

Bronze Star Awarded to Air Force Reservist Serving with DCMA Afghanistan

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Air Force Lt. Col. Steve Coughlan, Defense Contract Management Agency Aeronautical Division, was one of the first Air Force Reservists mobilized to Afghanistan supporting the DCMA contingency contract administrative services mission this year. He also holds the distinction of receiving the Bronze Star for meritorious service in support of Combined Joint Task Force-82 and the United States Central Command. The 82nd Airborne Division commander presented the award.

Coughlan began his tour as lead administrative contracting officer supporting contracts valued at \$200 million. The contracts provided

services for more than 16,000 troops at more than 60 locations in the combined joint operations area. He completed his tour as the deputy commander of DCMA Afghanistan.

Coughlan, employed with DCMA since 1992 and a reservist since 1996, mobilized as an ACO. As a civilian, he is a vice president with General Dynamics Information Technologies. Coughlan cites his DCMA and civilian experience in allowing him to hit the ground running when he arrived in Afghanistan last February.

“I started out as an ACO at FOB [forward operating base] Fenty, responsible for one of the largest LOGCAP [Logistics Civil Augmentation Program] III task orders as well as delegated contracts from regional contracting command. “We supported the “Task

Force Duke’ mountain warriors,” said Coughlan. “After a couple of months of ‘cutting my teeth,’ I was moved to DCMA North Afghanistan as the lead ACO responsible for all LOGCAP and [Regional Contracting Command] contract administration for the North Afghanistan tertiary command,” he continued.

One of the first initiatives Coughlan took on was to develop a plan with the contractor to reduce project backlog by 50 percent to support critical troop surge requirements. Through Coughlan’s analysis and direction, the contractor utilized a more cost-effective purchasing strategy resulting in a theater-wide savings of more than \$9 million a year.

If working in a fast-paced wartime environment is not difficult enough, Coughlan also rose to the challenge to fill the leadership role as DCMA Afghanistan’s deputy commander. Coughlan supervised the standup and expansion of 12 FOBs to support the troop surge of more than 20,000 additional personnel. He also led the DCMA Afghanistan response to inquiries from the Commission on Wartime Contracting, developed a revised contractor performance evaluation board process and revamped the theater contracting officer’s representative program, while crafting a blueprint for future improvements. 



Brian Johnson, left, Defense Contract Management Agency, administrative contracting officer, and Air Force Lt. Col. Steve Coughlan, DCMA Aeronautical Systems Division, pose for a shot at the Jalalabad Provincial Reconstruction Team headquarters sign located at Jalalabad, Afghanistan. (U.S. Armed Forces photo)