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DCO's new cyber innovation center can mean big business for industry

BY BRITTNEY M. BROWN, DEFENSIVE CYBER OPERATIONS



Lt. Gen. Stephen Fogarty, Commanding General, Army Cyber Command, at the Forge ribbon cutting at Fort Belvoir May 16, 2019. (U.S. Army photo by Cecilia Tueros, PEO EIS Strategic Communication Directorate)

Defensive Cyber Operations (DCO) is stepping up its game to bring more vendors to the Army's procurement table. The project manager (PM) is merging a new innovation center called the Forge, with its rapid and agile acquisition methodology known as the Cyber Operations Broad Responsive Agreement (COBRA) Other Transaction Authority (OTA).

The Forge is a centralized facility located at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, used as a one-stop shop to identify, assess, integrate and procure defensive cyber prototypes. The prototypes are then delivered to cyber protection brigades (CPBs), which are charged with defending the Army's network.

The facility is multifaceted. At times, it's an industry tradeshow venue where vendors can showcase their products in response to DCO solicitations. In contrast to traditional tradeshows, however, companies receive on-the-spot evaluations by DCO personnel and stakeholders. By the end of an event, vendors are notified whether they can continue on in the solicitation process. A recent DCO tradeshow event, called the Forge Storm, attracted more than 200 industry participants.

"The concept of the Forge Storm is a rarity," said Christian Sorenson, an industry participant in the event. "We seldom have the exposure to directly discuss our products with end users. Today, we were able to tailor our conversations with stakeholders of what solutions we have to offer."

In addition to stakeholder interaction, the Forge's on-site contracting office may pique the interest of industry. The office, run by Army Contracting Command – Rock Island (ACC-RI), means vendors can leave events like the Forge Storm, with check in hand. ACC-RI is utilizing the COBRA OTA for the immediate purchase of prototypes, and is a critical element of the Forge construct.

"In cyber, we can't afford to wait on long processes. We need industry solutions today," said Joe Kobsar, director of Applied Cyber Technologies, which manages the Forge. "We're enabled by the Forge and the COBRA OTA to get those capabilities into the hands of Soldiers today."

As a result of the Forge-COBRA coalition, industry partners have witnessed tangible returns on investments. To start, DCO has awarded \$24 million to industry in prototype procurements within the past 15 months. Since its inception in December 2018, the Forge has facilitated nearly \$10 million of that total. DCO predicts that another \$6 million will be awarded within the next two months. While traditional vendors have a place at the Forge, DCO is also looking to

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procure solutions from non-traditional contractors like start-ups or academia, as well.

“We’re changing the way we partner with industry,” said Col. Chad Harris, DCO project manager. “We’ve created a space that allows for true collaboration and an avenue to seek solutions from a variety of cyber experts.”

In addition to the CPBs, four other stakeholders have an ongoing presence at the Forge. They include the U.S. Army Test and Evaluation Command, Army Training and Doctrine Command, the System of Systems Consortium and U.S. Army Cyber Command (ARCYBER).

“Within a short timeframe, the Forge has already created opportunities for the government and private industry to collaborate, research and develop innovative practices to ensure ARCYBER has the right technology at the right time and timeliness is crucial to our mission,” said Chief Warrant Officer Joseph Mercado, ARCYBER technical advisor.

The Forge has been in initial operating capability since December 2018, and DCO hosted its official ribbon cutting for the facility on May 22, 2019.

Skype for Business rolls out Army-wide

BY ANTHONY SMALL, ENTERPRISE SERVICES



This past May, the Army’s Enterprise Content Collaboration & Messaging (EC2M), under, Enterprise Services, launched phase one rollout of Skype for Business that will ultimately support up to one million Army users world-wide. Skype for Business will allow users to communicate with ease, in real-time and without the need to be in the same location.

The Skype for Business launch is part of the Unified Capabilities Soft Client Subscription Service Contract that will help Soldiers communicate anytime, anywhere and on any device.

“This is a huge effort because this service will be commercially owned and operated,” said Deidra McCaskill, deputy product lead EC2M. “One of the biggest challenges is getting from the Army network out to the commercial cloud.”

The benefits of operating via cloud includes collaboration efficiency, scalability and access to automatic updates.

“When I think about the value proposition of deploying a cloud-based collaboration suite like Skype, I view this as both a productivity tool for the Army’s workforce, but also a talent management issue,” said Thomas Neff, project director for Enterprise Services. “The people the Army is recruiting, whether military, civilian or contractors, expect to work and collaborate using modern software like Skype and not only rely on e-mail. We owe it to them to provide the same types of tools that commercial industry provides to their workforce.”

Skype for Business uses a commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) contract that avoids a capital investment. There are many benefits to COTS including saving money on initial investment, meeting IT requirements while avoiding costs, lowering maintenance investments, cost-effective new upgrades and features and using technology that has already been tested.

“This effort required constant teamwork across multiple organizations, including Chief Information Officer/G-6, Army Network Enterprise Technology Command, Army Cyber Command, and AT&T Inc.,” said McCaskill. The partnership between these enterprise experts, along with base and major command members who worked diligently to prepare for the migration, were critical to the success of the effort.

Phase one of Skype for Business is now available and ready for use. It includes instant messaging (IM), chat, presence, and initial Defense Enterprise Email integration.

The IM/chat service will provide the ability for a participant in a two-party or multi-user chat to invite one or more additional users into a multi-user chat session. The presence service permits end users to update their status, and the host server will in turn broadcast the updated presence information to the user’s contacts.

Later phases of the rollout will include, non-assured voice, video and desktop (screen) conference session.

PEO speaks at AFCEA Belvoir scholarship presentation

BY KATHERINE MORGAN, PEO EIS STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE



Program Executive Officer Cherie Smith participated in the scholarship presentation, May 29, 2019 at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. (U.S. Army photo by Cecilia Tueros, PEO EIS Strategic Communication Directorate)

Upon taking the role as program executive officer for Enterprise Information Systems (EIS), Ms. Cherie Smith outlined talent management as one of her top priorities. Recognizing the need to infuse the government workforce with young talent, Smith has made a strong effort to engage with students, hoping to communicate the virtues of pursuing a career of government service. As she did in 2018, Smith spoke at the annual AFCEA Belvoir scholarship presentations on May 29, 2019, where awards were handed out to students in the local area pursuing degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math fields, commonly known as “STEM.” Twelve high school students received \$1,500 each and 42 college students received \$2,500 each. As an added bonus and surprise to the students, AFCEA Belvoir presented each high school scholarship recipient in attendance with a new laptop.

Smith focused her comments to the students on the importance of mentorship. She highlighted a real-life example of a student who attended the event last year and kept in touch with Smith throughout the year, sending periodic updates about what she was working on at school. Smith explained that this is the key to networking, not simply asking someone what they can do to help them get a job, but building a relationship and sharing information about what you are doing.

Following the scholarship presentation, Smith, along with Brendan Burke, deputy program executive officer for EIS, and the students adjourned for a luncheon hosted by AFCEA Belvoir and featuring a presentation by Dr. William Forrest Crain, director, Center for Army Analysis.

JUNE 2019

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- 11 JUNE:** Army Birthday
- 14 JUNE:** ALTESS 60th Anniversary
- 17 JUNE:** Aviation Logistics Relinquishment of Charter
- 18-19 JUNE:** MC4/TAO Town Hall
- 21 JUNE:** IPPS-A Change of Charter
- 25 JUNE:** ES Change of Charter
- 28 JUNE:** PEO EIS Org Day



AMERICA'S ARMY
HONORING THE CALL TO SERVICE
FROM D-DAY TO TODAY

ARMY BIRTHDAY CEREMONY

JUNE 11, 11:00 A.M.
PEO EIS FRONT LAWN



Q&A with DCO's Lt. Col. Scott Helmore

BY BRITTNEY BROWN, DEFENSIVE CYBER OPERATIONS



There's been plenty of action at Defensive Cyber Operations (DCO). Within the past year, it established three new organizations (two product managers and one directorate), implemented the use of Other Transaction Authority (OTA) and opened a new cyber innovation center called "the Forge."

Through the Forge, DCO is executing a variety of methods to procure and deliver defensive cyber prototypes. The Coliseum, Labyrinth, Constellations and the Forge Storm are among the methods being utilized. Lt. Col. Scott Helmore, product manager (PdM) for Cyber Platforms and Systems (CPS), gives insight on the naming conventions and how they build mutually beneficial relationships between DCO and industry partners.

Q: DCO is utilizing the Cyber Operations Broad Responsive Agreement, or COBRA for short, as the OTA to procure defensive cyber prototypes. What is COBRA?

A: COBRA is the name of DCO's OTA. An OTA in general is a means by which we acquire prototypes. It allows us to go outside the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) for a "try before you buy" procurement. The method gives us the flexibility we need to ensure a capability can actually meet the requirements of Soldiers before we purchase them through an official FAR contract.

Q: How does COBRA differ from other OTAs?

A: First, COBRA is unique because it specifically focuses on cyber. Other OTAs may focus on communications, but there are none really dedicated to defensive cyber. COBRA is also unique because we award agreements through the use of a centralized, physical location called the Forge. Within the Forge, we bring together all of the entities that make OTA execution and prototype development possible under one roof. The Forge has a contracting office, as well as the presence of our stakeholders like Army Cyber Command. No other OTA that I'm aware of has their customer or end-user co-located or involved in the process.

Another factor that sets COBRA apart is that we're executing the OTA through a variety of execution methods, like the Forge Storm and the Coliseum.



Q: Speaking of the Forge Storm and the Coliseum, you were the mastermind behind the names, including Labyrinth and Constellations. What do the names mean in the context of DCO?

A: The naming conventions were done as a means for people to be able to associate concepts with the methods. Most have historical references, like in the case of the Roman Coliseum.

Everyone knows the Coliseum was a place for events where observers watched participants, and then voted on the winners. We're applying the same concept, but in our case, the participants are industry and we solicit them to demonstrate their solutions to our teams of evaluators. Coliseums give us the ability to observe and vote on whether we want the technology from industry or not, and help us refine what we're looking for. Coliseums are efficient because they're hosted at existing industry events, such as the AFCEA Belvoir Industry Days, where industry is already present.

Q: How about the Labyrinth and Constellations methods?

A: Labyrinth is derived from Greek mythology and is basically just a maze. The Labyrinth method is all about problem solving. We present a problem to industry, bring them to the Forge, and conduct brainstorming sessions about how to solve those problems.

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Constellations are groups of stars that create a picture. In DCO's scenario, we're putting groups of industry experts together to focus on a specific area of interest, like analytics, for example. The point is for those groups to come back to us with common ideas or solutions, and present a picture of what a capability should look like. When new participants are added to the constellation, they start as a small star and at some point in time, they grow into a brighter star of the constellation.

Q: The method called the Forge Storm is related to meteorology. What was the thought process behind the name?

A: Multiple elements go into a storm; a storm brings wind, it brings rain, and sometimes tornadoes all at the same time. With the Forge Storm, we're going after different procurements and using multiple methodologies in the same environment. We're basically inviting industry to the Forge for an in-house tradeshow with a "Shark Tank" twist on it.

Q: How does the Forge in combination with COBRA benefit industry?

A: There are a lot of opportunities for industry to capitalize on DCO's new efforts. Within one Coliseum event alone, we looked at over 120 technologies from 63 companies and awarded 10 different COBRA agreements. That added up to \$6.4 million in procurement dollars that went to industry in a very short amount of time.

Our first Forge Storm event brought out more than 200 people from 22 companies, who were able to directly discuss their products with end-users without a middle man.

Q: How can industry take advantage of the opportunities?

A: DCO posts announcements on several platforms, including , the PEO EIS website, industry organization websites and through the System of Systems Consortium. Our announcements include specific instructions on how to participate, as well as the various timelines.

GFEBBS-SA welcomes a new product director

BY JENNIFER SEVIER, GENERAL FUND ENTERPRISE BUSINESS SYSTEM



Col. Donald Burton, project manager for GFEBBS, hosted the assumption of charter ceremony for incoming GFEBBS-SA product director, Jeannie Winchester. (U.S. Army photo by Racquel Lockett-Finch, PEO EIS Strategic Communication Directorate)

On May 23, 2019, Col. Donald Burton, project manager for General Fund Enterprise Business System, hosted an assumption of charter ceremony for General Fund Enterprise Business System – Sensitive Activities (GFEBBS-SA) at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Ms. Jeannie Winchester formally assumed her responsibilities as the incoming product director. "I am looking forward to working with the sensitive activities community, and the incredible opportunity to deliver a vital system to the United States Army," Winchester said.

GFEBBS-SA will be the "financial Kevlar" for the Army's tip-of-the-spear warriors. As a materiel developer for the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics & Technology), GFEBBS-SA is building a revolutionary security solution that will be the critical safeguard of information for extremely sensitive transactions, while supporting the Army's goal of improving financial and audibility processes.

"Ms. Winchester's reputation as an excellent leader precedes her and we are fortunate to have her on our team," Burton said during his opening remarks. Winchester has an extensive background in business systems and communications security, and is a true asset for the sensitive activities community. She comes to GFEBBS-SA from her prior role at Defensive Cyber Operations. Welcome to the team, Ms. Winchester!



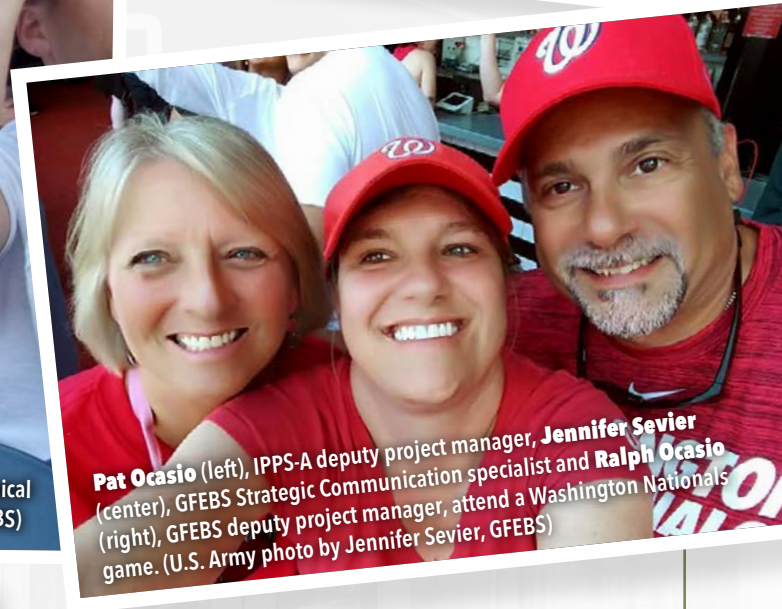
AFCEA Belvoir president **Bill Jones** presents certificates of appreciation to PEO EIS Strategic Communication director **Tara Clements** (right) and Strategic Communication specialist **Katie Morgan** on May 29, 2019, for their support of this year's AFCEA Belvoir Industry Days event. (U.S. Army photo by Racquel Lockett-Finch, PEO EIS Strategic Communication Directorate)



Incoming GFEBs-SA product director **Jeannie Winchester** smiles during her assumption of charter ceremony, May 23, 2019. (U.S. Army photo by Racquel Lockett-Finch, PEO EIS Strategic Communication Directorate)



Perry Boster (left), GFEBs computer scientist and **Audrey Diaz** (right), DevMod technical management, attend a Washington Nationals game. (U.S. Army photo, courtesy of GFEBs)



Pat Ocasio (left), IPPS-A deputy project manager, **Jennifer Sevier** (center), GFEBs Strategic Communication specialist and **Ralph Ocasio** (right), GFEBs deputy project manager, attend a Washington Nationals game. (U.S. Army photo by Jennifer Sevier, GFEBs)



Program Executive Officer **Cherie Smith** presents an award to **Michelle Walker**, acting director for Acquisition and Systems Management, June 5, 2019. (U.S. Army photo by Racquel Lockett-Finch, PEO EIS Strategic Communication Directorate)



IPPS-A project management specialist **Zack Brickhouse**, executive operations assistant **Nicole Woodruff** and project manager **Col. Darby McNulty** attend a Washington Nationals game. (U.S. Army photo, courtesy of IPPS-A)

EIS SNAPS