


Joint Contingency Contracting

A Step Forward

William Long



oday's contingency contracting officers are being challenged more than ever before. High frequencies of deployments to the field, working in austere environments, and rapidly changing acquisition policies are just a few of the challenges CCOs face every

Long retired from the Air Force in July 2009 as a major with more than 20 years of active duty. He is currently serving as a professor of contract management at the Defense Acquisition University.

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day. Keeping up with these substantial changes in the middle of the Global War on Terrorism is no doubt an ongoing training challenge. In this climate, deployments to the Horn of Africa, Qatar, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other countries are anything but Service-specific. Instead, most of these deployments are centered on a joint, or multiple, Service situation. This, in turn, creates an additional level of difficulty that CCOs must learn to overcome.

Joint Contingency Contracting Handbook Initiative

Shortly after my last deployment, I was informed of a permanent change of station move to the Air Force Logistics Management Agency at Gunter Air Force Base, Ala. As I researched AFLMA, I found its mission was to enhance agile combat support capabilities by generating logistics solutions to support the Air Force's enterprise logistics transformation studies, analysis, and war games; and to publish combat support literature. With this in mind, I began exploring the idea of publishing a new contingency contracting guide for deployed CCOs. AFLMA had previously published an Air Force contingency contracting guide in 2003; however the guide was specific to the Air Force, required updating, and, most important, needed to reflect the needs of CCOs operating in the a joint Service environment. In June 2006, I sold the idea of a new guidebook to my commander at AFLMA. Our team at AFLMA went on to build briefings to better present the handbook concept in hopes of obtaining a sponsorship with the Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition and Contracting. Our vision was to create a pocket-sized handbook with a corresponding DVD containing contracting

guidance, tools, and templates CCOs could use for training in garrison and on the battlefield.

The timing at this point could not have been more perfect. The Office for Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy had initiated several projects with the Secretary of the Air Force as part of a Joint Contingency Contracting Working Group. The group's mission was to develop an official doctrine for joint Service contingency contracting. This new doctrine was envisioned as the groundwork for the deployment of a joint framework for contingency contracting operations. After promoting the idea to the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force and obtaining sponsorship from the Office for Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, we were well on our way. The working group became the conduit to provide the concept with high visibility and funding.

Putting the Plan in Action

The working group first met in Rosslyn, Va., where the architectural framework all came together. The working group was tasked with two main objectives that were performed in parallel: develop DoD Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement procedures, guidance, and information; and develop a pocket-sized joint Service contingency contracting handbook. With a sponsorship in hand, the group quickly established a team of functional experts from across the Department of Defense to form two separate working groups. The two groups were successful in implementing U.S. legislative initiatives, which resulted in providing the warfighter with a joint Service CCO warfare capability. The groups quickly organized the development of the department's first-ever Joint Contingency Contracting Handbook and, at the same time, pushed for the development of multiple-Service doctrine. As a result of that initiative, the working group was successful in implementing standard core competencies across an entire departmental enterprise, thus meeting Congress' vision of "joint warfare capability."

Standardization

Prior to this initiative, a standard for contingency contracting did not exist at the departmental level, and each Service trained its CCOs using a different model. This included different contingency contracting handbooks and training plans, which were, in many ways, unique and tailored to the individual Service. As a result, CCOs arrived to the theater of combat operations with different training backgrounds and experiences. These differences were two significant factors that contributed to recent U.S. Army procurement problems in the U.S. Central Command's area of responsibility.

The working group identified the factors as serious problems and devised an innovative plan to develop a pocket-sized handbook and create a standardized contingency contracting training approach to fulfill the training needs across the entire department. The plan included accompanying the handbook with a DVD filled with hundreds of contingency contracting tools, templates, checklists, websites, and stan-

standardized training modules to maximize available resources for deployed contracting personnel.

Impact and Results

The handbook initiative benefited the entire department by synchronizing and accelerating the contingency contracting efforts of all four Services. This initiative eliminated redundancy and standardized core training for the entire department. AFLMA and the working group conceptualized and designed a training architecture that provided the warfighter with an integrated and networked tool that increased the interoperability of the various Services.

The initiative also generated other desirable effects. During the course of the project, AFLMA worked closely with Air Force Materiel Command and reduced the time for the command's Lean Contracting 21 Standardized CCO Training initiative by one year. This standardized training approach expedited the initial CCO training support for Air Force Installation Acquisition Transformation, which drove efforts to develop similar constructs at the squadron and regional levels.

The handbook quickly became a highly sought after training tool and was lauded by the director for Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy as an interagency solution to U.S. Army procurement problems in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait. In fact, the impact of this idea was immediately noticed by the Gansler Commission, a commission on U.S. Army acquisition and program management reform, citing the Joint Contingency Contracting Handbook initiative as a key recommendation in their final report to Congress.

Rapid Response to the Warfighter

The working groups accelerated their response time to the warfighter by identifying critical training shortfalls and developing urgently needed ethics and integrity training for expeditionary operations. The team built 60 customer training modules to meet the training needs of the CCOs. Additionally, the team developed an anti-terrorism and force protection checklist that provides CCOs with situational awareness and tactical tools to survive in hostile areas.

Going one step further, the group strategically linked the handbook to almost 300 contingency contracting websites and incorporated critical cultural and language skills vital for CCOs negotiating contracts in international locations. Seeing the urgent need for quality control, the group created 75 additional core contracting process checklists to provide CCOs with vital oversight during expeditionary operations. Furthermore, they capitalized on past experiences by analyzing recent after action reports and built more than 150 interactive training scenarios that encourage CCOs to think outside the box when supporting the warfighter.

The groups established a new standard in training and addressed an Air Force-wide training issue by developing stan-

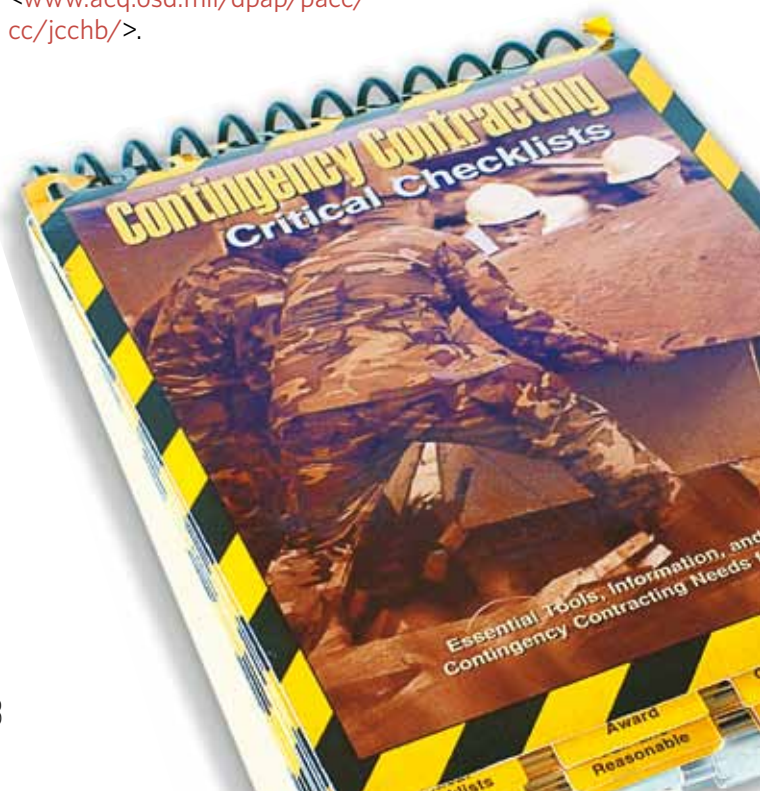
standardized contingency training modules and test questions aiding monthly CCO training. This proved critical for a highly deployed career field with little or no time to develop and implement unit-level CCO training programs. The team also collaborated with sister Services and linked the Joint Contingency Contracting Handbook DVD back to 90 other Service contingency guides and handbooks for Service-specific guidance. The versatility of this pocket-sized handbook and DVD gives CCOs the flexibility to train while in garrison or on the battle front.

Sustainment

The working group postured the department for success by developing a plan for the sustainment of the handbook well into the future. The group stressed an integrated approach, earning department-wide support, which aligned future budgets and planning functions towards a unified strategy. AFLMA coordinated directly with the Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy Office and developed a budget identifying future funding for contingency workshops, publishing, shipping, and travel costs. Additionally, AFLMA teamed with DAU to expedite development of contingency curricula, creating synergy and utilizing the core strengths of both organizations. Subsequently, that teaming arrangement drove the architectural blueprint for re-writing DAU's Contingency Contracting Course (CON 234). This foresight ensures that departmental contingency contracting will be sustainable and standardized for years to come.

New Contingency Contracting Website

In August 2008, another working group was formed to update the handbook with additional tools, templates, and training benchmarked from across the entire department. Not only did the team successfully update and streamline the handbook, but it also developed the first-ever joint Service contingency contracting website, www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/pacc/cc/jcchb/.



The website provides an additional tool to be used in concert with the handbook. It allows CCOs to instantly access updated, relevant information and expedites the architectural review process. Released in April 2009, the website represents a state-of-the-art portal to share tools and templates, and to provide real-time support for the contingency contracting workforce. This effort shaped how the department searches for and implements key resources for the deployed workforce. It represents the first successful joint venture by the department to maintain the familiarity and currency of the entire CCO corps with regard to acquisition policy changes, and to provide access to the best tools and resources. This unique approach supports the Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy's capability to provide CCOs with one-stop-shop access to thousands of tools, which is a force multiplier that saves countless manhours. Efforts on this project have set the standard for CCOs of the future by providing a single access point for tools, templates, and resources—whether CCOs are on foreign or domestic soil. In this attempt to standardize and consolidate resources across the department onto a publicly accessible website, the resulting product provides a credible toolset and thousands of Web-based references available anywhere and anytime, worldwide.

New Joint Contracting Handbook

Fielded in June 2009, the new handbook, *Contingency Contracting: A Joint Handbook for the 21st Century*, provides CCOs with additional capabilities and process improvements including:

- Revised and updated chapters on Joint Publication 4-10, Operational Contract Support
- Newly developed graphics for key contracting processes
- New Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy website (complete with feedback features)
- 12 new critical item checklists
- 73 checklists provided via DVD and website
- 143 CCO support Web links
- 291 Federal Acquisition Regulation and Defense Acquisition Regulations System reference links
- 230 test questions
- 36 newly developed training scenarios
- 47 contracting forms
- 150 consolidated and updated training modules
- 95 publications and regulations uploaded
- 180 frequently asked questions and nine new categories added to the interactive training games.

Joint Curriculum Development

The handbook drove the architectural blueprint for rewriting DAU's Contingency Contracting Course (CON 234). DAU revised its relevant courses by incorporating the latest topics and techniques demanded by the Services and defense agencies, using the handbook as the textbook for select courses. The course changes ensure the depart-

ment "trains as it fights," with current policy and lessons learned.

Feedback from deployed CCOs regarding the revised training has been positive. CON 234 remains the capstone course for all contingency contracting officers. DAU is also currently developing curriculum for a more advanced contingency contracting course (CON 334). The new course and handbook provide contracting officers with all the latest tools and techniques required to successfully operate in and manage a contracting activity in a contingency environment.

Success Story

The Joint Contingency Contracting Handbook won the Fiscal Year 2007 Air Force Contracting Special Recognition Award. In November 2009, the handbook initiative was further recognized by the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics with a Workforce Achievement Award. Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy continues to sponsor the working group each year so as to capitalize on recent experiences and successful practices from across the department, but these efforts only begin to scratch the surface.

As the saying goes, "Leave it better than you found it, and make it easier on the person behind you." The Joint Contingency Contracting Handbook has certainly been a success story; however, there is still much to be done. The lessons learned in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, and recent natural disasters over the last eight years need to reflect a step forward, not a step backward. It is essential for the acquisition workforce to continually focus on new and emerging practices and apply these experiences to the next war.

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The author welcomes comments and questions and can be contacted at william.long@eglin.af.mil.