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# DEVCOM CBC Team Earns Top Honors in Army Acquisition Writing Competition

*By Aeriel Storey*

**DEVCOM CBC public affairs specialist Dr. Brian Feeney, research chemist Dr. Alan Samuels, and research toxicologist Dr. Jennifer Sekowski received the Army's 2023 Major General Harold J. Greene Award for Acquisition Writing during the Army's Annual Acquisition Awards Ceremony held at the Pentagon on January 9, 2024. The awards were presented by the Honorable Douglas R. Bush, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology, and Lieutenant General Robert M. Collins, Principal Military Deputy to ASA (ALT). (U.S. Army photo by Rick Arndt)**

**Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD** – For the second year in a row, employees from the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Chemical Biological Center (DEVCOM CBC) were recipients of the Army's 2023 Major General Harold J. "Harry" Greene Award for Acquisition Writing in the category of "Acquisition Reform." The honor was awarded for an essay on the Center's Warfighter Innovation Leveraging Expertise and Experimentation (WILE-E) Pilot Program that was co-authored by three CBC employees.

Established in 2014, the purpose of the writing competition is to encourage the sharing of ideas, insights and experiences for improving Army acquisition. Winning submissions are selected for publication in the Army's AL&T Magazine and the authors are recognized during the Army's Annual Acquisition Awards Ceremony held at the Pentagon.

The winning trio from DEVCOM CBC consisted of research chemist and principal technical lead for the WILE-E program Dr. Alan Samuels, public affairs specialist Dr. Brian Feeney, and research toxicologist and WILE-E team lead Dr. Jennifer Sekowski. The group's integration on this effort proved to be a natural fit. Each member effectively worked off one another's strengths and found inspiration while working with the WILE-E team. "We took a very good project and were able to express just why it was so good in a very effective way because of the collaborative effort," said Feeney.

The WILE-E program began in 2018 as a way to introduce technology that is currently under development to the warfighter very early on in the process to get real-world

practical feedback to help guide requirements. WILE-E's methodology employs a small, cross-functional, multidisciplinary team that applies design thinking principles to develop solutions to complex challenges. The WILE-E program has been an innovative asset specific to the Center and reached its third iteration in the last year.

Sekowski served as the team lead for the program's third iteration, known as WILE-E 3.0. Samuels served as a technical lead on the project, supplying expertise in the subject matter of the problem statement and an extensive network of technical and operational contacts to enable the development of technology solutions. Sekowski's leadership and Samuels' expertise culminated in a highly successful WILE-E cycle, supplying compelling content for the winning essay.

"The way the WILE-E 3.0 story was developed was a mirror image of the teamwork of the WILE-E 3.0 team itself," explained Feeney. Both Sekowski and Samuels collaborated closely with Feeney to fully explain both the WILE-E process and the mobile sensor technology that was the subject of this iteration. "Brian succinctly turned all of our technical jargon into something that is consumable by the general population while targeting the specific audience, the readers of AL&T Magazine," said Samuels.

Feeney attributed the success of the article to the expertise of his collaborators. "A writer is only as good as the material that he or she has to work with, and they gave me great material to work with," he said. "The richness of technical detail the team shared with me, both the WILE-E concept and the mobile microsensors technology, was very gratifying. They made my job as a writer easy."

The WILE-E 3.0 project team was glad to receive such prominent coverage in the Army's AL&T Magazine "The WILE-E process has helped accelerate science and technology concepts into actual products that can help the warfighter," said Samuels. "We're in it for the Soldier and it's rewarding to see this program gain recognition as it has evolved."

Sekowski agreed, "It was truly collaborative in a way that helped us refine our ideas, because hearing everyone's different perspectives makes you re-consider ideas and create new solutions," she said. "I hope this award shines a light on this topic so the WILE-E method can be applied to projects across the Department of Defense to effectively meet the needs of the warfighter."

Moving forward, Sekowski plans to apply this "think tank" environment style to warfighter-driven problem sets at the Center, with the idea of using crowdsourcing as a way to harness the "collective genius" of CBC's talent to create new and better solutions for the warfighter.

At the heart of this collective endeavor is the Center's focus on innovation and service to the warfighter. "CBC is a team of teams, and this project benefited from that model," said Feeney. "Our article simply brings that approach to light."

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