Nomination of Robert E. Cothran for the Secretary of Defense Product Support Manager of the Year Award
(Major Defense Acquisition Programs ACAT IC Category)

Section 1. NOMINATION INFORMATION

1. Name: Robert E. Cothran, NH-04

2. Organization (Military Service and Command): Army, Unmanned Aircraft Systems Project Management Office, Program Executive Office, Aviation

3. Primary POC: COL Courtney P. Cote
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4. Primary POC: Ms. Lottie Dozier
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5. Background Information, Career Highlights

Mr. Robert Cothran has had a long and distinguished career, serving his country in varying capacities for over 46 years. He served 27 years in the United States Army in various assignments, leading/ managing repair facility operations for air defense (Vulcan/Chaparral) and land combat systems (Tow/Dragon/Multiple Launch Rocket Systems). He culminated his military career as a Command Sergeant Major and the Senior Maintenance Logistician at Eighth Army Headquarters, G-4. After military retirement, Mr. Cothran worked in the defense contracting industry where he supported the Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Project Management Office (PMO) for ten years, providing Aviation Integrated Logistics Support (ILS) expertise for the RQ-7B Shadow, RQ-11A/B Raven and Extended Range Multi-Purpose (ERMP) systems (i.e. Warrior A, Hunter, and Gray Eagle). In late 2009, Mr. Cothran joined the government civilian workforce as a NH-04, Logistics Management Specialist, first serving as a Branch Chief, leading program Training and Documentation efforts and later was selected as the Army's Product Support Manager (PSM) and Fleet Manager for the Medium Altitude Endurance (MAE) Product Office managing life-cycle logistics for the MQ-1C Gray Eagle. In managing the Army's fleet of Gray Eagle UAS, Mr. Cothran planned and implemented innovative and

affordable product support strategies, managing system readiness of deployed and CONUS-based systems, identifying and championing opportunities for competition, controlling costs, eliminating unproductive processes, implementing cost-effective reliability improvements, implementing supply chain efficiencies, and adding value on behalf of taxpayers, while supporting deployed soldiers.

Mr. Cothran is the PM's eyes and ears to the field, responsible for overseeing and orchestrating Total Life-Cycle System Management (TLCSM) functions necessary to gain and maintain visibility of the Gray Eagle fleet of UAS in the hands of Soldiers while ensuring support and sustainability throughout the system's life-cycle.

6. Command Mission Statement. (5 lines or less)
Provide our Nation and its allies a world class interoperable MQ-1C Gray Eagle system with integrated payloads through excellence in program management and lifecycle support. Support revolutionizing our Nation's warfighting operations by being the world class leader in the development, production and sustainment of the Gray Eagle unmanned aircraft and associated systems.

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Section 2. EVALUATION FACTORS

Mission Accomplishment. (Weight Factor = 45%)

Mr. Robert Cothran serves as the Product Support Manager (PSM) for the Army's MQ-1C Gray Eagle Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS). Within the organization, Mr. Cothran serves as an Army premier expert for UAS logistics support and sustainment operations, responsible for coordinating executive level actions at the Program Executive Office (PEO) for Aviation, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology (ASA-ALT), Aviation and Missile Command (AMCOM), Army Materiel Command (AMC), and theater sustainment command levels for this office's high-profile, high-demand systems. As the Gray Eagle Unmanned Aircraft System (Medium Altitude Endurance) Product Manager's chief logistics planner, Mr. Cothran is responsible for determining, coordinating, and advocating budgets, managing supply chains, and executing product support strategies to ensure support to units and Soldiers is timely, responsive, cost-effective, seamless, consistent, and meets commanders requirements. Mr. Cothran is credited with leading acquisition life-cycle planning and support for this platform, the Army's "flagship" UAS. Under his guidance, the Gray Eagle UAS program continues to enjoy an extraordinary level of operational readiness. Through his leadership, the Gray Eagle logistics team successfully supported this highly dynamic, spiral development ACAT-1C program while at the same time fielding the system and supporting Soldiers engaged in Overseas Contingency Operations.

Over the past year, Mr. Cothran and his team provided extraordinary support to deployed Soldiers in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). An important and noteworthy effort involved the transfer of equipment from two previously deployed Quick Reaction Capability (QRC) Gray Eagle units to Company E, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (E/160th). This was a significant undertaking, considering that these QRC units were originally deployed in 2009/2010 while the system was still in the Engineering and Manufacturing development phase of the acquisition life cycle. These early pre-production systems were rapidly developed and deployed under Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) surge efforts and remained in theater until the subsequent transfer of assets to E/160th in 2014. Despite challenges associated with these pre-production assets, Mr. Cothran and his team remarkably provided sustainment support, while simultaneously coordinating technology upgrades and associated developmental efforts prior to the transfer of equipment to E/160th, supporting urgent operational needs in theater. Mr. Cothran and his team are also recognized for their support of active duty Gray Eagle UAS Program of Record units that have deployed into theater. To his credit, all of these deployed systems have consistently maintained operational availability rates in excess of 97%, while conducting 24/7 operations in austere environments. This is a phenomenal accomplishment considering that the objective "requirement" is 80% and manned aviation platforms typically have a goal of 75%. It is also remarkable considering that the deployed Gray Eagle fleet (including pre-production assets) has successfully flown over 8,613 sorties, logging over 106,000 combat hours since 2010. Mr. Cothran facilitated this achievement through collaboration with the systems engineering team, which identified components subject to having a high frequency of failure, with the corresponding establishment of an Aviation Stockage List (ASL), to ensure

availability of critical repair parts. Additionally, his efforts directly drove the transition from a Contractor Logistics Support (CLS) sustainment strategy to a Performance Based Logistics (PBL) support strategy utilizing Contractor Field Service Representatives (CFSRs). This sustainment support strategy has resulted in a 6% decrease in contract price (over $250K in savings), while the fleet of Gray Eagle aircraft increased by over 73%.

Keeping these efforts ongoing and responding to all the critical demands of a Major Defense Acquisition Program (at the leading edge of not only technology, but best business processes) and the Army's adaptation to the advent of unmanned aircraft systems in a manned aviation world is a phenomenal accomplishment. Over the past year, Mr. Cothran led detailed planning efforts for this ACAT-1C program, coordinating with key Army Aviation stakeholders and industry partners. Under his guidance, the team aligned priorities to support our deployed Soldiers, while simultaneously executing compressed project schedules, streamlining processes through Better Buying Power initiatives, and coordinating/executing the formal Program of Record (POR) activities/milestones.

Under Mr. Cothran's leadership, the Gray Eagle team is credited with improvements of diagnostics/repair processes. This included an initiative to field and integrate Portable Maintenance Aids (PMA), which resulted in increased organic repair capabilities. These initiatives streamlined operations and decreased Mean-Time to Repair (MTTR). They have also resulted in personnel reductions of CFSRs from 26 (at a cost of $4.8M) to 12 (at a cost of $2.2M), significantly impacting future contract savings. These actions will save the Gray Eagle program $34M a year (estimated) by FY19.

Mr. Cothran also led the execution of a successful Lean Six Sigma process improvement project. His reforms positively impacted how the team executes New Equipment Training (NET), streamlining operations allowing for execution of NET events in a 16 week Program of Instruction (POI) versus the original curriculum of 24 weeks. Reducing NET lead time is projected to save approximately $7.1M for PM UAS / Medium Altitude Endurance, FY15-19.

A significant and noteworthy achievement is Mr. Cothran's leadership during the platform Logistics Demonstration (Log Demo #3) in preparation for a highly critical Follow on Test and Evaluation to operationally demonstrate a major upgrade to the system. The Log Demo was an essential step to demonstrate that the changes to the system had been successfully captured in the training process and that the soldiers were effective in carrying out the complicated operation and repair procedures attendant to the changed Hardware/Software in the system. Not only was it necessary to demonstrate effective training, but also that the all-important Interactive Electronic Technical Manuals, the documentation for the changed procedures, were complete, available and accurate. No small task in and of itself, particularly when considering the compressed schedule with which Mr. Cothran had to work. He is recognized for vigorous oversight with great attention to detail and subsequent approval of the Logistics and Prognostics/ Diagnostics Demo Plan, facilitation of monthly working group meetings, the conduct of Log Demo conferences, and coordination/participation of constituent stakeholders including organizations from Army Test and Evaluation Command (ATEC), General Atomics-

Aeronautical Systems (GA-ASI), United States Army Aviation Logistics School (USAALS), Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Capabilities Manager (TCM) UAS, and the UAS Project Management Office. The Log Demo was an unqualified success, with the team completing a review of over 490 critical tasks performed by the operator and maintainer in a two month period, ensuring that all tasks were performed in accordance with the written procedures, using appropriate support equipment, and following all safety guidelines. Mr. Cothran's dedication and attention to detail enabled the MAE Product Office to complete the event ahead of schedule which saved the program approximately $50,000 in man-hours and travel costs. Mr. Cothran and his team tracked over 800 observations against tasks being performed, applying immediate remediation through the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM). Mr. Cothran is also credited with coordinating MQ-1C test parameters consisting of stakeholders specifications, test data, sample data, etc. with collaboration between Government and OEM engineering sections coordinating remedial action against failures of the system.

Mr. Cothran and his team coordinated important Depot Level efforts which significantly improved the program. Mr. Cothran continues to lead depot-level planning conferences and documentation updates (e.g., Level of Repair Analysis, Core Logistics Assessment, Source of Repair Analysis, and Core Depot Assessment) focused on establishing the best possible path forward for depot level support of Army UAS.

Product Support Process Innovation. (Weight Factor = 30%)

Mr. Cothran also focused, the Gray Eagle team's work extensively on cost reduction initiatives associated with implementing a Performance Based Logistics (PBL) product support strategy. Mr. Cothran and his team completed a Public-Private Partnering (PPP) PBL strategy, providing significant savings for the Army. Through this PBL strategy, the Gray Eagle team is forecasting reductions of total ownership costs with consistently lower annual cost of readiness. Annual cost savings are anticipated through improvements in design, decreased spares requirements, reduced transportation costs, and implementation of Lean Six Sigma initiatives. Under Mr. Cothran's leadership, the Gray Eagle team routinely executes system engineering processes for the rapid identification, analysis, design and implementation of modifications that improve reliability, reduce life cycle costs, and enhance system capabilities. Further, his team continues to address obsolescence management through Integrated Product Teams (IPTs), employing best commercial practices to proactively identify obsolete components, determine the potential performance & cost impacts and to examine alternatives.

Mr. Cothran and his team have streamlined Gray Eagle support and sustainment efforts through acquisition life-cycle planning and the use of PBL support strategies. Mr. Cothran is recognized for the successful implementation of the program's FY13/14 PBL contracts, which are valued at $499.8M. Under his leadership, the team has achieved exceptionally high levels of operational readiness while simultaneously reducing system costs and improving reliability, maintainability, and supportability. Outstanding operational results have also contributed to reduced sustainment costs with the system achieving an average readiness rate greater than 97%. This is remarkable considering that the system has exceeded the threshold requirement, 80% operational

availability, and the objective requirement of 90% throughout the systems' deployment. This level of support is attributable to an extraordinary supportability design but more importantly to the highly responsive maintenance team of Field Service Representatives (FSR's) and well trained, hands-on soldier repairmen insuring the absolute minimum of downtime for a given failure or maintenance action.

Evidence of the effectiveness of the Gray Eagle PBL Program is reflected in the last two consecutive years in which total contract price decreased by 6% (over $250K in savings) while the number of Gray Eagle aircraft supported increased by more than 73%. This is remarkable, when considering that the Gray Eagle team continues to execute Pre-Planned Product Improvements (P3I) including engine upgrades, payload enhancements, and Universal Ground Support Equipment development and fielding.

Under Mr. Cothran's leadership, the logistics sustainment structure is continuing to evolve with diagnostics/repair processes, including Portable Maintenance Aids (PMA) and increased repair capability. These initiatives have allowed the reduction of Contractor Field Service Representatives (CFSR) and decreased Mean-Time to Repair (MTTR) by 20%. The reduction of per unit CFSR support from 26 (at a cost of $4.8M) to 12 (at a cost of $2.2M) will have a significant impact on future contract savings. These actions are projected to save the Gray Eagle program $34M a year (estimated) by FY19.

Mr. Cothran and his team also planned, reviewed and monitored $131M in contracted efforts supporting the Gray Eagle UAS. These contracts included spares, unit sustainment, repairs and training. He ensured timely execution of contracts, spend plan obligations, site resources (manpower, equipment and site preparation management with the required facilitating documentation; the Life Cycle Support Plan (LCSP), New Equipment Training Plans (NETP), Materiel Fielding Plans (MFP) and System Materiel Releases (MR)). Mr. Cothran is also recognized for effectively managing the entire logistics effort in support of multiple program milestone events. Among these are the Logistics Demonstration, Production Prove-out Test 4 (PPT 4), and preparation for the FOT&E.

In 2014, Mr. Cothran also provided outstanding leadership and oversight of a successful Lean Six Sigma process improvement. He conceived, sponsored and very effectively led streamlined New Equipment Training (NET) activities allowing for execution of NET events in a 16 week Program of Instruction (POI) versus the original curriculum that was 24 weeks in duration. Reducing NET lead time is projected to save approximately $7.1M for PM UAS / Medium Altitude Endurance, FY15-19.

Personnel Programs (Weight Factor = 25%)

Mr. Cothran provides superb leadership of a diverse logistics staff of 36 direct employees supporting operations in the Continental United States (CONUS) and over 95 deployed personnel supporting MQ-1C systems engaged in Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) in

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Afghanistan, Iraq and Kuwait. He is responsible with providing 24/7 support to Gray Eagle Units, deployed in Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR), and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and is recognized for his team building efforts and collaboration with industry partners (200+ contractor personnel) providing life-cycle sustainment support for the Gray Eagle system.

Reflective of his maturity, experience and significant leadership skills, Mr. Cothran communicates extensively with stakeholders inside and outside the UAS Project Management Office. He continuously communicates, mentors, and coaches his government/industry team to ensure achievement of goals/objectives, resulting in mission accomplishment. He remains focused, empowering employees and fostering teamwork to achieve milestones and meet product office schedules. He has ensured that all assigned Department of the Army Civilian (DAC) personnel are Level III Logistics certified or has a well-developed personal development plan that leads to certification. He also seeks opportunities where available for supporting contractors to leverage available Defense Acquisition University (DAU) logistics courses to obtain a minimum journeyman level of acquisition logistics expertise.

Mr. Cothran has worked in close collaboration with industry partners and inspires the team to do whatever is necessary to support Gray Eagle Soldiers. He has a very active employee recognition program, where he has nominated both his team and his subordinates for honorary recognition through various awards programs. In addition to “On the Spot and Special Act” monetary award recognitions, honorary award nominations submitted over the last year include: the 11th Annual Secretary of Defense Performance Based Logistics Award, the Ernest Young Award, the David Packard Award and the Individual Sustained Achievement Award. These nomination packets were all competitively selected as the “best” PEO Aviation nominations and were provided to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition Logistics and Technology for consideration. Through this approach, Mr. Cothran has built/ inspired a team and has realized extraordinarily synergistic effects producing greater results than could be realized by individual contributions alone. Mr. Cothran’s performance is exceptionally distinguished and extremely deserving of this award.

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Section 3. PROPOSED CITATION

Mr. Cothran's performance as the Product Support Manager for the Army's MQ-1C Gray Eagle UAS has had a tremendously positive impact in providing responsive, cost effective support to UAS units world-wide. Mr. Cothran's exceptional management, vision, and leadership have led to the development and implementation of innovative approaches to Total Life-Cycle Systems Management, performance-based product support/sustainment, and support for Better Buying Power initiatives. His professionalism, technical expertise, and tenacity are a model for all Army Logisticians. Mr. Cothran performs his mission with integrity, thoroughness, and a leadership style that invokes respect from equipment manufacturers, members of his Acquisition and Sustainment Community, his peers and seniors within the U.S. Government, and most importantly the Soldier. His actions bring great credit upon himself, the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Project Office, and the Program Executive Office for Aviation.