

2019 DEFENSE ACQUISITION WORKFORCE AWARDS

THE HONORABLE ELLEN M. LORD, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, hosted the 2019 Defense Acquisition Workforce Awards ceremony on Tuesday, Oct. 29, 2019, with distinguished guest Mr. Thomas F. Carney, Vice Director, Force Structure, Resources and Assessment, Joint Staff, J8. The Defense Acquisition Workforce Awards recipients represent the best of the best across our acquisition community. The winners' accomplishments will be on display in the Pentagon on the Defense Acquisition Workforce Wall of Recognition display.

The ceremony, which took place at the Pentagon Hall of Heroes, recognized acquisition professionals and organizations for their commitment to acquisition excellence through the presentation of:

- Defense Acquisition Workforce Individual Achievement Awards
- Software Innovation Team Award
- Flexibility in Contracting Award
- Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Innovation Awards

The **Defense Acquisition Workforce Individual Achievement Awards** highlight individuals who demonstrated an exemplary commitment to excellence and professionalism in the acquisition of products and services for the Department of Defense (DoD). These awards recognize individuals in each of 19 acquisition functional disciplines. This year's program includes two new **Individual Achievement Awards—Inter-**

national Partnership and Software—and one new Software Innovation Team Award. It is necessary to recognize these communities and their role in providing the best capabilities to our Warfighters.

Software is a crucial and growing part of weapons systems. New this year, the **Software Innovation Team Award** recognizes those who epitomize innovation, and use of best practices in software development and acquisition as evidenced by frequent and high quality delivery of software capabilities into the hands of Warfighters.

The **Flexibility in Contracting Award** was established by Section 834 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017. The award recognizes outstanding professionals who have, in their approach to program management and contracting, demonstrated "innovation and local adaptation" by using the flexibilities and authorities granted by the Federal Acquisition Regulation and the Department of Defense Instruction 5000.02 (*Operation of the Defense Acquisition System*) to increase the efficiency of programs.

The **Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Innovation Awards** recognize excellence by acquisition organizations in developing unique and innovative solutions to ensure that their workforces are well equipped to deliver world-class capabilities to the Warfighter. The awards highlight exceptional outside-the-box thinking and progress in tackling workforce development challenges.

Photos by Mr. Dirke Williams, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment.



The Honorable Ellen Lord and Major Eugene Choi



The Honorable Ellen Lord and Ms. Jessica Oliver



The Honorable Ellen Lord and Mr. Simon Klink



The Honorable Ellen Lord and Ms. Nicole Gulla

Individual Achievement Award Winners

Major Eugene Choi | U.S. Army | Acquisition in an Expeditionary Environment

Major Eugene Choi served as the lead Administrative Contracting Officer in the 414th Contracting Support Brigade, where he led the highest operating tempo team on deployments throughout the U.S. Africa Command. He provided contingency services to the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program (LOGCAP), delivering services to more than 16 sites in seven African countries. Major Choi also oversaw the LOGCAP contract valued at \$1.7 billion, which supports more than 14,000 personnel at seven sites throughout Iraq. Through his leadership, Major Choi saved \$12 million on food expenditures and created quality assurance documents for property and personnel management.

Ms. Jessica Oliver | Defense Contract Audit Agency | Auditing

As a senior auditor, Ms. Jessica Oliver developed a guide to identify estimating system deficiencies, which significantly advanced the Raytheon Integrated Defense Systems office's understanding of price proposals and estimating practices. She accepted a critical role in examining proposals totaling more than \$1.5 billion, issuing audits ahead of schedule. Ms. Oliver created risk assessment templates that saved 100 hours on an audit. She consistently pursues the advancement of her team's knowledge by creating and sharing new approaches. Her efforts contributed to more than \$90 million in reported pricing exceptions.

Mr. Simon Klink | U.S. Navy | Contracting and Procurement

Mr. Simon Klink is a Contracting Officer for the Block 4 Follow-On Modernization Program, within the F-35 Joint Program Office. His leadership resulted in the award of more than 20 contract actions valued at more than \$4 billion that transitioned the program from predevelopment risk reduction to capability delivery. His cost and price analysis and negotiating ability led to a business deal approved by foreign and domestic customers. Mr. Klink established a tailored continuous learning program, resulting in improved work products and increased collaboration.

Ms. Nicole Gulla | U.S. Army | Cost Estimating

Ms. Nicole Gulla is a Cost Analyst for the Joint Program Executive Office for Armaments and Ammunition. Her contributions to the Close Terrain Shaping Obstacle program resulted in a nearly \$500 million reduction of estimated funding requirements, and her cost analysis shaped the program's path forward. Ms. Gulla identified cost efficiencies for the Standoff Activated Volcano Obstacle program through the utilization of Other Transactional Agreement contract vehicles and the middle-tier acquisition approach—one of the first programs approved by the Army to do so.

Individual Achievement Award Winners (continued)

Ms. Melissa Ransom | U.S. Marine Corps | Earned Value Management

As a Cost Analyst for the Ground Air Task Oriented Radar program, Ms. Melissa Ransom provided essential leadership in Earned Value Management. Her insight and analysis proved instrumental in the review of the prime vendor cost estimating system deficiencies, and, once implemented, her corrections provided greater data integrity for the program. Ms. Ransom's analysis of contract types, data trends, and risk assessment were critical during the negotiation of the Full Rate Production contract and resulted in a total, life-cycle cost savings of \$40 million per system.



The Honorable Ellen Lord and Ms. Melissa Ransom

Mr. Joseph Krumenacker | U.S. Navy | Engineering

Mr. Joseph Krumenacker, F-35 Joint Program Office Chief Engineer, expertly led two complex engineering investigations that helped resolve propulsion system safety issues. In response to an F-35B loss of aircraft, Mr. Krumenacker led a team that confirmed the root cause failure of a high-pressure, high-volume fuel tube. He provided time-critical engineering responses that kept more than 400 aircraft operating safely. During this period, Mr. Krumenacker established a working group that implemented thrust cutback solutions to restore full vertical landing capability.



The Honorable Ellen Lord and Mr. Joseph Krumenacker

Ms. Lauren Borocharner | U.S. Army | Facilities Engineering

As the Engineering Division Chief at the Army Corps of Engineers, Ms. Lauren Borocharner was responsible for the engineering, design, and construction of numerous complex projects. Her achievements include the successful execution of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' largest dam rehabilitation at Herbert Hoover Dike in Florida; the rebuilding of the Guajataca Dam in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico; designing Everglades restoration projects valued at \$2.6 billion; and more than \$3 billion in civil works design projects.



The Honorable Ellen Lord and Ms. Lauren Borocharner

Ms. Julie Blankenbaker | U.S. Navy | Financial Management

Ms. Julie Blankenbaker, Deputy Program Executive Officer for Unmanned Aviation and Strike Weapons in Business Financial Management, led the Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) realignment to a mission-aligned organization. As a leader of the financial management community, she reduced nonessential reporting, provided innovative financial solutions to program managers and financial managers. Ms. Blankenbaker played an instrumental role in terms of providing financial dashboards and visualization of financial information and was key in embracing real-time, online, transparent data storage that could be visualized by a variety of personnel.



The Honorable Ellen Lord and Ms. Julie Blankenbaker

Captain Yazmin Garcia Smith | U.S. Air Force | Information Technology

As a project manager at the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile Systems Directorate, Captain Yazmin Garcia Smith led a team in the acquisition planning and expansion of the \$34 million Ground Based Strategic Deterrent Digital Engineering System. This effort enables multi-level IT integration for the \$83 billion Intercontinental Ballistic Missile weapon system replacement program. She developed the IT deployment strategy to build out and install a multi-level, Digital Engineering Environment across 23 sites within 18 months. Captain Garcia Smith saved approximately \$90,000 in costs in addition to eliminating 60 days from the deployment schedule. Her efforts are paramount to maintaining the nation's key nuclear deterrent.



The Honorable Ellen Lord and Captain Yazmin Garcia Smith

Ms. Jean-Anne Butler | U.S. Air Force | International Partnership

Ms. Jean-Anne Butler, as a coalition procurement advisor to the Afghan Ministry of Defense, was responsible for advising an international partner on commodity, service and construction acquisitions valued at \$4.5 billion annually. Her expertise resulted in a thorough review of the Afghan procurement processes and establishment of standard procurement lead times, which greatly increased out-year planning from 1 to 3 years. As a result, the Ministry achieved a 95 percent rate of budget execution, by far the highest of all 42 ministries.

New Award



The Honorable Ellen Lord and Ms. Jean-Anne Butler

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Martin Lopez | U.S. Marine Corps | Life Cycle Logistics

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Martin Lopez, as Maintenance Advisory Officer for Armored Vehicles, provided logistics support to the M1A1 Abrams Tank program. He identified an excessive intake of foreign particles that negatively affected the Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical (NBC) System. Chief Warrant Officer 4 Lopez produced a low-cost solution that increased the operational availability of the tank's NBC System by 50 percent and reduced the risk of fires. His analysis of the Armored Vehicle-Launched Bridge uncovered costly processes that will result in savings of \$20 million over the life cycle of the program.



The Honorable Ellen Lord and Chief Warrant Officer 4 Martin Lopez

Mr. James Gregory Clark | U.S. Army | Production, Quality, and Manufacturing

As an Aviation Systems Quality Section Chief, Mr. James Gregory Clark developed processes that increased quality assurance surveillance for spare parts contracts for the Army, saving the government an estimated \$673 million. He revamped outdated processes and procedures for the Apache Improved Drive System Main Transmission, which reduced some test audit requirements by 92 percent, reduced travel costs by 69 percent, and created a positive schedule impact.



The Honorable Ellen Lord and Mr. James Gregory Clark



The Honorable Ellen Lord and Colonel David Warnick

Individual Achievement Award Winners (continued)

Colonel David Warnick | U.S. Army | Program Management

Colonel David Warnick, a Project Manager for the Joint Attack Munition Systems, effectively managed three Acquisition Category 1 programs across every stage of the life cycle. He preserved and guided the Joint Air-to-Ground Missile program through the Engineering and Manufacturing Development phase and achieved a successful Milestone C decision. He increased HELLFIRE missile production capacity by 450 percent and achieved a unit cost savings of 9.5 percent. These are the largest and most affordable 1-year procurements in the history of the HELLFIRE.



Left to right (L to R): The Honorable Ellen Lord, Colonel Sean McMurry, and Mr. Thomas Carney

Colonel Sean McMurry | U.S. Army | Requirements Management

As the Joint Product Manager for the Common Analytical Laboratory Systems (CALs), Colonel Sean McMurry masterfully led one of the largest joint acquisition programs within the Joint Program Executive Office for Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Defense. He redefined requirements for the program and integrated off-the-shelf analytic equipment into mobile laboratories. Colonel McMurry's efforts successfully transformed the acquisition strategy for the CALs Field Confirmatory Integrated System variant—decreasing the expected fielding of the product by 2 years and \$44 million under budget.



The Honorable Ellen Lord and Lieutenant Colonel Mara Kreishman-Deitrick

Lieutenant Colonel Mara Kreishman-Deitrick | U.S. Army | Science and Technology Manager

Lieutenant Colonel Mara Kreishman-Deitrick, a strategic leader in malaria prophylaxis and antibacterial drug development within Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, was the chair of the Next Generation Malaria Drug Integrated Product Team. She completed a first-in-human clinical trial for the lead anti-malarial candidate, created a Milestone Decision Authority (MDA) directed data package on a potential combination therapy to inform a program transition/termination decision, and ensured global relevance of the DoD Antimalarial Drug Development mission.

Ms. Alicia Spurling | U.S. Special Operations Command | Services Acquisition

Ms. Alicia Spurling, an Acquisition Program Manager at U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), balanced four major programs, led two major source selections, and served as Primary contracting officer representative for 43 contracts. She successfully maintained her existing portfolio, including a \$200 million Language and Culture indefinite-delivery-indefinite-quantity contract and a \$47 million SOCOM Pacific effort, while balancing requirements shaping, source selection, and transition of the \$500 million Preservation of the Force and Family contract. Ms. Spurling also led the \$60 million Warrior Care Program contract while coaching and mentoring her peers. Her effort improved communications with industry partners and facilitated the successful award of 51 task orders totaling \$189 million.

Mr. Paul Ward | U.S. Special Operations Command | Small Business

As the Deputy Director for Small Business at USSOCOM, Mr. Paul Ward facilitated the largest Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Service set-aside, \$360 million, by using the All-Small Mentor-Protégé Program. This is the largest acquisition to date in the federal government using such authorities. Through market research and manufacturing facility reviews, Mr. Ward set-aside a historically full, and open, \$50 million sniper rifle requirement for small business. Through Mr. Ward's tenacity, the command set new records for the most dollars ever awarded to Historically Underutilized Business Zones and Women-Owned Small Businesses.

Mr. George Senger | U.S. Army | Software

Mr. George Senger, a lead engineer from the Program Executive Office for Command, Control, and Communications-Tactical, led a team to develop an application that revolutionizes the Soldiers Unit Task Reorganization process. This technology reduces the radio configuration time required for separate units to join a common network, from several hours to minutes. To expedite development, Mr. Senger leveraged cutting-edge business practices, agile software development, and commercial-off-the-shelf products to develop the software for full release in 17 months.

New Award

Colonel Varun Puri | U.S. Air Force, Retired | Test and Evaluation

As a Senior Test Leader at the F-35 Joint Program Office, Colonel Varun Puri directed a 1,400-person workforce across four test organizations. Under his leadership, the System Design and Demonstration developmental test program completed more than 9,000 flights, 16,000 flight test hours, and 65,000 test points without significant incident. By implementing this developmental test program, Colonel Puri generated a \$45 million cost avoidance. He was awarded the Collier Trophy for his contribution to the early delivery of the Automatic Ground Collision Avoidance System.



The Honorable Ellen Lord and Ms. Alicia Spurling



The Honorable Ellen Lord and Mr. Paul Ward



The Honorable Ellen Lord and Mr. George Senger



The Honorable Ellen Lord and Colonel Varun Puri (Retired)



Left to right: Mr. Ken McDougall, Captain Mike Dewitt, The Honorable Ellen Lord, Colonel Enrique Oti, Captain Nick Setterberg, and Captain Nick Lundin

Software Innovation Team Award
U.S. Air Force Kessel Run Team
Boston, Massachusetts

New Award

Kessel Run is a model for Defense DevSecOps and Agile software acquisition. The Kessel Run Team fielded 18 capabilities, including a tanker-planning tool, using agile software development and lean start-up methodologies. Collaborating with the Mad Hatter team, they modernized the F-35 Autonomous Logistics Information System. Kessel Run can push applications into SIPR in under an hour with the DoD's first Continuous Authority to Operate, and on a monthly basis, they save operations \$13 million and more than 2,000 man hours. Their operational value is unparalleled, delivering capability into the field every 14 hours and averaging 70 days to award contracts.



Left to right: Mr. Matt Davis, Mr. Dan Fadely, The Honorable Ellen Lord, Mr. Tim Clayton, Mr. Patrick Higgins, and Mr. Mike Kennitzer

Flexibility in Contracting Award
National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency JANUS Team
Springfield, Virginia

The JANUS Acquisition Team is recognized for their innovation and success, resulting in the award of more than 30 contracts in support of Foundation Geospatial Intelligence products. The contracts exceed \$2 billion in value and include \$320 million in set-asides for small businesses. NGA obligated more than \$174 million, spending 60 percent less than anticipated due to the innovative source selection and competitive delivery order processes. The JANUS contracts allowed NGA to purchase higher volumes of data and products, twice as much as compared to the previous contracts.

Workforce Development Innovation Awards



Left to right: Ms. Andrea Simon, Ms. Shruti Jha, The Honorable Ellen Lord, Mr. Ronald Meadows, Ms. Shannon Marold, and Mr. Eric Hecht

Large Organization

U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Ground Vehicle Systems Center Warren, Michigan

The U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Ground Vehicle Systems Center created and implemented workforce development programs to better train and prepare the future acquisition workforce and its emerging leaders. The Center's initiatives include the Recent Graduate Network, sponsorship and mentorship programs, numerous technical and leadership training opportunities that consist of weekly innovation talks, peer-to-peer, and formal recognition programs. The Ground Vehicle Systems Center's initiatives will have longstanding positive effects for years to come through the investment, development, and recognition of their workforce.



Left to right: Sergeant Major Richard Holman, Mr. James Smith, The Honorable Ellen Lord, Ms. Sherry Mathews, Ms. Raisa Barnes, and Mr. Brett Kennedy

Small Organization

U.S. Special Operations Command, Special Operations Forces Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics MacDill Air Force Base, Florida

The USSOCOM Special Operations Forces Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics implemented initiatives to prepare the next generation workforce for greater responsibility by creating opportunities through internship and Ghost programs, specialized trainings, and key-leader development positions. The early career workforce is engaged through a comprehensive program that promotes supervisor-mentoring, career planning, and tailored training. The workforce development team implemented a new community of interest and recruitment site to enhance the workforce and talent management initiatives. The Special Operations Forces Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics organization utilizes novel communication tools and strategies to recruit, retain, and professionalize their workforce to bolster capability readiness.

Visit <https://www.hci.mil/what-we-do/awards/Awards-2019-Gallery.html> to see a complete photo gallery from the awards ceremony.