

# Contracts Executive Leaves Legacy of Innovation, Excellence After 25 Years of Service

Cassandra Locke | DCMA Public Affairs



Charlie Williams, Jr., Defense Contract Management Agency director, left, presents David E. Ricci, DCMA Contracts executive director, a certificate for his retirement at DCMA headquarters in Alexandria, Va., Sept. 30. Ricci retired after 25 years of government service. (Photos by Cassandra Locke, DCMA Public Affairs)

## After 25 years of government service, the executive director of Contracts at the Defense Contract

Management Agency, David E. Ricci, retired in a formal ceremony at the DCMA Headquarters building in Alexandria, Va., Sept. 30.

Ricci's responsibilities included policy development and deployment of training and mission support tools in the areas of contract management, property administration and small business.

"Dave has brought more value and competence to the acquisition community," said Mike Williams, former DCMA chief information officer.

"Dave was the senior leader in charge of establishing the DCMA Executive Directorate of Contracts."

According to Williams, Ricci was tasked with reinvigorating the professional disciplines included within that directorate and heightening the Contracts workforce's professionalism throughout the agency.

"I believe he did an excellent job in doing all of those things," added Williams.

Ricci has done many things throughout the years to improve the agency and the overall acquisition process. According to Robin Schulze, DCMA Contract Policy director, Ricci's biggest contribution to

the agency has been his vision for DCMA's contracting workforce.

"When he was selected to be the executive director for Contracts, he was faced with many challenges," said Schulze. "The agency wasn't functionally aligned, had no standard internal policy, no structured competency assessment methodology, no consistent internal controls, little rigor in training and few enterprise-wide performance measures."

Schulze said Ricci immediately set off to functionally align the Contracts community and implement several key initiatives. The functional alignment was completed in 2008.

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— Robin Schulze, Defense Contract Management Agency Contract Policy director

“At our 2008 Contracts conference, he presented his initiatives to the contracting community and received a standing ovation in support of his vision and leadership,” said Schulze. “In less than two years, he has successfully implemented most of those initiatives, including standard policy that includes the how-to-do details long sought by the contracting community.”

Ricci also implemented an agency-specific contracting competency assessment tool, the contract management boards of review, for consistent internal controls and enterprise-wide performance indicators.

“He has also made great progress toward his goal of establishing a robust training program that is tailored to our unique mission,” added Schulze.

At the same time, Ricci developed an overall strategy to reinvigorate the Department’s cost and pricing skills.

According to Schulze, cost and pricing skills had been almost completely obliterated within the Department of Defense. The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics eagerly sought and endorsed his strategy, which included the establishment of DCMA’s pricing center.

“The center has been a great success,” said Schulze. “I attribute much of that success to Dave’s leadership and innovative hiring strategy.”

She said the Department needed to grow hundreds of journeyman-level cost and price analysts quickly, a task that usually would take several years. To overcome the challenge, Ricci targeted the mass of unemployed journeymen from the financial industry.

“As a result, we are providing the Department the support it needs years in advance of what was initially projected,” said Schulze. “I have personally reviewed several packages that were developed by these new-to-government journeyman hires and can say with confidence the strategy was a huge success.”

Among Ricci’s visionary successes was the implementation of the paid cost rule.

“Implementation of the rule, as planned by the Department, would have resulted in contractors maintaining dual systems, resulting in millions of dollars in unnecessary increased costs to the government,” said Schulze. “Dave developed an approach to seamlessly and flawlessly implement the rule without the additional costs to the Department — a huge success, not only for the Department and agency, but also for taxpayers,” she added.

Ricci was also recognized for independently resolving the Department’s specialty metal issues. Ricci has remained the Department’s specialty metal expert to this day. This year, at the USD(AT&L)’s request, Ricci developed the business case, delegation of authority and contract modification to implement the current specialty metals requirement.

“I’ve been very lucky throughout my career and worked for many great bosses, but Dave is the best boss I’ve ever had,” said Schulze. “He is recognized not only throughout the Department but also by the civilian agencies as one of the most proficient technical experts in federal acquisition. His ability to set the tone and vision — for not only DCMA but DoD — is unparalleled, and he inspires me to challenge myself each and every day. He is a consummate professional, leader and mentor as well as a treasured friend.”

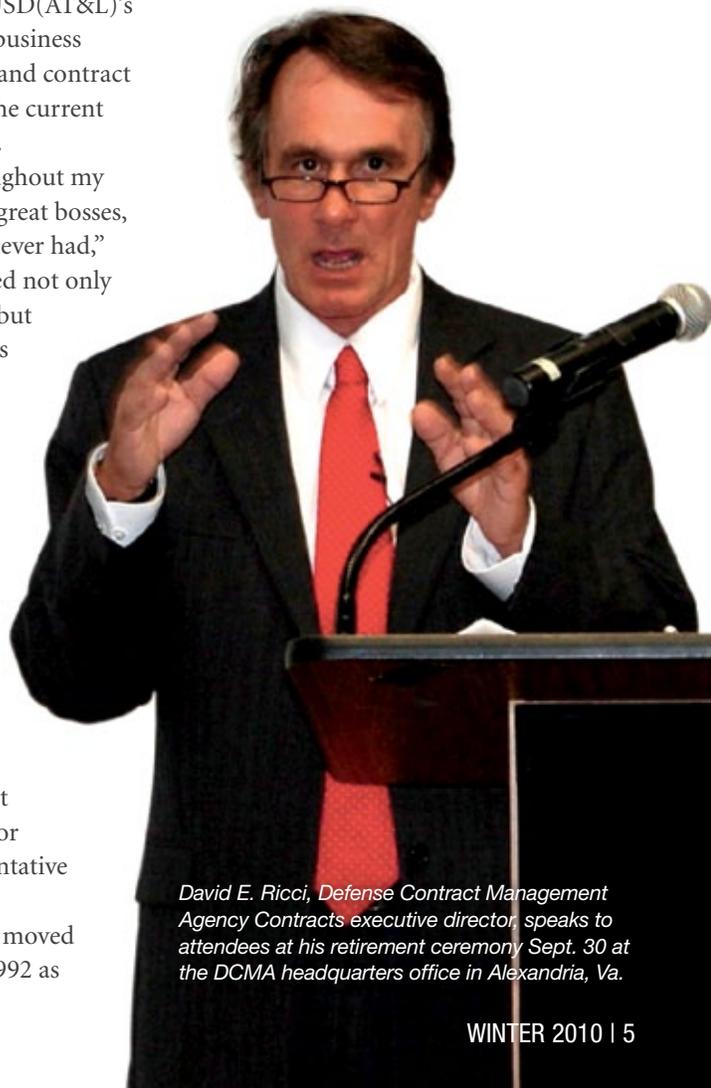
Ricci began his government service as a contract negotiator with the Naval Plant Representative Office in Stratford, Conn., at Sikorsky Aircraft in 1985. He moved to DCMA Headquarters in 1992 as

a participant in the agency’s Professional Enhancement Program and has held a variety of positions in the contracting field, including serving as DCMA’s contract policy director from 1997 to 2005.

Prior to his current position, Ricci was the deputy executive director for Contract Operations and Customer Relations at DCMA Headquarters. His responsibilities included policy direction, training development and mission support tools for all operational personnel within the agency in functions such as contract administration, property, product assurance, engineering and customer relations.

“Fair winds and following seas, and I’m sure the future is bringing you better,” said Williams to Ricci.

Ron Youngs, DCMA Cost and Pricing Center director, will assume all of the Contracts directorate position’s authorities and responsibilities until a new Senior Executive Service appointee has been selected and is in place. 



*David E. Ricci, Defense Contract Management Agency Contracts executive director, speaks to attendees at his retirement ceremony Sept. 30 at the DCMA headquarters office in Alexandria, Va.*