DCMA
DEFENSE CONTRACT MANAGEMENT AGENCY

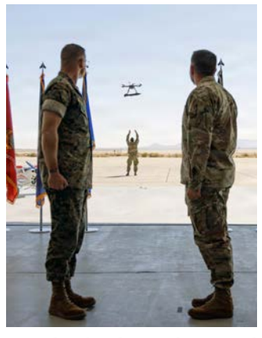
INSIGHT

DCMA supports joint mission to deliver

DRONE DOMINANCE

"This is just the beginning. Drones and other unmanned systems are driving a renaissance in precision technology. With DCMA's help, we'll look even further ahead, helping explore how battlefield manufacturing can fuel the speed and scale of fielding and sustaining equipment."

- Michael Duffey, Undersecretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment



(Front) An Air Force MQ-9 Reaper remotely piloted aircraft, assigned to the 432nd Wing, sits outside a sunshade at Creech Air Force Base, Nevada, April 15, 2025. It can be disassembled and loaded into a single container for deployment worldwide. (Air Force photo by Senior Airman Renee Blundon)

(Back) Marine Corps Col. Timothy Hough, former commander of DCMA Special Programs Command, and Air Force Col. Dustin Thomas, DCMA Special Programs Unmanned Systems-Experimental commander, watch a drone deliver the unit colors during US-X's establishment ceremony at Edwards Air Force Base, California, Sept. 23, 2025. (Air Force photo by Lindsey Iniguez)

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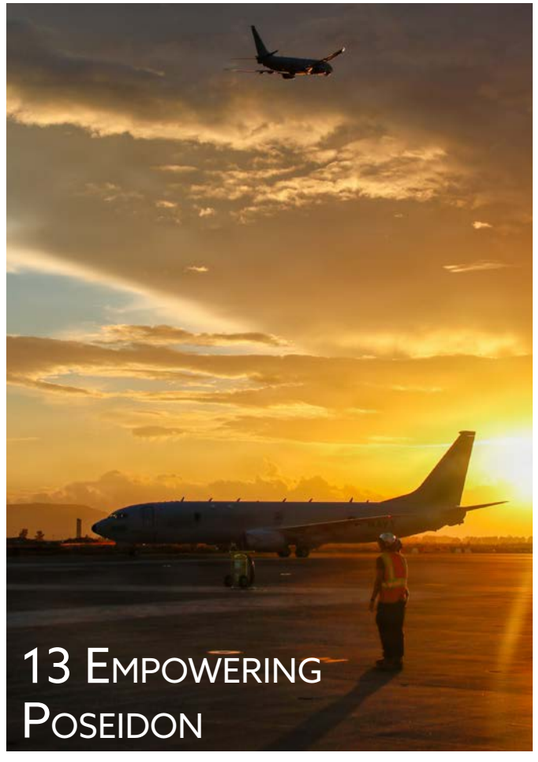


Welcome to the Defense Contract Management Agency's INSIGHT magazine. The following pages will introduce you to the work, and more importantly, the people, of DCMA. This team of 9,400 dedicated civil servants and military service members manages more than 300,000 contracts valued in excess of $11 trillion on behalf of our War Department customers. They deliver millions of items to our fighting forces each year, from aircraft to service rifles, and authorize more than $1 billion in contractor payments every business day.

This is impressive and essential work, but our product delivery mission is only half the story.

We're at a pivotal moment in history, as exponential advancements in technology inject uncertainty and new challenges into our nation's defense. Threats are increasing and shifting as never before, and our military capabilities must constantly transform to maintain decisive advantage. Defense acquisition needs to keep pace, through reform and by providing instant, actionable production and supply chain information to decision makers at all levels.

DCMA's unparalleled knowledge of the defense industrial base — enabled by proximity, maximized with technology and powered by our experienced acquisition professionals — allows us to provide real-time delivery, programmatic and contractor health data on demand. This information feeds decision making across the War Department and has become an indispensable part of operational planning and execution. It's folded into a broad spectrum of uses including Congressional responses, budget planning, Major Defense Acquisition Program reviews and industry engagements.

Last year was one of the most dynamic and important years in DCMA's history. In addition to major leaps forward in our data management and insight capability, we completed a significant internal reorganization, supported aggressive War Department initiatives, and launched a new strategic plan to serve as our compass.

In the fall we were rewarded for our success, as DCMA was hand-picked for a vital role in building U.S. drone dominance. We're now transforming the Blue List into a growing marketplace, fielding drones and components to our warfighters rapidly and by the millions. This innovative effort is pushing DCMA with fresh urgency and is a harbinger of the speed and scale of defense acquisition to come.

With our new structure and strategic plan in place, we're fully locked in with the War Department's National Defense Strategy and the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment priorities. The task now is to execute.

We'll deliver to our fighting forces the products they need to shoot, move, communicate and defend our nation. We'll deliver to our decision makers the precise defense production insight they need for fiscal planning, readiness and real-world military operations. And, as the execution arm of USW(A&S), we'll be the leading edge of implementing comprehensive acquisition reform to accelerate production, save money, rebuild our defense industrial base and keep our arsenal stocked and ready.

As USD(A&S) Michael Duffey said, "Success necessitates judgement, and DCMA will be a fulcrum as we balance change, speed and risk in acquisition reform; just as it's always formed part of the foundation of the acquisition process."

We're at a pivotal moment in history, and DCMA is more than ready, we're executing.

Stephen R. Tedford
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy
Director

BY THE NUMBERS

As of May 2026

8,875 Civilian Employees

309,743 Active Contracts

554 Military Personnel

DCMA averages more than $1.14 billion in contractor payments each business day

With a total value of: $11.2T providing direct support to the War Department and other government agencies

Fiscal Year 2025 Return on investment: 8.39:1

In fiscal year 2025, DCMA saved, recovered or cost avoided $12.9 billion against an annual $1.54 billion budget. The agency has produced a positive financial return on investment for the past 10 years

Cost savings from contract terminations

Commercial pricing, property and plant clearance, and surge support efforts

Contract litigation, cost accounting standards, fraud cost recoveries, incurred cost settlements and property claims

"DCMA's mission is both expansive and essential. Every contract we oversee, every program we safeguard, and every dollar we are entrusted to steward directly strengthens the warfighter."

- DCMA Director Vice Adm. Stephen Tedford

Fiscal Year 2025

PLATFORM DELIVERIES

243,421
Missiles/Rockets/Precision

18,086
Comms/NAV/Sensor

3,330
Ground Vehicles

509
Aircraft Engines

492
Aircraft

89
Missile Systems

7
Nuclear/Space

"Our war machine needs to be able to deliver punch, after punch, after punch. And US-X will look even further ahead, helping explore how battlefield manufacturing can fuel the speed and scale of putting drones into the fight."

- DCMA Deputy Director Sonya Ebright

Warfighter Support Mission

DCMA is, first and foremost, a product delivery organization. Our nation's warfighters expect our defense industry to produce and deliver the equipment they need to fight, survive and win. DCMA's integrated team of acquisition and support professionals makes this happen.

National Defense Strategy

- **Defend the U.S. Homeland**
- **Deter China in the Indo-Pacific Through Strength, Not Confrontation**
- **Increase Burden-Sharing with America's Allies and Partners**
- **Supercharge the Defense Industrial Base**

As of May 2026, DCMA manages 290 programs valued at $1.55 trillion. In addition to the services, DCMA performs contract work on behalf of other War Department and federal organizations, from NASA to the Defense Logistics Agency.

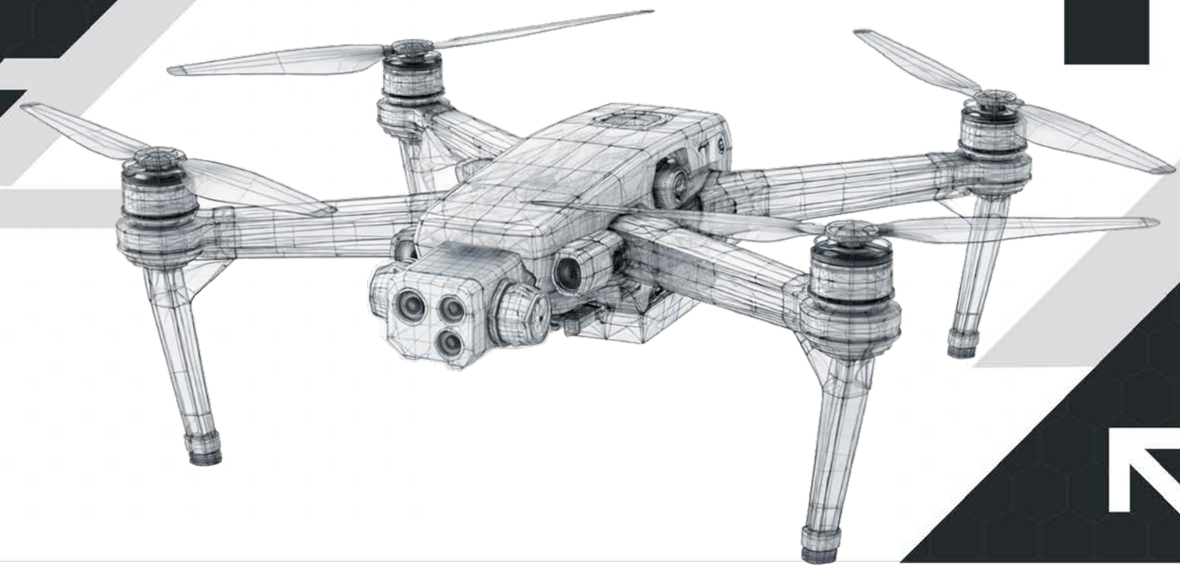
Active Programs

***ACAT I: 110 Programs valued at $1.3T**
ACAT II: 45 programs valued at $46.08B

Navy and Marine Corps: 97
Air Force: 76
Army: 76
Missile Defense Agency: 17
Space Force: 10
NASA: 3

****ACAT I, or acquisition category I, denotes a program that has either been designated by the War Department as a major defense acquisition program or is estimated to require an eventual expenditure for research, development, and test and evaluation of a certain value.***

DRONE DOMINANCE



By Thomas Perry and Sarah Gauvin

The Defense Contract Management Agency joined an effort to build U.S. dominance in unmanned systems by accelerating its pursuit to meet the increased demand for these systems among combatant and buying commands.

The agency-established DCMA Special Programs Unmanned Systems, commonly called DCMA US-X for "unmanned systems – experimental," is the first true integration of classified and mainstream work for DCMA Special Programs. This operational command is normally dedicated to contract administration of classified or other programs that require additional security safeguards. A key initiative for US-X is the DCMA Blue List, which offers warfighters safe, fast and flexible options for drone procurement and transforms a fragmented market into a trusted pipeline.

In July 2025, Secretary of War Pete Hegseth awarded DCMA the Blue List, citing the agency's past mission success. Demonstrating its commitment to speed and professionalism, DCMA launched the Blue List website on Dec. 3, 2025, a month ahead of schedule.

DCMA is rapidly transforming the Blue List into a true marketplace where service members can purchase trusted drones and drone components. The vision is for the Blue List to become an interconnected ecosystem where manufacturers, researchers, and end-users collaborate to drive innovation, efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and speed of delivery.

Undersecretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment Michael Duffey commented on DCMA's US-X and Blue List efforts on Dec. 11, 2025, stating, "This is just the beginning. Drones and other unmanned systems are driving a renaissance in precision technology. With DCMA's help, we'll look even further ahead, helping explore how battlefield manufacturing can fuel the speed and scale of fielding and sustaining equipment."

The agency's efforts are instrumental in the broader War Department's push for acquisition reform.

"DCMA Unmanned Systems is about precision, speed and an unsentimental approach to the next era of defense acquisition," said Sonya Ebright, DCMA's deputy director. "It's our first integration of mainstream and Special Programs. It's off-leash in some ways, expected to go faster, be more flexible, less risk-averse and draw the map for future programs to follow. It's our racecar and a test bed, and we'll use the things that work best to make our entire fleet better."

A key aspect of this organizational focus is managing the War Department Blue List program, a multi-tiered operational unit and defense industrial base support network designed to drive rapid development, vigorous production and efficient delivery of unmanned aircraft systems and components.

"Secretary of War Pete Hegseth directed us to 'unleash the combined potential of American manufacturing and warfighter ingenuity' through the Blue List, a completely new type of marketplace that will push the small drone competitive space," said Ebright. "This US-X managed list will incentivize industry to lower costs and encourage innovation. More importantly, it will get critical drones and components into warfighter hands as fast as Amazon delivers products to your home."

To accelerate the commercialization of drone technologies, US-X plans to champion industrial access by simplifying the application and onboarding process for American companies.

"The Blue List onboarding process is still being prototyped, but the concept is straightforward: Focus on components rather than full systems," said Air Force Col. Dustin Thomas, DCMA US-X commander. "To meet the secretary of war's intent for faster, easier onboarding, we designed a process where a military unit sponsors a desired (small) UAS, delivers the aircraft for inspection, and every component is logged against the Blue List."

If all components are already approved, a certification is triggered, and the product is added to the Blue List program.

"If we find a component not yet on the list, only that part goes to deeper review with a recognized assessor, while we also identify alternative components already approved if the company is willing to adjust," said Thomas. "That balance of speed and rigor makes the process both credible and fast. DCMA US-X and the Defense Innovation Unit are engaged from the very beginning. We're not waiting for a package to arrive; we're side-by-side with the company troubleshooting and guiding them through requirements in real time."

According to Army Maj. Eric Scholl, DCMA Blue List program manager, this mindset was recently tested when three operational units — Edwards' Experimental Test Force, United States Special Operations Command, and the Army's 75th Ranger Regiment — nominated companies to participate in the submission and onboarding test evaluation.

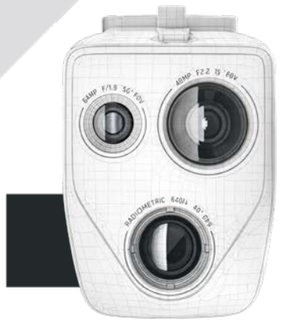
Titan Dynamics, an additive-manufactured UAS and software company, participated in the pilot program.

"Going into this pilot, our expectation was that the Blue List process would be slow and resource-intensive," said Noah Benton, Titan Dynamics chief technology officer. "What impressed us is how the in-development onboarding process actually empowered us to accelerate forward with new improvements. It aligned perfectly with how Titan Dynamics uses additive manufacturing to rapidly adapt and deliver new capabilities."

After joining the test evaluation, the in-development onboarding process continued to impress Benton and his team.

"With the Blue List Framework, the process became seamless," he said. "We submitted a bill of materials and received precise feedback on a few non-compliant components. We reengineered, rebuilt, and resubmitted on the same day. From the first email to Blue List placement, it took only 10 days. The fact that our aircraft was only at Edwards for three days to validate components shows how dramatically faster this framework enables the department to receive secure and mission-ready systems."

A Navy sailor with 2d Reconnaissance Battalion, 2d Marine Division, operates an RQ-20 Puma unmanned aircraft system during Operation Baltic Sentry in Southern Finland. (Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Brian Bolin Jr.)



In the past, similar challenges could extend the review and approval process significantly.

"The Titan Dynamics case was our first real test," said Thomas. "Their initial submission wasn't compliant, but instead of sending them away for months, we worked the challenges together with Edwards' Experimental Test Force. That collaboration meant we resolved the problems and resubmitted in days, not quarters. Our team worked with the company to identify compliant replacement parts, and Titan Dynamics quickly rebuilt the drone. Once resubmitted with all compliant parts, the system was placed on the Blue List in just three days."

Benton said while the process is still early, it shows a ton of promise. He engaged with Thomas and Scholl throughout the process and submitted feedback regarding specific components not yet available on the Blue List Framework. Such improvement suggestions were a key aspect of the onboarding test and will benefit US-X and future industry partners.

"The more the list of approved components expands, the more we, and the broader U.S. drone sector, can accelerate delivery of secure, innovative airframes that strengthen our nation's defense," said Benton. "We're grateful to the DCMA team for creating a system that listens to industry input and accelerates progress forward for American drone innovation."

As US-X evolves its Blue List support to meet developing mission objectives, much will change. Its focus on cost savings and efficiency will remain constant, ensuring excellence in warfighter and industry support.

"Every day we shave off the onboarding cycle is money saved – both for the company and the department," said Thomas. "By narrowing reviews to only the components that matter, we avoid relitigating entire systems. That translates directly into reduced nonrecurring costs and faster scaling. An assessment costs upward of $80,000. By focusing on the components, costs can be reduced to between $5,000-$20,000 depending on the complexity of each component. In addition, by focusing on the components, the cost can be shared and spread among many more vendors, ultimately reducing the high cost of entry to the Blue List.

"Operationally, it means more drones in the hands of warfighters when they need them, instead of sitting in certification queues," he continued. "Over time, the fiscal benefits grow as the Blue List builds out. Companies can reuse approved parts and go faster with each iteration."

Resource allocation serves a key role in mission, operational and fiscal success for the defense and commercial industries. To reach DOW's "Drone Dominance" objectives, public and private sectors must reshape past practices and embrace cooperative innovation.

"Drone dominance requires more than just swift delivery," said Ebright. "US-X will also play a crucial role in exploring and fostering long-term strategies to grow a domestic industrial base that can unceasingly deliver high numbers of low-cost, reliable drones to our warfighters. Our war machine needs to be able to deliver punch, after punch, after punch. And US-X will look even further ahead, helping explore how battlefield manufacturing can fuel the speed and scale of putting drones into the fight. Soon our front lines will build devices on-demand, in the field or at sea, tailoring them to the mission. I am proud to be a part of this historic moment and look forward to watching US-X takeoff, land and flourish."

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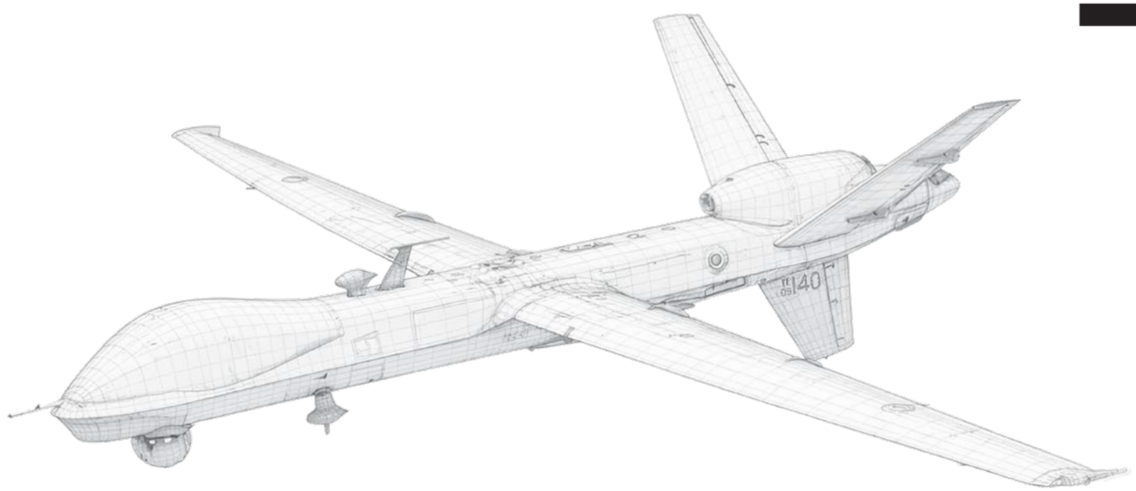
- DCMA Deputy Director Sonya Ebright

Master Sgt. David Rogers, 315th Security Forces Squadron fire team leader, aims a DroneDefender weapon at a small unmanned aircraft system during Exercise NEXUS FORGE Feb. 5, 2025, at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. Adversaries continue to refine drone tactics, increasing the need for adaptable training and emerging technologies to maintain airspace dominance. (Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Jeffrey Grossi)



DCMA BLUE LIST

By Sarah Gauvin

DCMA's Special Programs Unmanned Systems-Experimental, or US-X, launched its Blue List Unmanned Aircraft Systems website Dec. 3, 2025, creating an effective and flexible path for delivering critical drones and drone components to America's warfighters.

The website marks a successful Blue List responsibility change from the Defense Innovation Unit to DCMA.

"Launching the Blue List website is a major step forward," said Air Force Col. Dustin Thomas, DCMA US-X commander. "DIU built a great prototype, and DCMA is now scaling it for use across the Department of War, and this is only the beginning."

The website exceeded the timeline goals established by DOW in a July memorandum, "Unleashing U.S. Military Drone Dominance," said Thomas.

"Through the Blue List, DCMA US-X is already transforming our warfighting capability by getting unmanned systems rapidly fielded at the tactical level," said Sonya Ebright, DCMA deputy director. "It's going to help spur a revival of our defense industrial base. And it'll ultimately lead to much-needed changes in our acquisition processes."

As DOW acquisition models change to meet the needs of the operational climate, the Blue List website demonstrates how a new procurement strategy can more effectively deliver products our warfighters need to fight, survive and win, said Ebright.

US-X plans to make the Blue List a true marketplace where service members can purchase trusted drones and drone components scaled to all aspects of unmanned systems, according to Thomas.

Green Berets, assigned to 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), conduct preflight checks on small Unmanned Aircraft Systems prior to their final course evaluations during the Advanced Drone Course at Fort Carson, Colorado. (Army Photo by Sgt. Christian Dela Cruz)

"DCMA's Blue List delivers the capability, value and rigor to reach across thousands of suppliers, helping the services field new technologies faster and with confidence," said Thomas. "It is an enabler for getting UAS to the warfighter to prepare for any future conflict."

The Blue List UAS website offers warfighters safe, fast and flexible options and transforms a fragmented market into a trusted pipeline, said Thomas.

"The team worked tirelessly to ensure the website (and prospective marketplace) gives warfighters a single, easy-to-use source of vetted options," said Army Maj. Eric Scholl, Blue List program manager.

According to Scholl, the agency plans to scale and improve the DCMA Blue List website. The agency's goal is for the website to become a true marketplace for U.S. military services by the end of 2027, expanding supplier onboarding, assessor coverage and service integrations.

"The Blue List will evolve into an interconnected ecosystem where manufacturers, researchers and end-users work together within the procurement process to drive innovation and efficiency at the speed of the warfighter," said Scholl.

Drone dominance requires more than just swift delivery, said Ebright. US-X will also play a crucial role in exploring and fostering long-term strategies to grow a domestic industrial base that can increasingly deliver high numbers of low-cost reliable drones to our warfighters.

"It's stimulating a revival of our defense industrial base that is leading to essential and long-promised changes in our acquisition processes," said Ebright.

EMPOWERING POSEIDON

AIMO delivers upgrades to versatile maritime patrol aircraft

By Elizabeth Szoke and AIMO St. Augustine

The Defense Contract Management Agency is adapting to evolving threats, and its work on the P-8A Poseidon aircraft is a key example.

In 2025, DCMA's Aircraft Integrated Maintenance Operations St. Augustine delivered the first P-8A modified with Increment 3 Block 2 capabilities to the Navy. The upgrades provide full antisubmarine warfare; antisurface warfare; and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities.

"All functional areas within the AIMO St. Augustine team put in remarkable effort to influence the timely delivery of this aircraft back to the fleet to enhance warfighter capabilities," said Zachary Zeagler, quality group manager at AIMO St. Augustine.

Zeagler said success in meeting the contract's timeline and specifications began with early engagement during the negotiation phase.

"Our experts were able to provide valuable input before the contract was even signed," said Zeagler. "This prevented the contract modification delays that are typically seen when DCMA is not involved."

This proactive approach is a direct implementation of principles outlined in recent executive orders, including the April 9, 2025, order, "Modernizing Defense Acquisitions and Spurring Innovation in the Defense Industrial Base," and the April 15, 2025, order, "Restoring Common Sense to Federal Procurement." Zeagler called the project a "textbook execution" resulted in the on-time delivery of the major modification while meeting all contractual requirements.

The AIMO St. Augustine team conducted over 10,000 surveillance hours at Boeing's Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul, or MRO facility. This detailed oversight demonstrates why DCMA's unparalleled access to and understanding of the defense industrial base is so critical to successful reform. During this surveillance, they identified 43 risk factors and issued seven corrective action requests.

"Our team worked with contractors and Navy aircrew to conduct acceptance testing, which consisted of one functional check flight, one ground acceptance test and one flight acceptance test," said Navy Cmdr. Silas Carpenter, AIMO St. Augustine's government flight representative who oversees P-8A Poseidon production.

DCMA verified that all work, inspections and documentation were completed properly before a functional check flight.

"The FCFs are performed after any major modifications on an aircraft to ensure all aircraft systems work properly, and the aircraft is safe for flight," said Carpenter.

During the ground acceptance test, DCMA verified all tests were performed and met the contract's expected outcomes.

"The ground acceptance test allows the contractor to find and address any issues prior to flight, making the final test more productive," said Carpenter.

DCMA then worked with the contractor and Navy aircrew to conduct the flight acceptance test to ensure the aircraft met all contractual requirements before the government accepted the aircraft.

"Our job not only entails that the government receives its product on time and on budget, but that military personnel can successfully complete their mission and return home safely to their loved ones," said Patrick Hess, an AIMO St. Augustine quality assurance specialist. "I've been in aviation for over a decade, and it is still the best feeling watching the aircraft take off, knowing you had a hand in making that idea a reality."

In 2025, DCMA's AIMO St. Augustine delivered the first P-8A modified with Increment 3 Block 2 capabilities to the Navy. (Navy photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Samantha Jetzer)

Working on a new program like the P-8A Poseidon Increment 3 Block 2 modification can present evolving challenges compared to legacy programs, where obstacles have already been addressed. This is a situation where Hess feels he thrives.

"Being a part of the solution to questions that have never been posed, or problems that have never arisen before, gives me a sense of satisfaction when issues are ultimately rectified," Hess said. "Being able to give valuable input to your cohorts and the contractor means that you're making a difference day in and day out."

This on-the-ground, fact-based insight, derived from decades of experience, is critical for informing broader acquisition reform efforts, a responsibility DCMA is fulfilling as one of the first government agencies to implement these new policies.

AIMO St. Augustine is scheduled to oversee the modification of 14 more P-8A Poseidon aircraft at Boeing's facility at Cecil Airport, with five currently undergoing surveillance.

A Navy airman directs a P-8A Poseidon assigned to the "Fighting Marlins" of Patrol Squadron (VP) 40 as another P-8A flies overhead at Naval Air Station Sigonella, Sicily. (Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Andy Anderson)

ACCELERATING ACQUISITION REFORM

By Tonya Johnson

The Defense Contract Management Agency's Systems Command and Geographic & Systems Support Command officially launched during a stand-up ceremony at the agency's All Commanders & Deputies Conference in Herndon, Virginia, Sept. 18, 2025.

The overarching units replaced the Central, Eastern and Western Region Commands. The regions had made up 60% of the DCMA workforce. The new commands are a result of DCMA Vision, the agency's restructuring plan to better align its mission and structure to support its customers and America's warfighters. DCMA's Strategic Plan rigorously aligns the agency's goals to War Department objectives and directives, especially to deliver integrated capabilities at speed and scale, protect and sustain the force, and foster a resilient and robust industrial base, which this agency transformation helps achieve.

"Today we're recognizing the contributions our East, Central and West Regions have made to the agency over the last 16 years," said Sonya Ebright, DCMA deputy director, during the disestablishment ceremony. "But, more importantly, we're here to celebrate the people of the regions, and the teams and friendships that were formed during the regions' impressive run. We've had this structure in place for roughly 16 years, with continuous mission success and measurable return on investment. It was a model that worked at our inception and carried us through most of our history. You don't alter something like that without good reason, and a great deal of planning. And when you do, it's a big deal. That's why we're here today."

New Command Structure

Ebright said the new command structure is necessary for the agency to better serve the national defense team.

"Threats have changed, our defense priorities have changed, manufacturing and technology have changed," Ebright noted. "Artificial intelligence, automation, and unmanned systems were in their infancy when DCMA began. They're mature now and moving at a pace we couldn't have imagined years ago.

"Our saving grace is that even though our structure is changing, our people remain," she continued. "Our team of trusted professionals are the heart of what made the regions great. The people drove region success, and the dedication of region staffs and subordinate offices is what made the regions the core of DCMA. We get to take these professionals and move them to another structure, where I have no doubt they will excel."

The Geographic & Systems Support Command is led by Juanita Christensen, who is the former executive director of the Technical Directorate. Her deputy is Dave Devlin, who previously served as the Western Region deputy director. The GSS command has approximately 3,400 employees who manage more than 143,400 contracts with a contract value of $1.3 trillion.

Nine contract management offices will fall under the DCMA Geographic & Systems Support Command: Great Lakes; Ohio River Valley; Mid-Atlantic; Mountain Pacific; Northeast; South; Southeast; Southern California; and Great Plains.

Employees in the new GSS command provide oversight on numerous items and platforms, including the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense System, Integrated Battle Command System, Ground-based Midcourse Defense System, MK-53 Decoy Launching System, and various parts for the V-22 Osprey.

The Systems Command is led by Jorge Bennett, who had served as the agency's executive director of the Cost and Pricing Command. His deputy is Dan Durant, the previous deputy director of the Technical Directorate at DCMA headquarters. The command has approximately 3,500 employees who manage more than 59,000 contracts with a contract value of $1.956 trillion dollars. Through this work, DCMA is mapping and illuminating the complex supply chain feeding the defense industrial base.

Eleven CMOs will fall under the Systems Command: Fixed Wing, Vertical Lift, Aircraft Integrated Maintenance Operations, Aircraft Propulsion Operations, NASA Product Operations, Conventional Munitions, Missiles, Radars and Sensors, Space Enterprise, Naval Special Emphasis Operations and Land Systems.

Systems Command team members provide oversight on numerous items and platforms, including H-60 helicopters in the Black Hawk family, including the Seahawk, Pave Hawk, Jayhawk and White Hawk; CH-53K King Stallion; and VH-92 Patriot platforms. In addition, personnel in the various contracting support offices also provide acquisition oversight and insight of the V-22 Osprey, P-8A Poseidon, KC-46A Pegasus, F-15 Eagle, F/A-18 Hornet, T-7A Red Hawk, C-130 Hercules, and the F-35 Lightning II.

Navy Vice Adm. Stephen Tedford (right), DCMA director, Michael Duffey (center), Undersecretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment, and Sonya Ebright, DCMA deputy director, participate in a Dec. 11, 2025, change of leadership ceremony at the Ordnance Training Support Facility on Fort Lee, Va. During the event, the leaders highlighted the agency's commitment to aligning with Department of War directives. They emphasized that DCMA's transformation is critical to delivering integrated capabilities at speed and scale, protecting the force, and fostering a resilient defense industrial base. (DCMA photo by Patrick Tremblay)

The regions were led by Navy Capt. Nicola Gathright, the Eastern Region commander who retired Sept. 18; Army Col. Kenneth Darnall, the former Central Region commander; and Air Force Col. Shea Kennebrae, the former Western Region commander.

During the establishment ceremony, Christensen praised previous agency directors, retired Army Lt. Gen. David Bassett and Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Greg Masiello, now the program executive officer for the F-35 Lightning II Joint Program Office. She also highlighted the contributions of the deputy director, Sonya Ebright, ensuring the agency pivots in the right direction to support its customers by enhancing its acquisition insight and oversight mission. She also thanked the region commanders and CMO commanders for executing the agency mission.

"As we move forward in DCMA under the new command structure and in operationalizing our agency, there will be many challenges, but I know that GSS has exceptional commanders who will continue, through their professionalism and passion, to meet and exceed the mission," said Christensen. "We are now at an initial operational capability with the path ahead of us to mature and standardize our processes, refine our structures, understand the overall ecosystem required for success, and to fully integrate with the new operational centers."

Bennett, who previously served as the Central Region deputy director and acting Central Region director years ago, said now is the time for change.

"It's been a long road to get here," he said. "We're just now beginning the hard work. We must refine to meet the needs of our customers. We have new missions for the agency that are not just contract administration. The Systems Command, in partnership with GSS, is going to succeed because our structure and procedures will allow us to become even more agile."

One of the agency's new mission requirements will be to manage the Department of War's Blue List Program, which is used to vet certain unmanned aerial systems, commonly known as drones. With these new missions and a streamlined structure, DCMA is crucial to DOW's acquisition reform as the execution arm of the Office of the Undersecretary of War (Acquisition & Sustainment).

In addition to the new commands, there will be three operational centers: the Operational Learning Center, the Operational Analytics & Integration Center, and the Operational Business Center. Most of the region staff from the mission support office teams have been reassigned to one of the centers.

From Apollo to Artemis

DCMA boosts lunar landing mission

By DCMA NASA Product Operations, Luis Delgadillo and NASA

Two Defense Contract Management Agency personnel supporting NASA's Artemis Program witnessed the historic rollout of Artemis II at the Kennedy Space Center, Cape Canaveral, Florida, in 2026.

The stacked Space Launch System and Orion spacecraft, making up Artemis II, sat atop its mobile launch platform as the crawler started its four-mile journey to Launch Pad 39B, arriving in just under 12 hours. As an excited nation watched, the Artemis II mission sent four astronauts around the moon, harkening back to the trailblazing Apollo 8 mission.

Charles Nelson, a level-three non-destructive testing examiner with DCMA NASA Product Operations, and Scott Foreman, a program integrator for the booster element, with DCMA NPO's Northrop Grumman Utah, reflected on the significance of the scene at the Kennedy Space Center.

"I was born just two days before Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walked on the moon, fueling my dreams of becoming an astronaut," said Foreman, who has worked as a program integrator with his contracting office for more than 12 years. "Along with other children all over the world, I would watch the TV in awe as we sent men to the moon."

Foreman said seeing the Artemis II rocket roll out on the same crawler-transporter from the same Vehicle Assembly Building used by the Apollo missions more than 50 years ago brought back the excitement he experienced as a child.

"It's thrilling to be here now," he said. "When I first came on board with DCMA, we were just beginning to work on the early qualification for the solid rocket motors. Working on this rocket and contributing to the mission of sending astronauts back to the moon brings to mind the joy and the pride of all the hard work of the DCMA employees I've worked with."

Artemis II marked the first time since Apollo 17 launched on Dec. 7, 1972, that humans left Earth's orbit for deep space. According to NASA, it was the farthest from Earth humans have ever flown, and the journey tested all life support systems of the Orion Capsule.

For Nelson, who joined DCMA just over two years ago, examiners like him and the non-destructive testing auditors he trains, play a major role in the overall program's success. In his 22 years of non-destructive testing experience, the event represented a high-water mark for his career. It was the first time he had worked on a rocket.

"I worked on the SLS when it was still in segments on the factory floor at the Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans," he said. "To see it here today, fills me with pride and makes me think about my family and colleagues past and present."

Nelson said the event also highlighted the bold collaboration of organizations – including NASA, DCMA and industry partners. His remarks alluded to one of the ways that DCMA and NASA demonstrated the strengthening of their relationship and collaboration.

Just a few days before the scheduled rollout, members of the NASA resident management offices, industry partners and leaders from various DCMA NPO contracting offices met at Kennedy Space Center. During their Resident Management Office council meeting, the group reviewed the current state of SLS production and discussed how to meet NASA Director Jared Issacman's challenge to accelerate the delivery process.

"DCMA is well prepared to answer the NASA administrator's challenge," said Brian McGinnis, director of DCMA's NASA NPO. "Our current focus on detection to prevention and the utilization of process reviews, instead of product examinations creates the conditions to empower NASA's acceleration of delivering SLS and Orion."

This effort aligns with DCMA Director Vice Adm. Stephen Tedford's command expectation to "focus relentlessly on mission outcomes." As the acquisition landscape changes with faster cycles and new technologies, the team know that, "We must be agile, proactive and forward-looking. Our processes must serve our mission, using data and metrics to drive our decisions so we may achieve the outcomes that matter most."

The council recognized top performing DCMA NPO employees who support the Artemis program. The council recognized DCMA's Dawit Ghile, a quality engineer; E.J. Bice, a program integrator; and Mark Price, a quality engineer, for their excellent work. This recognition shows DCMA's commitment to personnel being key to the organization's success.

"It is very important to DCMA's partnership with MSFC that the RMO council recognizes the value that each of these professionals bring to not only the SLS but to the overall NASA human spaceflight program," said McGinnis.

National Mission

To achieve the national goal of landing American astronauts on the surface of the moon and maintaining U.S. superiority in exploration and discovery, NASA announced Feb. 27 it would increase its cadence of missions under the Artemis program, standardizing the SLS rocket configuration, and adding a new mission.

Scott Foreman, a program integrator overseeing the Space Launch System booster element assigned to DCMA's NASA Product Operations, Northrop Grumman Utah, takes a selfie as Artemis II emerges from the Vehicle Assembly Building at the Kennedy Space Center, Cape Canaveral, Fla., in January 2026. (DCMA photo by Scott Foreman)

The plans were shared during a news conference at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida, and included an update on the Artemis II mission.

This update focused on the transportation systems to take crew to the moon. NASA's latest architecture includes adding a new mission in 2027 to test system capabilities closer to home prior to sending astronauts to the surface of the moon for the first time in more than 50 years and aims to achieve one lunar mission per year thereafter. Standardizing SLS and other systems now will help NASA send astronauts to explore the lunar south pole for the first time in 2028.

Specific details to achieve this new approach as well as other architecture updates are forthcoming. Here are the basics for the first five missions under the Artemis program:

Artemis I: NASA successfully completed an uncrewed test flight of SLS and Orion spacecraft in November 2022. This mission tested launching the rocket for the first time using new exploration ground systems and evaluated Orion systems not including astronauts or critical life support systems planned on the next mission.

Artemis II: The test flight was the first flight with crew aboard the SLS rocket and Orion spacecraft. Following a successful wet dress rehearsal in February, NASA discovered a helium flow issue to the interim cryogenic propulsion stage and rolled the rocket and spacecraft back to the Vehicle Assembly Building for repairs. Engineers at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida addressed the issue that required rollback. Crew members included NASA astronauts Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover, Christina Koch and Canadian Space Agency astronaut Jeremy Hansen. They successfully completed their mission to great acclaim and global attention.

Artemis III: NASA added a new demonstration mission

"We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard."

- President John F. Kennedy

Members of the DCMA's NASA Product Operations pose for a group photo Jan. 14, 2026, from 32nd floor of the Vehicle Assembly Building at the Kennedy Space Center. (DCMA photo by Brian McGinnis)

in low Earth orbit in mid-2027 to test one or both commercial landers from SpaceX and Blue Origin respectively. The mission will launch crew in Orion on top of the SLS rocket to test rendezvous and docking capabilities between Orion and private commercial spacecraft needed to land astronauts on the Moon. This test will take place with one or both providers.

Artemis IV: NASA continues to target the first Artemis lunar landing in early 2028, which has been the target landing date since mid-2025. After launch, crew will transfer from Orion to a commercial lunar lander for transportation to the surface of the moon. Lander readiness will determine which provider will safely carry them to the surface and back to Orion in lunar orbit before crew return home aboard Orion – splashing down safely in the Pacific Ocean. Work to standardize the SLS rocket will be implemented for Artemis IV. With this architecture approach, NASA is assessing alternative options for the second stage of the rocket.

The interim cryogenic propulsion stage used for the first three missions will be replaced with a new second stage, and the agency is no longer planning to use the Exploration Upper Stage or Mobile Launcher 2, as mission development of both efforts has faced delays.

Artemis V: Using the standardized configuration of the SLS rocket, NASA anticipates launching this lunar surface mission by late 2028, and future missions about once per year thereafter. This mission also is when NASA is expected to begin building its moon base.

To drive innovation and exploration, NASA will send Artemis astronauts on increasingly difficult missions to explore more of the moon for scientific discovery, economic benefits, and to build on the foundation for the first crewed missions to Mars.

In November 2022, NASA completed Artemis I, an uncrewed test flight of its Space Launch System rocket and Orion spacecraft. The mission served two primary objectives: to test the first launch of the SLS rocket using new ground systems and to evaluate the Orion spacecraft's performance without the astronauts and critical life-support systems that were aboard during the successful Artemis II mission. (NASA photo by Joel Kowsky)

Space Enterprise, partners navigate GPS launch support

By DCMA Space Enterprise

In the early hours of Jan. 6, GPS III Space Vehicle 10, known as SV10, was loaded aboard a C-17 Globemaster III at Buckley Space Force Base, Colorado, marking another major milestone in advancing the nation's most trusted positioning, navigation and timing capability.

The mission, conducted to safeguard high-value hardware and align with transport timelines, culminated the efforts of personnel from Defense Contract Management Agency Space Enterprise, Space Force, Air Force, Air Mobility Command and industry partners. Their coordination ensured SV10's safe transfer from the production facility to its next staging location for final processing ahead of launch.

Air Force Col. Paul Ferguson, commander of DCMA Space Enterprise, participated in the operation, which the local DCMA Space Enterprise Denver team supported.

"Each GPS III satellite we deliver reinforces the nation's ability to conduct joint operations, protect our forces and support billions of people who rely on precise navigation and timing every day," said Ferguson. "This capability is foundational to both national defense and the global economy."

GPS III satellites bring advanced mission payloads, increased signal power, enhanced anti-jam capability and improved accuracy, ensuring the GPS enterprise remains the global benchmark for positioning, navigation and timing. DCMA's oversight includes contract administration, production surveillance, quality assurance and final acceptance for delivery. A 2019 National Institute of Standards and Technology report estimated GPS's positive economic impact to be more than $2 trillion in adjusted 2025 dollars in the U.S. alone.

This effort reflects the War Department directive to develop talent and align resources, infrastructure, and technology to meet evolving operational demands, ensuring the team is equipped for such critical tasks.

"Our workforce plays a vital role in safeguarding the GPS capability the world depends on, and they should take great pride in that responsibility," said Ferguson.

The SV10 transfer required support from DCMA quality assurance specialists, engineers and program integrators working alongside the Space Systems Command and the prime contractor.

After final inspections, the satellite's transport container was sealed and certified for flight, culminating in the C-17's departure under tightly controlled low-light conditions.

The moment held personal significance for Ferguson, who served as a C-17 maintenance officer as a lieutenant more than two decades ago.

"Standing beside a C-17 again, now as part of a combined Air Force, Space Force and DCMA team, underscores how every element of our enterprise contributes to mission success," Ferguson said. "It's a powerful reminder of the teamwork that drives our nation's space capabilities."

The C-17 departed just before midnight and landed at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida.

Subsequent satellite vehicles, under the GPS III Follow-On contract, will bring additional civilian benefits to include global search and rescue support.

GPS remains one of the most widely relied-upon capabilities fielded by the War Department, supporting global joint operations and enabling essential services across aviation, communications, finance, agriculture, scientific research and many everyday technologies.

With the successful shipment of GPS III SV10, DCMA Space Enterprise, working in concert with Air Force and Space Force partners, continues its vital role in strengthening space domain mission assurance and delivering world-class capability for the warfighter and taxpayers, embodying the drive to focus relentlessly on positive mission outcomes.

DCMA personnel stand between a C-17 Globemaster III and its cargo, an encapsulated GPS III Space Vehicle 10, during a Jan. 6, 2026, transport mission at Buckley Space Force Base, Col. (Space Force photo by Staff Sgt. Amanda Flower)

COMBAT SUPPORT

After a severe injury, contract administrator completes 21-year journey to serve America abroad.

By Alun Thomas

Emily Pecic's dream of becoming an Air Force fighter pilot ended in college after a spinal injury during ROTC training.

Her desire to serve her country never wavered, however, and two decades later Pecic deployed to Kuwait as a member of the Defense Contract Management Agency's Contingency Response Force, commonly known as the CRF.

Pecic, a contract administrator for DCMA Ohio River Valley, joined the agency in 2023. She deployed with the CRF in 2024, ending a 21-year journey that was defined by determination.

"After high school, I enrolled in Air Force Reserve Officers' Training Corps Detachment 380 at Michigan State University," she said. "However, my second year in the program, I injured my cervical spine during physical training, requiring surgery, and was medically disqualified. After many years of submitting waivers with the Air Force and then the Army, I received a final notice from the Army stating they appreciated how patriotic I was, but there were no waivers for my condition. The only way I would ever be able to serve my country was as a civilian."

Pecic earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice with a concentration in forensics and graduated from law school receiving a Juris Doctorate. For the next 15 years, she worked for the Social Security Administration's Office of Hearing and Appeals for Disability Claims.

"After years as a military spouse and raising our two children until they were old enough for my career change, I applied for a contract administrator position with the CRF program through DCMA," Pecic said. "I made the decision to change my career path to fulfill a goal that was put on hold many years ago."

After joining the CRF program, Pecic began the preparation process for a deployment to Kuwait. She received the required training through the agency's Combat Support Center, which is responsible for ensuring personnel are prepared prior to traveling to their designated location. Training programs like the CRF is an example of the agency's focus to develop talent and align resources, infrastructure, and technology to meet evolving operation demands.

"Preparing for deployment is time-consuming," she said. "On the professional side, there's various training that must be completed, medical testing to prove you're physically and mentally capable for deployment environments and back-to-basics certification training. I did all my classes back-to-back, enabling me to complete it all within my first year of employment."

Emily Pecic, who deployed to Kuwait from November 2024 to June 2025, realized her dream of serving the nation 21 years after a severe injury medically disqualified her from military service. Her deployment highlights the critical role of civilian employees within DCMA, the nation's acquisition combat support agency, which is crucial to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Combatant Commands for operational planning and execution.(Courtesy photos)

Pecic understood her overseas assignment would result in separation from her husband, whom she had supported as a military spouse during his deployments.

"Professional preparation was very easy for me, but my personal preparation was what I had to really make a priority," she said. "As a military wife, for years it was me at home while my husband deployed, handling everything and being a single parent. I know firsthand how difficult it is and how much people at home sacrifice for those deploying to do their job and remain safe. I had to switch mindsets, remembering that I needed to worry about myself in theater, that home will be just fine and my job and focus were in Kuwait with the mission and my battle buddies."

Pecic deployed to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, from November 2024 to June 2025. She was attached to the 408th Contracting Support Brigade and worked on pre-award contracts, creating solicitations, modifications, issuances of contracts, and memorandums for record, while communicating with contractors daily.

Pecic found Camp Arifjan to be an ideal location for her first deployment, making the most of her surroundings and the events offered on the base.

"Camp Arifjan eased me into deployment life, offering many activities to participate in when I wasn't working," she said. "It gave me an opportunity to meet so many people from around the world. After work, I participated in bingo, 5K races, saw movies, played darts and pool, and never missed a meal. The contracted employees on base were always smiling, personally remembering who each of us were."

There were challenges to navigate, including June's regional conflict.

"We experienced sleepless nights, with constant bunker runs, zones shutting down, (and) limiting access to food which resulted in eating Meals, Ready-to-Eat. Eventually we were all evacuated, grabbing enough stuff for 72 hours, and working out of an undisclosed area with limited equipment and access," Pecic said. "We remained successful, fulfilling milestones, supporting the missions, and becoming a closer family than we were before, bonding through a time that was unpredictable, and at times, unnerving."

Aspects of Pecic's workload also proved challenging, which she successfully overcame with her DCMA background and experience.

"Back home, I complete post-award workloads, and this deployment I was assigned pre-award workloads. It's easy to forget that I was dropped in a fast-paced contingency environment," she explained. "There's no lengthy training; I was given resources to review; I worked with new programs that I'd never heard of before – it's sink or swim mode. Luckily, I swam like a champ and went headfirst into my DCMA training. There is no greater experience than hands-on, in the middle of it all."

DCMA serves an important role in-theater, Pecic said, by offering expertise, dedication to supporting the mission and warfighters, and the unwavering ability to switch gears to focus on unpredictable challenges. As the nation's acquisition combat support agency, DCMA is crucial to War Department leaders and combatant commands for operating planning and execution.

"I grew more than any word could describe from this deployment, realizing that in a flight-or-fight time, I fight," she said. "I learned that wearing a Department of Defense civilian patch and not a military uniform is important and fulfilling. I also learned my family and home front are perfectly fine without me, which is humbling. I realized that I could adapt to high-pace changes, like I thought I would when I first applied for this position."

Pecic looks forward to fulfilling her four-year commitment with the CRF program and experiencing future deployments at new locations, while continuing her personal and professional growth.

"I learned a long time ago not to make future plans, live each day as it comes and tackle each issue as it lands in my lap." This is a motto Pecic will continue to live by as long as she's able, with no end in sight.

SUSTAINING OSPREY'S VERTICAL LEAP

By Jason Kaneshiro

After two decades of production support, the Defense Contract Management Agency approved the final MV-22 Osprey aircraft fuselage in 2025.

DCMA's V-22 program support traces back to the 1980s and 1990s with the DCMA Vertical Lift Philadelphia contract management office in Ridley Park, Pennsylvania, and DCMA Vertical Lift Texas in Fort Worth, Texas.

The final finished fuselage for the Marine Corps' MV-22 variant of the Osprey will move from the facility in Pennsylvania to a facility in Texas for final assembly and acceptance, projected for later in 2026.

According to the V-22 program office's website, the Osprey is a tiltrotor aircraft that can operate as a helicopter or a turboprop aircraft, offering greater capability and flexibility than the helicopters it was designed to replace.

DCMA played significant roles in supporting the V-22 Osprey program across multiple functions, said Joseph Cervo, V-22 program integrator with DCMA Vertical Lift Philadelphia.

"Quality assurance personnel ensured adherence to quality standards and specifications during manufacturing, helping to prevent substandard parts and improving reliability," Cervo said.

DCMA engineers provided technical oversight, contract specialists ensured compliance with terms, program managers monitored performance, and industrial specialists ensured high standards in manufacturing processes with a robust supply chain, said Cervo. These integrated efforts are central to DCMA's goal to deliver agile, transparent, and efficient acquisition life-cycle processes to improve stakeholder outcomes. This collective effort secures the defense industrial base.

Nearly 500 aircraft have been accepted to date with the majority being the Marine variant and the remainder being the Air Force and Navy variants. DCMA will continue to oversee the fuselage fabrication for the remainder of the CMV-22 Navy variant and the CV-22 variant managed by the Air Force at the Ridley Park facility.

The assigned government program management office is the V-22 Joint Program Office within the Navy's Naval Air Systems Command, and the Marines, Air Force, and Navy procure the aircraft, said Terry Taylor, program integrator at DCMA Vertical Lift Texas.

DCMA will continue to support the V-22, Taylor said.

"(The program office) plans to keep these aircraft flying into the 2050s and has initiated aircraft modernization activities," Taylor said.

Current and future initiatives include a cockpit technology refresh, a modernization program and a rotating structure improvement upgrade, Taylor said. These initiatives not only provide new contracting opportunities for DCMA to administer but also drive enhanced value and affordability through modern, adaptive, and responsive cost and pricing capabilities to increase return on investment.

"Additionally, sustainment parts are being procured under the Defense Logistics Agency and Naval Supply Systems Command to keep these aircraft flying," Taylor added.

The V-22 is a mature platform, and its continued operational effectiveness heavily relies on ongoing sustainment activities, said Walter Crowe, aerospace engineer at DCMA Vertical Lift Philadelphia.

"As the V-22 continues to evolve, DCMA will play a key role in managing modifications and upgrades, ensuring that these changes are implemented safely and effectively and that they meet the evolving needs of the warfighter," Crowe said.

> ***"DCMA's contributions to sustainment are crucial and multifaceted. We play a critical role in overseeing the V-22's supply chain, ensuring that spare parts and components are available."***
>
> *- Walter Crowe, Aerospace Engineer at DCMA Vertical Lift Philadelphia*

DCMA oversight of V-22 maintenance activities ensures maintenance procedures are followed correctly and maintenance personnel are properly trained and qualified, which helps prevent errors and ensures long-term airworthiness, Crowe said.

"DCMA's contributions to sustainment are crucial and multifaceted," Crowe said. "We play a critical role in overseeing the V-22's supply chain, ensuring that spare parts and components are available when and where they're needed to keep the aircraft flying. This involves monitoring contractor performance, tracking inventory levels and resolving supply chain disruptions. This contributes to operational readiness rates."

Achieving the milestone of accepting the final V-22 serves as validation of the hard work, dedication and expertise that the program support team poured into the program, Cervo said.

"It demonstrates that their efforts contributed to a tangible and positive outcome," he said. "It reinforces the importance of their work in supporting the warfighter and ensuring the success of critical defense programs."

DCMA IMPACT

Mission: We are the independent eyes and ears of the Department of War and its partners, enhancing warfighter lethality by ensuring timely delivery of quality products and providing relevant acquisition insight supporting affordability and readiness.

Air Combat Vitality

In a powerful testament to the enduring partnership between warfighters and the industrial base, Air Force Gen. Adrian Spain, commander of the Air Combat Command, recently visited DCMA Fixed Wing St. Louis.

"General Spain's visit served to underscore the critical importance of the F-15EX Eagle II and T-7A Red Hawk programs that DCMA Fixed Wing St. Louis personnel oversee," said Bob Corbin, DCMA Fixed Wing St. Louis deputy director. "His visit highlights the pivotal role DCMA plays in delivering overwhelming combat capabilities to our nation's defenders."

During his visit, Spain conducted a town hall with contract management office personnel and emphasized the importance to leverage industry and bring schedule, cost, and performance back to the forefront. He also inspected F-15EX aircraft.

According to Air Force Lt. Col. Matt Olde, a DCMA Fixed Wing St. Louis F-15 acceptance pilot, the F-15EX Eagle II represents a "significant leap in air superiority, boasting an expanded weapons capacity and advanced avionics that will support the United States dominating the skies for decades to come."

Air Combat: *Air Force Lt. Col. Matthew Olde (left) met with Air Force Gen. Adrian Spain, commander of the Air Combat Command, during a visit to DCMA Fixed Wing St. Louis.* ***Test Fire Boom:*** *DCMA stakeholders recently witnessed NASA and Northrop Grumman fire a ground-based version of a booster for the Space Launch System rocket in Promontory, Utah. (Courtesy photos)*

Test Fire Booster

NASA and Northrop Grumman recently conducted a full-scale ground test of the Space Launch System Booster Obsolescence and Life Extension, SLS BOLE, motor in Promontory, Utah.

DCMA representatives joined a crowd of engineers, scientists and aerospace professionals to observe the thunderous spectacle unfold in the arid expanse of northern Utah.

"Watching the SLS booster test fire is more than witnessing a technical milestone, it's a front-row seat to the future of human deep space exploration," said Craig Bennett, DCMA headquarters NASA program manager. "Our presence underscored the importance of the collaborative NASA and DCMA interagency oversight on one of the most ambitious space programs of our time."

DCMA's observers included Sonya Ebright, deputy director; Air Force Col. Shea Kennebrae, Western Region commander; Niclas Chavez, Western Region deputy commander; Brian McGinnis, NASA Product Operations director; Air Force Col. Jerry Pribyl, NPO Northrop Grumman Utah commander; and Bennett.

"Our senior leadership team interfaced with stakeholders and NASA's senior leadership to provide independent support and exceptional services to NASA," said McGinnis. "DCMA insight highly correlates with the final update to the recent presidential budget bill ensuring funding and program requirements for the Artemis, Gateway and International Space Station programs."

Agency personnel assigned to DCMA NPO Northrop Grumman Utah are at the heart of production and a partner of NASA's SLS Program Office located at Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama. Quality assurance, engineering, program integration, contracting, property management, plant clearance and earned value management teams work with the NASA Safety and Mission Assurance Representatives and Resident Management to support the administration's goal to ensure America's human space exploration efforts remain unparalleled, innovative and efficient.

Engineering Savings

An engineering team's new approach will save time and money by catching defects early in F-35 Lightning II production. The DCMA United Kingdom-based group led efforts to reduce product defects known as non-conforming material, or NCM, in F-35 components across its three variants.

These defects may seem as simple as a slightly oversized drilled hole but could lead to wasted time, labor and materials later in the assembly line because the part did not meet the specifications outlined in the contract.

"By reducing NCM materials in F-35 production, the program delivers a more reliable, safer and more affordable aircraft to the warfighter," said Air Force Lt. Col. Samantha Coburn, DCMA UK commander. "This translates into improved readiness, increased mission effectiveness and, ultimately, a greater chance of success in combat."

The effort's labor savings is projected to exceed $9 million for the F-35 program. Beginning in 2023, the agency's UK engineering team decreased minor defects by 22% and 24% in 2024. The program had nearly 5,900 NCMs in 2022, before the engineering team began applying their reduction plan. After a year of implementing that plan, the program saw just over 4,800 NCMs at the end of 2023, then another drop to just then another drop to just over 3,400 in 2024.

"Thanks to the ongoing efforts of the team, the contractor is on track for another 25% reduction for 2025, resulting in less than 2,600 total defects," said Brian Gary, the DCMA UK engineering supervisor and project initiator.

Future cost savings and NCM reductions project to positively impact the program moving forward. The buying commands benefit from reduced costs while reclaiming time for more impactful work.

Land Engagement: *Marines operating an Amphibious Combat Vehicle complete an amphibious landing at Camp Schwab, Okinawa, Japan. The DCMA Land Systems BAE York team regularly engages military customers to enhance the support it provides. The BAE York team manages a variety of combat vehicles, including the Marine Corps' Amphibious Combat Vehicle. (Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Kendrick Jackson)*

Land Engagement

DCMA is committed to communicating and collaborating with its customers to provide the best support to America's warfighters. The DCMA Land Systems BAE York team regularly engage the agency's military customers and others involved with the acquisition process, also known as stakeholders, to see how the agency can continue to enhance provided support.

"For our team, effective stakeholder engagement isn't simply a best practice, it's the critical mechanism for proactive risk mitigation, informed decision-making, and ultimately, delivering on the Department of War's mission," said Army Lt. Col. Jacob Olszewski, BAE York commander.

As the primary agency responsible for administering DOW contracts, DCMA engages with various stakeholders to ensure programs execute efficiently, effectively and in accordance with contractual requirements. The York office stakeholder engagements include monthly, quarterly and biannual meetings. The contract management office manages a variety of ground combat systems, including the M109 Paladin and the Marine Corps' Amphibious Combat Vehicle.

"DCMA plays a critical role in DOW's acquisition process by ensuring contractors deliver high-quality products and services on time and within budget," said Damian Morrison, Quality Assurance supervisor. "To achieve this, we often engage with contractors, program managers, buying commands and other government agencies."

In today's complex and dynamic project environments, effective stakeholder engagement is crucial for program success. A well-planned stakeholder engagement strategy builds trust, resolves issues and ensures all parties work toward common goals. Effective engagement and communication enable DCMA employees to identify and mitigate risks, optimize program performance, and inform and influence acquisition decisions.

"A detailed stakeholder engagement plan is not merely a procedural requirement, but a foundational element for effective program management," said Olszewski. "We want to maintain transparent communication with our stakeholders. By prioritizing consistent communication and collaborative problem-solving, DCMA ensures programs not only meet contractual requirements, but also contribute to the broader objectives."

War Symposium

DCMA recently sharpened its oversight of the nation's munitions enterprise during the Department of War Maintenance Symposium, where leaders pressed for faster production without sacrificing safety.

More than 2,300 maintainers and logisticians from across the military, government, industry and academia gathered under the theme "Advancing Readiness to Exploit the Logistics Deterrent Effect."

War Department leaders called for increased lethality delivered with speed, strict safety standards and reduced life cycle costs. Speakers emphasized that adversaries target not only warfighters but also the domestic logistics and industrial base that sustains them.

"DCMA's participation during the symposium focused on explosives safety, a core mission area that directly supports the defense industrial base and ensures contractors meet federal safety requirements while accelerating production," said Walt Eady, executive director of DCMA's Technical Directorate.

Eady served as a board member, addressing regulatory reform, risk management and embedding explosives safety into strategic decision-making.

"The Contract Safety team is doing everything possible to ensure explosives contractors are building safety into every production process," said Mike Tluchowski, director of Contract Safety. "We help streamline acquisition regulations."

My DCMA

My DCMA showcases the agency's experienced and dedicated workforce, their commitment to serving America and its warfighters, and their critical role in accelerating acquisition reform.

"Every day, I'm reminded the work we do directly strengthens our nation's defense and supports the men and women who serve. My role may not be on the front lines, but it plays an essential part in ensuring the warfighter receives what they need – on time, within cost and of the highest quality."

- Alfonso Laxamana, Management Analyst

"DCMA acts as a critical link between the military and defense contractors, by providing quality assurance, managing contracts and overseeing the acquisition process, which directly impacts warfighters' safety and mission readiness. The agency serves as the 'eyes and ears' of the warfighter at contractor facilities, ensuring contractors meet the required standards."

- Katee Waydula, Security Specialist

"DCMA is important to America's warfighters because we are facilitating the delivery of products as well as overseeing the sustainment items and repair services to maintain those products. We ensure the warfighter is getting timely, quality products and services, that provide good value to the American taxpayer."

Air Force Capt. Damian Cordiel, Lead Contract Administrator

"DCMA is important to America's warfighters because we influence the contractor at both the prime and sub-contractor level. My team has reach all over the globe, and we handle some of the biggest challenges within our programs. This capability allows us real-time data for reporting and positive change within the contractor's processes."

- Zachary Ransom, Lead Quality Assurance Specialist

"I am proud of and enjoy working at DCMA. It's fulfilling to know the work I do directly supports our nation's defense. I've grown a lot here — professionally and personally — all thanks to great mentors, leadership support and opportunities to be part of meaningful changes across the procurement field."

- Grecia Aviles, Procurement Technician

"The experience truly put my adaptability and understanding of complex systems to the test. I dove headfirst into collaboration with warfighters and international partners through the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program V, ensuring that operational needs were met swiftly and effectively."

- Valerie Williams, Contract Administrator

"DCMA's mission is incredibly important to America's warfighters, and as a six-year acquisition professional – and a relative of those who've served – I see it firsthand. We're the critical bridge between a written contract and the life-saving equipment for our troops. Ultimately, DCMA provides the accountability our service members deserve."

- Xanthos Stormbreaker, Contract Administrator

"One of the great things about working at my location includes being able to have a 'big picture' view of the agency's decision-making process. Whether it is advising senior leaders on an individual Air Force member's record or witnessing discussions on a policy change, it is eye-opening because I can learn the 'why' behind a decision that is made."

- Air Force Capt. Amy Schmidt, Chief of Military Personnel

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