DSMC HOSTS ACQUISITION RESEARCH FORUM

Joan L. Sable

On Tuesday evening, November 2, 1993, the Defense Systems Management College (DSMC) hosted an Acquisition Research Forum with The Honorable John M. Deutch, Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Technology) and other Department of Defense (DOD) officials attending. The Forum theme was "Relevancy of Acquisition Research to DOD's Unfolding Acquisition Challenges."

The 100 faculty and staff attending, a number from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces and Army Management Staff College, included: Dr. Deutch; Dr. James S. McMichael, Director of Acquisition Education, Training and Career Development Policy; Brigadier General (Sel.) Claude M. Bolton, Jr., USAF, DSMC Commandant; Mr. Gerald E. Keightley, Executive Director of the Defense Acquisition University (DAU); Dr. Walter B. LaBerge, DSMC Visiting Professor; and Dr. Benjamin C. Rush, DSMC Dean of Faculty.

The Forum opened with light refreshments and DSMC interactive exhibits and displays. Subsequently, during an award ceremony, two DSMC personnel, Thomas Dolan, Jr., and Donald M. Freedman, received Department of the Army Meritorious Civilian Service Awards for their work on the Department of Defense Advisory Panel on Streamlining and Codifying Acquisition Law.

Brig Gen (Sel.) Claude M. Bolton, Jr., DSMC Commandant and The Honorable John M. Deutch, Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Technology).

General (Sel.) Bolton began the Forum by stating: "DSMC remains at the forefront of knowledge in defense acquisition management education through long-term inquiry into topics of potential importance in improving DOD systems acquisition management. Products of research include classroom experiences, studies for DOD executives, and information in publications for the acquisition management community."

The Research, Consulting and Information Division (RCID) manages the overall program of applied acquisition research at the College. Research is conducted primarily by faculty members and selected students and, occasionally, with outside professionals in cooperative major emphasis including finding ways to reduce and control system acquisition costs more effectively. Current RCID endeavors include the following:

— The Acquisition Research Symposium is a series of conferences that began in 1972 and is conducted biennially. These symposia offer a dynamic forum for dialogue among key professionals working on vital issues facing the acquisition community. The most recent symposium was held in June 1993. Planning has begun for the 1995 symposium.

Ms. Sable, Research Associate of the Research, Consulting and Information Division, DSMC, organized the Forum program.

— The Military Research Fellowship Program, chartered by the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition) in 1987 to enhance DSMC capabilities, provides professional military education and develops new and innovative concepts for systems acquisition management. This joint fellowship program is a unique opportunity for selected officers to supplement DSMC research goals and to impact the defense acquisition process. The 1993-94 fellows are working on a handbook for program managers on modeling and simulation. Projected availability of this handbook is September 1994.

— The Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Defense Technology, Acquisition and Industrial Base has asked DSMC to conduct research in "defense conversion" and "dual-use technologies." The research should address specifically definitions, benchmarks and metrics, goals, milestones, and timetables. The RCID is conducting a preliminary structured study using past and current data to suggest a standardization of these critical terms, to answer the questions posed by the subcommittee and provide recommendations for legislation, if needed.

— Through a unique system called Research on Ongoing Acquisition Research (ROAR), DSMC is beginning to reform how acquisition policy research products are developed and acquired by the DOD. The ROAR monitors more than 1,000 ongoing, acquisition-related study projects across the DOD and in universities. The DSMC uses ROAR information to tell policy makers and researchers who embark on new projects about any current studies that tie into the projects. This allows the newcomer to collaborate, saving the DOD months of valuable time and effort. Other databases and on-line services cannot do what ROAR does — find shortcuts to research solutions for unfolding policy problems.

— The DOD Acquisition Historical Center represents significant potential as part of the DSMC and DAU research capability. The Center, established at the request of the USD(A) in 1992, fills a void as the only central repository of defense acquisition information in DOD. (See the related article in this issue.)

As the Forum continued, Dr. Rush identified processes and projects to enhance and ensure faculty currency in acquisition research. Dr. LaBerge then discussed student electives and how they can produce the most up-to-date initiatives in the acquisition field.

Mr. Keightley remarked on DAU accomplishments since it became operational one year ago and the role of DSMC Press as publisher of the new *Acquisition Review Quarterly*. He also addressed other planned assignments — one being definition of a role for DAU in acquisition research.

The Forum ended with questions and answers between Mr. Deutch, members of the roundtable, and the audience.

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