

DCMA's *trusted eyes and ears*

Matthew Sablan | Staff Writer



From left: Brian Scolpino, U.S. Navy Air Systems Command 1.0 Program Success Orientation Team, Pamela Gray, NAVAIR 2.3 Contracts Division V-22 Program chief, and Doris Sciara, Defense Contract Management Agency customer liaison, Navy Portfolio Division, pose for a photograph at a Program Executive Office Aviation off-site. Off-site events like this are an opportunity for DCMA Portfolio Management and Integration customer liaisons to build bridges with the services. (Photos courtesy of Doris Sciara)

“**W**e ride ahead in advance of DCMA’s Operations; we serve as DCMA’s trusted eyes and ears,” said Joseph Sweeney, Defense Contract Management Agency Portfolio Management and Integration Directorate executive director.

Sweeney compared PM&I to a military’s scouts and cavalry, helping DCMA better understand what is coming over the hill in terms of DCMA customers’ emerging demands. Gathering this intelligence and keeping the DCMA senior leadership team and operations up-to-date is the PM&I Directorate’s job.

This forward reconnaissance gives DCMA an external awareness with respect to the Office of the Secretary of Defense,

the military services, as well as the defense industrial base. PM&I gathers business intelligence and provides acquisition insight to alert DCMA’s senior leadership team and the Operational Directors (Chief Operating Office, International and Special Programs) of potential challenges, and where the Department of Defense will need help from DCMA.

The information PM&I feeds to Operations helps DCMA be best prepared

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to meet their customers’ needs. “PM&I is focused on customer satisfaction,” said Walter Eady, DCMA PM&I deputy executive director.

PM&I provides a direct connection to the heart of the agency. It constantly engages through our onsite customer liaison representatives stationed at customer buying activities throughout the country. PM&I also executes a strategic customer engagement plan to stay connected with the senior leadership levels of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, service acquisition executives and program executive officers.

“Communication is key,” Sweeney said. “We can’t leave Operations and the agency blind; we serve as the primary conduit for DCMA’s strategic customers

to get their issues, concerns and priorities communicated to the agency.”

Sweeney also described PM&I's role in the Defense Acquisition Executive Summary Review Process. “The DAES review is the principal mechanism for tracking Major Defense Acquisition Programs between milestone reviews. In a Memorandum dated May 12, 2010, the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, Mr. Frank Kendall, reinstated quarterly OSD staff assessments of program execution performance, which also led to DCMA being designated as an independent OSD rating organization. This is the first time in our agency's history we have been asked by DoD to provide our independent cost assessments of major program execution performance directly to OSD. This is significant.”

Not only does the agency submit independent assessments directly to OSD, but Sweeney also represents the agency at the actual defense acquisition executive summary reviews. Kendall chairs these monthly at the Pentagon that are attended by all the SAEs.

Better Buying, More Power

“We live and rely on accurate information,” Eady said. “The data we gather is critical. Our information/data must be independent and fact-based.”

PM&I's role is to provide this data to DoD in support of Dr. Ashton Carter's

Better Buying Power initiative. The collected data is briefed out at the DoD-level and is critical to informing the government's implementation of the initiative.

“We're on AT&L's speed dial; they're always asking for more information,” Eady said. “One thing we look at is where problems are that can be identified so we can provide advice to the services and OSD on any issues driving up costs.”

Another initiative PM&I is leading is the Standards Based Management Contract Oversight Program, scheduled to come online spring 2012. This program will be modeled after the Superior Supplier Incentive Program established by the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics. It will potentially let DCMA reduce oversight on high-performing suppliers so it can focus those resources where they would yield higher returns.

“PM&I is really looking at all the services and engaging with them to communicate and find the issues that DCMA needs to engage,” Sweeney said.

Acquiring Acquisition Insight

To meet customers' goals, PM&I also participates in the Industry Corporate Management Councils. Corporate Management Councils gives DCMA the opportunity to speak with senior levels of the defense industry about their business systems and to resolve customer issues.

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This has proven to be an excellent forum for communicating ideas, encouraging and sponsoring process improvement efforts; supporting acquisition initiatives by utilizing teaming, process management, and risk management tools; and for bringing to the table those customer issues that require top-level focus (e.g., performing financial/technical reviews, researching issues, addressing high risk/problem areas, etc.)

“Being the cavalry means that we gather information, and we convert that information into acquisition insight,” Sweeney said. “We then share this insight to effectively position our agency's operations.”

“PM&I is always on the road, looking for what is coming over the hill,” Sweeney said. “PM&I is uniquely positioned to provide the agency with the acquisition insight it needs.” 

Training the Agency

The PM&I intranet site has multiple webcasts on a variety of customer-related policies. To access this information, visit their website at https://home.dcma.mil/DCMAHQ/dcma_PI/index.cfm.



From left: Navy Rear Adm. Steven Eastburg, now vice commander, Naval Air Systems Command; and Deputy Program Executive Officer Aviation Todd Balazs discuss various objectives between sessions. The Defense Contract Management Agency meets with stakeholders, customers and subject matter experts like Eastburg and Balazs to keep informed of the community's growing needs.