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Welcome to the Army Acquisition Corps! You are now a member of an elite group of officers and civilians concerned with providing our soldiers with the best possible equipment.

These are changing times in the world and in the Army. The winds of political change sweeping across Europe, Asia, Africa, Central and South America have dictated a reassessment of our military strategy, the force structure and our Procurement Program. Our Army leadership has faced up to these changes and is restructuring the Army into one that is smaller, more deployable and lethal. You, as an Acquisition Corps member, will play a major role in assuring the readiness of this new Army.

Since the Army Acquisition Corps is a new program, I have enclosed a list of the most commonly asked questions about the concept and its implementation. I will simply tell you that it is an idea whose time has come; it is here to stay!

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ARMY ACQUISITION CORPS
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. What is the Army Acquisition Corps?

Answer: The Army Acquisition Corps is the Army's program to develop a pool of dedicated, highly qualified military and civilian acquisition specialists to fill designated acquisition management positions. It consists of about 1,350 military and civilian personnel filling critical positions located in Program Executive Offices, Program Management Offices, matrix support and Army Staff organizations. It also includes approximately 2,900 candidates who are being trained and developed for future assignment to these critical positions. Acquisition Corps members range from Captains to General Officers and from GS/GM-13's to SES level executives. The Army Acquisition Executive is the functional chief and proponent of the Army Acquisition Corps.

2. What do you mean by "critical" Army Acquisition Corps positions?

Answer: "Critical" is used to identify those positions which, because of law, DoD Directive, or at the direction of the Army Acquisition Executive, require the incumbent to have certain training, education, and experience. A Critical position can only be filled by a certified member of the Army Acquisition Corps. Critical acquisition positions are usually located in Program Executive Offices, Program Management Offices and supporting Headquarters and MACOM/MSC offices. They will normally be filled by individuals in grades Lieutenant Colonel or GS/GM-14 and above. All board-certified Product/Project Managers, including those assigned to Major subordinate commands, are considered to hold critical Acquisition Corps positions.

3. How many acquisition personnel does the Army have and are they the Acquisition Corps?

Answer: The Army has about 70,000 people serving in acquisition related jobs. The Army Acquisition Corps consists of those individuals whose jobs require the special training, education and experience dictated by law and DoD Directive and those individuals being developed to assume these positions. This is approximately 4,250 individuals.

4. What are the key features of the Army Acquisition Corps?

Answer: It provides competitive selection of military and civilian candidates into a common pool for training and development. It then develops the candidates through training, education and experience to qualify them for critical acquisition positions. For officers, it allows for advanced civil schooling and acquisition unique training. For civilians, it offers an alternative career path which capitalizes on the traditional career programs, and provides centralized referral for critical positions. Civilians are automatically programmed for attendance at the PM Course and Army Management Staff College. Additionally approximately 50 civilians each year will be selected to attend Senior Management training at selected schools such as Harvard, Penn, Stanford and University of Chicago. If legislation is passed to allow it, civilians will also be given the opportunity to participate in the Advanced Civil Schooling Program. The Acquisition Corps offers opportunities for promotion into the General Officer and Senior Executive Service ranks.

5. Why was the Army Acquisition Corps created?

Answer: The Army Acquisition Corps was created to achieve excellence in acquisition management and to assist in the development of leadership, managerial and technical skills needed for senior acquisition managers. It was also established in response to the Defense Management Review (DMR), announced by the Secretary of Defense in July, 1989, which directed each service to establish an Acquisition Corps. The program corrects deficiencies in the previous Material Acquisition Management career program for military personnel and addresses the lack of a comparable program for civilians. The program is necessary to comply with public laws and DoD Directives which require special training, education, and experience for persons serving in critical acquisition positions.

6. Who's eligible to apply for the Army Acquisition Corps?

Answer: Civilians will be admitted primarily from the following 11 Career Programs:

- Comptroller
- Supply Management
- Contracting & Acquisition
- Quality & Reliability Assurance

Engineer & Scientist (Nonconstruction)
Materiel Maintenance
Engineer & Scientist (Resources & Construction)
Automated Data Processing
Transportation
Communications
Ammunition Management

Those civilians who are not in the career fields listed above (such as 301's) but have significant acquisition experience may apply for entry into the Acquisition Corps.

Officers from all branches of the Army who hold one of the five Functional Areas listed below are eligible:

51-RDA
52-Nuclear Weapons
53-Systems Automation
97-Contracting and Industrial Management
15C35-Intelligence Aviator

7. How are people accessed into the Army Acquisition Corps?

Answer: Officers are normally accessed during their eighth year of service by applying for the Army Acquisition Corps or being designated into the Corps. A PERSCOM accession board will be held each October to access officers for the Acquisition Corps. Officers selected will be awarded skill code "4M" for acquisition corps candidate or "4Z" for certified Acquisition Manager. Their future assignments, including schooling, will be managed by the PERSCOM Army Acquisition Corps Management Office (AACMO) instead of their Branch.

Civilians in acquisition-related Career Programs or who have significant acquisition experience may apply for entry into the Acquisition Corps at GS/GM-13 and above. A Board similar to that used for officers will access civilians from applications received. Once accessed, they will be managed by the same PERSCOM Management Office and automatically programmed for developmental training.

8. Is it not unusual for the office administering the AAC military and civilian career management to be combined into one organization?

Answer: Yes. This is a key feature of the program, and it validates the commitment to a single Army system. It also capitalizes upon the efficiencies

achieved through centralized career management for the military and extends them to our civilians. This facilitates providing civilian members the experience, education and training required for their professional development.

9. How can people apply for the Army Acquisition Corps?

Answer: Officers may submit a written request, through their rating official, to Commander, PERSCOM, ATTN: (appropriate officer assignment branch), 200 Stovall St., Alexandria, VA 22332-0400.

Applications are not yet being taken for civilians. A world-wide message will be sent by PERSCOM in August providing details for applications. The first civilian accession board will be held in October.

10. Can I decline membership in the Army Acquisition Corps?

Answer: Officers are accessed either by application or by designation. Designated officers who believe that there are substantive reasons why their service in the Acquisition Corps would not be in their best interest and/or the best interest of the Army may request reconsideration through their chain of command to the Commander, US Total Army Personnel Command.

Civilians may decline membership simply by not applying. Incumbents of critical Acquisition Corps positions will be expected to join the Acquisition Corps, and they will automatically be grandfathered. Those incumbents not possessing the experience, training and education required for certification will be given the opportunity to obtain them. Waivers of training and education requirements may be granted at the discretion of the Army Acquisition Executive or the Secretary of the Army as appropriate. Incumbents who decline membership in the Acquisition Corps will be assisted in moving to other positions that do not require the training, education and experience necessary for holding critical Acquisition Corps positions.

11. Can an individual be removed from the Army Acquisition Corps?

Answer: Yes, officers who fail to attain the certification required to occupy critical Acquisition Corps positions will be removed from the Acquisition Corps.

Civilians will also be removed from the Acquisition Corps if they fail to meet conditions of employment (e.g., education, training, and experience required for certification) unless they are "grandfathered" into their position or granted a waiver.

Careers of all Acquisition Corps members will be intensively managed, thereby significantly reducing the likelihood that officers or civilians will be removed from the program for failing to meet the education, training and experience standards. Of course, officers or civilians may be removed from any position for cause.

12. What does the law and DoD Directive require for personnel in critical Army Acquisition Corps positions?

Answer: The current law requires that Program Managers of major programs have eight years of acquisition experience of which two years must have been acquired while serving in a procurement command (i.e., Army Material Command, Information Systems Command, Strategic Defense Command, or the staff of the Service Acquisition Executive, a PEO, or a PM). They also must attend the Defense Systems Management College (DSMC) Program Management Course (PMC). This criteria is extended by DoD Manual 5000.52M, with some modification, to other critical positions. Acquisition Corps members will be automatically programmed to attend PMC.

13. What is an officer's career pattern in the Army Acquisition Corps?

Answer: Once accessed into the AAC at the eighth year of service, officers will be awarded skill code "4M". Every effort will be made to get the officer into the Army Advanced Civil Schooling (ACS) program, followed by attendance at the nine-week Material Acquisition Management Course at the Army Logistics Management College. Officers will then be assigned to a developmental acquisition job in their functional area. Following this tour and promotion to Major, officers will attend intermediate level military schooling. Selection rates for resident attendance at the Command and Staff College (CSC) is expected to mirror the Army average. Officers not selected for resident attendance will be strongly encouraged to enroll in the nonresident program.

Following CSC, the officer can expect an acquisition user assignment with his/her branch at the field grade level. This assignment is important for

acquisition officers to upgrade their knowledge of the current weapons, tactics, and doctrine of their branch as it relates to their later development as acquisition experts for their branch.

The officer will then attend the Defense Systems Management College (DSMC) Program Management Course (PMC) and then serve a second acquisition tour. During this tour the officer should be considered for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel, certification as an Acquisition Manager ("4Z"), and Product Manager selection. Certified officers selected for Lieutenant Colonel, but not PM, will be utilized in other critical positions where they will have the opportunity to apply their extensive acquisition schooling and experience.

At this career point, the officer will normally be considered for, and if selected, attend a Senior Service College (SSC). Selection rates for acquisition officers are expected to reflect the Army average.

Upon consideration for and selection for promotion to Colonel an officer will be considered for Project Manager selection. If not selected for Colonel or PM, officers will be utilized in Acquisition Corps or other acquisition related positions in their Functional Area until they retire.

Following a successful Colonel PM tour, the officer could be selected for promotion to General Officer, with a subsequent tour as a Program Executive Officer or in another General Officer acquisition related position. If not selected for General Officer, the officer can expect to continue to serve in acquisition assignments until retirement.

14. Is it true that military members of the Army Acquisition Corps will not be eligible for battalion or brigade command?

Answer: Yes, this is true. Likewise, officers not in the Army Acquisition Corps, competing for battalion and brigade command, will not be eligible for selection as Product or Project Managers.

Realizing there is simply not enough time in an officer's career to gain concentrated experience in acquisition and at the same time pursue operational branch assignments, the Army leadership decided it is impractical for an officer to compete for both command and PM assignments. We are aware however that there are Commands that are uniquely Acquisition. These are the Functional Area 97 Procurement Commands, Functional

Area 51 Lab Commands and certain Ammo Depots. We are studying the feasibility of bringing those Commands positions under the Acquisition Corps.

15. What is a civilian member's career pattern in the Army Acquisition Corps?

Answer: Civilians will be accessed into the Army Acquisition Corps program at the grade GM/GS-13 or above. Upon selection to the AAC, civilian candidates will be slated to attend the Program Management Course (PMC) at the Defense Systems Management College and the Army Management Staff College. Opportunities will be provided on a selective basis for attendance at selected leadership and management short courses. If legislative changes are approved, opportunities will also exist for fully funded graduate level schooling. At grade GS/GM-14, civilians become eligible to serve in critical acquisition corps positions.

Civilians in the Acquisition Corps have the opportunity to fill a variety of progressively more responsible positions in matrix support, Army Staff and PEO/PM organizations, enabling them to advance to SES level. They may also compete for and serve in positions within their respective career programs.

16. When will the Army Acquisition Corps be implemented?

Answer: Implementation of the program has begun. The PERSCOM Acquisition Corps Management office is in place. Skill code 6T has been removed from officer record briefs and replaced by code 4M or 4Z as appropriate. Officer critical positions have been identified. Accession boards have met to align year group inventory through year group 83.

Critical civilian positions are being finalized now. Incumbents will be screened in the June timeframe. By August they will be notified of their certification standing and, if necessary, scheduled to fulfill training requirements or asked to provide justification for a waiver. New civilian accessions are planned for October.

17. How does the Army Acquisition Corps relate to traditional Army civilian career programs?

Answer: Traditional programs focus on a single occupational field (e.g., ADP, comptrollership, etc.) and guide the careerist from entry level through the top positions within the occupation. The Army Acquisition Corps draws participants, who are already

at middle levels, from multiple occupational areas and provides them with additional training to enhance their leadership and managerial skills in order to better prepare them to fill top acquisition positions.

18. Will my chances for promotion be different if I'm in the Army Acquisition Corps?

Answer: Promotion rates for officers in the Army Acquisition Corps will be at least that of the overall Army rate. Chances for promotion for civilians will increase when they join the Acquisition Corps because they can still compete for positions in their career fields. Acquisition Corps civilians will automatically be considered for promotion through centralized referral lists which will be sent by PERSCOM to selecting officials. Only members of the AAC may compete for selection to critical acquisition positions. Service obligations incurred as a result of promotion, both civilian and military, will be no different from what is currently prescribed in applicable regulations.

19. What role will mobility and rotation play in the Army Acquisition Corps?

Answer: Officers can expect to serve a normal tour of duty. Those holding PM positions will normally serve for 4 years or until completion of a major milestone. This applies to civilian PM's too. Mobility is a feature of the Army Acquisition Corps Program. Various types of mobility agreements are being reviewed at this time. A decision on how mobility will be applied to Acquisition Corps civilians will be made in the July timeframe.

20. Will civilian and military positions be interchangeable?

Answer: No, but positions will be reviewed periodically to determine whether civilian or military personnel are required to fill them. In theory, many Acquisition Corps positions could be filled by either a suitably qualified officer or civilians. However, the current set of critical positions was established to enhance productivity by exploiting the best attributes of a military/civilian team.

21. Will the length of assignment in Army Acquisition Corps critical positions apply equally to officers and civilians?

Answer: The minimum length of assignment for Product/Project Managers will be the same for military

and civilian personnel since it is prescribed by law and DoD Directive. For all other assignments, military personnel will serve a normal tour of duty. There will be no fixed arbitrary rotation for civilians. Civilians, however are expected to be mobile in order to accomplish professional development requirement and to facilitate optimum use of their skills.

22. What are the major benefits of being in the Army Acquisition Corps? For military? For civilians?

Answer: A common benefit to military and civilian members alike is the centralized and intensive career management they will receive from PERSCOM.

For military, all officers accessed into the Corps will be afforded the opportunity to obtain a fully-funded graduate degree if they do not already possess one. Additionally, promotion floors will be established for selection boards to insure that Army Acquisition Corps officers, selection is at least the same as the overall Army rate.

For civilians, the Acquisition Corps offers increased opportunities for promotion, since members can continue to compete for positions in other career fields as well as for Acquisition Corps positions. Through a centralized referral system, the Corps gives members automatic consideration for critical acquisition positions. Civilians compete for these positions only against fellow Acquisition Corps members who have similar training, education and experience.

The Corps also offers civilians excellent training and educational opportunities. Members attend the 20-week Program Management Course at Defense Systems Management College and the Army Management Staff College. If legislation is passed to allow it, they will also be able to earn fully funded advanced degrees.

Acquisition Corps civilians may also receive variable housing allowances for positions in high cost areas, if proposed legislation is passed into law.

For both military and civilian personnel, membership in the Acquisition Corps offers the opportunity to serve as part of an elite group of acquisition professionals who safeguard Army's investments and provide reliable, effective material to soldiers in the field.

23. Do I need a college degree to be in the Army Acquisition Corps.

Answer: Yes. A bachelor's degree is a prerequisite for attending the Program Management Course at Defense Systems Management College. The degree should be in a scientific, technical or managerial field.

24. Do I need an advanced degree to be in the Army Acquisition Corps?

Answer: Although neither a statutory or absolute Army requirement, most officers in the Acquisition Corps will have advanced degrees. We anticipate that many civilian members will also pursue advanced degrees to demonstrate higher skill levels to increase their competitiveness for the most prestigious positions. Educational background will be a discriminator in the selection process, so you are encouraged to obtain a graduate degree in a technical, scientific or managerial field if at all possible.

25. What is the relationship between existing programs such as LOGAMP and the MAM (Material Acquisition Management) Program and the Army Acquisition Corps?

Answer: The LOGAMP program serves a much broader area of logistics and acquisition and is not affected by this program. LOGAMP participants will, however, be one source of candidates for the Army Acquisition Corps. The MAM program has evolved into the military portion of the Acquisition Corps.

26. Are there plans for a Department of Defense Acquisition Corps?

Answer: No, there are no plans for a centralized DoD Acquisition Corps. Each service is establishing its own Acquisition Corps. They are similar in structure and will facilitate exchange of personnel across DoD departments and agencies.

27. Do the Reserves play any role in the Army Acquisition Corps?

Answer: The primary role of Acquisition Corps personnel is not normally associated with those of the Army National Guard or the Army Reserves. However, extensive material maintenance and procurement activities are performed by the National Guard Bureau and the US Army Reserves. Consequently the role of military and civilians working in these areas in the Reserve components and what affiliation they should have with the Acquisition Corps is being examined.

28. How will general officers and SES civilians be managed in the Army Acquisition Corps?

Answer: There will be no change in the management of General Officers or SES civilian members of the Army Acquisition Corps. Every effort will be made to insure senior personnel in Acquisition positions will possess requisite qualifications to perform their mission.

29. Will military officers have the opportunity to convert to civilian Army Acquisition Corps status upon completion of active duty tours?

Answer: There are no specific provisions for military officers to convert to civilian Army Acquisition Corps status. Officers released from active duty who are qualified may apply for Civil Service Status through the Federal Job Information Center in their area. The Dual Compensation Act prohibits the employment of any retired officer with the DoD within 180 days following retirement.

30. Will civilians have a different pay schedule if they're in the Army Acquisition Corps?

Answer: No, however there are various incentive packages proposed by Department of Defense, all require congressional action.

31. How will Aviation Officers meet their required "gates" if they are members of the Army Acquisition Corps?

Answer: With the recent Congressional mandate changing the number of years (9 of first 12) an Aviator must fly to meet gate requirements, it will be extremely difficult, but feasible, for an Army Acquisition Corps Aviator to make the gate. The Army Acquisition Corps proponent is working closely with PERSCOM and the Aviation school to determine possible solutions. Among the options being considered are: (1) intensive management of Army Acquisition Corps Aviators to ensure the gate requirements are met and (2) granting waivers.

32. How do I know the Army Acquisition Corps won't fade away like the "Zero Defects" or "OE" programs in the past?

Answer: Although there are no guarantees about the longevity of any initiative, the Army Acquisition Corps appears to be a very solid program. The Acquisition Corps is strongly supported by DoD and Army Leadership, and it is a top priority of the Army Acquisition Executive. In addition, the House Armed Services

Committee has drafted legislation that will mandate the establishment of an Acquisition Corps in each of the services.