



Jo Adail Stephenson | DCMA Public Affairs

An Army soldier checks a compass during preparation for an M119 Howitzer live fire exercise. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Dallas Edwards)

The targets Damarys Mercado zeros in on each day are several key assemblies critical to the M119 howitzer, a lightweight artillery weapon that provides direct support fires to light, airborne and air assault forces.

As a Defense Contract Management Agency Central Regional Command team member, Mercado is a quality assurance specialist for the M187A1 telescope mount, the M137A2 panoramic telescope and the M2A2 aiming circle assemblies contracts.

The M187A1 telescope mount adapts the M137A2 panoramic telescope, or pantel, to the howitzer. The mount provides adjustments in elevation and cross-level for indirect fire for the weapon, according to the U.S. Army Tank-automotive and Armaments Command Life Cycle Management Command.

The M137A2 panoramic telescope is the basic instrument used in laying the M119A2 howitzer in azimuth, which is the angle of horizontal deviation, measured clockwise, of a bearing from a standard direction, as from north or south. It is a four-power, fixed-focus telescope mounted on the howitzer using the M187A1



Damarys Mercado, quality assurance specialist, Defense Contract Management Agency Central Regional Command, performs a final inspection on the M2A2 aiming circle, an elbow telescope mounted on orienting and elevating mechanisms contained within a main housing. The main housing, in turn, is mounted on a tripod and provides precise measurements of azimuth and elevation angles of a ground or aerial target through the use of azimuth and elevation scales. (Photo by Jo Adail Stephenson, DCMA Public Affairs)

telescope mount.

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Mercado's oversight on the assemblies includes assuring contractual requirements are met and conducting mandatory inspection as required by letter of delegations or quality assurance letter of instruction. "I conduct investigative reviews on product quality deficiency reports received and support customer concerns," Mercado said.

When quality issues come up, Mercado



Quality assurance specialist Damarys Mercado, Defense Contract Management Agency Central Regional Command, inspects the M137A2 panoramic telescope, the basic instrument used in laying the M119A2 howitzer in azimuth. The M137A2 is a four-power, fixed-focus telescope mounted on the howitzer using the M187A1 telescope mount. (Photo by Jo Adail Stephenson, DCMA Public Affairs)



An Army soldier prepares an M119 Howitzer to fire during an exercise. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Dallas Edwards)

indicated it's a teaming effort with the contractor and customer in most cases. "I interface with the contractor via inspection visits, meetings, e-mails and phone calls. I support the customer visits whenever possible and I also communicate with them via e-mails or phone calls."

Mercado's aim has to be on target because the assemblies affect the howitzer's operation and functionality. The M119 is a versatile weapon. It can be towed by a Humvee, dropped by parachute, and airlifted by UH-60 Black Hawk and CH-47 Chinook helicopters or C-130 Hercules aircraft.

At the end of the day, it is evident Mercado has one thing clearly in her sights: supporting the warfighter. 