

Venturing Downrange to Oversee Contracts

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If you look at the statistics, Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) Phoenix provides acquisition management for more than 9,000 contracts worth more than \$21 billion in Arizona, Texas, New Mexico and northern Mexico — an area more than 500,000 square miles. But for Army Col. Peggy R. Carson, DCMA Phoenix commander, the area of responsibility is somewhat larger.



the middle of my bed,” she said. Someone, not too far away, had fired a shot into the air — and nearly caused a serious casualty. “Sometimes that is all it takes to seriously wound someone,” Col. Carson added.

The primary contractor for LOGCAP and AFCAP is Kellogg, Brown and Root (KBR), headquartered in Houston. The team that administers the contract is located at the company’s headquarters under Col. Carson’s command. “As a result of the Agency’s realignment, that team is now with its third contract management office (CMO) in three years,” the colonel said. It began with DCMA Dallas, was transferred to DCMA San Antonio’s jurisdiction (which became DCMA NASA Product Operations in Phase I of the realignment), then was transferred to the oversight of DCMA Phoenix.

The KBR contracts provide for the contractor to receive a fixed fee for each task accomplished under the work orders it is issued. Depending on how the work is graded (from poor to outstanding), the contractor can be given a monetary performance award, based on the task order ceiling of the contract. The award fee board (including the DCMA theater commander and customer representatives) meets twice a year in each theater of operations (Iraq/Kuwait and

Col. Carson’s personal area of responsibility and expertise also covers Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan. She is one of DCMA’s representatives on the award fee board for the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program (LOGCAP), mainly in Iraq and Kuwait, and the Armed Forces Contract Augmentation Program (AFCAP), mainly in Afghanistan, contracts. She goes to Iraq and Kuwait twice a year; in other months, she goes to Afghanistan.

When the colonel ventures “downrange,” she shares the same risks as many of our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines. During her first trip into Iraq, she returned from dinner to a shocking surprise. “When I came back to my room, there was a hole in the ceiling and a spent bullet in

(Above) Army Col. Peggy R. Carson, commander, DCMA Phoenix

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Afghanistan). Col. Carson is one member of the board that makes the award recommendation. Mr. Jerry Conry, a DCMA Phoenix team chief and systems administrative contracting officer at KBR, accompanies Col. Carson and briefs the board on the status of KBR systems.

Each trip downrange takes about two weeks from start to finish. “It isn’t the actual travel [that is physically stressful] so much as the time changes,” Col. Carson says. “The clock where you are might indicate it’s time for breakfast, but your body time tells you it’s time to turn in for the night.”

According to Col. Carson, the contractor “generally does very well under tough circumstances.” However, the Army recently announced that the current LOGCAP and AFCAP contracts would be rebid in order to give other potential contractors a chance to compete since the original contracts were not competitively bid.

Recently, Col. Carson was one of two Army officers named as DCMA finalists for the Secretary of the Army Acquisition Manager

Award. (Army Lt. Col. James E. Simpson, who is no longer with the Agency, was the other.) Col. Carson was nominated for her outstanding contributions and leadership. Under her management, DCMA Phoenix has played an essential role in providing timely delivery of vital products such as body and vehicle armor and oversight of the logistical support contracts in Iraq and Afghanistan. She has also been a driving force in her CMO’s support of other vital national and strategic programs.

She was a key member of the integrated process team (IPT) that developed the plans and strategies that resulted in DCMA’s realignment into divisions. Col. Carson was also a key member of the Ground Systems & Munitions Division IPT. She has also led the realignment efforts within DCMA Phoenix to streamline teams. That effort was so successful, that indirect labor hours were reduced to less than 13 percent of total labor costs.



(Above) Col. Carson on one of her trips “downrange.”

(Right) Col. Carson oversees KBR contracts as one of DCMA’s representatives on the LOGCAP award fee board.