

New Director Takes DCMA Helm

By Dick Cole, Chief, DCMA Public Affairs

“Let me assure each and every one of you — the men and women of DCMA — that I stand ready to tackle the challenges that we will face together as one agency, one family, focused on supporting the needs of our customers and committed to the defense of this nation,” said Charlie E. Williams Jr., the new director of the Defense Contract Management Agency during a May 5, 2008, change of leadership ceremony.

Williams succeeded Keith Ernst as DCMA’s director during the ceremony. Ernst officially retired from more than 30 years of federal service on April 30; however, his retirement ceremony was delayed until after the transfer of leadership to Williams.

Presiding over the change of leadership ceremony and Ernst’s retirement was Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for



Foreground, from left: Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology Dr. James Finley, outgoing DCMA Director Keith D. Ernst and new DCMA Director Charlie E. Williams Jr. at DCMA’s May 5, 2008, change of leadership ceremony. (Photo by Mark Woodbury, DCMA Public Affairs)

Acquisition and Technology Dr. James Finley.

Williams comes to his new duties from the U.S. Air Force, where he most recently served as the deputy assistant secretary for contracting in the office of the

assistant secretary of the Air Force for acquisition. Williams began his civil service career at Kelly Air Force Base, Texas, in 1982. He has served exclusively in the Air Force acquisition community until his assignment to DCMA.

The new director is a member of the defense acquisition corps and is Level II certified in systems acquisition. He holds a bachelor’s degree from Middle Tennessee State University and a master’s degree from Tennessee State University, Nashville. He is also

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a 1996 graduate of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, where he earned a second master's degree in national resource management.

"I am honored for this opportunity to lead the Defense Contract Management Agency during this particularly challenging time of war — a time marked by change and transformation across the Department [of Defense]," said Williams. "Let me just say, just as this agency has answered the department's calls in the past, I am

confident that we, together, will continue to answer the calls of the future."

A lot of Air Force uniforms were visible as numerous colleagues who served with Williams attended

the ceremony to show their support as he accepted his new responsibilities. Also, present for the ceremony and welcomed to the DCMA family were Williams' spouse, Tujuanna, and his daughter, Charity. **C**

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Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology Dr. James Finley presided over the ceremony. (Photo by Dick Cole, DCMA Public Affairs)



Former DCMA Director Keith D. Ernst ended 30 years of service to the United States at a formal retirement ceremony, Tuesday, May 6, in Alexandria, Va. (Photo by Dick Cole, DCMA Public Affairs)

Ernst Ends 30 Years of Federal Service

By Dick Cole, Chief, DCMA Public Affairs

Defense Contract Management Agency Director Keith D. Ernst ended 30 years of service to the United States at a formal retirement ceremony, Tuesday, May 6, in Alexandria, Va.

Presiding over Ernst's ceremony was Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology Dr. James Finley. At the ceremony, Finley presented Ernst with the Office of the Secretary of Defense Medal for Meritorious Civilian Service for "exemplary leadership, commitment to excellence and expert managerial abilities executing the complex and diversified contract management and acquisition logistics services of DCMA."

Ernst served as the deputy director and director of the Defense Department's contract management organization from October 2005 until his retirement. "Keith held, literally, every senior position of management in DCMA in his career," said Finley. Ernst, whom Finley referred to as a "special friend," was praised by the deputy undersecretary as "one of our best leaders who has provided an unwavering commitment to trust and integrity." He added, "Keith exuded leadership, trust and integrity — the absolute cornerstone for making leadership matter. He was steady at the helm ... in very turbulent times and 'up' for service to his country, 24/7, 365."

Present at Ernst's retirement ceremony were his wife, brother, three of his four sisters, his son and two daughters, two granddaughters, four grandsons, a daughter-in-law and approximately 150 guests from industry and government.

Ernst thanked his wife, Jane, and his family for allowing him to pursue "opportunities and dreams." He saved his greatest gratitude for the nearly 10,000 men and women of DCMA. "Nothing works unless everyone is working together to make a real impact. It really is all about the people. DCMA does not own any buildings. We do not have any manufacturing assets. All we have is the ability to work the process and the contractors that provide the services for the government on behalf of our warfighters," Ernst said.

Ernst will join his family in Rosemount, Minn., in the suburbs of Minneapolis-St. Paul. Charlie E. Williams Jr., a 22-year veteran of the federal civil service, succeeds him as DCMA director.