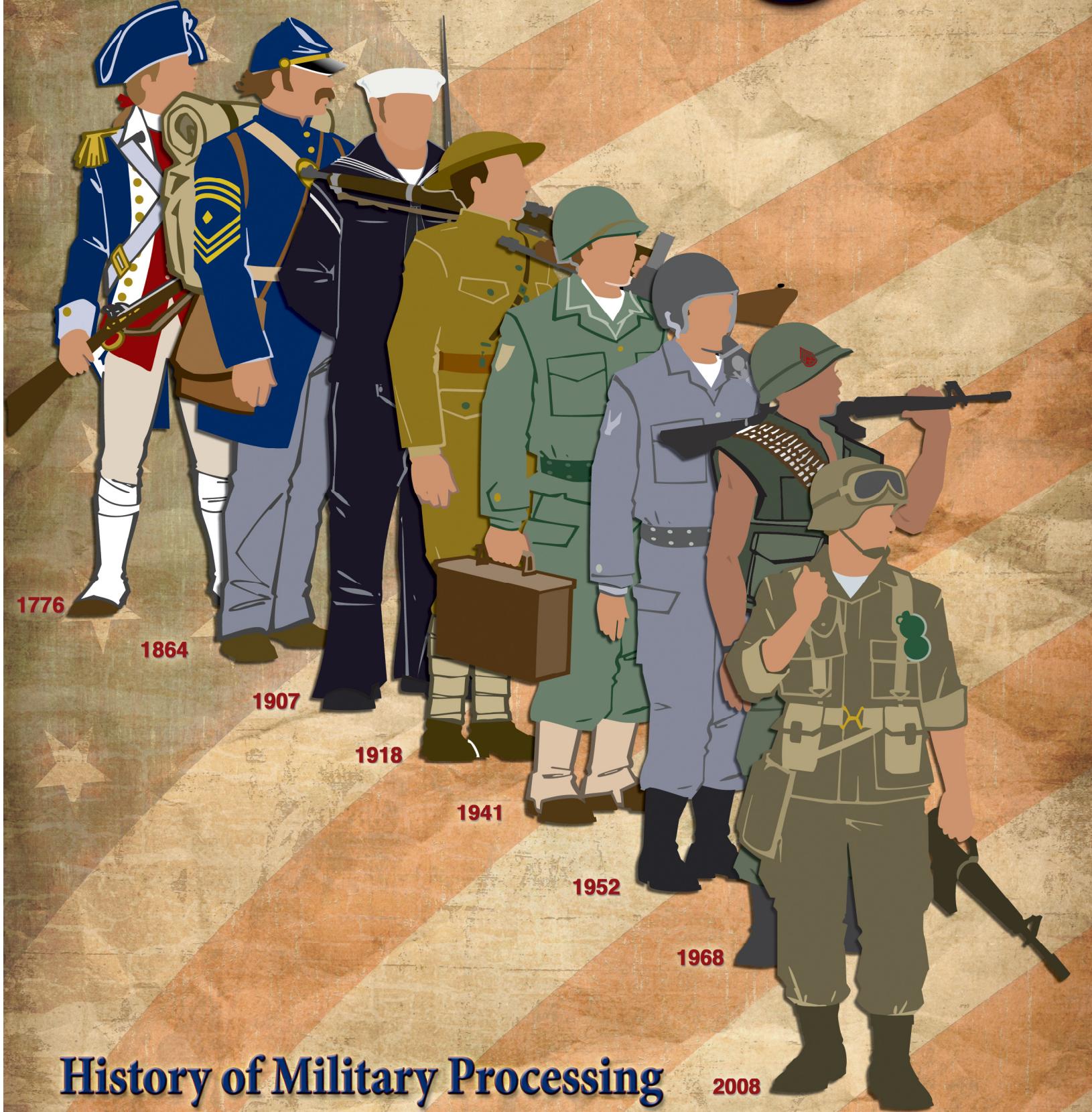


UNITED STATES MILITARY ENTRANCE PROCESSING COMMAND

# Messenger

SHARING INFORMATION TO REACH A VISION

VOL. 30, No. 4



History of Military Processing

2008

# Messenger

*Sharing information to reach a vision*

## The history of military entrance processing



A man enlists at an Army recruiting office in Houston, Texas, in February 1919.

This issue of the *Messenger* focuses on the history of military entrance standards and processing — from the Roman Empire to the creation and development of the U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command. The first article outlines the origins of modern U.S. military entrance standards (page 4). The second article explains how, following World War II, the Department of Defense began focusing on quality enlistments, and how USMEPCOM eventually broke away to become the “honest broker” of U.S. military entrance processing (page 12).

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# Commander's Commentary

While this issue of the *Messenger* looks at our past, I want to direct your attention to USMPECOM's future. We have done great things and should be proud, but our challenge now is to move forward quickly but not hastily. We do what we do better than anybody else right now, but we can do it even better as we adapt to and adopt new technology.

Our world is changing exponentially as technology evolves and expands faster than at any time in history. It took radio 38 years to reach 50 million users, television 14 years and the Internet four years. Technical information is doubling every two years. By 2010 it is estimated that it will double every three days. More new information was generated in 2007 than in the previous 5,000 years.

With change rushing at us — hopefully not past us — it is clear that Albert Einstein was spot on when he said, "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used to create them."

So, how do we adapt and improve our processes without becoming road kill on the information super highway? We plan carefully, change it as necessary and execute smartly. We have started the process with System to Standard and will continue as we transition into the Virtual Interactive Processing System.

The key to change is having vision. Helen Keller said, "There is one thing worse than not being able to see. Being able to see, but having no vision."

Fortunately we, as a command have an outstanding vision statement: "USMEPCOM is recognized as a customer-centered, future-focused learning organization driven by best business practices and cutting edge technologies, providing real time entrance processing and qualification."

Let's break down a few of the key parts of that statement.

*Customer centered* — We serve four customers: The Department of Defense as a whole, the services' recruiters and trainers, the applicants and our employees. All our efforts to modernize our practices must take into account the needs of all these customers. Our customers are best served when we make things easier for them by harnessing technology to eliminate barriers and making the enlistment process both transparent and seamless.

*Future-focused* — The last seven words of any great organization are "We've never done it that way before." By always looking for newer, faster, better ways to do our jobs, we avoid that trap. If you see a better way to do something, tell someone. We're all in this together.

*Learning organization* — That means that all of us want to be better tomorrow than we are today, individually and collectively.

*Best business practices, cutting edge technologies, real-time entrance processing and qualification* — This goes hand in hand with being a learning organization. STS is moving us toward paperless processing as we send more documents electronically, use biometrics to identify applicants and sign enlistment contracts, and enter and store medical information electronically.

VIPS will decentralize our operations even further. Today, USMEPCOM processes 485,000 applicants who spend a collective 1 million days in the MEPS to yield 243,000 shippers. With VIPS, the number of applicants and the days they spend in the MEPS will be cut in half, but we will still provide 235,000 qualified shippers to the services. Today, 95 percent of the workload is done in a USMEPCOM facility. With VIPS, it might be possible for an applicant to take an enlistment test, and complete medical pre-screening, background checks and waiver pre-screening without ever setting foot in a MEPS or a MET site.



Col. Mariano C. Campos Jr.

Nonetheless, a vision, no matter how well stated, is nothing without the support of those who must help execute it. As we move forward to our vision, and toward VIPS, I will rely on every member of our command to help us get there. Your expertise will be needed to help us achieve our vision. Your buy-in is critical to truly improve and transform our processes for all our four customers.

Change, with the proper vision and planning, is good. Our course will be a curve, not a straight line. As the learning curve steepens, as I'm sure it will, those who adapt best will do best. I've seen flexibility, adaptability and dedication throughout the command and I'm certain you will rise to the occasion.

  
**Mariano C. Campos Jr.**  
Colonel, USAF  
Commanding



# The Origins of Modern U.S. Military Entrance Standards

by Gaylan Johnson  
USMEPCOM Public Affairs

**T**he doctor's icy hand and order to "turn your head and cough" has been a rite of passage shared by millions of Americans facing military service for nearly a century.

Volunteer or conscript, male or female, all were required to meet the standards for enlistment, appointment or induction of their day. The standards military entrance processing stations apply today evolved from almost 100 years' worth of intelligence test development, and advances in medicine, science, and technology.

The current standards reflect vast progress made in American public health policy, nutrition and education.

Today's Department of Defense and service qualification standards originated with the United States' entry into World War I. The declaration of war signed by President Wilson on April 6, 1917, set into motion what would become, by the end of World War II, the largest

coordinated system of human resource selection, classification, training and assignment ever implemented in this country.

But armed forces personnel selection standards are hardly a 20<sup>th</sup> century innovation. Throughout the ages, nations have employed some form of selection criteria to meet their military manpower requirements.



*"On the careful choice of soldiers depends the welfare of the Republic, and the very essence of the Roman Empire and its power is so inseparably connected with this charge, that it is of the highest importance not to be entrusted indiscriminately, but only to persons whose fidelity can be relied on."*

So cautioned Flavius Vegetius Renatus, in his *De Re Militari*, circa 380 AD. In his day, not unlike our own, the individuals in the Roman levies were selected for their potential to adapt to military life and learn military skills to accomplish the mission. Vegetius' description of physical standards would not be entirely out of place today:

*"The young soldier, therefore, ought to have a lively eye, should carry his head erect, his chest should be broad, his shoulders muscular and brawny, his fingers long, his arms strong, his waist small, his shape easy, his legs and feet rather nervous than fleshy."*

More than 1,500 years later, Lawrence Kubie, writing in the Winter 1944 issue of Military Affairs, described the early American military accession process this way:

"Not many years ago every citizen had a gun and knew how to use it. He had to in order to survive. In those days there was no induction process. There was no training. There was no classification of men for specialized tasks."

Kubie's statement was dramatic, but not precisely true.

## The Civil War

During the Civil War, Union Army regulations called for a physician to inspect each recruit. The physician's judgment of the recruit's suitability was largely subjective. No specific cause for rejection was required. The Army did, however, provide guidance in the form of acceptable height and chest circumference measurements based on contemporary British and French standards.

Just as in the present day, the intent of height and chest circumference tables was to screen out individuals who were not likely to bear up during military service. The inspecting physician used below average height (minimum of 5 feet in 1864, down from the previous standard of 5 feet 6 inches in effect since 1802) as an indicator of possible disease, parasitic infestation, tuberculosis, or malnutrition.

Overweight prospective military members wouldn't become an issue for another 100 years. Exceptions to ev-



1864: Recruiting in the New York City Hall Park. Illustration from a sketch by George Law, published in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, March 19, 1864.

ery rule existed, however. In 1875, Colonel Jedidiah H. Baxter noted that a rejected Civil War draftee stood only 4 feet 3 inches tall, but weighed 313 pounds.

Although vague by today's standards, the screening procedures met the Union Army's needs, even as its ranks swelled from 27,958 personnel in 1860 to 1,062,848 in 1865. They also served the U.S. Army 30 years later during mobilization for the Spanish American War, when the Army grew to five and one half times its pre-war size.

## World War I

Modern military medical and aptitude screening processes, however, trace their origins only as far back in time as the U.S. mobilization for World War I.

During the 18 months the nation participated in that global conflict, the first Selective Service Act enabled the nation to expand its active duty military force to 2,897,167 by 1918, 16 times the 1916 peacetime total of 179,376. Behind these numbers were 200,000 local, state and federal civilian medical and administrative personnel who registered 24 million American males for potential service and inducted about 2.8 million of them.

In order to evaluate, process, and classify these massive numbers, uniform classification standards were devised to screen out the medically unsuitable and to assess the aptitude capabilities of volunteers and inductees.



1917: Physical examination of the men summoned in the first call for the National Army, at District No. 154, #60 West 13th Street, New York City. See page 10 for an in-depth article on the topic of physical height in military acceptance.

Medically, screening for tuberculosis was a priority. Much as heart disease is today, tuberculosis was a leading cause of death in turn of the century America. The disease killed nearly 6,500 Union Army soldiers during the Civil War, while a far larger number were discharged, returned home, and eventually succumbed to the disease.

Even with screening, military hospital admissions for tuberculosis during the war amounted to 11.8 per 1,000 and accounted for 15 percent of all military discharges. Three thousand U.S. soldiers died of tuberculosis during World War I. It also accounted for 12.7 percent of all disability discharges. In 1922, 44,591 veterans were under the care of the Veterans Bureau for the disease. The total cost for caring for tubercular World War I veterans was \$1 billion.

Height and weight standards were also first applied with uniformity during the World War I era. The standards were first published in Selective Service Regulations, Part VIII, "Physical Examination Standards, No. 3," November 1917. They were incorporated into Army Regulation 40-105, "Standards of Physical Examination for Entrance into the Regular Army, National Guard and Organized Reserves," on May 29,



February 1918: Men undergoing physical examination at the Plattsburg, N.Y., training camp. Only three out of the 1,374 enrolled in the camp were rejected as physically unfit.

1923, and included the horse-friendly policy of barring those exceeding 180 pounds from joining the cavalry.

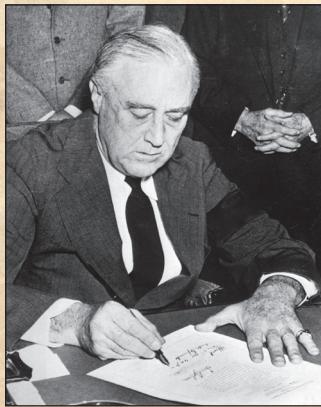
The regulation included a table titled, "U.S. Army Standards for Weight and Chest Girth, 1917," that specified standard and minimum variation measurements for height, weight, and chest circumference. The standards incorporated information gathered from the U.S. Sanitary Commission's survey of demographic data and height/weight measurements of 23,785 Civil War soldiers, the Army's first height and weight chart of 1887, and the insurance industry's 1912 Medico-Actuarial Mortality Investigation.

The application of these standards resulted in far more rejections of prospective service members for underweight than overweight. In 1918, nearly 75,000 were rejected for underweight, while only slightly more than 4,200 were rejected for being overweight.

World War I also witnessed the advent of aptitude testing. The Army Alpha test consisted of eight subtests and later served as a prototype for later test development. The Army Beta test was one of the first paper and pencil tests to evaluate the aptitude of recruits with little or no schooling and those who were non-English speakers. Both were replaced by the Army General Classification Test — the AGCT — in World War II.

*(For a comprehensive overview of the development of armed forces aptitude/intelligence testing, which evolved into today's Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, see, "The 90-year journey to the ASVAB," in the Messenger, Volume 30, Number 2, pages 16-17.)*

## World War II



Dec. 8, 1941: President Roosevelt signs the declaration of war against Japan. A year earlier, he signed the Selective Service and Training Act, in anticipation of a necessary personnel expansion for an impending war.

More than 20 years later, World War II presented the nation with an even more monumental mobilization.

President Roosevelt signed the Selective Service and Training Act of 1940, the nation's first peacetime draft, to facilitate the anticipated personnel expansion the impending war would require. By the time the wartime selective service laws expired in 1947, more than 10 million men had been inducted into the military services. The war years witnessed active duty personnel

strength balloon from a peacetime total of 334,473 in 1939 to a total of 12,055,884 in 1945.

Tuberculosis screening remained a major concern. A vaccine for the disease would not be widely available until after the war. Effective tuberculosis screening, however, was one of the success stories of the era thanks to the widespread use of the chest X-ray.

In October 1940, at the direction of the War Department, chest X-rays were required for all Selective Service registrants suspected of having pulmonary disease. By March 1942, the rules had changed so that all inductees received a chest X-ray. The results were impressive. In World War I, tuberculosis accounted for 15 percent of all disability discharges. By 1943 it accounted for only 1.6 percent. In all, of eight million examinees, 120,000 or 1.5 percent, were rejected for service because of the disease. Hospital admission rates for tuberculosis were 11.8 per thousand service members in World War I. In World War II the admission rate was reduced to less than one per 1,000.

The physical standards for induction were first published by the War Department in Medical Regulation — MR — 1-9, "Standards of Physical Examination During Mobilization," dated Aug. 31, 1940. The standards were used by both local draft board examining physicians and those at Joint Army and Navy Induction Stations. MR 1-9 was subjected to several major revisions as the war progressed. Specific subjects were amended by the War Department as the need arose.

The most extensive changes to MR 1-9 involved dental and visual acuity standards.

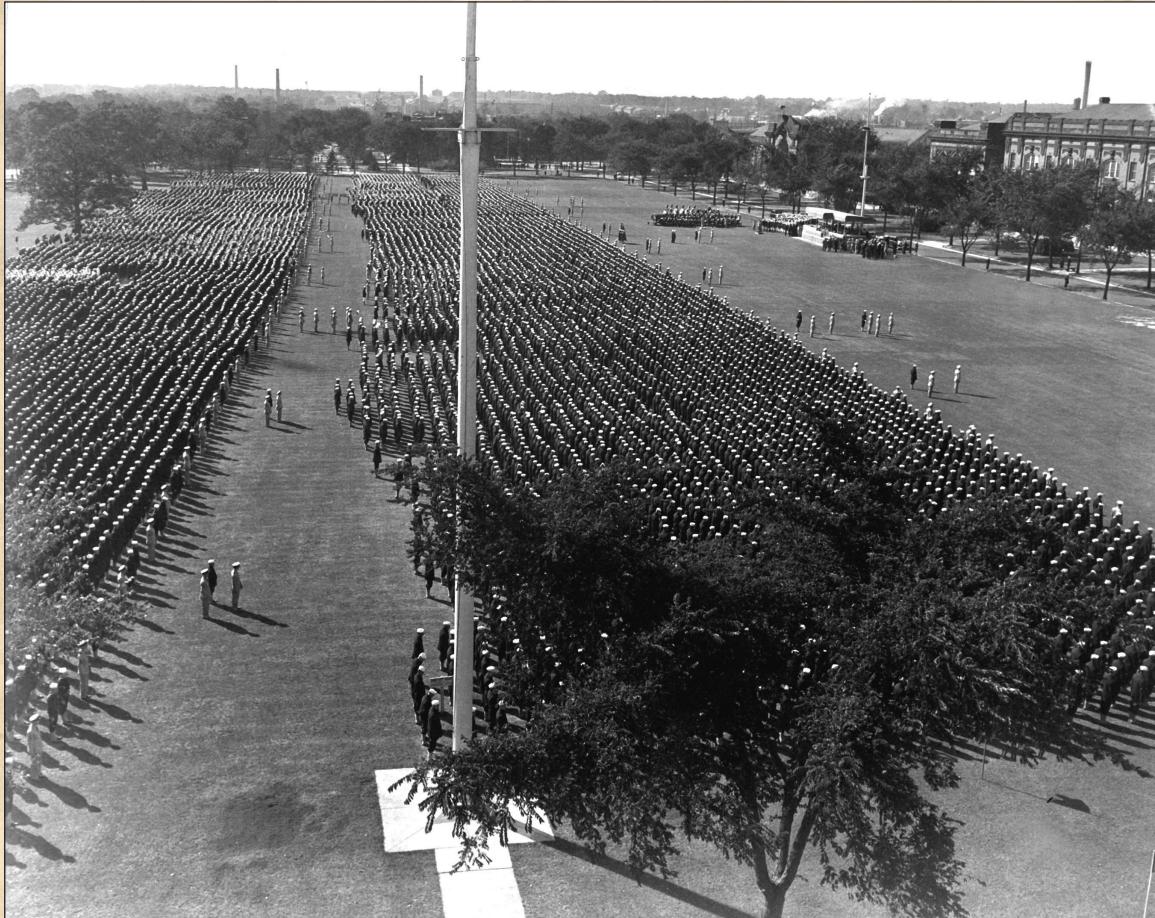
The August 1940 edition of MR 1-9 required military members to possess "a total of 6 masticating teeth and six incisor teeth properly opposed." The first statistics available after the standard was implemented revealed that it was responsible for about 9 percent of all rejections, and if continued, would result in the rejection of one million otherwise acceptable men by 1943.

The standard was revised downward at the same time the Army and Navy Dental Corps instituted extensive dental repair programs. By October 1942, the revised MR 1-9 allowed an inductee with no teeth to serve if dentures would correct the condition.

MR 1-9's visual acuity standards were the second highest cause for rejection. In 1940 the standard specified 20/100 in each eye, if corrected with glasses to 20/40 in both eyes. By April 1944 the standard had been lowered to 20/200 in each eye or 20/100 in one and 20/400 in the other if both were correctable to 20/40, and the services provided the corrective lenses. During World War II, the Army alone issued 2 million pairs of glasses.

World War II also introduced the PULHES physical classification system, still in use today.

Throughout most of the war only two physical classifications were available, general service and limited



1942: A ceremony at Naval Training Station Great Lakes, Ill. The photo was shot from the roof of the main administration building. Today, USMEPCOM Headquarters and Eastern and Western Sectors are located in a tenant building of Naval Station Great Lakes, the base that includes the Navy's Recruit Training Command.

service. Job-specific placement was determined by testing and interviews, but the process lacked a simple means to indicate the individual possessed the physical requirements to perform the assignment.

Enter our neighbors to the north. The Canadians had a system already in use called PULHEMS which indicated the individual's suitability for a particular assignment at a glance. After experimenting with the Canadian system, the Americans adopted it as PULHES in May 1944. The U.S. definitions were: P-general physical stamina and strength; U-upper extremities; L-lower extremities; H-hearing; E-eyes; and S-psychiatric evaluation. Each of the letter categories had four numerical grades that could

be assigned. The "M" in the Canadian system stood for mentality (intelligence) and was eliminated from the U.S. system in favor of AGCT results recorded separately in the individual's record.

At the conclusion of World War II, the nation faced a demobilization challenge almost as daunting as the earlier mobilization. Millions of former GIs had to assimilate back into civilian society. The size of the active force dropped dramatically from 12,055,884 in 1945 to 3,024,893 in 1946. That total was halved in 1947, resulting in an active duty force of 1,581,110. The force has remained within a range of about 1,500,000 to 3,600,000 from 1947 to the present day.

## Post World War II

After the war, the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, the newly-created Air Force and the Coast Guard resumed recruiting volunteers. Recruiting had been suspended in 1942 to allow the conscription system to fill service manpower quotas. The wartime Selective Service Act was allowed to lapse in 1947, but was replaced the next year with a new law that would drive conscription until the draft ended June 30, 1973.

In 1948, an inter-service working group was created to develop a single aptitude test for use by all services. This effort resulted in the introduction in 1950 of the Armed Forces Qualification Test.

The AFQT served as a screening device, determining the inductee or applicant's overall capacity to absorb military training, and provided a uniform yardstick with which to predict the individual's potential for success while in service. It did not aid in job classification, however. For this, the services employed their separate Army Classification Battery, the Navy Basic Test Battery, and the Airman Qualification Examination, in addition to other specialized tests.

In 1974 the Department of Defense selected the ASVAB as the single instrument of choice to both screen applicants for enlistment and for occupational classification testing. This streamlined the testing process and enhanced the individual service's ability to match applicants with jobs and to provide job guarantees to those applicants who qualify. In 1976, the same year the United States Military Enlistment Command was established, a revised version of the ASVAB became the

enlistment eligibility test Department of Defense-wide. Refined and improved versions of the ASVAB continue to serve in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

In 1959 the Surgeons General of the Army, Navy and Air Force created the Consolidated Medical Fitness Standards Project to consolidate, simplify and clarify the standards for military medical fitness. At the time, four Army regulations and about 200 directives addressed medical fitness standards for the

armed forces. The revisions were submitted for review by the Department of Defense as well, since induction physical standards were included in the new document. The approved document was published in 1961 as Army Regulation — AR — 40-501, "Standards of Medical Fitness."

The Department of Defense first published department-wide medical fitness standards for all services in the first edition of Department of Defense Instruction — DODI — 6130.4, "Criteria and Procedure Requirements for Physical Standards for Appointment, Enlistment, or Induction in the Armed Forces" published in 1986. It replaced AR 40-501 as the DoD standard.

Medical fitness standards continue to be refined to keep pace with current trends in public health, advances in medical science, and military requirements. In 1961 audiometric standards were added and hearing tests became routine. Screening for HIV was mandated in the 1980's for all persons entering the services. The most recent edition of DODI 6130.4, dated Jan. 18, 2005, incorporated the International Classification of Disease — ICD-9 — codes. Used for the collection of medical condition statistics and to support automated aspects of the health care system, ICD-9 codes now accompany each medical condition cited in DODI 6130.4. The codes, developed by the World Health Organization, are used to identify and record applicant medical conditions during MEPS processing. Results are used in statistical analysis of the data.

And the "turn your head and cough"?

Well, not everything changes in 100 years.



# How's the view up there?

by Gaylan Johnson  
USMEPCOM Public Affairs

**P**hysical height is a recurrent theme in historic writings about military acceptance standards. Here is a brief survey of some soldier height considerations.

Vegetius, the Roman military writer, advised:

*...the standard (height) for the cavalry of the wings and for the infantry of the first legionary cohorts was fixed at six feet, or at least five feet ten inches ... But when necessity requires it, the height of a man is not to be regarded so much as his strength ... ”*

Historically, service members of a certain stature have always been in demand by the military. Height was used as an indicator of overall medical suitability, and there were ceremonial, tactical, and weapons-related advantages as well. As Vegetius states, however, it was not an absolute.

Prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, an individual's height was used by the medical practitioner and the layman alike as an easily

applied indicator of overall health. A diminutive stature could indicate disease, malnutrition and poor physical development. Advocates of the pseudo-science of eugenics also believed that criminals were generally shorter than the general population.

Height did in fact have its practical advantages from the Classical Age to the Industrial Age. Here are some examples:

Monarchs preferred uniformly tall men for their personal guard forces. They looked great on the parade field and their size hopefully intimidated potential assassins.

On the battlefield, the psychological shock effect achieved in the initial engagement could be enhanced by placing the tallest men in the front ranks of infantry and cavalry as the opposing forces met.

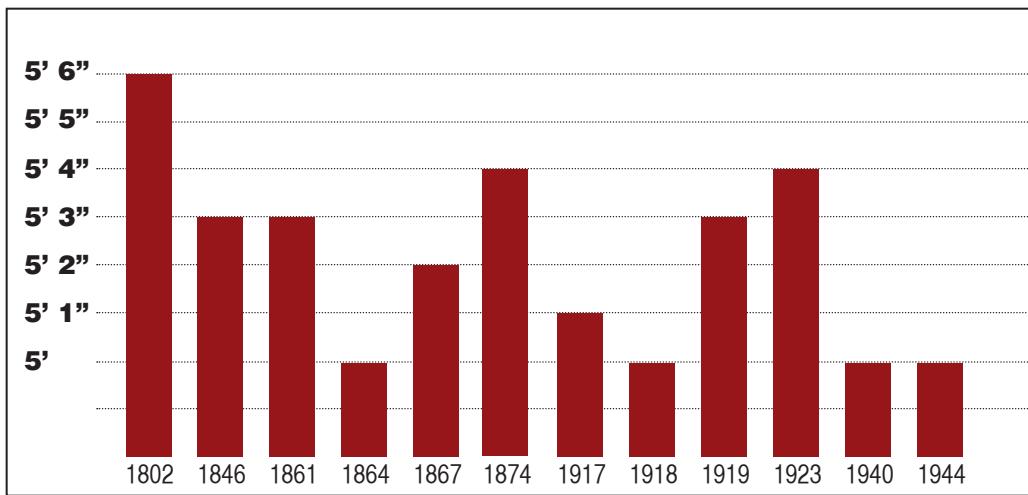
A tall stature also had its advantages for soldiers employing pre-Industrial Revolution military weapons. During the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453), archers employing the English longbow dominated the battlefield, notably at Crecy, Poitiers, and Agincourt. The bow itself was about 6 feet long and shot a 3-foot-long arrow, which required a fairly tall,

not to mention strong, archer to shoot the required 20 arrows per minute. Height was also an advantage when employing edged and pointed weapons such as the longer varieties of sword, as well as pikes, halberds and lances.

Early firearms like the muzzle-loading 5-foot British Long Land Pattern "Brown Bess" musket and Colonial American 5-foot-5-inch Kentucky long rifle favored a rifleman with a certain amount of stature. The Brown Bess, for example, had a 46-inch barrel and loading each round required the use of an equally long ramrod. The soldier rammed the wadding, bullet and powder down the barrel with the rod, "followed by two quick strokes" to seat the round, then withdrew the ramrod and returned it to its hoops beneath the barrel before each shot was fired. A degree of height and arm length made rapid reloading easier for the British soldier of the line who was expected to fire 3 shots per minute.

The Industrial Revolution introduced technological improvements in military weaponry that rendered a soldier's height much less of an advantage, as reflected in the old saying that, "... Samuel Colt

Minimum Acceptable Height for Military Service



## Characteristic Comparison of Male Soldiers (1864 - 1984)

	<b>Year of Study</b>			
	<b>1864 (23,624)</b>	<b>1919 (99,449)</b>	<b>1946 (85,000)</b>	<b>1984 (869)</b>
<b>Height (inches)</b>	67.2	67.7	68.4	68.6
<b>Weight (pounds)</b>	141.4	144.9	154.8	166.8
<b>Age (years)</b>	25.7	24.9	24.3	26.3
<b>Neck girth (inches)</b>	13.6	14.2	14.5	14.5
<b>Chest girth (inches)</b>	34.5	34.9	36.4	35.5
<b>Waist girth (inches)</b>	31.5	31.4	31.3	32.7
<b>Estimated body fat (percent)</b>	16.9	15.7	14.4	17.3
<b>Fat-free mass (pounds)</b>	117	122	133	138

made all men equal.” American breech-loading Sharps, Spencer, and Henry rifles, as well as the British Martini-Henry, eliminated the need for ramrod, powder and shot by utilizing a mass-produced all-in-one cartridge that was inserted in the weapon’s breech. The loading action required manual dexterity, not physical size. Later innovations such as the repeating rifle, magazine-fed rifle, and breech-loading land and naval artillery, continued to reduce the advantages of height and arm length.

Today, technology itself forces the height requirement downward for certain jobs such as armored vehicle crewmen, aircrew and submariners.

Wartime necessity may also require the lowering of height standards.

In 1864, 1918, 1940 and 1944, the minimum acceptable height for entry in the U.S. armed forces was set at an even 5 feet, down from previous standards of 5 feet 4 inches, 5 feet 3 inches, or 5 feet 1 inch, depending on the era.

The British Army experience in World War I offers a

useful illustration. The minimum height standard for soldiers was lowered twice between 1914 and 1918 to accommodate the need for personnel. At the beginning of the war, 1914, the minimum allowable height for entry in the British Army was 5 feet 6 inches. In June 1915, after only one year of conflict, the height requirement was lowered to 5 feet 2 inches. By April 1917, after three years of war, it was lowered a second time to 5 feet.

The British author Vera Brittain served as a Voluntary Aid Detachment nurse on the Western Front during the First World War. Her memoir “Testament of Youth,” offered a poignant contrast between the typical British soldier she’d grown accustomed to seeing and the fresh American soldiers marching through her field hospital area in the spring of 1918.

“They (the American troops) looked larger than ordinary men; their tall, straight figures were in vivid contrast to the under-sized armies of pale recruits to which we had grown accustomed ... they seemed as it were, Tommies in heaven.”



A Revolutionary War reenactor at Colonial Williamsburg, Va., illustrates the length of a mid-18th century musket. Photo by Amy Gregorski

# After World War II, military entrance processing begins to focus on *Quality*

by Christine Parker  
*Messenger* Editor

**A**lthough military processing has continued to evolve in the last 50 years, its mission remains the same: ensuring the quality of tomorrow's armed forces.

The last article, "The Origins of Modern U.S. Military Entrance Standards," outlined how mankind has filled its military ranks from the Roman Empire through World War II and beyond. It was after that war that military processing took new turns: from "drab, musty green-walled military buildings," through the adoption of red carpet treatment for applicants to the command's current transformation to the best possible processing systems.

At this point of further growth and transformation, reflecting on the past can provide insight in order to effectively plan for the future.

## Prior to 1950

When tracing the roots of today's U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command, one must look to the Army, because the military processing mission once belonged to that service.

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

In general, the first U.S. military processing was accomplished at military sites, such as training camps. Later, processing was accomplished at induction centers or stations.

## The 1950s

Although the Army has relied on volunteers throughout history, the service has always recruited. The only time conscription completely replaced volunteerism was during the latter part of World War II. Following this, the Army Adjutant General's Office re-established recruiting in August 1945.

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 in order to ensure a fair distribution of military manpower.

This memorandum had four directives. One, voluntary enlistments would continue. Two, identical mental and physical standards for acceptability would be provided for both enlistments and inductions. Three, qualitative distribution would be maintained by quota control. And, four, Armed Forces Examining Stations — AFES — would be established to carry out the qualitative distribution program.

On Sept. 1, 1951, the Secretary of the Army established AFES. Their mission was to facilitate the standardization of military processing and to ensure each military service received a fair distribution of quality enlistees.

Part of the general order read, "Armed Forces examining stations are established as element of recruiting main stations ... Unless otherwise indicated, Armed Forces

examining stations are located at U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force recruiting main stations."

At the time, First Army Area had 10 AFES, the second had 12, the third had six, the fourth had 12, the fifth had six, and the sixth had eight, for a total of 54. By Nov. 1, 1951, another general order added one to each of the six army areas, for a total of 60 AFES (today there are 65 MEPS).

The AFES reported to their executive agent, the Army. Initial AFES military personnel staffing was 50 percent Army, 15 percent Navy, 5 percent Marine Corps and 30 percent Air Force. Effective July 16, 1954, the percentages were changed to provide for staffing by the four services on an actual workload basis.

In the early days of AFES, potential military recruits were herded from room to room and processed through the various medical screening steps — eyes, ears, walk like a duck, turn your head and cough, etc. The process was often compared to herding cattle.

## Testing

In 1948, Congress passed the Selective Service Act that mandated DoD to develop a uniform screening test to be used by all of the services. In response, DoD developed the Armed Forces Qualification Test. DoD began administering the AFQT in 1950 (and continued doing so until the mid-1970s).

During the 1950s, the high mental rejection rate of registrants throughout

the nation made it necessary for the Army to take some action. On Jan. 1, 1952, each AFES received a personnel psychologist for the purpose of maintaining standardized and uniform mental testing procedures. They developed procedures whereby certain categories of registrants could be administratively accepted despite the fact they failed to achieve a passing score on the AFQT.

However, by June 14, 1957, procedures for categorization of administrative acceptees were further revised to restrict administrative acceptance to registrants who failed to achieve a passing score on the AFQT.

## The 1960s

In 1962 the Army transferred the recruiting, examining, induction and processing responsibilities within the continental United States to the Commanding General, Continental Army Command, or CONARC.

Under the U.S. Army Recruiting Service, recruiting was divided among the six continental armies, with each one responsible for recruiting within its geographic boundaries.

In December 1963, the Army deputy chief of staff for personnel appointed a committee to study recruiting. The committee recommended the Army remove the recruiting responsibility from the continental armies and centralize it under CONARC.

The Army activated the U.S. Army Recruiting Command on Oct. 1, 1964, as a subordinate element of CONARC. The new command was located at Fort Monroe, Va., and the headquarters had 23 officers, one warrant officer, 18 enlisted personnel and 50 civilian employees.

The new recruiting command had six recruiting districts, similar to today's recruiting brigades. They were located in New York City, Fort Meade, Md., Fort McPherson, Ga., Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Chicago and at the Presidio of San Francisco.

The command reorganized on July 1, 1965. The reorganization included moving AFES from the recruiting main stations and placing them directly under the control of the recruiting districts. Also, two districts were consolidated. Now USAREC had five recruiting districts, 38 recruiting main stations, 70 AFES and 1,024 recruiting stations (in the continental United States).

Effective July 1, 1966, the Army transferred USAREC from CONARC and placed it under the Army DCSPER.

About this time, the command moved to facilities at an old Nike site at Fox Hill, Va. In 1968, USAREC moved to Hampton, Va.

The Army established and named AFES in 1951. At the time of this writing, 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.

## Testing

As it had in the 1950s, the Army was still grappling with aptitude testing methods and how they relate to enlistment standards. So much so that, in 1960, the Army recruiting district headquarters were authorized a personnel psychologist, an enlistment assistant personnel psychologist, and a statistical clerk for the purpose of supervising the armed forces examining and induction activities at the recruiting main stations.

However, clarification arrived soon after these authorizations. On April 1, 1961, the Army published Regulation 40-501, Standards of Medical Fitness for Appointment, Enlistment and Induction. This regulation seemed to clarify many aspects of military enlistment standards.

During the 1960s, DoD was working to improve testing in schools as well. Beginning in 1958, the first test used in schools was the Airman Qualifying Exam. Shortly thereafter, the Army and Navy introduced their own versions of classification tests into high schools.

The service-specific tests were redundant and lacked a common standard. Then, in 1966, DoD began developing a single battery for all the services.

In 1968, DoD first offered the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery — at no cost — to high schools and postsecondary schools.



Today's USMEPCOM seal. The command created and approved its original seal in 1978. The seal was recreated in 1983 after the command's name change from U.S. Military *Enlistment* Processing Command to U.S. Military *Entrance* Processing Command. The five corners of the pentagon allude to the five services comprising USMEPCOM. The three basic functions performed in the selective process are represented by the checkered background indicative of administrative processing and the colors blue and red are symbolic of the mental and medical aspects of examination. The gold sword represents the high ideals inherent in the new service member.

The draft was in full swing in the 1960s and AFES were busy. A former Phoenix MEPS employee who worked at Chicago AFES while he was in the military, recalled occasions when the Chicago floor count reached 700.

## The 1970s

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

On July 15, 1973, USAREC headquarters moved from Hampton, Va., to Fort Sheridan, Ill., to gain more space for its expanded mission.

By 1976, AFES had been accomplishing the processing mission for 25 years — under USAREC's leadership. However, things were about to change and military enlistment processing was about to become independent.

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.

Still, the command was a staff element of USAREC. The Army designated the commander of USAREC as the concurrent commander of USMEPCOM. Both USMEPCOM and USAREC were located at Fort Sheridan, Ill.

Three years later, USMEPCOM would completely break away from USAREC. In August 1979, the USAREC/USMEPCOM commander, then Maj. Gen. William Mundie recommended to the Army DCSPER that USMEPCOM should stand alone. The Army approved his recommendation and, on Oct. 1, 1979, the Secretary of the Army directed that USMEPCOM would separate from USAREC and the USMEPCOM commander would report directly to the Army DCSPER.

The Department of Defense assigned the U.S. Army as executive agent for USMEPCOM. However, for operational and policy supervision, USMEPCOM reports directly to the then deputy assistant secretary of defense, military manpower and personnel policy.

With this in mind, in a sense, USMEPCOM has two birthdays. On July 1, 1976, the Army "created" USMEPCOM. However, USAREC kept the command "under its wing" until Oct. 1, 1979. On that day, USMEPCOM stood alone and distinct as a Department of Defense joint activity.

Whichever date you cite, USMEPCOM broke away from the Army and became a joint service command, an "independent broker" for military processing. And, because USMEPCOM provided support to all five services, the command was staffed with personnel from all five. The command was proportionately staffed, based on enlistment totals, until 2005.

Also in 1979, USMEPCOM began Entrance National Agency Checks. And, records indicate that, in that same year, the command created its Public Affairs Office, Civilian Personnel Office and Equal Employment Opportunity Office.

## Testing

Initially, the ASVAB wasn't used for military recruiting. However, in 1976, DoD introduced ASVAB as the official aptitude testing for all the services. This version had 12 subtests. By 1979, the command began automated ASVAB scoring.

## Technology

USMEPCOM began its first use of data processing in the early 1970s. MEPS were using Dura machines to process data gathered from applicants. These machines were similar to typewriters, with the addition of a strip of yellow paper running through them. As the person typed the data, the machine would punch little holes in the tape. Next the MEPS transmitted the data tapes through a device (that looked like a tape recorder) to headquarters. Sometimes the device would malfunction during the night and there would be piles of yellow tape all over the floor the next morning.

Because of this problem, military personnel were required to stay after duty hours to feed the tape into the device. When the yellow tape broke, the operator

had to re-establish communication with headquarters. What made it even more challenging — the operators needed to remember which "dots" represented which letters of the alphabet.

After the Dura machines, the command began using IBM magnetic card typewriters. They were very noisy and required sound-proofed rooms. The rooms were carpeted and had acoustic tile on the walls. Two to five typists sat in this room and operated the typewriters. At the end of the day, the lead typist would proofread all the codes and transmit the data on the cards via a telephone hook-up to Fort Sheridan, where the data was stored.

## The 1980s

This decade brought name changes. 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*, effective in 1983.



**Early days:** In 1980, the USMEPCOM staff gathers on the porch of its Headquarters building at Fort Sheridan, Ill. Although a few of these employees remained at USMEPCOM for 20 or more years, only a few remain. One of them, Tina Siordia stands directly to the right of the second pillar from the right (wearing a navy blue top). She is the USMEPCOM commander's secretary. Nancy Graf, who also works in the headquarters command group, is in the photo as well. The officer in an all-white uniform, in front, on the right, is USMEPCOM's second commander, Rear. Adm. Thomas F. Brown, III.



**April 1988:** Processing at Chicago MEPS. *U.S. Army*  
photo by Stan Cordell

In 1982, USMEPCOM headquarters moved from Fort Sheridan to Building 3400 at Great Lakes Naval Training Center, now named Naval Station Great Lakes.

Also during this decade, processing methods were changing. The 1980s ushered in the Red Carpet Program, a different way of processing applicants that would soon replace the assembly line methods of past decades. It established procedures to help ensure each applicant received personalized, efficient and courteous service.

Many changes occurred in 1985. USMEPCOM expanded its mission by adding the processing of applicants into the National Guard. That same year, the command implemented automated Entrance National Agency Checks.

In October 1985, USMEPCOM began testing applicants for Human Immunodeficiency Virus, or HIV. Applicants with the virus are permanently disqualified.

In 1985, the command received its first Joint Meritorious Unit Award from the Secretary of Defense. The command received its second Joint Meritorious Unit Award Nov. 18, 2008.

In 1987, regulations prohibited smoking in government buildings, except in designated areas. By 1995, the command built a smoking shelter in back of Building 3400.

In June 1988, the command implemented the Drug and Alcohol Testing Program and began using breathalyzers to determine the blood alcohol content of applicants. A positive reading of 0.05 or

higher at the MEPS is grounds for disqualification. The command uses a urinalysis sample for the drug test, which checks for THC and/or cocaine.

### Testing

By 1980, version 8 of the ASVAB had 11 subtests. In 1982, the MEPS gained an authorization for educational services specialists.

### Technology

During the 1980s, like much of the nation, USMEPCOM began increasing its use of

information technology. The command established the Joint Computer Center in 1980. At that time the JCC supported both USMEPCOM and the Selective Service's mainframe requirements (USMEPCOM is co-located with the Selective Service Region I Headquarters).

In 1981, the command's first mainframe — the IBM 370/165 — became operational. The system received upgrades in 1983, 1985, 1990 and 1994.

In 1979, the command leased its first office automation systems — Wang word processors. They caught on. Within a year, the command leased more terminals and printers. Soon everyone wanted one and the command began providing training on their use.

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. An additional removable disc memory unit, three identical printers and an optical character reader were linked to the CPU with cables. It was the first in a network that was to link all the processing stations.

At the time, System 80 was touted as a way 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. Also, it could interface with other information systems, such as ARADS, the Army Recruiting Accession Data System.

The new system required command personnel to learn new ways of doing business that would save time and make life easier for the people who processed applicants.

In 1982, System 80 came online throughout command and was well received.

By 1983, the Joint Computer Center was making plans for a new mainframe. The original one held 15 gigabytes of data and could be upgraded to a total of 8 megabytes of random access memory, or RAM. While that must have seemed like great capacity at the time, it's very small compared to today's standards.

Also in 1983, the command implemented automated prior service checks with the Defense Manpower Data Center.

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 today's MEPCOM Integrated Resource System, or MIRS.

Vendors provided software for IMIRS and MEPS produced other software that was screened in a USMEPCOM software clearing house. IMIRS was to have a planned interface with System 80, but could stand alone as well. At that time, some thought MIRS would begin to come online in fiscal year 1989.

In 1988, the Training and Doctrine Command and Army reception stations began to interface with USMEPCOM's mainframe.

### The 1990s

A comparison between enlistment numbers from 1986 and today shows how the command's bottom line — applicants enlisted — has changed. In fiscal 1986, USMEPCOM enlisted more than 451,000 qualified individuals into the armed forces. By fiscal 2008, that number has dropped to 274,000.

By the beginning of the 1990s, the military drawdown had begun and the services were recruiting fewer people than in past eras. During 1990, the command closed MEPS in New Haven, Conn., and Manchester, N.H., and a sub-station in Guam.

In January 1993, the command realigned from three sectors to two. The command closed Eastern Sector, then

located at Fort George Meade, Md., eliminated Central Sector and re-opened a new Eastern Sector, co-located with USMEPCOM headquarters at Great Lakes Naval Training Center.

Following this change, Eastern and Western Sectors divided the responsibility for all MEPS. The MEPS were separated geographically, roughly along the Mississippi River, with the exception of Milwaukee and New Orleans. Although located to the east of the Mississippi River, those two MEPS became part of Western Sector.

The Gulf War preceded a workload peak in 1992 and, in that same year, USMEPCOM introduced one-day processing. By 1993, the command closed three more MEPS — Wilkes-Barre, Pa., Newark, N.J., and Cincinnati.

During the Los Angeles riots, Los Angeles MEPS burned on April 29, 1992.

In 1993, USMEPCOM's and USAREC's former post location, Fort Sheridan, Ill., closed. Because of this, some of USMEPCOM's military personnel could no longer live at the former Army post. Also, USMEPCOM now employs many former Fort Sheridan personnel.

In 1993, the commander's position was changed from O-7 to an O-6. A list of USMEPCOM's commanders is on the next page.

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 Quality Leadership. Also around this time frame, the command began looking closely at its structure and mission. It completed a workload analysis

study and a 100 percent audit of the MEPS workforce.

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

In 1994, the command began processing National Civilian Community Corps applicants

Western Sector moved from Presidio of San Francisco to Denver in August 1992. In September 1995, Western Sector moved from Denver to Aurora, Colo.

In 1995, a government shutdown closed MEPS for three and a half workdays.

On Oct. 1, 1997, the Army transferred executive agency responsibilities from the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel to Headquarters, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, located at Fort Monroe, Va. This transfer applied to executive agency functions only; it did not change USMEPCOM's mission, internal operations nor the exercise of operational authority by the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. As of this change, realignment and reorganization authority and USMEPCOM personnel rating responsibility remained with OUSD (P&R) and the Army would begin to allocate operational and support resources *through* TRADOC to USMEPCOM.

In 1998, the Beckley MEPS' facility roof caved in during a snowstorm. The staff operated out of personal residences and temporary warehouses for 14 months. The command built a new facility for Beckley MEPS, which opened in April 1999.

## Testing

The command introduced Computerized Adaptive Testing-ASVAB, or CAT-ASVAB — as we know it today — in 1996. An earlier version, used on Hewlett-Packard computers, was introduced in 1990.

The ASVAB was shortened from 11 subtests to 10 in 1992.

## Technology

The JCC installed its first local area network in 1993. The next year, the command began fielding MIRS. In June 1995, Milwaukee MEPS was the first to go live with MIRS. That same year, the command began using e-mail.

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 include 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.

The System 80 components could take up an entire room. Upon implementation, MIRS consisted of an average of four personal computers, 12 computer-like "X-terminals" and 14 laser printers.

By 1998, a new MIRS interface allowed the command to pass nearly seven times as much information at once.



**April 1988:** Processing at Chicago MEPS (both photos). U.S. Army photo by Stan Cordell



## USMEPCOM Commanders

Brig. Gen. William P. Acker*	Air Force
Rear Adm. Charles E. Gurney III**	Navy
Rear Adm. Thomas F. Brown III	Navy
Rear Adm. Benjamin T. Hacker	Navy
Brig. Gen. Wilma L. Vaught	Air Force
Brig. Gen. Caleb J. Archer	Army
Rear Adm. Eugene D. Conner	Navy
Brig. Gen. Michael P. Mulqueen	Marine Corps
Rear Adm. Edison L. Watkins III	Navy
Col. Wanda C. Wood	Air Force
Col. Michael B. Weimer	Army
Capt. Martha R. Bills	Navy
Col. David L. Slotwinski	Army
Col. Lon M. Yeary	Marine Corps
Col. Mariano C. Campos Jr.	Air Force

\* Brig. Gen. William P. Acker was the USMEPCOM deputy commander because, at that time, the USAREC commander was dual-hatted as the USMEPCOM commander. \*\* Rear Adm. Charles E. Gurney III was the USMEPCOM deputy commander until Oct. 1, 1979, at which point he became USMEPCOM commander for two days before his change of command on Oct. 3, 1979.

## 2000 and beyond

The Army established the U.S. Army Accessions Command as a subordinate command of HQ, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command on Feb. 15, 2002. With this change, USAAC began to provide integrated command, control and coordination of numerous commands, including USAREC. Also as of this change, USAAC began to exercise Army-directed executive agency authority over USMEPCOM.

When it comes to military processing, the years since 2000 have focused on strategic planning initiatives and transformation. In line with both, the command began an A to Z processing review in 2002. The top-to-bottom review focused on three primary areas — processing, medical and testing. Also, this review studied how USMEPCOM fits into the entire accession triad — recruiting, processing and training.

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. From this division came a program that established readiness support groups in MEPS. The goal of the division and the groups is 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.

The year 2005 brought more name changes in USMEPCOM. In January, the command began using joint staff designations, further promoting a joint appearance.

In July 2005, Western Sector headquarters moved from Aurora, Colo., to join the rest of the command at Naval Station Great Lakes. For the first time, USMEPCOM headquarters and both Western and Eastern Sectors are co-located.

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

## Technology

The Internet was an everyday reality for USMEPCOM personnel by the late 1990s. However, dial-up modems and limited connections limited access, especially for MEPS.

Since 2000, the command has made great strides in all areas of information technology, including its use of the Internet and its intranet. Reflecting the

world of technology, changes take place continuously.

## Tomorrow's Processing

The strategic planning that began in the 1990s and the 2002 A to Z processing review were the beginning of a transformation that continues today.

The command continues to move forward based on its mission and vision. Today's mission is a refinement of the military processing mission of the past: ensure the quality of military accessions during peacetime and mobilization in accordance with established standards.

It is the command's vision that encourages the change necessary to set a course for leading the accessions community into the future.

The vision states, "USMEPCOM is recognized as a customer-centered, future-focused learning organization driven by best business practices and cutting-edge technologies, providing real-time entrance processing and qualification."

The current USMEPCOM commander established a transformation office within headquarters recently to study the future of military processing. The transformation includes processing as a whole — from administrative tasks to determining the physical, mental and moral qualifications of future service members. The goal of transformation is to take processing to the applicant — anytime, anywhere.

Mankind has been filling its military ranks throughout history. Like all improvements, they have been slow and they have mirrored society. With so many changes ahead, USMEPCOM will continue to evolve and adapt — and continue to ensure the quality of tomorrow's armed forces.

*Editor's Note: The U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command does not have a historian. In 1996, the Messenger magazine did a feature story on the command's 20th anniversary. It is the most requested issue of the magazine (it's also been a reference for military members preparing for boards.)*

*Our goal in writing the preceding articles was to paint a more thorough picture of the history of military processing.*

*We want to continue refining the command's written history. Therefore, if you have information that will add to or correct what's printed here, please contact the USMEPCOM Public Affairs Office at (847) 688-4874, and provide the information.*

# Anchorage doctor establishes 45-year *Legacy*

by Maj. Laura Bozeman  
Anchorage MEPS Commander

**F**or the last 45 years, Dr. Thomas Green has honed his medical craft in America's Last Frontier, including supporting the Anchorage MEPS for 30 years.

He has become one of the Anchorage MEPS' most enduring legacies, bringing care and concern to the applicants every day at "Freedom's Front Door."

While serving in Alaska, he has accrued a tremendous amount of hands-on experience as a contract physician examining bush pilots for the Federal Aviation Administration, treating prison inmates, providing care for Alaskan natives and running a private practice for rugged individualists. Standing about 6 feet tall, his speech is often peppered with laughter, self-deprecating humor and wise experience from frontier medicine.

Like a scene from the television series *Northern Exposure*, Green experienced culture shock when he arrived in Alaska. He came to Anchorage shortly after Alaska became a state and just a year after the devastating 1964 Good Friday earthquake that claimed 131 lives. It was the most powerful earthquake ever in North America and the third most powerful ever measured by seismograph.

Earthquake damage notwithstanding, Alaska was still a foreboding frontier back then. Many towns lacked basic services such as telephones, running water and indoor plumbing, making Alaska a very rugged place for a newly minted doctor serving in the Public Health Service.

Fortunately, Green was not a complete stranger to life in the far north because he worked as a medic and "played in the North Woods" for two summers when he

was attending medical school in Canada. He recalls that he had "literally delivered 100 [babies] before [he] had completed formal obstetrics" training.

His years in Canada prepared him remarkably well for Alaska. Green said he chose to come to Alaska, because he "thought the only thing that could be more fun than this [Canada] would be our own Alaska," and with the great fishing and untamed wilderness he knew he could experience fulfilling hobbies, as well!

## Medical training

Green trained to become a doctor by attending college in Pennsylvania, graduate school at St. Lawrence University in New York, and medical school at the University of Manitoba School of Medicine in Winnipeg, Canada. He was accepted into one of just two positions reserved for Americans at the prominent university — a great honor for which he remains grateful to Dr. Lennox "Buzz" Bell, dean of the school of medicine.

Green describes his first meeting with Bell fondly. He applied to several medical programs throughout the United States and Canada, hitting "all the major schools with applications." To his dismay, when he started getting letters back from the schools, he found out he had not been accepted. Undaunted, he called the University of Manitoba and told the medical school admissions office, "Don't make a decision until you have had a chance to meet with me. I am coming up to see you."

Driving 1,345 miles from Canton, N.Y., to Winnipeg, in a car he doubted could make it one way, let alone a round trip journey, Green arrived at the school of medicine, where he "found the only dean

of medicine who would meet with Tom Green."

Bell was overwhelmed that Green had driven all the way from New York to speak with him, and he invited him to dinner at his house, a meal that "turned into a two-and-one-half-hour interview." At the end of the evening, Bell told the prospective medical student that there was complete reciprocity between medical schools in the United States and Canada, and sometimes the University of Manitoba accepted American students.

With the words, "Here you are, we are going to give you a shot, you are in," Green was accepted into medical school. He remembers that Bell "gave me a chance, and I was never going to let him down," which is the legacy he continues today at the Anchorage MEPS.

## Early years in Alaska

After completing medical school and his internship, Green moved to Alaska to serve as a junior officer with the Public Health Service and to complete a two-year obligation he had accrued when he was drafted and deferred his service to attend medical school. He worked in general medicine at the Anchorage Medical Center of the Alaska Native Services, and eventually, in remote native communities.

After several months of practicing general medicine and "rotating through the wards," Green headed out to the bush. The hospital chief of surgery told him, "The only things that can grab you out there are appendixes. Scrub in on every appendix you can take."

The chief's advice was prophetic, because just two weeks after arriving on St. Paul Island, a tiny, remote Bering Sea community 300 miles off the Alaskan

mainland, a boy was brought into the clinic suffering from acute appendicitis. Faced with the boy's severe abdominal pain, the remote location and the treacherous Alaskan weather, which made medical evacuation impossible, Green conducted an emergency appendectomy under what he recalls were "kitchen table operating conditions." Months later, when Green was back in Anchorage the chief of surgery, who had heard about the emergency operation, excitedly asked Green to tell him about the experience.

Green recalls that he said, "Why do you want to hear about it? You did it." Were it not for the chief of surgery's foresight preparing Green, a general physician, to perform emergency appendectomies, a young Alaskan would have died, and Green would have lost all credibility with the local population.

Two years with the Public Health Service flew by, and after completing his service obligation, Green decided to stay in Alaska and to enter private practice. He quickly established a reputation for being able to work with people who previously lacked access to proper health care.

He recalls that in those days, there was a tremendous need for general physicians, and there was "always a doctor shortage." Demand for medical care in Alaska was so high that "as soon as you could figure out what a problem was and what a person wanted, you had to hurry up, sign [the paperwork], and [move] on to the next patient."

In addition to his private practice, Green also worked on a contract basis for the local prisons, where he provided medical care for inmates. Looking back upon his varied experience before the Anchorage MEPS, he said, "All that experience applied here." He modestly reflects back on his early years in Alaska as being "glad I could talk with people as well as anybody about problems."

## Joining AFEES

In June 1973, nearly a decade after his arrival in Alaska, the draft ended. As Green recalls, when the United States transitioned to an all-volunteer force, "the mood of the nation ... was happy." About a month after conscription ended, Green was approached by an Alaska Army National Guard recruiter who thought he



**1985:** Dr. Thomas Green, who has worked at Anchorage MEPS since 1974, has witnessed a lot of Alaska's history.

would be a great asset at the Armed Forces Examining and Entrance Station.

Green remembers the recruiter told him there was a need for "a new attitude and a fresh look" at the AFEES and he felt Green could help to establish it. His years working with convicts had certainly taught him how to make "rapid determinations," since the work he performed in area prisons was "all on [his] feet." Intrigued, Green visited the AFEES and decided it would be a great fit for someone who could "work fast and get it right." Since

MEPS substation. For the first 15 years he worked at what is now the Anchorage MEPS, Green recalls that he "functioned like a chief medical officer without the status."

Although he was not officially a CMO, he was the only physician at the Anchorage Substation, so aside from the job title, his responsibilities were identical to those of other CMOs. He fondly recalls that USMEPCOM ensured he was part of on-going training initiatives, including attending the command's chief medical

**"Green remembers the recruiter told him there was a need for 'a new attitude and a fresh look' at the AFEES ..."**

then, he has become an Alaskan legacy for the MEPS.

While Green now bears the title chief medical officer, that was not always the case, because Anchorage operated under the command and control of the Seattle AFEES. When AFEES became MEPS, Anchorage was later known as the Seattle

officer conferences and participating in training with the Seattle MEPS.

The training helped Green refine the medical examination process when the local military community failed to support the MEPS properly. Before occupying its current, stand-alone facility, the Anchorage MEPS operated out of several



**Fall 1988:** Dr. Thomas Green confers with an Alaskan applicant in his brand new office, shortly after the grand opening of the Anchorage MEPS stand-alone facility.

scattered locations, and applicants had to be medically examined at the local Air Force base's general medicine department. The installation gave applicants low scheduling priority, so there was significant loss of productivity.

This poor performance resulted from a 1980's effort to increase operational efficiency. For six months, the Anchorage Substation experimented with outsourcing all medical examinations to the Air Force base's family practice clinic, and Green returned to private practice full time.

## Joining MEPS

This effort negated the red carpet treatment the command sought as well as any cost savings. Green recalls that the underlying problem was that Air Force physicians "had no interest in the applicants." Before long, Green was asked to return to work at the MEPS.

Eventually, USMEPCOM explored transforming Anchorage Substation into a MEPS in its own right, and finally, in 1988, Anchorage MEPS shed Substation status to become its own MEPS.

As Green relates, "coincident with the opening of the new facility, they made me a CMO." The relocation of the MEPS was an exciting time that Green compares to "putting on a new suit." All the inconveniences of operating out of facilities scattered across town ended when the MEPS consolidated operations at its present location in mid-town Anchorage.

Much has changed in the years Green has worked for USMEPCOM. In the medical arena, he notes that his job has become far more "exacting" and there are added administrative burdens. When

he first served at the Anchorage AFEES, there was no pre-screening program. When this aspect of applicant processing was implemented, Green recalls that everything got "dressed up," with increased use of X-rays, medical specialist referrals and all the associated paperwork.

What was once a quick process became "quite involved," and that meant



A current photo of Dr. Thomas Green, who has worked at Anchorage MEPS since 1974. Green brings care and concern to bear on a daily basis at "Freedom's Front Door."

evaluating applicants for entry into military service required far more time and diligence. In turn, medicine has evolved a great deal.

Green explained that doctors now perform "all sorts of new imaging that never even existed in earlier years," and not only do applicants bring in more medical records, but many of their cases are also more complex. In sum, Green notes that the need for continuing medical education cannot be over-emphasized for today's CMOs.

Green's sage advice to private practice physicians interested in becoming CMOs is abundant and free, stemming from Dean Bell's mentorship. Aside for the need to "say goodbye to basic clinical medicine and patients, [because the people whom doctors see as CMOs] are now applicants." Green noted that becoming a CMO is a wonderful opportunity to "say goodbye to enormous liabilities, and attorneys and their lawsuits."

Rather than satisfaction through treating patients, CMOs need to "find satisfaction in helping young people find their way and gain educational opportunities."

Recalling the advice of his medical school mentor, the late Dr. Lennox "Buzz" Bell, Green relates that even as a CMO, the basic tenets of service as a physician apply, because "Every once in a while, and (possibly) every day, you have somebody who needs you, and you give it."

Green also reflects fondly on the close-knit nature of the MEPS back in the days when late night poker games and summer evening talent shows were common, since first run movies and coffee houses were unheard of on the frontier.

Evidence of this Alaskan "Pay It Forward" approach is clear to Green, because he has seen his Alaskan handiwork return to him repeatedly throughout the years. As the Anchorage MEPS CMO, he has processed through the AFEES some of the children he delivered as babies and, subsequently, some of their children through the MEPS for enlistment.

And whatever happened to the emergency appendectomy patient on St. Paul Island? The young man processed through the MEPS, and of course, Green got to examine the fully healed scar from the life-saving surgery he had performed on the young child. Green reminisces about that fateful night, when "the winds were up, the waves were crazy, and I got my hand caught." Fortunately for that young boy, Dr. Tom Green was on call.

# Experienced Seattle staff has many *Memories*

by Karen T. Venter

The Seattle Military Entrance Processing Station is like many other MEPS across the nation in that the staff is comprised of a team of dedicated civilian and military personnel.

Unlike some MEPS, the Seattle MEPS is able to draw on memories and experience ranging from before the Vietnam era all the way to the present. The MEPS has the advantage of being able to see itself from both the applicant's point of view and that of the staff. The times and technology have changed drastically since the days of the draft. The Seattle MEPS has evolved with the change and embraced the technology which gives it the ability to provide a more positive experience for applicants.

A few staff members processed for the military at the Seattle MEPS and returned to work there after they completed their enlistments. One staff member processed more than 40 years ago, and another walked through "Freedom's Front Door" only six years ago. Memories range from the dreaded physical to the mass of papers that had to be done manually before the computer age.

William James, the lead human resources assistant, processed through the Seattle MEPS during the Vietnam era. His memories of the MEPS are very different from the current stress on red carpet treatment. His first memory was an E-6 at the front desk

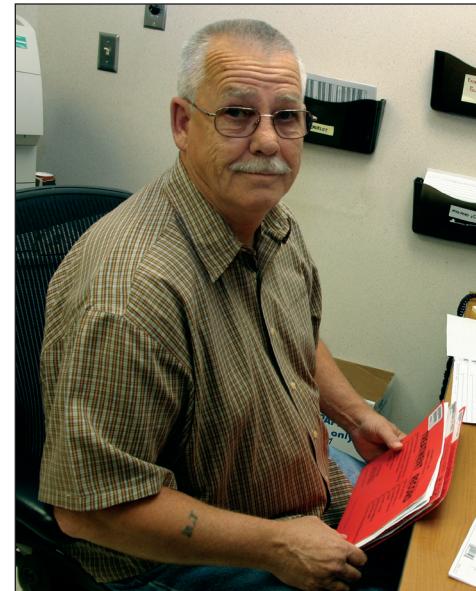
who only pointed in the general direction in which he was to go for processing.

According to James, the medical exam consisted of a large group of people in a room in skivvies who went through the exam together. He also recalls that due to the slow turnaround time of orders and the lack of ability to communicate quickly, he was sent to Texas for training a month early. He was ready for training, but training was not ready for him.

Dr. Goncharoff, fondly referred to as "Dr. G," was the chief medical officer about 10 years ago and is now a fee basis physician. He has been with the MEPS more than 25 years. He remembers processing 100 full physicals a day and that rules for entry into the military (even during the draft) were once very black and white. An applicant was either qualified or he was not.

Now there are waivers and various tests that applicants can take to get into the military. One of the main items that Goncharoff has seen change is body fat standards. The "new" standard that could pass an applicant if he did not meet height and weight standards introduced the formula of measurement to calculate body fat using measurements of the neck, waist and hips. Eye exams have also evolved. They are much more in-depth since the addition of the refract meter.

DeAmbra Donecker is the testing coordinator and has worked in just about every section of the MEPS over the past 25 years. She remembers the two times Seattle MEPS was firebombed. One was right after the addition of the new Sperry UNIVAC System 80. Applicants' paperwork — contracts, emergency contact forms, etc. — were prepared on typewriters by military personnel clerks (today's human resources assistants) and then the data was entered into the System 80 by data transcribers. All the military orders for shippers were also typed on typewriters by military personnel. All security interviews and fingerprinting were done by Marines. The Optical Mark Reader in testing was bigger than one of the current Lexmark



William James

printers and the answer sheets had to be feed into it one at a time. Donecker recalls that all ASVAB tests were taken with a paper and pencil. The MEPS didn't process same-day processors but did conduct ASVAB testing on Sunday nights.

Other memories from the staff include that Alaska was once a Seattle substation. There was a time when there was no hotel for the applicants to stay after processing. It is a distant memory in which recruiters were responsible for their applicants throughout the entire process until they shipped. It is also noted that before 1990, the budget section had no computers and everything was done manually with a calculator.

Computers have drastically changed operations and helped focus on providing the service we now offer to applicants. The staff has not only seen the environment in the MEPS change, but experienced it. Accessions of applicants have changed from something like herding cattle with manual inputs to a personalized process using computer-based systems. The MEPS can now ensure quality accessions into the military and do it with a personalized touch.



DeAmbra Donecker

# Length of service makes him Tampa's walking History

by Myra M. Ellis  
Tampa MEPS Test Coordinator

**J**ames "Jim" Davisson, currently the test control officer, has been with the Tampa MEPS since December 1988.

"I previously served in the Air Force for 25 years and some change," he said. "I 'officially' retired on June 1, 1986. I worked for Florida Power Corporation for a couple of years during which I interviewed for the test coordinator's position three times: once in the original building

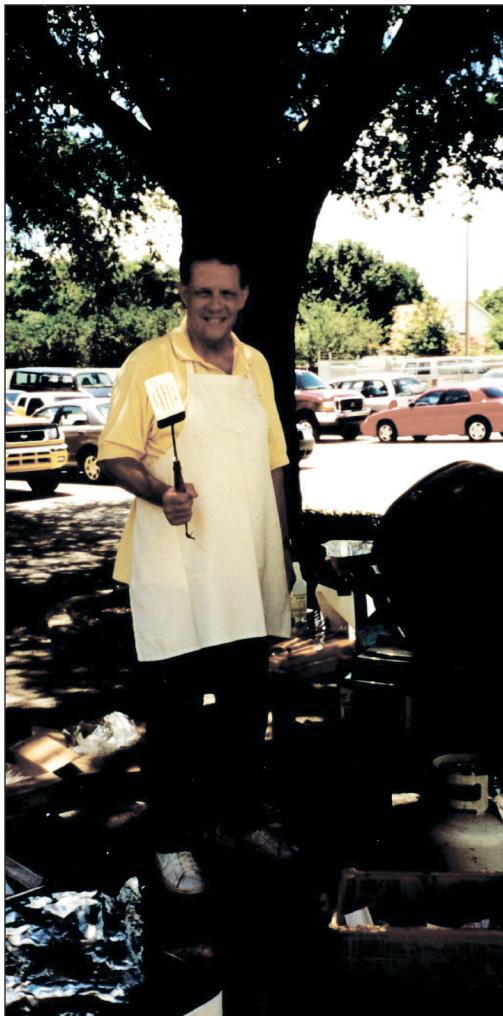
on North MacDill Avenue (that collapsed about three months later); a second time when the MEPS had moved to the Fort Homer Hesterly Armory on Howard Avenue when the processors were working on the upper deck and you had to step across the rafters to get where you were going; and the third (and final) time in the federal building in downtown St. Petersburg.

"Third time was the charm (I guess) and I was hired as a temporary testing clerk in December 1988," Davisson said. "In February 1990, I was merit promoted to the test coordinator's position. In August 1991, the MEPS moved to its current address in Tampa."

Jim is full of character, wisdom and brings a vast amount of energy and well-deserved respect not only to the testing section with his leadership skills, but to the entire Tampa MEPS. He is outgoing, caring and devoted to his position and family. Whenever there is a doubt, no matter what the question may be, be certain that our walking historian can not only give you directions on a great golf swing, but can just about tell you any location here in Florida and how to get there. Who needs GPS when you have Jim around? He can tell you not only where the old is, but can direct you painlessly to the new!

Lt. Cmdr Nicole DeRamus is the eighth commander for whom Davisson has worked. With those eight changes of command, he has seen a lot of transitions and changes through the years. He has seen many bumps and bruises from the switching of gears. He looks forward to seeing the Virtual Interactive Processing System and "how that will all work."

Davisson's most recent demonstration of his leadership skills



Jim Davisson mans the grill at a Tampa MEPS organization day.



Jim Davisson during his Air Force Days.

was when he took a pie in the face from Dan Gorneault, the information technology specialist. Gorneault paid \$1.90 to nail Davisson with the pie at the MEPS organization day. He also taught some how to properly steer clear of sea sickness on the testing team deep sea fishing outing. He told everyone how to prepare and then stood back and watched as the wise heeded his lessons. The team managed to catch a few fish without any casualties to sea sickness. Even his grandson, Nick, managed to muster up the strength to hang in there with his grandpa.

Davisson proves time and again that new ideas are just challenges for him to meet. When the Orlando testing site transitioned into an electronic remote site, he got right into the swing of things for improvement. He relates to all of his peers and subordinates as if they are his family. His spirit lives and thrives in the Tampa MEPS and his history here only makes the team richer. The Tampa MEPS team looks forward to serving with Mr. Jim Davisson, for as many years as he will continue to grace us with his rewards of service.

# Boston makes its home in historic *Building*

by 1st Sgt. Michael D. Trevino  
Boston MEPS Senior Enlisted Advisor

**I**t was 1910 and William H. Taft was president. The Boy Scouts were established, Halley's Comet was photographed for the first time, Yellow Cab was founded and the Fargo/Barnes Building was built, where the Boston MEPS resides.

The building was originally a wool warehouse. The Navy Department bought it in 1941. Officially it was called the Navy Building, but everyone called it the Fargo Building because Fargo Street was directly behind it. Say "Fargo Building," and most Bostonians relate it with the Navy.

Sailors for more than three wars passed through Fargo's doors. Thousands of sailors and Marines waited here for new assignments or repairs to be made to their vessels. Fargo had nine floors of billeting and also served many other purposes. It had a recreation hall, dance hall, roller skating rink, church services, boxing bouts and movies for sailors far from home.

The Fargo Building was renamed the Barnes Building in 1981, in honor of the Boston-born Pfc. John Andrew Barnes III, a Medal of Honor recipient killed in Vietnam in November 1967.

The Boston Armed Forces Examining and Entrance Station was activated July 1, 1965. The AFEES was redesignated as a MEPS Jan. 1, 1982, and moved to its present location on the fourth floor of the Barnes Building Feb. 8, 1982.

As I stand in my office and look out the window or even stand in front of the Barnes Building, I look at the water in front of me and think how much history has passed through this area. What history was seen through these windows and surrounds this building? Within a 10-mile radius you can see just few of those great historic places.

Gen. George Washington first gathered his troops at Cambridge Common, near Harvard University, during the American Revolution. The tree under which they gathered, called the Washington Elm, still stands, and is marked by a commemorative plaque and a pair of bronze cannons.

The Bunker Hill Monument stands tall on the site of the first major battle of the American Revolution, fought on Breed's Hill, June 17, 1775. With the legendary order attributed to Colonel William Prescott, "Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes" to make sure that each shot would count, Bunker Hill is where the poorly trained and ill-prepared colonial forces repelled two major assaults by the British army before retreating. Almost half of the British soldiers were killed or injured. Although the colonists lost the battle, their bravery and strong showing against the British encouraged them to fight on.

The Old North Church, "Christ Church in the City of Boston," was an Episcopal church, built in 1723 and is Boston's oldest church. On the steeple of this church, Robert Newman signaled with lanterns the approach of the British regulars: "One if by land, and two, if by sea." The steeple is 191 feet tall, making it the tallest steeple in Boston. It is also the first set of bells ever brought to America. Paul Revere was one of the neighborhood bell ringers.

At the Old State House, a circle of cobblestones commemorates the Boston Massacre. At this site, tensions between the colonists and British soldiers erupted into violence March 5, 1770. The soldiers fired into the crowd and killed five colonists. Samuel Adams and other patriots called the event a "massacre."

And as you start to return to the Boston MEPS you pass by the Old South Meeting House, built in 1729 as a Puritan house of worship. The meeting house is best known as the site where the Boston Tea Party began.

In the winter of 1773, more than 5,000 colonists gathered at the meeting house to protest the tax on tea. After many hours of debate, Samuel Adams announced, "This meeting can do nothing more to save the country!"

Protestors stormed out of the meeting house to the waterfront where they dumped three shiploads of tea into the harbor. They changed American history.

The USS Constitution is the oldest commissioned warship afloat in the world. It was launched in 1797. The USS Constitution is one of six ships ordered for construction by George Washington to protect America's growing maritime interests. Her greatest glory came during the War of 1812 when she defeated four British frigates and earned her nickname "Old Ironsides," because cannon balls glanced off her thick hull.

The first public school in America was established by Puritan settlers in 1635 in the home of Schoolmaster Philemon Pormont and was later moved to School Street. A portrait statue of Benjamin Franklin overlooks the site of the oldest public school in America which Franklin, Samuel Adams, and John Hancock once attended.

A 30-minute drive from the Boston MEPS will take you to the Minute Man National Historical Park. The North Bridge, often called the Old North Bridge, crosses the Concord River in Concord, Mass., and is a historical site in the Battle of Lexington and Concord, the first battle day in the Revolutionary War.

Walking up to the old bridge you can imagine the events that took place around it. It was commemorated by the poet Ralph Waldo Emerson's well-known Concord Hymn written in 1837. The first stanza says, "By the rude bridge that arched the flood, Their flag to April's breeze unfurled, Here once the embattled farmers stood And fired the shot heard round the world."

Each day people pass through the front doors of the Barnes Building, heading to Freedom's Front Door at the Boston MEPS, to process and ship. Do these men and women realize that they live in a place where our nation's history began and that they are a part of the history that is being made at this very moment? I smile and wave to them each day they depart, hoping that I passed along some sort of words of wisdom and whisper to myself, "Let the bells of freedom continue to ring with each passing day that people join the military to take up the charge, Let Freedom Ring."

# Commanders, senior enlisted attend NTC

by Skip Wiseman  
Messenger Associate Editor

**M**EPS commanders and senior enlisted advisors along with senior headquarters and sector staff assembled in St. Charles, Ill., Nov. 17-21 for the 2008 USMEPCOM National Training Conference.

The headquarters' joint service color guard posted the colors during the opening ceremonies, which were followed by welcoming remarks and a state of the command address by Col. Mariano C. Campos Jr., USMEPCOM commander.

Recruiting service commanders gave attendees and overview of the status of their commands and recruiting service senior enlisted advisors conducted a panel discussion.

The annual NTC banquet featured guest speaker Michael Dominguez, principal deputy under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness.

Dominguez presented the command's second Joint Meritorious Unit Award, which covered the period January 2005 to December 2007. The command's first Joint Meritorious Unit Award covered the period July 1982 to April 1985.

The command's outstanding military members and civilians of the year were also recognized at the banquet.

The second day's events included breakout sessions with the civilian person-



Col. Mariano C. Campos Jr., USMEPCOM commander, leads Lt. Gen. Benjamin C. Freakley, commanding general of the U.S. Army Accessions Command, into the amphitheater at the National Training Conference. Freakley was the featured speaker on the final day of the conference.

nel division, staff judge advocate's office and equal employment opportunity/equal opportunity office. The sessions were followed by a panel discussion that expanded on the topics covered in the breakout sessions.

A change of responsibility ceremony for both sector senior enlisted advisors wrapped up the day.

The morning of the final full day of the conference featured presentations by guest speakers from the National Employment Counseling Association, Merit System Protection Board, U.S. Equal Opportunity and the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity.

In the afternoon, attendees took part in a group learning activity called Quest. Its activities are designed to teach groups the basics of communication, cooperation and trust in a team format.

Participants broke into teams to perform a series of tasks, each of which had a point value. Points were tallied at the end to determine the "winners."

The conference wrapped up the morning of Nov. 21 with a briefing on the status of the Virtual Interactive Processing System and closing remarks from Lt. Gen. Benjamin C. Freakley, commanding general of U.S. Army Accessions Command.



Commanders and senior enlisted advisors at the National Training Conference. Photos from NTC are available on the MEPNET.



Recruiting service senior enlisted advisors answer questions during a panel discussion.



Brig. Gen. Robert E. Milstead Jr., commanding general of the Marine Corps Recruiting Command, makes a point during his presentation. Milstead has been selected for promotion to major general.



Lt. Cmdr. Rich Pokropski, Miami MEPS commander, draws a bead on a ball launched from a catapult.

## Command earns 2nd Joint Meritorious Unit Award

**O**n behalf of the secretary of defense, the principal deputy under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness, Michael Dominguez

presented the Joint Meritorious Unit Award to the USMEPCOM commander, Col. Mariano C. Campos Jr., Nov. 18 at the National Training Conference.



Col. Mariano C. Campos Jr., USMEPCOM commander, displays the Joint Meritorious Unit Award as Michael Dominguez, principal deputy under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness, applauds.

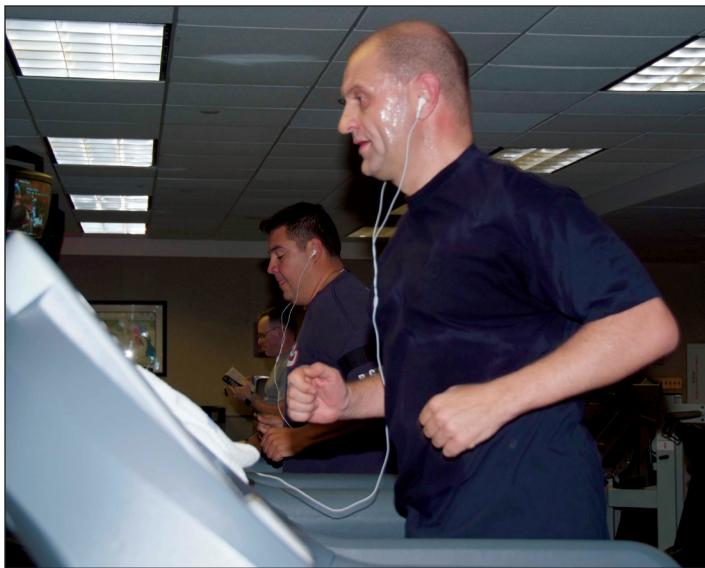
This is the second time USMEPCOM has received this award. The command first received the Joint Meritorious Unit Award in 1985.

USMEPCOM headquarters, sector and MEPS personnel who worked in the command during any part of the award period January 2005 to December 2007 are eligible for the award.

At a Dec. 8 ceremony at headquarters, Campos attached the award streamer to the command flag. Also at this ceremony, headquarters and sector military members received award ribbons and civilians received award pins.

Headquarters logistics branch personnel have ordered streamers, military ribbons and civilian pins for all 65 MEPS and their personnel. When they receive all the items, they will make one shipment of streamers, ribbons and pins to MEPS.

Military members who were assigned to USMEPCOM during the award period can update their records to reflect the award and are then eligible to wear the ribbon.



Physical training must go on ... even during the NTC.



Maj. Michael Thomas, Columbus MEPS commander, talks with Col. (Dr.) Raymond Watters, command surgeon.



The judge advocate general staff makes a presentation during a breakout session.



Chief Master Sgt. Vance Clarke, command chief master sergeant of the Air Force Recruiting Service, Brig. Gen. Joseph Anderson, deputy commanding general of U.S. Army Recruiting Command and Brig. Gen. P.J. Stewart, AFRS commander, chat during a break.



Capt. Sandra Haidvogel, USMEPCOM director of operations, and her team assemble pipes as part of the Quest exercise.



Dan Trew, USMEPCOM public affairs officer, completes a Quest task by determining the titles of the books being read by statues in the Q Center courtyard.

## Teenager STEPs up to excel for summer

story by Maj. Jennifer Hicks-McGowan  
Photos by Master Sgt. Bryan Plummer

The Jackson MEPS understands that young people are one of this nation's most valuable resources. In its efforts to support young people, the Jackson MEPS took part in the Student Temporary Employment Program.

Through this program, Matthew Gray, a senior at Terry, Miss., High School was selected from several applicants to work as a human resources assistant and control desk clerk. The high school student maintains a very good academic standing.

Gray manned the control desk from June 9 through Sept. 9.

"Mr. Gray learned extremely fast and could be counted on at all times," Aretha Lawson, operations supervisor, said.

Instead of hanging out at the mall and texting friends on his cell phone, Gray performed admirably as a human resources assistant. His contributions to the Jackson MEPS drew rave reviews and recognition from the USMEPCOM staff.

Master Sgt. Bryan Plummer, MEPS senior enlisted advisor, said Gray was hired with the expectation he would help out the current HRAs and do some of the time-consuming projects like shredding, copying, answering telephones, etc.

Instead, he quickly grasped the policies and procedures governing enlistment and performed his duties as the control desk clerk with very little supervision and without the help of a trained HRA clerk, which freed up

a clerk to do other duties.

He also works at a local restaurant, where he does just about everything they need including being a cashier and waiter.

Although he is only 17 years old and still in high school, Gray took a lot of initiative and learned the duties of the control desk, including using MIRS. During his time at the MEPS, he showed professional integrity and dedication.

He tracked and accounted for more than 1,400 applicants. His astuteness and attention to detail enabled him to easily perform routine duties and conduct end-of-day reconciliation. Gray not only tracked the applicants during the day, he tracked visitors, recruiters and family members in the MEPS by patrolling the waiting areas.

He handled about 95 percent of the questions and provided information that recruiters needed to process an applicant including looking up information on MIRS and printing out forms with minimal supervision. Before an applicant left for

the day, Gray did a quality check of his or her record to ensure all signatures and information were correct.

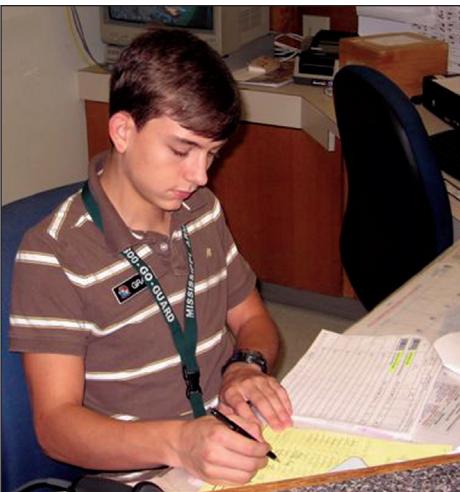
Gray kept the processing list updated throughout the day, filled out the projection sheet for the next day and ensured Command Management Services received it at the applicants' hotel. He also collected contracts, staged the applicants in the ceremony room and briefed them on all the required information before they took the oath of enlistment.

Gray is interested in a military career, participates in the Junior ROTC program at his high school and aspires to attend the United States Military Academy.

The Jackson MEPS staff appreciates Gray's service and commitment.



Matthew Gray explains procedures to an applicant.



Matthew Gray completes paperwork at the control desk.



Matthew Gray demonstrates the position of parade rest to applicants who are about to take the oath of enlistment.

# Training

## at the

# Mall

### Fort Dix staff tests itself at Army Experience Center

story and photos by  
Rebecca O'Donnell  
Fort Dix MEPS

The Fort Dix MEPS staff loaded up in vans early one Friday morning to head out for a training day most will never forget. An hour later, they arrived at the Franklin Mills Mall in Philadelphia to check out the newly-opened Army Experience Center as part of their quarterly training.

As the younger generation is more technologically savvy, the more-than-14,000-square-foot, high-tech center is part

of a strategy to encourage enlistment.

The center includes a Black Hawk helicopter, Humvee and Apache helicopter simulators, as well as video installations, gaming stations and a replica of a command center.

"I was the pilot of the Apache helicopter," Dave Reiman, MEPS administrative service technician, said. "The simulator allowed me to use my feet to move the 'copter left or right, a joystick control to pull the nose of the aircraft up or down and another control to

choose the speed and thrusting action of the craft. I actually got sweaty and clammy because the experience was so real."

He also explained that he had to maneuver through a horizon-style course of mountains, valleys, tunnels and buildings.



Griscelis Nieves, lead human resources assistant, prepares to exit an Apache helicopter simulator.

Each staff member was guided through the experience by soldiers who, unlike recruiters seen in the MEPS, were dressed in khaki pants and polo shirts to make the Army experience more passive. This is just another example of the marketing strategy the center has to offer.

Some of the touch screens explained

more than 100 jobs offered by the Army.

"I was glad to see the touch screens showing the mass amount of positions available in the Army and not just the aggressive gun positions in the video games this generation is attracted to," Petty Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Class Demetris Bryant said.

Once everyone had the opportunity to experience the technology, they were able to use the conference room to complete required annual training topics before heading back to the post in New Jersey.



Maj. Jerry Brooks, Fort Dix MEPS commander, takes Dr. Lucy Gorelli, chief medical officer for a "ride" in an Apache helicopter simulator.



From left: Tech. Sgt. Daniel Roken, medical specialist; Joy Gladness, human resources assistant; Cathy Shell, health technician; Carol McPhilips, secretary; and, Adele Oliver and Lisa Minney, human resources assistants; man a Humvee.

## Fort Dix family receives national recognition

A Fort Dix MEPS family is one of two runner-up families for the Association of the United States Army Newell Rubbermaid Volunteer Family of the Year Award.

According to AUSA, the award "recognizes an exceptional Army Family whose dedicated volunteer service significantly contributes to improving Army well-being and the well-being of the local community."

Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Wendell Kirkland, his wife Teresa, and their children Chanika, Wendell Jr., Nathaniel and Marcos, received a certificate of distinction, a savings bond and a gift basket recognizing their community service.

Sergeant 1<sup>st</sup> Class Kirkland is the medical NCOIC at the Fort Dix MEPS and volunteers as manager of the MEPS volunteer program. He reorganized the program to better manage and recognize MEPS volunteers.

He also attends the post's Volunteer Advisory Council and volunteers at the Fort Dix Elementary School and Family Association Program.

Teresa Kirkland was the 2008 Fort Dix Installation Volunteer of the Year. She volunteers in the school's classrooms, tutoring students in a variety of subjects and helping teachers with activities. Also, she is a librarian assistant and helped with the grand opening of the school's new library.

Teresa is vice president of the parent teacher organization at Pemberton Newcomb School and managed a book fair that raised more than \$6,800 for school activities.

Teresa volunteers more than 500 hours a year at the MEPS, where she manages administration and procedures in operations, coordinated a welcome packet for incoming personnel with the first sergeant, and accounted for and assigned more than 200 keys to MEPS employees.



Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Wendell Kirkland, his wife Teresa, and their children, Chanika, Wendell Jr., Nathaniel and Marcos. The family is runner up for the Association of the United States Army Rubbermaid Volunteer Family of the Year Award.

Teresa was selected to attend the USMEPCOM Wellness Symposium, similar to the Army's Family Advocacy Program Conference, where she helped assign priorities to top conference issues.

The Kirkland children often volunteer along with their parents. They helped at book fairs, the Newcomb School food booth and other activities.

## Oops — two visits, two generals, one photo



The Vol. 30, No. 3 issue of the *Messenger* included this photo with incorrect information. The correct information is: The commanding general of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, Gen. William S. Wallace visited Minneapolis MEPS on April 17. Here, Wallace talks with David White, Minneapolis MEPS lead health technician, during a tour of the MEPS. The Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. George Casey visited Minneapolis MEPS on May 23.

## Buffalo TCO retires after 21 years

Bette Chapman, Buffalo MEPS test control officer, retired Sept. 30, after 21 years of service there.

Chapman started her USMEPCOM career Sept. 15, 1987, as a military personnel clerk. She became a test coordinator in 1991 and was promoted to test control officer in 2006.

During Chapman's tenure as the TCO, the testing section earned consecutive "excellent" ratings in Inspector General evaluations.

She received the Commander's Award for Civilian Service upon her retirement.

In addition to her regular duties, she was the first and only readiness support group coordinator at Buffalo MEPS and planned events like children's holiday parties and activities at



Bette Chapman

organization day, team building exercises for training day, fund-raising events, and volunteering for community support activities. Chapman dressed as the Statue of Liberty, asking questions and awarding prizes for correct answers on Constitution Day, and dressed in costumes every Halloween to pass out candy to applicants and employees.

# Headquarters seven agree freedom run is about remembering, honoring service members

by Christine Parker  
Messenger Editor

**S**even headquarters personnel agree they ran in the first 9.11 Freedom Run to remember and honor service members and victims of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

The 9.11-mile run was part of the 5th annual Family Freedom Festival in Barrington, Ill., a Chicago suburb near USMEPCOM headquarters. The festival celebrates "our freedom, our way of life, and the goodness of America while supporting and thanking our men and women in uniform, veterans and military families." This year's event was held on the Saturday preceding Sept. 11.

Run participants included civilians from the community who ran alongside active duty, Guard, Reserve, veterans and their family members. The run had both civilian and military age categories, but all seven from headquarters — four military and three civilians — competed in military categories.

Community groups supported each of the nine miles with a military value — honor, duty, respect, selfless service, integrity, personal courage, loyalty, commitment and excellence.

"We cannot forget the terrible tragedy of 9/11," Roy Perez said. He added that he enjoyed the atmosphere and the military runners.

Perez took 1st place in the 55-59 age category with a time of 1:19:45. Perez, who works in the Training Development Division of Human Resources, runs four to five times a week, for a total of 20-25 miles.

Also from Human Resources, Master Sgt. Michael Skovranko placed first in his age category, 40-44. His time was 1:17:33. Skovranko said he considers himself an avid runner. He said he can run five to six miles a day for five or six months, and then not run for a couple of months. For this run, he trained by running eight miles, once, about a week before the event.

"I participated to show support to the other MEPCOM members who volunteered to run. It was also a reminder of 9/11," Skovranko said.

Ted Novaczyk placed first in the 45-49 age category, with a time of 1:22:23.

Novaczyk, who works in the medical directorate, retired from the Navy.

"The best part of the run was reflecting on 9/11," Novaczyk said. He trained by running an average of seven miles, five times a week.

"I started running in January, training for a marathon," Novaczyk said. Between January and September, he had lost 60 pounds (see adjacent article).

Sgt. 1st Class Rafael Sierra placed first in the 30-34 age category of the Barrington race with a time of 1:17:33. Sierra, who works in the Inspector General, said he's always enjoyed running and does so regularly, about five miles every other day.

"It was for a very good cause," he said. "I also wanted to support USMEPCOM and represent the Army."

Scott Schmidt, who works in the IG, placed third in the 45-49 age category, with a time of 1:40:41. Schmidt said he participated "to support the troops."

Schmidt runs four to five days a week. He said the town of Barrington "really came out and supported the event. The best part of the run was watching all the soldiers run in formation."

The last two runners were Master Sgt. Myron Harvey, who works as a National Guard advisor for the command, and Master Sgt. Tony Romero, who works in Human Resources. Romero finished second in the 45-49 category, with a time of 1:24:55.

"I ran as a commemoration to soldiers and service members who are serving," Harvey said. Although he has been plagued by injuries (his last surgery was in April), and hadn't run in eight months, he trained for this run to get back in shape.

"Last year, between surgeries, I ran the Baton Death March, the Army 10-Miler and the Air Force Marathon," Harvey said. He also ran in a Marine Corps Marathon.

Harvey finished in 5th place for the 40-44 age category, with a time of 1:54:42.

"Whether I'm in shape or not — I'll walk or run to finish it," he said. "I enjoy it even when I can't run it fast."

Although he's been dealing with surgeries and recovery, "I still had the 'soldier' in me to complete it," Harvey said.

And what was the extra motivation to finish this race? "The soldiers standing there," he said.

## New runner takes on marathon

**O**n a chilly Sunday morning, Ted Novaczyk ran in the Rock 'n' Roll San Antonio Marathon Nov. 16.

"The temperature at the start of the race was 35 degrees," he said. "I couldn't wait for the sun to come up!"

Novaczyk was pleased with his progress in the first half, but had some challenges by mile 18. "I was having severe leg and foot cramps and was determined to finish the race. I trained for this marathon all year long and was determined to complete it if it was the last thing I did," he said.

"It was hard seeing runners giving up and sitting on the side of the road, waiting for a ride," he said.

Thirty thousand people from 18 countries, 50 states and the District of Columbia registered for the marathon. Of those, 24,761 started the race and 7,612 finished. Novaczyk was one of those finishers with a time of 6:16:17.

"I knew I had friends at the finish line waiting for me and I just kept reminding myself that they are there for me."

"The feeling of accomplishment was one of overwhelming emotions of joy, pride, happiness and a sense of accomplishment."

"I was truly blessed that day," he said.

His plans for next year include: the Phoenix Rock 'n' Roll Marathon in January, OneAmerica 500 Festival Mini-Marathon in Indianapolis and the San Diego Rock 'n' Roll, both in May, and the Marine Corps Marathon in October.

"Twenty six point two miles is a long run and one thinks and clears the mind of many things," Novaczyk said. "Why would one want to do it again?" he asked. "Peace of mind."



**San Juan MEPS**  
Maj. Elliott Gomez

**Hometown:** Levittown, Puerto Rico. "It's a small city about five minutes from the beach. It's a normal working class neighborhood." (And yes it was developed by the same Levitts who built the others.)

**Fond childhood memories:**

"There was theater that showed three movies for \$2 on Sundays. My parents would do anything to get me out of the house so they could do what they had to do. The theater was in the middle of town so all the kids would go there. It was three movies for \$2 and the popcorn was like 50 cents, so it was a great bargain."

**Education:** Bachelor of arts degree in criminal justice from the Inter American University of Puerto Rico; master of arts degrees in human resource development, and computer resources and information management, both from Webster University. He completed his doctorate in organization and management at Capella University in August.

**Why Army?** "I enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1984. When the Marines ask why I switched to Army, I tell them I improved my IQ. In truth I came back to Puerto Rico to do my undergraduate work. I thought about the Navy, but there was no ROTC program in Puerto Rico, only Army and Air Force. Being a former

jarhead, I couldn't do the Air Force thing, so I opted for the Army.

**Previous assignment:**

Operations officer and executive officer for the Louisville MEPS.

**How did you get back-to-back MEPS assignments?** "I begged Colonel (Barrye) Price, Eastern Sector commander. I enlisted in this MEPS in 1984, and I intend to retire from this MEPS. My parents haven't been able to attend any of my ceremonies and it will be great for my family to attend my retirement ceremony."

**Favorite assignment:** Fort Sam Houston, Texas. "I was the deputy post adjutant general. Not only was it a great position, but San Antonio is great. The job was good, duty location made it even better."

**What do you want to be when you grow up?** "I would really like to teach at the master's degree level. Anything that has to do with leadership or human resources."

**What do you do when you're not a commander?** "I am an avid computer gamer. I build my own computer gaming rigs. I am also a 'living room bass player.' I haven't played with a band in many years, but I keep up with music. Other than that, I'm a full-time dad and husband."

**What's the best way to inspire the troops?** "Be yourself. Leaders can be read like a book. Having been enlisted myself, I can say enlisted people are good at reading leaders. They can tell if you really care for them, or if you're just filling the block. Doing what's right at the right time. I always say that when a troop or solider, introduces you to a friend or relative as the commander, you're in trouble. When they say this is *my* commander, you're doing it right. Once they take ownership of you as their commander, you know you're doing it right."

**What do you like best about your job?** "Being able to afford an opportunity to young applicants desiring to come into the service. I was given the opportunity 24 years ago, and had I not had that opportunity, I would not be who I am today. And folks giving me opportunities throughout my career. To give these kids the opportunity to start a career that may last four years or 40 years. Being able to ignite that spark is what I enjoy most about being at the MEPS."

**What do you order when you eat out?** "Usually Mexican food. Burritos, love them."

**What's the best present you ever got?** "I usually tell folks not to give me stuff. I guess I'd have to say my iPod, from my wife. I'm a music man. With the iPod, I can put almost my entire CD collection into one source and carry it around wherever I go."

**What's guaranteed to make you turn off the TV?** "When people start debating religion on TV, especially if they're religious fanatics. I'll turn it off quickly if people are trying to be holier than thou."

**What would people be surprised to know about you?** I'm Batman. (Laughs) I am a quasi-aviator. I'm working on my final hours for my private pilot's license. I fly Cessna 172s."

**One thing always on his desk:** "My bottle of Gatorade."

**Three things on his desk right now:** "My cell phone, my remote control for my radio and a lot of paperwork."

**What's the last book you read?** "Business Research Methods" by Donald Cooper and Pamela Schindler."

**What's your ideal vacation?** "Somewhere in a tropical island, like Jamaica, the Bahamas, sitting on a beach sipping a margarita without the cell phone within reach."



**Boston MEPS**  
Cmdr. Kristin Strong

**Hometown:** Virginia Beach, Va. "I consider D.C. my home, but I grew up in Virginia Beach."

**On being a geographical bachelor:** "It's very challenging. My family and I have grown in many ways so it's turned out to be a very positive experience."

**Fond childhood memories:** "My father was in the Navy, so I have fond memories of being on the flight line waiting for him to come home or waiting on the pier for the carrier to come in."

**Growing up Navy:** "We had a very unusual circumstance because we stayed in Virginia Beach for most of my father's career except for one tour in Washington. He rotated sea to shore. We're a very patriotic family and those values were passed down to myself and my brothers and sister."

**What was your favorite toy when you were a kid?** "I used to have a ballerina doll that would do pirouettes. She had this little handle on the top of her head. You would pump it up and down and she would do turns."

**Education:** Bachelor of science degree in political science from James Madison University, master of science in human resources from Troy State University and master of science in national security strategy from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

**Why Navy?** “Family tradition. I did consider the Air Force, but my GPA wasn’t high enough.”

**Previous assignment:** “ICAF. Before that, I was on the chief of naval operations staff, manpower resource sponsor shop. That’s where all the money is funneled through for manpower.”

**Favorite assignment:** “I was stationed with a helicopter squadron, Mine Countermeasures Squadron 12. It was the training squadron for mine countermeasures. They taught the pilots how to pull the sleds that look for mines. There were a lot of lieutenants there, I was a lieutenant. I usually don’t have a lot of other people my rank around, in my community.”

**Future military plans:** “I would like to go back to D.C. and either work for the OPNAV staff or joint manpower staff.”

**What do you do when you’re not a commander?** “I make it home on most weekends. Just family time. That’s pretty much all I do. Work and spend time with my family. I do like to PT.”

**What’s the best way to inspire the troops?** “Lead by example. Get to know them so you can find out what inspires and motivates them.”

**What do you like best about your job?** “Doing the oath of enlistment ceremonies. It’s very inspiring to talk to young people. I always ask them, ‘why did you pick your service?’ and listen to them say they think the military can provide them with a better life. And the fact that they believe in their country.”

**What do you order when you eat out?** “Normally grilled chicken, but I think I’m turning into a vegetarian the older I get.”

**What’s the best present you ever got?** “The surprise birthday party my husband threw for me. I had all my family and friends there.”

**What’s your guilty pleasure?** “Anything that’s got sugar in it. Sweets. Chocolate.”

**What’s guaranteed to make you turn off TV?** “Politics. Even more than that, anything gory, I can’t stand the blood.”

**What would people be surprised to know about you?** “I love bubble gum. It normally has a ton of sugar in it.”

**One thing always on her desk:** “A box of tissues.”

**Three things on her desk right now:** “My cell phone, a calculator and my calendar.”

**What was the last book you read?** “Good to great,” assigned by Colonel Price. “It was very good. It talked about companies and some of the characteristics that took them from good to great. Everybody thought the charismatic leaders did it but it was the people who are humble and introverted, because they put the company first.”

**What’s your ideal vacation?** “A family vacation. It doesn’t really matter what the destination is, just so long as we’re together.”



**Houston MEPS**  
**Maj. Clifton Turner**

**Hometown:** Memphis, Tenn. “I had a great childhood in Memphis. It was a lot smaller than it is now. I’m from a fairly large family, five brothers and two sisters. I remember playing in the park. Playing ball at the park or going to the local

community center. Basketball was a favorite pastime.”

**Ike’s aftermath:** “The facility held up great. We’re a rock’s throw from the Chase Building where the windows blew out and their glass ended up on our roof. We didn’t have any power outages, no flood damage, nothing. We closed on Friday before the hurricane and closed for the Monday after the storm because a lot of the roads were impassable.

**Using mass transit:** “I have a half-mile walk to work from the bus stop. It’s rather pleasant. I would gladly do a commercial for the Houston Metro. The park and ride is my friend.”

**What was your favorite toy when you were a kid?** “An electronic organ. It was given to my sister one Christmas. She put it down and I picked it up. I’ve never taken a formal class, but I play by ear and I enjoy it. It’s my way of decompressing. I put everything aside and play my music.”

**Education:** Bachelor’s degree in paralegal studies from the University of Memphis. Master’s degree in public administration from Tennessee State. “I had aspirations to be a lawyer and one of the best jobs I ever had was being a paralegal.”

**Why the Marine Corps?** “I went to college for a year. It was a rude awaking because I really wasn’t ready to do college work. I finished the year with a decent GPA, but then my father passed and there was no more money from home. I never even considered the other services. The recruiter stepped out and said, ‘You want to be a Marine?’ I said, ‘Let’s talk about it.’ A week-and-a-half later, I shipped out.”

**Previous assignment:** Logistics officer for Marine Air Group 26 in Jacksonville, N.C.  
**Learning to lead:** “I enlisted in the Marine Corps before

I went to college. I stayed enlisted for eight years and some change and came across as an officer. The hardest thing in the world for me was to become a hands-off guy.” He once tried to help load a truck, just to get things moving. One of his sergeants pulled him aside and explained that they didn’t need him on the truck. “I got the message. I said, ‘I’ll be in my office if you need me to sign anything.’”

**Favorite assignment:** “My first assignment as an officer, 1st Battalion, 6th Marines.” He started out in the battalion passing taskings down to the regiment. He asked his boss why they put a brand new second lieutenant at battalion. So they shipped him down to the regiment, where he asked his new boss the same thing. They moved him to the unit level. “It forced me to grow. Everything you could do as a logistian, I did. I don’t think I’ve worked harder in any other job, but by the time I left, I was a bulletproof logistician ready to take on the world.”

**Future military career plans:** “I’m torn. I told myself a long time ago it would be a great thing to retire as at least a lieutenant colonel and to command a battalion-level logistics command. Because I’m where I am in being able to retire, I also have been looking at transitioning to the next phase in life.”

**What do you want to be when you grow up?** “I’d like to be a professor. I’ve been trying to decide which doctoral program I want to be part of. I would also like to be involved in local politics. I’ve been in public service for a long time, so it would be nice to contribute that way. If I could do a little bit of both that would be ideal.”

**What do you do when you’re not a commander?** “I spend most of my time with my family. I just sent my oldest daughter off to college. My son is 12, so he and my wife

and I just hang out. I jog, play my music, and I always have something to read, keep my brain stimulated."

**What's the best way to inspire the troops?** "I've always given the latitude to lead. Give them responsibility and then give them room. I hate to be micromanaged and I think most people do. The year I spent in Iraq; it was amazing to watch those young people."

**What do you like best about your job?** You have to begin that it's always a great opportunity to command because you tell yourself 'This is how I'll do it when I'm in charge.' You find there's a lot more than you thought, but hopefully you come up with the right plan. I was the operations officer at Nashville MEPS for three years. When I came here, I had to look at it from the vantage point of the commander. I like being able to ensure people are being taken care of and the operation is running like its supposed to."

**What do you order when you eat out?** "We don't eat out much. Mom likes to cook. I am a steak and potatoes guy."

**What's the best present you ever got?** "My kids bought me an MP-3 player. I'm not a gadget guy, so I had to be brought into 21st century kicking and screaming, but that MP-3 player is my saving grace when I'm on my commute. (Remember, he rides the bus.)"

**What's your guilty pleasure?** "Banana pudding. I'm a sucker for banana pudding, even if I have to run three or four miles afterward to get rid of it."

**What's guaranteed to make you turn off the TV?** "My kids will tell you, and it's the truth, I don't do horror movies at all. It's just inane violence. They have no value to me."

**One thing always on his desk:** "My green binder. It is one of the real primitive supply service binders. It's my planner." His wife makes fun

of him because he keeps all of his planners from previous years in a footlocker. "I have all of them from the last 14 years. I can tell you what I did every year. It keeps me on track and makes sure I take care of the priorities."

**Three things on his desk right now:** "The book that I'm reading. It's called 'Movers and Shakers.' It's a collection of the 100 most influential people in business, not just CEOs, but business philosophers. A bottle of water and the speaker cord for the MP-3 player for when I want to take a break and clear my head."

**What's the last book you read?** "I just reread 'The Golden 13,' about the first black naval officers. And 'Dreams from My Father' by Barak Obama. It was very enlightening."

**What's your ideal vacation?** "I like warm climates, so a vacation in the tropics and to sit on a tropical island beach and vegetate. My wife always has to plan activities. She asks 'What time are you getting up in the morning?' and I say 'When I wake up.' I don't want to do anything but vegetate."

of Milwaukee. It's the second largest city in Michigan."

**Fond childhood memories:** "We used to go the local hockey games quite a bit." He liked the violence and the fights. "Besides them winning, that was the best part of the game."

**Education:** Two classes from a bachelor's degree in management from American Military University.

**Why Navy?** "At the time, all the other recruiting offices were closed. The Navy was the only one that was open, so that's basically how it went."

**Last assignment:** Senior enlisted engineer on board the fast frigate USS Elrod. "I was the top snipe."

**Favorite assignment:**

"The Elrod, because it was challenging. You've got four divisions you're in charge of 50 personnel. You've got all the challenges with the time constraints and inspections. It's not an easy job, but we had a good engineering crew."

**Future military plans:** "It's hard to say. If I don't pick up master chief in April I'll retire. If I make master chief, I'll continue for another five years to make it to 30."

**What do you want to be when you grow up?** "More or less do what I did on the ship, work on a power plant, being a supervisor. That is probably my best chance for getting a job."

**Two Andersons, one rate:**

There are two senior chief petty officers in the command who share the same last name and the gas turbine systems rate. Senior Chief Kevin Anderson is the senior enlisted advisor at the Fort Lee MEPS. Despite having the same rate and last name, it hasn't really caused any problems since both Andersons have been in USMEPCOM. "A few years ago they got some of his stuff in my record and some of mine in his record. Other than that we haven't had any problems."

**What do you do when you're not a senior enlisted advisor?**

"Watch football, go camping, work in the yard."

**What's the best way to inspire the troops?** "The best way is to be the coach that fires the team up, the hard-nosed coach that can fire the team up, like John Gruden, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers coach."

**What do you like best about your job?** "To be able to interact with the civilians more than just military. I'm still learning a lot about how to work with civilians again. It's a lot different when you're out on a ship for four years with just military."

**What do you order when you eat out?** Pizza, usually meat lover's pizza.

**What's the best present you ever got?** "A tapestry blanket that was made from a picture of my dog. (A husky shepherd mix.) I wasn't expecting it. It wasn't something I thought I would be getting. My wife gave it to me and she pretty much surprised me."

**What's your guilty pleasure?** "Beer. I make my own."

**What is guaranteed to make you turn off TV?** "Sappy love stories. I don't care for chick flicks. Whenever my wife is watching them I find something else to do."

**What would people be surprised to know about you?** "I like to watch kids movies, like Toy Story, animation, that stuff."

**One thing always on his desk:** Pictures of his daughters.

**Three things on his desk right now:** "My bamboo plant, my Detroit Lions coffee mug and my cell phone."

**What he's reading:** "Clive Cussler's 'Viking Odyssey.' It's a Dirk Pitt novel."

**What is your ideal vacation?**

"The ideal vacation for me and my wife would be to go tour Alaska for a couple of weeks. We've never been there. We want to go."



**Little Rock MEPS**  
Senior Chief  
Petty Officer  
**Christopher Anderson**

**Hometown:** Grand Rapids, Mich. "It's a typical Midwestern city, about the size



## Louisville MEPS First Sgt. Michael Dill

**Hometown:** Anderson, S.C.  
“It was a small town. When I grew up there, there was a lot of factory work.”

**Fond childhood memories:**

“Every summer when I was growing up, our vacation consisted of traveling to Six Flags in Atlanta and staying at Marriott Marquis. They had this glass elevator where you could look out. That was amazing for us.”

**What was your favorite toy when you were a kid?** “I’m a music man, so the thing I always enjoyed was my boom box. Back then I was a Teddy Pendergrass, Marvin Gaye, R&B fan, all the old stuff.”

**Education:** Associate degree in business management from Hawaii Pacific University. Bachelor’s degree in business management with a concentration in human resources from St. Francis of Brooklyn, N.Y. He just started his last class to complete a master’s degree in conflict management.

**New York, N.Y.:** He was stationed at the New York MEPS from 1994 to 1997. “I started out in testing and moved up to operations. New York was the second largest MEPS at the time. Mission nights were truly mission nights. We were there until midnight on mission day and the work flow was always fast-paced. For me, coming from down south, it was a new

experience watching the kids at the high schools going through metal detectors.”

**Why the Army?** “Initially I wanted to join the Marines because they had the sharpest uniforms. One of my buddies joined the Marine Corps and when he came home he seemed like he was brainwashed, so I went for the second toughest. My father was also in the Army Reserve, so I was familiar with the Army.”

**Tough duty:** His previous assignment was in Brussels, Belgium, with the Counsel International Sports Militaire. “I was the senior administrative person. We sponsored Olympic sports events throughout the world with all the military service members that fell under the United Nations. Our mission was to promote friendship through sports. I was an ambassador for the American armed forces. I was selected by a committee at DoD. I had an equal opportunity background, which shows I can work with diverse cultures, I had drill sergeant time interacting with people in training. My background was in HR, so they wanted me to be the administrative person. They were looking for people with discipline, maturity and ability to interact with leaders from more than 120 nations.”

**Favorite assignment:** “Being a drill sergeant. There is no greater feeling than watching civilians transform into soldiers. And getting e-mails and running into people years later and they thank you for what you did for them how you impacted their lives. My commander and I were in Columbus and this lady walked up to me and said, ‘You were my drill sergeant.’ She’s a civilian at the Columbus MEPS now.”

**Future military career plans:** “I retire in six months. I plan to continue to serve my country with pride until then, motivate these applicants who display

personal courage to serve their country in a time of war. I want to be a mentor to the civilians, applicants and other military people, and represent the Army with pride.”

**Coming full circle:** “I started my military career at Fort Knox for basic training and I’m doing my last assignment back in Kentucky at the Louisville MEPS.”

**What do you want to be when you grow up?** “I would like to be a motivational speaker for young kids to promote education and sustaining healthy family and personal relationships. I would also like to be an adjunct teacher at a local university teaching public speaking.”

**What do you do when you’re not a first sergeant?** “I like to go to the gym. I read. I enjoy going to the movies. I’m still into music. I love to listen to music.”

**What’s the best way to inspire troops?** “To me the best way is to lead by example. And also to show concern for their welfare as well as the mission and to always point out the positive, not just the negative when it comes down to recognizing employees.”

**What do you like best about your job?** “I like the experience of learning how to manage civilians because we’re so used to managing soldiers. I also enjoy the idea of processing the young men and women who will serve our country and replace me when I retire. To see them coming in and providing a better way of life for them and their families is exciting.”

**What do your orders when you eat out?** “My favorite meal is salmon. I love salmon and sweet potatoes. I go to Longhorns for that. I know it’s a steak house, but they’ve got some good salmon.”

**What’s the best present you ever got?** “In 2003 I bought a house in South Carolina. I didn’t want to live in government quarters

or an apartment any more.” He ended up selling it when he went overseas. “The neighborhood was going down, and I decided to get out while the getting was good.”

**What’s your guilty pleasure?** “Apple crisp. You get the apple pie with cinnamon and sugar. I just had one last night.”

**What’s guaranteed to make you turn off the TV?** “Those stupid reality shows.”

**What would people be surprised to know about you?** “That I’ve been married and divorced twice.”

**One thing always on his desk:** “I keep a lot of little sticky notes to remind me what to do.”

**Three things on his desk right now:** Water, a cell phone and a notebook.

**What he’s reading:** “The Nine Steps to Financial Freedom” by Suzy Orman, and “The Last Lecture” by Randy Pausch.

**What’s your ideal vacation?** “Hawaii. I just got back. That was my first duty station. I was 18 years old back then, so you know the deal.”



## Minneapolis MEPS Senior Master Sgt. Michael Tharp

**Hometown:** Delhi, Iowa. “It’s a very small farm community, about 600 people. It’s 45 minutes west of Dubuque and

45 minutes northeast of Cedar Rapids."

**Fond childhood memories:**

"I enjoyed all types of sports with my two brothers, John and Dave." John is one year older, Dave one year younger. "We got into fights and trouble and just hung out together. We were close in age, so we were pretty close. I participated in basketball and track." He ran the high hurdles, low hurdles and 4x200 meter relay. His team still holds the school record for the 4x200.

**Education:** Associate degree in information resource management from the Community College of the Air Force. He is pursuing a bachelor's degree in business administration with a focus on human resource management from Columbia Southern University online.

**Why Air Force?** "My father was in the Navy and he told me if I ever joined that the Air Force was the way to go. I don't remember any other recruiters except the Air Force coming to our school."

**Previous assignment:**

Hanscom Air Force Base, Mass. "I was the superintendant for the 554th Electronic Systems Wing."

**Favorite assignment:**

"Yokota Air Base, Japan. I would kill to go back there. I worked six years at U.S. Forces Japan, the first two years in J-3 (operations) and final four years with the government of Japan and the U.S. military services. One was working the Marine Corps artillery relocation program on Camp Hanson, Okinawa, then with the Army 1st battalion, 1st Special Airborne out of Torii Station, Okinawa, and then the Navy Night Landing Practice at Atsugi. That four years of traveling on the government of Japan's dime and working with the joint services was awesome. That assignment probably is why I made E-8.

**Future military career plans:** "Waiting for this position to turn into a civilian position, retiring and staying in the same job. I have two more years here and plan to extend and then retire. This is my last assignment. I won't relocate or PCS.

**What do you want to be when you grow up?** "I guess it's too late to be an NBA basketball player, so I would have to say a better father, a better Christian and a better husband." He plans to look for a civil service job, hopefully in Japan.

**What do you do when you're not a senior enlisted advisor?**

I enjoy playing golf with my 14-year-old-son, watching NASCAR – Dale Jr., No. 88 – and playing Texas hold 'em online."

**What's the best way to inspire the troops?** "Speak the truth, communicate as much information as possible to the lowest level and assure them you have their back."

**What do you like best about your job?** "I like the interaction with the different sections. I enjoy working side by side with my boss. I've had outstanding bosses with Lt. Col. Michael Tayman and Maj. John Althoff. I couldn't ask for anything better."

**What do you order when you eat out?** Steak and seafood fajitas.

**What's the best present you ever received?** "A Yamaha YZ-80 dirt bike." He was about 12.

**What's your guilty pleasure?** "Cabo Wabo Tequila. It's made by Sammy Hagar, the musician. It goes down smooth, no ice, no mix, just straight."

**What's guaranteed to make you turn off the TV?** Political debates. I don't like political

conventions and political debates."

**Tell me something people would be surprised to know about you:** "My wife is Korean and we've been happily married 16 years and I speak absolutely no Korean."

**One thing always on his desk:** "The newsletter camera. I take pictures for our newsletter."

**Three things on his desk right now:** A coffee cup with "Dad" on it, a Kevin Garnett scratch pad and wooden sake cups.

**What's the last book you read?** "Wildfire" by Nelson DeMill. I'm waiting for his new one, 'The Gatehouse.'" Wildfire is about a detective and his wife. He's a retired police officer and his wife is an FBI agent. They get caught up in a conspiracy about nuclear bombs blowing up in two major cities.

**What's your ideal vacation?** "Either going to the Bahamas or an inclusive vacation in Mexico. The Bahamas, because I'd like to see sharks and stingrays and do snorkeling along the pristine, white, sandy beaches. Mexico, because I love authentic Mexican food. And there's a lot of tequila."



## UNUSUAL ENLISTMENTS

### SPOKANE MEPS

**The Legacy Continues**

Retired Air Force Master Sgt. Greg Johnson, Spokane MEPS human resources assistant, stands with his daughter, Torii, and her enlisting officer, Capt. Pat Webinger, after Torii's enlistment. Johnson said he had never heard of a MEPS until 1985, when he entered the one in San Diego to enlist. Also, he said he would have never guessed he'd have his retirement ceremony at a MEPS. In 2005, he did just that, with his son, Gregory Jr., in attendance. Gregory Jr. is an Air Force senior airman, now stationed at Andersen Air Force Base in Guam. Three years later, Johnson had the opportunity to watch every step as his daughter Torii processed through the Spokane MEPS. Torii said she wanted, "to follow in the footsteps of her father and brother in giving back to the country that has given us so much."

## CHARLOTTE MEPS



### Twins times two

The Charlotte MEPS recently enlisted two sets of twins. Arrington and Adrienne Payseur (above) enlisted in the Army. Lennix and Bennix Currence (right) entered the Navy's Delayed Entry Program. Lt. Jeffrey Miovech, Charlotte MEPs operations officer, enlisted both sets of twins.



## INDIANAPOLIS MEPS



### Keeping it in the family

Capt. Brandy Culp swears in her husband, 1st Lt. Benjamin Estep to the Indiana National Guard. Culp administered the oath to Estep who transferred from the Ohio National Guard after his deployment to Afghanistan.



### Family ties

Chief Petty Officer Eric Johnson watched his son, Jerrell McQuay enlist and ship into the active duty Navy at the Charlotte MEPS. Lt. Jeffrey Miovech, Charlotte MEPS operations officer, conducted the ceremony.

## ANCHORAGE MEPS



### The next generation enlists

Coast Guard Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael Watson Sr. enlists his son, Michael Jr. (above) and daughter Amy Lou (right) into the Army. Michael Jr. will be a generator mechanic and Amy Lou plans to be a health care specialist. She arrived for basic training at Fort Jackson, S.C., the same day her brother graduated from basic training at Fort Knox, Ky. Both said they chose the Army because it offered better opportunities for training and assignments in their chosen fields. Their father served as an active duty soldier early in his career. After a break in service he enlisted in the Coast Guard and is assigned to the Marine Safety Detachment at Kenai, Alaska.



## NEW ORLEANS MEPS



### Making two commitments

Army enlistees Keith and Krissy Sandifier and Maj. Kevyn Bryant, New Orleans MEPS commander, pose after the Sandifiers' enlistment ceremony. Keith, 19, and Krissy, 18, enlisted in the Army together and got married a few days later. They met at Covington, La., High School and dated for more than three years before Keith decided to join the Army. Krissy took the ASVAB just to see the results and they decided to enlist together. He attended basic training at Fort Benning and she at Fort Jackson, S.C., before reuniting at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, for advanced individual training in health care career fields. They enrolled in the Married Army Couples Program, which will allow married soldiers to be stationed no more than 50 miles apart.

## SPOKANE MEPS



### Like father, like son

Capt. Von Astudillo, Spokane MEPS operations officer, pauses with Geoff Richardson and his father, Bill, after Geoff's enlistment ceremony. Geoff followed in his father's footsteps and enlisted in the Air Force. Bill Richardson is a retired Air Force master sergeant and is now a human resources assistant at Spokane MEPS. Geoff, a graduate of Lake City High School in Coeur D'Alene, Idaho, had been working in a lumber mill before enlisting. The younger Richardson said he is looking forward to starting his own Air Force career and picking up where his dad left off. He hopes to be stationed in the Northwest, but Florida or Hawaii "would be cool."

# MEPS of Excellence

Military Entrance Processing Stations must meet or exceed the criteria in 11 areas representing the core processes of medical, testing, processing and general military readiness in order to be named MEPS of Excellence.

The criteria are:

- Timeliness of military evaluations and awards
- Recruiter leads ratio
- Medical same day processing rate
- Drug and HIV specimen processing
- Clinical Laboratory Improvement Program
- Physical fitness results
- Height/weight standard
- Electronic Fingerprint Capture Station (unclassifiable fingerprints)
- Incidents of serious misconduct by military or civilian employees
- MOE test loss compromise
- Bank of America travel card delinquency rates

## Fourth Quarter, Fiscal 2008 MEPS of Excellence

### Western Sector

**Albuquerque MEPS**

**Fargo MEPS**

**Little Rock MEPS**

**Oklahoma City MEPS**

### Eastern Sector

**Detroit MEPS**

**Jackson MEPS**

**Nashville MEPS**

**Portland, Maine, MEPS**

## Will distributes assets as you would want

by Capt. Dan Papajcik  
Staff Judge Advocate's Office

A will distributes your assets and belongings after you die, and makes your wishes regarding guardianship of minor children known.

When you have a will written, you are stating specifically what you would like to happen to your property if you die. If you die without a will, the state law where you live will determine who gets your property. This doesn't mean that the state will get your property, but that state law, not you, that will decide who will receive your property.

In some states, if you do not have a will and you are married with children, you may not like what would happen to your property. Most people assume that their spouse would get all of their property. If you die without a will, your spouse could get half (or some other percentage) of your property and your children will get the remainder.

To avoid this sometimes complicated result, you must have a will prepared which states your exact wishes about how you want your estate distributed.

A will does not distribute all of your estate. Assets such as life insurance and individual retirement accounts will be paid to the named beneficiary whether or not you have a will. Joint bank accounts and jointly owned cars will pass automatically at death to the other person if they are owned as joint tenants. "Real" property, such as your home sometimes passes through your will to provide a proper chain of title in the event of a sale.

In a will you must first choose your personal representative. That person will handle the actual probate of your estate. He or she has three jobs:

- Determine and collect the assets that make up your estate.
- Pay all your just debts.
- Take whatever is left over, after paying your debts, and distribute it according to your will.

The personal representative must be appointed by the probate court. Once appointed, they can access your financial holdings and sell assets that were in your name. The person you nominate in your will to be your personal representative will have priority over anyone else. You should

also consider nominating at least one alternate in case your first choice is unable to act in that capacity.

Your next choice is how to distribute your assets. If you are married, you may want to leave everything to your spouse. If you cut your spouse out of your will, he or she can "elect" against the will. That means they have chosen to take their "elective share" of your estate, which could amount to more than the will gave.

Children do not have a right to "elect" against the will. Children have no right to inherit. The choice of whether to leave your estate to your children is solely yours. You can leave your estate to some of your children and not others, or exclude all your children, but your will must express those wishes.

When deciding how to distribute your estate, you should consider who you would like to receive your property in the event your first choice dies before you. An example would be leaving everything to your spouse, and then leaving it to your children in equal shares if

your spouse dies before you. You should plan now for occurrences such as this.

If you have young children, you may want to consider how any inheritance they receive should be handled. You may want to create a trust for them to care for the inheritance until they reach a certain age. You should consult with a civilian attorney or legal assistance attorney to determine how to best deal with your individual situation. You should also consider whom you would like to be their guardian if you die while they are minors. This is a very important decision that should be given careful consideration.

If you have decided that you would like a will, call and make an appointment with a legal assistance attorney. The nearest legal assistance attorney can be found in the U.S. Armed Forces Legal Assistance Locator <http://legalassistance.law.af.mil/content/locator.php>.

Consult an attorney or legal assistance attorney for specific legal advice for your particular situation.

**ALBUQUERQUE MEPS****Toby Wurschum**

Test Control Officer

Years of military service: 24 (retired Army)

Last assignment: Albuquerque MEPS

Senior Enlisted Advisor

**Barbara Garcia**

Test Administrator

Years of service: 7

Last assignment: Real estate appraiser

**Celena Soto**

Test Coordinator

Years of service: 10

Last assignment: Albuquerque MEPS

Human Resources Assistant

**Staff Sgt. Andrew Aragon**

Medical NCOIC

Years of service: 6

Last assignment: Medical Technician,  
Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas**Dawne Walters-Peters, Sascha****Wurschum, Peggy Hall**, Human

Resources Assistants

**CHICAGO MEPS****Lt. Col. Holly Gay**

Commander

**Lt.j.g. John York**

Operations Officer

**First Sgt. David Davis**

Senior Enlisted Advisor

**Elizabeth Graessle**

Secretary

**Novella Blanchard**

Health Technician

**Michael Lowe, Keith Sargent****Basem Bishawi, Spc. Jennifer Brooks**

Human Resources Assistants

**Rafael Ocampo, Gregorio Jiminez**

Test Clerks

**Staff Sgt. Marques Cakes**

Operations NCO

**FORT LEE MEPS****Maj. Carl Faison**

Commander

Years of service: 13

Last assignment: 23rd Quartermaster  
Brigade, Fort Lee, Va.

Education: Bachelor's degree in biology

Military education: Command and General  
Staff CollegeDiversions: Coaching Little League  
baseball, church and moviesFirst impression: "Very professional  
organization."**Lutrina Byrd**

Human Resources Assistant

Years of service: 3 active duty, 1 reserve,  
5 civil serviceLast assignment: Navy Exchange, Naval  
Air Base Little Creek, Va.Education: Associate of arts degree in  
liberal arts, bachelor of arts degree in  
criminal justiceDiversions: Writing, exercising, traveling  
and nature activities with her son.First impression: "Very amicable  
personnel and the building and job site are  
in outstanding condition."**Wanda Hernandez**

Testing Clerk

Years of military service: 5½

Last assignment: Fort Drum, N.Y.

Education: Bachelor's degree in political  
scienceDiversions: Biking, reading, walking,  
spending time with her son.

First impression: "Good, different."

**Terric Joseph**

Human Resources Assistant

Years of service: 7

Military education: Petroleum  
Supply Specialist Course, Supervisor  
Development Course and hazardous  
materials courses.

First impression: "Friendly."

**Robert Townsend**

Testing Clerk

Years of military service: 20

Last assignment: Fort Bragg, N.C.

Military education: Primary Leadership  
Development Course, Basic NCO Course.

First impression: "Very good."

**LOS ANGELES MEPS****Maj. Scott Vasquez**

Operations Officer/Deputy Commander

**Capt. Armando Corral**

Assistant Operations Officer

**1st Sgt. Gregory Study**

Senior Enlisted Advisor

Previous Assignment: Fort Lewis, Wash.

**Yadira Polluck**

Health Technician

**Jonathan Jones**

Human Resources Assistant

**Alberto Delamora**

Test Score Technician

**OMAHA MEPS****Capt. Nathan Loose**

Operations Officer

Years of service: 11

Last assignment: Nebraska Army National  
GuardDiversions: Playing guitar, camping,  
fishing, sports and family time.First impression: "A competent, mission-  
oriented group of people who are always  
friendly."

## FOND FAREWELLS

**ALBUQUERQUE MEPS****Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class****Emerson Granados**

Test Administrator

Next assignment: San Diego

**CHICAGO MEPS****Lt. Col. Daniel Finley**

Commander

**Lt. Scott Korljan**

Operations Officer

**First Sgt. Jill Matthews**

Senior Enlisted Advisor

**Karen Riley**

Lead Human Resources Assistant

**Steven Kulik**

Health Technician

**David Boguille**

Test Score Technician

## CONGRATS

**CHICAGO MEPS**Jon Woods, promotion to Lead Human  
Resources Assistant.**COLUMBUS MEPS**Sgt. Nathan Stepp and Capt. Stephen  
Smay, promoted.**COLUMBUS MEPS**Eric and Amanda Burkhardt, married  
June 6.

# Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday

