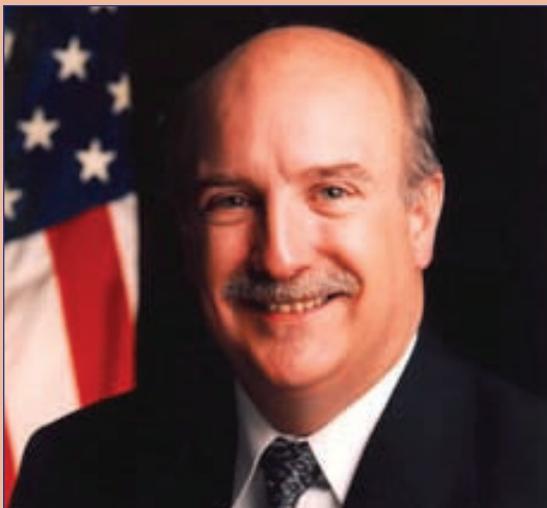


Part of the Family — DCMA Syracuse Supports the Army's "Warlock Duke" Program

An Interview with Mr. Edward Bair, U.S. Army Program Executive Officer Intelligence, Electronic Warfare & Sensors

by Ms. Lisandra LaShomb, DCMA Syracuse



Radio-controlled improvised explosive devices (RCIEDs) have killed or wounded a large number of Iraqi and U.S. personnel and have severely curtailed travel on Iraqi roads. It is a problem requiring an immediate solution, and the Program Executive Office for Intelligence, Electronic Warfare and Sensors (PEO IEW&S), in partnership with the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA), has set about finding it. One solution that is being developed by PEO IEW&S is "Warlock Duke," a system capable of jamming most RCIEDs.

To learn more about the way in which DCMA Syracuse worked with PEO IEW&S for the system's rapid deployment, I spoke with Mr. Edward Bair, program executive officer, IEW&S.

Lisandra LaShomb: In your opinion, how critical was the "Warlock Duke" program to the Army, the war effort, the Army's Communications and Electronics Command and the Department of Defense?

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Edward Bair: Extremely critical ... you can read in the press about improvised explosive devices, and the ability to combat them and deal with them is an absolute lifesaving issue from an Army, ground forces and coalition forces standpoint. It's absolutely essential.

LL: It appears you used DCMA as an independent source of information for the program — was this your plan from the beginning?

EB: Yes, I consider DCMA an invaluable member of the acquisition team. My view is

(Above) Mr. Edward Bair, program executive officer, IEW&S

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that the more information I have, the better decisions I can make. Or the more information I have, the better I can help people get things done and expedite things. I have always considered DCMA a valuable member of the team. I’m not sure that DCMA has always lived up to my expectations; however, in this particular case, DCMA Syracuse more than lived up to my expectations by proactively getting engaged and being our eyes and ears on the ground.

LL: How accurate was the information DCMA Syracuse provided in reflecting the actual status of the program?

EB: I don’t believe it was a question of the accuracy of the data. I think there was a general common understanding of the data. I think there were differences in the interpretation of what the data meant and [its] relevance. I would characterize DCMA as leaning more toward the conservative side of the ‘show me, I’ll-believe-it-when-I-see-it — I’m-from-Missouri’ type view. As opposed to the program manager who is pressing like heck and willing to accept risk along the way and tending to gloss over some things or say, ‘Oh, we can get to that later.’ Together they perform a great balance for each other. But I don’t think there was ever an issue in terms of the accuracy of the data. The interpretations and assessments of DCMA Syracuse’s were invaluable to me because they were factual, they explained why they felt that way, you could follow them logically and you could make the determination from a risk. I mean, that’s what this is about: everybody agreeing on the data, so the accuracy ought to be there. If it isn’t, we have serious problems. The issue is managing the risk and taking prudent risks or understanding when you shouldn’t be taking prudent risks. In this particular partnership, I think DCMA Syracuse did an outstanding job.

LL: The supply chain is an integral part of the program where DCMA worked to meet on-time delivery. How critical do you feel DCMA was in helping you meet those on-time deliveries?

EB: Absolutely essential. I think when you talk about supply chain [and] accelerating a product to be successful, you have to attack the supply chain. All too often people attack the prime contractor. The prime contractor only controls some of what actually gets done, mostly the normal-end assembly and then the processes. If you look in the case of this program, we were totally dependent on some 22 supply chain vendors; if they couldn’t meet schedules, if they couldn’t produce the surge in quantities that we needed, we weren’t going to meet the schedule demands that were placed on us. I think DCMA in conjunction with the program manager’s office did a great job of getting out with the individual critical suppliers, being on site, assessing their processes [and] helping them work through and accomplish their jobs.

LL: Did you observe any communication problems between DCMA, the program management office and the supplier?

EB: Yes; in the beginning there were clear communication challenges, differences of opinion. But the key to that, as I mentioned when we talked about management, was getting down to the common data. There is no excuse if we can’t agree upon data status facts. ... I believe in the beginning there were miscommunications by people misinterpreting what was asked for or what they wanted as different ... and people had different views of how you go about accelerating things or how you approach things. It wasn’t until they all got in a room together and had little emotional sessions with each other to get over things,

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which I think is probably normal in forging a team, [that things improved]. I mean, you’ve got to take disparate groups (whether it’s the program manager’s office, DCMA or suppliers) and get them in the same room, and there’s got to be a degree of building a trust and confidence in each other. ... Once they got to the understanding of common data and looking at common processes, they overcame this.

LL: How effective has DCMA been in responding to your concerns and issues throughout the program?

EB: Very effective, very responsive. I mean, there was no higher priority program for me — I think I made that abundantly clear — and to DCMA Syracuse’s credit, they responded and stepped up, and, at least from my standpoint, it seemed like it was their highest priority program. ... They were responsive or there when they needed to make things happen, providing assessments, overseeing processes, acceptances, [etc.]. My hat’s off to DCMA Syracuse. In this particular instance, they were extremely, extremely responsive and invaluable as a partner.

LL: When speaking about the personnel who worked on the program, you often refer to them as “one big, happy family.” Can you expand on that?

EB: My view is that when you’re one big, happy family, you’re all together in this. ... I’m fortunate that I have three kids and my wife. ... I often think back to the personal experience of the screaming, shouting, yelling and complaining in the house of teenagers,

college kids and mom and dad and battles over who’s in control, who’s not in control, what the rules are, ‘I don’t want any rules’ ... and all these things. But at the end of the day, we were all going in a common direction. When I talk about [us being] one big family, that allows for differences of opinion [and] arguments.



[When among] family, that is the time to kind of let everything down, get everything on the table and get everything out in front of each other. Even if it’s ugly, even if it’s bad, the family should all get together, rally around the flag, rise to the occasion and do what they think is in the best interests of the family. And I truly believe that’s what this team did. It’s not, ‘What does the person who’s in charge of the team think about you?’ It’s not, ‘What does the boss of the boss who’s not even on the team think of you?’ It’s, ‘What is the trust level, what’s the confidence level, what’s the respect level that you have from your peers on the team?’ If you’re not a team player, everybody on the team will see that, and you’ll be a pariah, and they will very quickly cut you out. However, if you’re in there rolling up your sleeves, helping one another and backing up

(Above) DCMA Syracuse program support team — back row, from left: Mr. Robert Graham, Mr. Paul Chayka and Mr. Kevin Reagan; front row, from left: Army Lt. Col. Floyd Smith, Ms. Mary Walker, Ms. Chere Dunphy and Mr. Steve Roberts.

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each other, they’ll very quickly see that as well. That’s what forges the bonds necessary for a successful, cohesive unit. One of the greatest attributes of the military is the ability of a unit to act as one. When they go into a mission, whatever that mission is, they are acting as a unit, not 20 or 20,000 individuals hanging out doing their own thing. They all have their own responsibilities, and they’re backing each other up along the way. Everyone’s always there to help each other and do what is necessary.

LL: As a program executive officer, do you see DCMA as a valuable partner in the acquisition management life cycle?

EB: Yes, I see them as a valuable partner. ... Partnerships don’t happen by signatures on paper — [they] happen by investing in them and working together. The foundation of an effective partnership is not a piece of paper — [it] is trust and confidence and respect for each other; you’ve got to engage [one another]. I think too often, historically, program managers don’t engage DCMA necessarily

or DCMA doesn’t engage the program managers. It’s a two-way street. ... DCMA’s role was to be there, on the ground in the contractors’ facilities, to provide independent U.S. government oversight, or insight ... for those contractor facilities that they have responsibilities for. We don’t need to duplicate that. That would be inefficient. We need to embrace [DCMA’s mission] and utilize that. That’s part of building an effective partnership. I think it’s a great partnership with DCMA, but you’ve got to engage, you’ve got to invest time with them, you’ve got to be part of the family.

For more information about the Warlock Duke program, see the article “Making the Impossible a Reality” on page 50 of the summer 2006 issue of Communicator.



(Above) From left: Mr. Edward Bair and Ms. Lisandra LaShomb, office automation assistant, DCMA Syracuse