

# Messenger

SUMMER  
2023

## 50 Years All-Volunteer Force 1973-2023



USMEPCOM

**PAST,**

**Present**

**+ Future**

*Freedom's Front Door*

p. 4

Half-Century of the

**All-Volunteer  
Force**

p. 7

*Behavioral*

**Health**

*Providers*

p. 14



Happy Summer Teammates,

This is a very special issue of the Messenger. With all the stories worth sharing across this command and information we need to get out, it's not often that we produce issues that carry a theme throughout. That's why I am so excited for this history-themed issue that commemorates and celebrates the 50th Anniversary of the All-Volunteer Force (AVF).

In this issue, we include an account of the history of the AVF from DoD (page 7); a history of applicant processing and our own organization, vital to the development and continued success of the AVF (page 4); and mini-features from personnel throughout our command who joined in each decade of the AVF – including one who joined before its inception! (page 16). History is important. It's always valuable to take time to learn about our shared past.

Just ahead of Memorial Day, I sent out a message to the command asking you to consider three questions. I challenge you to continue to reflect on these questions throughout the year.

- What lies at the crossroads of volunteerism, service, and sacrifice?
- What does it mean that young people have chosen and still choose to serve, knowing they may not come home?

- In particular, how do the answers to these questions impact us at USMEPCOM, who are critical observers and facilitators for applicants' journey to serve?

As we reflect on the past, we continue to move forward. Also in this issue are articles and information valuable to our daily work (initiative to improve behavioral health consults, page 14) and careers (updated information from OPM about civilian retirement, page 27) and more.

Thank you, as always, for all you do to support our mission. Have a safe and enjoyable summer.






*Megan B Stallings*

Megan B. Stallings  
Colonel, USA  
Commanding



# CONTENTS

## THIS ISSUE

- 4 PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE OF USMEPCOM**  
By Christine Parker
- 7 HALF-CENTURY OF THE ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE**  
By Jim Garamone, DOD News
- 9 GOING THE EXTRA MILE**  
 By Tampa MEPS
- 10 ASVAB CEP EXCEEDS TESTING GOAL**  
By Joseph Wax
- 11 MEDICAL LEADERSHIP COMES TOGETHER FOR COLLABORATION & COORDINATION**  
By Derrik Noack
- 12 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE CONNECTS COMMAND TEAMS**  
By Derrik Noack
- 14 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROVIDERS**  
By Derrik Noack
- 15 LEAPING INTO LANGUAGE**  
 By Navy Cmdr. Robert Liberato  
Boston MEPS
- 16 USMEPCOM AVF50 REFLECTIONS**
- 19 IN MEMORY OF ROSE V. PAYNE**  
 By Army Maj. Patrick Zebrowski &  
Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Juan Osuna  
Beckley MEPS
- 20 THE WHOLE COMMUNITY APPROACH**  
 By Marine Corps Lt. Col Nicole Bastian  
Montgomery MEPS
- 22 STEPSON OF USMEPCOM COMMANDER ENLISTS**  
By Derrik Noack
- 24 FORT GREGG-ADAMS**  
By Terrance Bell
- 25 THE 305 BURGER**  
 By Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class  
Myron De Sa, Miami MEPS
- 26 COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO PROTECTING OUR MEPS**  
By Andre Markham, Antiterrorism Officer
- 29 MEPS MENTION**
- 30 INSTAMEPS**

## STAFF

Col. Megan B. Stallings  
**Commander**  
USMEPCOM

Marshall Smith  
**Public Affairs Officer**

Derrik Noack  
**Messenger Editor**  
derrik.l.noack.civ@army.mil

Amy Gregorski  
**Visual Information Specialist**  
amy.e.gregorski.civ@army.mil

Israel Molina  
**Visual Information Specialist**  
israel.a.molina4.civ@army.mil

## LINKS

**USMEPCOM**  
HOMEPAGE



**facebook**



United States Military Entrance  
Processing Command



The Messenger is authorized by Army Regulation 360-1 for members of the U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command. This publication's contents are not necessarily official views of or endorsed by USMEPCOM, the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government. USMEPCOM publishes the Messenger quarterly using offset printing. Printed circulation: 3,000.

Please send "Letters to the Editor" submissions to:  
derrik.l.noack.civ@army.mil  
Summer 2023  
Cover Design by Amy Gregorski

### ON THE COVER:

*Line drawing by Israel Molina in recognition of 50 years of the All-Volunteer Force.  
Check out more info on page 16.*



# Past, Present & Future of USMEPCOM

By Christine Parker



An applicant completes paperwork at Boston MEPS in the 1970s. (Photo provided by Tom Fleming)

Although military processing has continued to evolve over the last 50 years, its mission remains the same: evaluating military applicants by applying Department of Defense standards in processing and determining eligibility for military service.

USMEPCOM has been an independent command since the late 1970s. Before that, it was part of the U.S. Army Recruiting Command, which traces its history back to the inception of the General Recruiting Service in 1822.

After the Korean War began in 1950, military leaders noticed there were sharp contrasts in the quality of people serving in the military services. On April 2, 1951, the secretary of defense sent a memorandum to the secretaries of the Army, Navy and Air Force, stating that certain policies would change to ensure a fair distribution of military manpower. They established Armed Forces Examining Stations — AFES — to carry out the qualitative distribution program.

The draft was in full swing in the 1960s and AFES were busy. Documents from the mid-1970s use the term AFEES — Armed Forces Examining and Entrance Stations.

The best current estimate for the name change from AFES to AFEES is 1965.

On April 1, 1961, the Army published Regulation 40-501, Standards of Medical Fitness for Appointment, Enlistment and Induction. This regulation clarified many aspects of military enlistment standards. During the 1960s, DoD was also working to improve testing in schools. In 1968, DoD first offered the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, or ASVAB — at no cost — to high schools and postsecondary schools.

**The draft officially ended in July 1973 and the services began recruiting an all-volunteer force.**

This story has been adapted from a 2008 Messenger article.  
While by no means fully inclusive, this article highlights some of USMEPCOM's milestones.



On July 1, 1976, the Department of the Army established the U.S. Military Enlistment Processing Command as the agency that would medically, mentally and administratively process and enlist applicants for the armed forces. The Department of Defense assigned the U.S. Army as executive agent for USMEPCOM. However, for operational and policy supervision, USMEPCOM would report directly to the deputy assistant secretary of defense, military manpower and personnel policy.

Initially, the ASVAB wasn't used for military recruiting. However, in 1976, DoD introduced ASVAB as the official aptitude testing for all the services.

### The 1980s

Effective Jan. 1, 1982, the Assistant Secretary of the Army changed the processing stations' names from Armed Forces Examining and Entrance Stations to Military Entrance Processing Stations. The same office issued a Dec. 2, 1982, memo that changed the command's name from U.S. Military Enlistment Processing Command to U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command.

**The 1980s ushered in the Red Carpet Program, a different way of processing applicants that replaced the assembly line methods of past decades.** It established procedures to help ensure each applicant received personalized, efficient and courteous service.

Also, during the 1980s, like much of the nation, USMEPCOM began increasing its use of information technology. The command began implementing System 80 in 1979 and early in 1981 the command installed the first of the UNIVAC System 80 minicomputers. The system was comprised of a central processing unit with built-in disc memory, a floppy disc drive, a console terminal and an expansion cabinet. It was the first in a network that was to link all the processing stations.

At the time, System 80 was touted to help recruiters and guidance counselors by providing quicker ASVAB results, 714-A data, and test results on one printer, and by printing contracts and other forms faster.

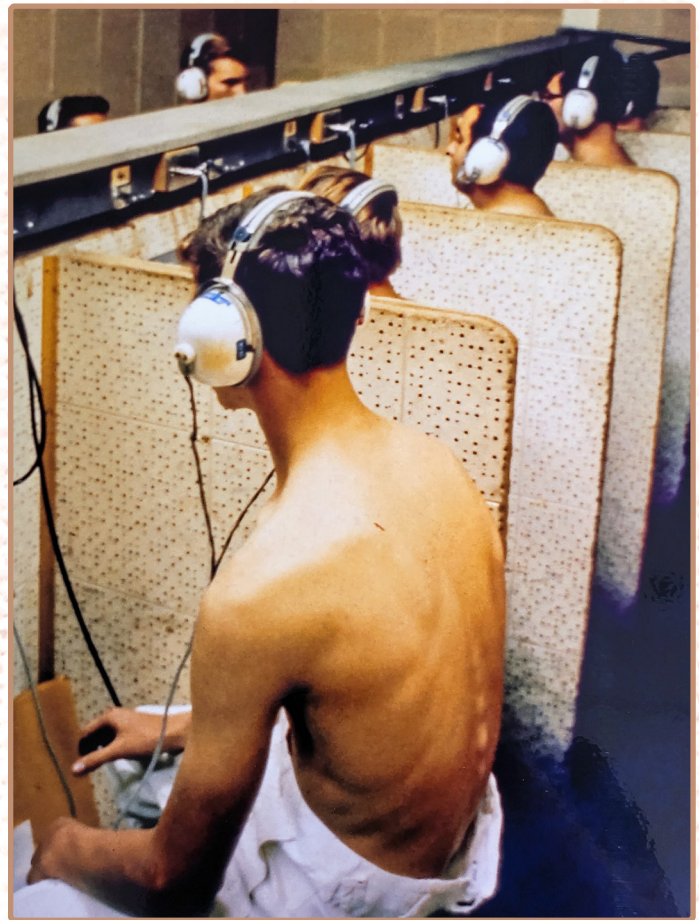
In 1985, the command began installing the Interim USMEPCOM Interactive Resource System, or IMIRS. The system included microcomputers and letter-quality printers that provided stations with word processing and other office automation management capabilities. IMIRS was meant as an advance program to usher in the USMEPCOM Integrated Resource System, or MIRS.

### The 1990s

By the beginning of the 1990s, the military drawdown had begun, and the services were recruiting fewer people than in past eras.

The Gulf War preceded a workload peak in 1992 and, in that same year, USMEPCOM introduced one-day processing.

In 1992, the Army Management Engineering College began guiding USMEPCOM through the first steps of strategic planning. By 1993, the command began studying and implementing the principles of Total



Applicants listen for tones at varying decibel levels during a hearing test at Boston MEPS in the 1970s. (Photo provided by Tom Fleming)

Quality Leadership. Also, around this time frame, the command began looking closely at its structure and mission.

By 1995, the command developed and published its first strategic plan that included a vision, mission and guiding principles. Together, they provided the foundation for building the command's strategic goals, strategies and objectives.

By April 1996, nearly a third of the MEPS were online with MIRS. The new computerized system had many advantages over System 80.

MIRS was designed to automate and improve the accession process and reduce or eliminate paperwork. Its capabilities included the ability to electronically transfer information such as ASVAB results, medical data and to interface with outside computer systems such as the recruiting services' recruit management systems.

Also new, MIRS was linked to the headquarters mainframe, which allowed it to link to many government agencies.

### 2000 & beyond

When it comes to military processing, the years since 2000 focused on strategic planning initiatives and transformation. By 2003, USMEPCOM leaders began taking a closer look at how it takes care of its personnel, both military and civilian. It was during this time frame



that the USMEPCOM commander established its first Wellness and Readiness Division. The goal of the division and the groups has always been to take care of service members, civilians and their families.

In 2005, Program Budget Decision 712 — the DoD's plan to take 20,000 soldiers from support positions to deployment — changed the face of USMEPCOM. The command's 3,000 personnel, once a 50/50 mix of civilians/military, would become an 80/20 mix of civilians/military. By the end, the command converted more than 850 military positions to civilian ones.

Also in 2005, the command created a new operations center to provide better customer service to its MEPS. The new center provides one hub — and continuity — for processing-related questions.

Like most of America, USMEPCOM continued in a usual path during the mid-2000s toward 2020. The 65 MEPS reliably accomplished their mission with an eye toward the future. Looking back, one could say the pace of "change" was slow. It wasn't until 2020 that anyone truly realized the critical role USMEPCOM plays in the accession triad of military recruiting, processing and training. When much of the world had closed its doors and sheltered in place,

MEPS doors remained open and the summer of 2020 proved that military processing cannot stop. Often referred to as the accession pipeline ... during the pandemic, MEPS around the country found inventive ways to keep that pipeline flowing.

Maybe partially because of this realization, USMEPCOM is now laser focused on improving its technological capabilities and work methods. After introducing a new processing system in 2021, USMEPCOM deployed MHS GENESIS in 2022. With this, the command took on the role of creating the enlisted service member's initial health record that evolves into their lifetime health record. In 2023, USMEPCOM continues to improve its new processing system's integration with MHS GENESIS as part of its overall advancement toward more efficient paperless processing.

### Tomorrow's Processing

With so many changes ahead, USMEPCOM will continue to evolve and adapt in fulfilling its mission of evaluating military applicants by applying Department of Defense standards in processing and determining eligibility for military service ... as only it can do. ■



Applicants at Chicago MEPS pose for a photo during processing in 2011. Despite global shutdowns during the pandemic, MEPS remained open to accomplish the mission. (Photo by Isreal Molina)



# Military Marks Half-Century of the All-Volunteer Force

By Jim Garamone, DOD News

Selective Service – the draft – had been in place near continuously in the United States since 1940, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the first peacetime draft in response to developments in Europe and Asia.

By most assessments, the draft had been very successful: The United States raised a 10-million-man military in World War II and supplied the manpower needed to later fight the Korean War and Vietnam War. But by the late 1960s, most Americans viewed the draft as unfair, and as opposition to the war in Vietnam increased, so did opposition to the draft.

During his run for the presidency in 1968, Richard M. Nixon pledged to get rid of the draft and move to an all-volunteer military.

This came to fruition when Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird announced on January 27, 1973, that "after receiving a report from the Secretary of the Army that he foresees no need for further inductions, I wish to inform you that the armed forces henceforth will depend exclusively on volunteer soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines. Use of the draft has ended."

Even though U.S. troops had left South Vietnam the year before, the Soviet Union still loomed large. Worldwide, the U.S. military had a strength of almost 3.3 million service members. Many American civilian and military officials believed it would be impossible to man the force adequately without the draft.

Edward C. Keefer is literally the man who wrote the chapters on the all-volunteer force – publishing the official DOD histories for the 1970s and 1980s. Keefer said the service's "Be All That You Can Be" campaign resonated not only with potential recruits, but their mothers. "Maxwell Thurman, who was the head of army recruiting, ... had people do some research on why people enlisted," he said.

That group found that the combination of the "be all you can be" with the college benefit for honorable service attracted mothers "who would encourage their daughters and sons to join the (service), because they wanted them to move up and go to college," Keefer said. "That was an amazingly strong recruiting tool."

The all-volunteer force was also increasingly family friendly, he said. "With the draft, you had mostly singles in the armed forces," he said. "But with the all-volunteer force, it moved to much more of a family force with children and spouses, sometimes dual-service spouses."

More emphasis went to training and attracting the right personnel for the services. New legislation – most notably the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 – emphasized the joint nature of warfare. The military responded with new doctrine, more realistic training, new standards and more.

An all-volunteer force was not cheap: It required higher pay, better living conditions, money for training and



An Army recruit receives his clothing during basic training, 1977.  
(National Archives)

education, better health care and programs for families.

While there were operations in the 1980s – notably against Libya, Panama and Lebanon – it wasn't until Iraqi President Saddam Hussein invaded neighboring Kuwait in 1990 that the American people realized what their money had bought.

Keefer said the Gulf War also solidified the role of women in the military. "In the all-volunteer force 33,000 women served in the Gulf War area, and five women were killed in action," he said. "I think what the Gulf War did was it shattered myths about women in war; that they wouldn't fight [or] ... they couldn't stand up to physical pressure, or inhospitable conditions. And they would somehow lessen combat readiness."

The all-volunteer force of the 1990s and today is "a





**WHAT SOME OF THE MOST  
SUCCESSFUL WOMEN  
ARE WEARING THIS YEAR.**

**ARMY. BE ALL YOU CAN BE.**

Army recruiting poster, 1990. (National Archives)

far different institution than that of its early years in the '70s," Erin Mahan, chief historian, Office of the Secretary of Defense said. "I think the all-volunteer force has always been somewhat of a microcosm of American society. I think that's even more true today. ... The military generally has often been on the forefront of societal change – whether it's gays in the military, suicide prevention, a host of societal issues – the AVF is a microcosm of society. And the military brings all of its force to tackle those challenges, and I think does so ultimately, quite successfully."

By any measure, the all-volunteer force has been a success. As President Joe Biden nominated Air Force Gen. Charles Q. Brown to be chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he called the U.S. military "the best in the history of the world."

Over 50 years, millions of Americans have served in the all-volunteer force. Most served one enlistment, but many served for careers. Their service didn't end when they returned to civilian life. "I think what's less obvious is that the all-volunteer force has had a tremendous impact on American society," Keefer said. "It has allowed people of lesser means ... to rise to middle-class status. You join the all-volunteer force, you learn skills, you serve for 20 years or less, you get your benefits, then you go out and get a second job, either in teaching or in industry or back in the civilian government."

"The all-volunteer force is this group of people that are very skilled, very well-educated and very capable, and they have been able to add, not just to the military, but to society as a whole," he said. ■



An Air Force second lieutenant watches the parade on Inauguration Day 1981 with his wife and child. (National Archives)



Marines move out on a mission after disembarcking from a CH-46E Sea Knight helicopter during Exercise Imminent Thunder, part of Operation Desert Shield. (Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. H. H. Deffner)



Air Force Senior Airman Joana Galang uses her body weight to secure humanitarian relief items bound for Pakistan during operations at Al Dhafra Air Base. (Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Grossi)





# GOING THE EXTRA MILE - TOGETHER AT TAMPA MEPS

By Tampa MEPS personnel: Navy Lt. Cmdr. America Estevez-Guerrero, commander; Army Capt. Roxeannely Correa-Torres, operations officer; Army 1st Lt. Abby Borchert, assistant operations officer & Giselle Santiago, IT specialist

Together, Tampa MEPS personnel promoted healthy development, healthy behaviors and well-being across all life stages through friendly competition. While our day-to-day occupation may often require us remaining sedentary while processing applicants, Army 1st Lt. 1LT Abby Borchert, Tampa MEPS assistant operations officer, presented the team with an exciting initiative she named “Service Relay.”

Due to competition always being a motivating factor at Tampa MEPS, the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard personnel joined forces to take on the Army and the Air Force team. Through the duration of the month there was no lack of friendly banter, often keeping us on our toes to produce top-notch results.

To effectively create a habit, our competition-based event drove many to get past the often dreaded first 21 days of habit formation. This drove many in the Tampa MEPS community to continue exercising past the “Service Relay.” By the end of the month, Tampa MEPS staff and service liaisons clocked in over 2,951 miles! Each of those miles was awarded a numeric value; 1 mile running was awarded 1 point, 2 miles walking was awarded 1 point, and 4 miles biking was awarded 1 point.

The competition’s physical activities were selected to help boost energy levels, improve the immune system and reduce stress, amongst many other benefits found when going “an extra mile” for health. While embarking on this journey toward improving personal fitness goals, many encountered a newfound love for the outdoors, often taking their loved ones and furry friends along for the ride.

Participating in the Service Relay as a team proved to check every single box in the SMARTER goals framework. SMARTER stands for specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-sensitive, enjoyable, and rewarding. After continuous effort from all Tampa MEPS staff and liaisons, several members were recognized as the MVP for each team.

For the Navy, Marine, and Coast Guard team, the MVP was Navy Lt. Cmdr. America Estevez-Guerrero, Tampa MEPS commander, with 89 points. For the Army and Air Force team, the MVP was Mary Ladiero, our newest intermittent test administrator. Ladiero singlehandedly clocked in over 100 points for her team between running, walking, and biking. The Army and Air Force were able to pass the Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard on the very last day, after slightly treading behind for most of the month. The overall score was USA/USAF: 667.75 pts and USN/USMC/CG: 656.07 pts. ■



“Service Relay” MVPs Mary Ladiero, Tamps MEPS intermittent test administrator, and Navy Lt. Cmdr. America Estevez-Guerrero, Tampa MEPS commander pose for a photo. (Courtesy photo)



Molly, dog of Melissa Soucie, Tampa MEPS travel assistant, enjoys the outdoors while tracking miles with Soucie for the “Service Relay”. (Courtesy photo)



# ASVAB CEP EXCEEDS TESTING GOAL

By Joseph Wax

For the second year in a row, and with a whole quarter remaining, the education service specialists (ESS) and testing coordinators from around USMEPCOM have surpassed their annual goal for completed tests in the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) Career Exploration Program (CEP).

As of April 1, 565,777 tests have been completed at schools around the country, exceeding the goal of 545,395.

According to Tabitha Jefferies, ASVAB CEP national program manager, J-3, the goal number is set considering the different challenges unique to each ESS and testing coordinator area. The focus is on high-quality rather than high numbers.

"Instead of giving our MEPS testing personnel a goal that was outside of the norm, we were able to take in other considerations for success," said Jefferies. "We were able to give our personnel an opportunity to refresh themselves and have a great work-life balance. So that in turn gave us more return on our investment because they were able to go out and work at a higher quality. In addition to that, they were able to spend more

time building relationships and networking with our community."

That networking is helping to rebuild relationships with schools after the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as introduce school personnel to the ASVAB CEP that might not have previously understood what it was.

"Instead of focusing on making mission, we can now spend time educating the educators to make sure they understand the why behind what we do," said Miguel Ortega, the ASVAB CEP manager in San Diego.

"When you show them the program, they see the value in it."

Administering the test is just the first part of the ASVAB CEP. For the program to be effective, program personnel follow up with students to administer a Post-Test Interpretation.

According to Jefferies, since the COVID-19 pandemic, young people in the demographic of 16-23 seem to be more undecided about their future than they were before. She believes that the ASVAB CEP can be a good tool for students to branch out into different things that they might like or would potentially be good at, while they figure out what path they would like to take.

"You don't just have to do one thing and put all your eggs in one basket," she said. "And so, once they have that epiphany in a year, or six months or 10 years, they will at least have some information to help them go in a better direction."

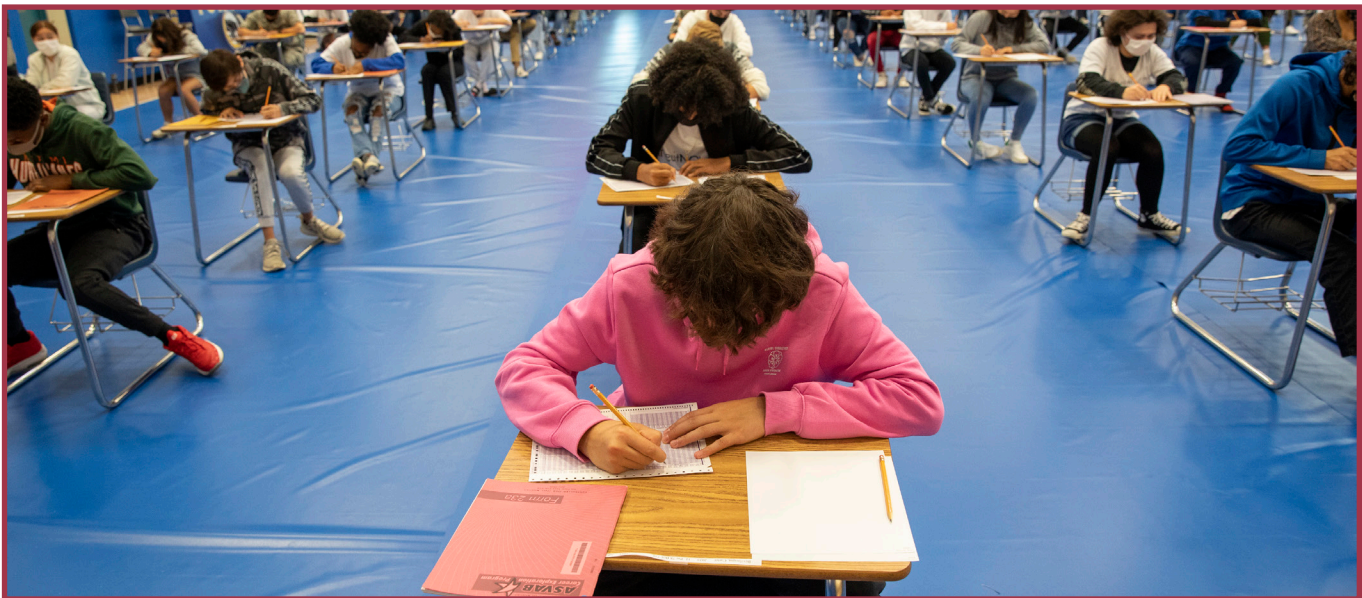
Ortega believes the program is even giving students the confidence to try career fields they previously didn't think they were capable of.

"CEP is meant as a free program to help students understand what they are doing after graduation," he said. "Sometimes, it even changes the perspective of the students of what they can accomplish."

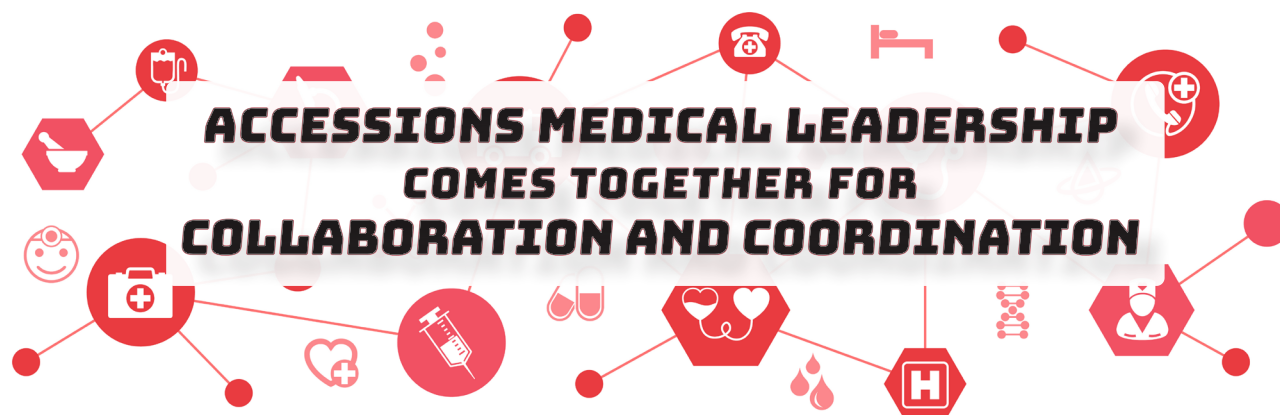
In addition to helping young people figure out what potential career fields they might like or be good at, the ASVAB CEP can be used as a pathway to graduation in some states like Indiana, Oklahoma and Texas in lieu of other testing requirements.

For Jefferies, hitting the testing goal just proved what she already knew to be true.

"I'm not surprised because I knew that we could do it," she said. "We have an amazing team, and we have so many skills. Just because we've met the goal, doesn't mean that the battle for the year is over." ■



Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery examinees from Yokota High School take the test at Yokota Air Base, Japan. (Photo by Yasuo Osakabe)



By Derrick Noack

After a four-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the USMEPCOM Medical Leadership Training Symposium (MLTS) returned, bringing the top command doctors and leadership together for three days of activities and presentations.

“A lot of change and rotation has happened since 2019,” said Col. Megan Stallings, USMEPCOM commander. “A year and a half ago we couldn’t do anything virtually, now we can. There are no new major system changes coming but there is a lot left untapped with USMIRS and MHS GENESIS. What we do now is finish building those products out.”

The theme of this year’s MLTS was “The Standardization of Modernization: Effectively Manning the Fighting Force.” Sessions included in-depth presentations on topics like writing prescreens and how service authorities approach waivers, but medical standardization remained a key focus throughout the symposium.

“Modernization amplifies the need for more coordination,” said Stallings. “It’s important that we provide readiness for our armed forces in a timely fashion by asking for what medical documents we need exactly and nothing more.”

Dr. Filomena Myers, Raleigh MEPS CMO, hasn’t missed a MLTS in 33 years and was grateful to return to this year’s event.

“My first MLTS was in 1990,” said Myers. “There are a lot of new CMOs this year, but all of us are still learning processes within MHS GENESIS. I can learn from them as much as they can from me. Sometimes it feels like we are alone as sole CMOs at our MEPS. This event helps bring that community together.”

Stakeholders in attendance were not only able to learn from presenters but give their perspective and insights in effectively manning the fighting force.

“We are one of the biggest consumers of CMO products,” said Army Lt. Col. Kathleen Ryan, U.S. Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) command surgeon. “Those of us in waiver authority do need to understand the CMO world. Sometimes, they need facetime with us as well. To be here and let them know how we are impacted is essential in this recruiting environment.”

As the first MLTS since the launch of MHS GENESIS, CMOs were able to provide leadership with substantial feedback in-person on the new technology. The new electronic health record was a huge launch for the command and is still being refined almost daily, thanks to feedback and guidance from the actual users. Stallings said that the command is committed to continually learning and listening to feedback from the field.

“Please continue to feed those recommendations up,” said Stallings. “The end goal is to make processing easier for all involved.” ■



1. Col. Megan Stallings, USMEPCOM commander, engages with attendees at the 2023 Medical Leadership Training Symposium (MLTS).  
2. Chief Medical Officers from MEPS across the country provide feedback on medical operations to USMEPCOM leadership during the 2023 Medical Leadership Training Symposium (MLTS).  
(Photos by Israel Molina)





# Leadership Conference Connects USMEPCOM Command Teams

By Derrik Noack

**A**t a command where teamwork is imperative and members are spread across 65 locations, conferences are a great tool for unit synergy and building important partnerships.

The USMEPCOM Leadership Conference, which brings together Sector, Battalion and MEPS commanders and senior enlisted advisors, returned May 8-12 to Lake Delavan, Wisconsin, after a four-year pause due to the pandemic.

In tackling the challenge of bringing the Leadership Conference back, J-1's Workforce Development, Training and Conference Division

sent out canvassing questions. The agenda was built from answers to prompts like "What are the top priorities for your MEPS with regard to medical processing?" and "What ethical issues do you struggle with at your MEPS?". What resulted was a five-day conference with a variety of presenters, breakout sessions and focused discussions.

"This is the first time we have had all of you in the same room since 2019," said Col. Megan Stallings, USMEPCOM commander. "That's a long time for an organization to go without its leaders being able to connect in person. This week is

about all of you talking, connecting and asking questions."

Dr. Katie Helland, director of Military Accession Policy, was able to introduce herself to USMEPCOM command leadership in person, answer questions and thank personnel for their continued dedication to duty.

"I know you have gone through several years of turbulence," said Helland. "Whether it be operating during a pandemic to processing applicants in the most turbulent recruiting environment, I know it hasn't been easy. You're a critical part to the military story and the



value of service, thank you for the work that you do.”

The attendees were a diverse group of leaders from all branches of the military. Everything from seating arrangements, breakout sessions and even a group run were to encourage comradery and to allow for beneficial networking opportunities.

“It’s important for us to know how our higher ups are thinking and that our issues are being tracked,” said Marine Corps Maj. Lou Murillo, Harrisburg MEPS commander. “But the most important thing we got to do this week is break the ice. If we never had this conference, I probably never would call Kansas City MEPS for guidance. Since sitting next to Lt. Col. Krippel, Kansas City MEPS commander, I now have someone I can go to for help.”

Throughout the conference, new connections were made across the command. But it also reunited familiar faces for some military personnel.

“It’s been nice to leave the office, recharge and learn what motivates other people,” said Navy Lt. Cmdr. America Estevez-Guerrero, Tampa MEPS commander. “This brings us back to reality and shows us what we do is bigger than we think. Meeting everybody has been great, but I was extremely excited to reconnect with two shipmates I previously served with on the USS Anchorage. It’s amazing to see them succeed and brings back great memories.”

A popular event during the conference was a leader development meet up around a courtyard fire pit. There were no slide show presentations or guided discussions. Attendees were able to network and bond over shared experiences.

“Engagements like this matter the most, where we can come together and share our common challenges and successes,” said Army Col. Janelle Kutter, Eastern Sector commander. “This conference not only reminds us that it’s okay to be vulnerable but gives us the opportunity to lift each other up.” ■



1. (L) Navy Lt. Cmdr. America Estevez-Guerrero, Tampa MEPS commander, listens intently during a presentation at the USMEPCOM Leadership Conference.
  2. Attendees of the 2023 USMEPCOM Leadership Conference share a laugh before participating in a 5K run.
  3. Dr. Katie Helland, Director of Military Accession Policy, engages with MEPS commanders during the USMEPCOM Leadership Conference.
  4. Marine Corps Maj. Lou Murillo, Harrisburg MEPS commander, takes the mic to ask Dr. Katie Helland a question about the state of recruiting during the Leadership Conference.
- (Photos by Israel Molina)

# Behavioral Health Providers Increasing Processing Efficiency

By Derrik Noack

USMEPCOM is bringing four clinical psychologists to the team to serve as applicant consult needs. These providers will conduct virtual behavioral health assessments for applicants needing a consult, as determined by their Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) or service waiver authority.

Behavioral health consults are currently administered by civilian doctors in the community of the applicants, resulting in a wide range of wait times and results.

“In today’s recruiting environment, USMEPCOM is laser focused on finding ways to shorten the time it takes for an applicant to join their respective service,” said Army Col. Megan Stallings, USMEPCOM commander. “Behavior health consults are often our longest waits, so we are taking the proactive step to bring that capability in-house, thereby providing better customer service to our recruiting partners and applicants.”

The four providers will aid in the medical review process by making an assessment on a potential candidate for military service. By reviewing the applicant’s medical history and conducting a virtual interview, they

will input their evaluations into the military health system, MHS GENESIS, for MEPS personnel to immediately see.

“Behavioral health consults are unique because it’s a communicative evaluation, so it can be done virtually,” said Cummings. “You don’t need to have the applicant in front of you, listening to their heart or lungs. There are several occupational health jobs that require a behavioral health assessment or screening before they will hire somebody into one of those positions. Anybody with that kind of experience would be great for us because that’s what this job is, it’s a screening.”

The behavioral health providers won’t be expected to hit the ground running. They will undergo training on how to use MHS GENESIS and travel to MEPSs to understand the mission, who they serve and what those personnel are looking for in medical evaluations.

“By visiting the MEPS, these new providers will have a much better perspective on what we are looking for,” said Cummings. “Eventually, they will work with our MEPS doctors to refine their processes. They’ll let our doctors know when an applicant has specific things in their

history, they don’t need a consult or what to ask for specifically when requesting a consult. There are some real benefits when it comes to the quality of their assessments and ability to clarify if there are any questions.”

Last year, the command outsourced 4,600 behavioral health consults from civilian doctors across the country. The most diagnosed behavioral health condition was attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), which often is diagnosed in childhood. With the decrease in social stigma around mental health care, ADHD diagnoses have been rising for decades.

“Behavioral health consults are going up every year,” said Cummings. “It’s important for us to evolve, and add personnel when we need to, because the environment that we’re operating in is always evolving. The recruiting market has transformed in a way that, five years ago, people did not anticipate. There’s much more focus on the speed in which we can process an applicant. We need to remain agile as we look to what we can do. This is a huge step to increase efficiency at the MEPS.” ■





# LEAPING INTO LANGUAGE

## Air Force Culture and Language Center Sends Boston MEPS Airman to Africa



By Navy Cmdr. Robert Liberato, Boston MEPS

With events happening around the world at a moment's notice, service members must always be ready for the fight. Not unlike the skills built over time by a pilot, the culture, language, and regional expertise the total force needs for critical missions cannot be “just-in-time” trained.

Through the Language Enabled Airman Program (LEAP), more than 3,400 Airmen, are trained in one of 93 strategic languages. Serving as pilots, maintenance officers, finance journeymen and medics, these scholars develop and maintain their skills “at the ready” while serving in their primary career fields.



1. Air Force Tech Sgt. Jude Baidoo poses for a photo with other LEAP scholars during their first day of class in West Africa.
  2. Air Force Tech Sgt. Jude Baidoo takes in a spectacular panoramic view from the hills of Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone.
  3. Air Force Tech Sgt. Jude Baidoo and other LEAP scholars visit Bunce Island, one of more than sixty slave trading forts established in the 1600s on the West African coast.
- (All photos courtesy of Air Force Tech Sgt. Jude Baidoo)

Air Force Tech Sgt. Jude Baidoo, medical technician, Boston MEPS, is one of only 11 LEAP Scholars developed by the Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC) in the African language Krio. His career-spanning involvement in the highly selective program resulted in his participation in the program's first-ever area studies immersion to the West African country of Sierra Leone in March 2023.

"They not only improved on their Krio language ability, one of the other (potentially) major effects of running a course like this is forming a cohort within the USAF of African language speakers and those born and raised in the region," said Dr. Scott Edmondson, associate professor of Regional and Cultural Studies-Africa at the AFCLC. "Put simply, such cohorts are the US military's invaluable 'secret weapon' for strategic competition/integrated deterrence via strengthening alliances and partnerships. Their ability to build rapport—and quickly—with African partners is unmatched. Everywhere we went they impressed people. It also makes an impression about America that signifies global leadership."

To carry the LEAP Special Experience Identifier, Airmen must endure consistent, active, and vigorous language and culture training and be ready to engage anywhere in the world when needed. These service members aren't just finely tuned warriors, they are also lifelong learners who routinely consume language and culture education. A LEAP scholar's skills are sharpened and honed over years of study and practice through one-on-one interactions and coursework.

Baidoo recognizes the importance of this program, and its responsibility to help further partnerships with other nations and honor their cultures.

"Having in-depth knowledge about people and their culture helps to integrate and assist them in various aspects of their daily lives," Baidoo said. "It also improves US-African relations."

For more information on the AFCLC, visit [www.airuniversity.af.edu/AFCLC/](http://www.airuniversity.af.edu/AFCLC/) ■



# 50 YEARS of the



**Davis Gray | 1980**  
IT Project Manager  
J-6

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU TO BE WORKING AT USMEPCOM?

I love working at USMEPCOM. I arrived on January 17, 1997 in uniform. At first, it was just a job – an assignment. I had intended to serve my 4 years and move on. However, 26 years and multiple internal J3, J6 and J8 assignments later; I am still here trying to make a difference.

## HOW DOES IT MAKE YOU FEEL TO SEE YOUNG PEOPLE RAISE THEIR RIGHT HAND AND JOIN THE MILITARY?

I love going to the MEPS and talking with the parents who are proud but scared and nervous not knowing what their child has signed up to do. However, the proudest moment of my USMEPCOM career was when I witnessed my son raise his hand and swear to support and defend the Constitution of the United States just like his father, grandfather and great-grandfather did.



**MATHEW "MAT" CERVANTES | 1990**  
IT Program Manager  
J-6

## WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO JOIN THE MILITARY?

Family tradition of wartime service for WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan. My son is currently a 5th Generation Army soldier.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT THAT WE HAVE AN ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE?

Because "Freedom is not free". To continue to be the beacon of freedom, a global leader and provide justice for the underdog, we will always need fresh volunteers to fill the breach.

To commemorate 50 years of our All-Volunteer Force, veterans and active duty service members of USMEPCOM were invited to reflect on what service means to them and express the importance of our mission.



**TED NEWMAN | 1981**  
IT Specialist  
J-6

## WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER MOST FONDLY ABOUT YOUR TIME IN UNIFORM?

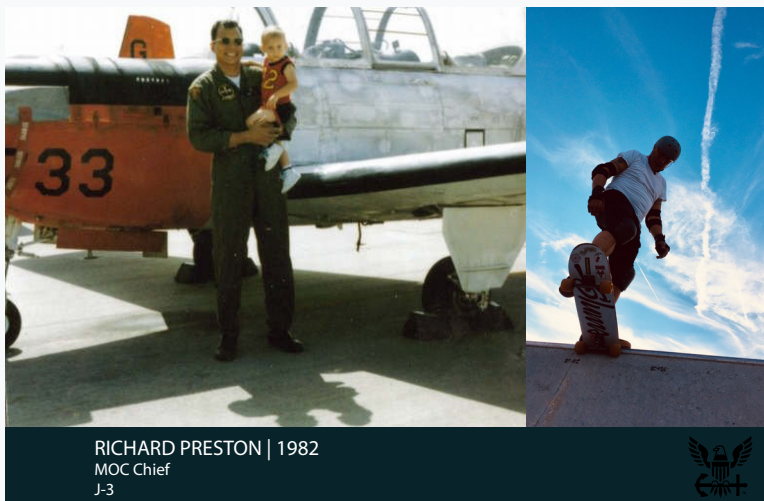
The relationships, opportunities to learn new things and improve myself, travel, and constant surprises that come with a military life.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU TO BE WORKING AT USMEPCOM? HOW DOES IT MAKE YOU FEEL TO SEE YOUNG PEOPLE RAISE THEIR RIGHT HAND AND JOIN THE MILITARY?

I went through Detroit MEPS in 1981 and it was not a great experience. Then I went back as OPSO, TCO, and commander in 1995. Red carpet treatment was new and in effect. Automation (MIRS and WINCAT) were being put in place along with a primitive version of the internet and messaging. I gave the oath to thousands of applicants and worked directly with a group of dedicated professionals who cared about the recruiters, their mission, and the applicants as if they were their own. It was a great job and good to see how much better we were doing than when I joined. Then I had the opportunity to come to USMEPCOM HQ in 2004 as J-3 operations officer after a tour as the Fort Knox Reception Battalion XO where I received applicants from MEPS across the country on a daily basis. I retired in 2007 and have been working at HQ ever since. I have been in J-3 Operations, Testing, J-5 Strategic Planning and now J-6 Technology Development Division. No matter where I have worked, the priority has been to support the MEPS, take care of the applicants and improve the process. We have been very successful in our efforts and it makes me feel great that we are doing our best to take care of our country's greatest resource and ensure they have a positive experience whether they are qualified or not.



# ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE



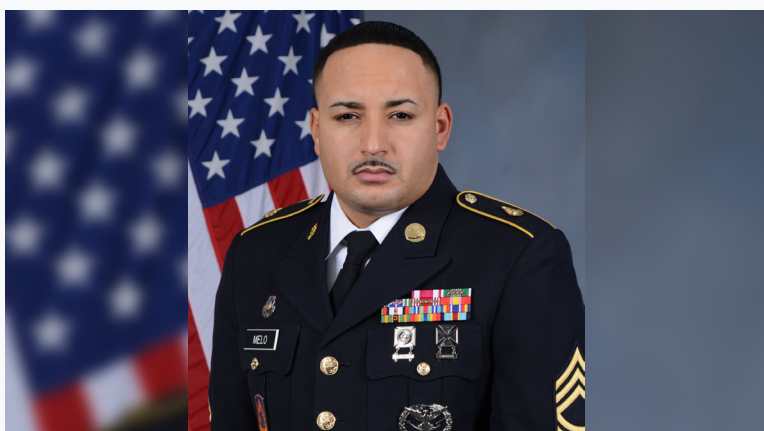
RICHARD PRESTON | 1982  
MOC Chief  
J-3

## WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO JOIN THE MILITARY?

The economy hit Kenosha, Wis. hard in the early '80s when a recruiter just happened to call me and asked what I was going to do with my life. I said that I will eventually work construction as an electrician once the economy picks up and apprenticeships start back up again. He said, "Construction Electrician! I have that exact job in the SeaBees." (I then stayed in for 20+ years.)

## WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER MOST FONDLY ABOUT YOUR TIME IN UNIFORM?

The structure. It changed my life, turned it completely around. Many highschool classmates are amazed to find out that the Navy made me into a SeaBee, then a math major, then a pilot, an MBA and the Deputy of ES.



KELVIS R. MELO | 2009  
Senior Enlisted Advisor  
Fargo MEPS

## WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO JOIN THE MILITARY?

To serve my country and to provide a life of adventure and opportunity for my family.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU TO BE WORKING AT USMEPCOM? HOW DOES IT MAKE YOU FEEL TO SEE YOUNG PEOPLE RAISE THEIR RIGHT HAND AND JOIN THE MILITARY?

It is an honor to serve as a Senior Enlisted Advisor for USMEPCOM Freedom's Front Door. I feel thankful and motivated to see our young people commit to service in order to maintain our freedoms and American way of life.



RYAN BUTLER | 1996  
Information Technology Specialist  
Amarillo MEPS

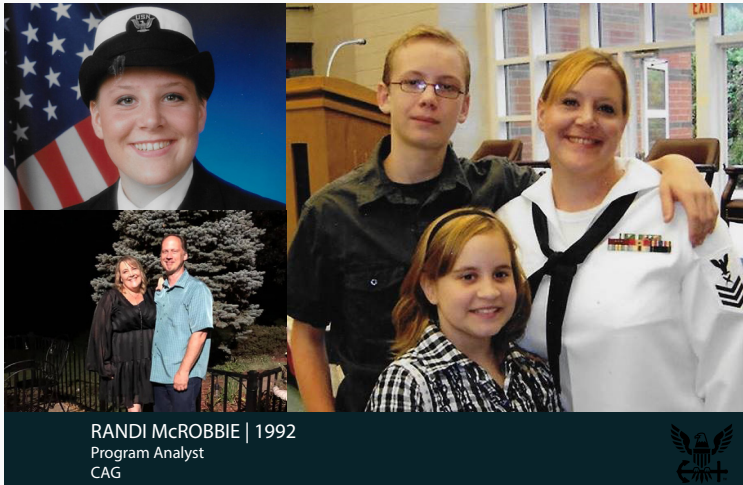
## WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER MOST FONDLY ABOUT YOUR TIME IN UNIFORM?

I remember those many, many Soldiers, NCOs, and Officers whom I became trusted friends and still to this day consider them my sisters and brothers for life!

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU TO BE WORKING AT USMEPCOM? HOW DOES IT MAKE YOU FEEL TO SEE YOUNG PEOPLE RAISE THEIR RIGHT HAND AND JOIN THE MILITARY?

USMEPCOM has been a huge part of my career, especially the Amarillo MEPS. I was born in Amarillo, enlisted at the Amarillo MEPS in 1996, returned as OPS NCO to the Amarillo MEPS in 1999. I reenlisted and re-classed during this time. I returned to the Amarillo MEPS in 2015 as the Testing OIC and retired in 2017 out of the Amarillo MEPS. I, again, returned to the Amarillo MEPS in 2019 as the TCO until March 2023 where I was hired and currently serving as the Information Technology Specialist (ITS) of the Amarillo MEPS!

*"I feel thankful and motivated to see our young people commit to service in order to maintain our freedoms and American way of life."*



## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT THAT WE HAVE AN ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE?

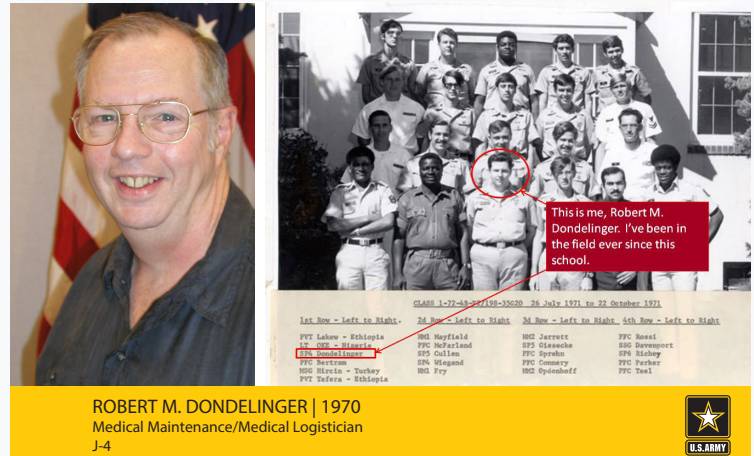
I believe volunteering in any case results in a more concerted effort towards dedication & commitment. It's not doing it because you have to –

*you choose to be  
selfless & contribute to  
something greater,*

for whatever purpose or end. There's a different approach & attitude to achieving success when you volunteer vs. being forced.

## HOW DOES IT MAKE YOU FEEL TO SEE YOUNG PEOPLE RAISE THEIR RIGHT HAND AND JOIN THE MILITARY?

First of all, it's amazing. However, the current recruiting struggle & declining veteran population makes me sad but, I understand the reluctance to join. Unless there is someone of influence to guide them, they rely on so many misconceptions & every generation is different, socially, emotionally, etc., & each has its unique challenges— it takes a unique dedication & commitment & not for everyone.



## WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO JOIN THE MILITARY?

In 1969 I was "selected" for a pre-induction physical during the (pre-lottery) military draft. So, I enlisted to have a say in what service I ended up in and what I did there.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT THAT WE HAVE AN ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE?

Because military volunteers are more enthusiastic, have a better attitude, and usually have better post-service outcomes, than draftees.



## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT THAT WE HAVE AN ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE?

It is important that we continue to have an all-volunteer force to ensure our nation is safe and prosperous. There are a lot of patriots who try to join our military every day. Our nation relies on the voluntary service of our citizens.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU TO BE WORKING AT USMEPCOM? HOW DOES IT MAKE YOU FEEL TO SEE YOUNG PEOPLE RAISE THEIR RIGHT HAND AND JOIN THE MILITARY?

Working at USMEPCOM means a lot to me. I have an immense sense of pride seeing the many young Americans who try to join our Armed Forces every day. It is humbling to know that there are many younger Americans excited to serve our nation even after my time.



# In Memory of Rose V. Payne:

## 53 Years of Dedicated Service

By Army Maj. Patrick Zebrowski & Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Juan Osuna, Beckley MEPS



1.



2.

1. Rose Payne poses for a photo after winning Civilian Member of the Quarter in 1988, one of multiple awards she received throughout 53 years of Federal Service.

2. Rose V. Payne, administrative support technician, earning one of her many Beckley MEPS Professional of the Month awards.

3. Rose Payne poses for a photo with fellow Beckley MEPS personnel during an Adopt-A-Highway cleanup. She planned, organized, and volunteered for each litter cleanup.

(All photos courtesy of Beckley MEPS)



3.

Rose Virenda Payne was born on February 3, 1949, and raised in Mount Hope, W. Va., only a few miles from the current location of Beckley MEPS. Rose graduated from Mount Hope High School in 1967 and then from Beckley Junior College in 1970. Shortly after graduation, Rose chose her occupation and then made it her career to serve of our Nation.

She dedicated nearly 50 faithful years of distinguished service to Beckley MEPS. She became one of the most tenured and highly decorated federal employees in USMEPCOM history. Her tenure began in 1970, with the Beckley Armed Forces Examining and Entrance Station as a clerk typist until 1973. She then served as a military personnel clerk from 1973 to 1979, followed by her role as a secretary from 1979 to 2009.

The position title changed to administrative support technician, where she distinctly held this post until her passing. For many years, she held the title as Battalion Subject Matter Expert. Her commitment to the organization's mission and her passion for her work enabled the processing of over 200,000 applicants into all the branches of the U.S. military over the span of her 53 years of service. For her exceptional and outstanding service to the Command and the Department of Defense, Rose was awarded 10 Certificates of Achievement and 4 Civilian Service Achievement Medals. In 2009, she won the Eastern Sector Semi-Annual Civilian Member of the Year (CMOY) award as well as multiple battalion CMOY awards throughout the years.

Rose grew up in the First Baptist Church in Mount Hope. Instrumental to her life was her faith. She served her church and community her entire adult life. Rose was a teacher and leader for both the youth and women's ministries. Always with her loving mother Gladys, they loved assisting others, consistently making home, hospital, and nursing home visits. Their beautiful smiles and loving hearts always warmed the ones they reached out to.

Rose loved to travel. She would share stories of the many tours and trips she went on with her friends. Rose was a great storyteller. She had a phenomenal memory and could provide details about anything she did, regardless of how long ago it was. Ask her something about the MEPS, West Virginia, or the quarterback situation for the Pittsburgh Steelers (her team), and you would get all the information you needed!

Rose was a proud member of the Mountain of Hope Organization, a non-profit organization with the purpose of providing educational scholarships and employment opportunities for disadvantaged residents of southern West Virginia. In her honor, they decreed an annual \$2,000 higher education scholarship as the Rose V. Payne Scholarship.

Our beloved Ms. Rose Virenda Payne departed this life on March 6, 2023, in Beckley, W. Va. She peacefully passed in her sleep with the elegance, grace, and dignity with which she lived her life. Her impact to all who knew her will last for years. Ms. Payne, the ultimate professional, you are truly missed. ■



# The Whole Community Approach

Where Recruiting, MEPS and the Community Influence Future Leaders

✈ By Marine Corps Lt. Col. Nicole Bastian, Montgomery MEPS



L to R: Navy Rear Adm. Ann Burkhardt, retired; Marine Corps Lt. Col. Nicole Bastian, commander, 8th Battalion and Montgomery MEPS; Coast Guard Vice Adm. Sandy Stosz, retired, and Air Force Brig. Gen. Leslie Maher, retired, kick off the 2023 Women in Leadership Conference at the University of West Florida. (Photo by Kate Treick)

I was invited to serve as a moderator for the Women in Leadership Conference at the University of West Florida (UWF). The panel was comprised of distinguished military flag officers from several service branches: including Coast Guard Vice Adm. Sandy Stosz, retired, Navy Rear Adm. Ann Burkhardt, retired, and Air Force Brig. Gen. Leslie Maher, retired. The program also included community leaders like Lindley Siri, a world champion and Olympic athlete coach, Dr. Fran Mainella, 16th Director of the National Park Service, top bank and industry executives, authors and a Florida State Congresswoman. The conference took place on the

beautiful UWF campus in Pensacola, Florida and it was a powerful confluence of leaders and community members in a setting designed to share leadership lessons learned.

Ten years ago, I was the Marine Corps Officer Selection Officer in Tallahassee, Fla. That area of responsibility covered colleges in southern Georgia, coastal Alabama and the Florida Panhandle (including UWF). Part of my approach to recruiting in that area was to network with community influencers with the idea that they would help create propensity for military service and enhance recruiting efforts. This approach worked well for me over those three years. What I did not



realize leaving recruiting duty was that the network in that I had created would be beneficial for years to come.

While recruiting on the UWF campus, I met Dr. Sherry Hartnett. She was a top leader in the University's College of Business. I spoke to her group of mentors and students about Marine Corps leadership. The speaking event led to access and influence over an audience of prospective service members and future leaders. Since that event, I maintained connection with Dr. Hartnett. Pensacola is again part of my area of responsibility, except this time, it is not in a recruiting capacity, but as the 8th Battalion Commander at USMEPCOM.

Building trust and confidence with the community we serve as MEPS personnel leads to access and influence, not just for conducting ASVAB tests and post-test interpretations on campuses, but also for our recruiting partners. Recruiting and MEPS are inextricably reliant on each other to make a mission. Everything from making a positive influence with our own community connections to returning applicants back to their communities with a positive MEPS experience matters and contributes to the propensity for serving the country through military service. So, when Dr. Hartnett reached out nearly a decade after I spoke to her first group to invite me to participate in the Women in Leadership Conference, I saw an opportunity to share leadership lessons, network with exceptional community leaders, further influence within the community and show an audience comprised mainly of young women that military service forges leaders too.

This was a powerful event with eclectic high caliber leaders who spoke on relevant topics and shared lessons learned from their immense breadth of experience. I learned from each speaker and was honored to moderate the panel. I met so many truly talented and inspiring women at the Women in Leadership Conference and hopefully contributed to setting conditions for success for our recruiting partners. ■



1. (Top Left) Marine Corps Lt. Col. Nicole Bastian, commander, 8th Battalion and Montgomery MEPS, joins fellow speakers at the 2023 Women in Leadership Conference for a group photo.
2. Marine Corps Capt. Steven Lamb, officer selection officer, Tallahassee, Fla. and Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Gustavo Debritto, officer selection assistant, Tallahassee, Fla. pose for a photo with Marine Corps Lt. Col. Nicole Bastian, commander, 8th Battalion and Montgomery MEPS (center), after attending the Women in Leadership Conference in support of Bastian who served as conference moderator.
3. (Left) Marine Corps Lt. Col. Nicole Bastian, commander, 8th Battalion and Montgomery MEPS, serves as moderator during the Women in Leadership Conference at the University of West Florida. (Photos by Kate Treick)



# Chicago MEPS



Chris Stallings, executive director, Naval Service Training Command, watches as his son, Carter Stallings, signs his final contract into the Air Force before heading to Basic Military Training. (Photo by Israel Molina)

## Stepson of USMEPCOM Commander Enlists

By Derrik Noack

When your father and grandfather were both Army Aviation Officers, and your stepmother is currently an Army colonel, following their legacy seems like an obvious path to pursue. That is, of course, if you aren't a 22-year-old wanting to forge your very own path. Instead of choosing to "Be All You Can Be" with the Army, Carter Stallings decided to enlist and "Aim High" with the Air Force.

Carter is the stepson of Army Col. Megan Stallings, commander, USMEPCOM, and his father is retired Army Col. Chris Stallings (current executive director of Naval Service Training Command). His father was on active duty before he was even born, so Carter grew up on various bases and military communities. From a young age, he favored Airmen wings to the Army's five-pointed star.

"I was interested in the Air Force ever since I was a kid," said Carter. "I would visit my parents on different bases, but I always gravitated towards the Air Force uniforms and insignia."

While attending The University of Alabama, Carter began seriously contemplating enlisting into the military. He knew his parents would have a lot to say, so he sought out their advice before sealing his decision.

"When it came to the point where I finalized my

decision to enlist, I talked to my parents," Carter said. "We made a list of pros and cons for the different branches and looked at a variety of jobs. Of course, their pro list for the Army was longer, but they were fair and open to me looking at other services. The tipping point really was that the jobs that interested me the most were in the Air Force."

Carter initially wanted to be a boom operator but decided upon explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) technician. He enlisted and entered the Delayed Entry Program (DEP) near his school in Alabama. He shipped out from Chicago MEPS, where his family is located.

"He entered the DEP at Montgomery MEPS," said Col. Megan Stallings. "Thanks to the virtual capabilities of USMIRS and MHS GENESIS, a MEPS-to-MEPS transfer is just a few clicks of a button. He was able to see his little brother and spend his last weekend with us before shipping out."

Aside from joking (or not) to never let basic training leadership know about his high-ranking parents, Carter's dad had some wise words to bestow upon him on his final day as a civilian.

**"We made a list of pros and cons for the different branches and looked at a variety of jobs. Of course, their pro list for the Army was longer, but they were fair and open to me looking at other services."**



“The two most important things I imparted upon him were to believe in yourself and be resilient in striving for your goal,” said Chris Stallings. “There’s a year-long training pipeline before becoming an EOD technician and there will be setbacks along the way. Adjust as needed and keep pursuing your goal.”

Carter looks forward to traveling after completion of EOD school. He said some of his fondest childhood memories included the adventure and travel that came with being a military kid.

“It has been nice to experience a bunch of different places,” Carter said. “I loved Washington D.C. when my stepmom worked at The Pentagon. When I was eight, my parents were at the Naval War College in Rhode Island and that was an awesome spot. In my career, I want to go overseas at some point. Being stationed in Japan or somewhere else in Asia would be awesome.”

Chris Stallings was able to administer the Oath of Enlistment to his son at Chicago MEPS, passing the baton to the next generation. He promised that there’s no service rivalry between father and son.

“Obviously as an old Army guy I was rooting for him to join the Army,” said Chris Stallings. “But I’m super proud he has decided to serve and found something he’d really like to do. It shows a lot about his moral fiber, that he is willing to follow orders of those over him. I hope he enjoys the experience and helps his fellow airmen get across the finish line.” ■



▲Col. Megan Stallings, USMEPCOM commander, presents her stepson Carter with the USMEPCOM challenge coin after taking the oath of enlistment, placing him on active duty, at Chicago MEPS. (Photo by Israel Molina)

◀Col. Megan Stallings, USMEPCOM commander, Carter Stallings, Air Force recruit, and Chris Stallings, executive director, Naval Service Training Command, pose for a photo after Carter took his final oath before shipping to boot camp. (Photo by Israel Molina)



# Home of U.S. Army Sustainment is now Fort Gregg-Adams

By Terrance Bell

The Army installation formerly known as Fort Lee became Fort Gregg-Adams during a historic redesignation ceremony, April 27, becoming the first Army installation named for Black military members.

The new name honors retired Lt. Gen. Arthur J. Gregg and the late Lt. Col. Charity Adams. Gregg is the Army's first Black three-star general and namesake of an Army logistics award.

Adams – as she was known before leaving military service and taking the married name Earley – led the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion beyond mission accomplishment in the European Theater of Operations during World War II.

Maj. Gen. Mark T. Simerly, CASCOM and Fort Gregg-Adams commanding general and senior commander, was host for the ceremony. During opening statements, he said the honorees collectively represent those willing to sacrifice in defense of the nation.

“The service of Lt. Gen. Gregg and Lt. Col. Adams reflect the courage and character of the millions of men and women who have worn this uniform and defended this nation,” he said. “This historic day belongs to American Soldiers – past, present and future.”

Later in his speech, he said the two officers shared commonalities that were critical to their growth as individuals and Soldiers.

“Today, we recognize Arthur Gregg and Charity Adams for their courage, dignity and their hope,” he said. “Despite growing up in a segregated nation, these two pioneers volunteered to serve that nation in uniform. Their service, both in war and peace, demonstrate the courage is not confined to a single race or gender.”

Fort Gregg-Adams is one of nine Army installations being redesignated. The redesignations

are the result of congressional legislation requiring the removal of Confederate names from Department of Defense assets, which includes nine Army posts.

Gregg, the only one among the redesignation namesakes still living, he was the event's most anticipated speaker. The 94-year-old took the podium to a standing ovation, one of several during the ceremony. He thanked his family and all who supported his career, and said he hoped the name change can serve as inspiration.

“I hope that this community will look with pride on the name ‘Fort Gregg-Adams,’ and that the name will instill pride in every Soldier entering our mighty gates.”

A South Carolina native who spent part of his childhood in Newport News, Virginia, Gregg enlisted in the Army as a private in 1946. The institution was still segregated, and he was not spared from its ugliness. Segregation persisted when he became an officer three years later. The Army became fully integrated in 1954.

He earned his first star in 1972 and his second in 1976. Upon pinning on his third star in 1977, he was selected by the president to be the director of logistics for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. His last assignment was chief, Office of the Deputy Chief of staff for Logistics, Department of the Army.

Adams, a Columbia, S.C., native and graduate of Wilberforce University, joined the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (later the Women's Army Corps) in 1942. She attended officer candidate school at Fort Des Moines, Iowa, becoming the first Black woman in the WAC to earn a commission.

In late 1944, Adams received orders for a mission in Europe. She found out while travelling

over the Atlantic she would be commanding a predominately Black, all-female postal battalion charged with clearing several hangars full of backlogged mail. The unit, nicknamed the Six Triple Eight, faced various challenges while stationed in England and France. This included racism among American troops, cultural differences with local populations, logistical problems and numerous other issues.

The unit was given a six-month deadline to complete a mission where others had failed. It completed the job in half the time.

Fort Gregg-Adams was established in 1917 as Camp Lee. It accommodated thousands of troops in preparation for World War I. Following the war, it closed and became under jurisdiction of the state. Camp Lee reopened in 1941 to support WWII, again training thousands of troops. It became permanent in 1950.

Today, Fort Gregg-Adams trains more than 70,000 military members and civilians annually as the home to CASCOM and the Sustainment Center of Excellence. ■



▲ Retired Lt. Gen. Arthur J. Gregg addresses the crowd during the Fort Gregg-Adams Redesignation Ceremony. (Photo by Terrance Bell)





# The 305 Burger

By Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Myron De Sa, Miami MEPS

The Miami Family Readiness Group held a cookout to raise funds for service members and Department of Defense civilians in anticipation of their upcoming organizational day. While the traditional hot dogs and hamburgers could have sufficed, that simply wasn't elevated enough for food connoisseur, Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Myron De Sa, Miami MEPS Testing Specialist NCOIC. He decided to bring a taste of Miami to the cookout by creating the "305 Burger."

The 305 Burger was meticulously crafted to capture the Latin vibe that is prevalent in Myron's hometown of Miami. Onions were seasoned and caramelized, cheese was freshly fried and shoestring chips were added for a crunchy texture. The lettuce and tomatoes were all freshly cut, and the burger was topped with either a homemade guava barbeque sauce or a Latin pink sauce with a sweet plantain garnish. To complement the burgers, volunteers donated sides like baked beans, macaroni and cheese and sweet corn on the cob.

As the grill heated up, the sweet tunes of Miami music played in the background and old glory flew high in the sky from a trailer hitch flagpole. In total, 80 burgers were hand-crafted to the 305 style and sold for a total of \$800 toward Miami MEPS's Org Day. The cookout was a testament to the creativity and passion that Miami locals have for food and culture, and the success of the event is sure to inspire more inventive culinary creations in the future. Ya Tu Sabes (you already know)! ■



(R) Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Myron De Sa, Miami MEPS Testing Specialist NCOIC, assembles two of 80 "305" burgers to raise funds for Miami MEPS's Org Day. (Courtesy photo)



## Make Your Own 305 Burger

### SAUCE

- 1 cup guava paste cut in cubes
- 1/3 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup spiced rum (omit if you'd like)
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- 3 tablespoons lime juice
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon liquid smoke
- 1 clove garlic minced
- 1/4 cup water
- Salt and pepper to taste

### BURGER

- Potato Bread Buns
- Queso De Freir fried on the skillet
- Iceberg lettuce
- Tomato's on the vine thinly cut
- Ground Chuck -patties molded from by hand
- Shoestring potato chips
- Fried Plantain
- Salt, pepper & garlic powder



# Comprehensive Approach to Protecting our MEPS

By Andre Markham, USMEPCOM Antiterrorism Officer

The United States remains in a heightened threat environment, and recent attacks have shown how dynamic and complex this threat environment can be. In addition to the threat of terrorism, active shooter incidents have become a growing concern for many public spaces. To protect against these threats, it is crucial that both USMEPCOM and MEPS/RPS have a comprehensive Antiterrorism (AT) Program that includes plans to prevent and respond to threats like active shooters.

## Risk Assessment

The first step in developing an effective AT Program is conducting an AT risk assessment. The process involves identifying and analyzing potential threats to the facility and its occupants. Consider factors, such as the location of the facility, the number of personnel and visitors, and any previous incidents or threats. By conducting a risk assessment, potential vulnerabilities can be identified, and strategies developed to mitigate risks. MEPS/RPS in commercial lease and Federal facilities are to review their Facility Security Assessment (FSA), and MEPS on an installation are to review the installation's AT risk assessment.

## Random Antiterrorism Measures (RAM)

The RAM are particularly important for MEPS/RPS due to the static nature of their mission. They have a fixed location and a regular flow of personnel and visitors. This predictability can make it a target for attackers who may seek to cause disruption or harm. By implementing RAM, such as 100% bag checks and searches, MEPS/RPS can create a more dynamic environment, making it more difficult for potential attackers to plan and execute an attack. It is important to note; however, while RAM can provide a strong deterrent effect, they must be implemented in a way which balances security with the need to maintain efficient operations.

## Coordination with Law Enforcement

Coordination with local, military, and/or Federal law enforcement is essential to an effective AT Program. MEPS/RPS are to establish strong partnerships with law enforcement agencies to facilitate rapid and effective responses to any potential threats.

## Emergency Action Plans

MEPS/RPS are to have an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) in place which outlines the roles and responsibilities of personnel in the event of an attack. This plan is to be established through a memorandum of agreement (MOA) or memorandum of understanding (MOU) between MEPS/RPS, other military units, and local law enforcement agencies. Regular training and drills are to be conducted to ensure everyone is prepared to respond quickly and effectively to an emergency.

## Training and Exercise

Training and exercise are critical components of an effective AT Program. MEPS/RPS personnel are to receive regular training on identifying and responding to potential threats, including active shooter scenarios. This training is to be conducted in coordination with local law enforcement agencies or Federal Protective Service (FPS) police to ensure MEPS/RPS personnel are aware of the latest tactics and strategies for responding to active shooter incidents. In addition, MEPS/RPS are to conduct regular exercises to test the effectiveness of their EAP and to identify areas for improvement. These exercises are to involve all relevant stakeholders, including military units, local law enforcement agencies, and emergency responders.

## AT Program Review

Finally, a comprehensive review of our AT Program must be accomplished on an annual basis. This review will help us identify areas where we can improve the AT Program and ensure that we are meeting all regulatory requirements. This review is to include an assessment of our policies, procedures, and practices, as well as a review of any incidents or threats that occurred since the last review.



# OPM Retirement Quick Guide

## A Reference for Voluntary Retirement

Timelines in this document are current estimates as of May 2023. View the most current version of this document at [opm.gov/retirement-center/quick-guide](https://opm.gov/retirement-center/quick-guide).

### Congratulations on your upcoming retirement!

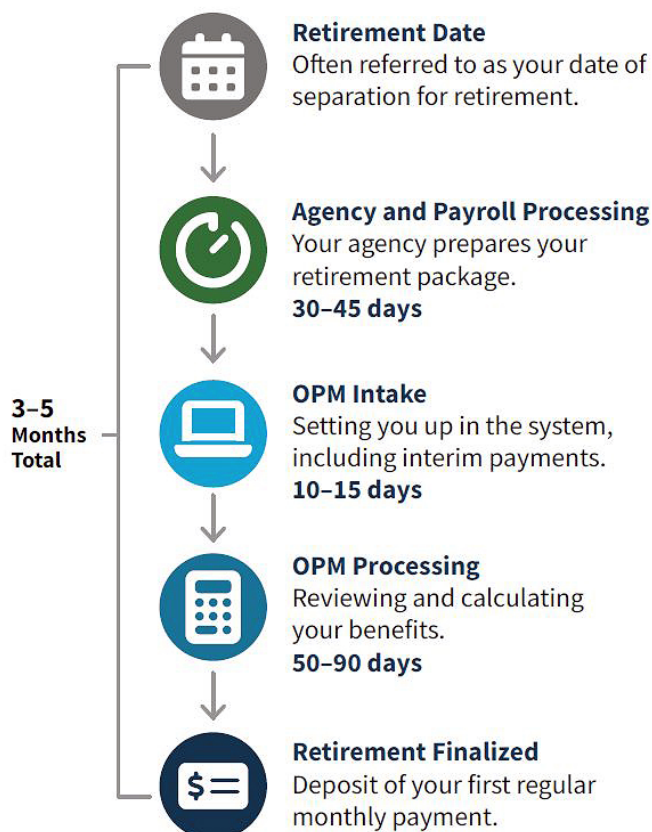
This guide will walk you through what to expect as your retirement application is processed and your benefits are determined. Most retirees will receive their first full annuity check within 3-5 months of retiring.

During processing, you will receive:

- **Interim payments**, typically 60–80% of your estimated net annuity to help cover your expenses.
- Any **health insurance coverage** you elected to take into retirement.
- Access to **Services Online**, a website to track your retirement.

### Process at a Glance

Below are current estimates as of May 2023.



### Four Things to Do Before You Retire

1. **Sign all forms.** Missing signatures are one of the most common reasons for processing delays.
2. **Download your personnel records** if your agency uses eOPF and you want your own copies. You will lose access to eOPF once you retire.
3. **Complete payments** for any [open service credit accounts](#)<sup>1</sup> for [FERS](#) and [CSRS](#) eligible deposit or service redeposit. Honorable post-1956 Military Service deposits must be paid in full before you retire.
4. **Check Supplemental Documents.** Include all documentation required for your retirement application such as marriage certificate, military service records, court orders, etc.



### Understand Your Benefits Choices

Make sure to understand your elections for the categories below. Your choices can significantly impact your annuity amount. There are limitations on when you can make changes after your retirement is complete.

- [Health Benefit](#)<sup>2</sup>
- [Survivor Benefits](#)<sup>4</sup>
- [Life Insurance](#)<sup>3</sup>
- [Designation of Beneficiary](#)<sup>5</sup>



### Factors That Might Delay Your Retirement Processing

While most retirement cases will be straightforward, certain circumstances can significantly delay the process, including:

- [Court orders](#)<sup>6</sup> such as a divorce decree or property settlement. These require an additional step and are sent to the Court Order Benefits Branch for review.
- Experience as a Law Enforcement Officer, Firefighter, Air Traffic Controller, Capitol Police, Supreme Court Police, or Nuclear Materials Courier, as these cases use a special annuity computation.
- Past or active [workers' compensation claims](#)<sup>7</sup>.
- Experience as a part-time or intermittent federal employee.
- Federal service at multiple federal agencies.
- Missing documents and forms, or incomplete or incorrect information in your retirement application.
- Moving without updating your address with OPM.



For more information visit:  
<https://www.opm.gov/retirement-center>





# Messenger: How to get your story published

Stories can highlight a range of topics including personnel, initiatives, programs, events or activities that support Freedom's Front Door.

Articles should be between 150 - 300 words.

If you want help getting started, reach out to schedule a Teams meeting. Messenger staff can help with workshopping a story and developing an outline. We can also schedule an interview to directly write the piece. To set up a meeting contact [derrik.l.noack.civ@army.mil](mailto:derrik.l.noack.civ@army.mil).

The Messenger is printed four times a year, once every season. For more information on submitting content to the Messenger, follow the QR Code to a user-friendly guide.





# MEPS MENTION

Email [derrik.l.noack.civ@army.mil](mailto:derrik.l.noack.civ@army.mil) with MEPS Mention submissions!



**NAME:** Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Christopher Beauchamp  
**POSITION AT SAN ANTONIO MEPS:** Medical NCO, Training NCO, Assistant Command Career Counselor

**BIO:** Beauchamp is an outstanding leader with 16 years of Naval experience. He goes above and beyond his duties to help thousands of applicants achieve their dreams of military service. He exemplifies the core values of honor, courage and commitment everyday - extending beyond the military community through his active volunteerism.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE:

Awarded the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal in 2023 for volunteer service to various organizations since 2018. His exceptional community support over time includes volunteering for: Greyhound Friends of North Carolina, Greyhound Adoption League of Central Texas, Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue, Susan G. Komen Foundation, St. Jude Children's Hospital and The Patriot Guard Riders of San Antonio.

## FAVORITE BOOK:

*Leaders Eat Last* by Simon Sinek.

**LIFE MOTTO:** Only worry about what you can control.



**NAME:** Marine Corps Cpl. Flor Samano  
**POSITION AT MINNEAPOLIS MEPS:** Testing Clerk

## TEAM PLAYER:

Samano is an indispensable member of Minneapolis MEPS. She has been cross-trained and helps both medical and operations with processes when not busy administering applicant and student testing. Samano is highly motivated and always looking to learn new things.

## BON APPÉTIT:

Samano has a bubbly personality and is a very caring individual. She is known for cooking and baking delicious dishes for Family Readiness Group events. She always volunteers to help with any and all celebrations and events at Minneapolis MEPS.

## COMPETITIVE SPIRIT:

When it comes to volleyball, she can be very competitive. She loves to be outdoors almost as much as she loves to cook.

## FAVORITE SONG:

Part of Me / Katy Perry

**LIFE MOTTO:** Take it one day at a time.



# InstaMEPS



Submit photos highlighting personnel at your MEPS to [derrik.l.noack.civ@army.mil](mailto:derrik.l.noack.civ@army.mil)



1. (R) Retired Marine Corps Col. Will Reinhart, J-3 director, participates in his son's commissioning ceremony. (L) Marine Corps 2nd Lt. Liam Reinhart begins flight school this fall. (Courtesy photo)

2. (L) Navy Chief Petty Officer Richard Calderone, Louisville MEPS Medical NCOIC, demonstrates how prescreens are reviewed in MHS GENESIS to Dr. Agnes Schaefer, Assistant Secretary of the Army, Manpower and Reserve Affairs, and Army Lt. Gen. Douglas Stitt, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army, during their visit to Louisville MEPS. (Courtesy photo)

3. (L to R) Calderone, Dr. Todd Peters, Knoxville MEPS CMO, Army Capt. Devin Cash, Louisville MEPS operations officer, Marine Corps Maj. Aaron Wellman, Louisville MEPS commander, Stitt, Schaefer, Army 1st Sgt. Jennifer Loera, Louisville MEPS senior enlisted advisor, Army Col. Janelle Kutter, Eastern Sector commander and 1st Lt. Luis Vazquez, Louisville MEPS assistant operations officer, pose for a photo. (Courtesy photo)







4.

4. (R) Jerry Holman, Syracuse MEPS Airforce Liaison, poses for a photo with his son-in-law, Maverick Fitzback, after processing him into the Air Force at Syracuse MEPS. Holman, who previously worked as an Army liaison at Louisville MEPS, also processed Fitzback into the Army in 2017 at Louisville MEPS. (Courtesy photo)

5. (Center) Dr. Irina Rader, ASVAB CEP national program manager and Dr. Rod McCloy, principal Human Resources Research staff scientist pose for a photo with Louisville MEPS personnel. Rader and McCloy gained familiarity with the mission and functions of a MEPS and met the MEPS staff to learn insights on testing challenges and best practices. (Courtesy photo)

6. Detroit MEPS personnel don their finest denim in support of National Denim Day Part to spread awareness around sexual violence issues and to support survivors.



5.



6.

### Processing Policy Guidance Updates:

- Reporting Ship Status (Update 1) - June 1
- Behavior Health Ordering Change - May 30
- Saturday Openings (Update 4) - May 24
- ConDEP Pilot Program (Update 5) - May 18
- Remote Prescreen Support - May 11
- Return to MEPS Visitor Policy - April 18

Past  
Quarter  
Updates

### Publication Announcements:

- When is the best day to retire? - May 15
- AMESOP - May 15
- Virtual Oath of Enlistment - May 8
- Processing Recruitment Incentives and Superior Qualifications - May 2
- Performance Awards Guidance - May 1
- Innovation Facilitation Team - May 1





# Commemorating 50 Years of Our All-Volunteer Force | 1973-2023

Stepping through  
Freedom's Front Door  
means joining a legacy  
of more than 15 million  
who have chosen to  
enlist since the creation  
of the All-Volunteer  
Force. Congratulations  
and thank you for  
choosing to serve.