



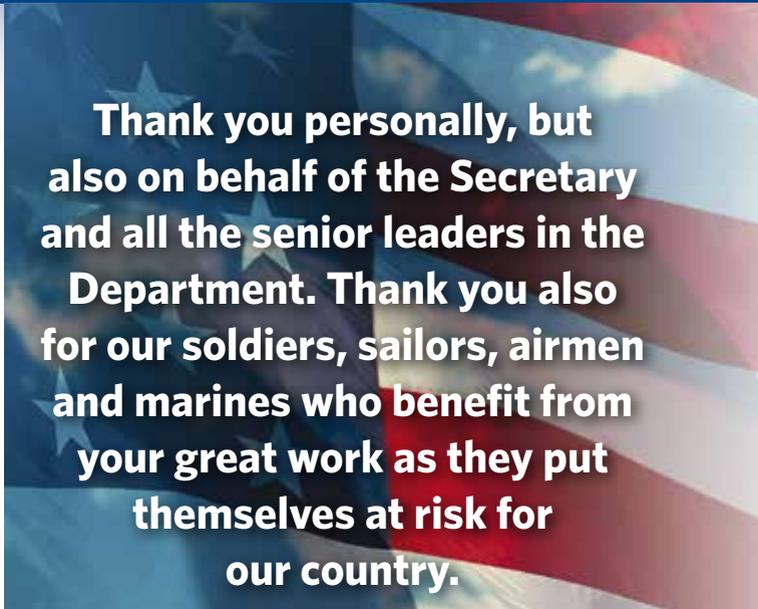
# What Really Matters in Defense Acquisition

*Frank Kendall*



**M**y first inclination for this issue's article was to discuss the newly released DoDI 5000.02. We recently implemented this new acquisition policy document as interim guidance. I provided a cover letter explaining why I had done a new version and outlined some of the features of this edition. I do recommend that you look at both the cover letter and the new document, but on reflection I decided to write about something else for this issue. An enormous amount of time and energy goes into designing our processes and implementing them, but at the end of the day it isn't those processes or policy documents like 5000.02 that really drive our results. What really matters in defense acquisition is our people and their professionalism and leadership—so I thought I would start the new year by writing about that.

This past year we've gone through a lot, and all of our acquisition professionals have been asked to put up with more than any workforce should have to endure. We've had continuing budget turmoil and uncertainty, furloughs, continuing resolutions, late-breaking sequestration, and most recently a government shutdown. We're also living under pay freezes and the prospect of further budget reductions and staff reductions. I want to thank the whole workforce for the way you have all coped with these challenges. While other senior leaders and I have been asking you to improve our productivity and achieve ever greater results for our warfighters and the taxpayer, you've also had to work in very challenging circumstances. You've come through, and it has inspired me and your other senior leaders to see the way you've dealt with all these challenges in stride. Thank you. Thank you personally, but also on behalf of the Secretary and all the senior leaders in the Department. Thank you also for our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines who benefit from your great work as they put themselves at risk for our country.



**Thank you personally, but also on behalf of the Secretary and all the senior leaders in the Department. Thank you also for our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines who benefit from your great work as they put themselves at risk for our country.**

Recently, I joined Dr. Carter in one of his last official acts as Deputy Secretary in presenting the Packard Awards to this year's recipients. As I write this, I'm looking forward to going out to the Defense Acquisition University to present the USD(AT&L) awards for professionalism and developing the work force to some of our outstanding performers. I'm sorry that we can't recognize more of our exceptional performers—there are so many of you, and you all deserve to be recognized for what you do. During the last few weeks, I also have had occasion to note the departure of some of our most capable people who are retiring or will soon retire from government service. We lose a lot of terrific people every year of course, and these individuals are just examples of the many fine professionals working in defense acquisition, technology and logistics. I decided that for this article I would note the contributions of some of these people with whom over the last few years I've had the chance to work. They are just examples, but they are especially powerful examples of what one can accomplish during a career in defense acquisition.

I'll start with Charlie Williams, the recently retired Director of the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA). Charlie led DCMA for the past several years. He started federal service in 1982 in Air Logistics Command in a Mid-Level Management Training Program. Charlie then rose through a series of contracting, program analysis and contract management positions with the Air Force both in the field and at Air Force Headquarters. He became Air Force Deputy Assistant Secretary for Contracting before taking the reins at DCMA. At DCMA, Charlie led the rebuilding of the organization after severe reductions in the 1990s. He kept his team together during the Base Realignment and Closure move from D.C. to Richmond, and he led the effort to ensure that our contracts in support of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq were executed properly.

Next I'll mention MajGen Tim Crosby, the soon-to-retire Army Program Executive Officer (PEO) for Aviation. Tim has led Army aviation programs since 2008. He was commissioned after graduating from the Citadel and started out as a field artillery officer. He moved quickly into aviation as a pilot before following his interest in research and development and flight testing. In acquisition, he worked in logistics, training and simulation, and test and evaluation before becoming a Product Manager, first for the CH-47 F and later Program Manager for the Army's Armed Scout. His long tenure at PEO Aviation is marked by strong leadership in support of our deployed forces and in building the capability of the Afghan Air Force. Tim embraced the Better Buying Power principles and was implementing them well before Dr. Carter and I gave them a name.

Rear Admiral Jim Murdoch retired recently after serving as the Navy's first PEO for Littoral Combat Ships (LCS). Jim en-

tered the Navy with an ROTC commission after graduating from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in mechanical engineering. He moved between surface combatant assignments and acquisition positions. His acquisition assignments included program management for surface weapons and launchers and responsibility for integrated warfare systems as well as program manager for the Littoral Combat Ships. In 2011, Jim was handpicked by Sean Stackley to lead the new Program Executive Office for LCS sea-frames and mission modules. He stabilized and fully integrated one of the Navy's most complex acquisition endeavors.

Finally Scott Correll, our retiring Air Force PEO for Space Launch, also started his career as an intern. From the Pacer Intern Contracting Program at Robbins Air Force Base, where he began as a cost analyst and contract negotiator on the F-4 and F-15, Scott rose through the contracting, supply chain management and program management fields. Scott's diverse positions include leadership positions at Military Sealift Command and TRANSCOM. I was able to take Scott in to meet Secretary Hagel recently so the Secretary could thank him personally for saving the Department billions of dollars in space launch costs—quite an achievement for our taxpayers and warfighters.

The people I mention above have accomplished a great deal for their country during their careers. They've also had the opportunity to do exciting and fulfilling work. People who achieve this sort of success over their careers are what give us the best equipped military in the world. All of these people have a lot to be proud of. All of you have a lot to be proud of. I'm looking forward to 2014 with the hope that things will improve—and there are some signs that they will. But mostly I'm just looking forward to another year of working with this terrific team. Thank you again for all that you do. 