



Air Force announces small business winners


The 2006 Secretary of the Air Force Small Business Awards were presented by Dr. Ronald M. Sega, undersecretary of the Air Force, in a ceremony in Washington, D.C. on May 23rd. "It is a pleasure to recognize these Air Force members and teams who have excelled in this important area," Dr. Sega said. "Their efforts play a valuable role in the Air Force's ability to perform its mission and ultimately result in our being able to successfully operate in air, space, and cyberspace." The 2006 Small Business Award winners are:

Secretary of the Air Force Special Achievement Award, Activity: **Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center, Tinker AFB, Okla.;** and **2nd Contracting Squadron, Barksdale AFB, La.** The OC-ALC Small Business Office at Tinker AFB was cited for its tireless efforts throughout the year to enhance acquisition opportunities for small businesses in support of the Air Force Mission. One result was that the organization exceeded the Small Business Program goals in all categories. The 2nd Contracting Squadron also exceeded all Small Business goals. Additionally, they maintained an outstanding partnership with both the Small Business Administration Louisiana District and the Louisiana

Procurement Technical Assistance Center. Through these partnerships and extensive market research, the squadron was able to locate, develop and maintain business relationships with a multitude of small businesses, in all small business categories.

Secretary of the Air Force Special Achievement Award, Individual: **Joan F. Fulkerson, Air Force Research Laboratory, Kirtland AFB, N.M.;** and **Dwight Slotto, 5th Contracting Squadron, Minot AFB, N.D.** Joan Fulkerson, the director of the Small Business Office at the Air Force Research Laboratory at Kirtland AFB, was recognized for her leadership that resulted in AFRL's awarding more than 47 percent of its total contract dollars to small businesses and 83 percent of its higher education institution dollars to minority institutions and universities. Her outreach efforts were hailed by key Congressional and government leaders and resulted in the 2006 Minority Business Development Association's Regional Director Award. Dwight Slotto, as the Small Business Specialist for Minot AFB, used innovative ideas to assist disadvantaged firms while meeting the mission needs of two nuclear-capable wings. He hosted a

continued on Page 4



the
Air
Force
salutes
America's
veteran
small
business
owners

See Page 17

from the Air Force Small Business director opportunity for America's heroes

This issue focuses on America's heroes – wounded veterans and particularly those that have ventured into businesses of their own and those with entrepreneurial spirit seeking to give back their talents to the warfighter. We will focus on the capabilities and accomplishments firms owned by wounded veterans bring to the mission in partnership with customers, Commanders, Small Business Specialists, Contracting Officers and other businesses. These firms, unlike any others, are truly run by heroes that succeed because they know, first hand, what is needed for mission success. They bring the leadership, skills and dedication to the fight in their role as entrepreneurs. They exemplify Air Force core values of Integrity, Service, and Excellence. They truly are Airmen. For these reasons and more, we want to proclaim those successes, address the challenges that lie ahead and create a path to reach *beyond goals* to win the fight for our wounded veterans.

Winning the fight requires innovative and aggressive strategies that match corporate capabilities to mission needs. Command Small Business Specialists are committed to mission success by providing the bridge between customers and wounded veteran firms. Small Business Specialists bring options to the warfighter to deliver innovation, responsiveness, agility and efficiency—all hallmarks of American

small businesses. Every day small business specialists make vital contributions to the Air Force's ability to fly, fight and win in air, space and cyberspace. Every day small business specialists find talented and capable small businesses that are committed to help the Air Force win the global war on terrorism, care for our airmen and families and modernize our forces. Every day they demonstrate the commitment to Air Force objectives and the warfighter spirit embodied in the Air Force Strategic Plan and the Chief of Staff's Vector. Every day they reach *beyond goals* to make small business a solution of choice. Make no mistake – Air Force Small Business Specialists are Airmen.

Air Force priorities are clear. In the months ahead our Small Business team will embark on a renewed strategic planning process to lay out concrete initiatives to achieve our *Beyond Goals* vision. We will strengthen the alignment of our small business capabilities with the Air Force mission we support. We will aggressively pursue new opportunities for small business solutions for the warfighter, particularly in key technologies, cyberspace and services. And we will lead new initiatives to create opportunities for veterans returning from overseas, with special emphasis on wounded veterans.

It is this priority that requires our immediate and dedicated attention.



Ronald A. Poussard

What better enterprise than the DoD to create and promote business opportunities for wounded veterans. The Air Force, along with the other military departments, the Small Business Administration and Veterans Administration, is leading the fight to do better – to reach beyond 3 percent of our contract dollars. We will aggressively create *new* opportunities and simplify access to the training many veteran business owners need to enter and perform in the DoD market. As a Nation still at war, and as disabled veterans return from Iraq and Afghanistan, I know that we all believe in giving back to those who have given so much for our Nation.

Reaching beyond goals for our Nation's heroes is the right thing to do.

VETERAN CORPSSM

SUPPLYING MORE THAN IT DEMANDSSM

technology, history and heart combine to benefit disabled vets

The Veteran Corps of America is a Service-disabled Veteran-owned Small Business that is a provider of high quality Information Technology, Safety, Security and Defense-related services and products. Their customers include the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Army, the Department of Homeland Security, and the General Services Administration, among others. The Fairfax, Va.-based company, whose slogan is "Supplying More Than IT Demands," was founded by military veterans with a family legacy of military service. Among the decorated veterans in their family was their grandfather, General Earle G. Wheeler, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon.



General Earle G. Wheeler

True to their military heritage, one element of their mission statement is "employ military service and service-disabled veterans." Proving that this is no empty slogan, the company has partnered with the Military Order of the Purple Heart in a program to train and find employment for disabled veterans in the Purple Heart's Veterans Business Training Center. They have also pledged \$100,000 to support that program.

Veteran Corps is one of 43 Service-disabled Veteran-owned Small Businesses who are contract holders under the recently issued GSA VETS GWAC. We recently spoke with Veteran Corps about its experiences, goals, and connections to the disabled veteran community.

Editor: How did you go about preparing your company to bid on this contract?

Veteran Corps: The VETS GWAC was one of the most competitive and challenging solicitations ever issued by the Government. The pre-proposal conference had more than 700 participants, and more than 400 proposals were received to support the two functional areas. The really difficult part of the proposal was the requirement for demonstrated experience references in every element of the Statement of Work. Further, there were 'monetary tiers' within each work scope element that required three references for each of the three tiers (\$25,000 to \$100,000; \$100,001 to \$250,000; and above \$250,000) for a total of nine per element. Doing the math, with 51 total work scope elements and nine citations per element, that is 459 references!

This made the most important task for us, and really all offerors, to identify and recruit quality teaming partners who had a lot of varied Information Technology experience. While teaming with one or more large businesses was important, the large number of experience references required for smaller contracts required companies of all sizes and specialties. For that reason, our team includes companies that range in size from a single person veteran-owned small business to the likes of industry giants like L-3 Communications and AT&T. While it made the proposal more difficult to produce and contract more difficult to win, these requirements expanded the teaming opportunities for Service-disabled Veteran-owned subcontractors, and today the 44 prime contractors represent teams that include over 200 SDVOSBs.

Editor: What do you think this GWAC means for America's SDVOSBs?

Veteran Corps: The GSA VETS GWAC has brought a lot of focus to the SDVOSB goal still not being met after many years of being in force. It has helped the overall movement over the past several years to get serious about meeting this commitment to our disabled veterans. We have seen a tremendous growth in opportunities over the past two years and in the number of registered SDVOSBs.

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Veteran Corps

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The GWAC itself is a demonstration of the Federal Government's commitment to significant opportunities for SDVOSBs. It really shows how the industry has changed in that you will find every major IT company represented on the various contractor teams.

It took over two years of hard work by a lot of people, but in particular Brad Scott of GSA (and every single person in the GSA Small Business GWAC Center) and Scott Denniston of the Veterans Administration. These are the two people who always show up and face the crowd, good or bad, and tell everyone exactly what is going on.

Editor: Where do you see this contract taking you in the future? What potential doors opening for your company?

Veteran Corps: There will be many opportunities that are competed under the GWAC in the coming years and we expect to win a share of those bids. However, it is a misconception to think that the selected GWAC primes are now rich because the \$5 billion contract ceiling divided between 44 companies equals \$113 million per company. It just doesn't work that way. We have to compete for every dollar of VETS GWAC revenue against the toughest competition in our industry, which are teamed with every large company out there.

It is widely known just how difficult the process was to be selected as a GSA VETS GWAC Prime Contractor. It definitely opens doors for us and our entire team, and gets us an invitation to a lot of expositions, trade shows and other fine events. As in all things, it is then up to us to step up to

the plate, participate, and let the contracting community know what we can do while showing our support for the agencies that are supporting the VETS GWAC. This is what really makes the difference.

Editor: Your web site shows that you are soliciting for subcontractors.

How many are you looking for, and what capabilities?

Veteran Corps: The number one thing to know when aspiring to be a Prime Contractor to the Federal Government is that you are competing to support the mission of an agency and will not win anything

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the VETS GWAC

The General Services Administration announced in February the Notice to Proceed to 43 Service-disabled Veteran-owned Small Business technology firms on the Veterans Technology (VETS) government-wide acquisition contract (GWAC). This is the first GWAC set aside for SDVOSBs. The VETS GWAC is valued at \$5 billion over 10 years and is intended to provide worldwide information technology solutions to federal agencies while increasing federal opportunities for SDVOSBs. This multiple award contract includes a five year initial term, as well as a five-year option period.

The selection rate was about one in six, with more than 250 companies applying for the VETS GWAC contract. The 43 contract holders represent highly qualified firms that have gone through rigorous screening and had to meet tough standards, according to government officials. VETS is a direct result of an executive order signed by President Bush in 2004, which called for strengthening opportunities in federal contracting for SDVOSB concerns. In awarding the VETS GWAC, GSA met a section of the order that required the agency to establish a GWAC reserved for participation by these businesses.

Earlier this year, the military departments received a letter from the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, Kenneth J. Krieg, asking military officials to allow the contract holders with the maximum opportunity to participate in DoD buying activity.

"Many more disabled veterans will return from the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan and will seek to participate in DoD procurements, including GWACs, such as this one," Krieg wrote. "By contracting with these teams of businesses owned by service-disabled veterans, we acknowledge their service as warfighters and appreciate their acumen as entrepreneurs and vendors to the department."

The Veterans Entrepreneurship Act and Small Business Development Act of 1999 established an annual government wide goal of not less than 3 percent of the value of prime contract and subcontract awards for participation by SDVOSBs. Krieg called on the acquisition community and major commands to use the contract vehicle to meet the congressionally established goal of 3 percent of procurement for SDVOSBs.

Veteran Corps

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just based on a contracting status. Agencies award contracts to support specific needs that, in turn, support their mission. Regardless of status as a SDVOSB, a company must demonstrate that it possesses the capabilities and business competency to advance the agency's mission. By the time a contracting requirement comes to the VETS GWAC, the decision to utilize an SDVOSB procurement strategy has already been made. The task ahead involves competing with the best SDVOSBs in the nation, and to win we have to demonstrate that we can successfully perform the mission of that task order better than anyone else.

As such, we are seeking SDVOSB subcontractors in every area of Information Technology that have unique capabilities, people or services. While we are not seeking any specific number, we must ensure we focus on companies that can add value to our team or solutions to the Government. Central to our teaming criteria is the ability of potential partners to assist our federal clients in successfully achieving the tenets of their organizational mission. One reason we are looking primarily for SDVOSBs is that the Code of Federal Regulations (13 CFR 125.6) allows SDVOSBs to work together to meet this requirement. This is one of the major reasons why the GSA VETS GWAC is a contracting vehicle for the entire SDVOSB community. Already we have seen task orders come out that non-GWAC Primes had been working before the decision to put them under GSA VETS. You can be sure these companies had no problem getting picked up on a team.

Editor: How did your relationship with the Military Order of the Purple Heart Service Foundation's Veterans Business Training Center begin?

Veteran Corps: As we were formulating our business plan, we knew that we were taking on a very heavy responsibility by naming ourselves the Veteran Corps of America. This is because the "Corps" in our name does not stand for "corporation." We founded the Veteran Corps to create an organization of individuals with the common bond of military service and common purpose of supporting and creating jobs for service disabled veterans. We knew this would be a large task and our success or failure would reflect not only on our own family's many veterans, but also every one of the 25 million living veterans if we did not meet their expectations. Therefore, to move forward required that we establish supporting veterans and employing military service and service disabled veterans as the cornerstone of our corporate mission.

Along the way our President, Bill Wheeler, read about the Veterans Business Training Center, a program of the Military Order of the Purple Heart Service Foundation, on MSNBC and immediately set himself to finding out about the VBTC and contacting Purple Heart with an offer to support them anyway we could. Initially, we all thought this support would involve our experience in government contracting, and assistance in steering the VBTC's services into the Federal marketplace via such things as a GSA Schedule, etc. However, the more we worked with the Purple Heart, the more we

realized that there was not only an unbelievable organizational synergy between us, but that, at the personal level, there was a tangible connection of focus, purpose, and passion when it came to the issue of advancing the



interests and opportunities for SDVOSB firms.

When we first met Dick Gallant, Executive Director of the Purple Heart Service Foundation, he told us that he had shaken hands with our Grandfather, General Earle Wheeler, and that he was a good man. Hearing that from the Purple Heart Executive Director when your Grandfather was the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for most of Viet Nam era was a very powerful moment in our relationship and further strengthened our personal and organizational bonds.

Editor: What is your relationship with them now?

Veteran Corps: We now have a formal partnership with the Purple

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Veteran Corps

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Heart Service Foundation to recruit and train combat wounded and disabled veterans. This includes 15-week accredited veteran training focused on technology, business applications, and customer service, and additional training in contracts, purchasing, and acquisition support. The Purple Heart Service Foundation also provides full contact/call center capability via the Combat-wounded Call Center. We donate no less than 10 percent of our profit annually to the Purple Heart Service Foundation.

Editor: You also have made a commitment to donate \$100,000 to them. How is that coming along?

Veteran Corps: We are very active on the campaign towards the \$100,000 goal, and Purple Heart has been very amenable to allowing us to strive towards this goal on an "installment plan." Further, as I mentioned previously, as a company we have committed to donating no less than 10 percent of our corporate earnings each year. The bottom line is our initial commitment of \$100,000 is just a start from our perspective, and we hope to exceed that ten times over in the coming years.

We are very proud to have the opportunity to work with and support the Purple Heart. Their very specific actions to support disabled veterans make them one of the premier veterans support organization today.

places in the heart



The Military Order of the Purple Heart Service Foundation is an organization chartered to raise funds for service, welfare, and rehabilitation work in connection with the members of the Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A, those who are eligible for membership, or any wounded or disabled or handicapped veteran or widow/widower or children. The Service Foundation also works for the support and maintenance of liaison services with the Department of Veterans Affairs, soldier's homes and similar organizations. While the Military Order of the Purple Heart represents the membership side of the organization, their Service Foundation raises and manages the monies to support the programs and service provided by the organization. The two groups work very closely together, but they are organized and governed separately. While the Service Foundation is not a government organization, it is congressionally chartered by the government to ensure that services are provided to combat-wounded veterans and their families.

The Service Foundation also provides veterans' benefits experts at various Veterans Administration regional offices, hospitals, vet centers, and state and county veterans facilities. They help process veterans' claims for compensation, pension, medical care, education, job training, employment, veteran's preference, housing, death, and burial benefits, as

well as assist in identifying and helping homeless veterans.

In 2005, the Service Foundation started the Veterans Business Training Center to provide online job training and placement to disabled and combat-wounded veterans by using the internet and web-based technology. The goal is to recruit and train qualified veterans in high-demand information technology careers that offer long-term job placement. The course work will maximize the military training veterans receive and reengineer their skills to the information industry – creating employment opportunities to provide for themselves and their families.

Accredited by Northern Virginia Community College, the training consists of 600 hours (8 hours per day, five days a week for a total of 15-weeks.) Trainees follow a detailed curriculum, attending virtual classroom discussions and accrue real-time work experience. At the completion of the program each veteran is certified by the Veterans Business Training Center.

For more information, contact the Military Order of the Purple Heart Service Foundation, P.O. Box 49, Annandale, Va., 22004. You can call them at (703) 256-6139 or email phsf@purpleheartfoundation.org.



**The Air Force Memorial
Washington, D.C.**