*What does this mean for me?*

In the coming months, DCMA employees will have the opportunity to improve the landscape of our future workforce and be fully engaged in

“Over the past few months, we’ve made significant progress in identifying key areas we need to improve with respect to how we conduct the agency business in pursuit of our vision.”

— Charlie Williams, Jr.

determining their career paths and skill development, according to Sawlsville. Human resources will invite a number of employees to participate in interviews, surveys, advisory panels, working groups and focus groups.

“The input of our employees is critical to ensuring DCMA continues to be a competitive, quality place to work and that we continue to recruit and retain the best and brightest employees,” said Sawlsville. “More specifically, we want to make DCMA a preferred employer in the federal government, identify people with the right skills for the right jobs, identify skills we will need in the future so we may develop a workforce prepared to support our mission and to empower our employees to be full partners in developing their own careers.”

DCMA’s director noted the agency’s focus on addressing these issues. “Over the past few months, we’ve made significant progress in identifying key areas we need to improve with respect to how we conduct the agency business in pursuit of our vision,” said Williams.

“I recognize many of our employees may already be asking, ‘So, where’s the beef?’ It’s coming, but I think it is important that we move deliberately as we seek to make changes so that the changes are not just Band-Aids™, but enduring solutions,” he continued. “As I have said before, we’re at the starting line of a journey, which will require patience and hard work. The human capital solutions initiative is a huge step forward on that journey.” 