



# U.S. ARMY COMMUNICATIONS-ELECTRONICS COMMAND

SOFTWARE ENGINEERING CENTER  
6585 SURVEILLANCE LOOP  
ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, MD 21005  
WWW.SEC.ARMY.MIL



## People Power at the CECOM Software Engineering Center

### ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. –

When Gen. James McConville assumed duties as the 40th Chief of Staff of the Army in August 2019, he emphasized he would place a renewed focus on people. The Army's strength and resilience, he noted, is rooted in the Soldiers, civilians and families who empower the Army to achieve its mission every day. At the U.S. Army Communications-Electronics Command, the Software Engineering Center, or SEC, is channeling that priority into its own people-focused manpower initiative — and saving the government millions in the process.

### In 2019, Software is King

To be successful on the 21st century battlefield, the Army increasingly relies on software-defined, networked equipment to connect and protect Soldiers. And it must update that software constantly to ensure ongoing operability, interoperability and security. This process is known as post-production software support, and much of it falls to SEC, which is responsible for cyber-hardening against the latest threats and vulnerabilities.

However, as more software systems transition to sustainment under the SEC, the organization does not automatically receive authorizations to hire more employees. In recent years, this led the SEC to rely on contractor support, which can be very expensive. So beginning in 2017, it initiated the manpower initiative, a major effort to bring more expertise in-house to reduce costs and attrition while fostering mission buy-in and morale.

“When our engineers are government employees, they’re motivated not only to better serve Soldiers, but also to find new efficiencies that save time and money and make their jobs easier,” said Mark Hosson, SEC Associate Director of Operations. “The manpower initiative is focused on building that organic capacity and encouraging employees to use innovation in their critical work in defense of our country.”

### Saving Money, Saving Lives

After getting approval from Army headquarters for additional authorizations, SEC undertook the manpower initiative through three phases. Thus far it has hired approximately 200 new employees, and it projects hiring an additional 60 in support of 14 total systems. In fiscal year 2018 that translated to \$9.5 million in savings, and it is projected to save \$38.8 million annually beginning in fiscal year 2021. The third phase also includes employees working in other Army Materiel Command major subordinate commands.

SEC saw the impact of the initiative almost immediately. For example, manpower initiative employees enabled the SEC to reverse engineer the main computer circuit card in the Joint Tactical Terminal, a key communications platform. This allowed users to confirm whether software was corrupted but mimicking hardware failure. The procedure reduced repair times from 120 days to one day and avoided \$45,000 in costs per unit. In addition, it gave the team time to create more efficiencies, like automating test procedures and software installs.

The SEC also saw manpower initiative benefits through its modernization of the AN/GSC-52 satellite system. By transferring software sustainment to the SEC from the original equipment manufacturer, the SEC saved nearly \$1 million in fiscal year 2018. This was due to lower labor rates and the ability to share existing SEC laboratory assets.

