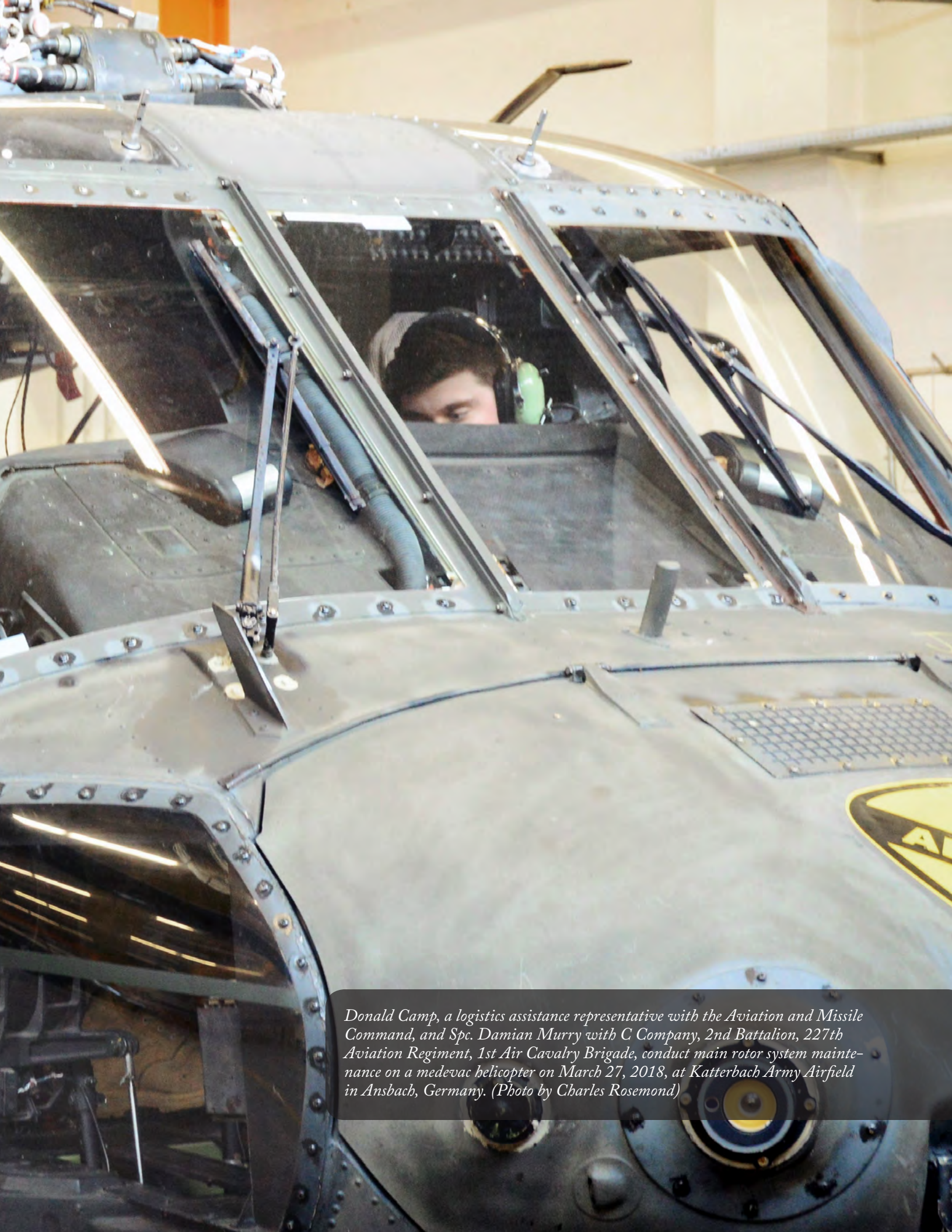




Developing Civilian Leaders in a Complex Sustainment Enterprise

■ By Lisha Adams



Donald Camp, a logistics assistance representative with the Aviation and Missile Command, and Spc. Damian Murry with C Company, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, conduct main rotor system maintenance on a medevac helicopter on March 27, 2018, at Katterbach Army Airfield in Ansbach, Germany. (Photo by Charles Rosemond)

The Army Materiel
Command develops civilian leaders
to lead its extensive
Department of the
Army workforce and
improve the Army's
readiness.

A Soldier's route to personal and professional readiness is well defined, but the path for Department of the Army (DA) civilians is not as clear. In the Army sustainment community, with its substantial DA civilian workforce, developing civilian leaders starts with clearly articulated requirements and a rigorous commitment to professional development. Readiness remains the Army's watchword, and developing DA civilians within the Army profession is a critical component of ensuring readiness across the force.

Career Programs

The Army is committed to civilian professional development and has defined 32 career programs to manage its human capital. Career programs help create career paths with educational and developmental opportunities that ensure personnel have the resources available to reach their full potential.

Career program management is a team effort between the civilian employee, the supervisor, and the career program manager. Employees must understand the opportunities available to them and take an active role in choosing their career paths. Supervisors must enable training and development to make civilian employees successful. The career program manager provides the framework and guidance to enable workforce and talent management in every functional area. Together, these components play a significant role in fulfilling the sustainment mission and providing readiness for the joint warfighter.

Civilian Readiness

As the Army Materiel Command's (AMC's) senior civilian, my priority is ensuring our civilian workforce is trained and ready to execute directed missions in support of Army priorities. As an employer of 26 percent of the Army's civilian population and 55 percent of the Army's wage grade population, AMC wants trained, qualified, and certified employees who produce results. It is essential for AMC leaders to provide opportunities and enable

employees to get the training and development they need.

Defining the term "ready civilian" is crucial in charting the path forward. What is a ready civilian, and what is the civilian workforce supposed to be ready for? These questions are met with interesting responses across the AMC enterprise, which spans from the shop floors of maintenance depots to technology-laden research labs.

While the dialogue reflects the diversity of our workforce, a constant theme emerges. Above all else, a ready civilian is one who is prepared to take action and is committed to providing Soldiers with the timely support necessary to meet today's challenges and posture for tomorrow's threats.

Most DA civilians make a 30-year commitment to the Army. That means 42 percent of a civilian's average lifetime is spent working, and more than half of an employee's waking hours are spent at work. People want personal fulfillment, work-life balance, goal achievement, and financial security in their jobs.

If we can help DA civilians take control of their careers by showing them career paths and providing training resources, there is a better chance that their 30-year commitments will be fulfilling. By enabling success, personal fulfillment, work-life balance, goal achievement, and financial security, we will have committed DA civilians who produce results.

Character, Competence, and Commitment

As stated in Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1, The Army Profession, being a professional requires us "to provide a unique and vital service to society ... by developing and applying expert knowledge." It requires us to "earn the trust of society through ethical, effective, and efficient" service and to "establish and uphold the discipline and standards" of the profession, "including the responsibility for professional development and certification."

Doctrine tells us Army professionals are honorable servants who

earn and sustain the nation's trust by demonstrating character, competence, and commitment. One element of the Code of Ethics for Government Service is to give a full day's labor for a full day's pay and give earnest effort and best thought to the performance of duties.

Character is not just what you know; it is who you are. Who you are will determine what you do. As stewards of our profession, we are accountable to each other and to the American people. As professionals of character, we serve honorably while obeying laws and legal orders. We act with integrity.

As competent professionals, we lead and follow with discipline. In seeking to maintain and enhance our professional competence, we understand that beyond our knowledge and abilities, competence also encompasses our attitudes and behaviors. We continually advance our expertise through our day-to-day emphasis on professional development and life-long learning.

Like our military counterparts, DA civilians swear an oath as we start our careers. That commitment is the foundation of our profession. Throughout our careers we serve as leaders and followers. As leaders, we must continually grow, learn, and develop while providing the same opportunities to those we lead.

In the sustainment community, we dedicate our efforts to providing reliable and enduring support to the warfighter. Understanding the significance of our purpose provides much of our motivation. Character, competence, and commitment provide us with the confidence required to be effective Army leaders.

An Army career, whether military or civilian, is a noble calling. Those who have pledged to serve do so from a sense of commitment to our Soldiers and our nation. We must have that same level of commitment to those we lead. A committed leader empowers employees and creates opportunities for professional development. Those who look to us for direction and guidance should find a devoted leader with a winning attitude.

Leader Development

Developing civilian leaders is among my top priorities to make certain the civilian workforce successfully provides stability and continuity during war and peace. In this role, the workforce must demonstrate that it is trustworthy, reliable, and capable of equipping and sustaining our troops on the front lines.

Whatever brings civilians into the Army fold, they soon find that beyond the profession of preparing for war, the Army is also in the leadership business. Since its inception, the Army has grown and developed leaders. Unlike their uniformed counterparts, DA civilians don't wear their ranks. But make no mistake, civilian employees look to their civilian leaders in the same way a private looks to a sergeant for direction, guidance, and career development.

The Army also provides a means to help civilians develop leadership skills. Every employee should have the opportunity to attend Civilian Education System courses. This leader development program includes five courses ranging from the Foundation Course, which teaches the basics, to the Senior Service College, which prepares leaders to think and operate at the strategic level. I encourage employees to take advantage of these opportunities. I also encourage all leaders to ensure employees are aware of and provided the opportunity to attend these courses.

The Enterprise Talent Management and Senior Enterprise Talent Management programs also provide opportunities to further civilian leadership and career growth. These programs bridge the gap between functional and technical training and include formal instruction, senior leader mentorship, developmental assignments, and self-development activities.

To play our part in readiness, we must ensure our employees take advantage of professional development opportunities. We must also foster an environment that grows innovative civilian leaders with critical thinking

skills that prepare them to face the challenges ahead.

Discipline and Balance

We must look within ourselves to determine how best to reach our goals as leaders. For me, that involves a commitment to self-development; maintaining balance between mental, physical, and spiritual well-being; and taking time to reflect.

Discipline and balance are crucial to Army readiness. Discipline is having the mastery, preparation, and authority needed to meet goals. Balance is the ability to fully engage all aspects of life to face work challenges with energy, dedication, and the focus needed to make crucial decisions.

Since we don't take semiannual physical fitness tests or qualify on weapons regularly, DA civilian preparedness is not always measured or recognized. Even so, Soldiers must know and have confidence in the team of dedicated DA civilians that stands with them as they face down the enemy.

I count on leaders to provide focus and ensure that focus is aligned with identified priorities. Hold yourself and others accountable. Build on the commitment of the DA civilian workforce to develop competent and courageous leaders who are willing to challenge the status quo.

In times of war, Soldiers want and deserve to be surrounded by the best. As we shift our focus to the future, Army leaders have clearly outlined priorities. I challenge our civilian leaders to reevaluate themselves and their teams to ensure we are all aligned with those priorities and are always ready to answer the call.

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