

UNITED STATES MILITARY ENTRANCE PROCESSING COMMAND

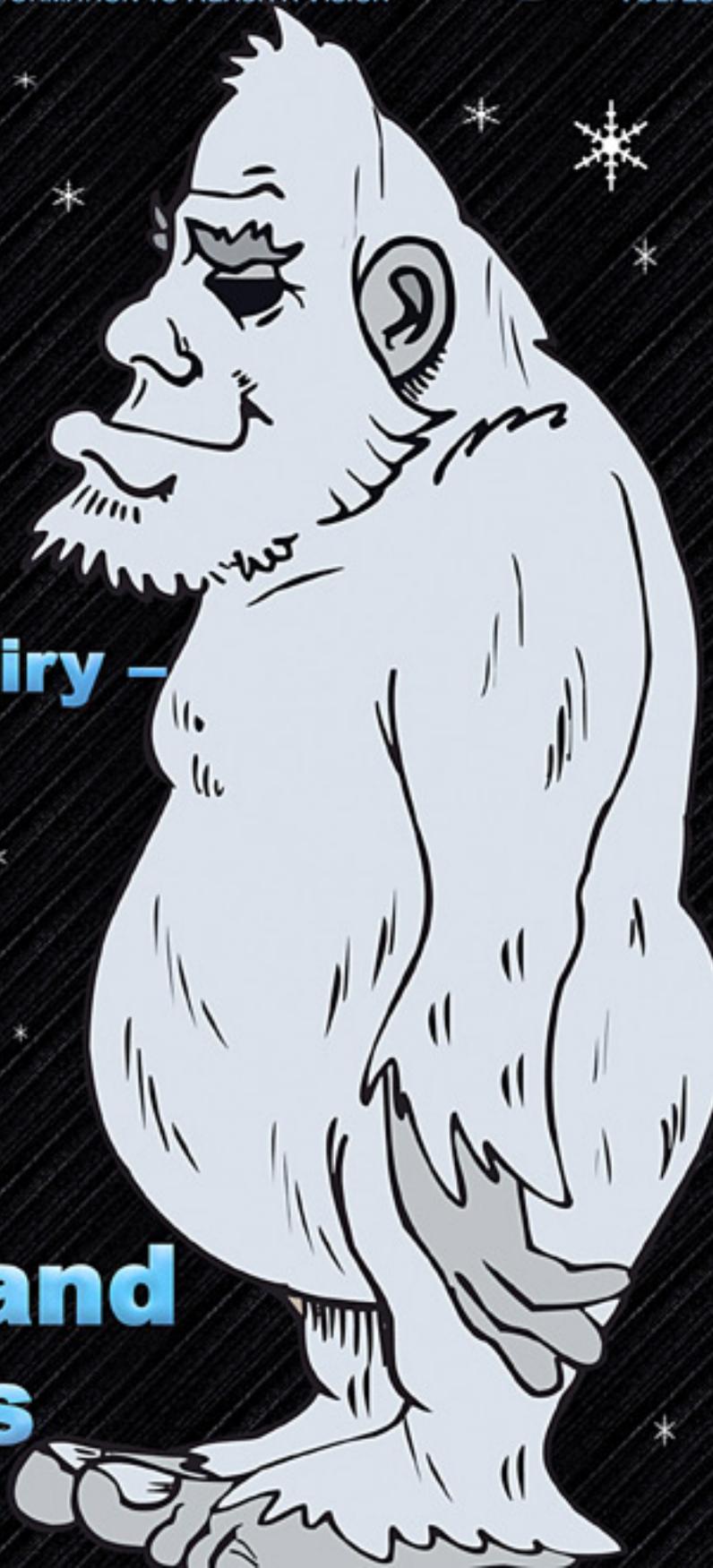
# Messenger

SHARING INFORMATION TO REACH A VISION

VOL. 25, No. 3

**It's  
big and hairy –  
but don't  
be afraid**

**Command  
Metrics**



# Commander's Commentary

I want to address my rationale for introducing metrics throughout USMEPCOM, how they fit in our command and the Department of Defense, and how they affect and assist our work.

Throughout my career, I have seen military organizations use metrics. In recruiting, they are a way of life. In that environment, work is measured in multiple ways — constantly. In fact, metrics are the lifeblood of military recruiting.

In order to understand why our command needs metrics, one must first comprehend standardization and “improving the product.” The term standardization does not imply every MEPS will process people in an identical manner and environment. In this context, standardization means there’s a standard expectation of services — those we provide to applicants and the recruiting services — and a standard outcome — the product we provide our nation.

In order to have standardized expectations and outcomes, we must measure our performance. Metrics allow us to do that and improve our productivity. They can tell an organization where it’s been, where it is, and where it’s going. When an organization can see where it’s headed, it’s capable of changing course, if necessary.

As DoD resources tighten, USMEPCOM will have to compete for its fair share. Metrics will enable us to obtain necessary resources by demonstrating how the command is providing quality service.

In general, we will generate metrics in three areas. The first is resource-driven. These measure our performance and enable us to compete for resources outside the command. These metrics include measurements that are tied to performance ratios, e.g., the cost of processing an applicant.

The second is a set of metrics related to strategic goals. These measure results from the implementation of change. They ensure that the strategic changes we’re making don’t inadvertently alter something that was already working.

The third set of metrics is tied to the MEPS. These are the areas that are within our area of responsibility. These are specific, product-related metrics — a series of numbers related to our core functions — testing, processing, physical qualification.

Our goal is to pull most of this data directly from the MEPCOM Integrated Resource System. Without a lot of “stubby pencil” calculations, MEPS personnel will be able to view metrics on MEPSNet and see how they’re performing against our standards and other MEPS.

The first set of MEPS metrics will include operations and medical data. These metrics will enable us to analyze ourselves, and improve our services. As a command, if we can’t analyze our performance, we’re hindered. Keep in mind that our first set of metrics will not be 100 percent complete or accurate, but they will be a start point.

MEPS will have the opportunity to look at the good things they’re doing or the things they need to work on. If a MEPS is within a band of excellence — that’s great. If it’s outside the band — we begin to ask, “why?” Is it an issue of resources, facilities, personnel?

MEPS can best assist in this effort by providing clarity. We don’t need to measure everything. If we measure too much, we’ll get paralyzed, buried in statistics. We need you to help us determine the right measures. And, there will be nothing secretive about this process. Ultimately the data will be available for our customers as well.

Metrics are not punitive. If we want to solve problems and properly distribute resources, we must measure performance. On the bright side, we will reward folks for doing well.

Metrics fit our transformation as well. As we make changes to processes and systems, we have to measure our performance to see if we’ve, in fact, made the process more effective. All the pieces fit together — metrics, transformation, the A-Z Processing Review, and technology improvements.

Metrics will help everyone — from USMEPCOM, recruiting services, and applicants to the American taxpayer. When we identify ways to make our service more effective and efficient, we improve the product — and everyone wins.



Col. David L. Slotwinski

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. L. Slotwinski".

DAVID L. SLOTWINSKI  
Colonel, U.S Army  
Commanding

# M

## Dial M for Metrics

When your very survival is at stake, who you gonna call?

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## U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command

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## Messenger

Vol. 25, No. 3  
September-November  
2003

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The Messenger is authorized by Army Regulation 360-1 for members of the U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command. Contents of this publication are not necessarily official views of, or endorsed by USMEPCOM, the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government. Articles about MEPS were submitted by that MEPS unless indicated otherwise. USMEPCOM publishes the Messenger bimonthly using offset printing. Printed circulation: 3,000.

# *When your very survival is at stake, who you gonna call? Just Dial*

By Tech. Sgt. Gary J. Kunich  
*Messenger* Associate Editor

If there was ever a list made of Things That Are Probably True, this one might be at the top of the list: If it's big, and it's hairy, it's probably not something you should touch.

But sitting in a corner cubicle of USMEPCOM Headquarters, Maj. Richard Spainhour said it's nothing to be scared of, and it's even OK to touch. He also said it's not anything new, and it's nothing visionary.

And if USMEPCOM wants to survive, it's something that must be done, and he's just one of the people to do it.

"It's big, hairy, high-level math," he said, in reference to the metrics program, a massive Transformation undertaking that began about 14 months ago to see what the command does, how well the command is doing it, and what can be done to make it better.

Spainhour is an operations research analyst the Army has sent to graduate school to understand this complicated math and how to scientifically apply it to make everyday life run smoother. Now he wants to explain how it will help you, and USMEPCOM.

"It's about solving problems that lend themselves to a mathematical solution, as opposed to an equation scribbled on the back of a napkin," Spainhour said. "That's necessary when you are solving problems so complex that it requires more than just common sense to come up with a reasonable solution."

Huh?!?

Stick with his thought process here.

"Depending on how you define it, there are over 500 processes that happen to an applicant from the time the recruiter drops him off in the morning, if you count each part of the eye exam, each part of the hearing test, and every part of the doctor's exam. Now you multiply that by all the kids who process at the L.A. MEPS every day, and you multiply that times the 65 MEPS scattered throughout the United States, and then you figure five armed services, and two genders, it only makes sense to make it run as efficiently as humanly possible, and right now, we're not always doing that."

A recent *Marine Corps Times* article highlighted those areas where the command

## M *for Metrics*

has fallen short. One applicant waited 17 hours before being told to go home and come back another day. Another would-be sailor had to hold off going to boot camp because his name was misspelled on the forms. Others come and wait long hours before getting a physical or learn quickly that the military's "hurry up and wait" can sometimes begin before they even get in a military uniform.

Bottom line is this: it needs to be fixed, Spainhour said.



Just so we're clear here ... Big, hairy Big Foot, best you don't touch. Big, hairy math with the command's metrics program, that's OK to touch.

"The facts are clear," he said. "More and more, your average American is not fit enough to serve in the forces. Furthermore, all of the (military jobs) are getting more complex. It's not just about humping a rifle. You have to know a lot as the Army experiments with new, highly technical weapons, requiring very sharp and very savvy people. So now you need to find the strongest and the smartest. That means we're going to have to go after the top athletes, the brightest, the smartest, and the most fit. And those people aren't going to be content to sit in front of a big screen TV for four hours at a MEPS while they wait to get a blood test or eye exam. They are going to be recruited by the top schools and jobs, and we had better take care of them."

Spainhour said when the command is able to come up with ways to help the applicants, that in turn makes the job easier for those processing the applicants.

USMEPCOM's Commander, Col. David Slotwinski first pushed the metrics program when he took over as the commander last year. But such changes don't come overnight, and it's not as easy as reciting magical incantations to speed things up. It involves using non-standardized business practices, enhancing business practices, and leveraging technology to make everything work smoother, according to background papers on metrics.

The command decided to initially focus on the medical and operations side of the house. Before finding out if anything was broken, the command first had to figure out what was "normal" processing. To that end, USMEPCOM teamed up top brass and great thinkers from various MEPS to brainstorm more than 30 areas that needed to be measured and recorded, because as Spainhour said, you can't fix something if you don't know how well you're doing it. From there, the list was pared down to 17 — everything from qualifying applicants medically the first time to how many visits it takes to a MEPS before an applicant becomes a service member, to the accuracy of personnel packets.

Before anyone gripes about having to do extra work measuring and recording stuff for number crunchers at headquarters, Spainhour is quick to point out that most of



**Do you measure up? Maj. Rich Spainhour, the focal point for the command's metrics program, is on a mission to start keeping track of what USMEPCOM does, and how well it does it. Keeping metrics, he said, is nothing new for the military, and will ensure the command's survival.**

## Dial M for Metrics

Continued from Page 4

this information is already collected and posted on different systems. Now, it's a matter of bringing it together in one place.

"Six of the 17 (topics) are already on Quick-R," USMEPCOM's automated database that's been around since 1997, Spainhour said.

Though the reported numbers aren't yet validated, it is a starting point to raise the bar. For example, according to that data, one-time medical processing varies between 74.5 percent in Eastern Sector to 77.13 percent in Western Sector. Those who were able to delay enlist in one visit to Eastern Sector numbered 49.43 percent, but in Western Sector, the number was 52.53 percent. That doesn't necessarily mean it is being done better at one place or another.

"You can do damage to an organization if you measure the wrong thing," Spainhour said. "We're not doing anyone a favor if we get (chief medical officers) to reduce the (time it takes) to give a physical, if more applicants aren't making it through basic training for problems we should have caught. You have to learn how to balance the two to come up with the optimal level of quality and quantity."

John McKinney, who works with Spainhour with the metrics program, is responsible for bringing the other 11 metrics topics into the same format and on line so they can be accessed by all the MEPS. He said as more of the information becomes accessible, it will "level the playing field" across the MEPS.

"(The MEPS) will be able to look at the percentages and see where they stand," he said. "At first, some people thought this would be a punitive measure where if you're not measuring up to a particular standard, you'll get a knock on the door. Actually, what it helps to do is to get everyone into a particular band of excellence. Then, once everyone is there, raise the bar to make further improvements."

McKinney said there were initial challenges of getting people over the shock of such a major overhaul, "but as more and more people use this, they will see the power of having this information on their desktops."

The beauty of such a program, Spainhour added, is that to most of the MEPS, the transition will be transparent. But some processing stations aren't content to wait for the headquarters to do the work. The Fargo MEPS already implemented metrics to chart their own performance.

When the new commander, Marine Corps Maj. Brian Kalk took command in August, his predecessor, Maj. Todd Fey left him with a list of metrics, tracking at least 10 different items at the MEPS.

"We're continuing everything he had done because it helps us establish facts based on real information instead of anecdotal information," Kalk said. "If we have a problem in medical, we want to see if it's a recruiter error on the prescreen, or if it's an applicant error, or whatever. If we have a problem with one of the recruiters, we can go back to the (recruiting commands) to address that and fix the processes across the board."

Kalk said it may be easier for his MEPS to chart the processes because of the size of his MEPS — they process 12 to 15 applicants a day — but it is still a challenge.

"We have the flexibility, but on days we get heavy loads, that is time we're taking away from something else. But as we get up to speed on it, and get that information in a spreadsheet, I know it will get easier, and it will help us. If it helps us to pinpoint why we're sending applicants out for medical consults, we can fix that, cut down on the consults, and that will save us time and money in the future."

It helps, he said, that the Marines have been a metrics-focused service for the last eight years or so, when the former commandant, Gen. Charles Krulak, made it a part of everyday Marine life.

"He was all about 'Show me the money and that's what we'll base our decisions on,'" Kalk said.



# Dial M for Metrics —

Continued from page 5

That doesn't surprise Spainhour. He said all the branches of the military use the measuring stick in one way or another.

"Picture a day, not too long ago, when none of the services had a physical fitness standard," he said. "Everyone was just expected to be rough, tough, and hump a rucksack. That wasn't so long ago. That was when my father was in the Army, and there was no standardized physical fitness test. The Army eventually realized you just couldn't rely on that, and there needed to be some test to make sure people were physically capable. It was the same thing for a rifle marksmanship. At one point, commanders at each base got to make up the standard. When word came that it would be measured, there was a lot of friction, a lot of consternation. How are we going to do that? Now, it's normal. How do we not do it? It's done in every job. If you're a trigger-puller or a tanker, you need to know that weapon is going to work, so you measure what's available and what's not. It's the same thing."

With that in mind, he said USMEPCOM has two choices: stay bogged down using the same processing techniques used when Elvis Presley joined the Army, or update with the times.

"As we strive to fix things, we need the best technology; we need money, and initia-

tive. We aren't going to pry that money from the people who have it without clear ideas on how to fix and improve things that have been broken for weeks or years. In some cases, it's not broken, but our process for putting youth in uniform hasn't changed since the 1950s. Everything around us has changed since the 1950s, and now we need to change.

"We need to go back to the people in Washington and tell them, 'Look, we're taking something that has worked for 50 years, we want you to give us millions of dollars, and we want to completely rewrite regulations.' They are going to want to know how that is going to make their life better, how that is going to make the military better, and we had better be able to articulate our answers."

Why?  
"Because without data," Spainhour said, "you're just another guy with an opinion."

Making those changes isn't just making busy work. It's ensuring the command's survival, he said.

"If we don't pinpoint where the changes need to be made, and if we don't make those changes, we will be the albatross around the



And one more time ... big, hairy moustache, bad touch; big, hairy metrics, good touch.

accession community's neck, and we will be jettisoned. If we want to be relevant, we need to do it."

While he's on the cutting-edge of the USMEPCOM Transformation, Spainhour won't be around to see if the right changes are made. He's soon due for an assignment, and someone else will fill his slot. In order for this to work, he said it has to be a committed effort by the current commander, and those who follow, to see the changes through.

And then in 2010 he'll see if that actually happened.

"Seven years from now, right before I retire and leave the Army, I'll go online to see if USMEPCOM still exists. If it does, I'm convinced it will be because of all the coordinating we've done to make this program work."

## MEPS View: Making Transformation a success

Transformation is the latest Department of Defense push to operate smartly and adapt to the world around us. With that in mind, we asked, "What must be done to ensure Transformation is a success and not relegated to the buzz word grave yard?" This is what you had to say:



Master Sgt. Bart Heidrich

### Master Sgt. Bart Heidrich Jacksonville MEPS

"The military today is well into Transformation. The services need to continue to keep strict rules and guidelines, and to continue to strive for those quality and qualified individuals, in order for a complete Transformation."

### Retired Air Force Master Sgt. Randy Chase Knoxville MEPS

"In order to ensure the Transformation way of life, it must be done with a successful management practice. Whether tracking quality of work, conducting A-Z reviews, or measuring work output — it can only be successful if it is properly sold and



Randy Chase

communicated to employees. If it cannot be sold or communicated to employees effectively, then the process will die a fatal death."

### Staff Sgt. Chris Kay Milwaukee MEPS

"For Transformation to be successful, people will have to



Staff Sgt. Chris Kay

accept what it is. In my opinion, Transformation is taking an internal look at self and service to promote a positive change and evolution. This should be initiated from top to bottom simultaneously, embracing a whole new mindset, new goals, and it should create training to reinforce the ideology."

# Degree helps transform yourself

By Command Sgt. Maj. J. Kelly Fain  
USMEPCOM Senior Enlisted Adviser

I am sometimes asked what has been one of the most important ingredients of my successful Army career, and without hesitation, I tell people it is my bachelor's degrees.

I am not telling you this to brag, but to help you also get ahead in life and in the military. When we talk about metrics and keeping track of what we do, that does not just apply to the job. It also applies to our personal lives and educational accomplishments. Getting a degree should never be an afterthought. Every single enlisted person — whether he or she is in the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, or Coast Guard, should strive for that bachelor's degree. It will not only open doors for promotion, but will give you a secure future when you separate or retire from the military.

Unfortunately, not everyone strives for this degree. Only 4.6 percent of Air Force enlisted has a bachelor's degree, followed by 3.7 percent of Army enlisted. The numbers are slightly smaller for the Navy and Marines. Why do so few have this important ingredient of success? Some people are working on it, but it is a slow process when you are working and raising a family. Others think it is too hard. And still others do not even try because they think it is out of reach or they do not care. With an assignment to USMEPCOM, you should most certainly be in the first category. You are not living in the field,

## NCO TIME

**“You are not living in the field, and you are not deploying on a moment's notice, so you have no excuse.”**



and you are not deploying on a moment's notice, so you have no excuse.

How can you get that degree? In the spirit of Transformation and metrics, the first thing you need to do is take stock of your college accomplishments so far. It only takes a small amount of time to see an education counselor. If you are at a MEPS without an education center, call your nearest base. Do not sell yourself

short. You would be surprised at the number of college credits you have already earned just for going through basic training, job training, and military schools.

Once you know the number of credits you have already, you need to find out how many you need for the degree, and then set a goal for yourself. You will not accomplish the goal if you do not take the most important step — actually signing up for a course.

I got a lot of my college credits while I was in Korea, and anyone who has been stationed there knows how demanding that kind of assignment can be. But while many of my fellow soldiers were participating in frivolous activities, I was studying, taking tests, and getting college credits. If you are not the classroom type, then look into distance education.

Regardless of how you do it, just do it and keep doing it until you reach your goal. Give yourself a check-up every six months. Find out where you are in that march toward your final goal. When you set goals, see where you stand, and then keep tabs on where you are going, you will be more motivated to get things done.

There is so much talk nowadays about making our pay commensurate with our duties. We are already asked to do a lot, and those responsibilities become greater every day. Yet, if a senior NCO expects to compete with officers in the pay department, the senior NCO should get that degree. If you don't have yours, then hit the books, and start measuring yourself for success.

## Fallen San Jose Marine was a friend to all, and a hero

By Marine Staff Sgt. Carlos Davila  
San Jose MEPS

The morning of March 28 seemed like any regular MEPS morning, as the halls were filled with the sounds of applicants who would be future soldiers, Marines, sailors, airmen, and Coast Guardsmen. While the shippers were filled with excitement, the staff was quiet and more somber.

It was on this day we learned that a particular Marine, a recruiter liaison who left months

earlier for a new assignment, would not be returning home. Gunnery Sgt. Joe Menusa, a 33-year old Marine stationed with 1<sup>st</sup> Combat Engineer Battalion, was killed in Iraq.

Menusa, a veteran of the first Gulf war, grew up in San Jose, Calif. He returned home to recruit young men and women into the Marine Corps, a job he truly loved.

When he came to the MEPS as a recruiter liaison, he quickly made friends among the staff. He was not just a leader of Ma-

rines, but also a man with a genuine concern for people. He brought a certain vibe to the office, and on many occasions, shared much needed laughter. He was a proud father of 3-year old Joshua Menusa, and he always talked about his wife, Stacy.

He loved being a Marine and looked forward to leading young troops. As we reflect on this tragedy, we are reminded that among us there are heroes. He was one. We should never forget him and all that he stood for.



Gunnery Sgt. Menusa and his wife, Stacy

## Hotel room for 400? Not for the night, just a banquet room for testing, please

The Buffalo MEPS staff didn't accept the status quo or give in to a few challenges before testing an entire junior class — almost 400 students — compared to previous years' totals of 25 or less.

And the MEPS delivered when Jamestown High School in Jamestown, N.Y., scheduled — for the first time — their entire junior class. Since 1997, the school has never exceeded 25 students, and usually even a lot less than that. During the 2001 school year, only eight students tested.

This year, the school worked with one of the service recruiters and became familiar with the idea of testing a larger number of students. At that point, the education services specialist, Debra Utecht began working the new program into the scheme and the school was more than willing to participate.

There was a catch, though. In the past, the school did not have room to hold such a test,

and students instead used the local post office. But even that wasn't big enough for a group of 400, and the school didn't want to get into the logistics of finding a better place. That's when the Buffalo MEPS testing section snapped into action.

Between Utecht and Bette Chapman, test coordinator, the team placed calls and searched for a place that could handle the load in a timely and cost-effective fashion.

After searching the community, the team settled on the Holiday Inn's largest banquet room.

But this wasn't the end of the journey.

The school agreed to two testing sessions, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. Contract and organization arrangements were necessary also. In order to provide the utmost customer service, the Buffalo MEPS arranged for their testing program to administer and provide support for the sessions.

The team concentrated on all areas to provide successful testing sessions. The team worked on various seating arrangements that would provide an environment that was testing friendly as well as attendance effective, another request made by the school. With such a large number of expected students at an alternate location, within walking distance from the school, officials wanted an accurate account for the students. Each student had a pass that test administrators collected, and compared to a list provided by the school.

The support from the entire testing department, as well as from each of the services, was fantastic and led to a positive and successful testing day. The program continues the customer service factor as Utecht follows up with the school and students with their score interpretation.



### A little young to enlist, but what the heck ...

"... And I promise to obey my parents, the rules of the house, and to keep my room clean ..." The Indianapolis MEPS held a not-so-typical swear-in ceremony for some not-so-typical applicants — the sons and daughters of MEPS and liaison staff members. Everyone was encouraged to bring in their children for the Month of the Military Child to see what mommy and daddy do at work, and learn a little bit about the military. The applicants took a modified ASVAB test and processed through the medical and operation sections. They finished their afternoon with a mock swear-in ceremony, and when they were asked, "Who would like to join the military?" they all shouted, "Me!"

## How we do it San Diego caters to 'Center of Influence'

The San Diego MEPS and the Southern California Army Recruiting Battalion recently cosponsored a "Center of Influence" event for high school and college educators to give an inside look at joining the military and processing through a MEPS.

Univision KBN, a local Hispanic television and radio station also attended the day-long event, which described how applicants process into the military and to learn about the education bridge to the processing mission.

In joint spirit, Joe Stephenson, an Army recruiting education services specialist, joined with John Stine, his counterpart from the MEPS, to explain the importance of the redesigned ASVAB Career Exploration Program, and how students can use the test to make career decisions, regardless if they join the military or not.

The television station shot footage during the day for a series of news stories called "Army 101," which airs in Spanish in San Diego County and Tijuana, Mexico. Since many applicants don't speak English as a native language, several of the guests wanted to know how proficiency tests are administered and handled.

Officials said the event served as a reminder of how important it is to engage local educators and the media to a better understanding of the military mission. This and similar goodwill community measures aim to counter negative military stereotypes and organizations that put out misleading information about military service.

# Son of 9/11 hero continues military tradition

By Sgt. 1st Class Robin Brown  
Army Public Affairs — New York Branch

Tradition may be an overly simplistic description of this soldier's dedication to service. At age 23, the compulsion to follow in his ancestors' footsteps is ever present. Joining the Army earlier this month, the newly enlisted private said, "My father was an (Army) intelligence analyst. He started in Vietnam with the 101<sup>st</sup> (Airborne) — the Special Forces. I grew up around it. I thought it was cool. I wanted to do the same."

Spec. Ronald Bucca, Jr. — the son of New York City fire marshal and 9/11 hero, Ronald Bucca, who lost his life in the terrorist attack — will be an Army intelligence analyst.

"I feel proud he is following his father's legacy," explains his uncle, Army Reserve Maj. Alfred Bucca. "I also have mixed feelings."

Uncle Alfred, who's assigned to the 301st Area Support Group at the Ernie Pyle Army Reserve Center on Fort Totten in Flushing, recently delivered the Oath of Enlistment to his nephew.

"He's following the family tradition, but there are risks involved."

"While we were driving to the MEPS at Fort Hamilton, he told me he was going to the same building where his father enlisted 30 years ago."

Bucca's father — Warrant Officer Ronald P. Bucca — was one of six Army reservists from the 77th Regional Support Command at Fort Totten killed in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in lower Manhattan. The Special Forces soldier was a 29-year Army veteran.

As the fire marshal, Bucca was assigned to the Engine 30 Firehouse — now the New York City Fire Department Museum. Bucca reached the crash zone on the 78th floor of the second tower, where they aided critically injured people trapped by the plane's impact.

"I am proud, but I am worried he is joining the Army," said Aunt Celest Bucca. "I understand he's compelled to follow in his father's footsteps. He was brought up to do the right thing and he's doing so."

The younger Bucca was in college at Tulane University in Louisiana on 9/11. Despite the family tragedy, he still graduated cum laude with a bachelor's degree in finance.



Spec. Ronald Bucca, Jr. — son of New York Fire Marshal Ronald Bucca, who lost his life in the 9/11 terrorist attacks, is sworn into the Army by his uncle, Army Reserve Maj. Alfred Bucca.

"Personally, I can't change the world, but you want to make sure no 9/11 happens again — no more fathers are lost," said the single soldier from New Rochelle. "I want to do anything I can to prevent another 9/11."

"At this time, the safety of our country is at risk. I enjoy living here, so let's step up and defend it."

Bucca comes from a long line of family members who answered that call. His great uncle Mathew Bucca served on the Navy's USS Waldron that cleared Tokyo Bay for the USS Missouri and Gen. Douglas MacArthur, signaling the surrender of Japan and end of World War II in the Pacific.

Great uncle, Johnny Orlando Bucca fought during World War II at the Battle of the Volga in Eastern Europe. He was later awarded the Bronze Star and a Purple Heart for his gallantry.

Grandfather Joseph A. Bucca served with the Coast Guard in the Pacific and another uncle, Robert Bucca, served with Army's 508th Infantry Regiment, part of the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, N.C.

## And then there were three ...

Staff Sgt. Anthony Louderback made the military a "family affair" recently when he recruited his twin sons, Justin and Anthony, into the Ohio National Guard at the Columbus MEPS. Louderback is an Army National Guard recruiter from Cincinnati, Ohio. Justin and Anthony both chose the health care profession and left for basic training in July.





Retired Maj. Gen. Harry Cochran swears in his grandson and other applicants at the Columbus MEPS. The elder Cochran flew in the Army Air Corps, a precursor to today's U.S. Air Force, which his grandson joined.

# Granddad flew 'em, grandson fixes 'em

By Master Chief Petty Officer Wayne Smith  
Columbus MEPS First Sergeant

Some who cross the threshold into the military join for the fun, the money, the college, the experience, or the patriotic calling. For some, they're inspired by glossy ads and fast-paced commercials. Others find the inspiration at home, and that's where Casey Cochran found his.

The 2001 Central Catholic High School graduate from Springfield, Ohio recently enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, continuing



Retired Maj. Gen. Harry L. Cochran signs his grandson's enlistment paperwork.

the Cochran family tradition of service in the Air Force.

It started more than 60 years ago, when his grandfather, Harry Cochran, a retired major general signed on with the U.S. Army Air Corps as an aviation cadet. Twenty-six years later, his father, Christopher Cochran, now a lieutenant colonel, enlisted in the Ohio Air National Guard as a communications center specialist.

Marking this special third generation accession, Maj. Gen. Cochran returned to duty to speak to and deliver the Oath of Enlistment to his grandson and 20 others shipping out.

"Incredible opportunities are before you," he told the group. "(You have) opportunities in education, training, advancement, increasing pay, improved living conditions and above all, the opportunity to establish and improve upon your personal and professional pride and sense of accomplishment. Now, you are the professional force that will carry us far into the future.

"Be all you can be," he added. "Take every advantage offered to you, always work for self-improvement, and check your appearance. Remember this and you will better serve yourself, The U.S. Armed Forces and The United States of America.

"I wish that I could trade places with you, and do it all again."

The elder Cochran's words echo his own accomplishments, that backed up his challenge to be all you can be. He served in various staff and command positions including fighter group commander and wing Commander. He flew fighters most of his career, from the P-40 to the F-16.

He served two combat operations tours in the Mediterranean theater during World War II, the first in B-25 Mitchell Bombers and the second in the P-51 Mustang Fighters. He retired from active duty in 1984. He maintains his flight status today and serves as an officer and flight instructor at the Aero Club at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

Casey's dad, Lt. Col. Cochran, received his commission in 1980 and is part of the 251st Combat Communications Group headquarters of the Ohio Air National Guard. He deployed overseas for eight months after 9-11, and is currently on active duty at Ramstein Air Base, Germany in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Casey's uncle, Geoff, served in the Air Force from 1986 to 1992, and was a KC-135 navigator who served during the Gulf War.

The latest addition to the Cochran legacy, Casey, is now attending basic training at Lackland Air Force Base, and will receive additional training in tactical aircraft maintenance, before becoming a crew chief for the U.S. Air Force.

# Time Tunnel

## *Jackson MEPS relives bloody Civil War battle*

By Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Nathan Ruska  
Messenger Staff Writer

The present met the past when the Jackson MEPS took a “time machine” trip for a special training day event to the Vicksburg National Military Park.

And if anyone thought this would be a ho-hum event, the historical excursion to a bloody Civil War battlefield proved to be anything but.

The “time machine” for this trip was actually a school bus the MEPS staff boarded to visit the site of a key Civil War battle.

“At first when we were leaving there was a lot of grumbling and complaining ... but by the end of the day everyone was glad they were able to attend,” said Capt. Oscar Mariona, operations officer at the Jackson MEPS. “It was an absolutely amazing trip

with the amount of graves and being able to see how close the actual hand-to-hand combat was on the battlefield.”

The City of Vicksburg was considered the keystone of the South due to its strategic position on the Mississippi River. The north saw it as the key to dividing the South in two and winning the Civil War.

The Campaign of Vicksburg began March 29, 1863, when Ulysses Grant marched through Louisiana, then cumulated with the

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Because of steep terrain, soldiers were forced to dismantle and carry the cannons while bloody fights took place in the trenches.

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The Jackson MEPS used training day to buff up on Civil War history at the nearby Vicksburg National Military Park.

siege of Vicksburg and the final surrender of the fortress on July 4.

Because the terrain is so steep, it was impossible for horses to maneuver, and soldiers were forced to dismantle and carry the cannons while bloody, hand-to-hand combat took place in the trenches and fields. The zig-zag trenches and shovel-dug tunnels remain throughout the park today.

The tour guide for the day painted a vivid picture for everyone of what life was like and the occurrences that took place in Vicksburg over the spring and early summer of 1863, said Aretha Lawson, who helped plan the trip.

“It was like you were there,” she said. “He really made things come alive for us.”



## FACILITIES UPDATE

### Retired combat vet lauds today's troops at Charlotte MEPS grand opening

Although working out of their new digs since late January, the Charlotte MEPS marked the event with a grand opening with special guests, including USMEPCOM Commander, Col. David Slotwinski, and retired Air Force Maj. Gen. Thomas Sadler, a veteran of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

Sadler, who has more than 37 years of active-duty time to his credit, was a combat pilot for all three wars, and he touched upon the importance of the military in the war on terror in Afghanistan and Iraq. He stressed the importance of the job that MEPS personnel do, as they are the first step to building the future of the American military. He offered words of wisdom and a great sense of humor.

Immediately following his speech, there was an official Oath of Enlistment ceremony, with each military branch represented by a liaison and an applicant enlisting into their service.

The Charlotte MEPS was previously located in the Charles R. Jonas Federal Building, in uptown Charlotte since Nov. 19, 1984.

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Guests and staff members were on hand to celebrate the grand opening of the Charlotte MEPS. Retired Air Force Maj. Gen. Thomas Sadler and Col. David Slotwinski, USMEPCOM Commander, cut the ribbon to the entrance.

# 'Don't trust anybody'

## *First sergeant's tale of woe, a cautious tale for all*

By Tech. Sgt. Gary J. Kunich  
*Messenger Associate Editor*

He didn't know it, but Army 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Finn Carlton from the Lansing, Mich., Military Entrance Processing Station, had the law looking for him in Greenville, N.C. But those things happen when you're busted for driving without a license and then fail to show up in court.

At least the guy dresses nice. He wears Tommy Hilfiger clothes, and bought a gold watch and diamond ring on credit, not to mention a lot of cell phones, some children's clothes, and a flat screen television.

There's only one problem.

1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Finn Carlton isn't exactly 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Finn Carlton. At least the real Carlton isn't the same guy who used the first sergeant's social security number to ring up more than \$15,000 in debt in two months, plus the arrest warrant for not showing up in court.

That guy is allegedly Tovarus Tyson, a former soldier Carlton enlisted in 1996, when he was a recruiter in Greenville, N.C. The soldier was discharged earlier this year from the Army for drug use, and arrested Oct. 22 on another drug charge. All told, he has seven other charges pending against him, ranging from drug use and intent to sell, to failing to show up in court. But he was mistakenly released from jail Oct. 31 on \$20,000 bond for those crimes before he could be charged with identity theft. Police rearrested him Nov. 13 after police asked him to come in for further questioning and he didn't show. He was charged with eight more counts related to the identity theft.

Chances are the Army first sergeant might still not be the wiser if he hadn't received an unusual letter in the mail from a credit card company that was investigating a fraud complaint they said he initiated.

The Household Bank credit card company on Sept. 29 sent him a letter saying they investigated his fraud dispute, resolved the case in his favor, and closed the account. But Carlton said he never opened an account with the company, and never initiated a fraud dispute.

"At first I thought it was junk mail because it didn't have a phone number where I could reach them, but it did list three creditors where I could check my own credit. To this day, I don't know how or why they initiated a fraud investigation, but I'm grateful."

Fred Davis, a financial counselor at Great Lakes Naval Training Station in North Chicago, said it's possible Carlton was the victim of a second identity theft, and when Household Bank noticed several requests for credit, they may have contacted that person, who initiated the fraud dispute to cover his tracks.

"That's not unusual," Davis said. "I'm helping a sailor right now who had her identity stolen by two different people, in two different states, at about the same time. (Carlton) may have gotten one of those credit card pre-approvals in the mail, threw it away, and then someone stole it from his trash."

The same day Carlton received that letter from Household Bank, he got his credit report from the three major companies that keep

that information – Equifax, Experion, and Trans Union. That night – and \$39.95 later – he got all three reports off the Internet.

"And then some serious words came out of my mouth as I tried to figure out what the hell was going on," Carlton said.

All of the charges were in the Greenville, N.C., area where he was a recruiter from 1994 to 1997.

Carlton called the cops but was told it could take a long time before they could track down the culprit. He contacted private investigator Gary Pastor, and the former Marine and Greenville policeman, agreed to take the case immediately.

"He told me that it would normally require a \$1,000 retainer up front, and \$55 an hour, but because I'm in the military, and he knew it was a bad situation, he started working it right away, so kudos to him," Carlton said.

After a few phone calls, Pastor figured out who stole Carlton's name and social security number, and the two were able to figure out how he did it.

Until recently, Army recruiters had to print their full name and social security number on all enlistment documents. When this particular person was discharged from the Army, he lifted Carlton's identification off his old paperwork, and then started ringing up the bills. Because identity theft is a growing problem, the Army no longer requires that information on enlistment paperwork.

But for Carlton, the damage was done.

At one point, the person was pulled over for a traffic violation. He told the policeman he didn't have his driver's license but gave him Carlton's name and social security number instead, then didn't show up in court, hence the warrant for Carlton's arrest.

Davis said situations like Carlton's are becoming more frequent every day, "because of the things we do in our everyday lives.

"The best investment someone can make is to buy a high-quality shredder, and I'm not talking about a \$10 one. You need to go to an office supply store, spend \$80 and put every piece of mail in there. It does no good to rip credit card letters in two. If you do that, a criminal just has to put it on a table and tape it together."

Carlton has since put fraud alerts out at all three credit bureaus. It doesn't cost anything, but the next time a store runs a credit check on him with Equifax, Experion, and Trans Union, they'll have to give a password he created. Davis said when doing this, insist on a two-word password, which makes it harder for thieves to crack.

Carlton has taken that a step further with the credit bureaus, and purchased additional security for \$100 a year. Now, when someone checks his credit with that bureau, he'll be notified via e-mail within 24 hours. That's how he found out that the person who stole his information tried to get credit once again.

"The best thing (Carlton) could have done was hiring that private investigator," Davis said. "Average Joe's might not have those resources, but that saved him a lot. You'd be surprised how many times this happens. If you don't want to be a victim, my advice is check your credit every year, and even then, don't trust anybody."



**Col. John M. Atkins**  
**Commander, Eastern Sector**  
**U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command**

**Education:** Atkins was a ROTC scholarship student at Washington University in St. Louis, Mo., where he graduated in 1982 as a Distinguished Military Graduate, with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics. He earned a Master's degree in Administration from Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant, Mich., in 1993, and another Master's in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Penn., in 2002. His **military education** includes Adjutant General Corps Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, Joint Professional Military education Phase II at the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Va., Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., and the Army War College.

**Assignments:** Chief, Division Personnel Actions, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, Wurzburg, Germany; Detachment Commander and Adjutant, 1<sup>st</sup> Forward Support Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, Schweinfurt, Germany; Chief, Consolidated Military Personnel Activity Center, Fort Dix, N.J.; Chief, Personnel Service Center, New York Area Command, Fort Hamilton, N.Y.; a combat tour as Military Personnel Officer with the Office of the Program Manager, Saudi Arabian National Guard Modernization Program, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, during the Gulf War; Division Personnel Strength Manager and Deputy Personnel Officer, 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, Fort Carson, Colo.; Personnel Plans Officer for the NATO Rapid Reaction Corps, in the Balkans and in Rheindalen, Germany; Commander of the Army's largest reception battalion, 120<sup>th</sup> Adjutant General Battalion, Fort Jackson, S.C., managing more than 35,000 soldiers a year; and Division Assistant Chief of Staff, Personnel, for the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, the Army's largest combat division with more than 18,000 soldiers assigned, at Fort Hood, Texas.

**Awards and Decorations:** Bronze Star Medal, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, four Army Meritorious Service Medals, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, two Army Commendation Medals, three Army Achievement Medals, the Joint Meritorious Unit Award, the Valorous Unit Award, the National Defense Service Medal, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the South West Asia Service Medal, the Armed Forces Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, two Overseas Service Ribbons, the NATO Medal, the Saudi Arabian and Kuwait Liberation Medals, the Saudi Arabian Battle Medal for the Battle of Al Kafgi, and the Adjutant General Corps' Horatio Gates Bronze Medal.



**Col. Sheila M. Q. Scanlon**  
**Commander, Western Sector**  
**U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command**

**Education:** Scanlon graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 1979. She earned a Master's degree in National Strategic Studies at the National War College. Her military education includes Marine Corps Basic School and Administrative Officer's Course.

**Assignments:** Personnel Officer, Adjutant, and Legal Officer at Marine Corps Air Station, Yuma, Ariz.; Battalion Adjutant, Group Manpower Officer and Group Personnel Officer, 3<sup>rd</sup> Force Service Support Group, Okinawa, Japan; Battalion Adjutant, then Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company, which included the former Casual Company, the Recruit Support Platoon and the Recruit Separations Section, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, Calif.; S-1 Officer for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Surveillance Reconnaissance Intelligence Group, Okinawa; Joint Task Force Adjutant, Exercise Cobra Gold, G-1A for III Marine Expeditionary Force; G-1 Manpower Officer, 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Aircraft Wing, Thailand; Chief, National Programs Branch of the Arms Control Division, working the Cooperative Threat Program with the former Soviet Union and the Marine Corps Element Commander, Field Command, Defense Special Weapons Agency; Assistant Chief of Staff G-1, Marine Forces Atlantic Command, Norfolk, Va.; Commander, Headquarters and Service Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Force Service Support Group, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

**Awards and decorations:** Defense Meritorious Service Medal, two Meritorious Service Medals, three Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals, and the Distinguished Rifle Marksmanship Badge.



**Albany MEPS**  
**Marine Corps**  
**Maj. Kyle East**

**Took command:** July 2003  
**Background:** East grew up the son of an Air Force master sergeant at Chanhute Air Force Base, Ill. Prior to his current position, East served as the Marine attaché at the U.S. embassy in Mexico City. “That was a very unique assignment,” he said. “I would repeat it if I had the opportunity.”  
**Civilian education:** East earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology from the University of Illinois in 1989, and is currently pursuing a master’s degree in National Security Matters from the American Military University.  
**Time in service:** 14 years. “I’m staying in until they kick me out.”  
**Favorite assignment:** “Oh boy, that’s gonna be Italy,” he said.  
That’s because, while he was stationed at Naples, Italy, his brother — also a Marine officer — was stationed at Vicenza, Italy. “He’s my younger brother. I was his recruiter. I got to do all the recruiting paperwork.”  
**Something people don’t know about him:** “I enjoy classical music and played the violin years ago. I’m a Marine infantry major, see? You don’t hear that too often.”



**Anchorage MEPS**  
**Army Maj. Jeffery**  
**Barlup**

**Took command:** June 2003  
**Background:** Barlup grew up near Gettysburg, Pa., in a rural farming community. “There was a lot of hunting, fishing, that kind of thing. I still like to hunt and fish, and my son likes to snowboard, so this will be a great assignment.”  
**Last assignment:** He served with the Army Forces Central Command in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, but going from the extreme heat to Alaska hasn’t been so bad.  
“I kind of joked with the assignment guy about that, but it’s pretty nice,” he said. “Right now it’s in the 40s to 50s during the day, and 30s at night. It was raining with a little snow between the rain drops earlier.”  
**Time in service:** “I was enlisted for six years, but that was a long time ago. I can’t remember how long it’s been. I don’t come into the zone for lieutenant colonel until 2006, so I’ll stay until at least 2010.”  
**Something people don’t know about him:** In 1973 he qualified No. 4 in the nation for wrestling by the Amateur Athletic Union. But don’t look for Barlup to join World Wrestling Entertainment like Kurt Angle.  
“You don’t jump that ship. That’s not wrestling. That’s entertainment,” he said. “He sold his soul. Real wrestling is hard. It’s the longest six minutes of your life.”



**Beckley MEPS**  
**Army Maj. Eric Drake**

**Took command:** June 2003  
**Background:** Drake grew up in Wilsie, W.Va., about an hour and a half from the Beckley MEPS.  
“It’s a small place,” he said of his hometown. “No stop signs, no police department, and the volunteer fire department burned down. They were playing poker one night and burned down the building.”  
He came into the Army in 1989 as an armor officer. “I came in as a tanker and went to Desert Storm right out of the chute. I grew up real quick. They sent me to Aschaffenberg, Germany, and I thought, ‘This is fun.’ Then in three months I was on my way to Desert Storm and had to learn the new M1A1 Abrams tank. I did a lot of weekend training with the platoon sergeant. He raised me. I didn’t have a clue and was smart enough to go to him. We’re still great friends. He’s a command sergeant major today.”  
**Something people don’t know about him:** “I acted professionally between high school and college. The plan was to go to Hollywood to become an actor. Before I left, my brother took me out back and whupped up on me and said, ‘Before you go, go to college and get your technical degree, then you can do what you want.’ That was great advice. How many actors have come out of Wilsie, W.Va.?”



**Boise MEPS**  
**Air Force Maj.**  
**Michael Timmerman**

**Took command:** August 2003  
**Background:** He grew up in a small town, and saw enlisting in the Air Force as a way to “get out of town, get some training, and see the world.”  
“I had my associate’s degree, and my dad was Coast Guard for 21 years. I remember him telling me if he had it to do all over, he would have joined the Air Force. That kind of stuck in the back of my head, even when I applied for the warrant officer program with the Army. I was going to go to chopper school, but those words kept ringing in my head, and I decided to join the Air Force.”  
He began his military career as an enlisted man in December 1983, and did a stint with the Air Force Presidential Honor Guard at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, D.C.  
“That wasn’t a bad job for my first two years in the Air Force, to have no rank and get the chance to sit next to the president, or meet (then-Secretary of Defense) Caspar Weinberger.”  
**Something people don’t know about him:** “In 1984 during the Inaugural Ball, President Reagan came down the red carpet and stepped on my toes. He sort of backed into me. He was waving to the crowd at the time, but he turned around and gave me an apologetic look.”  
**Leadership motto:** “Integrity first. You gotta have integrity.”



**Denver MEPS**  
**Army Maj. Carlos**  
**"Hugo" Morales**

**Took command:** June 2003  
**Background:** After earning an associate's degree in law enforcement from El Paso Community College in 1986, he enlisted in the U.S. Army.

"It was basic, pure economics," he said. "I needed a job, didn't know what to do, didn't have a skill, and I wanted to learn something. It was an open door, and I'll stay in as long as I continue to have fun."

Morales later earned his commission through the ROTC program at the University of Texas in El Paso, where in 1989 he earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice.

**Favorite assignment:** The 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division in Wuerzburg, Germany.

"The cultural experience was great. I had the opportunity to see so many different things. Just to go to the store and hear a clerk speak three or four different languages was an amazing thing."

**Hobbies:** "My kids and the 'honey do' list. My hobbies have changed drastically now that I have kids. They keep my mind entertained, instead of the weirder stuff."

**Something people don't know about him:** "I was called for a job by the Chippendales! I'm playing. That really didn't happen. If I think of something, I'll let you know."

**Leadership motto:** "Work hard, play hard. That's it."



**Fargo MEPS**  
**Marine Corps**  
**Maj. Brian Kalk**

**Took command:** August 2003  
**Background:** Like a lot of Marine officers, he was first enlisted.

"We don't need that many new officers, because we have enough hard-charging sergeants who want to be officers. After I did Desert Storm, I was debating getting out of the Marine Corps and my battalion commander told me to think about it. I had gone to night school while I was in. I was a sergeant with a four-year degree, but my commander said, 'We could use some young officers.' It was probably one of the better decisions I've made."

**Last assignment:** His career came full circle when he found himself in Kuwait and Iraq as the forward operations officer for the Transportation Support Battalion from Camp Pendleton, Calif.

"Not in my wildest dream (did I think I'd be back). One of our objectives during Desert Storm was to take the Kuwait airfield, and flying into there as a major a dozen years later was an interesting experience.

**Leadership motto:** "Don't forget where you came from. It has always served me well. I know what a corporal can do, what a sergeant can do, and what a lieutenant can do. Let them do what they do, and let me be the value added at this level. Never forget what they are capable of."



**Honolulu MEPS**  
**Navy Lt. Cmdr.**  
**Theresa Anne Lewis**

**Took command:** July 2003  
**Background:** She grew up in Livermore, Calif., near San Francisco, where she was a gymnast and diver.

"All my life, my mom encouraged me to go to the Naval Academy. She thought it would be challenging, and something I would enjoy. That is what gave me the spark. My grandfather was a retired E-6 from the Navy, from World War II. He was very excited about that."

**Last assignment:** Commanding officer of the Military Sealift Command at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

"It was a hop, skip, and a jump across the drink, just on the other side of the harbor," she said.

She and her husband, a Marine, own a home in Pearl City.

"It's an island paradise here," Lewis said. "You can do absolutely everything, if you like the outdoors and enjoy warm weather."

**Favorite assignment:** This one. "When you have Hawaii and a command job, you can never complain."

**Something people don't know about her:** "I like to sing jazz," she said. "If I can have a band, I like Diana Kroft (music). My other favorite artist is Barbra Streisand."



**Jacksonville MEPS**  
**Navy Lt. Cmdr. Jo**  
**Anne Cunningham**

**Took command:** May 2003  
**Background:** "I originally came into the Navy in '86. I'm originally from the south suburbs of Chicago and didn't see a whole lot of opportunity there. My mother thought there was no way in heck one of her daughters would join the military. It was something unheard of. She expected one of her sons to go. But I'm the only one."

**Civilian education:** A bachelor's in marketing from Illinois State University; a master's in Management from the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif.; and another master's in national security and strategic studies from the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, R.I.

**Time in service:** 17 and a half years. "I'll probably be 20 and gone," she said. "I'm not dissatisfied. I just want to retire while I'm still young and marketable for another career. But with two master's, it makes it more difficult to decide what I want to do when I grow up."

**Something people don't know about her:** "How about this? I can field dress and skin basically any kind of (animal). I like to hunt."



**New Orleans MEPS  
Army Maj. Elizabeth  
Cisne**

**Took command:** May 2003  
**Background:** Prior to her commissioning, Cisne served for three years as an enlisted soldier, a signaler, in Germany.

"I came in the Army in 1982," she said. "I knew I wasn't ready for college, but I wanted college benefits."

She used her skiing skills picked up from childhood to join the Army Europe Ski Team in 1983 and 1984.

After getting out and going to school for a year, she joined a ROTC unit, "and once I put on that uniform, I realized I had missed it."

She may be the only MEPS commander who speaks Chinese. She completed the Chinese Mandarin course at the Defense Language Institute at the Presidio in Monterey, Calif.; then did in-country training in Singapore.

**Civilian education:** Distinguished Military Graduate from the ROTC program at Western Michigan in Kalamazoo, Mich.

**Something people don't know about her:** I've recently taken up kayaking. It allows me to do more bird watching, which is my other hobby," she said. "I also saw John Goodman at the airport. I didn't go up to him. He was looking a little scruffy and like he was in a hurry."



**New York MEPS  
Navy Cmdr. Layne  
Boone**

**Took command:** July 2003  
**Background:** "I did it backwards. This is really my second career," Boone said. "I was a school teacher for nine years. It was great, but it didn't pay me enough. I was looking for a career change that would not be in private industry."

When she told her colleagues what she was doing, they thought she was lying. "It was really a shock for some people, for such a change. Not only being a female in the military, but a black female. But it wasn't like it was an overnight decision. I gave it a lot of thought, and I've never regretted it."

Her youngest daughter is now a freshman at Florida A&M University, and her oldest is in Los Angeles hoping to become a famous actress.

"I told her to go for her dreams," she said.

**Favorite assignment:** Holy Loch Naval Support Activity in Dunoon, Scotland.

"The kids went to school with Scottish kids. There were no drugs, no crime, it was a small town and everybody treated us like we were part of the community."

She made it to Loch Ness while she was there, but came up empty-handed in a search for the monster.



**Portland, Maine MEPS  
Army Maj. Timothy  
Merriott**

**Took command:** July 2003  
**Background:** Merriott was raised on a farm in Kansas City. "We had a dairy farm, and dad also had beef cattle," he said. "It was a 400-acre plus farm."

He first enlisted in the Missouri National Guard in January 1987 as a combat signaler. He received his commission from the ROTC program at Southwest Baptist University where he got a bachelor's in business administration management and marketing.

**Time in service:** All told, he has over 16 years, "and I plan on sticking around."

**Something people don't know about him:** "That's the toughest question you asked so far," he said. "One thing I like to pride myself on is I don't take 'No' for an answer. If someone says something can't be done, I'm going to put forth that extra effort and stick to my guns. If it seems right, I stick with it. I will get the job done. That has gotten me far."

**Leadership motto:** "Do the right thing always."



**Salt Lake City MEPS  
Air Force Maj.  
Anne Warnement**

**Took command:** July 2003  
**Background:** Warnement grew up in the Fort Worth, Texas, area near Carswell Air Force Base, and knew she wanted to join the Air Force since she was in junior high.

"My dad was in the Navy, but the B-52s would fly over our house, and my dad always said to go into the Air Force."

School played a big part of her life, and Warnement was on the math and science team. "I was like a major geek," she said. "I was the valedictorian of my class. People would not recognize me now."

**Last assignment:** The Pentagon where she worked on the Air Staff.

**Time in service:** 12 in February

**Favorite assignment:** Heidelberg, Germany, where she was the executive officer for the 4<sup>th</sup> Air Support Operations Group. She met her husband, who is also in the Air Force, and the two married at the Heidelberg castle.

**Something people don't know about her:** She's an avid Harley-Davidson enthusiast.

**Leadership motto:** "Firm but fair."



**San Jose MEPS**  
Army Maj. Todd  
Parker Sr.

**Took command:** June 2003

**Background:** Parker is originally from Lancaster, Pa. He did an enlisted stint in the Coast Guard from 1983 to 1986, "but I wanted to be an officer and stay on land, so I joined the Army to become an infantry officer. The (commander) wanted me to pee in a cup on that one."

**Last assignment:** Joint forces training base in Los Alamos, N.M.

**Favorite assignment:** "My first Army assignment as rifle platoon leader in Baumholder, Germany, before the Berlin Wall went down," he said. "We were working missions along the eastern German border and subsequently seeing the Berlin Wall was extremely gratifying. The wall came down and it was very exciting and just bred a lot of hope for things to come."

**Something people don't know about him:** He's been a professional triathlete since returning from Korea about six years ago.

"I plan on being a coach at the university level, or the Olympic level," he said. "I decided I'm ready to take my teaching, coaching, and mentoring skills I learned with the Army, and I'm ready to do something different."



**Shreveport MEPS**  
Army Maj. Barrie  
Johnson

**Took command:** August 2003

**Background:** "Joining the Army was something I always wanted to do," Johnson said, except back then, she saw herself becoming a drill sergeant and then a sergeant major.

"I guess I saw too much TV, one too many 'Be all you can be' commercials," she laughed. "I just knew sergeant major was the highest rank and that's what I wanted."

Instead, Johnson joined the ROTC in college and was commissioned in 1989.

**Time in service:** 14 years. "I'll serve as long as the Army will let me serve," she said. "After awhile, it grows on you."

Seriously, I tell the kids going in today that even if you don't stay for a career, it is definitely a good foundation."

**Last assignment:** Korea, where she spent two years – one in Taegu, and the other in Pyontek.

"It turned out to be a good cultural experience. I got to work with the Korean kids, teach English classes, help in an orphanage, work with the Chambers of Commerce, and take a lot of tours. I met a lot of great people. If you go into an assignment like that with an open mind, you can learn a lot and have fun."

## Dossier



**Staff Sgt. Linda Battle**  
Operations NCOIC  
San Antonio MEPS

**Hometown:** Rocky Mount, N.C.

**Years in the military:** 10

**Hobbies:** Reading and cooking

**What she considers her single-most important achievement thus far in life:** "My family."

**Three things that can always be found in her refrigerator:** Milk, eggs and cheese.

**Last book she read:** "Mama," by Jerry McMillan

**Favorite movie:** "'The Color Purple,' because I'm an Oprah fan."

**Motto she lives by:** "Live in the present. The future is yet to come."

**Times per year she changes her hairstyle:** 10

**Her favorite pair of shoes and why:** "Red pumps. They make me taller."

**One food she can't live without:** Steak and potatoes

**If she were stranded on a deserted island with just a boom box (and a lot of batteries), which three CDs would she like to have:** Mr. Bigg, Shirley Caesar, and Luther Vandross

**Her favorite song by Elvis Presley:** "Love Me Tender."

**The two greatest people she has met in her life and why:** "My mom and Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Brown. They have been excellent role models."

**What she would you do if she had three hours all to herself:** "Relax and watch movies."

**If she were an entertainer, she would you be:** "A singer."

**If she were an animal, she would be:** "A lion."

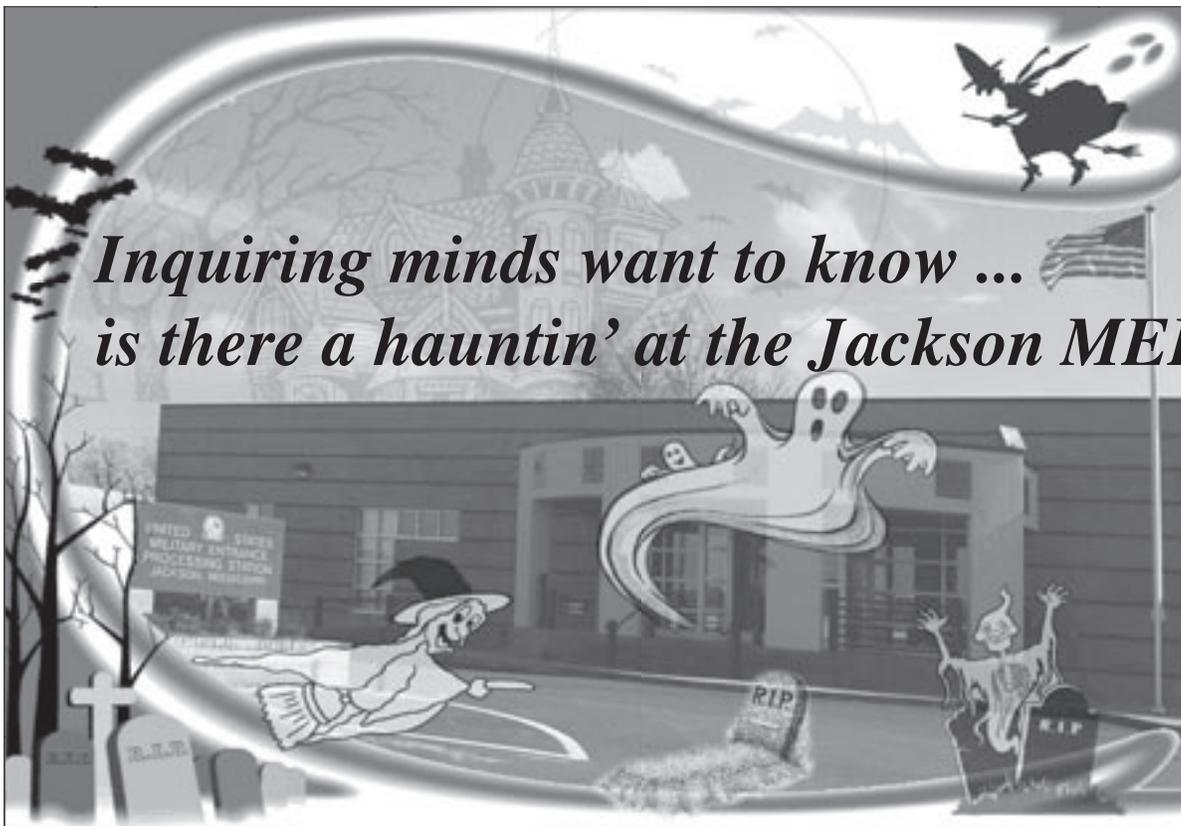
**If she were a car, she would you be:** "A red Corvette; it's beautiful."

**Her usual order at McDonald's:** A McFlurry drink and McNuggets.

**Taxes, early or late?:** "Quick for the early refund."

**How long will Ben Affleck's marriage to J. Lo last?** "Two months."

**Her online name:** Battle\_Army



## *Inquiring minds want to know ... is there a hauntin' at the Jackson MEPS?*

**A marble slab originally cut for a tombstone, once welcomed applicants to the Jackson MEPS. Is that a sign the building is haunted?!? Eh, maybe yes, maybe no ...**

By Tech. Sgt. Gary J. Kunich  
*Messenger* Associate Editor

Conventional wisdom — or at least the movie *Poltergeist* — suggests one should never build property on an ancient Indian burial ground.

Apparently, the Jackson MEPS didn't get the memo.

Just in time for Halloween — give or take a couple weeks — here's a mostly fact-filled story to sink your teeth into. Or is it fiction-fractured folly? And if it is, what exactly does "folly" mean? What's fact, what's fantasy, and what's a little of both conjured up by the locals? We'll let you decide ...

Long before anyone ever processed for the military in Jackson, Miss., in fact, long before there was a military at all, the Choctaw Indians inhabited large areas of the state. And when the Choctaw passed on to the Great Spirit in the sky, their family would lay their bodies to rest under mounds of dirt, and these burial grounds were located

throughout the region. Some at the MEPS say the site of their building is actually an ancient Indian burial ground. Trouble is finding anyone to back that up. A story like this doesn't just happen without a lot of research. Since a lot of research can be really boring, we used Google. You can learn a lot about Google, like if you type in "Paranormal investigator in Mississippi," you can find a few e-mails from those who investigate this kind of stuff, and they have e-mail addresses on their Web sites, but they either don't work or most of them don't respond. Our conclusion is there must have been a Star Trek convention the same time we were working on this story.

You can actually find a lot of information on ancient Indian burial grounds on the Internet, and supposed hauntings in these locations, some of which include photos of alleged ghosts. We think the scientific phrase for these photos is, "Dude, that's freaky."

As for the Jackson MEPS

and ancient burial grounds, talk first surfaced when the MEPS was built in, conveniently enough, October 1990. Attaching actual names to these whispers is where it becomes a challenge. People were quoted — without names, mind you — in a *Messenger* article about eight years ago. What kind of shoddy reporting is that? Or, are these people just afraid to come forward? Is it a bigger part of a conspiracy? What does our government know about the MEPS and the burial grounds? Not content to actually work today, we first visited with Don Warnock in the Facilities Directorate of USMEPCOM since he was one of the people behind the new Jackson MEPS when it was new back in 1990.

"I've heard about the Indian burial grounds from people who were building it at the time," he said. "Was it true? Was it not true? I don't know. I do know it was built on an old tombstone factory."

Tombstone factory! Aha! We're getting somewhere!"

I remember the tombstone factory when I was a kid," said Connie Kelley, the MEPS secretary, whose quote was only slightly misconstrued to better fit this story.

Kelley grew up in the area and remembered walking by the site of the future MEPS and seeing the ground littered with freshly made tombstones (no doubt for freshly dead corpses), and a boarded up old building.

"When the MEPS was built, we even had a piece of leftover marble from the factory that was used for our sign, and every time it rained, the letters would disappear and you couldn't read it," she said.

That wasn't the only funny stuff.

"Things got moved around or disappeared and we said there was a ghost," she said ... without a laugh.

Was she half serious or half joking?

"Half serious," she answered, "and the motion alarm system keeps going off at night." ➔

We confirmed that allegation with the station commander, Maj. Daniel Kelly, who said he often had to send out his operations officer, Lt. Rob Gray, to check on the mystery alarm, because, apparently, ghost chasing is one of those important duties lieutenants have that they don't learn about until after their commission. When Gray investigated each tripped alarm, he never found anything. We tried getting in touch with Gray, but were too late. Missing? Gone without a trace? Another cover up? Or did he just make a permanent change of station move and were we too lazy to find out where? Again, we'll let you decide.

At any rate, the commander said he isn't concerned. "The alarm does go off, but I think it's funny. When that happens, we check the system. If the place is haunted, as long as they leave the applicants alone, I don't mind."

Granted, there haven't been any applicants sucked into the big screen television while waiting to have their blood drawn, so maybe it's not Indian ghosts. Maybe it's just the ghost of some dead guy whose a little upset because his name was misspelled on his tombstone. Something like that has got to be really embarrassing in the spirit world. The ghosts in the popular clique probably have a good time with that one: "*Hey, everybody! Here's Lenny ... or should we say, 'Lemmy.' Hi Lemmy!*"

We might be taking artistic liberties, but ghosts probably speak in italics.

In fairness to the possible ghosts, Kelley, the station secretary, said if they're heee-eere, they're more mischievous than mean, and Lenny — or Lemmy — seems to be a nice ghost.

"Nothing bad really happens," she said.

Still, not content to work, we dug further into this alarm-going-off-in-the-middle-of-the-night thing, so we talked to Tech. Sgt. Jeff Walker, the USMEPCOM security liaison, who spoke to us on condition of anonymity.

"Yes it is a motion and heat sensor alarm," he said. "It's triggered by heat and motion. If there is heat, but no motion, or motion and no heat, normally it can't be triggered. It has gone off several times in the middle of the night."

So are we talking a hot ghost? "Could be," he mused. "Or it could be the fax machine set it off when a fax came in. I'm not an expert, so don't quote me."

Don't worry, we said. We won't quote you. Hopefully he won't read this article.

He also said there are no fax machines in the part of the MEPS where the alarm goes off, which makes sense, because who would a ghost fax, anyway?

So we're still left with plenty of questions and not a lot of answers.

Next time you're at the Jackson MEPS in the middle of the night and you hear a creak or a moan, or that alarm goes off and no one is around, don't worry. We have plenty of lieutenants at USMEPCOM.

## Dossier

### Chief Petty Officer Shannon Jayasinghe Medical NCOIC Buffalo MEPS



**Hometown:** Middletown, Pa., and Sharon Springs, Kan.

**Years in service:** 17

**Hobbies:** Reading, watching Hindi films, and exploring other cultures.

**What she considers her single-most important achievement thus far in life:** "Juggling a career, two kids, a graduate student husband and a cat."

**Three things that can always be found in her refrigerator:** "Fresh fruit and veggies, block cheese and coriander chutney."

**Last book she read:** "Green Eggs and Ham," by Dr. Seuss

**Favorite movie and why:** "The Hindi film, 'Devdas.' Each frame is a work of art."

**Motto she lives by:** "Enjoy every moment, you might not be here tomorrow. My husband does enough worrying about the future for both of us."

**Times per year she changes her hairstyle:** "It hasn't changed since 1992, but the color changes often."

**Her favorite pair of shoes:** "Anything I can slip on quickly and go."

**One food she can't live without:** Masala Dosa

**If she were stranded on a deserted island with just a boom box (and a lot of batteries), which three CDs would she like to have:** "Anything by Enigma, Josh Groban, or A. R. Rahman."

**Her favorite song by Elvis Presley:** "Sorry, but I like Prince better than the King."

**If she could have lunch with any person from history, who would it be and what would she ask:** "Mother Theresa. Why aren't there more people like you in the world?"

**The two greatest people she's met in her life:** "My husband who has introduced me to the many cultures of the world, and Mr. Stegman, my 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher who was one of those teachers all students remember for making a difference and being encouraging."

**If she had 3 hours to herself, she would:** "Read, read, read!"

**If she were an entertainer, she would be:** "A singer and dancer, or concert cellist."

**If she were an animal, she would be:** "A very social and talkative parrot."

**If she were a car, she would be:** "A Mini Cooper because they're cute and so European."

**Her favorite Twilight Zone episode?** "Don't have one."

**Her usual order at McDonald's?** "Double cheeseburger, pickles only, with fries and a Coke."

**Taxes, early or late?** "Last minute. So many other things to do and I like to drive my accountant crazy."

**How long will Ben Affleck's marriage to J. Lo last?** "You actually think they will make it to the altar?"

**A little bit country or a little bit rock 'n' roll?** "Rock 'n' roll. Country songs are too depressing."

# A gift for Tiny

—He served his country during some of America's darkest hours, but never received his due ... until his nephew set things right

By Tech. Sgt. Gary J. Kunich  
*Messenger* Associate Editor

Uncle Tiny was always there for Jerry Holm, as long as he can remember. Through births and birthdays, baseball games, marriages, and other family gatherings, Uncle Tiny was always a fixture in Holm's life.

This past July, Holm, a lieutenant colonel in the Marine Corps, made good on a promise, and did something in return for his Uncle Tiny, who served in the Army during World War II but never received any of his medals.

Holm, who works for the Marine Corps' department of aviation at the Pentagon, set out to right that wrong about two years ago, and did it with the help of some old, burned records, the sergeant major of the Army and the Sioux Falls MEPS commander.

But the full story probably starts nearly 60 years earlier.

Uncle Tiny — or Kenneth Baldwin as the rest of the world and Uncle Sam knows him — spent his entire life in Inwood, Iowa, except for 1943 to 1946, when he served in Europe during the war.

"I remember as a youngster seeing a picture of a dashing young Tiny in an Army uniform on an end table in Grandma's house, but Uncle Tiny's service ended nearly nine years before I was born, and it was still years later before I could articulately ask him about the picture," Holm said. "He didn't speak much about it."

Still, vets sometimes have a bond that's only understood by other vets. After Holm enlisted in the Marines in 1974, the two would swap military stories when Holm was home on leave, and Uncle Tiny would give him a good-natured ribbing for not wearing his uniform.

"While I was home on leave for Christmas 2000, Uncle Tiny was giving me a hard time, like usual, that he didn't think I was really in the Marine Corps. After all, he never saw me in uniform."

So the following year, on July 4, 2001, Holm decided to surprise his uncle. Decked in his dress blues, the Marine knocked on his uncle's door, and asked if he'd join him at the Inwood Independence Day parade.

"He was pretty touched," Holm said, "and while we were posing for a picture, he was looking at my medals. He mentioned that he never received his from the Army. I made a mental note to investigate further."

Holm discovered that thousands of vets from Tiny's era never received their just due because of the massive draw down after the war. And there weren't any electronic databases to store the information. Then there was the problem of the fire at the record center.

"About 80 percent of all those service records were destroyed in a fire in 1973. I told Tiny we'd try, but not to get his hopes up."



"Uncle Tiny" (left) poses with his nephew, Lt. Col. Jerry Holm. Fifty-seven years after he served in the Army, Tiny received his medals from the war, due to the special efforts of his nephew.

As it turned out, Tiny's records almost went up in flames. The left edge of his service documents were charred and burned, and the only way to identify them was from his service number and first name. Once that was done, the record center sent Holm a list of medals that his uncle earned.

Holm didn't want to wait for the Army to send the medals, so he purchased all of them himself and then talked to a friend at the Pentagon who makes shadow boxes. He then got a flag that flew aboard the Arizona Memorial in Pearl Harbor on Tiny's birthday.

For the finishing touch, Holm contacted the sergeant major of the Army for assistance.

"It's pretty good when you can just go down the hall and talk to him," he chuckled.

The sergeant major wrote a personal letter, and then he got in touch with the Sioux Falls MEPS so an Army representative could formally present the shadow box.

"I got the phone call from the sergeant major of the Army's office and was wondering what he wanted with me because I knew I wasn't coming up on any good assignments," said Maj. Thomas Conlon, the Sioux Falls MEPS commander.

When he heard about the situation, Conlon readily agreed to represent the Army for the special event.

"It was an honor to do it," he said. "Inwood is a small town. It's not a booming Metropolis, and it was nice to represent the Army, and honor his accomplishments. He served his country during the war. It's the least we could do for him."

Tiny was almost speechless when he saw the shadow box.

"I didn't know about it until they presented it to me," he said. "I think a lot of the guys (who served at the same time) never did get their medals, and they probably never will. It only took me 57 and a half years to get mine, but they look pretty nice."

# Quiet Giants

*Army troops nab top Navy honors for giving back to those in need*

By Tech. Sgt. Gary J. Kunich  
Messenger Associate Editor

Two Army soldiers from USMEPCOM Headquarters took top Navy honors at Great Lakes Naval Training Station for volunteering hundreds of hours of community service.

Capt. Matt Burton of Houston, Texas; and Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Derrick Scott of Chicago, Ill., are the Admiral Gallery/Admiral Renken Award of Merit winners in the junior officer, and senior enlisted category. Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Sydney Sykes, who works in the Naval Dental Center at Great Lakes Naval Training Station, is the winner in the junior enlisted category.

The awards, named after Rear Admirals William O. Gallery and Henry A. Renken, are given annually to three outstanding military men or women chosen by the awards board and various military commands at Great Lakes. Both admirals were known for encouraging volunteering to build good relations with the local communities.

When Burton isn't serving as a budget analyst for USMEPCOM, he donates his time to every ethnic and cultural observance in the command, including Black History Month, Women's History Month, Holocaust Remembrance Day, and Hispanic Heritage Month. He

also works as a tutor at Green Bay Elementary School and the Youth Life Learning Center in Waukegan, Ill.; and served meals to homeless people.

Burton and his wife, Toniya, have two children: Matt, 13; and Daria, 11. He also believes in getting his children involved, and last weekend they spent a day helping senior citizens.



(Left to right) Sgt. 1st Class Derrick Scott, Petty Officer 2nd Class Sydney Sykes, and Capt. Matt Burton display their Admiral Gallery/Admiral Renken Awards of Merit.

“By working with the cultural observances, I want to help dispel stereotypes and misconceptions we have about one another. I volunteer in the other areas because I just try to help those who may be less fortunate or who need a helping hand.”

“I wanted to show them that there are other people out there who need our help, and to show them they can help others,” he said.

Scott, the senior enlisted winner of the award who works in the command's medical directorate, said that

is one of the reasons he donates so much time to others. He also tutors at Green Bay Elementary School, as well as the North Chicago DADS program that assists schools with student mentoring. He also coaches for several sports teams, and conducted a physical fitness, and drill and ceremony class for local school children.

“I believe in giving back,” the Chicago native said. “I was shocked when I heard I won the award because I didn't think I had done enough to earn something like that.”

He said he credits his mom, Ora, who still lives in Chicago, with instilling basic values in him, and he tries passing that on to his own children and others he helps in the community. He and his wife, Gloria, have four children: John and Jason, 20; Darius, 15; and Jazmine, 13.

While Scott believes in helping others regardless of where he is stationed, it's hard to get him to speak about his volunteerism.

“He is a very quiet person, and I think a lot of the work he does goes unnoticed because he doesn't talk about it,” said his boss, Capt. Rosalind Peay, the medical operations officer. “He does numerous things for the community, and he doesn't do it for any kind of recognition. He does it out of a love for assisting others. That makes him a great example for military members as well as civilians.”

## Houston remembers POWs, MIAs with permanent flag

by Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Nathan Ruska  
 Messenger Staff Writer

The Houston MEPS honored prisoners of war and those who never returned from combat when the station commander ordered a distinctive black and white flag hoisted up the flag pole. The Prisoner of War/Missing in Action flag now has a permanent location under the Stars and Stripes.

After discussing the idea of displaying the POW/MIA flag on a regular basis, MEPS officials put in the formal request, and then scheduled the ceremony, complete with a guest speaker from the local American Legion.

Houston MEPS Commander, Maj. Keith Coleman said the flag commemorates what those in uniform did in years past.

“What they were building would have to last a lifetime. Through their efforts, they built a bridge ... this bridge’s name is Freedom.”

To further emphasize the sacrifices others have made, Rex Dexter, commander of American Legion Post 654, displayed several military items, and described each one. The event included an empty table with place settings – symbolizing those who went to war but didn’t return.

The Joint Service Color Guard for the event was a mix of veterans and active duty staff members. 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Maura Newby said “We



American Legion and Houston MEPS personnel raise the MEPS’ new POW/MIA flag.

wanted to have a mix of veterans and active duty members as it was close to Memorial Day. “It was a nice experience for our soldiers and reminds them to be thankful that they are where they are.”

## Harrisburg joins community in honoring Armed Forces Day



Harrisburg MEPS personnel had a great opportunity to take part in their city’s Armed Forces Day activities.

Before a special enlistment ceremony, Col. J.P. Innerst, MEPS commander, gave a brief talk about the MEPS’ mission. He told the audience that, yearly, more than 13,000 high school students in 38 different counties take the ASVAB, 7,600 of which take it at 11 different MET sites, and the MEPS performs more than 8,000 medical examinations. MEPS Testing Officer, 2nd Lt. Thomas Brooks then administered the Oath of Enlistment.

With a full color guard, friends, family and many other watching, more than 20 personnel were sworn into the Delayed Entry Program.

The day included many activities, from a Civil War camp reenactment, World War II platoon, and rock scaling wall, to tanks on public display.

## Cleveland remains ever present in community by showing Colors

Since the Cleveland MEPS is located nearly 200 miles from any military base or post, their Joint Service Color Guard performances sometimes reach members of the community who rarely witness a military ceremony.

Cleveland MEPS’ color guard has performed throughout the city’s metropolitan area at various events and every holiday honoring the military. Whenever the color guard enters an auditorium, football field, ballroom, or wherever they may be, there is a sincere silence that speaks respect, dignity, and unity from the audience.

“It’s great to know that many Americans don’t take freedom for granted any longer, and that all of America realizes there are young men and women in the Armed Forces who protect our freedom every day,” 2nd Lt. Johnson said.

The Cleveland MEPS Joint Service Color Guard includes Tech. Sgts. Jamey Weaver and Molly Miller, Staff Sgts. Robert Montgomery and Tina Bryant, Sgts. Kevin Sims, Oscar Atkinson, Deyanius Blackmon, John Laverick, and Raelene Bowen, Petty Officers 2nd Class Guy West, Ryan Curylo, Ray Moore and Dustin Joseph. Members of the color guard sacrifice many of their holidays to support community events.

The role of the color guard is three-fold – besides presenting, posting, and retiring the colors at events, they represent not only the Cleveland MEPS, but all the men and women in the Armed Forces. Community relations are improved with their performances. They ultimately increase the public’s awareness of the Armed Forces’ professionalism, dedication, and honor.

# From bicep curls to ‘talking smack’ — almost 30 compete for strongman/woman in Baltimore

When it comes to physical training, it seems even the Air Force is getting back in on the action, ditching the bike in favor of a run, push-ups, and sit-ups.

But the Baltimore MEPS didn't want to wait until another official PT test to establish bragging rights in the gym, so Staff Sgt. Jason Fox designed his own method — a Strong Man and Strong Woman contest for their recent training day.

Close to 20 men, and seven women participated in the event, where all contestants had only two categories in which to compete — men or women.

“Some of the smaller guys complained about not having weight categories,” Fox said. “Maybe next time.”

Even if they couldn't lift the weight, the contestants still made up for it with some strong verbal exercises.

“There was a lot of people talking smack that day,” Fox said. “So even if you didn't do good in the competition, you still could talk smack.”

Fox got the idea for the contest after he and others at the MEPS worked out together at the gym. The hard part was coming up with a contest where everyone could agree what would determine the strongest man and woman in the MEPS, finally settling on a bench press, incline bench press, leg press, squat, bicep curl, pull ups, and dips.

“The pull ups were killing everybody,” Fox said. “But the Army did the best.”

But in the end, it was a civilian who took the top title. Chris Miller, son of one of the MEPS' doctors, benched 315 pounds. The



commander, Lt. Col. James Grier — “a pretty big dude,” according to Fox — came close with 295 on the bar.

Meanwhile, Petty Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Class Marie Wadford, the Coast Guard liaison, took top strong woman honors.

“Well, she's Coast Guard, so they don't put in a full day and they can spend more time in the gym,” Fox said.

The *Messenger* will do a follow-up story in a couple months to let readers know what Wadford did to Fox after reading that statement.



## Recognizing All

Bette Chapman and Sonja Blue-Brown celebrate Month of the Military Child by creating a bulletin board recognizing Buffalo MEPS military members' children. The two are dedicated to creating an environment in which personnel celebrate diversity and recognize the contributions of all cultures. Each month, they take advantage of creating an eye-catching board that highlights upcoming ethnic observances and special events in the community. In addition to the board, Buffalo MEPS personnel take advantage of ethnic observances by having thematic potlucks and presentations during quarterly training.



## 12K and still standing

Three San Jose MEPS troops (from left to right) former commander Maj. Kenneth Breiten; Sgt. Michael Boone; and Eric Barocio are almost all smiles after sprinting 12 kilometers from the San Francisco Bay to the Pacific Ocean in the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Bay to Breakers Run. The annual event, originated to raise morale after a devastating California earthquake, attracts more than 100,000 people each year. Breiten pulled out the fastest MEPS time with a finish of 59:33, finishing 785<sup>th</sup> overall. Barocio's time of 1:05:37, put him at 1,398; and Boone was 1,443<sup>rd</sup> to cross the finish line with a time of 1:05:37. One other MEPS employee, not pictured, also challenged the terrain. Howard Williams finished 3,659 with a time of 1:15:36.

**Amarillo MEPS**

Capt. William Parrish III  
Test Control Officer  
Years of service: 6  
Last assignment: HHC, Aviation Brigade, Camp Stanley, Korea (Assistant S-1)  
Civilian education: Bachelor's in Public Relations from University of Oklahoma  
Divisions: Fishing and running  
First impression: "Small, everyone knows each other."

**Ronald Swan**

Human Resources Assistant  
Years of service: 22 years of active duty with the Air Force  
Last assignment: Amarillo MEPS; Air Force military liaison supervisor  
Divisions: All sports, especially golf and bowling  
First impression: "Excellent organization."

**Vianna Larue**

Education Services Specialist  
Years of service: 16  
Last assignment: Installation Management Agency, Europe Region, ACES Branch, Program Manager  
Civilian education: Masters in Education  
Divisions: Golf, tennis, and travel  
First impression: Pleased with level of security in building.

**Beckley MEPS**

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Dena Lentz  
Test Control Officer  
Years of service: 5  
Last assignment: Fort Carson, Colo.  
Divisions: Music, crafts, and family time with my daughter  
First impression: "Much different environment than a typical Army unit."

**Buffalo MEPS**

Master Sgt. Darryl Dickinson  
NCOIC, Operations  
Years of service: 21  
Last assignment: Superintendent, Mission Support DCMA Korea, Pusan, South Korea  
Civilian education: Associate of Arts, Information Resources  
Military education: Senior NCO Academy, NCO Academy, NCO Leadership School, NCO Prep Course  
Divisions: Fishing, reading, going to the gym, and sampling Buffalo's fine cuisine  
First impression: "I work with a fine group of officers, NCOs and civilians. I am very impressed with their work ethic and dedication to the mission!"

**Sgt. John Garcia**

Operations NCO  
Years of service: 6  
Last assignment: Assistant NCOIC, Inprocessing, Darmstadt, Germany  
Military education: Primary Leadership Development Course, Air Assault  
Divisions: Going to movies, clubs, and exercise  
First impression: "A lot of activity in the work place, very busy!"

**Santo Tricarico**

Supply Technician  
Years of service: Retired Army — Air Defense Artillery  
Last assignment: Inspector General, 78<sup>th</sup> Division Headquarters; Edison, N.J.  
Military education: Combined Arms Service Staff School, Air Defense Officer Advanced & Basic Course, Inspector General Course, Junior Officer Maintenance Course, Quality Leadership Course for Mangers, Officer Candidate School (DMG), U. S. Army Airborne School.  
Civilian education: Bachelor of Science (Business), Medaille College, Buffalo, N.Y.  
Master of Science (Administration), Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, Mich.  
Divisions: My family, acclimating to civilian life, establishing a newly built home, fitness, and searching for a worthy volunteer organization.  
First impression: "Organized, professional, clean — having entered military service at this very MEPS, I found myself trying to recall the steps I took during processing."

**Chicago MEPS**

Sgt. Tremayne Thomas  
Personnel Service NCO  
Years of service: 7  
Last assignment: 701<sup>st</sup> Military Police Battalion, Fort Leonardwood, Mo.

**Dallas MEPS**

Carlos Garcia  
Human Resource Assistant  
Years of service: 7  
Last assignment: Wiesbaden, Germany  
Divisions: Reading, sightseeing, dancing  
First impression: "Excellent working environment"

**Debbie Allen**

Human Resource Assistant  
Civilian education: 2 years of college  
Divisions: Traveling, encouragement to others  
First impression: "Organized."

**Wesley Coleman**

Human Resource Assistant  
Years of service: 8  
Last assignment: Fort Carson, Colo.  
Civilian education: Associate degree in Business  
First impression: "This is going to be a piece of cake."

**Honolulu MEPS**

Sgt. Jacquelyn Livers  
Testing  
Years of service: 5  
Last assignment: Ansbach, Germany  
Divisions: Art, entertaining others with my charm.  
Civilian education: Attending University of Maryland and Central Texas College, majoring in Early Childhood Education.

**Houston MEPS**

Sgt 1<sup>st</sup> Class Goodman  
Operations NCOIC  
Years of service: 17  
Last assignment: Army Reserve Garrison Command, Fort Irwin, Calif.

**Knoxville MEPS**

Staff Sgt. Sharon Mikel  
Test Administrator  
Years of service: 8  
Last assignment: Recruiter  
Divisions: Spending time with family  
First impression: "I found everyone to be very helpful."

**Los Angeles MEPS**

Sgt. Juel Mallard  
Test Specialist  
Years of service: 4  
Last assignment: Fort Drum, N.Y.  
Divisions: Playing with my daughters  
First impression: "I think I will enjoy working here."

**Sgt. Clayton Arnold**

Medical Technician  
Last assignment: 170th Military Police Company/504th MP Battalion  
Military education: Primary Leadership Development Course  
Divisions: Martial arts, music, and law  
First impression: "Very Professional and organized."

**Sgt. Steven Hayes**

Processing NCO  
Years of service: 6  
Last assignment: MSSG-11 (6 month deployment to Kuwait)  
Military education: Admin Clerk School, Legal Clerk School and U.S. Customs Aboard a Vessel School  
First impression: "Best unit I have ever been assigned to."

**Lansing MEPS**

Sgt. John Thong  
Last assignment: South Dakota

**Staff Sgt. Sean Cartwright**

Last assignment: Hawaii

**Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Eric Olds**

Last assignment: USS John C. Stennis

**Little Rock MEPS**

Jessie Lindsey  
Human Resource Assistant  
Years of service: Retired Army  
Last assignment: Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, Test Proctor, Camp Robinson North Little Rock, Ark.  
Divisions: Bowling, fishing, basketball, and reading  
First impression: "Very friendly people!"

**Wilburn Lee Maddox**

Medical Technician  
Years of service: 22 years active duty, 9 years civil service  
Last assignment: Little Rock Air Force Base, 314th Medical Group  
Civilian education: LPN  
Divisions: Hunting, fishing, brew my own beer & wine

**Brenda Wojtarowicz**

Medical Technician  
 Years of service: 9 years active duty, 8 years Reserve, 12 years civil service  
 Last assignment: North Little Rock Veterans Administration - Staff Nurse  
 Civilian education: LPN  
 Military education: Electronic School, Missile Maintenance School, Medical Services School  
 Diversions: Any outdoor activities  
 First impression: "Nice facility and professional staff."

**Chartrice Donahue**

Human Resource Assistant  
 Years of service: 17  
 Last assignment: Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan  
 Civilian education: Bachelors in Business Management  
 Military education: Primary Leadership Development Course, Airmen Leadership, NCO Academy  
 Diversions: Sports and spending time with family  
 First impression: "Very friendly."

**Staff Sgt. Edward Prueitt**

Testing NCOIC  
 Years of service: 11  
 Last assignment: Postal Platoon Sergeant, 1541st Postal, Fort Hood, Texas  
 Military education: Primary Leadership Development Course, Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course  
 Diversions: Music  
 First impression: "Great People!"

**Kenneth Justice**

Human Resource Assistant  
 Last assignment: Arkansas Employment Security Department  
 Civilian education: Bachelors in Religion and Elementary Education  
 Diversions: Guitar, fishing, writing  
 First impression: "Professional staff."

**Edgar Stitt**

Education Services Specialist  
 Years of service: Retired Army  
 Last assignment: ESS, 417th BSB, Germany  
 Civilian education: Masters in Human Relations  
 Diversions: Renovation work, studying  
 First impression: Good.

**Louisville MEPS****Sgt. Edward Barner**

Testing Specialist  
 Years of service: 6  
 Last assignment: Schofield Barracks, Hawaii  
 Diversions: Sports  
 First impression: "Different, exciting."

**Miami MEPS****Dr. Heather Wagoner**

Education Services Specialist  
 Years of service: 5  
 Last assignment: RAF Mildenhall, Guidance Counselor  
 Civilian education: PhD, Colorado State University  
 Military education: Squadron Officer School as a civilian  
 Diversions: Reading, travel, listening to Portuguese jazz & Bossa Nova.

**Jose Luis Marin**

Processing clerk  
 Years of service: 5  
 Last assignment: Administration clerk, Quantico, Va.  
 Military education: Administration school  
 Diversions: Soccer, movies, cars, going out.  
 First impression: "Busy!"

**Lt. Geoffrey Austin Patten**

Test Control Officer  
 Years of service: 5  
 Last assignment: VQ-1, Whidbey Island, Wash., Naval pilot  
 Civilian education: Bachelor of Science in Aviation  
 Military education: Aviation training EP-3  
 Diversions: Keeping track of 3 kids  
 First impression: "Muy Caliente!"

**Staff Sgt. Kum Mallory**

Processing clerk  
 Years of service: 7  
 Last assignment: Randolph Air Force Base, Texas  
 Military education: 7-level  
 Diversions: Outdoor activities, movies

**New York MEPS****Sgt. April York**

Operations Front Desk  
 Years of service: 6  
 Last assignment: Admin NCO, 19<sup>th</sup> Criminal Investigation Division, Yongsan, Korea  
 Diversions: Reading, shopping, traveling, watching movies  
 First impression: "Very friendly atmosphere and the transition into the workplace was easy."

**Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Simon Cleetus**

Operations Front Desk  
 Years of service: 5  
 Last assignment: USS Austin  
 Diversions: Enjoy traveling, working on automobiles, and any kind of mechanical, electrical stuff  
 First impression: "Reminded me of the first day I got here to go for basic training. I felt very welcomed ... outstanding staff."

**1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Vinita Hambrick**

Testing Control Officer  
 Years of service: 3  
 Last assignment: Chief, Enlisted Strength Management, Fort Bragg, N.C.  
 Diversions: Dancing, bowling, reading, house shopping  
 First impression: "Very organized and hospitable atmosphere."

**Portland, Maine MEPS****Donna Slack**

Secretary  
 Years of service: 5  
 Last assignment: The last 18 years—morning show radio personality  
 Diversions: Genealogy  
 Civilian education: B.A. in History, University of Southern Maine  
 First impression: "Everyone's been so welcoming!"

**Richmond MEPS**

Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Charles Brown  
 Processing Specialist  
 Years of service: 8  
 Last position: USS Parche  
 Diversions: Basketball and paintball  
 First impression: "Outstanding place to be."

**Sacramento MEPS**

Stephanie Torian  
 Test Coordinator  
 Last assignment: NRD San Francisco, Officer Processor  
 Military education: CTO "A" School  
 Diversions: Decorating, reading, and swimming

**Brian Bowen**

Health Technician  
 Civilian education: High Tech Institute  
 Military education: Community College of the Air Force  
 Diversions: Sports  
 First impression: "An interesting place to work."

**Sgt. Keith Jones**

Processing Specialist  
 Years of service: 12  
 Last assignment: 1/38th Postal Co  
 Diversions: All sports, fishing  
 First impression: "Helpful military and civilian personnel that make you feel welcome."

**Staff Sgt. Stephanie Alvarez**

Operations NCO  
 Years of service: 9  
 Last assignment: Pentagon/Mail and Distribution NCOIC  
 Civilian education: Associate's Degree  
 Diversions: Dancing, working out, traveling  
 First impression: "Good! The personnel are very helpful and polite."

**Capt. Scott Whited**

Test Control Officer  
 Years of service: 7  
 Last assignment: 25th Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, Wash., Brigade Assistant, S-4  
 Civilian education: Bachelor's Degree, Business Admin, MBA in progress  
 Military education: Airborne  
 Diversions: Hunting, fishing  
 First impression: "Excellent!"

**Spc. Maria Long**

Test Administrator  
 Years of service: 5  
 Last assignment: Camp Zama, Japan, Postal Clerk  
 Military education: Postal School, Correspondence Courses  
 Diversions: Sleeping  
 First impression: "Very unique assignment."

**San Antonio MEPS****Tom Grippo**

Last assignment: 90<sup>th</sup> Regional Support Command, Little Rock, Ark.  
 Diversions: Reading, attending plays and concerts, and weight training

**Sgt. Ayankemi Broadus**

Last assignment: 102d Signal Battalion, Hanau, Germany  
 Diversions: Reading, listening to music, spending time with family.

**Sgt. Melanie Humphrey**

Last assignment: HHB 5/7<sup>th</sup> ADA, Hanau, Germany  
 Diversions: Flying, running, and reading.

**San Diego MEPS****Sgt. Emmanuel Rubio**

Military Processing Clerk  
 Years in service: 6  
 Last assignment: Wurzburg, Germany  
 Diversions: Boxing, running, reading, shopping, watching TV, visiting family  
 First impression: "Pretty neat!"

**Sgt. Alice McJimson**

Military Processing Clerk  
 Years in service: 12  
 Last assignment: HHC, 89<sup>th</sup> Military Police Brigade, Fort Hood, Texas  
 Diversions: Family time, sports, cooking

**San Juan MEPS****Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Helvis Ortiz**

Health Technician  
 Years of service: 16  
 Last assignment: Branch Medical Clinic, El Centro, Calif.  
 Diversions: Swimming and 4x4 (Off Road)

**Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> class Sonia Rodriguez**

Female Technician  
 Years of service: 9  
 Last assignment: Naval Medical Clinic, Quantico, Va.  
 Diversions: Going to the movies  
 First impression: Great place to work

**Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> class Wardell Carter:**

Test Administrator  
 Years in service: 4  
 Last assignment: USS Boxer  
 Diversions: Football, basketball, and weightlifting  
 First impression: Good work atmosphere

**Maria Cotto:**

Test Administrator  
 Years of service: 13  
 Last assignment: NSGA Sabana Seca, MWR personnel assistance  
 Diversions: Computers, the Internet, and collecting DVDs.  
 First impression: "Everyone was pretty friendly. Testing area is very organized. TAs there know their job!"

**Syracuse MEPS****Master Sgt. K. Odom**

Operations NCOIC  
 Years of service: 18  
 Last assignment: Lackland Air Force Base, Texas  
 Military education: Community College of the Air Force Degree  
 Diversions: Sports  
 First impression: "I'm looking forward to my assignment at the MEPS."

**Sgt. Shawn Bell**

Operations/ENTNAC clerk  
 Years of service: 9  
 Last assignment: 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division Fort Drum, N.Y.  
 Diversions: Golf, fishing  
 First impression: "Unlike any other OPTEMPO I've ever seen."

**Tampa MEPS****Staff Sgt. Farante Parker**

Processing Clerk  
 Years of service: 9  
 Last assignment: Ismar, Turkey  
 Diversions: Music, riding motorcycle  
 Military education: Army Safety Course, Anti-Terrorism Course

**Sgt. Shelli Thomas**

Processing Clerk  
 Years of service: 10  
 Last assignment: HQ, U.S. Army Recruiting Command, Fort Knox, Ky.  
 Civilian education: Associate's Degree

**Liza Vanessa Jones**

Processing Clerk  
 Years of service: 3 1/2  
 Last assignment: Camp Casey, Korea 177<sup>th</sup> Finance Battalion  
 Diversions: Running  
 Military education: Drivers Training, Combat Lifesaver  
 Civilian education: Associate's degree  
 First impression: "Based on my last two assignments, the MEPS is very laid back." "Everyone that I have met has been very hospitable."

**1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Betty J. Gordon**

First Sergeant  
 Years of service: 20  
 Last assignment: Equal Opportunity Advisor, 26<sup>th</sup> Area Support Group  
 Diversions: Traveling  
 Military education: First Sergeant's Course  
 Civilian education: Master's of Human Relations  
 First impression: "Interesting!"

## FOND FAREWELLS

**Amarillo MEPS****Staff Sgt. Rene Hernandez**

Processing NCOIC/Travel Specialist  
 Years of service: 9  
 Departing for: 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, Okinawa, Japan  
 Award: Joint Service Commendation Medal  
 Most remembered for: Her professionalism and military bearing.

**Sgt. Jackie Harris**

Testing Section NCOIC  
 Years of service: 13  
 Departing for: Republic of South Korea  
 Award: Joint Service Commendation Medal  
 Most remembered for: Being a friendly, outgoing, hard worker and having a very positive attitude!

**Sgt. Curtis Tobin, Jr.**

Processing NCO  
 Years of service: 15  
 Departing for: Republic of South Korea  
 Award: Joint Service Achievement Medal  
 Most remembered for: His upbeat personality – always willing to help and being very motivated with applicants.

**Staff Sgt. Ryan Byrnes**

Processing NCO  
 Years of service: 11  
 Award: Joint Service Achievement Medal  
 Most remembered for: His ability to quickly process applicants and ship them to boot camp.

**Chicago MEPS****Cmdr. Carolyn Kresek**

Executive Officer  
 Years of service: 20  
 Departing for: Retirement – civilian sector  
 Award: Defense Meritorious Service Medal

**Dallas MEPS****Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> class Bryant Dukes**

Travel Specialist  
 Years of service: 12  
 Departing for: Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless, Galveston, Texas  
 Most remembered for: The sheep theory, "Baaahh"

**Staff Sgt. April Murray**

Processing Clerk  
 Years of service: 7  
 Departing for: Belgium  
 Most remembered for: "Collecting lunch orders – everyday – she loves to eat!"

**Sgt. Curtis Ducote, Jr.**

Processing Clerk  
 Years of service: 12  
 Departing for: Seattle Recruiting Battalion  
 Most remembered for: "Witty comments" and "The Form 20 Guy"

**Knoxville MEPS****Petty Officer 1st Class Rodney Burdette**

Years of service: 11  
 Next assignment: Interservice Transfer to the Coast Guard, stationed aboard the USCG Tampa in Portsmouth, Va.  
 Award: Joint Service Commendation Medal  
 Most remembered for: Morale and welfare of his NCOs.

**Little Rock MEPS****Sgt. Garland Alexander Adkins III**

Test Administrator  
 Years of service: 9  
 Next assignment: Officer Candidate School, Fort Benning, Ga.  
 Most remembered for: Sense of humor, charm, wit.

**Sgt. David Rolins**

Test Administrator  
Years of service: 11  
Next assignment: Active Guard Reserve, 90th  
Regional Support Command, North Little Rock,  
Ark.  
Most remembered for: You Decide!

**Petty Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Class Herbert Dean Huggins**

Test Administrator  
Years of service: 20  
Next assignment: Retirement  
Most remembered for: Very pleasant

**Sgt. Rocky Sudduth**

Control Desk NCO  
Years of service: 7  
Next assignment: Fort Polk, La.  
Most remembered for: Sarcastic stories

**Louisville MEPS****Sgt. Barbara Robinson**

Control Desk NCOIC  
Years of service: 14  
Departing for: Office of Defense Cooperation  
Turkey, Ankara, Turkey  
Award: Joint Service Commendation Medal  
Most remembered for: Being a top-notch soldier  
and a good friend.

**Miami MEPS****Capt. Tiana Williams**

Operations Officer  
Departing for: Civilian life in the Midwest  
Award: Joint Service Commendation Medal

**Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Linda Morgan**

Processing NCOIC  
Departing for: Retirement in Miami, Fla.  
Award: Joint Service Commendation Medal

**Staff Sgt. Mark Kennedy**

Lead Processing Clerk  
Departing for: Camp Lejeune, N.C.  
Award: Joint Service Commendation Medal

**Montgomery MEPS****Petty Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Class Christopher Linger**

Years of service: 9  
Departing for: Student (MECP) Nursing School  
Award: Joint Service Commendation Medal  
Most remembered for: Integrity, saying what I  
mean and owning up to it later.

**Staff Sgt. Theodis Jones, Jr.**

Years of service: 7  
Departing for: Camp Lejeune, N.C.  
Most remembered for: Never refusing to help  
out a service counselor at anytime.

**New Orleans MEPS****Staff Sgt. Javier Cardenas**

Medical Specialist  
Departing for: Fort Wainwright, Alaska  
Award: Joint Service Commendation Medal  
Most remembered for: Always putting everyone  
before his needs.

**Richmond MEPS****Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Patricia Smith**

Operations NCOIC  
Years of service: 20  
Departing for: Retirement

**Sgt. Andre Powell**

Medical  
Departing for: Korea  
Award: Joint Service Commendation Medal.

**San Antonio MEPS****Art Garcia**

Supply Technician  
Departing for: Retirement

**San Jose MEPS****Lt. Steven Ledoux**

Operations Officer  
Award: Joint Service Commendation Medal  
Final impression: "It has been a pleasure to  
serve with San Jose MEPS."

**Staff Sgt. Carlos Davila**

ENTNAC Clerk  
Years of service: 8 1/2  
Final impression: "Semper Fi San Jose"

**Tech. Sgt. Gregory Call**

Front Desk NCOIC  
Years of service: 19  
Next assignment: Little Rock Air Force Base,  
Ark.  
Award: Joint Service Commendation Medal  
Diversions: Sight-seeing, camping  
Final impression: "Pleasure serving at the  
MEPS where I began my career"

**San Juan MEPS****Petty Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Class Jeffrey Bowling**

Assistant Testing Control Officer  
Years of service: 18  
Departing for: Commander Carrier Group Three,  
Bremerton, Wash.  
Award: Joint Service Achievement Medal  
Most remembered for: His outstanding customer  
service

**Sgt. Desiree Alexander**

Control Desk  
Years of service: 14  
Next assignment: Fort Hood, Texas  
Most remembered for: Organizing monthly  
health and junk food luncheons

**Sioux Falls MEPS****Tech. Sgt. Geoffrey Phillips**

Test Administrator  
Years of service: 13  
Departing for: Scott Air Force Base, Ill.  
Award: Joint Service Commendation Medal  
Most remembered for: Outstanding job  
proficiency and was the best golf player in the  
station

**Syracuse MEPS****Sgt. David Collins**

Administrative NCO  
Years of service: 6  
Departing for: Bahrain  
Most remembered for: Usually shows up on  
time, occasionally fit for duty.

**Sgt. Paula Wiggins**

Administrative Specialist  
Years of service: 14  
Departing for: Defense Intelligence Agency,  
Arlington, Va.  
Award: Joint Service Commendation Award  
Most remembered for: Her effervescent  
personality.

**Master Sgt. Valerie Samson**

Operations NCOIC  
Years of service: 20  
Departing for: Retirement  
Award: Joint Service Commendation Award  
Most remembered for: Her cheerful personality  
and the clicking of her heels.

**Capt. Jeremy Lingenfelter**

Operations Officer  
Years of service: 5  
Departing for: Connecticut Army National Guard  
Most remembered for: His vast amounts of  
knowledge.

**1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Sandy Petersen**

First Sergeant  
Years of service: 20  
Departing for: Retirement  
Award: Army Meritorious Service Medal  
Most remembered for: Bagels & sour crème &  
chive dip.

**Tampa MEPS****Sgt. Eric Padron**

Military Personnel Clerk  
Years of service: 8  
Departing for: Civilian life  
Award: Joint Service Commendation Medal  
Most remembered for: Subject matter expert in  
the files room.

**Staff Sgt. Patrick Clay**

Test Administrator  
Years of service: 10  
Departing for: Fort Jackson, S.C.  
Award: Joint Service Achievement Medal  
Most remembered for: Being a motivator.

**Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> class Henry Garcia**

Medical NCOIC  
Years of service: 23  
Departing for: Retirement

**Capt. Julie Sevelius**

Operations Officer  
Years of service: 8  
Departing for: Civilian life

**Staff Sgt. Paz Krieger**

Operations  
Departing for: NATO assignment in Germany

**HQ, USMEPCOM**

**John Ault, Mark Harmon, promotion**

**BUFFALO MEPS**

**Staff Sgt. Geneice Walker**, Western New York Soldier of the Year; **Staff Sgt. Breck Downey**, Military Member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter; **Cathy Woodruff**, Civilian of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter

**DALLAS MEPS**

**Staff Sgt. April Murray, Petty Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Class Maria Calvert**, promotion

**FARGO MEPS**

**Dale Mowry**, Fargo-Moorhead FEA Civil Servant of the Year in both the Admin-Operational Support and Overall Categories; **Kathy Myhre**, Fargo MEPS Biannual Civilian Award; **Sgt. Janine Hanson**, first Fargo MEPS Military Member Biannual Award

**HONOLULU MEPS**

**Sgt. Craig Sterrette**, Military Member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter; **Don Johnson**, Civilian of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter

**LOS ANGELES MEPS**

**Petty Officer 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Sarah Wagner**, Military Member of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter; **Mark Singleton**, Civilian of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter

**LITTLE ROCK MEPS**

**Chief Petty Officer Donald Cooper**, promotion

**LOUISVILLE MEPS**

**Tari Holmes**, Civilian of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter; **Sgt. Jose Hernandez**, Military Member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter; **Lataunya Porter**, Civilian Achievement Medal; **Staff Sgt. Karlene Brown**, promotion

**MIAMI MEPS**

**Staff Sgt. Karen Martin**, promotion, re-enlistment

**NEW ORLEANS MEPS**

**Staff Sgt. Priscilla Bailey**, promotion

**PORTLAND MEPS**

**Jim Burnell**: Achievement Medal for Civilian Service; **Sgt. Kelly O'Guinn**, Military Member of the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, Perfect 300 on the Army physical fitness test; **Master Sgt. Tim Morse**, 299 Army PFT; **Petty Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Class Billy James**, Military Member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter; **Sgt. Charlotte Carroll**, Superior Customer Service Award from U.S. Army Recruiting; **Petty Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Class Terry Heriot**, Joint Service Commendation Medal

**RICHMOND MEPS**

**Harold Davis**, Civilian Member of the Quarter; **Sgt. Donna Stearns**, Military Member of the Quarter; **Sgt. Andre Powell**, Joint Service Commendation Medal; **Teri Walker**, Commander's On-The-Spot Award

**SAN ANTONIO MEPS**

**Shari Madore**, Civilian of the Year; **Sgt. Martha T. Rawley**, Military Member of the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter; **Sgt. Rosa Mora**, Military Member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter; **Glo Holder**, Civilian of the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter; **Chris Longhurst**, Civilian of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter; **Tech. Sgt. Anna Blundell**, promotion

**SIOUX FALLS MEPS**

**Sgt. Mary Waggoner**, Naval Recruiting District Omaha – MEPS Staff Person of the Quarter Certificate; **Sgt. Mary Linquist**, graduated the 71L Basis Noncommissioned Officer Course

## BIRTHS

**BUFFALO MEPS**

**Sgt. William Ramos** and his wife, **Gina**, a son, **Nathan**, 5 pounds, 7 ounces, 19 inches.

**HOUSTON MEPS**

**Victoria Taylor Sudul**, 6 pounds, 10 ounces, 20 inches.

**LOS ANGELES MEPS**

**Sgt. Hanson** and his wife, **Keisha**, a daughter, 5 pounds, 8 ounces.

**LITTLE ROCK MEPS**

**Staff Sgt. Michele Bortvit**, and her husband, **Bill**, a son, **Ethan Michael**, 8 pounds, 20 ½ inches.

**LITTLE ROCK MEPS**

**Capt. JoAnne Fittante** and her husband, **Michael**, a daughter, **Felicity Marcella**, 6 pounds, 14 ounces, 19 ½ inches.

**MIAMI MEPS**

**Staff Sgt. Kum Mallory**, and her husband, **Brian**, a son, **Andrew Chai**, 7 pounds, 15 ounces.

**NEW YORK MEPS**

**Sgt. Jeanine Ling** and her husband, **Jim**, a son **Jarryd Michael**, 6 pounds, 15 ounces, 21 inches.

**NEW YORK MEPS**

**Sgt. Johnny Rodriguez**, and his wife, **Gisel**, a daughter, **Sarai Olivia**, 7 pounds, 6 ounces, 21 inches.

**SAN ANTONIO MEPS**

**Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class James Hampton** and his wife, **Angeline**, a daughter, **Alina Marie**.

**SIOUX FALLS MEPS**

**Jennifer Anderson**, a daughter, **Miah Nicholas**, 7 pounds, 9 ounces.

## CONGRATS

**KNOXVILLE MEPS**

To **Master Sgt. David Bamburg** for his recent STEP promotion. The STEP Program is designed to instantly promote stand-out performers. Bamburg competed and won at USMEPCOM and then went on to compete against all other Air Force elements at a central selection board at Bolling Air Force Base, D.C.

**LOS ANGELES MEPS**

To Mr. Jones, supply technician, whose 17-year-old son who recently graduated from Morris High School in San Diego and was drafted into the Seattle Mariners.

## EDUCATIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**HQ, USMEPCOM**

**Sgt. 1st Class Robin Beamon**, Master of Arts in Human Resources Development, Webster University, May 2003

**Sgt. 1st Class Robert Valentine**, Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Columbia College, March 2003

**Staff Sgt. John Mayton**, Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Columbia College, June 2003

**FARGO MEPS**

Fargo MEPS had three graduates from the University of Mary in May. They

are: **Tech. Sgt. Deborah Williams** and **Chief Petty Officer Richard Osert** — Bachelor of Science in Management; and **Jennifer Farris** — Bachelor of Science in Computer Information Systems

**LOS ANGELES MEPS**

**Capt. Humphrey** graduated with a Master's in Business Administration from Webster University.

**LITTLE ROCK MEPS**

**Capt. JoAnne Fittante** graduated with a Master's Degree in Human Resource Management from Webster University. **Alytrius Bonds** graduated with a Master's in Business Administration from the University of Arkansas.

## HQ Comings & Goings

### Human Resources

**Vicki Hamlin** is the new Wellness & Readiness Program Manager. She arrived in August, from Grafenwoehr, Germany, where she held a position as a family advocacy educator. At USMEPCOM, she will establish a command wellness program that supports command personnel and families.

**1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Victor Wiseman**, Distance Learning Coordinator, left the command. He is a manager with Home Depot.

**Master Sgt. Todd Turner**, training NCO, left in June. He is now working in the financial planning arena.

**Staff Sgt. Richard Ward**, training coordinator and manager, transferred to Germany to work as a supply NCO.

### Information Technology

**Kevin Moore** is the new IT director. He arrived in July. His last position was as deputy program director, Logistics Modernization Program, Communications Electronics Command at Fort Monmouth, N.J., since December 1999. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science from the U.S. Military Academy West Point, and is a lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve.

**1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Griffith Marshall** is the new network officer in the Communication Division. His last duty station was 8<sup>th</sup> Communication Battalion, Camp LeJeune, N.C.

**Capt. William McCutcheon** left in July. He was the network officer. He retired from the Marine Corps and is looking for a new position in Pittsburgh.

### Judge Advocate

**Col. Rafael Lara** is the new USMEPCOM Staff Judge Advocate. He arrived in June. His last position was at the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization, Office of General Counsel, Washington D.C. as SJA.

**Col. Paul Holden, Jr.**, former USMEPCOM SJA, left the command in June. He is now assigned as the director, Defense Institute of International Legal Studies, Newport, R.I.

**Sgt. Timothy Brandenburg** is the new Eastern Sector Paralegal NCO. His last position was as a criminal law paralegal NCO in Wurzburg, Germany. He will be handling all military justice actions for Eastern Sector.

### Operations

**Davis Gray** is a new management analyst. He arrived in June. His last position was with the Software Testing Group in IT. In his new position, he will be testing software for the MOP Accession Division.

**Teri Montesa** is the new administrative assistant for Accessions Division. She arrived in June. Her last position was Naval Station, Great Lakes.

### Program Analysis and Evaluation

**Capt. Phil Reeves** left the command in June on his way to Camp Pendleton.

**Lt. Jason Hudson**, program analyst, arrived in June. His last position was as an enlisted programs officer at Navy Recruiting in Nashville, Tenn.

**1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Paul Greenberg**, program analyst, arrived in July. His last position was at Marine Aircraft Group 26, Marine Corps Air Station, New River, N.C. He was the MAG-26 Adjutant.

### Special Assistant to the Commander

**Lt. Col. Sally Jo Hall** is the Headquarters deputy chief of staff for Transformation. She arrived in July. Her last position was as assistant director, General and Flag Officer Management, USD (P&R). She will manage the USMEPCOM Transformation Program.

## Tampa rewards excellence with Snapshot Recognition

The Tampa MEPS began a new program to recognize excellence among its team members.

Tampa MEPS commander, Lt. Cmdr. Johnna Marchant wanted a way for her team to recognize each other for acts that go above and beyond what is expected on a daily basis. She wanted it to be easy to implement and fun at the same time. Enter Tampa MEPS Form 101, Snapshot Recognition!

As an incentive, MEPS sections compete to have the highest percentage

of recognized acts. This is determined by dividing the number of people in each section by the number of snapshot recognition forms received. The results are tallied each quarter and the section with the highest percentage receives a pizza party, compliments of the commander.

The first quarter came and went and the medical section barely out recognized the processing section and recently ate the fruits of their hard work. The program is a success and continues to promote friendly competition while

rewarding and recognizing excellence throughout the MEPS.

In addition to giving above and beyond at work, Tampa MEPS personnel give outside the job as well. Currently the MEPS participates in Habitat for Humanity, a local soup kitchen, and an afternoon Kid's Café. Military members who donate 10 or more hours receive a 3-day pass and civilian members receive a time-off award. Three staff members volunteered to head these committees in supporting our local community and giving something back.

## Easter Seals and NFL Alumni honor Dallas personnel

The Easter Seals of Greater Dallas and NFL Alumni Association, Dallas Chapter, honored Dallas MEPS military personnel as heroes at a Celebrity Gala recently.

The Easter Seals is a non-profit organization with a mission of helping children and adults with disabilities and special needs achieve their highest level of self-esteem and independence, regardless of ability to pay. Easter Seals provides outpatient rehabilitation services such as physical, occupational and speech therapy, audiology services, provides breast prostheses and bras to breast cancer survivors who are post-mastectomy, social services as well as medical consultation. Because Easter Seals of Greater Dallas is a non-profit organization, they are able to provide charitable care to those who are unable to afford therapy.

The NFL Alumni Association is a non-profit organization made up of former professional football players who work voluntarily on behalf of youth and charity. The NFL Alumni raises funds for worthy causes that, for the most part, are youth-oriented in nature. In their philanthropic work, members of the NFL Alumni are guided by their motto: "Caring For Kids."



MEPS personnel display the plaques they received at a Celebrity Gala recently. (Left to right) Senior Master Sgt. Patricia Sonntag, Elizabeth Hart (president & CEO of Easter Seals of Greater Dallas), Staff Sgt. Barbara Freeny, Petty Officer 3rd Class Kymberly Axtell, Petty Officer 2nd Class Darren Axtell, Sgt. Victor Eaves II, Lt. Col. David Lambert (Dallas MEPS commander), and Jimmie Turner (president of the NFL Alumni Association, Dallas Chapter).

## St. Louis company shows care and gratitude to new troops

A private company has found a way to care for the men and women enlisting at the St. Louis MEPS, located in the Robert A. Young Federal Building.

Since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Team Computer Sciences Corporation St. Louis employees have donated cakes, cookies, donuts, chips, crackers, juices, fruits, books, word puzzle game books, games, and 10-minute phone cards to St. Louis MEPS applicants. A similar "We Care" project existed during Operation Desert Storm.

"Our staff has just been overwhelmed that the good folks at Team CSC St. Louis have continued to show their support even weeks before and during the war," St. Louis MEPS Commander, Maj. Pablo Fernandez said.

"The St. Louis MEPS staff really appreciates what 'We Care' is doing and we are elated over the tremendous support from Team CSC St. Louis. They have shown their gratitude and commitment for the applicants who process through our station and thank them for their willingness to step forward in defending this great nation."

Fernandez explained that the "We Care" program helped several employees get through a difficult time. "When the anti-war protests began it was very difficult for many employees and the 'We Care' program made it possible to channel that negative energy

into something positive, Fernandez said.

To show appreciation for and honor Team CSC St. Louis, the MEPS presented them with an Eagle Statue.

St. Louis MEPS commander, Maj. Pablo Fernandez presents an Eagle Statue to representatives from Team Computer Sciences Corporation. Team CSC has been making gestures to show they care about new troops since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



## Multiple promotions in Lansing

The Lansing MEPS was seeing things in multiples recently as five of its military members were promoted to the grade of E-6 within a period of five months.

The promotees were: Army Staff Sgt. James Lewis, Army Staff Sgt. Roland Walker, Army Staff Sgt. Augustine Robinson, Army Staff Sgt. Marla Woodson, and Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jay Valloric.

# ASSIGNMENT:



## Beckley MEPS

USMEPCOM spreads its reach into 65 different locations from Pittsburgh to Los Angeles, Alaska to Hawaii, and a lot of points in between. But how much do you know about the MEPS around the world? In this new feature, we take a look at the MEPS around us: what's there to do if you're stationed not only at the big places, but the smaller ones, too. In each issue, we'll look at local populations, housing costs, things to see, and other interesting tidbits.

Welcome to the Beckley MEPS in Beckley, W.Va., located in the southern part of the state. While the deep woods of the small town still have a "Deliverance" feel, that stereotype doesn't always match the reality, and big city amenities aren't hard to find. A total of 79,066 people call this place home.

An assignment here offers plenty for those hitting the books or hitting the trails. There are seven area colleges and universities, and West Virginia was the first state to wire every classroom from kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade with computers.

Beckley is minutes from whitewater rafting on the New River, which, despite its name, is the oldest river in North America. While you're there, check out the New River Gorge Bridge near Fayetteville. Completed in 1977, it's the longest steel-arch bridge in the world. Still looking for something to do? There's a ski resort 15 miles from Beckley, and since West Virginia boasts the highest elevation of any state east of the Mississippi River, it offers some outstanding runs. The area is also widely known for kayaking, rock climbing, hiking, hunting and fishing.

While Beckley has an eye on modernization, it also remembers its roots with guided trips through its Exhibition Mine. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, tourists can ride through dark passages of an authentic, vintage coal mine, 500 feet underground, to get an idea of what coal mining was like in the 1800s.

### Vital Stats

**Median housing cost:** \$44,100

**Median cost to rent:** \$218

The above numbers from the Beckley-Raleigh Chamber of Commerce Web site, and provided by the state, are a bit on the low side, said one MEPS official, who said average home prices are about \$70,000, and average rent runs between \$700 and \$900.

**Average rainfall:** 38 inches

**Average snowfall:** 51 inches

**Average temperature:** 52 degrees — average summers range in the 80s and winter in the teens to 30s.

Price for a gallon of gas (as of Aug. 28, 2003): \$1.69

**Closest professional sports teams:** The Steelers, Pirates and Penguins in Pittsburgh, Pa.

**They did what?** In 1997, the football team of Woodrow Wilson High School of Beckley defeated Mount View High School of Welch, W.Va., 116-28.

**In case of emergency, break glass:** On May 31, 1992, with the Cold War apparently over, the Washington Post revealed something that some West Virginians kept secret for 30 years. In case of a nuclear attack on this country, the entire U.S. Congress and support staff could survive for 40 days in a bunker underneath the Greenbrier Resort in nearby White Sulphur Springs.

**Looking for love?** Of the 79,066 residents, 36,194 are male, and 40,625 are female, according to the latest census.

### In a nutshell

The Beckley MEPS has enlistment responsibility for 49 counties in West Virginia, Kentucky, and Virginia. They also have six Mobile Examining Team sites in the area that offer aptitude testing to applicants near their homes, eliminating unnecessary travel.

**Staff:** A total of 14 civilians and 16 military (10 in the Army, four in the Navy, one in the Air Force, and one in the Marines) processes about 10,000 applicants per year.

**Closest military installation:** It's about a three-way tie. Fort Knox, Ky., is 333 miles away; Fort Belvoir, Va., is 316 miles



away; and the winner is Fort Jackson, S.C., 304 miles away.

**Housing:** Since there are no military bases, the majority of the MEPS staff lives in nearby Hollers, W.Va.

**But don't just take our word for it ...**

"Like any place, it has its ups and downs, but you have to explore the place and get to know the people. I like it because it's a smaller town but it still has the conveniences of a city," said Navy Lt. Carmelo Nicastro, the operations officer for the Beckley MEPS. "There are a lot of outdoor things to do, a lot of state trails and wild areas where you can get away from it all and unwind."

For more information about the local area, log onto: [www.beckley.org](http://www.beckley.org)



# Then...



# & Now

