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ARMY SCIENCE BOARD

INFORMAL REPORT OF

ARMY SCIENCE BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE

ON

SELECTED SPECIFICATIONS OF THE

CAMOUFLAGE SYSTEMS PROCUREMENT

ISSUED 23 NOVEMBER, 1982

WILLIAM W. BUMPUS,

SUB-COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

15 DECEMBER, 1982

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Richard Montgomery, Chairman of the Army Science Board, requested that I chair a review on an informal basis of a selected group of specifications contained in the Army's Request for Proposal issued through TSARCOM on 23 November 1982 that covered the procurement of camouflage systems. The purpose of the review was to investigate the reasonableness, fairness and appropriateness of the specifications that deal with aluminum / plastic poles as well as those covering the piece sizes required for the camouflage garnish material. I received the request from Dr. Montgomery on the 3rd of December requesting that I finish this informal report and submit it to Dr. J.R.Sculley, Assistant Secretary of the Army (RDA) by 16 December 1982.

PREMISE

No final system specifications are ever entirely satisfactory to all potential contractors, particularly when the required deliverable is not a shelf item, but is one that is designed for specific DOD usage. Generally, formal specifications are based upon an agency's past experience in obtaining a quality item at a reasonable price. Specification changes frequently invite delivery delays that in most cases cannot be tolerated. When possible, latitude should be provided for technical

innovation and / or financial savings if the final objective of achieving the Army's mission is not threatened. At some point a final line must be drawn on specification refinement in order to proceed with a procurement simply to meet delivery requirements even though some areas of the specifications may be in conflict among potential contractors.

REPORT ACTIVITIES

In preparing this report, the committee met at various times with personnel from the Office of the Assistant Secretary (RDA), DARCOM, MERADCOM and additional Science Board members. Detailed discussions were held concerning the specifications of interest, suggestions from potential contractors and the reasoning behind some of the requirements and restrictions in the RFP. Further, we inspected material delivered on previous procurements to see if specification deviations should be permitted. The Board received complete and open cooperation from the involved DOD personnel. I feel that this spirit led to excellent progress in both areas of the study.

CONCLUSIONS

a. Camouflage Garnishing (Screen) Sizing

MERADCOM has provided interested firms with the opportunity to submit material for evaluation and comment. I have been assured that many man-hours have been spent with representatives of

these potential bidders discussing specifications and changes therein. MERADCOM has requested comments on projected specifications and has also conducted a bidders conference. On 10 December our committee met with six members of the MERADCOM technical team to discuss in detail the specifications that are under question. I feel quite comfortable in reporting that when the attached letter from MERADCOM is added to the now existing requirements, no interested bidder has a logical protest concerning the screen sizing. This attached letter indicates general acceptance of proposals that utilize a smaller than originally specified piece or pattern if other key performance objectives are met. Any major variance that would require extensive testing programs and thereby introduce serious delivery delays would not be acceptable. This makes good sense, while also assuring a thoroughly open procurement in this area of our investigation.

b. Aluminum / Plastic Poles

As of the date of this report, amendments have been added to the RFP that permit all known potential bidders to propose any pole material discussed at bidders conferences. Acceptance tests for any type pole that meets the basic criteria are now the same as other poles. In a progressive and cooperative manner, MERADCOM has made suggestions to potential bidders as to methods to improve their product while assuring soldier protection and pole reliability. A combination of design and performance specification is being used in this procurement that

we feel is a solution arrived at through consideration of past program experience and potential technical progression.

SUMMARY

Based upon our investigation of only the assigned portions of the procurement specifications, the RFP as now published is fair and equitable, particularly when measured against the delivery needs of the Army. Interested and knowledgeable bidders should have no valid complaints.

SUGGESTIONS

MERADCOM should continue to refine specifications for future procurements of camouflage systems while encouraging manufacturers to submit new materials and innovative ideas for serious evaluation and testing.

On behalf of the Science Board, I should like to express my appreciation for the cooperation received during this study. The professionalism and the obvious concern exhibited by the DOD personnel with whom we met during the investigation are to be commended.

1 attachment



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
US ARMY MOBILITY EQUIPMENT RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT COMMAND
FORT BELVOIR, VIRGINIA 22060

DRDME-X

10 DEC 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. WILLIAM W. BUMPUS, ARMY SCIENCE BOARD

SUBJECT: Camouflage Screening System

1. If MERADCOM were asked for a technical evaluation of proposals submitted for lightweight camouflage screen system MIL-C-53004 (ME) the following is offered:

a. Any proposal that proposes randomness of patterns, colors, and/or incisions or indicates variance from screen to screen is not thought to be technically acceptable.

b. Any proposal that requests that certain portions of pieces or patterns be made up of smaller pieces than specified in the specification because of material availability or economics which assures uniformity of screen to screen and conforms to specification would be entertained with a high probability of acceptance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stuart A. Kilpatrick", is written over the typed name and title.

STUART A. KILPATRICK
Chief
Counter Surveillance/Counter
Intrusion Laboratory

ADDENDUM #1
to
ARMY SCIENCE BOARD
INFORMAL REPORT OF
ARMY SCIENCE BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE
ON
SELECTED SPECIFICATIONS OF THE
CAMOUFLAGE SYSTEMS PROCUREMENT
ISSUED 23 NOVEMBER 1982

WILLIAM W. BUMPUS

SUB-COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

28 DECEMBER 1982

ORIGINAL REPORT DATED 15 DECEMBER 1982

INTRODUCTION

The Assistant Secretary of the Army (RDA) requested the Sub-Committee to meet with a potential bidder on 21 December 1982 to determine if the subject specifications concerning primarily camouflage poles were either unfair or unclear.

SUMMARY

It is the opinion of the Sub-Committee that Par.3.4.3.2 was not clearly understood by the potential bidder and that a clarification is in order. MERADCOM has provided the attached document in response to our request.

A discussion was held concerning the pole test procedure as established by MERADCOM. The Sub-Committee feels that this procedure is quite fair in establishing pole integrity and actually is rather favorable to the potential bidder with whom we met. Continuing efforts should be made to refine this rather complex matter.

In the Sub-Committee's basic report dated 15 December, we suggested that DARCOM encourage manufacturers to submit new materials and ideas to MERADCOM for evaluation. As a clarification of the specifications for the subject procurement, the attached document provides guidelines and further encourages alternative proposals that take exception to the specifications but still meet the Army mission requirements.

It became obvious to the Sub-Committee that far too many pole materials could be proposed for all to be listed in the procurement document. Each that is proposed to meet Par.3.4.2.3. will be considered by the technical evaluation team with respect to coefficient of expansion and other characteristics listed in the attached document for acceptability. Certainly potential bidders are aware of the properties of their pole material when applied to the requirements of this procurement.

The Sub-Committee has been informed that the attached has been approved by TSARCOM as a specification clarification; however we feel that many questions from bidders could well have been answered during the pre-solicitation conference where a technical representative of MERADCOM was present.

CONCLUSIONS

The Sub-Committee has attempted to provide an independent and objective evaluation of specific portions of the specifications for the Camouflage Systems procurement. As a result of a number of technical meetings, we have requested and obtained clarifications to the specifications that we feel should be helpful to potential bidders. These clarifications include items concerning pattern size, alternate pole material, the reason for present pole testing specifications and the acceptance of alternate proposals that take exception to the RFP in the area of radius/ flange requirements. We have found that there is

technical acceptance within MERADCOM for innovative and progressive proposals that will still permit timely delivery of dependable camouflage systems to the field. The Army agencies involved in this procurement have been quite cooperative with this Sub-Committee and with potential bidders with whom we have dealt. In our view, there should be no obstacle to an open and fair procurement.

This Sub-Committee is available for any future meeting to discuss any aspect of the initial report or this addendum.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
US ARMY MOBILITY EQUIPMENT RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT COMMAND
FORT BELVOIR, VIRGINIA 22060

DRDME- X


MEMORANDUM FOR WILLIAM W. BUMPUS, ARMY SCIENCE BOARD

SUBJECT: Clarification of Camouflage Screening System Support Pole Requirements

1. MERADCOM will provide the contracting officer at TSARCOM with the following clarification of contractor expressed concerns on the current amended specification:

a. The present support pole design is the result of a recent improvement effort during which a multitude of materials and configurations were examined. If a contractor has an alternate pole design, he should be invited to submit this alternate proposal (in addition to the "as specified" proposal). To enable the technical evaluation of the alternative proposal the contractor must submit sufficient technical evidence (specifications, test data, calculations, etc.) that the proposed design is comparable to the specified design in terms of: rough handling, crush strength, abrasion resistance, impact strength, single pole and pole assembly drop, column load strength and dimensional stability; when subjected to world wide extremes of environmental conditions (hot, cold, humidity, solar radiation, fungus, etc.).

b. The current Amendment I to MIL-C-52765c, paragraph 3.4.3.2 specifies: "The Type II support poles shall show no evidence of fiberglass fibers exposed or protruding out of resin, ...". The intent of this requirement is to provide poles to the troops which will not unravel or delaminate and cause fiberglass peculiar problems with skin and eyes. It is the Government's position that exposed or protruding fibers are those fibers which when pulled by hand cause unrestricted propagation and/or constitute a hazardous condition to personnel.


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