



Marine Corps Systems Command team members peruse more than 20 kiosks and displays during the command's annual Acquisition Excellence Day. (Photo by Darren Hillmann)

AE Day paints the *'Art of the Possible'*

Hundreds of Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) team members spent a warm June day at the Hylton Event Center in Woodbridge, Va., for the command's annual Acquisition Excellence (AE) Day. Participants had an opportunity to peruse more than 20 kiosks and displays highlighting MCSC's areas of excellence and glean valuable information from three speakers who illustrated the "Art of the Possible."

"This year's theme and focus is especially relevant in today's ever-evolving warfighting environment," said Barry Dillon, MCSC Executive Director. "We cannot be successful in our mission of equipping the warfighter to win if we cannot look beyond 'business as usual' and find innovative solutions to the new challenges of the warfighting environment."

"As we continue to fight the Long War on Terror, it is critical we support the warfighter by providing him with better and more capable systems," added Brig. Gen. Michael Brogan, MCSC Commander. "Their safe return to their families depends upon us doing our jobs well and with a necessary sense of urgency."

In an opening video, the commander asked everyone to take the day to "sharpen their axe" and to gain insight from the guest speakers, all of them "recognized around the world as leaders in finding innovative ways to meet the critical challenges they face."

Air Force Brig. Gen. Mark Schissler, Deputy Director for the War on Terrorism for the Joint Staff Strategic Plans and Policy Directorate, stepped in for scheduled keynote speaker Marine Corps Lt. Gen. John Sattler, Director for Strategic Plans and Policy for the Joint Staff, who was unable to appear because of a last-minute White House request. The substitute speaker provided valuable insight on the war and stressed the tremendous job our warfighters are doing.

"If you are not inspired to do your very best every day," Schissler said, "tomorrow when you go to your desk and you sit down at your computers, think first about the warriors who are out there fighting the war on terror for us. And then recognize that what you do tomorrow might be the breakthrough in just a few months.... Do not hold back. What you are doing is critically

important. Do not ever think you are not involved in the fight."

The general mentioned jammers and Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles as examples of programs that are making a difference.

"I appreciate what you do in terms of providing the warfighter what he and she needs out on the battlefield," Schissler stated. "A lot of times, in a lot of ways when you look at this fight, it comes down to their personal protection. And we have made a lot of innovations and a lot of improvements in personal protection. We make a lot of changes in how we operate, trying to keep our folks on the ground alive to do their job. In the cases where they have been injured, it is tragic, it is heartbreaking, but the reality is we brought a lot more of them home than we have in previous fights because of breakthroughs in terms of how we protect them."

In addition to Schissler, command employees enjoyed two presentations. During the first talk, Lee Evey, program manager for the Pentagon renovation, both pre- and post-9/11, spoke proudly of how the many people involved in this important operation used innovation and urgency to complete the project far ahead of schedule. Then, Dennis Carlson of Pit Stop Technology divulged how he brought new and unique concepts to the

race car industry and used the same technique to help the Department of Defense benefit from these innovations. (See separate stories on each of these presentations earlier in this magazine in the Equip to Win section.)

Three award ceremonies were also conducted during AE Day including the Andrew J. Higgins Award, Eugene M. Stoner Award and Donald Roebling Award. The honors recognized exceptional persons and program teams. (See AE Day awards story on page 24 in the Ooh-Rah section.)

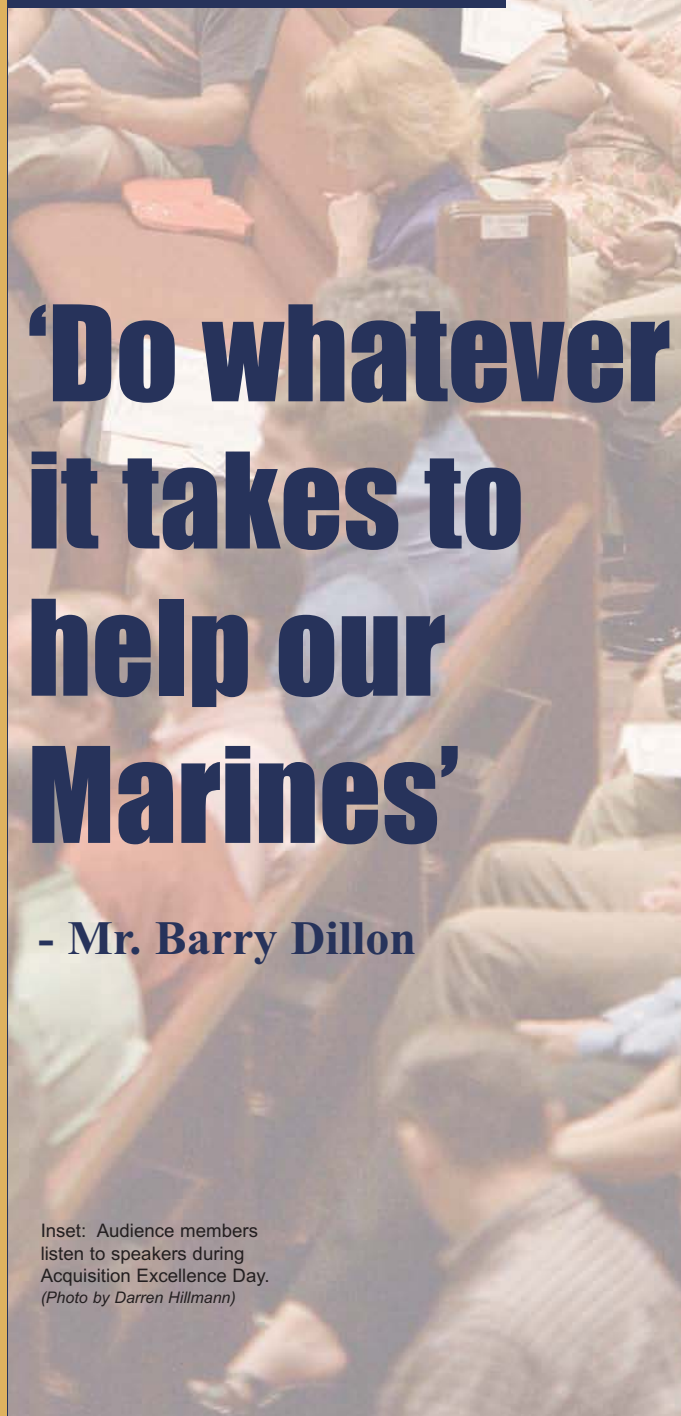
Putting the final touches on the "Art of the Possible," Mr. Dillon wrapped up the day's events.

"There always is room and time for improvement, and we really do have a responsibility to every Marine to do our very best, which, I believe, you do," Dillon said. "Think about the present and think about the future. Do not limit yourself at all. Think about the art of the possible. Albert Einstein said, 'Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds.' Be a great spirit. Think about the art of the possible. Do whatever it takes to help our Marines."

— Bill Johnson-Miles, Corporate Communications



Barry Dillon, Marine Corps Systems Command's Executive Director, addresses the command's employees during Acquisition Excellence Day. (Photo by Bill Johnson-Miles)



'Do whatever it takes to help our Marines'

- Mr. Barry Dillon

Inset: Audience members listen to speakers during Acquisition Excellence Day. (Photo by Darren Hillmann)