



U.S. Army photo by Rikeshia Davidson

Minority College Relations Program -- Current and former Interns From left: Frederick Robinson of the University of Texas at El Paso; Abram Morman, graduate of Albany State University, Albany, Ga.; Juhwon Peoples, University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff; Randy Ledet Jr., graduate of Southern University and A&M College, Baton Rouge, La.; Darryl McNeal, graduate of Grambling State University, Grambling, La., and Karen Jamison-Hatch of Jackson State University, Jackson, Miss.

By Rikeshia Davidson JMC Public Affairs

CRANE, Ind.--Having a "go get it attitude" is commendable for many in the under-30 age group. A positive attitude will take you far but it places you in a league of your own when that attitude shines through in opportune situations. Situations that are designed for the select and equally selective are indeed worthy of putting forth your best effort.

The Minority College Relations Program is one of those opportune situations, and Crane Army Ammunition Activity located in Crane, Ind., embraces the program's exceptional students with open arms.

MCRP has been a joint venture between both the Joint Munitions Command and Army Sustainment Command, both headquartered in Rock Island, Ill., since 1996 when

Executive Orders 12876, 12900 and 13021 established the program. Serving minority institutions such as tribal colleges, historically black colleges and universities and Hispanic serving institutions, the program offers college students and recent graduates a glimpse into the federal government. The students selected must meet requirements that prove their ability to handle the tasks associated with their new internships.

Looking around his cubicle and talking to Randy Ladet Jr. reminds you he's the typical graduate: pictures of his days as an undergraduate, fraternity photos on his desk and the chuckle after explaining he attended **The** Southern University at Baton Rouge in Louisiana. (As if there is no other.) But his experiences are unique to his newfound home--a native of Louisiana, graduate of historically black Southern University at Baton Rouge and now employee at

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Crane. Ladet is exceptionally different and so are the many other MCRP interns that come to Crane.

That difference can be credited as a source of success for the program, making it an attractive one to partner with. Crane, being no exception, has a penchant for acquiring bright minds via the MCRP. And this year was no different.

Embarking on a new area of discipline offered at Jackson State University, Jackson, Miss., Karen Jamison-Hatch is studying educational technology and support services. Her field of study may be relatively unheard of to some, but it has been quite the preparation for her role as MCRP intern in the office of records management.

During her time at Crane, Karen is quickly jumping into her work with numerous projects underway. "They have made sure I've been involved in constructive things. I've worked on databases, Web sites for Crane (including the) inter and intranet--the homepage site," said Jamison-Hatch. "I've also been involved in redesigning the training room in the machine shop."

Jamison-Hatch comes to the MCRP well-rounded.

She is currently co-owner of a small business, Technix, based in Jackson, Miss., offering graphic design services and PC repair. Her path to Crane began with a trip to her university's career services center where Jamison-Hatch found the internship listed as part time. "I'm here by faith. This opportunity can't be beat--it was all-expense paid. I was hoping for that," she said.

Recognizing a great opportunity, Jamison-Hatch is grasping the benefits of federal employment. "Advancement opportunities would make working for the government advantageous. Working here has altered previous plans--it's opened a world of opportu-

nities," she said.

In thinking of future career opportunities, Jamison-Hatch now thinks of it all as a career stepping stone. "Whether working permanently (for the government), this internship holds high credibility," said Jamison-Hatch.

And so that remains a constant among MCRP interns: the invaluable experience received, placing them well ahead of the rest. From current MCRP interns to past members, Crane is taking full advantage of a program looking to give students a distinctive opportunity. Even managers notice the difference.

"They come into the workplace, they come in with fresh ideas; they are full of youth, full of energy," said Joseph Mikac, director of resource management at Crane. Working with MCRP for the third year, Mikac is fond of the program. "What I like is that it exposes some of our people here to minorities and takes away some preconceived notions they (the workforce) may have.

"In addition to helping the interns develop, we're helping the workforce here to develop in terms of diversification," said Mikac. That statement alone signifies that MCRP and its students are not the only ones benefiting from the program.

In addition to stating the facts, Mikac wasted no time talking about an instance when diversification was front and center for him. "I was probably in the same situation where I had not worked with minorities or many minorities. I worked at the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority in Cleveland, Ohio. I had a very diverse workforce. It spanned the whole range and we all worked together to just improve that operation and make things run," said Mikac.

"I guess I'd already seen what the benefit of what a diverse workforce could be." I approached it (MCRP)

from the perspective, 'could I bring some of this benefit to Crane?' " Mikac added, "That job made me see the light and so my hope would be that by running a good program here, some other folks could see the light too."

The Minority College Relations Program is gaining a following; people who believe in the intent of the program while detecting the subtle differences that make MCRP interns valuable. A following that is slowly gaining momentum--but doing so nonetheless--with places like Crane capturing the success. ^J_M_C

They Said It:

Reasons to work for the government:

"Recession!"

--Randy Ledet Jr., former MCRP intern

"Don't have to worry about losing my job at the drop of a dime."

--Darryl McNeal, former MCRP

Why Apply for the MCRP:

"You actually do work."

--Frederick Robinson--current MCRP intern
University of Texas at El Paso

Indiana weather:

"Winter's like six-seven months out the year (here). In Louisiana, we have winter on Feb. 28 and we keep it moving."

--Randy Ledet Jr., former MCRP intern

MCRP Point of Contact:

"Ms. Teresea provides us with everything. Having open communication with your contact person. She helps us out tremendously."

--Jubwon Peoples, current MCRP intern
University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff

The Comforts of Home:

"I miss my Southern cooking. I miss my Krispy Kreme donuts and I miss hospitality."

--Abram Morman, former MCRP intern