

AGENCY IS A ‘FORCE MULTIPLIER’ IN IRAQ

By Senior Airman Jarrod R. Chavana, U.S. Air Forces Central, Baghdad Media Outreach Team

Force protection is no joking matter when it comes to the military, especially in a combat environment, and the Defense Contract Management Agency – Central Iraq is a force multiplier, letting military personnel focus on the bigger picture.

The Theater-Wide Internal Security Service team manages more than \$1.3 billion in static security contracts in more than 30 forward operating bases and complexes. Within Iraq, there are between 9,000 and 12,000 static security personnel protecting a base in locations like entrée control points, towers and dining facilities.

“It’s really a force multiplier being able to have these contracts because it allows the military to do more with less,” explained Jerry Croghan, DCMA-CI team lead. “These contracts allow the government to put its combat power and training power out where it’s needed. We contract the force protection back in the rear, giving the military a place to come back that’s secure to rearm, regroup and refit to go out and do their missions.”

All of the contracts are tracked manually with spreadsheets. At times this can cause mathematical errors that have to be traced so the contracts can be fulfilled. “We’ve had problems where finance wouldn’t pay a private security detail contract because the



From left: Alissa Chulack, Air Force 1st Lt. Elizabeth Baker and Boedy Franklin, Air Force Staff Sgt. Jennifer Didgeon, Defense Contract Management Agency – Central Iraq Team Lead Jerry Croghan, all contract administrators, DCMA employees and members of the Theater-Wide Internal Security Services team, stand beside just a few of the \$1.3 billion contracts they handle in their office on Camp Victory, Iraq, Jan. 11. The TWISS team oversees security contracts across 30 bases in Iraq.

line items didn’t match up,” said U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Jennifer Didgeon, a DCMA-CI contracting administrator deployed from Scott Air Force Base, Ill. “We have to go through the spreadsheets, which can have hundreds of line items, and find out where the error is originating. There have been times that the contract is off by a penny, and finance wouldn’t pay until that penny was found. When you’re looking at a \$300 million contract, it can take a while.”

The team works between 12–14 hours a day, 7 days a week to accomplish the mission. This includes traveling to different

locations throughout Iraq to help train contracting officer representatives or to settle contract issues. “U.S. and NATO forces being able to go out to do missions or go into villages to make allies versus securing the base is important,” affirmed Air Force 1st Lt. Boedy Franklin, a DCMA-CI contract administrator deployed from Pope Air Force Base, N.C. “Our mission is to win the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people. I feel with the guards contracted out, the airmen, marines, soldiers and sailors can do this.” 🟡