

JAMES NORRIS: NEWLY APPOINTED SPECIAL PROGRAMS DIRECTOR

By Mark Woodbury, DCMA Public Affairs



James Norris, right, Defense Contract Management Agency Special Programs Division director, discusses a security issue involving the division with Ted Robinson, DCMA Special Programs security director, at DCMA Headquarters, Jan. 11. (Photos by Mark Woodbury, DCMA Public Affairs)

A new face took charge of the Defense Contract Management Agency's Special Programs Division late last year; though, the "new face" is old hat when it comes to working within the agency.

James Norris, DCMA Special Programs director, started his connection to the agency back in 2000. As an Army contracting officer, Norris was the operations chief and deputy commander of DCMA Lockheed Martin Missile and Fires and Controls — an assignment that solidified his desire to remain working within the agency.

During this assignment, Norris also commanded a contingency

contract administration support team in Bosnia, helping him realize the importance of agency support to the warfighters.

Following his temporary duty in Bosnia, the Army promoted Norris and assigned him to command the DCMA Special Programs South office. While in the position, Norris

retired from the Army after 21 years of service. He returned to the position immediately as the first civilian director for the office.

After serving in this position for three years, Norris became the executive director of DCMA's Office of Independent Assessment for two years before his appointment to his current position.

HOBBIES/INTERESTS

Admitting that all work and no play makes for an unhappy person, Norris reveals he finds enjoyment in "anything sports related," quipping, "I would rather watch badminton on television before watching a sitcom. There is just something that excites me about watching something competitive."

Norris' favorite sports teams include The University of Alabama and the Green Bay Packers, but he admits he is slowly becoming a Duke University

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basketball fan because of his son’s attendance there.

Although Norris said it is getting more and more difficult to get a round in these days, he enjoys the time when he gets to play golf. Having played historic courses like Saint Andrews, Pebble Beach and Pinehurst, Norris said he is always ready to take on the next challenging course nearby.

One interest Norris declared he will “always make the time for” is his family’s annual hunting and outdoor trip to Arkansas. “This is my time to trust in the people I work with [to run the shop in my absence] and wholeheartedly spend the quality time I need with my family,” Norris remarked.

LEADERSHIP

Norris is a believer that no particular leadership style works in every situation. To him, great leaders adjust their leadership style and approach to lead their teams most effectively.

However, Norris believes there are traits that can, and should be, incorporated within every leader’s style — such as showing team members that the leader understands the work they are doing, that they are capable of doing the work and dealing with the pressures the job requires. “You will be amazed at how far people will follow you when they know you understand, as their leader, the

pressures and commitments they deal with on a day-to-day basis,” Norris said.

Norris admitted this requires him to get out of his office and from behind his desk almost every day, a challenge he welcomes. “I like being in the pit,” Norris admitted. “Being strapped behind a desk all day is not where I am most happy.”

Another trait Norris incorporates into how he leads is simply who he leads. “I am only as good as the people around me,” he affirmed. “Some people are afraid of surrounding themselves with people who are better than themselves. I am certainly not one of these people.” Norris said surrounding yourself with people better than yourself can only make a person better and bring eventual success to the entire group.

GOALS/VISION FOR THE DIVISION

Feeding from the agency goals and visions, Norris said he must simply “strive and motivate the Special Programs Division to do everything it can to be the best at accomplishing the established agency goals and vision,” a goal he says simply needs to be maintained rather than established. “Mr. Youngs made this a fantastic division,” Norris commented. “It’s simply my responsibility to maintain what he has created here while ensuring the division accomplishes the next milestone that brings the division, and the agency, that much closer to the coveted title of ‘great.’” 🟡



James Norris, Defense Contract Management Agency Special Programs Division director, looks over documents at his desk at DCMA Headquarters, Jan. 11.