

2015 Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Award Contact Information

Award Category	Large Organization
Nominee Information	
Name of Organization	Missile Defense Agency (MDA)
Name of Organization Acquisition Executive / Senior Acquisition Leader	VADM James D. Syring
Title	Director
Name of Organization Submission Point of Contact (POC)	Donna H. Davis
Title	Director for Human Resources
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POC Telephone	256-450-4973
E-mail	Donna.davis@mda.mil
Organization number of employees:	2,330
Organization number of acquisition workforce members	1,885
Organization Mission Statement:	
To develop, test, and field an integrated, layered ballistic missile defense system (BMDS) to defend the United States, its deployed forces, allies, and friends against all ranges of enemy ballistic missiles in all phases of flight.	
Names and position titles of key individuals responsible for acquisition workforce/talent management (often those managing initiatives cited in narrative):	
John H. James, Jr., Executive Director; Donna Davis, Director for Human Resources; Angela Carsten, Deputy Director for Human Resources; Anita Boush, Director for Equal Opportunity and Diversity; Margaret Haack, Missile Defense Career Development Program Champion; Sandra Rawdon, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Program Lead; and Dr. Pamela Knight, Engineering Career Development Program Lead.	
Component Director, Acquisition Career Management Staff Point of Contact	
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The Missile Defense Agency (MDA) is under the direction, authority, and control of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (AT&L). Eighty-one percent of the MDA workforce is assigned to acquisition positions, and they accomplish one of the most challenging missions facing our Nation. To maintain a high performance level, MDA completed significant activities in the July 2014–June 2015 timeframe aimed at improving the qualifications and professionalism of the existing workforce. These activities, aligned with goals of the USD(AT&L) Better Buying Power initiative to achieve technical excellence and innovation, were directed across all segments, with special emphasis on civilians in mission critical occupations (MCOs), participants in the Missile Defense Career Development Program (MDCDP), and our future workforce Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Outreach activities.

1. To improve the qualifications and professionalism of its acquisition workforce and MCOs, MDA incorporates talent management techniques and strategies, leadership and knowledge transfer activities, workforce development and employee recognition initiatives; MDA takes full advantage of opportunities to partner and share best practices, using internal and external assessments to determine return on investment and impact of initiatives to improve mission results.

Mission success requires a highly competent workforce, purposeful employee development, and a mix of generations to form a solid and sustainable pipeline of qualified, experienced personnel. The MDA strives to accomplish this in concert with key Better Buying Power objectives to strengthen organic engineering capabilities in its current workforce and increase support for STEM education to build its future workforce. The cornerstone to the agency's recruitment, placement and development of employees is based on a partnership among MDA teams with specific missions. The STEM outreach program helps to develop and encourage candidates in pre-employment pipelines. The MDCDP recruits and develops entry-level career-ladder employees in MCOs. Human Resources (HR) manages overall recruitment, placement and development of the entire workforce, focusing on acquisition and MCOs. Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management (EO) guides all teams to focus on outreach to underrepresented populations. Functional area subject matter experts are hired specifically for career development efforts in MCOs (e.g. engineering and contracting). And finally, the teams have strong support and constant guidance via routine strategic planning sessions with MDA's executive leadership team to further these efforts.

To support key AT&L and MDA goals to foster a supporting environment for a diverse and professional workforce, MDA representatives from HR, EO, STEM, and the MDCDP created a targeted recruitment strategy with a strong focus on the entry-level pipeline with nationwide face-to-face recruitment and e-Recruitment to expand outreach. This team strategically pinpointed student populations with concentrated fields of study and organic engineering capabilities, as well as minority serving institutions with an emphasis in those fields. Recruitment efforts successfully promoted MDA as an employer of choice to a wide, targeted audience; identified potential high quality candidates and notified student populations of future MDA hiring campaigns. These efforts encourage the college age students to pursue STEM majors, and educate students on MDA's mission along with the variety of job opportunities available when they graduate. The ultimate goal was to improve the quality of hires in MCOs while also attracting a diverse group of applicants.

The inclusion of EO and STEM representatives in the strategy meetings demonstrated MDA's commitment to outreach among minority serving institutions, and adherence to the Better Buying Power goal to increase support for STEM education. Face-to-face recruitment activities occurred over a six-week period and targeted 16 private and public institutions across the United States.

MDA participated in planned career fairs and individual breakout sessions at colleges and universities from Alabama to New Mexico, and Texas to the National Capital Region. Recruitment teams exemplified MDA's diversity and included a member of the HR recruitment staff, an MDCDP participant and a technical subject matter expert.

The agency further broadened its recruitment and branding efforts with a significant enhancement to its external Web sites to incorporate recruiting best practices for mobile device capability. The agency implemented responsive Web design methodology on its sites at <http://www.mda.mil> and <http://www.mda.mil/careers>; completed redesign of both sites. In responsive Web design, MDA Web pages will format properly and resize for either fixed Web (standard computers) or mobile Web (on a variety of devices and browsers). This enhancement is particularly appealing to a targeted technically-savvy audience of engineers and recent college graduates. Prospective applicants will find it easier to search for job opportunities. The redesign increases the agency's visibility and viability as an "employer of choice."

2. MDA firmly believes in mentorship to coach and professionally develop the next generation of executive leaders. The HR Directorate and MDA's Diversity, Wellness and Morale Advisory Council partnered to develop and conduct an Executive Mentorship stand down in April 2015. The goal for this event was to connect executives (members of the Senior Executive Services, General and Flag Officers) with members of the workforce to help them develop realistic and achievable professional goals, to foster an environment of continuous improvement and learning, to share knowledge, and to create collaborative working relationships. Sessions were offered over a two-day period at all MDA locations, face-to-face or via Video Teleconference. Candidates submitted an application package and attended agency developed training to prepare for the sessions. The training session, mentoring sessions, and follow-up surveys were created, scheduled, and implemented within a four-week period.

To match the mentor with the employee, candidates identified three executives they wanted to meet with for mentorship. More than 70 civilians and military members were mentored by 20 Flag or General Officers and Executives. After the sessions, surveys were conducted through the agency's Learning Management System and revealed overwhelmingly positive feedback from both the executive mentors and the participants.

The Executive Mentorship Program dovetails with the fully-fledged MDCDP mentoring program that has done much to develop strong, effective working relationships between senior leaders and junior employees.

In addition to the mentoring program, MDA implemented new initiatives in the MDCDP that focus on knowledge sharing, continuous improvement, learning, and retention. Through data analysis, we learned a slight majority of individuals who leave MDA have been with the agency fewer than five years. Recognizing the stability of MDA's talent pipeline is a critical component to mission success, we refined our on-boarding process to more efficiently welcome and integrate new employees into the workforce. Through targeted training, they learned about MDA culture, office etiquette, communications, critical thinking, and effective problem-solving. MDCDP participants also have access to a Microsoft SharePoint portal site devoted solely to their enculturation at MDA, and access to an additional 53 courses specifically developed for them. MDA developed and delivered a training course for mentors titled Mentoring the MDA Way, and created peer-to-peer mentoring in which MDCDP graduates meet with new members to exchange information, offer

guidance, and share their experiences.

To target mid-career retention, MDA customized and supplemented course content for the DoD online Supervisor Development Course to increase the knowledge and competencies of our cadre of supervisors. The curriculum is competency-based and aligns with the DoD Leadership Development Continuum. It helps first time supervisors successfully transition to their new roles and responsibilities, and is a comprehensive refresher for current supervisors. The curriculum supports the Department's lifecycle management approach to recruit, manage, develop, and retain a capable and ready workforce. This is in line with the Better Buying Power goal to establish high standards for key leadership positions. The updated curriculum replaced two courses (a Basic Supervisor Course and an Advanced Supervisor Course), offering broader content and the capability for supervisors to use it as an online reference tool. To supplement the online course, the agency implemented mandatory Supervisor Sessions led by subject matter experts that focus on specific aspects of supervision. These sessions provide opportunities for supervisors, managers, and agency leaders to learn best practices, share knowledge, and develop a supervisory network.

3. In 2014-2015, MDA sponsored and partnered with DAU to develop a new long-term leadership development program for Department of Defense Acquisition Professionals who are poised to assume key leadership positions. The Key Leadership Development Program (KLDP) is structured to establish a standard for acquisition professionals in technical leadership areas, similar to PMT 401 for the Program Management field, but with an emphasis on critical technical management expertise. The one-year pilot program, which launched in the Summer of 2015, is comprised of 24 cohorts with two-thirds from MDA and one-third of the pilot class participants from Army, Navy, Air Force and private industry. Over the course of a year, the cohorts meet for classroom training four times for a total of 10 weeks, and they spend the remaining time in virtual teams, with specific curriculum and assignments due as they work through approximately 45 actual case studies. The curriculum is designed to improve critical thinking for acquisition workforce key technical leaders, increase functional proficiency in managing complex programs, and hone leadership and teamwork skills to facilitate change. Pending the assessment of this pilot in the summer of 2016, the course is projected to be offered across the Department to prepare our next senior technical leaders to mitigate risk and lead critical Major Defense Acquisition Programs.

The MDA Engineering Directorate initiated a FY15 Systems Engineering Certificate program with the Naval Postgraduate School's (NPS) Graduate School in Engineering and Applied Sciences in Monterey, California, and also partnered with NPS to develop and implement a new Master of Science Program in Systems Engineering. The MDA currently has 16 participants in the certificate program and 11 in the Master's program. Both the certificate program and Master of Science program have tailorable focus areas (i.e. weapon system reliability) to meet emerging critical needs in complex weapon system acquisition programs. The certificate program develops advanced systems engineering skills via online courses over a one-year period. The Masters class is a two-year online program designed for senior engineering and technical professionals. "It develops a new kind of leader with a holistic perspective and knowledge of the total life-cycle acquisition system. . . and provides the educational foundation to drive systems engineering innovations and help achieve acquisition excellence." These advanced training opportunities meet the Better Buying Power goal to strengthen organic engineering capabilities and will accommodate another goal, to improve leader's abilities to understand and mitigate technical risk.

The MDA uses numerous analytical and data collection tools to evaluate the current state of the

workforce, identify target areas to meet agency goals, and track success in initiatives. The analyses use multi-faceted repeatable methodologies that allow the data to be re-applied in subsequent years to identify, assess and understand statistical fluctuations over time. MDA incorporates qualitative assessments when possible to qualify employee statistical results.

More in-depth analysis supports overarching MDA and DoD level requirements for workforce statistics regarding MCOs, attrition, and fill rates. The agency culls information from multiple sources to determine loss rates and trends that could compromise mission success. For example, analyzing losses by MCO or by years of service impacted MDA recruitment and retention activities. Thus, the renewed emphasis on enculturation of MDCDP participants to retain them, and increased educational opportunities and mentoring sessions for the MDCDP participants to engage them.

4. The agency uses multiple means to recognize and reward individual or team achievements that contribute to meeting organization goals or improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. These recognitions and awards can be either monetary or honorary. The MDA has a robust honorary awards program, with internal MDA-specific awards (the Director's Career Achievement Award, the Director's Significant Technical Achievement Award, the Director's Pinnacle Award), our own annual version of the "Golden Globes" to recognize individuals and groups across a spectrum of categories, and the Agency participates to the fullest extent in the OSD(AT&L) awards programs, to ensure members of our civilian and military workforce are recognized for their exceptional contributions to mission success.

The primary MDA recognition program is our Annual Awards Program which culminates at the end of the fiscal year, recognizing more than 18 different categories for individual and team successes in key mission critical areas at MDA such as Risk Management, Environmental Stewardship, Technology, System Engineering, and Quality, Safety and Mission Assurance. There is a Work Smart Award that recognizes efforts that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the agency. There are special categories for Excellence in Acquisition, Leadership, and Mentor of the Year. The agency initiated significant changes to its internal awards program in 2014-2015, moving from a manual to an online nomination process and voting tool. These improvements significantly reduced many hours of effort and increased the accuracy of the voting process, saving senior leadership time and improving outcomes. Because of these efficiencies, the agency no longer had to restrict the number of nominees. This resulted in greater employee recognition, since being nominated for an annual award is in itself a significant achievement.

MDA recently initiated a dashboard, via the Microsoft SharePoint portal, for leadership to track the status of other employee recognition activity related to Federal career credit. The prototype system currently tracks retirement status, from submission of retirement papers to final ceremony. This system ensures that the agency appropriately recognizes, at the highest levels, those individuals who have dedicated their careers to the Department of Defense and to MDA. The tracking system will expand in the future to incorporate all honorary awards and calls for nominations.

5. A primary goal of Better Buying Power is to increase DoD support for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education. MDA has a keen interest in meeting and promoting this goal and demonstrates that in its external and internal partnering, recently establishing a Federal fulltime civilian position to direct the STEM program outreach and activities. In addition, the MDA's Executive Director currently serves on the DoD STEM Executive Board with others from across the Services. The agency has representation that enables us to learn from, share and

collaborate on STEM Outreach efforts and workforce initiatives (e.g., Science, Mathematics and Research for Transformation, SMART, internships) across the Department of Defense.

The MDA STEM Outreach goal is to partner with many organizations to encourage young people to pursue STEM related careers, increase the awareness of K-12 and college students to STEM, and enhance the number of U.S. scientists and engineers capable of solving future Missile Defense challenges in the government, industry, and academia. Over the past year, MDA engaged with approximately 8,321 students, parents, and adults through STEM Outreach events in 2014, with 119 MDA civilian and military employees volunteering to assist.

The agency shared STEM program goals, strategies and efforts with the 4th Estate HR Directors at a quarterly meeting in the spring of 2015, and will continue to showcase efforts and lessons learned at future meetings with the OSD Agencies and activities represented by the 4th Estate. In previously mentioned efforts, MDA shared the Executive Mentorship program information and all materials with AT&L leadership, following an AT&L Staff meeting in which the program was highlighted. Through the pilot KLDP highlighted in response number 3, MDA invited the Services and some Industry partners to share in the learning experience, with the intent to refine curriculum for the wider DoD audience, and provide invaluable feedback as to the impact of the curriculum upon their missions.

6. The MDA places high value on the results from technical and soft skills training offered to our employees, and also on the employee opinions expressed in the Office of Personnel Management's annual Federal Employees Viewpoint Survey, and in-house surveys administered by human resources.

Though results of the technical and soft skills training is primarily qualitative, employees and leadership express satisfaction with the offerings and the agency's continued emphasis on training and developmental opportunities. Given results from annual Acquisition Demonstration performance management pay pools, managers are satisfied with development and performance of their workforce in more than 95 percent of cases.

The results of the annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey are an indicator of employee satisfaction and a source of action plans to improve the work environment and workforce readiness, and to impact mission results. MDA uses data elements from the survey in several initiatives, its Leadership in Action course (MDA-specific advanced leadership training) and in entrance and exit surveys. In the Leadership in Action course, current and future leaders are presented with several low scoring elements from the Viewpoint survey and asked to work together on teams to identify the source of the low scores and to develop action plans to improve them.

The results from the course and the entrance and exit surveys are shared at the highest levels in the agency and disseminated to senior leaders, as appropriate. Through analysis over a four-year period, MDA is able to trend workforce attitudes, morale, and satisfaction levels, and take action to mitigate. For example, the Executive Mentoring Sessions were developed to address the workforce perception that senior leaders are distant and unapproachable. A concern about "dealing with problem performers" is being addressed in the both the Supervisor Development Course curriculum and, more fully, in the Mandatory Supervisor Sessions.

These mitigation efforts, coupled with the agency's honorary awards program and focus on

professional development, do much to demonstrate the value the agency places on its employees. These efforts improve the working environment, morale, and readiness of the workforce.

Identifying and understanding outputs of the analyses allow for the implementation of targeted action plans across the enterprise with the employees perspectives in mind. The application of this approach and implementation of various targeted action plans has significantly increased MDA's ranking by 40 favorable percentage points over the last four years according to the "Best Places to Work (Federal Government)" rankings.

7. Other.

No additional information to add.

AWARD CITATION

One page; not to exceed 200 words

The Missile Defense Agency implemented a comprehensive acquisition workforce development program that addresses every aspect of the employment lifecycle. MDA engaged with approximately 8,321 students, parents, and adults through STEM Outreach events and conducted face-to-face recruitment activities at 16 targeted institutions for higher education across the United States to ensure diversity and technical competencies are met. Recognizing the stability of MDA's talent pipeline is a critical component to mission success, the agency refined its on-boarding process to more efficiently welcome and integrate new employees into the workforce. Over the past year MDA implemented new initiatives in its Career Development Program that focus on knowledge sharing, continuous improvement, learning, and retention. They implemented a peer to peer mentoring program for Career Development Program participants, pairing new employees with recent graduates from the program to exchange information, offer guidance, and share experiences. They recently held an executive level mentoring stand down to allow more than 70 employees to meet with Flag and Senior Executive level leaders for one-on-one mentoring to enhance career planning. MDA partnered with the Defense Acquisition University and the Naval Post Graduate School to build long-term training programs focused on Acquisition Key Leadership development and strengthening organic engineering competencies.

**2015 Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Award
Contact Information**

Award Category: Small Organization

Organization Nominee Information

Name of Organization: Special Operations Forces Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (SOF AT&L), United States Special Operations Command

Name of Acquisition Executive/Senior Acquisition Leader: Mr. James F. Geurts, SES

Title: Acquisition Executive

Name of Nomination Submission Point of Contact (POC): Mr. Chris Harrington

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POC Telephone: 813.826.9475

E-mail: christopher.harrington@socom.mil

Organization number of employees: 376

Organization number of acquisition workforce members: 287

Organization Mission Statement: Provide rapid and focused acquisition, technology, and logistics to Special Operations Forces.

Names and position title of key individuals responsible for acquisition workforce/talent management (often those managing initiatives cited in narrative):

Mr. Chris Harrington, Chief, Acquisition Support

Ms. Kim Kundinger, Acquisition Workforce Specialist

Ms. Rachel Ford, Acquisition Workforce & Business Specialist

Component Director, Acquisition Career Management Staff Point of Contact

Name: Mr. James F. Geurts, SES

Title: Acquisition Executive

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NOMINATION NARRATIVE

1. Talent management, with a focus on quality and efforts to have people with the right skills, in the right places, at the right times – with the high priority competencies for mission-critical functions. Examples of initiatives include efforts to attract, acquire, develop, promote, and retain quality talent. Additional examples include strategic recruitment of diverse and qualified candidates for the organization’s workforce. Examples also include how organization leaders, managers, and supervisors create and sustain effective working relationships with employees.

Special Operations Forces Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (SOF AT&L), United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), utilizes various opportunities to recruit high-caliber individuals from a number of resources into civil service careers. This practice enables SOF AT&L to hire and train interns and journeymen to replace anticipated vacancies within our acquisition workforce due to natural attrition. Our Intern programs support multiple disciplines while enabling new members of the acquisition workforce to train alongside experienced staff in their functional area. We rotate our interns on a pre-planned basis to ensure a wide breadth of training, experience, and exposure. Over the last year, SOF AT&L supported four interns. Our comprehensive training and certification plans provide developmental positions insight to a vast array of processes and programs within our acquisition center.

SOF AT&L has also developed many innovative initiatives to enhance the capabilities of both USSOCOM Headquarters and Service acquisition workforces. We continued with the “GHOST” program, an initiative that deploys junior Air Force acquisition officers to our Program Executive Office for Fixed Wing. As of June 2015, 87 Air Force acquisition officers have been hand-selected for this competitive program. During their 120-day deployment, these junior acquisition officers learn and execute rapid acquisition programs in direct support of Special Operations Forces (SOF) combat operations. They are responsible for programs within the dynamic Manned and Unmanned Aircraft, Precision Strike Package, and the full range of AFSOC C-130 aircraft. Their recent accomplishments include integrating ballistic protection on the CV-22 Special Operations aircraft to meet a critical mission operational requirement, fielding an innovative unmanned system in direct support of the President’s Syria Train and Equip initiative, establishing new unmanned system systems sites in response to constantly evolving threat requirements, and establishing a dedicated airborne test platform for rapid demonstration and implementation of new SOF-unique capabilities.

This award period, the GHOSTs also directly supported the Revolutionary Acquisition Tactics, Procedures, and Collaboration (RATPAC) initiative. Developed in response to a Chief of Staff of the Air Force challenge directly to the GHOSTs, RATPAC gathers senior leaders as well as select junior acquirers to share acquisition tactics, techniques, and procedures, lessons learned, and innovative ideas. The RATPAC forum has garnered enthusiastic support from both the Secretary of the Air Force and Chief of Staff of the Air Force and has formalized this methodology as the Air Force’s method for sharing innovation acquisition tactics across the Air Force. As a result, the GHOSTs have more than doubled the number of participants for the third meeting of this revolutionary collaboration forum. Moving forward, RATPAC will leverage the power of GHOST nation to hold smaller, localized sessions and ensure acquisition innovation is a continual process driving powerful change to implement NOW throughout the Air Force.

SOF AT&L Science & Technology's newest initiative of Advanced Manufacturing is exploring a new effort to train SOF Wounded Warriors in the area of 3D printing (material decisions, innovative 3D design, additive/subtractive manufacturing equipment, etc.) to create a cadre of trained SOF experts who can provide direct combat support through 3D Printing to SOF, thereby further accelerating iteration cycles, relevance, acquisition, and the ultimate delivery of new capabilities. Currently through the

USSOCOM Care Coalition and Oak Ridge National Laboratory, our first Wounded Warrior is onsite and plugged in. We are currently driving forward to expand this effort through the USSOCOM Care Coalition with current Active Duty SOF Wounded Warriors, projected for a fiscal year 2016 start date.

SOF AT&L is committed to the whole person concept and, in July 2013, introduced the SOF AT&L Health and Wellness program. In collaboration with wellness providers and various organizations, we provide acquisition solutions that preserve our force and families while also preserving our critical workforce of SOF Acquirers so we meet our individual and collective wellness goals. Since the program's inception, we have hosted 153 events, with 1605 attendees, including men's and women's health workshops, healthy food shopping, and exercise programs, such as various yoga classes and "Workday Workouts." Additionally, we support the Global Corporate Challenge with 32 USSOCOM teams that include 224 participants (an increase from 29 teams/203 participants in 2014), who have completed over 57 million steps since 27 May 2015, totaling over 22.5 thousand miles. We realize our people are our greatest resource and strive to maintain a healthy and productive organization.

2. Organization's leadership and knowledge transfer efforts to build the competencies of current and future leaders – initiatives and results that advance mission success; continuity of leadership; knowledge and best practice sharing across the organization; and an environment of mentoring, continuous improvement, and learning.

As with being part of USSOCOM's operational force, being a SOF Acquirer, Technologist, or Logistician is demanding and requires the utmost in skill, professionalism, and dedication to the mission. SOF AT&L's human capital planning encompasses the holistic development of the acquisition workforce through various recruiting, training, education, and retention incentives to develop and maintain a highly qualified workforce. The SOF AT&L Human Capital Plan synchronizes a myriad of conventional and unconventional strategies to accomplish the workforce development goals of recruiting retiring military personnel, providing asynchronous training and education, compiling a central repository of SOF AT&L - specific training opportunities on our SharePoint portal, and orchestrating continuous process improvements of acquisition programs through lessons learned.

To ensure the workforce meets Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) certification continuous learning point (CLP) requirements, SOF AT&L designated a training manager who tracks the certification status and CLPs for our personnel. The training manager also projects SOF AT&L's training requirements by gathering a list of required courses from the various organizations within our acquisition center and providing a consolidated training requirement to the Air Force Acquisition Training Office. A host of metrics located on our portal provides a ready reference to SOF AT&L leadership on the status and health of our certification and training programs. Our training manager also tracks SOF AT&L University (SOF AT&L-U) events and participation to ensure utility of the sponsored events. SOF AT&L-U is SOF AT&L's central repository for all knowledge sharing across the organization. Subject matter experts from our program executive offices and directorates provide acquisition presentations each month to disseminate pertinent information on lessons learned, to discuss strategies, and to analyze programmatic challenges, all of which are then uploaded to the SOF AT&L-U portal. Attendees are able to earn CLPs toward their 80-hour requirement in accordance with the DAWIA regulation

SOF AT&L's Service Academy Summer Intern program exposed two U.S. Air Force Academy and four U.S. Naval Academy interns in various engineering disciplines to the SOF mission and SOF AT&L acquisition processes and procedures. The interns were assigned to the Joint Acquisition Task Force – Tactical Assault Light Operator Suit (JATF-TALOS) team and played an integral role in the JATF-TALOS Tactical Systems June rapid prototype event, working side by side with program engineers to

develop technical solutions to meet program requirements in computing, human factors, command, control, communications, and intelligence, helmet and armor design, and digital optics.

SOF AT&L recently initiated a Mentorship program, which includes toolkits for both the mentor and protégé. The program provides an environment where the mentor and protégé work together to promote personal and professional growth and development. The program helps prepare the protégé for increased levels of responsibility and provides a catalyst for cross-organizational and cross-generational learning and knowledge sharing. Acquisition professionals at various levels learn from the experiences of others, and the program participants are then able to “pay it forward” and provide mentorship to other team members. SOF AT&L’s mentorship program has been well received by both our mentors and protégés, and it has infused team spirit throughout our organization. Currently, SOF AT&L has 20 mentors and 19 protégés participating in the program.

In addition, SOF AT&L established a Job Shadow Program that encourages Government civilian and military participation. The purpose of the Job Shadow Program is to provide the SOF AT&L workforce an opportunity to learn more about (other) program executive offices’ and directorates’ mission, responsibilities, commodity areas, and daily Battle Rhythm events—not just for the one to which they are assigned. Benefits of this program include individuals feel valued, improving employee morale; they are able to get out of their comfort zone and learn new skills; they increase their professional network; they learn new management techniques; they gain an appreciation for other staff members’ duties; and they have new sources of information for future projects and/or tasks. Additionally, leaders of each of the participating program executive offices and directorates are afforded an opportunity to interface with staff members and see their untapped resources and potentially utilize them on future projects and/or tasks. Although in its infancy stage, the Job Shadow Program proves to be a beneficial vehicle for individuals to diversify their areas of interest in the acquisition community while networking with others within the organization they otherwise wouldn’t have had an opportunity to do so.

Also new this past year is our Course Review collaborative portal page, which asks personnel to review courses they’ve attended so others within the organization have a resource to reference when looking for additional information/training on a particular concept and/or topic. The portal page asks users to provide a brief, but candid, review of courses they’ve attended. The intent is to help colleagues determine whether a specific course is worthy of their time and will meet the individual’s objectives. Individuals have the ability to rate the course, the instructor, and add any commentary regarding the content of course material. Users can submit these reviews by identifying themselves by name or anonymously.

3. Workforce development initiatives demonstrate alignment with and support for organization, Component, and Department of Defense mission, goals, and objectives. Describe the organization’s effort to analyze and ensure an effective case for initiatives and execution measures of success.

USSOCOM’s mission demands a highly skilled workforce of SOF Acquirers, Technologists, and Logisticians who are experts in rapid acquisition and the fielding of innovative capabilities and equipment to the Warfighter. Consequently, both the USSOCOM Commander and Acquisition Executive (AE) have emphasized workforce development as a top priority for USSOCOM’s acquisition workforce. SOF AT&L has aligned its workforce development objectives with the human capital goals of the AT&L Strategic Plan, with a focus on developing a highly agile workforce. Our goals include: (1) commanding excellence in education and training, (2) recruiting and retaining a highly qualified acquisition workforce, (3) fostering positive relationships among industry and the Department of Defense (DoD) community, and (4) creating a self-sustaining learning organization. In addition, the AE publishes an annual written Mission Tasking letter to the entire SOF enterprise, which provides goals and priorities for the year and

serves as the basis for all workforce contribution plans, ensuring alignment of goals with the priorities of the Command.

SOF AT&L's workforce development activities have helped immeasurably to sustain our ability to be agile, innovative, and effective. Our activities have allowed our AE to delegate Milestone Decision Authority (MDA) to the lowest level, enabling accelerated decision making by our program executive officers and program managers. Ninety-nine percent of SOF programs have MDA delegated to the program executive office level or lower. As a result, we are developing and fielding new equipment and technologies at a pace more rapidly than ever due to the increased effectiveness of our workforce. Utilizing the lessons learned and best practices associated with our highly successful Joint Acquisition Task Force (JATF)-Dragon Spear program (winner of the 2010 William J. Perry and Air Force Acquisition Transformation Awards), SOF AT&L established JATF- TALOS as a joint, interagency research and development effort under the direction of USSOCOM. The project will develop an advanced warfighting system with upgraded protection, enhanced performance, and an exponential improvement in situational awareness. JATF-TALOS will facilitate carrying out directed taskings in extremely high risk scenarios. In parallel, the TALOS effort is a pilot program to pioneer a faster and more agile acquisition process. In a resource-constrained environment where information is globally available, SOF AT&L strives to stay ahead of the curve by leveraging technology as quickly as possible.

SOF AT&L's Technology and Industry Liaison Office (TILO) and Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP) have helped the acquisition workforce engage more directly with industry and small businesses. TILO assists industry representatives, USSOCOM senior leaders, and other key Command personnel to foster business opportunities between the government and industry and to identify innovative potential solutions to USSOCOM requirements. During this award period, TILO coordinated approximately 250 industry briefings to the Command and helped facilitate the 2015 Special Operations Forces Industry Conference (SOFIC), which included more than 10,000 attendees, 350 companies, and 825 industry booths. Similarly, OSBP participated in several prestigious events, such as the Annual Small Business Development Center Small Business Conference, Senator Warner's (VA) Multi-Cultural Small Business Conference, National Small Business Contracting Summit, Florida 8(a) Alliance Small Business Conference, and SOFIC. This past year, the USSOCOM OSBP was recognized by the Office of Federal Procurement Policy and the Chief Acquisition Officers Council as their winner for Small Business Excellence.

4. Initiatives recognize and reward individual or team achievement that contributes to meeting organization mission goals or improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization.

USSOCOM's goal for the workforce development plan is to infuse the SOF ethos into the acquisition workforce in the form of the SOF Acquirer, Technologist, and Logistician—an operationally oriented, professionally trained, and certified expert in SOF-unique acquisition processes. The culture can be found in everything accomplished within SOF AT&L, and it's the unifying theme to link SOF AT&L's workforce initiatives into the SOF mission.

Our AE has established numerous initiatives to solicit feedback from the workforce, including blogs, suggestion boxes, town hall meetings, and informal group discussions to allow uninhibited communication. SOF AT&L's "Blowing up Bureaucracy" initiative has fostered positive change in the work environment by reducing unnecessary processes while using resources more efficiently and effectively. Recent initiatives generated by our program enhanced the source selection execution process and program financial execution tracking, and it also produced significant cost savings through the consolidation of IT purchases across the enterprise. Regardless of the forum, personnel feel empowered

when contributing their suggestions and, subsequently, seeing their implemented suggestions result in a positive impact to the organization.

SOF AT&L's recent initiative to transition to the Acquisition Demonstration Project has had a positive impact. It has significantly increased our ability to recruit, manage, and retain the superior acquisition workforce required to provide rapid and agile support of SOF Warfighters worldwide. The flexibility to reshape our organization—to provide urgent, critical capabilities to the field—has already begun to reap significant benefits and will continue well into the future. Additionally, our contribution-based compensation and appraisal system supports the identification and compensation of key contributors to the accomplishment of the SOF AT&L mission. The system is designed to motivate the workforce by rewarding those who have provided significant contributions to SOF AT&L's mission and the Warfighter.

Finally, SOF AT&L's annual awards program recognizes the contributions of individuals and teams that demonstrate SOF core values in eight unique categories: Adapter, Enabler, Innovator, Maverick, Motivator, Up and Comer, Catalyst, and Better Buying Power. SOF AT&L held the awards ceremony this year on 21 May, recognizing 24 individuals and teams with crystal awards presented by the USSOCOM Commander and AE. This awards program has been a great addition to SOF AT&L's workforce climate and culture and has resulted in positive feedback from personnel across our organization on the motivation it provides and the special meaning it has to them.

5. Examples of partnering and sharing of workforce development best practices.

SOF AT&L relies on the many partnerships and cooperative agreements we have with academia, industry, and affiliate organizations. These arrangements allow us to maximize the amount of funding available for the acquisition of special operations materiel solutions and to realize the highest return for SOF AT&L's research and development investments.

USSOCOM has a cooperative agreement with the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). In support of this relationship, the Command jointly funds DARPA programs where synergies exist and supports the testing of new technology projects. The sophistication of the Warfighter and the complexity of the problems they face provide significant opportunities to evaluate emerging technical solutions to difficult problems. This partnership has led to the completion of many technology projects, such as advanced runaway light and flashlight systems, water purification pens, unmanned aerial vehicles, and foliage penetration sensors in addition to current efforts to develop hemorrhage control technologies, such as a first-in-kind hemostatic device for the treatment of gunshot and shrapnel wounds on the battlefield.

6. Overall assessment and examples of positive impact on organization's team, environment, readiness, and mission results.

Our AE has focused on the initiatives of DAWIA by commanding workforce excellence in education and training. He holds his principal deputy, the Deputy Director for Acquisition, accountable for all facets of workforce development and human capital management. SOF AT&L tracks education, training, and workforce certification in real time on the SOF AT&L acquisition dashboard, which enables the AE and Deputy Director to maintain a laser focus on workforce health in accordance with the SOF AT&L Human Capital Plan. Our acquisition dashboard enhances transparency and increases accountability, and it includes compliance metrics that are utilized during the Deputy Director's monthly manpower meeting to brief our CLP and DAWIA certification status, SOF AT&L-U training events, and Service and DoD training opportunities. As a result, 98% of SOF AT&L personnel meet their DAWIA certification requirements within the grace period.

In attempt to assist the organization in tracking the status of program executive offices' and directorates' CLP suspense dates, SOF AT&L developed a new report and placed it on our internal organizational portal page. This report is easily accessed and provides organizational leaders a snapshot of personnel whose suspense dates are within 60 days of expiring. In creating this report, it enables our supervisors to proactively address potential individuals that will not meet their continuous learning suspense dates.

Our SOF AT&L-U initiative continues to benefit the organization by sharing information and lessons learned among the acquisition workforce. SOF AT&L-U provides a venue for our workforce to learn from each other, gain expertise on emerging technologies and acquisition techniques, and meet with SOF operators to get feedback on capability needs and potential future requirements. The self-sustaining nature of the SOF AT&L-U initiative provides the opportunity for personnel to request specific training and/or schedule their own presentations to broaden the awareness and understanding of the programs within SOF AT&L's expansive portfolio, all via a portal-based system available to the entire enterprise.

7. Other.

The SOF AT&L workforce strives daily to meet the needs of SOF by expeditiously delivering the right capability to enable them to execute the USSOCOM acquisition mission. Despite dynamic mission demands and budget uncertainties, SOF AT&L continues to achieve our vision of being THE recognized expert and trusted provider to the finest SOF the world has ever known. Over the last year—with a team of less than 400 members—the SOF AT&L SOF Acquirers, Technologists, and Logisticians:

- Executed more than 400 programs and projects;
- Oversaw \$7.9 billion in funds;
- Awarded \$3.0 billion in contracts with 11,480 contract actions; and
- Fielded:
 - 163 fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft and systems
 - 9 maritime craft and systems
 - 31,679 weapons, accessories, lasers, and visual augmentation systems
 - 37,804 operator survival and equipment kits
 - 627 vehicles
 - 85 million rounds of ammunition
 - 2,974 operator and medic kits
 - 83 CASEVAC sets
 - 1,991 ISR kits
 - 4,527 radios, SATCOM terminals, and ancillary equipment
 - 7,442 IT automation devices and systems
 - 91 tactical MISO systems

These accomplishments demonstrate the consistent commitment of SOF AT&L to continuously improve the professionalism of the total acquisition workforce and our dedication to the development of a skilled professional workforce. At a time of budget constraints and uncertainty, it is the DoD community's responsibility to *DO MORE WITHOUT MORE*. The SOF AT&L organization has done just that without losing focus on what is most important—supporting the SOF operators and their families.

AWARD CITATION

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
2015 DEFENSE ACQUISITION WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AWARD
TO
SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES ACQUISITION, TECHNOLOGY, AND LOGISTICS

Special Operations Forces Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, United States Special Operations Command, has demonstrated outstanding commitment, innovation, and results to develop and support the success of its workforce. The Command's mission demands a highly skilled workforce of Special Operations Forces (SOF) Acquirers, Technologists, and Logisticians who are experts in rapid acquisition and the fielding of innovative capabilities and equipment for the Warfighter. As with SOF's operational force, being a SOF AT&L professional is demanding, dynamic, and requires the utmost in acquisition skill, professionalism, and dedication to the mission. This unique acquisition workforce spans eight program executive offices and four directorates who have expertly supported the nation's most elite warriors deployed, at any given time, in up to one hundred countries. They continuously meet the needs of our Special Operations Forces by expeditiously delivering the right capability to enable them to successfully execute their critical, often time-sensitive, missions worldwide.