

Messenger

UNITED STATES MILITARY ENTRANCE PROCESSING COMMAND

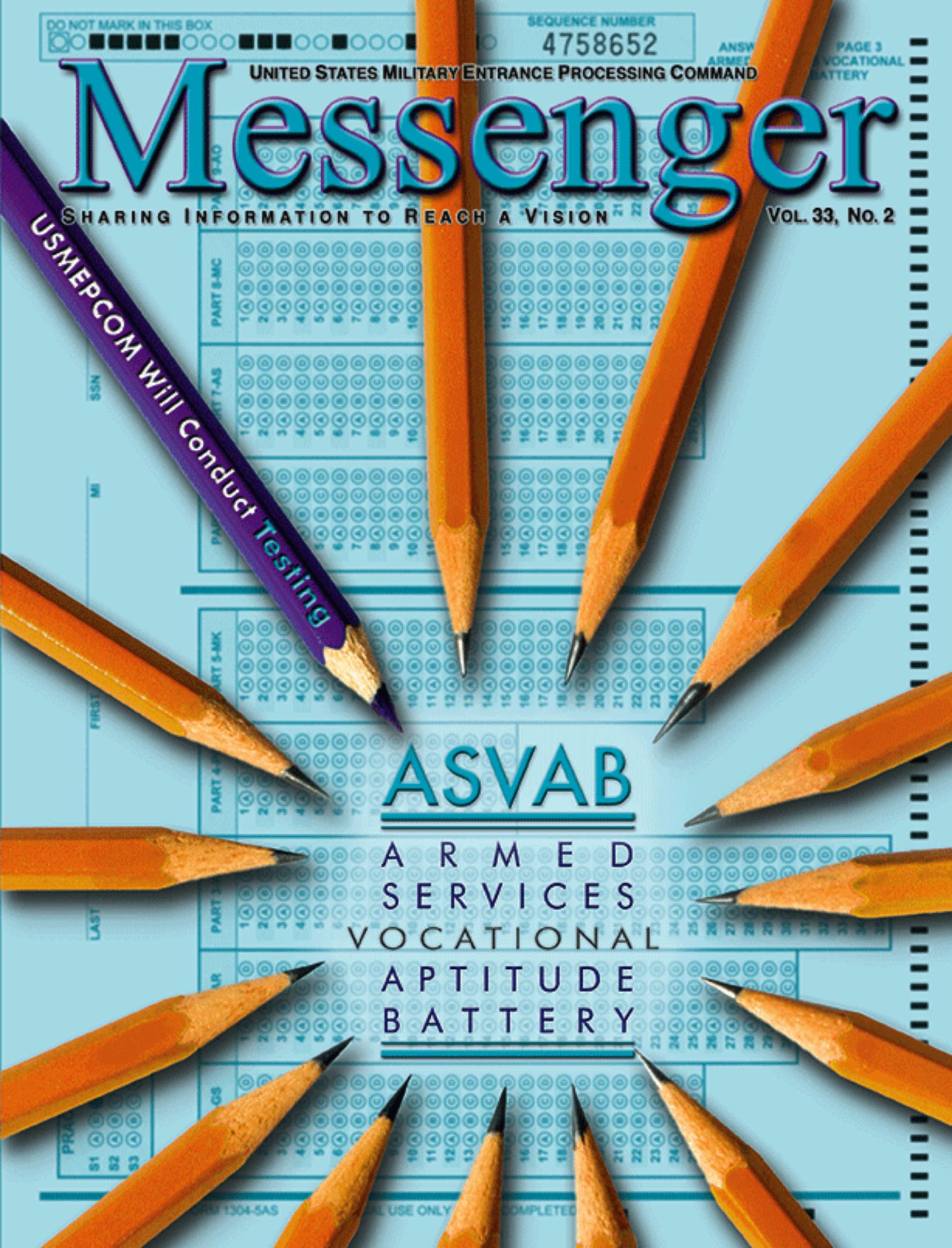
SHARING INFORMATION TO REACH A VISION

VOL. 33, No. 2

USMEPCOM Will Conduct Testing

ASVAB

ARMED
SERVICES
VOCATIONAL
APTITUDE
BATTERY



SSN

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FIRST

LAST

PART 8-MC

PART 7-AS

PART 5-MK

PART 4-PT

PART 3-AR

PART 2-GS

PR

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Dallas MEPS partners with the community, and the result is a Memorial Day event that includes a multi-service enlistment ceremony, a flyover, and representation from the Fort Hood 1st Cavalry Horse Detachment and the Paralyzed Veterans of America. *Photo by James Garner*

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U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command

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Messenger

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Capt. Eric W. Johnson

Since taking command, I've had the privilege to visit 20 MEPS and dedicate time at USMEPCOM headquarters. I've learned a lot more about who we are and what we do; and am continually impressed with the dedication of our USMEPCOM team. In early May, we held our strategic off-site meeting — at which MEPS commanders and senior enlisted advisors, battalion commanders, and senior sector and headquarters staff gathered to actively discuss the present and future state of the command; and to shape decisions and courses of action to accomplish our strategic goals.

Going in, we had a two-fold purpose — to look at the internal alignment of the command as it stands today, and how the command can optimally be aligned in 2015, 2020, and 2025. With a topic as vital as the command's alignment, our debates were thoughtful and thorough. It wasn't a "light" topic, so we took it very seriously.

The group reflected on how the command is structured today — without taking into account the implementation of the Virtual Interactive Processing System, or any other transformational initiatives. With this "as is" view, I asked the attendees to define how we could best align headquarters to provide the best possible support and service to the field and our executive agency.

We agreed on the need for three near-term changes that will realign logistics and personnel functions with

Commander's Commentary

a traditional joint staff structure. The first two include bringing all aspects of logistics under one directorate. This requires the Resource Management (J-8) Acquisition Division, and the Human Resources (J-1) Safety, Physical Security, Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection positions to transfer to the Facilities (J-4) Directorate. With this change, MEPS will receive all logistics and facilities support from one directorate; and our headquarters team will be best aligned to provide the best customer service to our field partners.

The third change will improve personnel-related support to MEPS. Until now, J-8 Manpower managed the billets, or spaces, and J-1 managed the people, or faces. At the strategic off-site meeting, after much thought and consideration, we decided for J-8 Manpower Branch to transfer to J-1. This adjustment will ensure the J-1 can manage all personnel and billet aspects.

All three realignments will take place in the next four months. These alignment changes do not include any loss of billets or savings in personnel cuts, no one's job is at risk. Human Resources will review each position description in accordance with the Office of Personnel Management, Department of Defense and USMEPCOM directives to ensure duties are correctly graded and classified. This process is time-consuming, so we will phase in the changes. As scheduled, the Acquisition Division will transfer by July 3, and the manpower and safety and security positions will transfer by Sept. 25. We will write a detailed plan of action and milestones for these transfers in June.

Another outtake from the strategic off-site meeting is training-related and will ensure the command is staffed with people who are properly trained to accomplish tomorrow's processing mission. To begin working toward this, the J-1 Training Division has written and distributed a comprehensive, billet-specific training

package. It will include the resources MEPS personnel need to prepare for transformation, including VIPS. When I visit MEPS, we talk about the importance of leaning forward in the foxhole, and embracing change. This type of training will enable us to do just that.

Recently I visited the United States Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island. The "Crucible" is a two-and-a-half-day final test for Marine recruits who are nearing the end of their basic training. It includes sleep and food deprivation, and more than 40 miles of walking with 45 pounds, gear, uniform, and M16 service rifle weight. The "Crucible" ends with a final nine mile march ending with a very private and emotional ceremony when the new recruits are presented with the USMC eagle, globe and anchor emblem and are addressed as "Marines" for the first time. While there, I learned that one recruit had finished the final nine miles with a broken ankle — without telling anyone — because there was no way in the world he was going to miss the graduation ceremony. This single, dedicated, recruit signifies how important our mission is ... to deliver the volunteer warfighter to the fight! We can't let these fantastic, young Americans down!

Our mission ensures the military ranks include young men and women with this resilience and dedication. We ensure they're equipped for the challenge. In order to do this, we need to self-assess and make the internal changes necessary for improvement. So, I thank you for supporting these changes. Keep doing what you're doing, as well as you're doing it, and remember — it's vital. Keep Charging, Team!

Eric W. Johnson
Captain, USN
Commanding

Lewis takes command of Western Sector

By Skip Wiseman
Messenger Associate Editor

Western Sector, U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command welcomed its new commander, Navy Capt. Theresa A. Lewis, in a May 18 change of command ceremony in the Courts Plus Fitness Center, Naval Station Great Lakes, Ill.

The sector bade farewell to Marine Corps Col. Charles S. Dunston, who retired after a 35-year career.

Navy Capt. Eric W. Johnson, USMEPCOM commander, officiated the change of command and Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Ronald L. Bailey, commanding general of Marine Corps Recruiting Command, and Marine Corps Recruit Depot and Western Recruiting Region, conducted the retirement ceremony.

Lewis, whose previous assignment was as executive officer for Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes, commanded the Honolulu Military Entrance Processing Station 2001-2003.

"If I were asked what would be the perfect replacement for the Western Sector commander, I would ask for a hard-charging, hungry new captain who has previously been a successful MEPS commanding officer and understands our customers' needs at the training end," Johnson said. "And, low and behold, the Navy detailing system got it right and sent us Captain Lewis.

"She's a proven leader, highly experienced in our operations," he said. "She understands the critical need



Capt. Theresa A. Lewis accepts Western Sector organizational colors from Capt. Eric Johnson, USMEPCOM commander.
Photos by Art Heintz

to execute our daily mission and is a fantastic addition to our team."

Johnson also praised Dunston's performance as commander, saying the sector's performance under his leadership was outstanding.

"Focused on results, never forgetting our daily efforts to man the All-Volunteer Force and put warriors into the fight, Charlie directed his team to execute our daily processing mission with excellence, thoroughness and skill," he said.

Lewis spoke of her experiences as commander of Honolulu MEPS and her desire to serve a second tour with USMEPCOM.

"When I left there, I knew I wanted to return to be a part of this great organization one day," she said. "So to take command today, here, as the Western Sector commander, well, it doesn't get any better than that with me."

She recalled that Adm. Arleigh Burke, former chief of naval operations, challenged the first crew of his namesake ship by saying, "This ship is built to fight. You better know how."



The 31 Western Sector MEPS Commanders and senior enlisted advisors attended the Western Sector change of command ceremony.

“Western Sector,” Lewis said, “I paraphrase Admiral Burke in saying our military’s built to fight and it’s in the fight today. You’d better make sure we are dedicated to ensuring the quality of our work, which has a direct impact on the readiness of our All-Volunteer Force.”

Bailey spelled Dunston’s first name by using words that described his service: Courage and commitment, honesty and hard work, attitude, role model, leadership, integrity, intellect and intensity, and eagerness and endurance.

“The seven letters are really just Charlie,” he said. “Charlie has always been someone who was extremely courageous. Someone who is above board, day in and day out, in his honesty and hard work, his attitude, (as a) role model, his leadership, integrity and endurance.

“Our current commandant says there are no former Marines, only Marines who are wearing a different uniform,” Bailey said. “So, while we are participating in

a retirement ceremony today, we also know that you’ll be standing by, ready to step up to the plate ... because this Corps is for keeps. You have always demonstrated that throughout your 35 years in leading Marines, training Marines and teaching Marines.”

Dunston said he has been blessed and has no regrets.

“I am comfortable as I go over the side,” he said, “knowing that the current generation is currently on deck and will be standing the watch, standing guard, and I have no reservations about their ability to perform.

“As I gave up command today, I couldn’t help but think I felt like a father giving away a bride – this beautiful command,” Dunston said.

Speaking to Lewis, he said, “I was heartened to know that you’re going to take good care of it. You’re the perfect leader to roll in here. Take this command to the next step. The command is looking forward to your leadership and I wish you all the best in the world.”

Capt. Theresa A. Lewis

Commission

- United States Naval Academy.

Assignments

- New accessions detailer for the general unrestricted line community, Bureau of Naval Personnel, Washington, D.C.
- Director of White House television and unit commander for the director of the White House military office in the George H.W. Bush and Clinton administrations.
- Administrative officer, United States Navy Support Facility, Diego Garcia.
- Executive officer, Military Sealift Command Office, Port Canaveral, Fla.
- Fleet aviation manpower officer, manpower analyst, and assistant fleet personnel officer and operations manning coordinator for commander in chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.



- Commanding officer, Military Sealift Command Office, Pearl Harbor.
- Commanding officer, Honolulu MEPS.
- Deputy division chief, Joint Staff Support Services Office, director of management and Joint Staff deputy inspector general, the Pentagon.
- Executive officer, Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes Naval Training Center, Ill.

Education

- Bachelor of science degree in political science, United States Naval Academy.
- Master of science degree in management with a subspecialty in transportation, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, Calif.
- Master’s degree in national security and strategic studies, Naval War College.

Command Leadership Schools

- Naval War College Seminar Program.
- Joint Combined Warfare School, Joint Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Va.

Major Awards

- Defense Superior Service Medal
- Two Defense Meritorious Service Medals
- Two Meritorious Service Medals
- Three Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals
- Four Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals

Thirty-five-year association with agency ends — Command plans to conduct aptitude tests with intermittent employees

By Skip Wiseman
Messenger Associate Editor

An association of 35 years will end later this year as USMEPCOM brings all testing functions back in house rather than using test administrators from the Office of Personnel Management.

The command plans to hire more than 1,000 test administrators to work intermittent schedules to conduct all Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery testing at military entrance test sites and for the Career Exploration Program.

The manpower and management division in Resource Management (J-8) developed the concept plan in conjunction with Operations (J-3) and Strategic Planning and Transformation (J-5). Human Resources (J-1) developed a position description for a GS-4 position. Some positions are currently advertised, and the command plans to begin hiring actions this summer so it can

fully assume the testing mission from OPM Oct. 1.

Richard Harris, chief of the manpower and management division, said his staff developed the concept plan to submit to the Army to “make the sale that it is cheaper and more efficient for USMEPCOM to take care of the student and MET site testing through an intermittent, on-call workforce.

“Really, our role was in helping develop the requirement, coming up with what costs might be and does that fit inside the budget,” he said.

Once the decision was made that USMEPCOM should hire its own test administrators rather than rely on OPM, J-1 developed the position descriptions.

“We obtained a copy of the OPM test administrator position description,” Liz Lane, J-1’s deputy director, said. “We worked with J-3 on editing the position description to be focused on MEPCOM testing and not all the other duties they had in those positions.

“Once we came up with a good job description ... we went through the process of grading that position. The outcome was that the job would be a GS-4.”

Lane said the directorate is working to make it as easy as possible for the MEPS to conduct the program.

“We’ve developed standard skills so the supervisors in each of the MEPS won’t have to work that for every recruitment action,” she said. “We are developing questions for the vacancy announcement that are directly related

to the position description. Once we have those two items, an information message will go out to the field to give them instructions on how to fill the positions at the locations where OPM is currently performing for us.”

Training will be another major factor as the program comes on line.

“We’re working on determining what additional training the test control officers need,” Lane said, “because they will be supervising employees that have different entitlements and work schedules than they are used to working with, and how to schedule them so they don’t violate any of those obligations.

“We are also working with J-3 to develop training for those test administrators we will be hiring out in the field who may not have ever done the USMEPCOM mission,” she said.

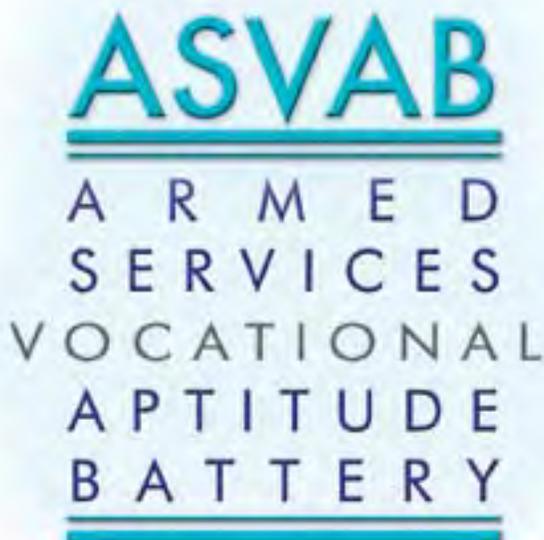
MEPS commanders also received a message telling them to contact their union counterparts to let them know about the changes, Lane said.

OPM conducted virtually all test sessions, but the costs had risen over the years, and the command recently lost contingency operations funds which had financed much of the testing function.

“The OPM testing mission was never fully funded,” Harris said. We were getting overseas contingency operating funds. It was a bunch of money. Prior to that, we were struggling to fund this thing.”

Don Hill, chief of the testing division, J-3, which administers the program, also said the budget was the major factor in bringing testing in house.

“The budget restrictions we’ve been having in the last three years have literally forced us to reconsider how we do business,” he said.



Hill said the memorandum of agreement with OPM is the second largest budget item after payroll.

“When the Army starts trying to cut funding, the only thing there was testing,” he said, “unless you really start to get into the meat of things. It was a logical thing. It’s gotten pretty expensive.”

The testing budget for fiscal 2011 was slightly more than \$14 million. Hill said the exact amount to be saved “depends on the end state,” but anticipates \$7 million to \$9 million a year in savings. OPM typically charged the command about \$300 per test session, with the test administrators receiving \$80-100 plus travel expenses.

“When you start doing some math, that’s a whole lot of savings,” Hill said. “How much we save will depend on if we can replicate (OPM’s network) or not.

“We’re going to continue to use OPM through the end of the fiscal year,” he said. OPM support will be gradually phased out.

“We’re going to hire similar folks to do what OPM has done,” he said. “We’re going to try to replicate their network. How much money we save overall depends on if we can replicate it exactly. We’re fairly confident that, given time, we can.

“Once we replicate it and we can provide the same level of service that OPM currently provides, we’ll start evaluating the efficiencies,” Hill said. “Are (MET sites) in the correct locations? Maybe we’ve got two that are too close together and we only need one, things like that.”

Impact on the testing staff in MEPS should be minimal, Hill said. The test control officer will supervise the test administrators. The biggest adjustment will be getting paperwork to them, a task that OPM handles now.

“In reality, Hill said, “The test coordinator in the MEPS will do the scheduling. Instead of dealing with an OPM area coordinator who supervises

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The idea is to provide the same level of support to our recruiting partners, and that’s what we’re going to do.

– Don Hill, chief of the testing division, USMEPCOM Operations

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their TAs, we’ll be dealing with the TAs directly. It’s kind of taking the middle man out of the process. That should be a little more efficient in and of itself.”

“The TC, right now is doing everything except contacting the TAs directly,” Hill said. “If the person we hire has a computer, they’ll send them the paperwork and maybe make a quick phone call to say ‘I just sent you some stuff,’ or call them and say, ‘Before I send you stuff, here’s what I’m looking at for scheduling. Will that work?’”

Hill said there will be little or no effect on the overall testing program.

“I don’t see any, per se,” he said. “The idea is to provide the same level of support to our recruiting partners, and that’s what we’re going to do. As we work toward some efficiencies, we may invoke some slight changes in some small rural schools.

“We have a process in Alaska where we send them the materials, they give them the test and send it all back. We may start using something like that in remote, rural schools. It’s an option we’ll probably invoke after we establish the network.”

Flexibility to meet changing needs and being able to adjust to possible changes when the Virtual Interactive Processing System comes online were also considerations in bringing the testing program in house.

“Because of the current recruiting environment, our testing volume has dropped dramatically,” Hill said. “Some of the MET sites are testing less often; some are to be closed due

to nonuse. We have to make sure we don’t shrink our infrastructure down too far and then (have to) expand it again with limited resources.

“We all realize we are in a unique environment and can’t build a system for this environment,” he said, “knowing the economy will eventually turn around and recruiting will get more difficult again. Then we have to have a larger footprint or larger infrastructure than we currently have.”

“We’ll always be able to hire folks,” Hill said. “You have that billet. We would always have the flexibility to bring more people on board.”

The MET sites are not only cost effective, they provide an invaluable service to recruiters.

“It’s almost a two to one cost to bring all applicants into the MEPS to test versus having them test locally at a MET site,” Hill said. “The recruiter isn’t prospecting, he’s a bus driver. We need to have the local sites available for the recruiters.

“With VIPS,” he said, “there are some things coming, but we aren’t there yet, so we have to continue with the current system.”

Taking advantage of VIPS’ capabilities may require using existing computers in National Guard armories, and the command is working with Reserve centers and some community colleges, Hill said.

Hill is confident bringing the testing mission fully under USMEPCOM control will be successful and benefit the command.

“It’s going to be a challenge to get there,” he said, “but once we’ve got all the employees it will be a pretty good system. We will control our own destiny then and it will be a whole lot cheaper. That’s the bottom line.”

“

When you start doing some math, that’s a whole lot of savings.

– Don Hill, chief of the testing division, USMEPCOM Operations

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Suggestions anyone?

By Christine Parker
Messenger Editor

Have you ever thought of an idea — related to the Army — that could save lives, money or time? There's a program for that.

The Army Suggestion Program exists to encourage military members and civilians to submit ideas that will increase efficiency and reduce costs in the Army. Suggesters can receive cash awards up to \$25,000.

Who can submit ideas to the Army Suggestion Program?

Any person or group concerned with the welfare of the Army and the nation. This includes all members of the military community — uniformed and civilian — or any private citizen.

Who is eligible to receive a cash incentive for a suggestion?

Although any person or group can submit a suggestion, only military members and certain groups of civilian employees are eligible to receive incentives (see box titled, "Award Eligibility"). If the Army adopts an idea from someone who is not eligible to receive a cash award, the local command can present them with appropriate non-cash gifts.

How do I submit a suggestion?

If you want to submit a suggestion, go to the web site named at the bottom of page 9. The site walks you through the process.

You have the choice to sign in (authenticate) with either your common access card or through Army Knowledge Online. Signing in with a CAC is automatic. If you sign in through AKO, you will need your AKO user name and password.

After signing in, the site is self-explanatory.

What happens after a submission is made?

After submission, a subject matter expert will evaluate the idea. If the idea pertains to an Army topic, a



SME within the Army will evaluate it. If the idea is related to military processing or a USMEPCOM process, the ASP system will forward the idea (via AKO) to the USMEPCOM ASP coordinator. Then the coordinator will forward it to the appropriate command SME for that topic and they will evaluate it.

If the SME/evaluator is able to do so, they will make a disposition of adoption, non-adoption or approval for testing. Then it goes on from there.

Award Eligibility

People eligible to receive cash awards include:

- Direct-hire Army civilians who are paid from appropriated funds
- Active duty Soldiers
- Army Reserve members in an active reserve status; including Army National Guard members in federal service (under 10 USC orders)
- Non-Army federal employees paid from appropriated funds
- Military members in the Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard
- Retired or otherwise separated employees and Soldiers whose ideas were entered into the ASP system while they were in an eligible status

Throughout the process, the Army can examine all submitted suggestions, including those forwarded to USMEPCOM. And, the Army can review how long it's taking for a SME to review a suggestion.

If an idea is adopted, how does the incentive part work?

If an idea is adopted, the suggester can receive a cash incentive up to \$25,000. Army auditors must review awards for more than \$10,000.

If a suggestion saves the Army up to \$10,000, the suggester will receive a 10 percent award of the savings. A chart within Army Regulation 5-17 defines the awards for savings of more than \$10,000. For example, a suggester would receive an award of \$2,200 for a savings of \$50,000; a \$5,200 award for a \$400,000 savings; and a \$25,000 award for a savings of \$4,360,000 or greater.

Does the idea need to pertain to the suggester's work?

Absolutely not! In fact, a suggester is not able to receive an award for a suggestion within the scope of their job description. This stipulation encourages people to think beyond their area of responsibility.

How can a person receive a USMEPCOM Army Suggestion Program hat, mug or duffel bag?

The Army allows commands to use appropriated funds to purchase inexpensive items to promote the Army Suggestion Program. USMEPCOM personnel who submit ideas to the ASP can receive one of the items, e.g., a command mug or duffel bag.

Does anyone at USMEPCOM see my submission?

Yes. The ASP system assigns a number to all suggestions, and the number is used for tracking purposes. Also, when someone from USMEPCOM submits an idea, the system sends an e-mail to Michele Chambers, notifying her that the submission was made. Throughout the process, Chambers, the submitter and the Department of the Army can track the suggestion by its number.



Michele Chambers is USMEPCOM's Army Suggestion Program coordinator. She is a management analyst in the Management Branch, Manpower and Management Division, Resource Management (J-8). Her phone number is (847) 688-3680, Ext. 7355.

How many suggestions do command personnel submit?

For the first quarter of 2011, headquarters employees have made two suggestions. In 2010, MEPS submitted 13 suggestions and headquarters submitted one. In 2009, MEPS submitted 15 suggestions and headquarters submitted two.

Chambers would like to see an increase in submissions. She explains that the program gives all USMEPCOM employees the opportunity to improve present policy, practices and regulatory constraints.

How old is the Army Suggestion Program?

It was established in 1917, and became public law in 1954. In 1990, the Army penned Army Regulation 5-17, The Army Ideas for Excellence Program. The program's name reflected the regulation's title from 1990 until 2002, when the Army renamed it the Army Suggestion Program.

To submit a suggestion, begin at:

<https://asp.hqda.pentagon.mil/public/default.htm> *

* This address will offer the choice of authentication with CAC or AKO. You may choose either. The next screen will offer "Submit a Suggestion."

Command's Good Idea Program focuses on ...

Processing

By Christine Parker
Messenger Editor

It's ironic that there's debate about who was the first person to say, "There are no original ideas. There are only original people." Was it author Barbara Grizzuti Harrison, Eleanor Roosevelt, or another? Maybe it proves the theory itself.

And, for example, who brought us automobiles? Henry Ford? The man who revolutionized car manufacturing, beginning in 1908? Or Karl Friedrich Benz, who received a German patent for a gasoline automobile in about 1885? Or was it really Leonardo Da Vinci, born in 1452, who designed a wooden, self-propelled vehicle? When scientists built a replica in 2004, they found it worked as Da Vinci intended.

Does it matter who's first? Or is it more important to keep improving? The intent of USMEPCOM's Good Idea Program is just that — to continue improving the business of processing applicants for the armed forces.

Theresa Morris, chief, Current Operations Division, knows exactly who invented the command's Good Idea Program. Marine Corps Col. Lon Yeary was USMEPCOM's fourteenth commander, after he had been the command's Inspector General. Like others, he visited MEPS throughout the nation.

"The MEPS personnel bent his ear," Morris said. "It (the program) was Colonel Yeary's brainchild."

Since the ideas were to be about improving operations, Yeary asked the Operations Directorate (J-3) to

design a program that allowed personnel to submit suggestions to headquarters, and have their ideas staffed and tracked. He wanted the system to ensure idea submitters could stay informed about their idea's review progress as well.

According to Morris, they originally tried to incorporate the program into the Army Suggestion Program, but that didn't allow the command to monitor and control it. Something did exist that would make the program visible — the MEPCOM Operations Center, or MOC "eye," an icon located in the command's e-mail toolbar.

"It (the MOC eye) has the visibility, it's efficient, effective and it enables a person to track their idea."

So, in 2006, the USMEPCOM Good Idea Program began. "There are some parameters," Morris said. "The ideas must apply to improving some aspect of applicant processing."

Policy Memo 2-1, dated Feb. 11, explains the program. The memo is available on the MEPNET (next to the MOC eye in the command's e-mail toolbar). At the main page of the MEPNET, under the heading "Dashboard," click on Command Policy Memorandums, open the Word document, then control click on Memo 2-1.

The good ideas have been rolling in since 2006. Morris recounts when Sherri Widermyre visited her office and said, "I have a good idea." Morris said Widermyre asked whether or not people were receiving recognition for their good ideas. At the time, it wasn't being done, so Morris replied, "Good idea, Sherri, submit it!"

Widermyre, who works in the Human Resources (J-1) Directorate, submitted the idea and received a certificate for it.

USMEPCOM's fifteenth commander, Air Force Col. Mariano C. Campos Jr. gave the program more visibility when he decided to begin sending out a USMEPCOM coin with the certificate.

Since the beginning of the program, the MOC has received 289 good ideas, something they refer to as "GIDS." Of those 289, the command has implemented 40. In total, they've closed out 243, and they are staffing more and more each day.

Command personnel have submitted ideas on a variety of processing-related subjects. For example, Aaron Sorensen, Salt Lake City human resources assistant, noticed that it takes a long time to individually print all the documents in e-Orders. The command implemented Sorensen's idea to create a button for "Print All" in version 2 of e-Orders.

Another example of a good idea is when Capt. Ian Lynch from Detroit MEPS suggested all MEPS use a DVD recording of the pre-oath briefing. Later that year, the headquarters mailed out two such DVDs to all MEPS.

When someone submits a good idea, within five minutes, the MOC eye (system) generates an e-mail stating the request number, and that it was opened. The next e-mail will indicate the request was successfully created, and that the MOC sent the idea to a subject matter expert, for review. According to Robert McLean, MOC chief, "They're taken seriously. When you submit an idea, it's given a lot of thought."

At a minimum, either a director, deputy director or special staff member must decide to either implement or not implement an idea before the Operations Directorate closes it out. "They (the ideas) get the highest level of visibility," McLean said.

Morris agrees. "I think an individual wants to be able to submit an idea and trust that it will be thoroughly staffed and addressed. When they hit that button (in the MOC eye), we have to respond. The idea is not going to get buried in the virtual file 13."

Idea submitters can review all the ideas that have been submitted on the MEPNET. At the main page, choose Headquarters, J-3/MOP, Links and Resources, and scroll down to Current Operations Division Links and Resources, and then to the document titled, "GIDS." The Excel document contains pages entitled, "closed-not implemented GIDS," "pending GIDS," and "closed-implemented GIDS."

McLean asks submitters to review the ideas that have been submitted, in order to determine if the idea was previously submitted. Resolution time for good ideas varies, depending on the complexity of the subject.

Every two weeks, the Current Operations Division reports the status of GIDS to the Operations director. Only the director or deputy director can close out a good idea.

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It (the MOC eye) has the visibility, it's efficient, effective and it enables a person to track their idea.

– Theresa Morris
Chief, Current Operations Division

”

How's the program going? "Excellent," Morris said. "We have our peaks and valleys," McLean added. He explained that the peaks usually follow the commander's visits to MEPS. Incidentally, the USMEPCOM commander receives a trip book that includes information about the MEPS, including their GIDS, before he visits a MEPS.

According to McLean, lately, many idea submissions have been related to information technology. The command is still using USMIRS — the U.S. MEPCOM Integrated Resource System — even though it has become a legacy system, one that is outdated but still functions, even through newer technology or more efficient methods are available. And because the command is still using MIRS, while designing its future IT system — the Virtual Information Processing System — the MOC must turn away IT-related ideas to improve USMIRS. However, they will review and staff good ideas for VIPs.

And how does the command's good idea program compare to the Army Suggestion Program (featured on pages 8-9)? The primary difference is that the idea submitter can receive money if the Army implements a suggestion made through the Army Suggestion Program. However, the Army's program is for the entire Army, and this can lead to a more lengthy evaluation process.

So, if you have a good idea, which program fits best? "It's their choice," Morris said. "If someone wants to consider the time factor, I think they will use the GIDS. If they're interested in a cash award, they can use the formal Army program." Or, a person can submit their idea to both programs. "Ours is more directly related to processing," McLean added.

When an idea is approved for implementation, Pat Halvey, J-3, coordinates and sends the USMEPCOM certificate and coin to the MEPS commander or director/special staff. Halvey emphasized the importance of presenting the certificate and coin in a suitable, honorable way.

Everyone brings a unique perspective to their job. With that perspective comes new ideas. Is there a way to improve the way the command accomplishes its mission? A new technique? Form? Tool? It's easy to submit an idea.

"We want folks to use it!" Morris said. McLean added, "If someone hasn't already submitted the idea, give it a try."

More than 50 mentor- mentee relationships approach one-year mark

By Christine Parker
Messenger Editor

Last August, a small team at headquarters launched a formal mentorship pilot program. As its first “birthday” approaches, the group will evaluate what’s working and then take the program to the next level.

The *Messenger*, Vol. 32, No. 2, printed in July 2010, included a four-page feature on the mentorship program. The article spelled out details about its creation, gave definitions and discussed the benefits of participating — for both the individual and organization. *Messengers* are available on the command’s web site (www.mepcom.army.mil) and the MEPNET main page, lower right corner.

Caroline Oncken, Facilities (J-4) Directorate, was a member of the program’s initial planning team. She built the SharePoint site for it, publishes the Mentoring Matters newsletter and has planned various related activities. Recently, she completed a mid-year evaluation of the pilot, and some personal responses are included in the gray boxes throughout this article. She said the mid-year evaluation produced a lot of positive comments and feedback.



Mid-Year Review

“Almost everyone agreed their mentoring experiences were beneficial,” Oncken said. “Many of the comments were related to meeting strategies — how often people met, the methodology ... time was a big factor. But we want to encourage people to do whatever it takes to get together for mentoring.”

Participants found that time was a greater factor than distance in a successful mentorship relationship. Thirty percent of the “matches” met weekly, 30 percent met bi-weekly and the rest were scattered. Eighty percent of mentors felt meeting times were just right and 50 percent of mentees agreed.

At the mid-year evaluation, 68 people were participating as mentees and 57 as mentors. Six percent of the command’s senior leaders are participating in the program — 5 percent senior military and 1 percent senior civilians.

Overall, 65 percent of participants are from MEPS, and 35 percent are from headquarters and sectors. Sixty-two percent of the pairs are geographically separated.

“At the beginning we had a lot of people apply, so we considered demographics, vocation and skills, experi-

Why did you participate in the mentoring program?

“Establishing a relationship with someone who has been in the organization helps when you need advice, assistance or information about the current work climate.”

— Test Control Officer

What were the strengths of the program?

“It helps you focus on career management and personal goals. It makes you accountable.”

—*Management Analyst*

“The linkup of mentor and mentee. This part of the program enabled me to be assigned a mentee that I was able to help rather than me trying to find a mentee, only to later determine that I wasn’t the best mentor for that person.”

—*Information Technology Specialist*

“Lots of focus, effort, and attention, with easy-to-use and available tools.”

—*MEPS Commander*

“I have an excellent mentor who pushes me to advance in weak areas by both coursework and on-the-job practice, and gives excellent advice.”

—*Management Analyst*

“Networking and leadership training.”

—*Human Resources Assistant*

“Ability to connect with more experienced personnel who have other contacts and could guide me toward more information.”

—*Budget Tech*

“Knowledge sharing. I am really learning a lot from my mentor.”

—*Management Analyst*

“The program is well-organized with pertinent information, activities, and opportunities for training and networking. The monthly newsletter is awesome!”

—*Education Services Specialist*

http://sharepoint/mentoring

ence, interests and background,” Oncken said.

At the mid-year point, when most of the matches had been made, it was a little more difficult to make pairs because there were less people to match. “So right now they’re on hold,” Oncken said. “We don’t want to just throw people together. They should be matched, based on their needs, experience, things like that.”

The matched pairs are remaining together for the entire first year and can remain a pair, if they so choose.

“Absolutely,” Oncken said. “By all means, pairs can stay together past the first year. However, she will ask them to evaluate the first year, for the sake of the program.”

“It’s good to have a closure,” she said. One year is good, and a mentor-mentee relationship should progress and continue. Some pairs will even become lifetime relationships.

The mid-year feedback indicated the three most beneficial tools were the Civilian Leader Improvement Battery, or CLIMB (offered online at <http://www.123assess.com/climb/home.do>), education opportunities and career management. The CLIMB measures leadership competencies and identifies training suited to a person’s strengths and weaknesses. An individual and their supervisor or mentor independently completes portions of the CLIMB. It generates several tailored feedback reports designed to help interpret the results and focus on the individual’s most important leadership competencies and choose training information for areas on which to focus.

The mid-year review also showed that many people observed senior leadership must be engaged and supportive in order for the mentorship program to be successful.

Also, mentors expressed a need for more training on how to mentor. So, Pat Moore and Jennifer Kim, the Eastern and Western Sector education services specialists, built a mentorship tutorial that Human Resources (J-1) is currently reviewing. The tutorial will be available on the SharePoint site soon. ➔

What improvements would you make to the mentoring program?

“To devote more time during work hours to participate and to encourage more supervisors and managers to mentor. Invite mentees to senior leadership meetings to get a flavor of what happens at the top.”

—*Senior Budget Analyst*

“I sense that not all mentors are as motivated/experienced as mine, perhaps more training for them to give them more direction on what to do? I could be wrong, but I have heard others say they hardly ever hear from their mentors. I do not have this misfortune, however .”

—*Management Analyst*

<http://sharepoint/mentoring>



What were two of the most beneficial developmental activities?

“The CLIMB Assessment and the training he recommended; Action Officer Course.”

— *Management analyst*

“The courses; ‘Mentoring Effectively’ and ‘The Mentoring Manager’ (available through Skillsoft).”

“I provided my mentee with a position description and qualification standards for a specific job series. I encouraged her to have her college transcripts reviewed for her post-secondary educational plans.”

— *Education Services Specialist*

Getting started

If you’re interested in checking out the program, go to <http://sharepoint/mentoring>. The main page includes a link to full details of the program at “Start Here.” Next, choose the “Step by Step Guide,” which offers more information about the program and links to either a mentor or mentee application (or both). And, Oncken is willing to field questions as well. You can reach her at (847) 688-3680, Ext. 7264.

Oncken thought SharePoint would be a great vehicle for the mentorship program. She was hoping the site would give people a place to connect.

“When I created the site, I wanted it to be similar to Facebook — a social network,” Oncken said. “It doesn’t look like Facebook, and I don’t think it’s been used that way,” she continued. “But I think that’s because people don’t really know about it.”

She hasn’t received much feedback stating the SharePoint site isn’t working. “If people have problems with it, I hope they’ll let me know,” she said.

What new or improved skills and/or insight or knowledge did you gain?

“It improved my time organizational skills and meeting preparation skills.”

“The multitude of courses available (many for free) in so many different areas, and the importance of being assertive as well as saying ‘no’ in order to get the most important tasks done.”

— *Management Analyst*

“

I found out how easy it is to encourage someone and how thirsty people are for knowledge.

— The insight gained by a mentor

”

The SharePoint site offers a book club. To get started, the site recommends three titles, “The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership” by John C. Maxwell “Good to Great,” by Jim Collins and “Gung Ho!” by Ken Blanchard and Sheldon Bowles. The first two should be available at

What is the most beneficial change you have identified in yourself as a result of participating in the program?

“I know I have to complete my ‘homework’ and I make time to do it! It is also nice to interface with others in your career series who can offer guidance and their own experience to assist you in growing professionally. There is a wealth of knowledge and experience in USMEPCOM that can be utilized by ‘newcomers’ to USMEPCOM like myself.”

—*Management Analyst*

“As a leader I feel self-fulfilled and empowered to help others.”

“Self motivation remains essential.”

“I want to help more.”

—*Management Analyst*

“I so enjoyed meeting (my mentee)! Also, I strongly advocate for the continuation of the Mentoring Program to assist employees navigate an ever-changing workplace.”

—*Education Services Specialist*

“

My mentor spent time and effort in researching ways to better my skills via online classes, off-site training and training relevant to my personal and professional goals.

— The insight gained by a mentee

”

MEPS. A fourth book suggestion is “Who Moved My Cheese,” by Spencer Johnson. If you’ve read any of the books, help the online discussion grow!

Brown Bag Events

Since the program began, Oncken has coordinated various “Mentoring Matters” brown bag lunches with speakers. In October, they held a program orientation, and in November and January, they discussed personality types. They made the presentations available as meetings on Defense Connect Online and the recordings are still available on the program’s site, <http://sharepoint/mentoring>.

Since then, they have held two more brown bag lunches. In March, Ted Hagert, Operations (J-3), spoke on the topic of career exploration and, in April, Dan Jostes, J-1, spoke about career development. On April 28, administrative assistants from headquarters and sectors met for a question and answer session.

The next brown bag lunch topics include communication, public speaking and change. Kimberly Glanton, Resource Management (J-8), will give her views on effective communication, Jeff Arthur, J-8, will offer oral presentation tips, and Warren Nelson, Strategic Planning and Transformation (J-5), will discuss change management.

“We’ve got a lot of things in the works,” Oncken said. “I think the main thing that would be beneficial

to the program is to put a call out there for people who can speak as a subject matter expert for one of the brown bag events.

Mentors and mentees are the heart of the program, but Oncken suggests that people can participate even if they can’t make a lengthy commitment.

“They can participate as a speaker on an issue or skill — something they feel passionate about,” she said.

Since they’re using DCO as a means to share the message throughout the command, speakers can come from anywhere. Could someone from a MEPS speak at a brown bag event? “That would be wonderful,” Oncken said.

What feedback or assistance did you receive that you believe was the most beneficial?

“The brown bag lunches gave me the opportunity to see what other mentors did and to get ideas of how the formal program worked.”

“Our online conversations helped to accomplish some of the goals he laid out.

—*Human Resources Assistant*

Commander introduces new recognition

By Christine Parker
Messenger Editor

When Capt. Eric W. Johnson took command of USMEPCOM, he brought the Great Job sticker. During his travels to MEPS, and at the headquarters and sectors, Johnson hands out these stickers to recognize a job well done.

Although it's only an inch and a half wide, leave it to civilian and military personnel rules to make the little sticker complex!

The command's Policy Memorandum 6-19 explains procedures about the use of the sticker and its related awards. The policy is a supplement to USMEPCOM Regulation 600-25, Civilian and Military Personnel – USMEPCOM Awards Program (UAP for those of you who love acronyms). The regulation is dated October 1, 2010.

Also, it's good to know about DA Form 1256 – Incentive Award Nomination and Approval, the Standard Form 52, aka RPA, or Request for Personnel Action, and the acronym TOA – not to be confused with a toad – but rather the Time-Off Award.

OK, with the memo, regulation, form and acronyms named, this is how it works.

When Capt. Johnson decides someone deserves one, he hands the Great Job sticker to the employee and they usually smile, because they've just received a day off (unless they love their job so much they don't want a day off).

At this point, there's a fork in the road for civilian and military personnel.

Military personnel who receive a sticker will receive a one-day pass/liberty (and not the vehicle made by Jeep). They must coordinate this day off through their immediate supervisor and document the day off in accordance with the appropriate service leave/pass regulations (that means Soldiers can't follow the Navy's regs, etc.) And, that one day pass/liberty can be taken in conjunction with the ever-popular weekend. But remember – document, document, document.

Now it branches off again. Another fork, because there are



different procedures for civilians, based on their location!

When a civilian employee who works at a MEPS receives a Great Job sticker, their supervisor needs to submit an award packet to the MEPS headquarters section. That packet will include the DA Form 1256 and documentation stating the employee received the sticker. Then, the MEPS headquarters section needs to fill out the SF 52, or RPA for the 8-hour TOA (told you learning the acronyms would help).

When a civilian from headquarters or sectors receives a sticker, their supervisor needs to submit an award packet to Human Resources (J-1) Civilian Personnel Division. Just like the MEPS packet, it should contain DA Form 1256 and documentation stating the employee received the sticker. Finally, good news – CPD will fill out the SF 52, aka RPA, for the 8-hour TOA (croak).

And, remember, civilians can request to use the TOA only after it is reflected on their leave and earnings statement. And, by all means, civilians must comply with appropriate procedures to request to use the TOA.

Basically, those are the procedures. And, if you have any questions, CPD is just a phone call away at (847) 688-3680, Ext. 7204 for Ed Edge and Ext. 7206 for Paula Rivera.

Documents

Policy Memorandum 6-19 – Go to the MEPNET, Dashboard, Command Policy Memorandums

USMEPCOM Regulation 600-25 – Go to the MEPNET, Dashboard, Publications, Regulations

DA Form 1256 and SF 52 – Go to the Army Publishing Directorate web site –

<http://www.apd.army.mil/AdminPubs/ProductMap.asp>



Adm. Mike Mullen autographs his official photo at Boise MEPS.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff visits Boise

By Lt. Emily Klossner
Boise MEPS Assistant Operations Officer

It was no ordinary enlistment ceremony for eight people joining the armed forces April 4 at the Boise MEPS.

Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, administered the oath of enlistment in front of a crowd of parents, friends, recruiters and MEPS staff members.

Mullen was in Boise as part of a national tour, "Conversations with the Country." Mullen is touring the country to stay connected with the American people.

Mullen stopped by the MEPS during his visit to Boise.

As Mullen posed for pictures with each applicant he gave them a chairman's coin with some specific guidelines.

"Don't show this coin to anyone at basic training because no one will believe you," he warned, "and don't use it at the pub to get free drinks."

Mullen also thanked the MEPS staff members for their service to the country in uncertain times.

Strategic Command's Major General Turner visits Omaha

Maj. Gen. Abraham J. Turner, chief of staff for United States Strategic Command, Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., made a special visit to Omaha MEPS to serve as a guest enlistment officer.

He is the principal advisor to USTRATCOM's commander and deputy commander and directs the command staff's activities by developing and implementing policies and procedures in support of the command's missions. He chairs numerous boards, oversees the command corporate process and is director of the commander's staff.

Turner is preparing for retirement after a 35-year Army career. His passion for his country, service and career led him to give some words of wisdom to a group of shippers who were about to depart the Omaha MEPS for basic training.



During his visit to Omaha MEPS as a guest enlistment officer, Maj. Gen. Abraham J. Turner, who is nearing retirement after a 35-year career, encouraged shippers to appreciate the opportunity to serve their country.

He first thanked the parents and guests for supporting their loved ones' decision to join the military. He made it clear that the shippers are joining an extended family and will be different people when basic training is over.

Turner encouraged the shippers to appreciate the opportunity to serve the country, as basic training is the first step to becoming part of the military's history and legacy.

After completing the enlistment ceremony, Turner toured MEPS to meet to the staff and liaisons.

— Room dedicated to uncle that is Medal of Honor recipient from Battle of Mogadishu

Man fulfills intention to follow in uncle's footsteps

MEPS don't create or develop warriors and heroes, but they do help future warriors and heroes begin their journey.

Recently the Portland, Maine, MEPS had the honor of helping

the nephew of a fallen hero start his journey. Devin Littlefield is the nephew of Master Sgt. Gary Ivan Gordon, one of the two Medal of Honor recipients from the Battle of Mogadishu.

said Senior Master Sgt. Terry Spoon, Portland MEPS senior enlisted advisor. "I was extremely proud of my staff and the U.S. Army liaison staff for the professionalism they exhibited in processing Mr. Littlefield.

Two years ago, Littlefield attended the ceremony at which Portland MEPS dedicated its ceremony room to Gordon.

After the ceremony, he told the station staff that he intended to follow his uncle's footsteps when the opportunity arose.

That day arrived on March 31.

"His excitement was contagious,"

"The humility and reverence of (Littlefield) and his family for the sacrifice of Master Sergeant Gordon was evident because no one asked for any special treatment," Spoon said. "They were the example we all strive to be."

Littlefield chose to become an Army cavalry scout. He is scheduled to ship Sept. 13.

"We will be here to welcome him back on his ship date and wish him the best of luck in his new endeavor," Spoon said.

"Our job is to process applicants," he said. "but it is always stirring to realize how much each of our individual efforts contribute to the future success of each service and each individual service member. My staff and I are grateful for the opportunity to serve as a conduit for individuals to become warriors and heroes of the future."



Recruiters Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Barnes (left) and Staff Sgt. Forrest Bellew (right) pose for a photo to mark Devin Littlefield's enlistment.

Twins, sister are first in family to join the Navy

By Adrian Roberson
Tampa MEPS

Three young women — Yarenis, Yesenia and Yaralis DeJesus enlisted in the Navy at Tampa MEPS on April 6.

Yesenia and Yarenis are twins, and Yaralis is their younger sister. The three are the first in their family to serve in the military.

When asked why they joined, their responses varied — from wanting to serve their country and further their education, and the opportunity to travel the world, to the current state of the economy.

The twins entered into the Delayed Entry Program as undesignated airmen, they will attend aviation apprenticeship training and then move to a home port of San Diego. Yaralis entered into the DEP and received an avionics rating. The Navy liaisons ensured the sisters will ship on the same date so they can complete basic training together.



(Left to right) Yaralis, Yarenis and Yesenia DeJesus enlist in the Navy.

The young women's parents said they were filled with mixed emotions — happy and excited for them, yet sad to see their three daughters leave.



(Below) Lt. Col. T.J. Edwards administers the oath of enlistment to Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Texas Army National Guard applicants in front of more than 10,000 minor league baseball fans at Dr. Pepper Ball Park in Frisco, Texas (Left).

Photos by James Garner



Dallas partners with community to ensure first-rate Memorial Day event

The Dallas MEPS observed Memorial Day weekend by partnering with military, veteran and community groups.

The MEPS conducted an oath of enlistment ceremony at Dr. Pepper Ball Park in Frisco, Texas. Ninth Battalion and Dallas MEPS Commander, Lt. Col. T.J. Edwards, administered the oath. He swore in applicants from the Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Texas Army National Guard in front of more than 10,000 minor league baseball fans as the Frisco RoughRiders played the Tulsa Drillers. The RoughRiders are the double-A affiliate of the Texas Rangers.

Immediately following the singing of the National Anthem, a bugler played "Taps" and the crowd's attention was directed toward a fallen soldier's memorial in the ball park's right field. The crowd was reverently silent throughout the ceremony.

The MEPS partnered with groups including American Legion Post #21, the U.S. Sea Cadets, Fort Hood's 1st Cavalry Horse Detachment and the Paralyzed Veterans of America. The groups were a part of the pre-game ceremonies.

The MEPS also coordinated a flyover by a Vietnam-era OH-13D Sioux helicopter, provided by the Cavanaugh Flight Museum in Addison, Texas.



Fort Hood's 1st Cavalry Horse Detachment.



Members of the Paralyzed Veterans of America.



Lt. Col. T.J. Edwards throws the ceremonial first pitch to start the game.

General calls Boise commander back to Kuwait for his protocol expertise



Adm. Mike Mullen (right) presents Boise MEPS Commander, Maj. Jeffrey Rosa with a coin during Mullen's visit to Kuwait. Rosa's former boss called him back to Kuwait to provide protocol support for a significant celebratory event there.

By Skip Wiseman
 Messenger Associate Editor

Just as he was settling in to his new position as commander of the Boise MEPS, Maj. Jeffrey Rosa's previous assignment reached out and presented a new, if temporary, challenge.

Before assuming command of the Boise MEPS in June 2010, Rosa was the chief of protocol for the Office of Military Cooperation at the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait. His former boss, Brig. Gen. Gregory Touhill, asked him to return to provide protocol support for Kuwait's celebration of the 50th anniversary of its independence and the 20th anniversary of its liberation by coalition forces after it was invaded by Iraq. Touhill was chief of the office of military cooperation.

"Because of the 50/20 celebration, they had way too many distinguished visitors arriving in country because we only had a two-person protocol shop," Rosa said. "They

reached out to me because they knew I could come back. I had only been gone nine months. I already knew the area and had the connections, so it was easy for them to bring me back."

When he arrived Feb. 13, Rosa wasn't sure which distinguished visitor he would handle, but he had plenty of experience dealing with high-ranking visitors. During his tour, Rosa's shop planned and executed visits from the Secretary of State, three and four star military officers, senators, Vice President-elect Joe Biden and a senator named Barack Obama when he was running for president.

For the 50/20 celebration, Rosa was tasked to make arrangements

for Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the senior U.S. representative for the celebration.

"I had already handled his visits four times before," Rosa said. "I was familiar with his staff and his requirements. They knew they could hand it to me and I could take it on."

Not that it was easy. Although Mullen was only there two days, Rosa said he worked 16-20 hours a day for two weeks preparing for the visit.

"I coordinated and executed everything connected with the visit," Rosa said. "Aircraft arrival, lodging, security, requests for meeting through the embassy, all those sorts of things."

Once the celebration began, the atmosphere was festive.

"This is like their Fourth of July," Rosa said. "The entire country was in celebration. Everybody was off work. The motorcade was interesting because we drove down the road where all the celebrations were. It was kind of like being in a parade. I had never experienced that before."

During his visit, Mullen had an office call with the Kuwaiti prime minister along with former secretaries of state James Baker and Colin Powell, breakfast with the U.S. Ambassador and other distinguished visitors, lunch with the crown prince, an office call with the minister of defense and attended a performance of the national opera. Amid all of it was the main event.

"We went up into the desert for the Grand Military Parade, the largest parade they had ever put together," Rosa said. "All the Gulf states and some coalition forces partici-

“ Jeff was invaluable. He was the lead for the chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff and ... did a fabulous job.

— Brig. Gen. Gregory Touhill

”

pated. It was attended by Kuwait's senior government officials and coalition officials. Tony Blair (former English prime minister) was there and there were 60 heads of state."

Touhill praised Rosa's performance in an e-mail to Col. Charles Dunston, then USMEPCOM's Western Sector commander.

"Jeff was invaluable!" Touhill wrote. "He was the lead for the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and ... did a fabulous job."

Rosa got another bonus in addition to receiving a coin from the admiral. He knew Mullen was going to visit Boise soon as part of his "Conversations with the Country" series of speeches and appearances.

He mentioned a possible visit to the MEPS to the admiral's aide and followed up with an e-mail. The aide talked to Mullen and they visited the MEPS where the admiral met the staff and swore in several applicants (story on page 17).



Dignitaries, officials and U.S. military personnel pose for a photo during Kuwait's celebration of the 50th anniversary of its independence and the 20th anniversary of its liberation by coalition forces after it was invaded by Iraq. Photo includes (front row, fourth from left) James Baker, (sixth from left) Adm. Mike Mullen, (fifth from right) Colin Powell, and (back row, farthest right) Brig. Gen. Gregory Touhill.

Boise staff lead flag dedication that honors Senator McClure

By Maj. Christopher B. Williams
Boise MEPS Operations Officer

Military members from Boise, Idaho, carried out a proud military tradition March 3 by lowering and raising the flag at the James A. McClure Federal Building.

A detail of two soldiers, five sailors a Marine and an airman from the Boise MEPS and Boise Navy Recruiting Station lowered and folded the American Flag to be presented to Senator McClure's family. A new flag was raised as employees and guests looked on.

The detail was led by Lt. Emily J. Klossner, Boise MEPS assistant operation officer, and 1st Sgt. John H. Mayton, MEPS senior enlisted advisor.

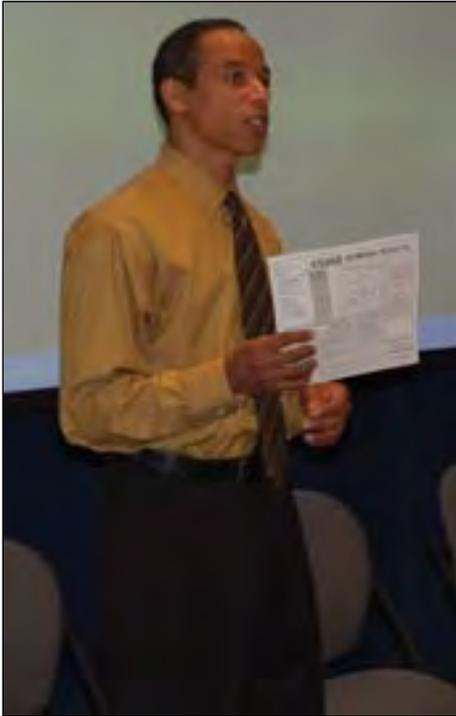
Senator McClure died Feb. 26, 2011, at the age of 86. President George W. Bush signed into law a Senate bill Dec. 12, 2001, which designated the federal building



Military members from the Boise area lower the American flag in honor of Senator James A. McClure, before presenting it to McClure's family.

and U.S. courthouse in Boise as the James A. McClure Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse.

Spreading the word about the Career Exploration Program — A win for all — the community, and military recruiting and processing



Dennis Holman gives a presentation on the ASVAB Career Exploration Program at a community event.

By Vernetta Garcia
Public Affairs Specialist
Army Recruiting Battalion Columbia

On May 4, Dennis Holman, Fort Jackson MEPS test coordinator, discussed the ASVAB with members of Midlands Education and Business Alliance during a military workshop.

Commander of the Columbia Recruiting Battalion, Lt. Col. Chuck White and area recruiters discussed their Army stories as well as the eligibility and benefits of military service.

“The military workshop was a great success. The educators came away with valuable information to better assist students and parents,” said Stacey Westbury, Professional Development Director/Regional Career Specialist for MEBA.

Editor’s Note

This was the first time someone from Fort Jackson MEPS spoke at this

type of event for MEBA, an organization that connects businesses, communities and education systems in three counties near Columbia, S.C. Founded in 1990 as part of the state-wide Tech Prep initiative, over time, MEBA has evolved into a non-profit organization.

The attendees were educators from various parts of the state. Holman’s presentation was geared toward the value of the ASVAB Career Exploration Program for all students, not just those interested in military careers.

“The benefit to MEPCOM is the marketing of the program to educators we typically may not have contact with, such as counselors and/or principals from schools in which we don’t currently test,” said Holman, who’s worked for USMEPCOM for more than 18 years.

Following the presentation, Holman received several requests for more information about scheduling the ASVAB.

Commander begins program to recognize recruiters

By Janice Carson
Portland, Ore., Education Services Specialist

There’s no doubt that recruiters play an important role in supporting USMEPCOM’s student testing mission. The Portland, Ore., MEPS commander found a way to recognize this role.

Maj. Kevin Kerby, the Portland MEPS commander, has begun a “Recruiter Recognition Program” that awards certificates of achievement to recruiters for outstanding contributions to the ASVAB Career Exploration Program.

The recruiting services assist in gaining ASVAB CEP acceptance at non-testing schools, providing logistical support for off-site testing and conducting online career seminars.

“Their support shows their dedication and commitment of the recruiting services to the program,” Kerby said.



Portland, Ore., MEPS Commander, Maj. Kevin Kerby (center) poses for a photo after presenting Sgt. James Gamet (left) and Sgt. Nicholas Corella, Marine Corps recruiters, with certificates recognizing their support of the command’s student testing program.

Alabama governor proclaims 2011-2012 ASVAB Year

Members of the Montgomery MEPS staff and the Interservice Recruitment Committee gathered April 21 at the Alabama state capitol to witness a special proclamation signing by Gov. Robert Bentley.

Bentley proclaimed 2011-2012 as Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Career Exploration Program Awareness Year in Alabama to show his and the state's support of the Student Testing Program.

The proclamation says, in part, that the "career exploration and planning skills taught by the (ASVAB CEP)" and that "the ASVAB CEP has been critically acclaimed nationally as a valid career-planning instrument and is offered to students and schools at not cost."

"We greatly appreciate the fact that the state of Alabama is so highly supportive of the ASVAB CEP," Robert Gaston, Montgomery MEPS education services specialist, said. "This school year we anticipate conducting almost 16,000 tests at over 315 schools. This proclamation further enables our efforts to provide the benefits of the Career Exploration Program to a broad

segment of students throughout the state."

Lt. Col. Eric Garretty, MEPS commander; Sgt. 1st Class Charles Landrum, MEPS senior enlisted advisor; Allison Mims, MEPS test coordinator; and Gaston represented the MEPS.

IRC attendees included Lt. Col. James F. Palumbo and 1st Lt. Brandon Willert, represent-

ing the Air Force; Donald Ellwood, Army ESS, Army Staff Sgts. Angela Kennedy and Thomas Browning; Marine Maj. Patrick Byrne; Navy Cmdr. Bill Garren; Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory Poff, Alabama Army National Guard; and Master Sgt. Cynthia C. Young, Alabama Air National Guard.



Alabama Governor Robert Bentley signs a proclamation making 2011-2012 the Armed Services Vocational Battery Year. MEPS staff attended the signing, including Montgomery MEPS Commander, Lt. Col. Eric Garretty (front row, farthest left) Sgt. 1st Class Charles Landrum and Allison Mims. Photo by Jamie Martin

Kerby presented the certificates to nine recruiters representing the Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Oregon Army National Guard. The certificates were signed by Col. Charles Dunston, former Western Sector commander.

Due to the recruiters' initiative, 73 students were tested at "red schools," 815 students tested at Oregon Army National Guard facilities and one recruiter conducted online seminars for 668 students at his home high school.

Recipients included 1st Sgt. Rodney B. Galloway, Master Sgt. Jeremy D. McCloud, Sgt. 1st Class Kathryn J. Pritchard, Staff Sgts. Nick A. Marshall and Michael Hillier, Petty Officer 2nd Class Sean Kriloff, Sgts. Nicholas Corella and James Gamet and Spc. Samuel Schmidt.

According to Maj. Kerby, "Achieving our student testing mission cannot be accomplished without the support of the recruiting services."

The program is the first of its kind.



Maj. Kevin Kerby presents a certificate to Petty Officer 2nd Class Sean Kriloff, a Navy recruiter, for his support of the command's student testing program.



Hometown: Sioux Falls, S.D. “It’s on the eastern border with Minnesota and Iowa. It’s the largest city in South Dakota, right at 100,000 when I grew up there. I lived there until I graduated high school.”

Fond childhood memories: “Some of my fondest memories were weekends at the drop zone. My dad was a sky diver, so I spent a lot of time with the sky diving community. When I turned 18, I skydived for four or five years. We also owned a sailboat. We spent a lot of time on the Missouri river. A lot of outdoor activities – sailing, fishing, sky diving.” My grandfather started the South Dakota skydivers in the early ’60s, and my dad grew up with it. My dad was a parachute rigger when he was in the Air Force.”

What was your favorite toy when you were a kid? “I played a lot of unorganized softball and baseball growing up, so I would say my baseball and softball bats and glove. I did a lot of skateboarding when I was a young teenager.”

Education: Bachelor of science degree in geography, South Dakota State University in Brookings. “I was a Jackrabbit.” (The school’s sports nickname.) He also earned a master of science degree in human relations from the University of Oklahoma.

Why Air Force? “I grew up in a family of flying enthusiasts. My father was a pilot. His father was one of the founding members of the South Dakota Air National Guard. Flying and skydiving and airplanes were always part of my life. I wanted to be a pilot growing up, but a guy with bad vision wasn’t going to do it at that time. It was really my family background. I spent a lot of time at the Sioux Falls Guard unit. They had A-7s and I thought I wanted to be an A-7 pilot.”

Previous assignment: “I was the dean of students at the Defense Language Institute in Monterrey, Calif. I got an assignment out of Northern Command. My first job was associate dean of students for the European and Latin American school. That’s kind of like being the assistant principal at a high school. Then I got promoted and moved up to dean of students.”

Favorite assignment: “Northern Command at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo. I was part of a deployable unit. I deployed as part of the joint force headquarters element for Joint Task Force Katrina, and JTFs in support of shuttle launches and landings with the headquarters element for search and rescue forces for shuttle landings.” He was part of the joint task force for the “Return to Flight,” the first shuttle mission after the Columbia disaster.

Future military career plans: “I feel like I’ve just gotten my feet under me here. I want to continue to learn and progress in the Cleveland MEPS and 4th Battalion. I’d like to go to Air Force Personnel Center and maybe later be an inspector general.”

How is 4th Battalion working out? “I’ve been fortunate. It was an easy transition for me. My predecessor set it up quite well. The officers and senior enlisted advisors bought into the battalion concept from day one. We’re all on board. It works out for cross training, cross walks and day-to-day business. We love it.”

What do you want to be when you grow up? “My father was a teacher. I always thought I would want to

be a teacher. My mother-in-law and father-in-law are still teachers. My wife is a speech therapist. I come from a teaching background. I’d like to pursue the Troops to Teachers program.”

What do you do when you’re not a commander? “I spend a lot of time with my three kids. I have a 9-year-old son, a 6-year-old daughter and 3-year-old son. When the weather’s nice, we spend a lot of time outside shooting baskets, riding bikes. Most of my free time is spending time with my wife and three kids. Whenever we move to a new area, we take a lot of weekend trips and explore the area. My oldest son and I spend a lot of time on Boy Scout projects.”

What’s your leadership style? “I’m very approachable. I think that’s something that was established by my upbringing. I tend to be somewhat laid back. In order to be comfortable, I have to do a lot of research on the regulations and processes. I pride myself on being able to back up on things. I tend to resolve a lot of problems in my command face-to-face and mediate at my level.”

What do you like best about your job? “I like spending time with the people I get to interact with. I’ve always been able to interact with people. I like it when I get to spend time with the family members, USO volunteers, applicants and my staff. When I wake up in the morning, I look forward to doing that every day.”

What do you order when you eat out? “I’m a steak and potatoes kind of guy. If I eat out it’s probably going to be a steak. Unless there are pork chops in the menu. Then it’s going to be pork chops.”

What’s the best present you ever got? “My first parachute rig from my father — my own parachute rig — when I graduated from college.”

What’s your guilty pleasure? “Ice cream. If I can find an ice cream shop, I’m going there.” Mint chocolate chip is his favorite.

Tell me something people would be surprised to know about you: “I was the 1985 Midwest Wham-O Frisbee throwing champion. Wham-O had a standard for the competition. You did tricks and threw also for accuracy.”

What is your favorite all-time movie? “I guess, because it had such a big impact on me in the ’70s, the original Star Wars that came out in ’77. My son and I watch it together now. The Blues Brothers is right up there, too.”

If they made a movie of your life, who would play you? “Matthew McConaughey. My wife would appreciate that.”

What are you reading? “The Kite Runner, it’s about the stuff that was going on in Afghanistan. It follows an individual coming of age just before the Russian occupation.” It also talks about the Taliban banning kite flying, which is very popular in Afghanistan.”

What’s your ideal vacation? “I’d like to take my family to Europe someday. In my Air Force career, that’s one place I haven’t been able to take my family. I’ve been there, but I’d like to take my family when my kids are older and can appreciate it.”

11th
Battalion**Shreveport MEPS****Maj. Gilbert White**

Hometown: Tampa, Fla. “It’s a very metropolitan area, lots to do. Great weather, great sports and good food.”

Fond childhood memories: “Having the sun, the beaches and just being able to play sports year around.”

What was your favorite toy when you were a kid? “My GI Joe with the kung fu grip. I grew up during the Vietnam era and you saw it on TV. Even though there were protesters, what those men were doing stood for what was right.”

Education: Bachelor of arts degree in history from Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond. He is pursuing master’s degree in human resources from Webster University.

Why the Army? “In the Army you’re allowed to be intelligent. You can be physically involved and you have more interaction as far as what goes on on the ground. You can have air superiority, you can have sea superiority, but you must be able to take and hold ground.”

Previous assignment: Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kan. Before that, he was the human resources officer at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif.

Favorite assignment: Replacement commander for the 101st Airborne Division. He credits three officers for whom he worked for making the assignment memorable and enjoyable — Gen. David Petraeus, Lt. Gen. Benjamin Freakley and Col. Karl King. “I was involved with moving soldiers to Iraq and redeployment to the United States and they allowed me to do my job.”

Future military career plans: “I will go any place the Army tells me I need to go. I’d like to command a battalion, preferably with a division. I’d be happy doing recruiting or taking an ROTC job.”

What do you want to be when you grow up? “If I had my druthers, a high school coach — football, basketball and golf.” His father was a long-time coach.

What do you do when you’re not a commander? “Most of my time right now is spent working on commu-

nity projects. I work with the police, talking to kids about staying out of trouble and the rewards of staying out of trouble. I also work with an organization called First Tee as a golf coach and life skills coach.”

What’s your leadership style? “Open and hands on. I’m always open for suggestions from my staff and I like to go out and see the work for myself, see what my folks are doing, so I can understand and explain it to someone without having to ask someone else.”

What do you like best about your job? “Meeting the young people that make the decision to serve their county.”

What do you order when you eat out? “It depends on the menu and the restaurant. There’s a restaurant called BJ’s, that has one of the best flat bread pizzas around. That’s my all time favorite meal.”

What’s the best present you ever got? “It has to be something my daughter gave me. She gave me a little change tray from her own hand that she made in clay.”

What’s your guilty pleasure? “Good German beer.”

What is your least favorite sport? “Fishing. It’s not very physical. No physicality needed.”

Tell me something people would be surprised to know about you. “I enjoy cooking. I like to make everything from Italian to down-south barbecue. I’ve even gotten into more Asian stuff. On the grill or in the kitchen, it doesn’t matter. I’ve gotten pretty good at baking, too.”

What is your favorite all-time movie? “I’m a huge movie buff. One that I can watch anytime is ‘Goodfellas,’ just so I can watch the part where Joe Pesci says, ‘Am I a joke? Do I make you laugh, am I a clown?’”

If they made a movie of your life, who would play you? “Most people would say Denzel Washington, but I’m not going to go there. Eddie Murphy. He’s the closest thing to me.”

What are you reading? “‘Staffing organizations.’ It’s about human resource management, how you go through the staffing process from the application to actually setting up your levels and priorities, developing job positions and how you go about hiring your folks.”

What’s your ideal vacation? “I’ve already done it, and I’m going to do it again. A tour of Italy, going from Rome to Venice to Florence and Naples. Going up into the southern Alps. The culture is No. 1 because you see five distinct cultures. In the mountains you see where the food comes from, the cheeses and meats and, of course, the wines.”

6th
Battalion

Indianapolis MEPS



Lt. Cmdr. Matthew Byrne

Hometown: Columbia, Mo. “It’s a college town, about 100,000 people. The University of Missouri is there along with a couple of smaller colleges.”

Fond childhood memories? “Family vacations. We tended to drive on vacation. I remember driving from Missouri to San Francisco when I was a kid, all the way across the Western United States. We drove down to Orlando just after I got my learner’s permit. That was the first time my mom handed me the keys on the interstate and told me to have at it. That’s a long drive from Columbia to Orlando.”

What was your favorite toy when you were a kid? “I liked my G.I. Joes. When I was 10 or 12, my mom said ‘You don’t play with those anymore. Either do something with them or get rid of them.’ I sold them at a garage sale for about a quarter a piece. I’m kicking myself now.” He also sold all his Star Wars toys at the same garage sale — a couple of dollars for the vehicles and 25 cents for the action figures.

Education: Bachelor of science degree in chemical engineering from the University of Kansas. “I got a lot of funny looks from my family, growing up and Columbia and then going to Kansas.” He also earned a master of business administration degree with a concentration in resource management from DePaul University.

Why the Navy? “I hadn’t planned on going into the military, but I got into it at the end of my junior year. And engineering in the corporate world was losing its luster. A friend of mine told me about the Navy’s nuclear program. You go to nuclear power school and then teach there for four years. I figured if I didn’t like it I would take my GI Bill and go to graduate school. None of the other services have anything equivalent to nuclear power school.”

Previous assignment: Fort Leavenworth, Kan., for Command and General Staff College. “I had a year of learning to speak Army before I came here.”

Favorite assignment: “I was the training officer on the USS Abraham Lincoln. It was challenging work. I like being on a ship and everything that came with that. I didn’t mind deployment. I got to see a lot of cool places on deployment.”

Future military career plans: “It’s going to depend a lot on the results of the O-5 board in progress now. If I make O-5 it will go one way, if I don’t it will go another.”

What do you want to be when you grow up? “I’m kind of planning on

a job in human resources, probably training and development, because that’s what I’ve done most of my Navy career.”

What do you do when you’re not a commander? “Spend time with my kids. I’ve got a 7-year-old and a one-year-old. The 7 year-old is in Tae Kwon Do and swimming. The 1-year old is walking around. That keeps me busy. I also like to golf and do woodworking.”

What’s your leadership style? “I’m fairly laid back. I like to get input from as many people as I can before I make a big decision. I’m not one to make snap decisions. I like to make people feel they are important to what we’re doing.”

What do you like best about your job? “I like seeing the kids get on the bus for boot camp, knowing that they’re going to start what is hopefully going to be rewarding part of their life. It’s a good day to swear them in, sign the contract and send them on their way.”

What do you order when you eat out? “I’m a big fan of Italian food. It’s very mood driven, but a well-made lasagna can always tempt.”

What’s the best present you ever got? For Christmas last year, my wife got me a trip down to St. Thomas to visit my brother and his wife.” He took the trip the first week in May.

What’s your guilty pleasure? “I watch reality TV, more than I probably should — the Biggest Loser, American Idol, things like that.”

What is your least favorite sport? “I’m not a fan of watching the NBA. I love college basketball. I’ll watch it all day. I find the NBA incredibly boring.”

Tell me something people would be surprised to know about you: “I’ve been skydiving once. I wish I could go again, but that’s one of those hobbies that get real pricy, real fast.”

What is your favorite all-time movie? “I could watch Patton and Midway over and over again.”

What are you reading? “I’ve got one I haven’t started, ‘Unbroken.’ It’s about Louis Zamperini, who was an Olympian in the ’30s, enlisted in the Army Air Corps and was later a Japanese POW. It was written by Lauren Hillenbrand, the same lady who wrote ‘Seabiscuit.’”

What is your ideal vacation? “Over spring break, we took the family to San Diego. We did a lot of the tourist stuff, but also had time to sit on the beach and talk with old friends. Someday, I’d like to take a month or so and tour Europe, see some castles and stuff like that.”



Hometown: “I call Glendale, Ariz., home. It’s hot. Big city life, big metro area.”

Fond childhood memories: “My dad was in the Army so I traveled all over. I’ve got a lot of childhood memories traveling around as my dad was in the Army. Waiting for the fruit wagon to come around in Germany to deliver fruits and vegetables. Chasing the ice cream truck, in El Paso, Texas.” The ice cream truck incident got him picked up by the military police. “I was chasing the ice cream truck through the neighborhood. I was just a little kid. They picked me, took me to MP sta-

tion and called my parents.” His dad worked on the electronic components on Nike-Hercules missile.

What was your favorite toy when you were a kid? “I played with tractors and race cars. A John Deere tractor comes to mind.”

Education: He is pursuing a bachelor of business administration degree with a background in human resources through Columbia Southern University.

Why the Army? “I did talk to every recruiter when I joined the Army. I didn’t join the Marines because boot camp was 13 weeks at the time and that was too long. I didn’t join the Navy because I wasn’t into the bell bottoms. The Air Force couldn’t get me a school date for six weeks and I didn’t want to wait that long. The Army got me out the door the quickest.”

Previous assignment: Fort Wainright, Alaska, near Fairbanks. 1st Striker Brigade, 25th Infantry Division.

Favorite assignment: “Hands down, two tours in Alaska, a total of about 10 and a half or 11 years between the two tours. I liked the outdoors, the hunting the fishing, the clean air. It’s away from mainstream America. It’s its own entity.”

Future military career plans? “I will retire from here. That’s the plan right now.”

What do you want to be when you grow up? “I’m still up in the air with that. I’d like to move back to Alaska and find a job up there, not necessarily with the military, maybe the Alaska pipeline. If I can find something away from the military, that would be great. I’ve been doing that long enough.”

What do you do when you’re not a senior enlisted advisor? “Spend time with my family. I play a lot of racquetball, and I play a lot of golf.”

What’s your leadership style? “Participative. I’m not really directive,

but I can be. I like to involve people in the decision-making process.”

What do you like best about your job? “The predictability of the hours would probably be the best. Going from 100 miles an hour (in Alaska) to walking at your own pace. You’re going to go home pretty much the same time every night. I’m approaching retirement, and I have a little more time to take care of myself.”

What do you order when you eat out? “Mexican food. Steak or chicken fajitas. There’s nothing wrong with a good steak, either.”

What’s the best present you ever got? “I’d say my Harley-Davidson I bought during my last deployment. It was supposed to be my retirement gift. I didn’t retire, but I wasn’t going to get rid of the bike.” He bought it through the overseas purchase program. It’s a 2009 Night Train.

What’s your guilty pleasure? “Bud Light Lime.”

What is your least favorite sport? “Basketball. It’s one sport I never got into playing. I’m vertically challenged, so I never played. I might watch a little bit of the playoffs, but that’s about it.” He’s not a big fan of March Madness, either.

Tell me something people would be surprised to know about you. “I enjoy cleaning the house, doing spring cleaning. You wouldn’t know it by looking at my office, though. I get in these cleaning moods and I get started and can’t stop.”

What is your favorite all-time movie? “Happy Gilmore. It’s a classic comedy and it’s golf oriented.”

If they made a movie of your life, who would play you? “Kevin Bacon. Over the years, throughout my military career, I’ve been told may times that I look like Kevin Bacon, especially back in the early ’90s.”

Last book you read? “I really don’t read hard cover books. I like reading Golf Digest, motorcycle magazines, things like that.” ➡

What is your ideal vacation? “I guess go to Ireland and play some of the links courses. That probably won’t happen anytime soon. I’ve always wanted to go to Hawaii and do some surfing. That will probably happen first.”

12th
Battalion

Raleigh MEPS



1st Sgt. Lisa Cole

Hometown: Laurinburg, N.C. “It’s a real small town. My graduating class had 464 people. It used to be an industrial town, but that’s gone. Laurinburg Institute is there and St. Andrew’s Presbyterian College.”

Fond childhood memories: “My first grade teacher, who is still alive and I still go see. She said my visit added 10 years to her life. My school days are my fondest memories. My first grade teacher had a profound effect on my life. That’s why I went back to school and got a master’s degree in education. She once sent me up to the chalkboard to write 36 and I kept writing 306. She tore my knuckles up with that ruler. She was with me through the first four years of school. She was there when I got my first pair of glasses. She always made sure I had what I needed, extra paper, pencils, things like that.”

What was your favorite toy when you were a kid? “I didn’t have a favorite toy. I had favorite stray cats that I fed.”

Education: Bachelor of science degree in history from Excelsior Col-

lege; master of business administration degree in teaching and instruction from Trident University.

Why the Army? “My godfather was a retired sergeant major. I didn’t realize that until I was older. My father was in the Air Force, but I’m the only other one that was in the military. My godfather explained to me that if I went into the military for four years I would have an education, money saved and a houseful of furniture. My friends who went to college would be looking for a job and have student loans after four years.”

Playing mind games with the recruiter: The recruiter took her out for steak dinners three times. She went to the Charlotte MEPS three times. “I would go down to the MEPS, stay in the hotel, meet interesting people, splash around in the pool, eat that big breakfast, but when it came time to swear in, I would say I wasn’t ready yet. The third time I went looking for him. I had worked in a factory and in restaurants, and I knew I didn’t want to do that for the rest of my life. My very last time, I said I was ready. I had my bags packed, he came to the neighborhood in his little tan car. Nobody thought I would enlist, but I was ready that time.”

Previous assignment: Senior personnel sergeant at Osan Air Base, South Korea.

Favorite assignment: Baumholder, Germany. “They called it the rock and most people thought it was their worst assignment. I enjoyed it because it was my first time away from home. They had the best food and the people were so friendly. I liked the richness of the land, the greenery reminded me of North Carolina. I was still just a little country bumpkin and it reminded me of the book Hansel and Gretel. It was beautiful and the houses were just like the book Hansel and Gretel.”

Future military career plans? “Hopefully, I’ll make the sergeant major list and I can serve as an equal opportunity and inspector general sergeant major.”

What do you want to be when you grow up? “I want to do something in an underprivileged neighborhood; it can be in my own home town. I want to work with very young children, so I can show them what’s out there. When I was growing up, the only thing I had was the library. I want to be able to grab them when they’re young and show them I came from where they did. I do want to teach. I want to use that teaching degree to help others.”

What do you do when you’re not a senior enlisted advisor? “I do a lot of reading. I like old black and white films.”

What do you like best about your job? “That I’m always busy. There’s never a dull moment here. Every day is a different challenge that I’m able to tackle and overcome.”

What do you order when you eat out? “It’s got to be seafood or the flat part of hot wings. I’m picky about my wings. I love big crab legs and croissants. That’s a meal for me, right there.”

What’s the best present you ever got? “Godiva Chocolate and a book. My ex-husband would always hide Godiva Chocolate and a good book in my lingerie drawer.”

What’s your guilty pleasure? “Godiva Chocolate.”

What is your least favorite sport? “Golf. It seems long and boring. I just can’t watch it on television.”

Tell me something people would be surprised to know about you. “I was responsible for catching the Arifjan shower stalker. He was going around raping women, sneaking into tents and fondling women. I happened to catch him one night in April 2004. I had to go back to Iraq in August 2004 to testify. It was my testimony that convicted him. He got 7 years.”

What is your favorite all-time movie? “‘All about Eve’ with Bette Davis and ‘Mildred Pierce’ with Joan Crawford. They are very dark and mysterious.”

If they made a movie of your life, who would play you? “Vanessa Bell Calloway. She is the first actress I saw on TV who was a down-to-earth woman. She has the prettiest skin. She wears very little makeup and I wear very little makeup.”

What are you reading? “‘Midnight’ by Sister Souljah. I’m also reading ‘The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership’ by John C. Maxwell.”

What’s your ideal vacation? “Jeju Island in Korea. It had been a long time since I was able to go on a vacation. I got to ride an ATV for the first time. It’s a beautiful place. I’d like to go back.”



Hometown: Bremerton, Wash. “It’s very green, rainy, slow, very private. Everyone pretty much minds their own business. It’s a great place to raise kids.”

Fond childhood memories: As a little kid, I used to enjoy when my father would take me on the ship on duty night and we would have dinner and breakfast in the chief’s mess. It sounds corny but it was kind of cool.” His father retired as a Master Chief Lithographer’s Mate.

What was your favorite toy when you were a kid? “Rock ‘em sock ‘em robots. I liked the sound when you hit the guy and his chin pops up.”

Why Navy? “The Navy provided the best opportunity for me to advance and get a job I could apply on the outside. The other services didn’t offer me electrician. I wasn’t crazy about being in the jungle, so the Army and Marines weren’t going to get it. In Hawaii, I worked at Hickam Air Force Base, and I liked the lifestyle and everything, but I didn’t want to do 20 years as an E-5, either.”

Previous assignment: “USS Shoup (DDG-86), a destroyer.”

Favorite assignment: The USS Carl Vinson, (CVN-70) “The leadership, from the top all the way down was awesome. That’s also the ship I made chief on. I call myself a 9/11 baby. I got pinned Sept 10. It’s usually Sept. 16, but we were going in and they didn’t want to be playing games, the next day was Sept. 11. The Vinson was the first ship to drop bombs on Afghanistan after 9/11. We were already in the area.”

Future military career plans: “Hopefully to pick up master chief. I still have a year and a few months left here at MEPCOM. I’d like to be a command master chief, get a small boy, like a destroyer or a frigate.”

What do you want to be when you grow up? I’m going to be a biomedical technician. I’ve always been curious about medical equipment, and that industry is just booming.” He would work installing and maintaining equipment for hospitals and training people to use it.

What do you do when you’re not a senior enlisted advisor? “I’m really involved in a group home for girls. I help coordinate activities for the girls with the owner and do maintenance on the house. Instead of them paying an electrician, I do the work for them. I went to high school with the family, and when I got here, it was a great opportunity. It’s one of the better female group homes in the area.”

What’s your leadership style? “I listen. I’m a communicator. I’m not a micromanager, that’s for sure. Being a micromanager, is more work. I’m an open approachable person.”

What do you like best about your job? “The diversity of all the services and the civilian personnel. This whole setup is one of a kind. It’s a challenge on a day to day basis. When you’re processing applicants, something new always has a tendency to pop up. I learned a lot about the civilian side of things, as opposed to what you learn in the military. You manage civilian personnel differently than you do military. It’s a rewarding challenge.”

What do you order when you eat out? “Popeye’s salt and pepper wings.”

What’s the best present you ever got? “My son bought me an Oakland Raiders jacket recently that has their Super Bowl trophies on it. I don’t even wear it. I don’t want it to get messed up.”

What’s your guilty pleasure? “Casinos.” He plays the slots.

What is your least favorite sport? “Hockey. I don’t understand it. I don’t understand the penalty lines.”

Tell me something people would be surprised to know about you. “I’m a sucker for little dogs, especially Mini Pinschers. And I’m into gardening, especially roses. A lot of guys see me — 6-feet 3-inches, 230 pounds with that little bitty dog and I’m out there trimming roses. I hear about that a lot from my friends.”

What is your favorite all-time movie? “I’ve got two. Malcolm X and JFK. It’s interesting to learn from Spike Lee’s version of the life of Malcolm X. I’ve always been fascinated with the Kennedy assassination and the times back then. I also like the way Denzel Washington played Malcolm X.”

If they made a movie of your life, who would play you? “Cuba Gooding Jr. I look like him a little bit and he’s an awesome actor.”

What’s your ideal vacation? “A South American tour. The beaches, the food, the culture. The Navy has taken me many places, but going to Chile, Venezuela and all those other places would be awesome.”

Tampa senior enlisted advisor takes on her city's Annual Dragon Boat Race – in 90-degree heat

Editor's Note. Three weeks prior, during her first practice for the Annual Dragon Boat Race, 1st Sgt. Leona McKoy asked herself, "What have I gotten myself and my husband roped into this time?" Her husband is Chief Warrant Officer Mike McKoy. One week and one practice later, she was saying, "By George, I think we got it!"

The following, an excerpt from her account of the race, is titled "Diary of a Warrior."

**By 1st Sgt. Leona McKoy
Tampa MEPS Senior Enlisted Advisor**

It's game day — April 30. Eighty-nine degrees, sun beaming. The warriors are ready! Paddles up! It's show time!

We gear up, load the boat and head to the start point. The steer person instructs us to paddle to the rear. But, as we were paddling, a helicopter hovers over us and, all of a sudden, the horn blares to start the race and the steer person yells, "Go! Go! Go!"

As we scramble, out of sync, to move forward rather than backward, we find ourselves to be the last team of the heat. What a disappointment! Frustration is evident and tempers flare.

While we're waiting for the next round, the Tampa MEPS cheering squad — Develin Lyons, LaPonda Pittman, Sgt. 1st Class Cheryl Pierce and her daughter — give us their moral support. In a tent with mixed emotions and uncertainty, their presence definitely uplifts the mood.

We — Team Tampa Bay & Company — will compete again at noon. Surprisingly enough, we made it!

It's noon — we're ready, we're pumped, and we're going to take it!



Bend, reach, pull, up, bend, reach, pull, up!

Tampa MEPS senior enlisted advisor, 1st Sgt. Leona McKoy and her husband, Chief Warrant Officer Mike McKoy are part of an 18-person paddling team that competes in their city's Annual Dragon Boat Race.

We gear up, load up and, with a new steer person, we hear the command, "Paddles up!" and with the sound of the horn, we paddled five hard strokes, followed by 10 short ones, sweating profusely, our arms burning to the constant sound of "up, up, up" as we glide the dragon boat across the Tampa Bay.

We keep pulling and pulling, and that's when I hear a familiar voice shout, "HOOAH!" It was my husband, Mike, sounding off with victory! We took first place! This was definitely a 180-degree change — we redeemed ourselves! Our time was 2:02, one of the 10 fastest team times.

After a break for lunch, we learn we will race again at 2 p.m. By then, it feels like it's 5 degrees warmer. Our bellies are full, the sun is scorching, and our bodies are exhausted. Some paddlers even take a shot of an energy drink. Show time!

Once again, we get an awesome steer person and we load up, and head toward the start point. Our motivation is sky high, based on our previous race. We're waiting, waiting, then the horn sounds and we're off! Strong, but at a steady, unison pace. Don't look up! Don't look to the left or right, it will slow you down. All of a sudden the first seat paddler loses her momentum, causing a ripple effect with the paddlers immediately behind her.

Hurry! Get back in sync with your row partner! We are neck in neck with the team to our left. I find myself screaming, "Reach, pull, up! Reach, pull, up!"



1st Sgt. Leona McKoy and her husband, Chief Warrant Officer Three Mike McKoy pose for a photo on the day of the race.

The race is over and we take second place. After just three practices, we finished the race second in our division. I thoroughly enjoyed myself and competing with my community partners. Maybe next time we will have a Team Tampa MEPS to represent. Until then, paddles up and keep the motivation going!

MEPS of Excellence

The MEPS of Excellence Program acknowledges military entrance processing stations that obtain a level of excellence based on criteria related to USMEPCOM core processes (medical, testing, applicant processing) and general military readiness.

The two requirements to become a MEPS of Excellence are:

- To be one of the top three MEPS in each category.
- To meet the overall threshold.

The 65 MEPS are divided into three categories, based on historical data. MEPS remain in the designated category the entire fiscal year.

The MOE points system measures up to 10 criteria per quarter. The criteria are:

- Timeliness of military evaluations and awards.
- Total students tested goal.
- Drug and HIV specimen processing.

- Clinical Laboratory Improvement Program.
- Physical fitness readiness.
- Height and weight standards.
- Electronic fingerprint capture station (unclassifiable fingerprints).
- Incidents of serious misconduct by military or civilian employees.
- Test loss compromise.
- Citibank travel card delinquency rates.

Second Quarter, Fiscal 2011

Category 1
Baltimore MEPS
San Diego MEPS
San Jose MEPS

Category 2
Portland, Ore., MEPS
New Orleans MEPS
Nashville MEPS

Category 3
Syracuse MEPS
Beckley MEPS
San Juan MEPS

COMMUNITY

El Paso staff and families support local Komen efforts



El Paso MEPS employees and family members stop for a photo on the day of the 2011 Komen El Paso Affiliate Race for the Cure. Since its inception in 1983, the Susan G. Komen series has grown from one local 800-person race to more than 120 races globally. Up to 75 percent of the funds raised at the El Paso race remained in the city to provide breast health research, diagnostics, screening, treatment, services and education for uninsured or underinsured women. The remaining 25 percent goes to fund national research to discover the causes of breast cancer and, ultimately its cures. Photo (Front row, left to right) Jessica Valdez, human resources assistant, Sgt. Diana Solis, medical technician, Staff Sgt. Hector Vargas, Marine recruiter. (Second row, left to right) Staff Sgt. Matthew Cunningham, Tifarah Cunningham, HRA, Grace Cunningham, Ruben Balboa, lead HRA, Senior Master Sgt. Daniel Thompson, El Paso MEPS senior enlisted advisor, Debbie Harris, Tyrone Harris, HRA, and Maj. James E. Crews II, El Paso MEPS commander.

San Juan's Peña 'takes one for the team' in HBO comedy series

Coast Guard Petty Officer Second Class Alexander Peña (right) poses for a photo with actor Danny McBride. Peña participated in a casting for the HBO comedy series, "Eastbound and Down," filmed at Gurabo and Arroyo, Puerto Rico. A test score technician at the San Juan MEPS, Peña appeared in one scene in which he is at bat and, after an argument with another baseball player, he's punched. Subsequently, both teams end up in a big fight. McBride has been in movies such as "Land of the Lost," "Pineapple Express," and was a writer for "Underworld: Rise of the Lycans." More activity from the film industry is anticipated on the island as the local government of Puerto Rico continues to provide new credits and monetary incentives for those interested in filming and working there. *Submitted by Lt. Siul E. Rivera*



Thirty-year employee is 'heart and soul' of Boston MEPS

The Boston MEPS recognized an employee for 30 years of service, all at the MEPS.

Dave Albert began his civil service career April 27, 1981, at the Boston Armed Forces Examining and Entrance Station, now the Boston MEPS, and never left.

Albert started as a radiology technician when the AFEES was just down the road from the MEPS' current location. At that time, the MEPS gave every applicant a chest X-ray and regularly handled 40-60 applicants a day.

Dave became interested in radiology as a teenager, and accompanied his father, a former Army medic, to the Veterans Affairs hospital where his father was a pharmacist.

After studying English literature at the University of Massachusetts-Boston and a stint as a horse groomer and trainer at Suffolk Downs, Albert found his way into radiology.

After a couple of years in the private sector, he began working at AFEES. The radiology technician

position was eliminated in most MEPS in 1997 and Albert became the lead health technician.

Albert is philosophical about his time at the MEPS. He said the job "suited him to a T." The processing feels like it's always on the edge of chaos! He has seen a lot of changes over the years — from technology advances to every new commander wanting to make tweaks on the organization. Albert has also seen a lot of staff members come and go, which can be the saddest part of the job. When he first started, 75 percent of the staff was military and he said he has enjoyed his co-workers over the years.

Albert said he has always tried to do a good job, that he feels content working here and that it is a blessing in his life. Most days, he said, he wakes up looking forward to coming to work.



Cmdr. Catherine Masar, Boston MEPS commander, and Dave Albert, at his recognition ceremony.

"Your co-workers and I look forward to seeing you every day," Cmdr. Catherine Masar, Boston MEPS commander, told Albert. "You are the heart and soul of the Boston MEPS and I hope we are blessed to have several more years with you as a teammate. Thank you for 30 years of dedicated and committed service to the Boston MEPS, USMEPCOM and the Department of Defense."

Doctor retires after 22 years at Des Moines MEPS

By Cheree Mann
Command
Secretary

Dr. Loran F. Parker, 90, retired from the Des Moines MEPS medical section after completing 22 years of service. He serviced thousands of applicants and was still on his "A" game when he decided to retire. Dr. Parker was always personable, polite and conducted himself professionally.

He served two years in the U.S. Air Force in 1946-47, and then began his private practice as a family physician. He was also head of the Family Practice



(Left to right) Dr. Kimball, Dr. Kohler, Dr. Matthews, Maj. Kipp Wahlgren (Des Moines MEPS commander), Dr. Loran Parker, Dr. Socarras, Dr. Thompson (Chief Medical Officer at Des Moines MEPS), Dr. Creagh, Clarence Fisher. Photo by Susan Thompson

Residency Program at Broadlawns Hospital in Des Moines until his retirement in 1988.

Dr. Parker has always served with distinction and leaves in his wake many excellent family physicians in central Iowa. He has opened the door to military service for thousands of young applicants.

Sector commander hosts dual promotion ceremony in Beckley

On May 4, Eastern Sector Commander, Col. Todd Garlick hosted a dual promotion ceremony at Beckley MEPS.

He promoted Maj. Barbara Bracy, Beckley MEPS commander, to lieutenant colonel, and Sgt. 1st Class Gilberto Colon, medical NCOIC, to master sergeant.

The ceremony was an opportunity for staff members, brothers and sisters in arms, and families to recognize the achievements of Bracy and Colon. It also provided the opportunity for the promotees to thank their fellow service members, leaders, and everyone who has helped and supported them along the way.

The promotion orders stated that the Army believes in their abilities to perform at the next higher grade. It is a reward for hard work, dedication, professional excellence and sacrifice.

“Lieutenant Colonel Bracy and Master Sergeant Colon emulate



Eastern Sector Commander, Col. Todd Garlick poses with newly promoted Master Sgt. Gilberto Colon (left) and Lt. Col. Barbara Bracy.

these points to the highest of standards,” Senior Master Sgt. Thomas Helbling, Beckley MEPS senior enlisted advisor, said. “The ceremony shows their efforts of the past were not in vain. The promotion ceremony also provides encouragement to the promotees to

continue to excel and strive for the next grade.”

In addition to MEPS staff and Interservice Recruitment Committee members, Bracy’s mother and two sisters, and Colon’s wife and two sons attended.

Dondelinger receives clinical engineering award

By Christine Parker
Messenger Editor

Robert Dondelinger received the 2011 Challenge Award from the American College of Clinical Engineering. The award is part of ACCE’s yearly Advocacy Awards.

At USMEPCOM headquarters, Dondelinger works in the Logistics Branch of Resource Management (J-8). His primary responsibility is managing medical logistics for all 65 MEPS.

Dondelinger was in the Army for 32 years, and retired as a chief warrant officer five. He’s had positions ranging from running the smallest one-person biomedical shop in the Army to leading the largest biomedical maintenance team in the world. After retiring from the Army, he began working at USMEPCOM. He writes articles related to clinical engineering for numerous publications and organizations, including ACCE.

A native of suburban Chicago, Dondelinger is a lifetime member of Mensa, a society for people whose IQs are in the top 2 percent of the population.

The ACCE is the only internationally recognized professional society for clinical engineers. Recently the ACCE has assisted with global disaster relief response efforts in Haiti, Chile and Japan.

The ACCE’s definition of a clinical engineer is “a professional who supports and advances patient care



Robert Dondelinger

by applying engineering and managerial skills to health care technology.”

The ACCE web site explains, “the clinical engineer often serves as the translator walking between the worlds of the medical, engineering and business professionals.

Today, health care technology extends into information and communications systems and traditional medical equipment

is more complex than ever. Assessing, managing and solving problems in this hyper-tech world is the work of the clinical engineer.”

Dondelinger is an internationally certified biomedical electronics technician, whose certification is currently in emeritus status (designated as CBET-E). He was recognized for his ongoing professional writing and various other support activities for the CE/biomedical engineering community. He has a master of science in business management (health care management) from Central Michigan University. He is a member of the Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation medical equipment management committee, and the Biomedical Instrumentation & Technology Journal editorial board.

They say, 'Never say never'

— because life can be full of surprises ...

By Christine Parker
Messenger Editor

Kimberly Hendrix didn't know how much her life would change when she began working at USMEPCOM. Fresh out of college, she was focusing on her career. The daughter of an Army officer, she didn't want to move around anymore, so she swore she would never marry a military man.

In the spring of 2008, Kimberly started working as a management analyst in manpower, at headquarters, and began hanging out with a co-worker, Tanja Reyes. A former soldier, once assigned to the

command, Reyes is now a management analyst in the Operations Accession Division. By fall, Kimberly began hanging out with Reyes' brother, Shawn Glanton. And, from the beginning, Shawn expressed interest in enlisting in the Army.

"I told him I will not marry a military man," Kimberly said. "It's not going to happen." But love would prevail and she became Mrs. Kimberly Glanton on "10-10-10." In January, Shawn enlisted in the Army at the Chicago MEPS.

The family planned that Kimberly's father would perform the enlistment ceremony for Shawn. "I'm close to both of them, so for me, that would have been just the most amazing thing," she said. However, when family issues precluded that, Kimberly came up with another plan. She contacted former USMEPCOM Commander, Col. Mariano Campos, who retired in January.

"Colonel Campos is such a personable guy," Kimberly said. The retired colonel gave Shawn "the talk," in what turned out to be a private ceremony. Afterwards, Campos explained that command coins are for people "who do great things." Then he gave the coin to Kimberly and told her to present it to Shawn when he graduated basic training. On March 31, she did just that.



Former USMEPCOM Commander, Col. Mariano C. Campos Jr. administers the oath of enlistment to Shawn Glanton, as his wife, Kimberly (second from the left behind him) and her co-workers from the Manpower and Management Division at USMEPCOM headquarters watch.

Photo by Art Heintz

Kimberly's mother, a career civilian, her father, aunt, Shawn's mother, sister, niece and nephew, two aunts and two cousins attended his basic training graduation.

"It was very nice," Kimberly said. But the tone of her voice, her endearing smile and "glow" revealed there was more to the story.

Kimberly has visited numerous MEPS, and she saw boot camp firsthand when she worked at nearby Naval Station Great Lakes. "You know, we do this all the time. So I can say things like, 'the point of basic is to break them down mentally, physically, emotionally and then build them up. I can say that ... but seeing the transformation in my husband was amazing – and totally unexpected. I was very proud of him.'"

Within a month, Shawn lost 20 pounds and a total of 40 by the end of basic. Kimberly expected a physical change, but there was a lot more. "He's still my husband," she said. "But he's different. His sense of responsibility is different, his 'take charge' attitude. It's different – it's amazing. I was shocked!"

During the 10 weeks of basic, "They're yelling – so even his voice is different – it's like I'm with a whole different person," Kimberly said. She asked her dad, "Will his voice come back?"

She's told Shawn, "Even the things that are funny to you now are different — your jokes are different." And Shawn is someone who likes to sing to himself in non-busy moments. "He'll sing cadences now," Kimberly said. "It's ingrained. I didn't think anyone could change so drastically. People who see him say, 'He doesn't even look the same.'"

Recently, Kimberly said something to Shawn, and he replied, "Hooah." She said, "Really? So you're a Hooah person now?"

Fifty weeks of separation for a newly married couple isn't easy, but they're managing. Technology helps. With an iPhone 4 and a laptop, they can talk face-to-face, and there's also e-mail, photo exchanges, Skype, and even letters and cards.

"Being able to communicate instantly is great, but you have to find other ways to stay connected," she said. While Shawn was in basic, he was a platoon guide. "What that meant for him was — the 15 minutes of free time they had a day — his got cut down to five," Kimberly said. So, she sent a constant stream of letters and cards that described what was going on in her life.

In addition to the separations, there's the worry. Reflecting on her father's Army career, she said, "The worst thing for me was moving. My father never had to deploy. The only war we had while he was in was Desert Storm, and he didn't have to go."

She admits, "I'm scared — with Shawn's job — things can happen anywhere — here or over there. It's a reality I will soon be facing."

But, he's the one, right? "That's right. Exactly," she answered.

Kimberly wears two dog tags around her neck — not Army-issued, however. Shawn gave her the tags as a wedding gift. He wears a matching set of tags. Her small tag has his name on it and his small tag has her name on it. Both large tags have the words, "Wisdom is knowing I am nothing, love is knowing I am everything, and in between the two, my life moves."

Shawn's specialty is air traffic control repair. He began his 40 weeks of advanced individual training at Fort Gordon, Ga., in April.

Kimberly graduated from the University of Kentucky with a major in communications and a minor in sociology. She's been thinking about her career lately and how her outlook has changed. "I'm looking at it as a positive," she said. And explains that, while she sees her position at USMEPCOM as something in which she could get comfortable, she will now need to look toward being professionally flexible, and "the requirement" to look for opportunities to progress and move.

So ... what's it like so far, being the wife of a soldier? "I adore my soldier," Kimberly said, in a tone you'd have to hear to truly understand.

“ Seeing the transition in my husband was amazing — and totally unexpected.

— Kimberly Glanton

”



Pvt. Shawn Glanton and Kimberly Glanton.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Enlists Eight in Boise

Adm. Mike Mullen administers the oath of enlistment at the Boise MEPS on April 4, during a visit that was part of "Conversations with the Country" (top). Since April 2010, the chairman has traveled throughout the nation having open, two-way conversations about the military and how Americans can help returning veterans and their families. During his MEPS visit, Mullen enlisted eight applicants and posed for photos with applicants (center) and the Boise MEPS staff (bottom).



In February, Mullen told a Pennsylvania audience, *"I believe that there is, in our country, this sea of good will to support our men and women in uniform and their families. And we are now in our tenth year of war."* Also, he said, *"They are extraordinary young men and women, and they come from all over the country – and in some cases all over the world. They make a difference, and they want to make a difference."*

On April 4, the chairman gave a speech at Boise State University, in which he said, *"The main focus of my visit here, really, is exemplified by those sitting up here in the front row. We have a group of wounded warriors and their families who are part of the best military I've been associated with over the course of the last 40-plus years that I've been privileged to wear the uniform. And it is really their sacrifice and their service ... not just what they did but also what they will do in the future."*

See more about the chairman's visit to the Boise MEPS on page 17

