

UNITED STATES MILITARY ENTRANCE PROCESSING COMMAND

Messenger

SHARING INFORMATION TO REACH A VISION

VOL. 35, NO. 1



SHARING Policy Experience And Resources

Messenger *Sharing information to reach a vision*

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Wounded Warrior lends a hand



When Army Staff Sgt. Anthony D. Acuna was sent home to recover from an injury he sustained in Iraq, he jumped at the chance to work in the Portland, Ore., MEPS' medical section as part of the Community-Based Warrior Transition Unit. Page 20.

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U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command

Capt. Eric W. Johnson
Commander

Gaylan Johnson
Public Affairs Officer

Messenger
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Magazine Staff

Skip Wiseman, Editor
(847) 688-3680 or DSN 792-3680, Ext. 7226
E-mail: louis.wiseman@mepcom.army.mil

Amy Gregorski, Graphic Design

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Send submissions and changes to:
Commander
U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command
ATTN: MPA (Messenger)
2834 Green Bay Road, North Chicago, IL 60064-3091
E-mail: Messenger@mepcom.army.mil — Fax: (847) 688-2664

Commander's Commentary



Capt. Eric W. Johnson

Team,
I am pleased to announce USMEPCOM will soon replace the MEPNET intranet with SPEAR (Sharing Policy, Experience and Resources) – and that we have adopted a new Mission and Vision Statement and updated our Strategic Plan.

I am very excited about the potential of our new intranet. MEPNET is a legacy system that no longer meets our needs in the 21st Century. The outdated technology limits our ability to upgrade and improve the system.

SPEAR, based on Microsoft's SharePoint software, will give us a much more user-friendly platform with vastly improved capabilities, and (equally important) the ability to upgrade the system as new versions become available.

One of the most important features of SPEAR will be a more effective search capability. You, the users, have long let it be known how difficult it is to find specific content in MEPNET. With SPEAR's search capability, users performing information searches will be able to retrieve information almost immediately.

Command forums and local MEPS forums will be available to increase the flow of information, provide com-

mon discussion areas and permit collaboration on issues and topics at various levels throughout the command.

Speaking of suspenses, we will later add a streamlined tasker system to SPEAR to better organize workload and allow users to respond in a timelier, more effective manner. Your Information Technology Directorate team is working very hard to bring the new software online and Human Resources Directorate is developing targeted training to ensure users, content managers and "super users" have the knowledge needed to take full advantage of the features we will gain.

To prepare the way for all users to benefit from SPEAR, current MEPNET content editors will receive SharePoint training to migrate current MEPNET content to SPEAR. This provides a great opportunity to perform house cleaning to ensure only up-to-date content is moved.

While SPEAR will enhance job performance on a day-to-day basis, the new USMEPCOM Mission and Vision Statement and updated Strategic Plan focus our attention on more distant goals, reaching out some five years into the future and detailing how we will continue with USMEPCOM transformation and seek additional mission capabilities.

As technology makes our processing more efficient, the Strategic Plan allows us to map out ways to expand our customer base to include organizations outside the military services and the Department of Defense. While processing applicants for military enlistment and maintaining DoD accessions quality will always

be our core mission, the excess capacity realized by improved use of technology is an opportunity to offer vital services to other agencies.

Embracing technology will potentially allow us to drastically reduce the number of applicant visits to MEPS, thus providing the opportunity for other agencies to avail themselves of our services. A host of federal agencies require background checks and medical examinations to qualify potential employees. USMEPCOM is uniquely positioned to provide those services more efficiently and at a much lower cost.

While we have not identified specific new customers, we know we can enhance our value to the government and, more importantly the taxpayers, by harnessing technology to allow us to provide expanded services.

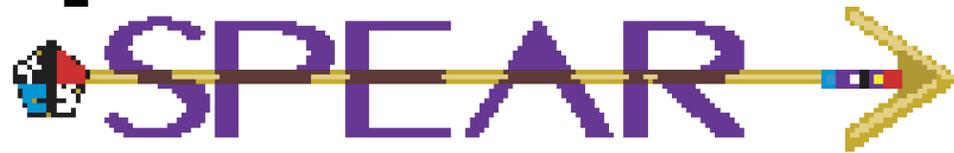
The tag line, "Opening Freedom's Front Door to You" relates directly to our motto – "Freedom's Front Door," and succinctly expresses our mission. We are the gateway for Americans who aspire to military service. In the future, we will be able to open the doors even wider to accommodate those who aspire to public services in other areas of government.

Team, these are exciting times to be part of USMEPCOM! Let's stride boldly into the future and embrace the opportunities promised.

Thank you for what you do each and every day and *Keep Charging!*

Eric W. Johnson
Captain, USN
Commanding

On the tip of the



SHARING POLICY EXPERIENCE AND RESOURCES

This summer the United States Military Entrance Processing Command will roll out its new intranet site, SPEAR (Sharing Policy, Experience, and Resources), based on Microsoft SharePoint software. SPEAR will replace the aging MEPNET.

Adoption of the new platform grew out of MEPNET user feedback. Kent Morgan, chief of the Business Services Division, J-6/Information Technology Directorate, said technology has bypassed the nearly 10-year old intranet site.

"The current system is old technology that is limited by the few changes that can be made to it," Morgan said. "By selecting a different technology, we can add functionality that users want. One of the basic ones will be the search capability," he said. "Users have been having trouble finding things with the current system. With the search capability you should be able to find it very quickly."

SharePoint was selected as the platform for a variety of reasons, said Patrick J. Simon, former chief of the Enterprise Systems Architecture and Integration Office, J-6/Information Technology Directorate.

"We considered other options," Simon said. "We looked at other available commercial off-the-shelf platforms. We looked at what it would cost to do some in-house development and what it would take to do a major overhaul of the current MEPNET system."

The decision to use SharePoint software rather than developing a solution in-house was made for a number of reasons, Simon said. Rules established by the Army and Department of Defense would have made developing an in-house system challenging. Cost was another factor. By using SharePoint, the command took advantage of its existing Microsoft license.

"Overall, the cost (for SPEAR) will be about \$150,000, mainly for configuration, training, and staff development," Simon explained. "There is no cost for the software at this time because we are already in a Microsoft platform. Zero is a great number right now. We felt the safest, most cost effective path would be to use SharePoint."

"One of the major advantages of SharePoint," Morgan said, "is that

it interfaces with other Microsoft products and allows you to do many things with those other products at no additional cost."

Users will already be familiar with many SharePoint operations, since they are the same as other Microsoft products. As well, it is a "mature" program that is continually improved through updated versions, and provides tools that give the non-technical user the ability to interface, collaborate and share information.

"Two things draw people back to Web sites – current information and services that are valuable to the user," said Richard Root, SPEAR project manager, J-6/Information Technology Directorate. "Content editors in the MEPS and on the staff will have the capability to not only easily add and update information, but also to work together – collaborate – on projects and events to make those events successful."

The command will field SPEAR in phases. Phase one includes technical development, initial SharePoint orientation training for content editors at each MEPS, battalion, sector, directorate and special staff office, user acceptance testing, transfer of existing data on current MEPNET pages to the new SPEAR locations and ends when SPEAR is in the hands of all USMEPCOM personnel.

Phase two and subsequent phases of SPEAR will concentrate on adding additional capabilities and functions once command personnel become comfortable with the basic SPEAR product.

"The initial SPEAR offering will give us a foundation to work upon," Root said. "We'll continue to expand SPEAR's capabilities to benefit the

command and its users to ensure it continues providing a high level of value by meeting USMEPCOM's needs."

SharePoint training, organized and supervised by the Training Development Division, J-1/Human Resources Directorate, has been largely completed with more than 175 MEPNET content editors having taken the conversion training throughout the command. These individuals will complete the transfer of MEPNET files to the new platform and manage the content on the individual pages.

A year and a half in development, SPEAR is currently undergoing user acceptance testing in the command's Public Affairs Office.

What is SPEAR like to use? Kenneth Anthony, public affairs specialist, is currently the "user" in user acceptance testing, which involves using the SharePoint software from the content editor's perspective.

"I have no prior experience editing SharePoint pages, but I was able to learn it within a week," Anthony said. "It's easy to use. If you are familiar with using other Microsoft products, it's a relatively shallow learning curve."



(Left to right) Peter Hanson, information technology specialist, Kenneth Anthony, public affairs specialist, and Richard Root, SPEAR project manager, assess the progress of SPEAR user acceptance testing, which is currently 90 percent complete.

User acceptance testing involves performing the different functions that a MEPS content editor would perform, such as uploading documents and editing pages to display information in different ways, and identifying and fixing any "bugs" in the system before SPEAR is released to the command.

"One of the first I encountered was my inability to display Adobe documents," Anthony said. "I reported it, and J-6 discovered it was a permission setting problem, and the difficulty was easily fixed. MEPS editors should never encounter the problem."

How SPEAR got its name

Work on SPEAR began in early 2012. Those involved in the project, not to mention the USMEPCOM commander, quickly realized that for identification and branding purposes the unnamed intranet site needed a name, and MEPNET wasn't it.

On June 19, 2012, an information message was released to all USMEPCOM personnel announcing the "Name the Intranet Contest." The contest closed June 22 and netted 98 submissions from across the command.

Selecting the winner was a subjective process that fell to the Public Af-



Capt. Stephen Jennison

fairs Office. There were many great entries, and a few that made the judges laugh. In the end, "MEPCOM S.P.E.A.R." submitted by Army Captain Stephen K. Jennison, operations officer at the

Detroit MEPS, shined through and was approved by the USMEPCOM commander.

Jennison said he was surprised to learn he had won the contest.

"It's always good to contribute in any way possible," he said. "I guess five years down the road, if I get a new soldier from a MEPS I can ask if you are still using it. It's a legacy."

Jennison's original definition of S.P.E.A.R., SharePoint Exchange and Resources, was modified to Sharing Policy, Experience and Resources after it was discovered that Microsoft prohibits the use of its product names in non-

Microsoft branding and logo efforts. The periods between each letter were deleted to streamline SPEAR's appearance.

The SPEAR logo was designed and executed by Amy Gregorski, graphic artist in the public affairs office.

Jennison has since left the Detroit MEPS. He is currently a battery commander assigned to a training support battalion at Fort Bliss, Texas. He trains, mentors and certifies National Guard Avenger and Sentinel short range air defense units. As of this writing, he's preparing to train elements of the North Dakota Nation Guard.



A sample SPEAR intranet site page in the development stage.

Strategically Speaking

New plan focuses firmly on the future

By Skip Wiseman
Messenger Associate Editor

The seeds to update the USMEPCOM Mission and Vision statements for the first time in a decade were planted during a strategic offsite attended by command leaders in February 2012. The command has also adopted a new strategic plan.

The strategic plan was published in June. The command published its first strategic plan Oct. 31, 1995.

The Vision was last revised in 2003 and the Mission in 2001.

The command also adopted a tagline.

The command established goals it plans to accomplish between now and 2025. In large part, the changes to the mission and vision were driven by changes in processing procedures and those expected to occur in the future.

The vision is:

“America’s elite source for military and federal employment screening.”

The vision description is:

“USMEPCOM has grown into America’s elite source for military and federal employment screening. USMEPCOM is the authoritative source for initial electronic medical and personnel data. Through the breakthrough in pre-qualification of military applicants, USMEPCOM has moved from a qualifier role to a validator role for the All-Volunteer Force. USMEPCOM is the obvious choice for employment screening of military and civilian applicants because of its proven quality service. USMEPCOM has a flexible workforce shaped by customer needs

that has established its reputation for outstanding employee and customer satisfaction.”

Mission statements rarely change because most organization’s missions are static. In this case the modified mission statement reflects the realities of 21st Century processing. It reads:

“USMEPCOM evaluates applicants by applying established DoD standards during processing in order to determine eligibility for military service.”

This is the first time the command has adopted a tagline. It is *“Opening Freedom’s Front Door to You,”* a play on the command motto.

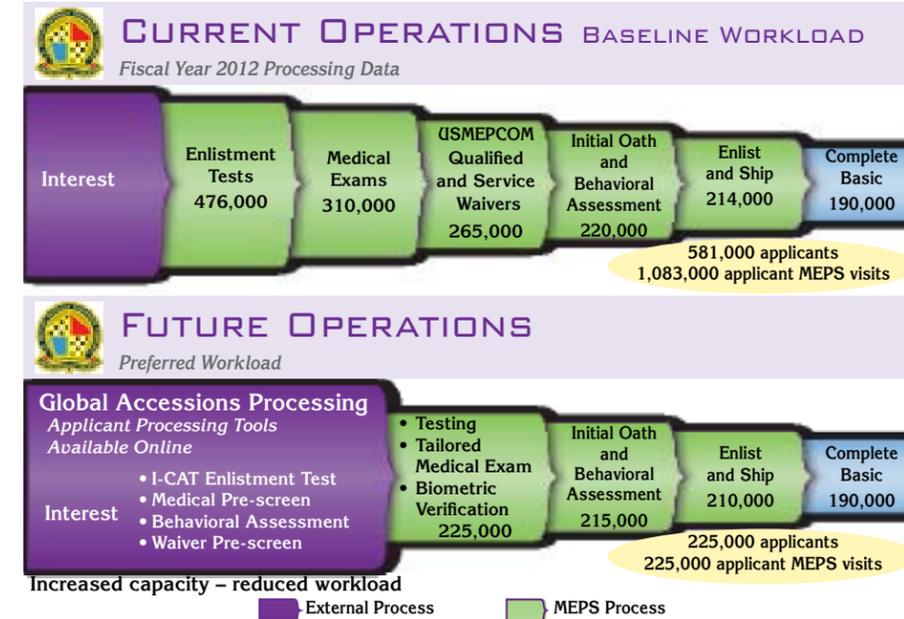
The command values remain unchanged.

The changes reflect refinements to USMEPCOM’s goals over the next 13 years.

“We looked at our mission and vision in our environmental scan, and the environment had changed in DoD and how we were operating,” Col. Arthur Hoffmann Jr., the command’s director of Strategic Planning and Transformation, said. “This most succinctly gets us back on track to be able to meet that guidance.”

A working group was established year to identify potential changes to the mission, vision, goals and values and to establish a tagline,

Matt Lince, futures division chief in the Strategic Planning and Transformation Directorate, said. The working group presented its findings to a command strategic offsite that included about 40 leaders from the headquarters, sectors, battalions and MEPS.



“Before the offsite there were high-level discussions about what needed to be changed or what should change,” Lince said. “During the offsite, this group did a lot of hard brainstorming, debating and thinking, and all that creative stuff and came up with a number of things.”

“About a month after the offsite, we went out to the entire command and said, ‘Here are some proposals we have for mission, vision and goals. Tell us what you think,’” he said. “We got a lot of input and a lot of ideas that were then massaged and incorporated into what came out of the offsite. In April, these all came together and were put into the strategic plan for the commander to review.”

One of the major areas of discussion for the Mission Statement was whether the command “qualifies” applicants or “evaluates” them. Danielle Lieber, formerly the management assistant in the futures division, explained the difference between what the command does now and what it plans to do in the future.

“Right now, we get applicants and we evaluate whether they’re qualified or not,” she said. “We gather all the information about them, then we say whether they’re qualified. We’re trying to change that by gathering their information, say medical information, earlier in the process.”

“By the time we get them to the MEPS, we can just double check their

information,” Lieber said. “The recruiter has already evaluated them. We’re just going to say ‘Yes, we double checked the recruiter’s information,’ or ‘We checked the data base,’ or whatever we have at the time and we say they’re qualified. It will actually be less work for the MEPS because it will happen earlier in the process.”

Lince compared the command’s function to Underwriters’ Laboratory or Consumer Reports.

“UL doesn’t produce electrical cords or any of that sort of thing,” he said. “The companies that do say they’ve done this and this. UL verifies that what they are saying about this product is, in fact, true.”

“We use the same analogy with Consumer Reports – somebody who is a third party that comes in as an independent agency,” he said. “The company says its dishwasher does X. They run it a thousand times to see if the claims are true.”

USMEPCOM performs a similar function for its customers.

“We didn’t create the standards we are validating,” Lince said. “These aren’t our standards. We’re just verifying. That’s a crucial point that sometimes gets lost.”

“These are DoD standards or, in many cases, service standards,” he said. “The services tell us what the body fat percentages of their applicants must be. We are validating what they say the standards are.”

The goals set the command’s proposed path to the future and are arranged chronologically.

Strategic Planning and Transformation solicited input from the field in defining the goals.

“We sent out the one liners and asked people what they thought it meant,” Lieber said. “We got 12-15 responses from people in the MEPS and headquarters. We compiled two or three page descriptions and condensed them into one paragraph, using the wording from the people it affects most. We wouldn’t have been able to do it without them.”

“I looked at every single one of your comments,” she said. “I read every one. The goals are not my words. They are a compilation of what other people had to say. I might have actually written it, but the ideas aren’t mine. They are from the people who contributed. It’s their plan, not mine.”

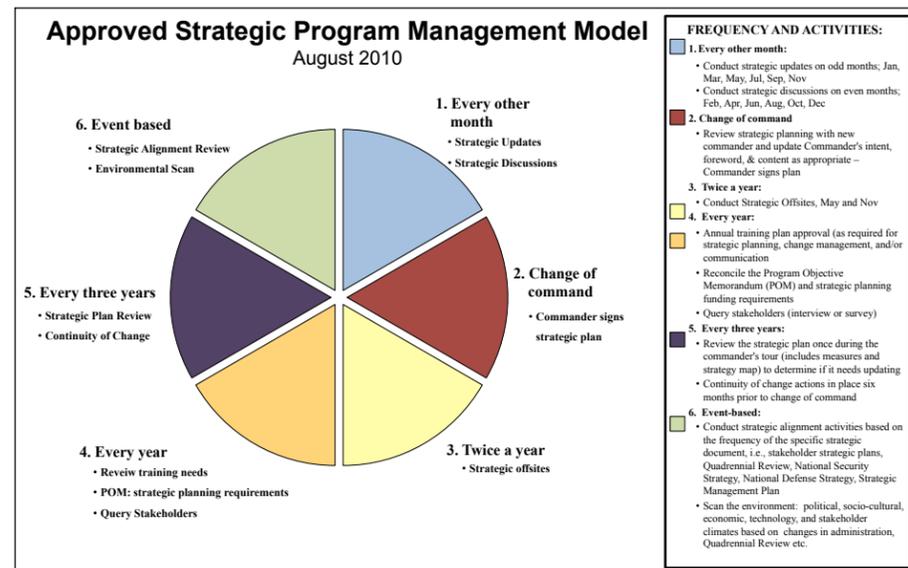
“I would encourage people to participate in the future because their comments, questions and concerns are going to be looked at with as much care and seriousness as we did this time,” Lieber said.

Goal 1

Flexible workforce shaped by customer needs (2015)

A mission-focused workforce consisting of a dynamic blend of military, civilian, full-time, and part-time employees that support fluctuating mission requirements and who collectively possess a wide spectrum of skills and training. These employees address evolving current and future customer needs immediately and thoroughly by actively maintaining awareness of the changing environment. They are organizationally agile and operationally adaptable and adjust policies, procedures, and processes to meet customer needs accordingly. They support the regionally unique MEPS and establish a relevant, effective, and efficient organization.

“The commander’s intent says organizational transformation is going to enable us to meet all the other goals, our vision and all the great things we want to do,” Lince said. “The strategic plan is saying that before we can do these things and enact



all the ideas, we have to do organizational transformation. We have to fundamentally change our processes.

“By transforming the organization, you are not transforming the wire diagram,” he said. “You’re transforming people. That enables people in the organization to do the things we want to do.”

Technology will not only improve processes at the MEPS, it will make the military more attractive to today’s young people.

“These people we are processing are going to be working on nuclear power plants, in advanced electronics, going through some of the most cutting edge, top-notch training in the world,” Lince said. “We know things are changing, the way this generation

interacts with technology, how they do things.

“Here you have this applicant who walked into the MEPS, who has been interacting in a digital world all day and we hand him a huge stack of paper,” he said. “He goes, ‘What’s that? What do you want me to do with this?’ We know those changes are only going to accelerate in the next 10 years.

“We in USMEPCOM not only have to be able to catch up, but also adapt to all the changes in the next 10 years,” Lince said, “not just from the perspective of the applicant, but from the perspective of the Department of Defense. DoD is driving down all these business efficiencies, literally, from the president down.

“That’s coming down to us and say-

ing, ‘You have to modernize, be more efficient, be more cost effective,’” he said. “Those tools are available, but we have to have the workforce and the organization to use those tools. That’s the start of all this.”

Goal 2

Authoritative source for initial electronic medical and personnel data (Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record) (2016)

An automated, efficient, certified database promoting transparent, inclusive, timely, and accurate dissemination of medical, biometric, conduct, aptitude, and personnel information. It provides accurate and complete data to initiate electronic personnel and health records that follow the applicants throughout their careers.

“It’s taking all that pencil and paper data and putting it into a digital format that is portable and easily transmitted,” Lince said, “easily looked at and verified, securely done and then follows that service member throughout their career and life. It all starts at the MEPS.”

Lieber gave examples from a younger person’s perspective.

“My doctor had a computer the last time I went to him,” she said. “He doesn’t carry a clipboard any more. He fills out a form on his computer and it goes right into his data base.

“As somebody who is from the millennial generation, it’s so crazy to me to know that I could send an e-mail to London instantaneously,” she said. “And the paper we use. Think of the trees we could save.”

Goal 3

Ability to assess applicant eligibility earlier in the process (2016)

Pre-qualification is the ability to assess applicant eligibility prior to arriving at a MEPS. Use of authoritative source data provides an initial assessment for whether an applicant meets accession standards. This assessment will assist USMEPCOM personnel in determining applicant options for completing qualifica-

tion requirements including tailored examination determination and examination location options. The ability to perform medical examinations and administer aptitude tests remotely as well as electronically access an applicant’s health, educational, aptitudinal, and background information allows for pre-qualification before an applicant physically enters a MEPS. Only those preliminarily screened and found to meet standards are permitted to process unless the service indicates a waiver is approved.

“Pre-qualification screening is going to come in many forms and many formats,” Lince said. “There will be many things the applicants themselves are doing. Some of it will be stuff the recruiters are doing. Some of it will be things that we in MEPCOM are retrieving from different data bases.

“Right now, you have this big mass of people who recruiters have identified as potential applicants who all just walk into a MEPS cold,” he said. “Then we do all the screening, qualifying and verifying to get that number down to the ones who can take the oath of enlistment.

“In the vision for the future there would be a step before the MEPS,” he said. “People who recruiters identify or those who self-identify can take a pre-ASVAB on line.” Lince said. “We would not filter everybody, but it’s a step so the group that comes into the MEPS has been winnowed down to a much smaller number.

“We’re not doing nearly as much validating in the MEPS,” he said. “A lot of it has been done before they even walk into the MEPS, which makes our processes more effective and efficient.”

Lince pointed out that the current pre-qualification steps are really just gathering information rather than validating or qualifying an applicant.

“Right now we ask ‘Have you ever been arrested?’ ‘No,’ Lince said. “That’s good enough for us right now. He goes through the entire process and does fingerprinting. Later it comes back that this guy’s got two felonies. We just wasted all that time.

“In the future, we will be able to do that ahead of time and validate the information,” Lieber said

Future . . . 2020

ASYMMETRICAL PROCESSES

APPLICANT ROLE

- Individual initiates “anytime, anywhere” process
 - Internet access
- Fills out application
 - Medical history questionnaire
 - Take ASVAB at various locations
- Receives
 - Test scores
 - Qualification status
 - Best fit career fields
- Searches for job opportunities

RECRUITER ROLE

- Recruiter may initiate process via internet
- Recruiter meets with the prospect
 - Capture biometric
 - Set up medical practitioner appointment/consult if needed
 - Negotiate job selection and signing bonuses
 - Schedule date for entry to training
 - Contract e-signed pending medical results
- Medical qualification confirmed, DEP-in/Ship
 - Ability to monitor the qualifications process

USMEPCOM VALIDATION

- Interface with applicant
- Database access to collect and maintain all accession data
 - Medical providers
 - Insurance providers
 - Criminal
 - Security
 - Social Security Administration
 - US Citizenship and Immigration Services
- Data mining capability
- “Validates” pre-qualification data

USMEPCOM MEDICAL

- Measure against Service standards
- Schedule consults based on previous medical history collected in databases
- Physical examination performed by medical practitioner
 - Hometown
 - USMEPCOM
- Online scheduling system for physicals and consults

RECEPTION CENTERS/TRAINING COMMANDS

- Confirm medical results
- Perform other required tests
- Retrieve electronic record for Trainee’s records

- Update electronic record to permanent duty station, returned and updated throughout time in Service/career

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Timely validation of recruit qualifications
- Significantly reduced down-time/travel time
- Sophisticated data mining of medical, insurance, security, criminal databases
- Contract closed upon first contact
- Official electronic health and personnel service member record

Tomorrow . . . 2015

HIGH-TECH MEPS/REMOTE SITES - UP-FRONT PRE QUALIFICATIONS



ELECTRONIC CHECK-IN AND TRACKING

- Facilitated by biometrics
- Verification and enrollment
- Applicant self-processing
- Index print



E-TESTING

Expanded opportunities for ASVAB testing at various locations



BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT

- 10 prints
- Office of Personnel Management



PRE-ENLISTMENT INTERVIEW

- Automated



E-PRE-SCREENING HISTORY

Results fed directly to database.



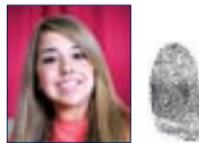
QUALIFICATION/INFORMATICS

Medical Practitioner reviews information and results from system; available for trend analysis.



MEDICAL EXAM

Results recorded electronically and fed to main database.



ELECTRONIC CONTRACT

e-Signature/Biometric Signature; all paperwork in electronic format.



OATH

Applicants take oath of enlistment.



ELECTRONIC ORDERS AND TICKETS

Automated system interfaces with travel agencies

PERSONNEL VISIBILITY

- Official record uploaded to:
- Defense Integrated Military Human Resource System, (DIMHRS)
 - Armed Forces Health Longitudinal Technology Application, (AHLTA)
 - Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (Vista)
 - Veterans Administration, (VA)
 - Defense Manpower Data Center, (DMDC)
 - “EXPECT” report sent to Reception Centers/Training Bases

IMPACT

- Reduce accession processing costs
- Reduce attrition
- Improve data quality
- Initiate Electronic Health Record
- Enable business process flexibility, adaptability, and scalability
- Enhance data exchange across DoD

MOVING AWAY FROM

- Paper-based process
- Reactionary management
- Linear MEPS processes
- Significant applicant time at the MEPS

ing and technology. It has not been determined what agencies might use the MEPS to process potential employees. The command has to refine the processes for current customers before it will have the capacity to take on additional workload.

“It’s the perfect segue into saying this freed up capacity from not having so many people come in for military qualifying will be filled by screening and validating for other federal agencies,” Lince said.

“Our potential customers are any federal agency, but looking at who would be the most likely, the FBI, Homeland Security and things like that would likely be the earliest ones.

“The neat thing is, we have fixed

costs in the MEPS around the country,” Lince said. “That gives us an advantage, because we are everywhere, so it would be convenient to all these agencies when they have applicants going through the process.”

Goal 5

Modular screening configurations in place nationwide (2017)

Modular screening configurations (site, size and location) provide alternative ways to process applicants and optimize USMEPCOM’s assets based on evolving operating procedures, customer needs, and

fiscal constraints. Configurations provide the ability to place various size operations in locations which are cost-effective and best-fitted for the mission in that area. Configurations may include sub-stations where accession density is low or mobile processing teams that visit areas on a recurring basis to conduct processing.

Lince suggested that the best way to describe the both the “as is” and “to be” models of the command’s organization is to think of the solar system.

“Right now the MEPs is the sun and the planets orbiting around it are the recruiters and applicants,” Lince said. “Everybody comes to the MEPs, reacts to the MEPS. Everything is driven by the MEPS footprint.

“In the future, it will be the exact opposite,” he said. “The sun, at the middle of the solar system is the recruiter and applicant and our processes will be the planets. The processes will be moving and will be able to come directly to (recruiters and applicants) when and where they need it.

“The modular configurations provide the ability to place various size operations in locations that are cost effective and best fitted for the mission in that area,” he said.

“There may be applicants who go to a traditional, large MEPS,” Lince said. “But there may be applicants who go to a MEPS with three employees in a strip mall in the middle of Montana. It may, literally, be like a bloodmobile where they come to you.

“There are a wide variety of ways to do things digitally, but you still have to have that physical interaction,” he said.

Another analogy is the way banks and credit unions operate.

There is the main branch, a full-service institution that offers mortgage services, has loan officers and can process any transaction. A smaller branch, perhaps located in a supermarket, offers fewer services. Automated teller machines, which it seems are everywhere, can only process deposits and withdrawals, but are available 24 hours a day. Most institutions now offer online banking, so some transactions can be done from a home computer.

Command selects

The Best

USMEPCOM Company Grade Officer of the Year



Capt Tara O. Maddox
Jacksonville MEPS

Capt. Tara O. Maddox is the USMEPCOM Company Grade Officer of the Year. She is the assistant operations officer at the Jacksonville MEPS.

She led the effort in a mass induction ceremony sponsored by the Jacksonville Jaguars attended by 176 applicants and escorts. The event led to national media exposure. She helped manage the 46 person staff in processing more than 5,000 applicants and served as the operations officer for six weeks.

Maddox was hand picked to lead the processing sec-

tion directing 13 civilians and two military members. She led the command inspection program team to inspect all operational areas. The 15-person team tracked and corrected deficiencies and was named best in 10th Battalion.

Maddox organized the first operations officer conference in Eastern Sector, which allowed the sector staff to train six officers.

She overhauled processing training so it focused on guidance procedures, which almost eliminated errors and rework.

She also guided a two week cross training program which increased versatility in the station.

She regularly made on-the-spot decisions to support the liaisons and the recruiting services.

Maddox reinstated briefings to applicants’ families that provided emergency procedures and gave an overview of basic training.

Maddox completed all phases of the Captain’s Career Course and completed the Air Defense Artillery Course.

She is an avid health advocate who participates in fitness challenges and advises coworkers on the ad-

vantages of healthy eating and physical fitness.

She joined Toastmasters to improve her speaking ability and is now regarded as the MEPS’ first choice to narrate ceremonies.

In the community, Maddox collected blankets, shoes and other items to help a homeless shelter clothe the area’s neediest residents and worked at a local soup kitchen to help prepare meals and bag groceries.

She donated money to provide food baskets for needy families at Thanksgiving, regularly contributes to an international charity that provides subsistence to poor families worldwide and donated items for the “Stuff the Bus” drive, which provides classroom items for children in Northeast Florida.

“Captain Maddox’s tenacious drive is clearly evident in every task she manages,” Cmdr. Karen Sray, 10th Battalion and Jacksonville MEPS commander said.

“As a recognized leader, she far exceeds the performance expected for her position and has become an indispensable part of the Jacksonville MEPS and 10th Battalion.”

USMEPCOM Senior Enlisted Member of the Year



Sgt. 1st Class Serena M. Marler
Jacksonville MEPS

Sgt. 1st Class Serena M. Marler is the USMEPCOM Senior Enlisted Military Member of the Year. She is the noncommissioned officer in charge of the medical section at the Jacksonville MEPS.

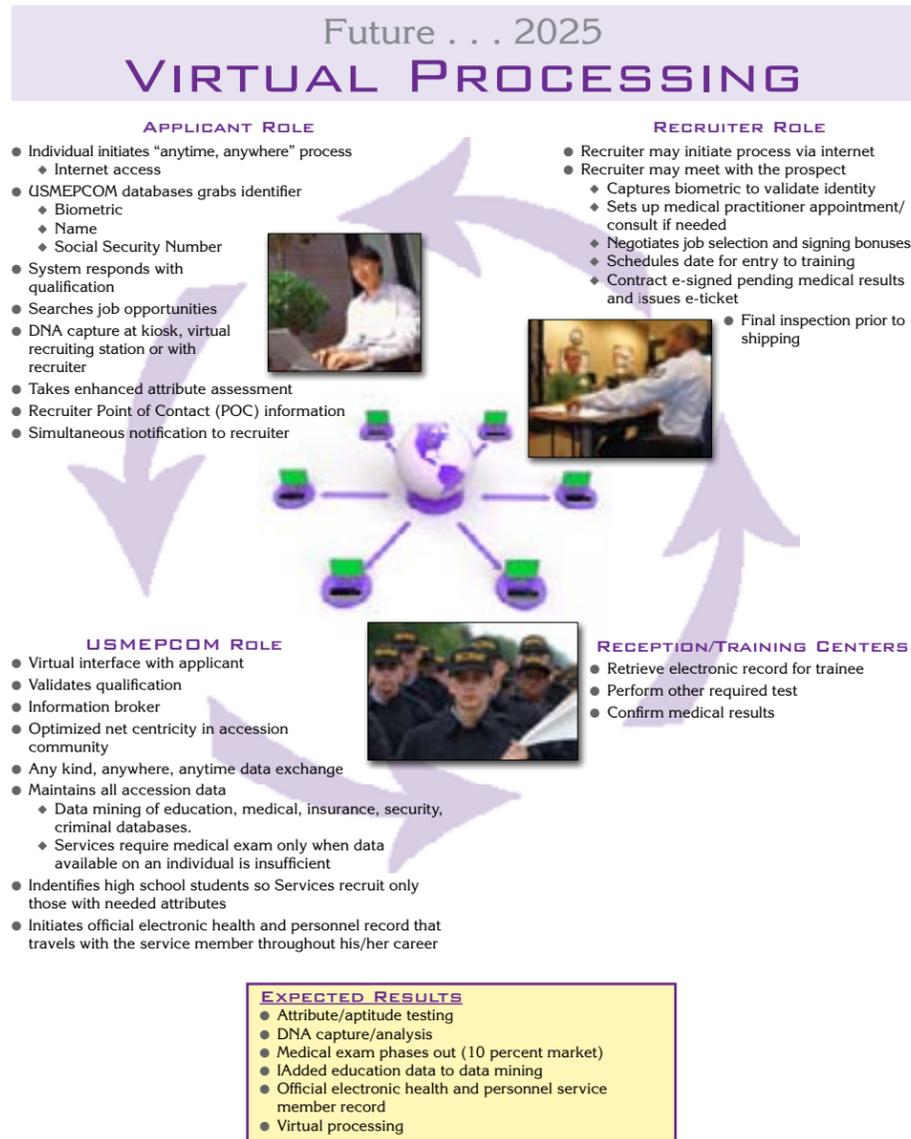
Marler leads an 11-member staff that maintains more than \$200,000 worth of equipment and manages a \$160,000 budget.

She directed the fee-basis provider work record program, which had no discrepancies in nine months.

Marler worked with the testing section to change the morning flow which reduced medical briefings from six to one and saved five man hours per day.

She founded an enlisted forum to address concerns and mentor junior NCOs. She served as acting first sergeant for six weeks while the incumbent was away.

Marler directed and accounted for 45 applicants who enlisted at halftime of a Jacksonville Jaguars football game. She briefed medical trends and changes liaisons and recruiters and trained more than 90



recruiters on their responsibilities to successfully floor applicants.

She managed cross-training for three non-medical staff members, which increased medical's manpower and made the staff more versatile.

Marler served as a test administrator for Mega Test Day and tested 400 students while ensuring accountability for test materials. Her efforts helped the MEPS achieve 124 percent of its student testing goal for the year.

She completed Phase I Battle Staff training via distance learning which helped her learn skills vital to the Army. Marler completed six classes toward her bachelor's degree during her off duty time.

She attended the USMEPCOM training conference to gain knowledge about medical consultations and waiver authorities and completed the Human Resources for Supervisors Course to better manage civilian employees.

Marler led 20 volunteers to man a soft drink booth for the Navy Base's Air Show. She assembled and delivered Thanksgiving meal boxes that fed 22 families.

She volunteered at a local soup kitchen, preparing meals and bagging canned goods for the homeless and collected canned goods for another charity's food drive.

"When Sergeant 1st Class Marler joined the Jacksonville MEPS staff, she introduced great energy and enthusiasm to the organization," Cmdr. Karen L. Sray, 10th Battalion and Jacksonville MEPS commander, said. "Her zeal to excel is clearly evident in every task she handles. She is well respected and ad-

mired by her subordinates and command leaders alike for her mentoring and caring leadership."

USMEPCOM Enlisted Member of the Year



Petty Officer 1st Class
Ashley J. Aldeguer
Honolulu MEPS

Petty Officer 1st Class Ashley J. Aldeguer is the USMEPCOM Military Member of the Year. She is a medical technician at the Honolulu MEPS.

She was part of a team that deployed to American Samoa, Palau, Micronesia and the Marshall Islands that processed 84 applicants at remote locations.

Aldeguer saved the MEPS \$87,263 in medical consultations by using Composite Health Care System and Armed Forces Health Longitudinal Application.

She processed 168 medical consultations and provided laboratory and other test results that allow the chief medical officer to accurately assess applicants' medical readiness.

As the fee basis provider point of contact, she accurately reported 256 orders and reconciled 119 performances without any errors, which led to the station receiving the command's Fee Basis Provider Award.

She completed nearly 2,200 physicals and 1,700 medical inspections.

She was selected as the MEPS command fitness leader and completed the Navy Command Fitness Leader Course.

She completed the Army Supervisors Development Course, Army Civilian Basic Course Phase 1, and Army Civilian Intermediate Course.

She is pursuing a bachelor of science degree in technical management and maintained a 3.4 grade point average while completing five courses.

In the community, Aldeguer is an active member of a local canoe club that conducts weekly beach cleanups. She volunteered at a local high school, mentoring students in conjunction with the Big Brothers/Big Sisters Program. She completed the Great Aloha Run, an 8.5-mile race that raised more \$2 million for charities in Hawaii.

Battalion/MEPS Civilian of the Year GS-10 and Above



Dr. Stephen Lazoritz
Omaha MEPS

Dr. Stephen Lazoritz is the Battalion and MEPS Civilian of the Year, GS-10 and Above. Lazoritz is the chief medical officer at the Omaha MEPS.

Lazoritz led his section in developing process improvements and training to reduce medical consultations and documentation errors.

Seeing a need for a better way to perform refractive eye surgery screening, he led his section in developing and implementing a corrective eye surgery qualification checklist that consolidates data from dozens of documents onto one sheet, reducing document review time by 80 percent.

Lazoritz developed an attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder evaluation sheet for use during applicant interviews ensuring consistent information and making interviews more efficient.

He created knee and shoulder exam checklists which add only a few minutes to examination times, while reducing the need for orthopedic consultations and saving thousands of dollars and reducing the need for applicants to make multiple visits to the MEPS.

Lazoritz developed a quality control checklist for reviewing applicant medical records to identify errors, trends and training needs for the medical section. His efficient consultation scheduling and excellent relations with providers resulted in same day consultations 50 percent of the time, reducing the number of applicant MEPS visits and saving thousands of dollars.

Together with the medical noncommissioned officer in charge and the lead medical technician, Lazoritz developed a workload management system to reduced costs for fee basis providers by one third.

Lazoritz completed 59 hours of continuing medi-

cal education, four Civilian Education System courses and eight Federal Emergency Management Agency online courses.

He holds appointments as a clinical professor with the Department of Pediatrics at the Creighton University School of Medicine and adjunct professor, Department of Pediatrics at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Lazoritz is a member of the archdiocese committee for the protection of children and young people.

He is a member of the Nebraska Medical Association education committee, a member of the St. Charles parish council and a lector at the church.

Battalion/MEPS Civilian of the Year GS-7-9



Arnaldo D.
Acosta-Rodriguez
San Juan MEPS

Arnaldo D. Acosta-Rodriguez is the Battalion and MEPS Civilian of the Year, GS-7-9. He is the test control officer at the San Juan MEPS.

His leadership influenced the performance of the testing staff and allowed it to administer more than 6,300 Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery tests and more than 5,500 special

tests with 100 percent accuracy, which resulted in 2,018 military service candidates. Acosta-Rodriguez is considered the testing subject matter expert in 10th Battalion. He provided valuable input on testing matters to ensure the integrity of the testing program.

Acosta-Rodriguez played an essential role in the Career Exploration Program, coordinating, facilitating and conducting pre and post-test interpretations to high school students and helping the station achieve 132 percent of its annual testing goal.

He completed hiring 15 intermittent test administrators, trained them and conducted initial test administration reviews. He ensured a smooth transition from Office of Personnel Management to internal test administrators by focusing on priorities.

He coordinated troubleshooting for an Internet-based military entrance test site, identifying connectivity issues and found a temporary solution to provide adequate support and services.

Acosta-Rodriguez coordinated and established a second Internet-Based Computerized Aptitude Battery test center in Puerto Rico that has a capacity of 60 testers. His support enabled San Juan to be one of the first MEPS in the command with 100 percent iCAT-based MET sites.

He completed four on-line training course over a holiday weekend to be certified as a first responder for the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

He completed more than 50 computer based training courses and maintained proficiency on Defense Department programs.

In the community, Acosta-Rodriguez volunteered two hours a week to tutor undergraduates in the management and business administration program at Inter American University, helping them understand human resources management and financial issues.

"Mr. Acosta-Rodriguez is a resourceful, creative, solution-oriented professional who works to exceed standards while putting the needs of the organization before his own," Cmdr. Karen L. Sray, 10th Battalion and Jacksonville MEPS commander, said.

Battalion/MEPS Civilian of the Year GS-6 and Below



Antonio Parker
Montgomery MEPS

Antonio Parker is the Battalion and MEPS Civilian of the Year, GS-6 and Below. He is the test score technician at the Montgomery MEPS.

He processed and scored 599 enlistment and 436 student tests, and exceeded the command standard by making the scores available in less than 36 hours.

He trained all new intermittent test administrators ahead of schedule.

As the testing section's training monitor, he ensured all training require-

ments were met and documented.

Parker managed intermittent test administrator scheduling and time cards and ensured all travel claims were paid without discrepancies. He administered special tests to 1,560 applicants, helping the services fill critical vacancies.

Parker is pursuing a bachelor's degree in business management and completed 53 credit hours while maintaining a 3.59 grade point average.

He is an avid runner and completed three marathons.

In the community, Parker led weekly classes on character development and mentoring at the Boys and Girls Club and a summer class at his church on leadership development.

He volunteers as a bus driver for his church, providing transportation for youth to local and community activities.

Parker conducted an employment workshop for high school and college students to teach them interviewing techniques, resume writing and proper attire.

He organized a formal banquet that raised \$5,000 for local youth and held a 3-on-3 basketball tournament that raised \$1,000 for a local youth program. He is also the chairman of the Boys to Men mentorship program.

"He is a tireless worker and is dedicated to mission accomplishment," Lt. Col. Eric B. Garrety, 8th Battalion and Montgomery MEPS commander, said. "As the test score technician, he personally oversees the schedule for enlistment testing as well as student testing throughout the state of Alabama and the panhandle of Florida."

Headquarters recognizes its top civilians

Headquarters Civilian of the Year GS-10 and Above



Robert Knoll
Information
Technology
Directorate

Robert Knoll is the Headquarters Civilian of the Year, GS-10 and above. He is a supervisory management analyst in the Information Technology Directorate.

Knoll led negotiations for a new contract and obtained funding for an unexpected \$18 million software license requirement to prevent the command from possible software piracy. The command would have been forced to shut down USMIRS without the funding. He helped prepare briefings and funding documents on the mission impacts for senior Army and Defense Department leaders explaining the mission impact.

He was instrumental in preparing mission impact statements on a \$21.3 budget shortfall in information technology. The funding was needed to pay for hardware and software maintenance contracts, certification and accredita-

tion, Recruiting Services Network, and information technology sustainment.

As a result of Knoll's efforts, the command was able to obtain funding for critical mission support. He led the Plans and Resources Office while it faced major budget cuts and personnel shortages, enabling it to replace failed hardware for the e-Security computers and avoid mission impact.

Knoll completed an associate degree in human resource management and a bachelor of science degree in business management and is pursuing a master of science degree in leadership and management, and procurements and acquisition.

He is a volunteer at Saint Matthew Parish where he supported a school book fair and refreshment stand, and helped install white boards in classrooms.

Headquarters Civilian of the Year GS-7-9



Richard Quick
Information
Technology
Directorate

Richard Quick is the Headquarters Civilian of the Year, GS-7-9. He is a

service desk technician in the Information Technology Directorate.

He took the technical lead to dispose of and destroy an electronic data center console that had been in place for more than 20 years and on approving, testing and deploying global positioning system updates for all 65 MEPS.

He fielded phone calls, logging more than 80 hours reporting or resolving more than 400 help desk tickets from the headquarters and the MEPS. Quick researched and resolved an issue with e-Security cameras not functioning properly in MEPS.

An expert at working with remote users, Quick tested the viability of using Defense Connect Online.

As the main property book secretary, he helped account for more than \$100,000 worth of equipment. He led late shift certification and accreditation efforts to help remediate third party software issues.

He worked with Windows system administrators to ensure timely response to BlackBerry issues, supporting some 230 devices nationwide, including the BlackBerry enterprise server.

Quick completed the Action Officer's Development Course and the resident and non-resident Basic Courses. He completed requirements to take the CompTIA Network+ test. He is working to complete the Project Management for IT Professionals Course, certification for project management and the Managers Development Course.

He was appointed by the Red Cross National Headquarters as the representa-

tive to the Veterans Affairs Volunteer Services Committee for three VA medical centers.

He is chairman for Chicago's Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces Committee serving seven northern Illinois counties.

He coordinated with deploying units to provide briefings to service members and families on available resources and tools.

He is the veterans service officer for a VFW post, serving more than 150 veterans plus children and widows.

Headquarters Civilian of the Year GS-6 and Below



Catherine Vick
Information
Technology
Directorate

Catherine Vick is the Headquarters Civilian of the Year, GS-6 and Below. She is a secretary in the Information Management Directorate.

In the absence of the administrative officer, Vick took the initiative to mentor and train the directorate's other administrative

See 'Headquarters,' Page 17

Intern program helps Jacksonville teen come overcome her shyness

By 1st Lt. Tiffany E. Scott
Assistant Operations Officer
Jacksonville MEPS

As community organizations like Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Florida seek creative ways to keep children engaged during the summer months, Jacksonville MEPS became a place to help a local teen overcome her fear.

This year, the MEPS collaborated with Big Brothers Big Sisters to support the Jacksonville Summer Youth Job Preparation and Employment Program.

The program connected low-income 16-19-year-old job-seeking youth to meaningful employment experiences including job readiness training, on-the-job mentoring and individual coaching.

Crystal Bentley, 10th Battalion mission support specialist, is a big sister and a member of the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Florida board of directors.

When approached with a request for youth employment options, Bentley immediately spoke to Cmdr. Karen L. Sray, commander of 10th Battalion and the Jacksonville MEPS.

Sray, who also volun-

teers as a big sister, believes "We need to live what we preach. In Eastern Sector and here at the MEPS, we stress ambassadorship. What better way to be ambassadors in our community than to support Big Brothers Big Sisters as they strive to make a difference in the lives of children in Jacksonville. Opening doors to new possibilities, new opportunities is what we do every day at the MEPS."

Bentley served as an employment coach for intern, Kaylin Johnson.

Her primary role was to prepare Johnson for entry into the workforce by helping her understand the MEPS' and future employers expectations in the work environment.

Johnson worked as a human resources assistant at the control desk. Under the guidance of Doritha Chisley, human resources assistant, and Willie Fleming, lead human resources assistant, she proved herself an asset.

"Kaylin was a hard worker and eager to learn," Chisley said. "She supported the MEPS during the heavier processing months also known as summer



Crystal Bentley, 10th Battalion mission support specialist, Kaylin Johnson, Willie Fleming, lead human resources assistant, and Kaylin's mother.

surge."

Fleming said he could rely on Johnson.

"She was punctual, organized and very professional – qualities any employer would love his employees to possess," he said.

Johnson summed her experience.

"Before working at the MEPS, I never liked looking people in their eyes, communicating with people or even smiling," she said. "Since then I have learned how to overcome these obstacles by simply doing my job every day.

"Yes, I had many challenges but I worked through them even when I felt like giving up. Working at the Jacksonville MEPS not only inspired me, but it made me overcome my insecurities."

As a token of appreciation for her hard work, the Jacksonville MEPS presented Johnson with a plaque and surprise luncheon.

Her teammates from the processing section nicknamed her "Giggles" because of her newfound smile and endearing spirit.

'Headquarters,' from Page 16 assistants. She conducted employee orientations for new employees. Vick coordinated internal and external suspenses with directorate leaders. She was critical in finalizing the directorate's reorganization, coordinated with the Human Resources Directorate

and worked many hours to ensure that more than 100 billets were accounted for and assigned to the correct directorate branch. She mastered SharePoint and uses it to track suspenses and to route documents.

Vick completed MS Word, Defense Connect Online and Sharepoint

classes, the Leadership for Women and Administrative Assistant Courses, and Excel Training, and is enrolled in the Civilian Education System Foundation Course.

She has coordinated the Organization Day bowling event for four years, took part in several command

committees and planned directorate social events.

Vick is a member of the United Protestant Church, where she is a committee member of the Children's Ministry, secretary of the Women's Christian Fund Board and Women's Christian Fund Circle 2 chairwoman.

Butte hosts Kyrgyz guests; provides information about medical processing methods

Fifteen individuals from the Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Defense visited the Butte MEPS.

The Kyrgyz learned about the medical tests performed at the MEPS for applicants processing to join the United States military.

The methods used and the importance of nationwide standardization were highlighted in the orientation. They also observed an oath of enlistment ceremony.

The visit was part of the Kyrgyz's 26-day visit to Montana to enhance first-responder medical capability in the Kyrgyz military, and enhance emergency response and consequence management during disasters; counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism interdiction; personnel retention

and professionalization through a multi-year series of interlinked mutually dependent events.

This year the Kyrgyz took part in Emergency Medical Technician-Basic Information Exchange.

The goal was to share information with the Montana National Guard medical personnel and to gain a mutual understanding of requirements to establish a program equivalent to the United States' emergency medical technician course.

Participants learned about the content, administering, logistical requirements and other details of administering the course.

Hands-on demonstrations facilitated familiarization.

Most participants were equivalent level medical personnel, with a small



Staff Sgt. Timothy Bagwell, Butte MEPS medical noncommissioned officer, explains ortho-neuro procedures to Kyrgyz guests.

number of doctor and nurse-level personnel who play a role in developing first responder medical training programs in Kyrgyzstan.

The event, in combination with later training events in fiscal 2013 and 2014, should lead to

implementing a Kyrgyz-developed equivalent to the American EMT course by 2015.

This event familiarized the Kyrgyz with the concepts required to build a Kyrgyz-developed version of the U.S. Army's Combat Lifesaver Program by adding depth to first response capability and expanded acceptance of the idea that ordinary service members should be empowered to take life-saving measures. That should in turn lead to expanding and developing capabilities equivalent to the American EMT course.

The first responder medical capability will help Kyrgyz defense forces in consequence management and enhance legitimacy in remote regions; in willingness to take aggressive action; and retention needed to develop a professional military and for NCO-equivalent development.



With the help of a translator, Staff Sgt. Timothy Bagwell, Butte MEPS medical noncommissioned officer, answers visitors' questions.

Salt Lake City NCO receives medal for helping injured hiker

By Staff Sgt. John Etheridge
Salt Lake City MEPS

A Salt Lake City MEPS service member who aided a severely injured hiker in the rugged Wasatch Mountains has been awarded the Joint Service Achievement Medal.

Staff Sgt. Aaron Massey, the MEP-Stesting NCOIC received the award in front of the woman he helped, her family and his co-workers.

"I don't think I'm a hero," Massey said. "I don't think it was a hero situation. I was in the right place, at the right time, for the right person."

But for the woman he aided, Monica Minton, and her mother, the gratitude expressed to Massey before and after the ceremony tells a different story.

After camping overnight at a popular spot next to some natural hot spring pools in the mountains southeast of Salt Lake City, Massey broke down his camp and set out for the hot springs after a cold night to warm up before heading out of the canyon.

After his soak, and while he was eating his lunch, Minton and her friend arrives and started chatting with Massey. After about an hour of conversation, he prepared his gear and started to leave the area, joining another group of hikers for the descent out of the canyon on the ice covered trail.

After hiking down about 200 yards, they heard two loud screams from behind them. Massey immediately rushed back, carefully navigating the icy trail, to the source of the scream.

Massey found Minton sitting on an ice sheet, with her friend standing about 10 feet away. Minton's friend said, "I think she broke her arm."

From here Massey took charge. The others in his group were in shock at the event and were also slipping on the ice. He had to calm the group down and tell them what they needed to do to administer first aid to Minton and treat her for shock.

Once her arm was swathed tightly with clothing from her backpack and Massey's jacket was wrapped around her to keep her warm, they headed down the steep, icy two and a half mile trail to their vehicles.

Fortunately, Massey had brought along a set of ice spikes for his boots and was able to support Minton's weight on the spikes over the ice sheets on their journey back. After about an hour and a half they finally made it back to their vehicles and transported Minton to the hospital because there was no phone service in the canyon to call emergency vehicles.

Massey stayed at the hospital for about an hour waiting to hear word of Minton's recovery. Her brother told him that he felt that if it wasn't for his quick thinking and action that Minton may have lost her arm or even died from shock.

The emergency room doctor said it was the worst broken bone that he had ever seen in a patient less than 80 years old.

Although Massey had first-aid training as a mountain bike guide before entering the Air Force, he credits his military training for being able to deal with the crisis.

"It was my military training that brought my first aid training down to a step by step sequence to handle emergency situations," he said.

At the award ceremony the appreciation shown to Massey's quick thinking and military training was very apparent from Minton's mother.

"After the ceremony we went through the lines of everybody shaking hands and her mom came up and gave me a big hug and broke down in tears and said 'Thank you so much for saving my daughter's life, we can never repay you,'" Massey said. "That's what got me and took me to



Staff Sgt. Aaron Massey, Salt Lake City MEPS testing noncommissioned officer, and Monica Minton whom he rescued, at the ceremony where he received a Joint Service Achievement Medal.

tears, that without me being there she wouldn't be here anymore."

Although he hadn't seen her since the incident, Massey kept in touch with Minton through texting and e-mail. She has had surgery and has a five-inch titanium plate in her arm supported by several screws. He was glad to see her at the ceremony and to have closure.

"I felt a sense of satisfaction that she was okay and her family was there to give her support and that she was able to get around on her own," he said. "At one point she told me that she broke down in tears to think that someone would be willing to come back and be willing to help and that she might not be alive without that help."

Wounded Warrior lends a hand in Portland, Oregon

By Petty Officer 1st Class Sarah Murphy
Portland Oregon MEPS

PORTLAND, Ore. – After more than 21 years of service and four overseas deployments, Army Staff Sgt. Anthony D. Acuna is now working at the Portland, Ore. Military Entrance Processing Station, with the help of an Army program called Community-Based Warrior Transition Units while recovering from an injury he sustained in Iraq.

Acuna is a medic, someone who helps fellow service members when they need medical care, counseling or just someone to stay with them for a while.

Before joining the Army, Acuna was a hospital corpsman in the Navy; it was a smooth transition since his skills easily transferred.

“It wasn’t until my fourth deployment, in July 2011, to Iraq at Contingency Operating Base Speicher where we were doing a convoy escort for long-haul trucks, and the call came out,” Acuna said. “They needed a medic; I was the closest so I took it. Grabbing



Staff Sgt. Anthony D. Acuna checks a patient’s blood pressure during his deployment in Afghanistan.

“I was pretty bummed. I was leaving behind all my guys. I knew it was the right choice because they need to know they can rely on me.”

Staff Sgt. Anthony Acuna, on leaving his comrades to continue the fight without him.

my gear, I jumped from the back of the Mine-Resistant, Armor-Protected vehicle I was traveling in and headed out.

“When I landed, I felt something go in my left ankle, but I continued toward the person who needed my help,” he said.

When he returned to the COB, another sergeant noticed Acuna was limping badly and encouraged him to have it examined.

“He escorted me to medical,” Acuna said. “He said, ‘we can’t have you hurt,

Doc, we need you here.’ I’m not the type of person to ask for help, but he was persistent so I reluctantly went with him. When I got there, they ran all the tests and X-rays, and the doctor told me he didn’t like what he saw.”

Acuna said he knew when he felt the pain that he had aggravated an old injury and he knew his deployment was over. He was evacuated to Landstuhl, Germany for more tests, and sent back to the states for recovery.

“I was pretty bummed,” he said. “I was leaving behind all my guys. You get to know all these guys on a personal level and they become family; it felt like I was leaving my family behind. I knew that it was the right choice because they need to know that they can rely on me, just as I need to rely on them. And I couldn’t do that for them now.”

When Acuna arrived in the states, he was diagnosed with Osteochondral Defect, or OCD, an injury that occurs as a result of repetitive trauma to the joint. The diagnosis put him on a long road to recovery; that’s where the transition unit comes in.

The transition unit gave Acuna, a Portland native, a chance to recover while stationed in his hometown. “When I got to Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington state, the unit got me into the system and explained to me that I was there to heal,” Acuna said. “My medical appointments supersede everything else, including work and school. All my doctors are civilians and tied into this program so they know what’s expected of me,



Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Sarah Murphy

Staff Sgt. Anthony Acuna administers the Pseudo Isochromatic Plate test to an Army applicant. Acuna is currently working in the Portland MEPS medical department while he recovers from an injury he sustained in 2011 when he served in Iraq.

and report back to the transition unit to ensure I am using the program the way it is intended.”

With his health care and rehabilitation programs arranged, Acuna started a new job. He joined the medical element at Portland MEPS.

“I took the position,” Acuna said. “I am able to use my skills and started working in the medical department. I help with vital signs, hearing and eye exams, physicals, all the things I was trained for in the Army.”

Acuna reported to MEPS Oct. 3. While there, he will heal, prepare for a medical retirement and spend time with his family.

Acuna and his wife of 14 years, Tracy and their four children have a lot of catching up to do. Acuna also has two grandchildren with whom he would like to spend time.

“When I got back, the younger ones would ask if I was leaving again,” he said. “I was happy to tell them that I wasn’t. I’m not sure if they understand yet, but in time they will know when I’ve been here for a while.”

Acuna is also working toward a nursing degree. With all the work Acuna is doing to recover, he looks back at the time from his deployments and says he will remember the camaraderie he had while he was there.

“I appreciate the guys, my buddies,

“When I got back, the younger ones would ask if I was leaving again. I’m not sure if they understand yet.”

Staff Sgt. Anthony Acuna, on his children’s reaction to his returning home.

looking out for me,” he said. “They know if Doc’s hurting, they’re going to be hurting. They need to know that they can rely on me, just as I need to know that I can rely on them. You get to know a group of guys on a personal

level; you get to feel like a family. We look out for one another.

“I’m going to miss that when I leave the military. I am going to miss that type of bond,” he said.



Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Sarah Murphy

Staff Sgt. Anthony Acuna checks the blood pressure of an Army applicant.

Sioux Falls joins 'Pedal the Plains' to raise big money to fight MS

Sioux Falls MEPS staff members, family and friends formed a team to support the 2012 South Dakota Bike MS – Sanford Health Pedal the Plains.

Nineteen members, including volunteers and bikers, made up this year's team which was sponsored by a local beverage and a brewing company. The sponsors provided bikers with team jerseys and volunteers with team shirts.

This year's ride covered up to 170 miles with an overnight in Sioux

Falls. The ride began and ended at Dell Rapids Public High School in Dell Rapids, S.D. Cyclists had the option of choosing a variety of routes each day, with the team riders completing at least 100 miles each.

The MEPS involvement began in 2009 by Jennifer Reynolds, Sioux Falls information technology specialist. Reynolds initially built the team in support of her childhood friend who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in his 20s.

During the first three years of



Photo by Jennifer Reynolds

Craig Bowles and Hunter Andersen work to fix a bike at a rest stop during Bike MS. Hunter, son of Medical Technician, Jennifer Andersen, finished the 70-mile ride from Dell Rapids to Sioux Falls. (Photo taken by Jennifer Reynolds)



(Photo by Maj. Trisha Meyer)

Jennifer Reynolds clicks out of her pedals as she enters a rest stop.

the annual event, the team raised roughly \$14,000 in donations for the National MS Society assisting those in need dealing with the disease. The 2010 team raised a record \$6,454.30.

Fundraising events included garage sales, walking taco lunch sales and donations from families and friends. The team event was successful due to the participation of the cyclists and volunteers.

Volunteers took digital photographs during the event, provided set up and tear down groups for the team area, loading and unloading bikes and baggage, transportation, and a team trail vehicle to assist riders at rest stops with mechanical and medical issues, as well as motivation.

The 2012 team, raised more than \$4,100 through fundraising events and donations.

The team's cyclists were Reynolds, Jen Andersen, Hunter Andersen, Mark Biggins, Susan Biggins, Craig Bowes, Ryan Doering, Darla Frederick, Kim Jepp, Anthony Meyer, Seth Peterson and Carin Schleicher. Susan Biggins is an MS survivor.

Volunteers were Maj. Trisha Meyer, Capt. Tina Hamilton, Randy Schauer, Sgt. 1st Class TaRita Taylor, Staff Sgt. DeAndrae Boyd, Crispin Meyer, Savanna Meyer, Sheree Dickerson and Jayden Fenton.

Georgia governor recognizes student testing program

Gov. Nathan Deal presented the Atlanta MEPS commander and Interservice Recruiting commanders with a commendation in recognition of the outstanding participation

of Georgia students in the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Career Exploration Program for the 2011-12 school year.

Georgia high schools and the

Department of Defense cooperatively administer the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery to thousands of students each year.

As students begin their occupational pursuits, it is important for them to have access to information that helps them determine their future.

The demands of society and the workplace dictate that Georgia students receive the best possible education and assistance in career planning that can be provided.

The ASVAB is the key to opening the doors to many highly technical and competitive careers in the private sector and in the armed services.

The computerized career resources provided through the Armed Service Vocational Aptitude Battery Career Exploration Program, give Georgia students 21st century cutting edge career resources suitable for all students.



Left to right – Lt. Col. Kenneth Hutnick, Maj. Seth W. MacCutcheon, Lt. Cmdr. Kenyatta Martin, Joseph A. Verrett, 1st Sgt. Mae F. Dyous-Rawlins, Governor Nathan Deal, Maj. Stephen F. Vensor, Harriet H. Blakely, Lt. Col. John L. Throckmorton and Lt. Col. John J. Deresky.

Sports

Atlanta military members compete for German badges

By Naomi Hunkin

The Atlanta MEPS hosted a competition for the German Sports Badge and German Marksmanship Badge. The badges are officially called German Schutzenschnur and Sportabzeichen.

Both competitions are normally only held in Germany, with strict requirements that only allow a few competitors to attain them each year.

Maj. Stephen Vensor, MEPS commander, and Capt. Matthew Benasuly, executive officer, coordinated the connection between countries so the restrictions could be temporarily lifted and the competition be brought to the United States.

Benasuly worked closely with German badge affiliates

of the Bundeswehr Training Center at Wildflicken, Germany, to ensure the competition would remain faithful to the criteria of the actual German contest, and that it wouldn't lose its competitiveness or difficulty.

Coordinating the use of local gymnasiums, tracks and ranges proved a little difficult as many local venues didn't know what to expect. The competition consists of qualifying with weapons, including the M-9 pistol, M-16 rifle and the M-240B squad automatic weapon. It also included a two-mile run with 100 meter sprint, long jump and shot put.

Military members belonging to the MEPS, recruiting services and local military units got to shoot, ruck march, swim



Capt. Mathew Benasuly, Atlanta executive officer, completes the swimming portion of the German Sports Badge competition

and take part in track and field events to earn the two awards.

The competition ran two consecutive weekends. Eighty-one shooting badges – 29 gold, 25 silver, and 27 bronze were earned.

The German badge

cadre awarded more than 25 military participants the German Sports badge.

This was a unique opportunity for many participants. The visiting German soldiers said they planned to make it an annual event.

Kansas City hosts college, career fair

The Kansas City MEPS hosted its 2nd Annual College and Career Fair.

The goal was to provide staff members, recruiters, liaisons, spouses and family members with information about colleges, universities, technical schools, and other resources such as Free Application for Federal Student Aid, scholarships, financial aid, student loan repayment, and veteran information.

The fair brought experts together to help people further their educations and advise them on how to receive certification for the skills they already have.

The first career fair, held June 20, 2011, was primarily attended by MEPS staff members.

Eight representatives from local colleges and universities attended the first career fair.

This year K. J. Heather Kappes, MEPS education

services specialist, was instrumental in expanding the scope.

Twenty-two local and distant colleges and universities and resource representatives attended this year's fair.

Attendance also increased. Invitations went out to MEPS staff members, all service members in the MEPS area of operation, their spouses and family members.

Representatives came from as far away as Chicago; Dodge City, Kan.; Irving, Texas; Manassas, Va.; and Clinton, Ind.

The representatives were the outreach liaisons for military, retired military and federal employees. They provided guidance and expertise in serving military veterans and federal civilian workers.

The representatives explained the financial aid process, programs and oth-



Advertising for the college and career fair helped boost attendance.

er funding resources that serve active and retired military, spouses, family members and federal workers.

Schools sending representative included DeVry University, ITT Tech, University of Missouri-Kansas City, Kansas State University, Ashford University, Bellevue University, Grantham University, Mid America Nazarene University, Veteran Administration, Tricare and Dodge City Community College.

Most of the representatives were either prior service or had some affiliation with the armed forces.

For example, retired Col.

Larry Lyons from Dodge City Community College, the vice president of community and industrial relations, recently initiated a helicopter training program. He previously served as an Army field artillery observer.

Ed Mounts from Ameri-

can Public University, a retired sergeant major, is the coordinator for the Military Outreach Education Program.

They made presentations on attending their programs in class settings and distance learning programs.

The fair was a success based on comments from attendees and the representatives.

Both groups said the event was positive, informative, and one they would like to attend in the future.

Attendees felt the fair provided one-on-one time with the various representatives and let them compare different programs and resources, and have questions answered.

Representatives were thankful to have the opportunity to help people with their educational plans and to have a forum where they could explain how military skills transfer over to the civilian sector.

Representatives said this was one of the best college and career fairs they had ever attended and they appreciated the MEPS commander taking the time to present representatives with certificates of appreciation.



An attendee discusses educational opportunities with a university representative.

Phoenix teams up with Ronald McDonald to help othen

By Capt. Jeremy Gumeringer
Operations Officer
Phoenix MEPS

The Phoenix MEPS has again helped feed needy families who are receiving medical care from around the southwest.

The MEPS contribution is through the Phoenix Area Ronald McDonald House Charities.

For 37 years, Ronald McDonald House has provided a "home-away-from-home" for families, allowing them to stay close by their hospitalized child at little or no cost for families.

Ronald McDonald House Charities is a non-profit organization with more than 300 houses in 56 countries.

It began in 1974 with former Philadelphia Eagle tight end Fred Hill. Hill's daughter was diagnosed with leukemia. The Hills had to camp out in hospitals to stay close to their daughter.

The Hills laid the foundations of the Ronald McDonald House with their charity, Eagles Fly for Leukemia.

Through several contacts at hospitals and through the Eagles' General Management, Hill's charity linked up with Ed Rensi, a McDonalds regional manager.

Rensi and the local McDonalds advertising agency launched the Shamrock Shake promotion in support of Eagles Fly. The proceeds purchased a house near the hospital.

Many families come from hundreds of miles away to receive medical care at the nationally renowned Phoenix Children's Hospital.

The Ronald McDonald House provides an aspect



Members of the Phoenix MEPS staff take a break with Ronald McDonald.

of medical care, love and support.

At the Ronald McDonald House every family can expect a secure, monitored facility with a support staff 24 hours a day, a home cooked meal every night, private rooms, play areas for children, internet access and many other features.

The friendly and safe environment allows families to focus on love and support.

The Phoenix MEPS has been able to lend a helping hand.

Every quarter the Command Support Group and Readiness Support Group work together to plan and coordinate a dinner night at the Ronald McDonald House.

The Phoenix staff collected donations and prepared a full meal for the

families at the Ronald McDonald House.

Everything from planning the meal to cleanup is coordinated and executed by the MEPS staff to ensure the families don't have to worry about dinner on top of the stress at the hospital.

The most recent meal consisted of fried chicken, macaroni and cheese, corn and mashed potatoes with gravy.

For Tech. Sgt. Natasha Washington-Brown, RSG president, the experience is about more than just the act itself.

"The most rewarding way to find myself as a person is to lose 'myself' in the service of helping others," she said

For Karen Duffy, Phoenix administrative assistant, "Giving back makes me feel needed and gives

me greater purpose in life. I thank the Ronald McDonald House for letting us prepare a hot meal for a good cause".

The MEPS staff served more than 35 people from eight families that night. It has served more than 200 people from more than 50 families to date.

The interaction with the families shows the community does care and gives families hope in dark times.

The Ronald McDonald House has become the cornerstone event for the MEPS every quarter, with staff from all sections participating.

"The experience of sharing and giving at the Ronald McDonald House is worthwhile in many ways, Temi Balogun, supervisory health technician, said. "I cannot wait to come back again!"

Silent auctions help Spokane raise funds for special events

Since the Amusement Vending Machine Fund program was discontinued in December 2010, money for special events such as organization day and holiday parties has been a little tight at some stations.

The Spokane MEPS Readiness Support Group has come up with an easy way to replace some of the lost funds.

Leaf Rich, Spokane's RSG leader and test control officer, suggests holding silent auctions.

"We do silent auctions twice a year," he said, "one in the September-October time frame and one on March or April.

"We ask folks to bring in decent items they no longer need or use, like smaller kids' bikes, bike racks, camping gear, favorite food items like pies, ribs, and cookies; other items like ceiling fans, home décor, the commander's parking spot, donated gift cards, shoes, used power tools, dishes, hunting gear, etc."

"We usually run the auctions from Wednesday through Friday of the following week," Rich said. "This gives folks time to get their donated items

“For the last minute we use an ASVAB testing timer with beeper. We tell folks that we are in the last minute of bidding which is an open verbal bidding minute – no more writing on bid sheets.”

Leaf Rich, Spokane Readiness Support Group leader

in, and time for the whole adventure of the event to build with everyone at the MEPS.

Each item has a bid sheet which Rich makes and sets out. As bids get filled in and written on during the 8-day period, he starts to rank order the items from lowest bids to highest bids.

"On the second to the last day we publish a schedule that tells everyone in the MEPS when each item will be closed out on Friday," Rich said. "Smaller bid items are earlier in the morning, but not before about 10 a.m. The higher priced items run later around lunch.

"We close out 3-5 items

at a time," he said. "Here's the fun part at the close. We announce over the loud speaker when each group of items closes for anyone who didn't see the published close-out schedule. The idea is maximum participation which also means more money for the RSG."

"We also e-mail the close-out schedule to spouses and family members at home who might want their MEPS employee to bid on something," Rich said. "For the last minute we use an ASVAB testing timer with beeper. We tell folks that we are in the last minute of bidding which is an open verbal bidding minute – no

more writing on bid sheets.

"In this last minute we have the most fun with certain items, (people can) openly and verbally raise each other's bids for that Halloween decoration they just have to have. I say \$14, you say \$15, and so on until the timer goes off.

"I have the master bid close-out sheet and record everything as they close," Rich said. "We send e-mails to everyone to pay for their items soonest, and collect all the money within five days."

Rich said it's much easier to do two big pushes a year than "passing the hat" every month or so.

"We found that some employees just get tired of the constant RSG 'money-grubbing,'" he said.

The station has held silent auctions since March 2007 and has averaged nearly \$1,000 profit per auction.

As a reminder, MEPS should always check the legality of a fund-raiser with the command's staff judge advocate before proceeding. Contact Lilly Dixon, command paralegal at (847) 688-3680, Ext. 7555 or via e-mail at mildred.dixon@mepcom.army.mil.

Applause

These people were selected to attend the Army Sergeant Major Course: **1st Sgts. Hector Alfonso**, San Antonio MEPS; **Alan Cline**, Jacksonville MEPS; **Susana DeArmas**, San Juan MEPS; **Jason Filmore**, Honolulu MEPS; **George Hunter Jr.**, Lansing MEPS; **Leona McKoy**, Tampa MEPS; **Rebbia Parker**,

Boston MEPS; **Roger Rendon**, Los Angeles MEPS; and **Keith Stewart**, Fort Dix MEPS. Also, four former MEPS senior enlisted advisors were selected to attend the Army Sergeant Major Course and promotion to sergeant major: **Master Sgts. Nathaniel Francis**, Boston MEPS; **Peter Robles**, Springfield MEPS; **Sean Kirk**, Spokane MEPS; and

McManus Suzuki, Seattle MEPS

Portland, Maine
Maj. Todd Mitchell, commander, selected for promotion to lieutenant colonel.

Portland, Ore.
Maj. Davy Godfrey, MEPS commander, Certificate of

Athletic Achievement for scoring 294 on the Army Physical Fitness Test.

TSgt Trinidad Villa, medical specialist, Certificate of Athletic Achievement for scoring 93.5 on the Air Force Assessment.

Springfield
Maj. William Willey, commander, selected for promotion to lieutenant colonel

New faces

Boise

1st Lt. Sade Williams
Assistant Operations Officer
Years of military service: 4
Last assignment: Aide-de-camp, Camp Arifjan, Kuwait
Diversions: Writing, fencing (the sport), cooking.
First impressions: Her smile is contagious!

Pittsburgh

Maj. Regina I. Telado
Commander
Years of service: 17
Previous assignment: Officer in charge of the Human Resources Operations Branch, 593rd Sustainment Brigade, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.
Military Education: Intermediate Level Education.

Portland, Ore.

Capt. Andrew C. Ash
Operations Officer
Years of service: Five

Boise

Bob Gallemore
Test Clerk
Years of military service: More than 20.
Years of government service: Six
Departing for: Retirement.
Award: Boise MEPS Certificate of Appreciation.
Most remembered for: His dry sense of humor.

Omaha

Bernadine M. Hoose
Lead Human Resources Assistant
Years of service: 44, 24 with Omaha MEPS.
Departing for: Retirement.
Parting thought: "I have enjoyed working with MEPS personnel and all branches of the service."
Future plans: Continue to work part time at Wal-Mart and enjoy the grandchildren
Gerald M. Mikula
Test Coordinator
Years of service: 24, 12 with

Douglas Jones

Medical Technician
Years of military service: 8
Previous assignment: Infantry squad leader.
Capt. Douglas R. Shonk
Executive Officer
Years of service: 10
Previous assignment Logistics officer, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas.

Spokane

Lt. Cmdr. Jeffrey Morin
Commander
Years of service: 13
Previous assignment: Personnel planner and assistant chief, Navy Desk, U.S. Southern Command, Miami.
Civilian education: Bachelor of arts degree in chemistry from Vassar College; Master of education degree from the College of Charleston, S.C.; certified professional in human resources from the

the Omaha MEPS.
Departing for: Retirement.
Parting thought: "I enjoyed working with the Western Sector staff and fellow test coordinators assigned to 1st Battalion. As for my co-workers, it has been a pleasure working with a great staff who is dedicated and provide a team effort."
Future plans: Fishing.

Pittsburgh

Lt. Col. Will Neubauer
Commander
Years of service: 24
Departing for: Deputy human resources officer, III Corps, Fort Hood, Texas.
Award: Defense Meritorious Service Medal
Most remembered for: Upholding standards, maintaining a professional "curb appeal" and the ability to strike up a conversation with anyone.
1st Lt. Joshua S. Freeman

Human Resources Certification Institute.
Military education: Officer Indoctrination School, Senior Officer Legal Course, Joint Professional Military Education Phase I from Naval War College.
Diversions: Woodworking, traveling, outdoor activities and spending time with his family
First impressions: "USMEPCOM has an interesting mission, accomplished by a diverse staff with a wealth of knowledge and experience. I am excited to be part of the USMEPCOM team."

Capt. Adam J. Willingham
Executive Officer
Years of service: 10
Last assignment: Ammunition officer, 6th Ordnance Battalion
Civilian Education: Bachelor of arts degree in liberal arts; master of business administration degree

Fond farewells

Assistant Operations Officer
Years of service: Nine
Award: Joint Service Commendation Medal

Portland, Ore.

Capt. John T. Miller
Operations Officer
1st Sgt. Michael Martinez
Senior Enlisted Advisor

Shreveport

Jody Walker
Budget Technician
Years of service: 30
Departing for: Retirement.

Spokane

Cmdr. Olivia L. Bethea
Commander
Departing for: Executive officer, Training Support Center, Great Lakes, Ill.
1st Lt. James A. Hopkins Jr.
Departing for: 420th Chemical Battalion, Yakima, Wash.
Best remembered for: Operational additional support.
We wish we could have his

advanced masters certificate in Lean 6 Sigma with Master Black Belt Certification; graduate certificate in quality manufacturing with Six Sigma Black Belt.
Military education: Company Commanders Course, Combined Logistics Course, Engineer Officer Basic Course
Diversions: Race Cars

Capt. Crystal D. Moore
Executive Officer
Years of service: Eight.
Entered the military in 2004 as a private first class, commissioned in 2007
Last assignment: Adjutant General Captains Career Course, Fort Jackson, S.C.
Diversions: Spending quality time with her family and daughters, outdoor activities, and exploring and finding new things together.

term extended but his battalion wants him back.

Congrats

Headquarters
Gunnery Sgt. Ramiro D. Banda, Human Resources Directorate, Headquarters 2nd Half Semi-Annual Senior Enlisted Military Member of the Year.

Indianapolis

Justin Smith, Marine Corps service liaison, meritoriously promoted to gunnery sergeant. A meritorious promotion allows Marines who stand out above their peers to compete against before a board of more senior Marines.
Carlton Amerson, human resources assistant, earned a bachelor of science degree in business management from the University of Phoenix.

Flag Day



June 14th