



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®

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Huntsville Center

# Bulletin

## Metering Success



U.S. Army photo

Secretary of the Army John McHugh met with members of Fort Knox Ky.,'s energy program to learn more about the installation's energy control room. The systems in this one room monitor in real time the energy usage in virtually all Fort Knox facilities. Fort Knox received the Secretary of the Army Energy and Water Management Award in the Innovative and New Technology category for these advancements in monitoring energy usage. Huntsville Center manages the Metering Program for the U.S. Army, and the program has installed 523 advanced electric and gas meters at Fort Knox.

### Mark you calendar ...

#### 12th Annual Huntsville Center Small Business Forum

- Nov., 18 at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, University Center
- Check-in begins at 8 a.m., forum begins at 9 a.m.

## 10 years after 9/11

# Huntsville Center personnel still supporting Afghanistan efforts

By William S. Farrow  
Public Affairs Office

**T**his year marks the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks that prompted the launch of Operation Enduring Freedom.

By 2002, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had presence in Afghanistan performing a crucial role in the international efforts to establish a secure and stable environment while promoting reconstruction and infrastructure

development.

Since then Huntsville Center personnel have supported multiple efforts to support coalition forces there and to assist with improving that nation's

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# Commander's thoughts

**T**eam,  
Sept. 11 marks the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on American soil.

The Corps continues to make progress in Afghanistan, and I am very proud of all the Huntsville Center employees who volunteered to deploy to support the effort.

Since 2002, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has supported national efforts in Afghanistan. The Corps is committed to helping rebuild a war torn nation, providing electricity, clean drinking water and transportation in Afghanistan.

To date USACE has awarded approximately \$7 billion in construction contracts in Afghanistan, mostly building Afghan police stations, army bases, roads, airstrips and other infrastructure projects, plus facilities for U.S. and Coalition forces.

As you know, our main focus for September is closeout. As of Aug. 1, the Center had about 2,000 actions left to be processed of the original 6,100 actions projected by Center Contracting.

The 6,100 actions represent an estimated \$1.5 billion in obligations for fiscal year 11. That means we still have a lot of work to do. It will be a hectic month, but I am confident that our great team will meet the goal.

Even though we will all be busy

with year-end closeout, we also must remember that rating cycles for annual performance appraisals are coming to an end.

The rating cycle for GS-13 and above and GS-8 and below ends Sept. 30. The rating cycle for GS 9- 12 will close Oct. 31. Information about TAPES and the timeline is available on BMO's Intranet site (<https://hnc-ws-intra/BMO/BMOindex.asp>).

Huntsville Center employees attended the USACE Summer Leader Conference last month in New Orleans, including our emerging leaders Amber Martin, a program manager in Installation Support's Facilities Division, and Lauren Ploetze, an interior designer in Engineering Directorate's Civil Structures Division.

While there we visited the largest, most complex USACE projects and exchanged lessons learned and best practices with the individuals leading and managing these projects.

Huntsville Center also participated in the annual GovEnergy conference in Cincinnati, Ohio. You may know our Energy Program is very active. Secretary of the Army John McHugh spoke at the conference and mentioned a Huntsville Center initiative in his remarks.

He talked about establishment of the Army's Energy Initiatives Task Force that will work with the private



**Col. Nello L. Tortora**

sector to increase the use of renewable energy on Army installations.

In his White House blog this month, Mr. McHugh said, "The Huntsville Center Corps of Engineers last month released a Sources Sought request for Renewable and Alternative Energy Power Production.

"The goal is to establish a pre-qualified pool of private sector partners positioned to finance development of large scale renewable energy projects and re-coup their capital investment through the sale of energy to the Army and excess energy back to the grid."

This is one of the largest and most complex acquisitions we have undertaken and is another opportunity for Huntsville Center to be first with the best in support of the Army. The blog can be accessed at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2011/08/11/conserving-our-resources-securing-our-forces>.

National Hispanic Heritage Month starts Sept. 15 and will go through Oct. 15. It is a time to celebrate the

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## Hails and farewells

**Hail:** Helen Mandich, Eric Graham, Chemical Demilitarization Directorate; Laura Lokey-Flippo, Valerie Shippers, Brian Bickel, Installation Support and Program Management Directorate; Douglas Patterson, Cynethia Crawford-McDonald, Center Contracting; Jessica Larson, Environmental and Munitions Center of Excellence; Zach Stanfield, Ordnance and Explosives Directorate

**Farewell:** Herbert Broussard, Security Office; Chase Waites, Matthew Zager, Elizabeth Kruzchkov, OE; Brian Park, Engineering Directorate



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**

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## BULLETIN

Commander..... Col. Nello Tortora  
Chief, Public Affairs..... Debra Valine  
Editor..... William S. Farrow



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# The *Bulletin* asks:

## How did the events of Sept. 11, 2001 change you?



I remember the 9/11 attacks like it was yesterday. I was sitting in U.S. government class when our teacher turned on the television just before the second plane hit the tower. It was then that I realized things would never be the same and it made me aware of how fragile life really is.

**Matthew Duncan**  
Center Contracting Directorate



It had a tremendous change on my perspective on life and also shed light on how life is unpredictable. It made me extremely appreciative of life and family a lot more, because we are usually entangled in our own issues and daily responsibilities that we take these things for granted and lose focus on the true meaning of life.

**Ivor Gilkes**  
Small Business Office



That day I watched the news in disbelief and saw the horror and devastation on the faces of the New Yorkers living it. Through that, and the weeks and months that followed, I felt the shared sense of community and pride in the way our country pulled together to help and support one another. As a result, I think this tragedy further deepened my empathy for others, and reinforced how lucky I am to be an American.

**Amy Webb**  
Engineering Directorate

## COMMANDER

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accomplishments and contributions of our Hispanic American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America.

The observance starts Sept. 15 to coincide with the date Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua gained independence.

Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on Sept. 16 and Sept. 18. Look for e-mail and the monitor in the lobby for information about activities planned in our community.

Now that school is back in session, keep the safety of the children in mind while driving.

Be aware of children in school zones and slow down. Also remember to stop for school buses.

September will be very busy here at the Center. I look forward to tackling the year-end challenge and another record-breaking year. Thanks for all you do to make Huntsville Center great.

# Employee Spotlight:

## Raul Alonso

**Where do you work and what is your job title?** Project manager, Bluegrass Chemical Alternatives Pilot Program Chemical Munitions Demilitarization Directorate, Huntsville Center

**How long have you worked for the Corps?** 17 Years

**In your own words, what is your job? What do you do?** I am the project manager for the Bluegrass Chemical Demilitarization Plant near Richmond, Ky. The plant will neutralize 523 tons of nerve and blister agents stored in rockets and projectiles that have been housed in munitions storage bunkers since the World War II era.

As project manager, I am the Corps of Engineers' lead for the plant product delivery team composed of over 30 cross-functional team members from Huntsville Center Engineering Directorate, resource management, finance, contracting and resident field offices responsible for planning, funds management, scheduling, design and construction oversight and coordination between sister Corps of Engineers offices, and other federal, state and local agencies.

**Review the Campaign Plan goals and objectives. Which one(s) apply to you?** We support Goal 3 and Goal 4 of the USACE Campaign Plan: Goal 3 (Delivering Effective,



Alonso

Resilient, Sustainable Solutions). We are constructing unique and specialized multi-discipline process facilities at Pueblo, Colo., and Bluegrass, Ky., that will provide the best protection, safety and life cycle investments for the communities, our customer and our nation.

We have developed and applied innovative engineering processes to ensure the maximum safety in the destruction of chemical weapons using risk-informed approaches.

Goal 4 (Recruit and Retain Strong Teams). We support our customer's requirements through a cadre of subject matter experts from both Huntsville Center and our two field offices.

This work force is continually developing and applying their unique skills in various disciplines (structural, blast, mechanical and electrical). We are also developing and involving new engineers through an internship program and

support rotations through our field offices from other directorates and/or other Corps district offices.

**How do you see your job making a difference and contributing to the Corps' success?** By leading great and capable personnel, we are providing the assets to conduct the safest destruction of stockpiled chemical weapons. When our customer is successful in their mission then the Corps is also successful.

**What do you love about your job?**

To see the actual construction of this massive and very complex endeavor come to life. I enjoy working and serving the teams that are directly involved in making this happen.

**Any special moments/memories about your job you'd like to share?**

Each of my emergency deployments with the Corps (Alabama's recent tornadoes, Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma) remind me of the time when I first heard of the Corps of Engineers in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew in 1992. The Corps was removing construction and demolition debris from in front of our residence in Miami. The memories of seeing our streets and neighborhoods getting cleaned up in Miami resonate when I get to "pay it back" each time I serve under an emergency operations tasker.

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The **Employee Spotlight** is intended to let our Center employees shine for positively impacting our organization through mission achievements. Employees are nominated on a monthly basis, and are also featured on the Huntsville Center web site monthly, and the Headquarters, Corps of Engineers web site on a rotating basis. If you'd like to nominate someone within your office for this recognition, please contact Jo Anita Miley, Public Affairs Office, at 256-895-1585, or e-mail [JoAnita.Miley@usace.army.mil](mailto:JoAnita.Miley@usace.army.mil).

# AFGHANISTAN

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infrastructure and helping the local population improve their quality of life.

According to Jeffrey Davis, Huntsville Center deployment coordinator, approximately 90 Huntsville Center personnel have deployed to Afghanistan.

Davis said determining the first person from Huntsville Center who deployed in support of 9/11 is hard since some people may have deployed to support early USACE efforts under Corps of Engineers taskers.

However, according to Wayne Galloway, chief of safety, Ordnance and Explosives Directorate, the Army began negotiating with Huntsville Center's OE to provide Captured Enemy Munitions Assessments there in May 2004. Galloway said by July of that year, Huntsville Center OE personnel were in Afghanistan and by August they were disposing of munitions caches.

Although the Center's OE personnel have had a seemingly constant presence in Afghanistan, other needs also developed there over the years that fit well with Huntsville Center capabilities.

Within the last two-and-a-half years, Huntsville Center took the lead in the oversight of Task Force Power contracts providing for comprehensive electrical inspection of existing coalition facilities in Afghanistan.

Bob Britton, Ordnance and Explosives project manager, currently deployed to Afghanistan as a member of the Task Force Power product development team, said mission needs in there caused the Center to re-evaluate its business function and re-focus efforts there as needs change.

"Our leadership emphasized we



File photo

**Captured ordnance being prepared for disposal in Afghanistan in 2008.**

will support the Soldier in the field. So our guys were always looking for anyway we could help. Since we (Huntsville Center) are good at deploying personnel, we assisted Task Force Power by providing electrical inspection and repair contract personnel," Britton said.

Since 9/11 and the unraveling of events in Southwest Asia, there has been a steady increase in the need for Corps personnel to fill positions there and many of the Huntsville Center personnel who deployed ended up going there again and again. Britton said never in his wildest dreams did he think he would deploy to a war zone five times.

"Initially, I never planned to deploy five times, but as opportunities presented themselves, I deployed."

Sherry Masters, chief, Huntsville Center Internal Review, is also a multiple deployer, having deployed to Iraq in 2004 and Afghanistan in 2008 and again in 2010. Masters returned in May after serving 14 months as chief of audit for Afghanistan Engineer District North. She is the Center's most recent returnee from Afghanistan.

She said the Corps' presence

there provides sustainable development projects for the Afghan people that employ the populace, build skilled human capital and promote the future stability of Afghanistan.

She said the contracts using Afghan companies and sub-contractors provide much-needed income to Afghan workers.

However, Masters said more importantly the Corps is teaching Afghans to "build better" by improving their knowledge of construction sciences.

In particular, she said the Corps began instilling quality assurance inspections in Afghan projects teaching project managers and crews the importance of ensuring projects are completed using quality workmanship which translates to safe, stable facilities and infrastructure.

She said because the conditions are so austere in most of rural Afghanistan, the local population often doesn't realize they can improve their quality of life just by improving the quality of workmanship on their own homes, markets, schools and mosques, and as the Afghan construction work force learns more about quality construction practices, the better off the total population.

"We can tell them all day long that there can be a better life, but once they learn or improve a skill and start seeing improvements and benefits affecting their day-to-day lives, it makes them want to work toward a life free from the constraints of war brought on by the presence of the Taliban."

On any given day, as many as 20,000 Afghans are at work on Corps projects in Afghanistan.

# Center's emerging leaders attend conference

The annual U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Summer Leaders' Conference was held in New Orleans, July 30 - Aug. 5, in conjunction with the USACE Emerging Leaders Conference.

Installation Support and Programs Management Directorate's program manager Amber Martin and Engineering Directorate's Lauren Ploetze, interior designer, were Huntsville Center's 2010 Emerging Leaders.

They answered some question and shared some of

## Lauren Ploetze

**What was the most rewarding experience (professionally speaking) from the conference?**

I was able to take a good look at the traits that make me effective and the traits that could use some improvement. I was able to learn a lot more about the Corps as a whole, and the very diverse missions we have. The importance the Corps places on developing and retaining employees through training and developmental opportunities makes me very happy and proud to work for this organization. During the SLC, everyone stressed the importance of people and how people are the most important resource we have. The fact that emerging leaders have the opportunity to attend the Summer Leaders' Conference just further emphasizes the significance the Corps places on their people.

**What portion of the conference did you find most applicable to your job here at Huntsville Center?**

The ELC portion allowed me to see how others perceive me and point out areas for improvement that can help make me more effective when interacting with co-workers and customers

The SLC portion showed where the Corps is heading and the challenges that I may face at my job in the next couple of years. More sustainable practices and efficient processes will be essential for us to continue to meet and exceed our customer's expectations.



## Amber Martin

**What did you do (professionally) to prepare for the conference?**

I re-read the campaign plan, did a 360 degree self assessment and asked six coworkers to assess me.

**What did you take from the conference that you can instill in your work here at Huntsville Center?**

General Temple told us that good leaders have a vision and turn their vision into a mission and then use enabling values to accomplish the mission.

That idea really resonated with me, and made me realize that I had a mission statement for one of my programs but my vision for it was only in my head. I needed to get it down on paper and share it with my team and chain of command.

I have also been thinking about specific actions I can take to increase the value of the service we provide to our customers. It was encouraging to hear the vision of our senior leaders and relate that vision to the program level to figure out whether or not what I was doing aligned with the vision.

I spent many evenings thinking about that and writing down what specific actions I need to take as a leader to continue to improve my programs. It was a great opportunity to pour all of my energy into thinking about the future and what I needed to improve upon from a leadership perspective.

Many of us tend to get bogged down with turning the crank and do not prioritize some time to think about where we need to be headed. I realize that I need to take the few minutes every week to write new things down as I think about them during the week and continue to refine the vision and mission of my programs.

It does not take a lot of time and I think it will help me be a more effective leader. After experiencing the Summer Leaders Conference, I can now say I better understand what he was talking about which makes me so excited about what the future holds for us.



# Center's Lynch selected for degree program, begins master's studies at UAB in January

By William S. Farrow  
Public Affairs Office

**A** Huntsville Center employee was one of five people Corps-wide recently selected to participate in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Centrally Funded Academic Degree Training Program.

In January, Tracy Lynch, a military construction analyst with the Army Facility Component System Branch will attend the University of Alabama, Birmingham, and obtain a masters degree in Engineering with concentration in Military Construction.

Lynch said she was honored by the selection and hopes pursuing a master's degree will provide her with the knowledge needed to become a more effective project manager and one day propel her into program management.

She said her selection will also help her develop skills needed to become an effective leader.

Lynch said her skills and knowledge will increase and allow her to be a more competitive force in the Huntsville Center organization as well as be a valuable asset when dealing with Army projects.

"This training will allow me to better meet customer needs while providing quality service which is very important to stay competitive in the military construction industry," she said.



Lynch

"I strive to be on the leading edge in industry to ensure that I am representing my organization and the Army as being the best project or program manager providing quality products in a timely manner. I will be better equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to get the job done."

Her supervisor, Terry Patton, chief, AFCS, said he believes Lynch's selection is a wise and prudent decision by the Army "Tracy is a dedicated Corps of Engineers professional with unlimited potential and she has a knack for getting the job completed to the customer's satisfaction," Patton said.

"She maintains a positive attitude that radiates to others, causing them to respond in kind with full effort and cooperation."



## On Display

After placing second in the Team Redstone display case competition at the Women's Equality Day Observance at Redstone Arsenal Aug. 25, Beth Norris placed the recognition certificate and commander's coins on a shelf in the Huntsville Center display case. Norris, Suzanne Murdock and Valerie Clinkenbeard, all of Engineering Directorate, developed the display celebrating women's equality.

Photo by William S. Farrow

# Center Contracting graduates four from internship program

By Debra Valine  
Public Affairs Office

**D**uring a town hall meeting Aug. 19, four Center Contracting interns received certificates marking the completion of their three-year intern program.

John Mayes, director, Center Contracting, John Teetsov, Principal Assistant Responsible for Contracting-Winchester, and Lynn Harper, deputy PARC, presented the certificates to Marta Anerton, Richard Locklair, Jordan Miller and Kenneth Salter.

Employees marking service milestones and others receiving their contracting officer warrant certificates were also recognized.

The intern program prepares individuals to assume positions as journeymen contracting specialists. Interns are given the opportunity to gain experience through on-the-job training and formal classroom training. They are rotated through different teams within the Contracting Directorate to add meaningful skills related to the procurement of services, supplies, construction, oversight and policy, and pre-award functions.

In some cases, they were also afforded the opportunity to fulfill rotational assignments outside of Huntsville Center at Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other districts.

Upon completion of the program, each individual has obtained Level 2 Defense

Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act certification in Contracting.

“We want to make sure you are trained up so that when you graduate, you will be able to complete procurements from start to finish,” Mayes said. “You will be able to award a real procurement; it is more than a task order.”

“The intern program is one of the ways we try to enhance our work force with innovative new minds,” said Lillian Fox, the intern program coordinator.

“We take the time to train them up to become journeyman procurement people. People form impressions using the power of three 10s: people make an assessment from 10 feet away, again at 10 inches away, and finally people formulate their overall impression of you based on the first 10 words that come out of your mouth,” Fox said.

“These four interns fulfilled that first impression through their hard work and dedication over the three-year internship.”

To be eligible for the intern program, candidates must have a bachelor’s degree in any discipline, 24 hours in business-related courses such as accounting, finance, management, economics, marketing, contract law, higher level mathematics such as calculus, etc., and a 2.5 grade point average.

“This is the third formal intern graduation,” Fox said. “Prior to these four individuals we have

graduated seven personnel. In 2009, there were three graduates. In 2010, we graduated four. The four this year makes 11. We have 33 remaining interns within Contracting.”

Anerton started in the administrative career while working on her bachelor’s degree and transitioned to an intern position upon completion of the degree. She has worked on the Pre-Award, Center Support and Energy teams. She currently supports Planning and Programming, Ranges and Military Construction.

During her time as an intern, Anerton assisted with the implementation of the Quality Management System for Mayes and Mr. Kim Denver, former director, National Contracting Command. She was 100 percent accurate with the government purchase card on contract actions with no interest and a zero balance each month.

She wrote work instructions for the Business Operations Branch, utilizing Reverse Auction Contracting.

Anerton also attended the annual Society of American Military Engineers conference, received a Commander’s Coin for above and beyond customer service, participated in seven Source Selection Boards, and received accolades from instructors for professionalism displayed while a Corps intern.

Locklair interned with the  
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# INTERNS

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Furniture and Electronic Security Systems teams. He currently supports the Medical Repair and Renewal Program.

While an intern, Locklair completed all classes for Level 3 DAWIA Certification, and displayed a great deal of flexibility by working for nine different contracting officers.

“He jokingly boasts that he did so without causing any of them to lose their warrants or go to jail,” Fox said.

Locklair also won “CT’s Got Talent” for a creative poem recited by his alter ego named BO CEFMS, and played on the championship volleyball team “Contract Killers” at the annual awards day picnic.

Miller started as a SCEP student (PD2 System Administrator functions and Business Operations Branch responsibilities) in 2005.

Miller was part of the Business Operations Branch and Facilities Reduction Program while an intern and was also the first to serve as the special projects officer.

He completed rotational assignments at Headquarters, USACE, Baltimore District and Fort Lee, Va. He currently supports the Business Operations Branch

Miller led the initiative to implement the Paperless Contract File System across the National Contracting Organization.

He was recognized as the Intern of the Year across the NCO at the 2011 Excellence in Contracting Awards Program. He was a component of the improvement initiatives at the Baltimore District.

He established the foundation

for the special projects officer position and the CT Future Leadership Program, which provides a single intern with opportunities to lead and interface with senior management for a period of one year.

Salter completed the intern program by working with the Files Room, Business Operations Branch, Center Support and the Furniture teams.

He currently works with the Facilities Reduction Program awarding task orders off of multiple award task order contracts and single award task order contracts.

Salter proved himself during the intern program by his ability to survive the Furniture Teams’ heavy workload, Fox said.

He saved government resources (time and money) on the Furniture team by initiating process improvements such as posting solicitation information on an FTP site rather than disseminating that information via overnight mail. The process was readily implemented by the Furniture Team. Salter completed a two-week developmental assignment in Washington, D.C. represented the government on site visits for the FRP and Pre-Award teams, and exercised options for the FRP team.

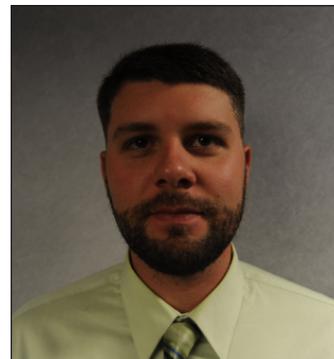
“Some people say three years as an intern and you still need some seasoning,” Locklair said as he presented his fellow graduates with a bottle of Tabasco Sauce. “Some people still need seasoning after 30 years. I say if you have been at Huntsville Center for one year and have lived through year-end, you are seasoned.”



**Anerton**



**Locklair**



**Miller**



**Salter**

# Center sponsors robotics challenge

By James Campbell  
Public Affairs Office

The rugged terrain of the American West provided a backdrop for a showdown August 7-14 as competitors met at Camp Guernsey, about 100 miles north of Cheyenne in southeastern Wyoming for a contest aimed at finding the best robotics solution for tasks associated with clearing ranges.

The U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, the Air Force Research Laboratory Robotics Research Group, and Joint Ground Robotics Enterprise, Office of the Secretary of Defense for Acquisition Technology and Logistics sponsored the program and sent senior representatives to judge the competition.

The robotics used aren't sleek and lightweight like combat drones or humanoid like futuristic movie robots. They are modified pieces of construction and farm equipment equipped with ruggedized electronic systems.

The competition was divided into four categories testing the entrants' ability to automate the tasks of vegetation clearance, surface debris clearance, geophysical mapping and sub-surface clearance.

The overall winner, team UXOD, took first place in geophysical mapping and accumulated enough points in other categories to edge out the competition for an overall prize of \$1.25 million. The team was comprised of Kairos Autonomi, Zonge



Photo courtesy team UXOD

**A modified tractor with ruggedized automation equipment and a feller buncher demonstrates vegetation clearance at the competition.**

International, Autonomous Solutions, Science Applications International Corporation, VKR, WM Robots and John Deere.

Team D4C, a grouping of ECC, QinetiQ North America and Bobcat, won the vegetation clearance and surface clearance categories, taking home a prize of \$500,000.

There was no winner in the sub-surface clearance competition.

Range clearance operations are manpower intensive, time consuming, dangerous and expensive, said Plyler McManus, chief of Ordnance and Explosives Design Center, at Huntsville Center.

The goal of using robotics is to automate as many of the tasks as possible making the necessary work safer and less costly.

Ideally, 25 percent of the work performed by the machines would be autonomous, like running patterns across a field, with the rest of the work remote-controlled.

“This pulls together all of the technologies,” said Robert Maline, director of the Joint Ground Robotics Enterprise. “It is a great cooperative effort for us to work with the Corps and the Air Force.”

Public law authorizes cash prizes for this type of competition and technology development. The alternative would be a longer, more costly approach, establishing a research and development program that can transition into a development and acquisition program. The intent is for the competition to result in viable systems that can be procured and placed into service.

The ultimate aim of clearing ranges is to return millions of acres currently encumbered with spent training rounds and debris to productive use. Huntsville Center has planned a separate acquisition for robotic clearance services with a projected award in the second quarter of fiscal year 2012.

# Heat illness can be fatal, even during fall

As fall approaches, temperatures in the Deep South can remain dangerously high on into late September and even October.

Therefore it's important to remember that working in an excessively hot environment can be difficult – and even fatal.

Heat can create a number of safety problems and illnesses, including heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke, which can be fatal. These illnesses caused by too much heat are called hyperthermia.

Heat can also cause you to become inattentive, short-tempered, dizzy and slow. All of these conditions can cause you to work in an unsafe manner.

Hot conditions can be caused by the weather or by the work situation itself, such as a laundry room or a foundry.

When the atmosphere is humid, the effects of the heat are compounded.

## Warning signals of heat illness:

**Heat Cramps.** Heat cramps affect muscles that have been used while working such as those in the arms, legs and abdomen. These cramps may occur after work, when the person is resting. Heat cramps are a signal that the body has lost too much salt through sweating.

**Heat Exhaustion.** Heat exhaustion is a serious condition needing immediate attention. It may have any or all of these symptoms: a feeling of exhaustion, nausea, dizziness, pale and clammy

skin, quick pulse, and low blood pressure. Heat exhaustion is also a warning that the mechanism that controls heat for the body has become seriously overtaxed. Heat stroke may follow if heat exhaustion is not treated.

**Heat Stroke.** Heat stroke is a serious matter and it can be fatal. It occurs when the body's heat control mechanism simply shuts down. Perspiration stops and the body temperature rises. The heart pounds and the skin becomes flushed and hot. This condition is a medical emergency and must be treated immediately.

## Preventing heat illness:

**Get used to working in the heat gradually.** For example, if the weather suddenly turns hot or you are transferred to a hot environment, take it easy until you are accustomed to the temperature.

**Drink water often** to avoid dehydration. The body loses water through perspiration, so you need to replenish it frequently. Do not drink alcoholic beverages or caffeinated beverages because they will cause you to lose even more water and salt.

**Take frequent rest breaks** when working in hot conditions. These breaks can consist of moving to a cooler area or switching to lighter work for awhile.

**Get a physician's advice** before replacing salt, particularly if your salt intake is restricted for medical reasons such as circulatory problems. The use of salt tablets is not recommended. Eating lightly salted food before entering the work environment may be a better idea. Also available are special drinks that are intended to replace the body's fluid and mineral levels.

**Dress lightly**, in layers so that you can subtract or add clothing as the temperature changes. Be sure to shade the skin against the sun.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the best defense is prevention:

- Never leave anyone in a closed parked vehicle.
- Check regularly on infants and young children; people aged 65 or older; people with a mental illness; and those who are physically ill, especially with heart disease or high blood pressure.
- Visit at risk adults at least twice a day and closely watch them for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Infants and young children, of course, need much more frequent watching.

*(Information provided by Huntsville Center Safety Office. For more information, call 256-895-1225)*



**For additional information and tips for preventing heat-related illness, go to the CDC link:** <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heattips.asp>

**For information on how to prevent dehydration in children, go to the Safe Kids link:** <http://www.safekids.org/safety-basics/safety-resources-by-risk-area/sports-and-recreation/dehydration-and-heat-illness.html>

## **Ethics Corner**

# **A contractor gave me a gift card Now what should I do?**

**By Chris Paden  
Office of Counsel**

I recently had a scenario come my way in which a government program manager was presented a \$10 gift card from a contractor after a presentation they made to the PM to demonstrate their company's capability. Obviously, this company is seeking to do business with the government.

The PM's question was simply if he could accept the gift card.

The general rule is that a government employee may not accept a gift from a prohibitive source (someone who does or seeks to do business with the government). This contractor who came in is a prohibitive source since they are seeking government contracts for their company. So, under the general rule, the answer would be: No, the PM cannot accept the gift card and must return it. However, there are plenty of exceptions to the general rule that must be looked at before the PM returns the card.

The relevant exception is commonly referred to as the 20/50 rule. This exception states that a government employee may accept a gift from a prohibitive source so long as the value of the gift does not exceed \$20. However, this exception limits the total value a government employee may receive from a prohibitive source in a calendar year to \$50. Thus the 20/50 rule: \$20 of value per occasion, not to exceed \$50 of value per calendar year. The gift must be value; a government employee may never accept cash from a prohibitive source.

Since the PM was only the recipient of a general capabilities briefing by this company, the more stringent rules governing procurement officials do not apply.

So, can the PM accept the \$10 gift card? The answer in this case is yes, the PM can accept the gift card if he so chooses.

If you have a question about accepting gifts from prohibitive sources or any other ethics matters, please come by and see me, shoot me an e-mail at [roger.c.paden@usace.army.mil](mailto:roger.c.paden@usace.army.mil) or call me at 256-895-1103.

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