

Messenger *Sharing information to reach a vision*

- 4 Student Testing Program makes goal in record time
- 6 IG team members aid injured woman
- 7 Phoenix NCO STEPS up to technical sergeant
- 8-9 Denver, Kansas City dedicate ceremony rooms
- 17 Spokane shares idea for low-effort fund raising



MEPS reach out to communities
Maj. Trisha Meyer, Sioux Falls MEPS commander, talks to elementary students during a school visit. Sioux Falls was involved in five community events in one month. Boston, Kansas City, Memphis, Portland, Ore., and Syracuse are also reaching out with community projects. Pages 10-14.

Departments

Special Visitors.....	14	Testing Talk.....	18
Around the MEPS.....	16-17	Recognition.....	19

U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command

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Capt. Eric W. Johnson

There are three topics I would like to cover in this issue – (1) the outstanding, successful year for the Student Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery program, (2) elimination of MEPS budget technician positions and (3) reiteration of my policy on sexual harassment and sexual assault.

USMEPCOM, with outstanding leadership from sector and battalion leaders, achieved another outstanding Student Testing Program goal for the school year by the end of March, the earliest ever! By the end of the school year, USMEPCOM attained 115 percent of goal and 57 MEPS had surpassed their missions for the year. While this is a tremendous accomplishment itself, it is even more noteworthy when you consider the upheaval caused by our transition from Office of Personnel Management test assistants to hiring our own intermittent TAs. OPM provided test administrators to the command for many years. However, it was determined that USMEPCOM through a lot of hard work by every station, could dramatically cut the cost associated with remote student and enlistment testing. We estimate that USMEPCOM will save up to \$8 million of the taxpayers' dollars by hiring our own intermittent test administrators.

It is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our testing folks in the field that they were able to accomplish this milestone without a full staff of intermittent test administrators. Other sections of the MEPS also pitched in by learning to administer tests and interpret the

Commander's Commentary

results. I am extremely impressed with the dedication of our MEPS teams across the nation to persevere and set new STP achievement records while operating under trying circumstances. Truly the finest example of teamwork at the station level!

Emerging technology continues to provide opportunities to transform command business lines of operations. Army's new accounting system; the General Fund Enterprise Business System enabled us to centralize much of our accounting process that was previously the responsibility of MEPS budget technicians.

We used to have 140 accounting documents, called ledgers. The more ledgers a command has, the more likely the possibility for accounting errors and budget policy violations. With GFEBS, we now have only one ledger. We also consolidated all personnel travel and training documents at the headquarters and established a new medical services contract. These actions eliminated the work defined in the position descriptions for budget technicians, which led to the decision to eliminate those positions. In most command's, this would have resulted in a normal RIF action with no other opportunities offered. Not so at USMEPCOM!

Most of our BTs were high performing employees; we valued their dedication, versatility and teamwork. For that reason, we took unusual and dramatic action to ensure we could retain as many of our high performing BTs as possible. At the time of the decision to eliminate the BT billets, we had 62 BTs filling 65 positions.

First, we offered early retirement incentives (twice!) to those eligible, and separation incentives to those who chose to pursue employment outside government. Fully half of our 62 BTs elected retirement. An additional 14 or 15 moved on to other federal positions; half of them secured promotions (a good news story for them and USMEPCOM ... win/win). Second, we froze all open GS-7 positions at MEPS and

offered BTs, who desired to do so, the first shot at accepting those positions. We also lifted the command-wide hiring freeze for BTs only and allowed them to accept other lower graded MEPS positions and take advantage of grade retention that will protect their salaries for up to two years. Third, we offered to pay for BTs to transfer to open positions in other MEPS if an opening were not locally available.

Additionally, I will authorize early priority placement ASAP for sitting budget technicians who have not applied or been selected for a comparable position in the command.

I have tried to make this whole situation as transparent and seamless as possible. Our civilian personnel team has gone full speed ahead to serve the needs of all involved. We will continue to work with each of our BTs to ensure we meet their and USMEPCOM needs.

My hope is that the entire civilian workforce at USMEPCOM, our treasure, sits up and takes notice of how we took action in the case of BTs ... two retirement opportunities, priority placement, preferential hiring, paid transfers, separation incentives, etc. As we continue down the transformation road with the USMIRS upgrade and VIPS implementation, and face the unknown impacts of budget constraints in the future, I intend to utilize every possible means to retain our high quality and highly skilled civilian employees.

As of this writing, I have no plan or intention to reduce any additional positions, or close single MEPS for that matter. Don't listen to rumors or urban legends. However, future transformation will ultimately result in restructuring and re-sizing; I expect in the three to five year time frame. It is my hope that our handling of the BT billet reduction engenders trust in our workforce that USMEPCOM values and wishes to retain our performers!

I would like to stress again my position on sexual harassment and sexual assault. The bottom line: USMEPCOM **Please see 'Commentary,' Page 17**

Making the grade

Student testing program exceeds goal fastest in program history

By Skip Wiseman
Messenger Associate Editor

Teamwork by MEPS staffs across the country helped USMEPCOM exceed its student testing mission for the year by March 31 – the earliest the command has ever exceeded its goal.

That was accomplished despite the command severing its association with the Office of Personnel Management, which had long provided test administrators to conduct testing sessions, during the year.

The command hired more than 900 intermittent test administrators. MEPS staff members shouldered

much of the workload during the changeover.

By the end of the school year, the command had attained 115 percent of its Student Testing Program. Western Sector reached 115.2 percent of its goal and Eastern Sector 114.6 percent. Thirty Western Sector MEPS and 27 Eastern Sector MEPS had exceeded their missions for the school year.

“We want to thank every member of the MEPCOM Student Career exploration Program for their contributions in a most remarkable year,” Dr. Jane Arabian, assistant director for accession standards, Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, said.

“MEPCOM successfully executed its Student Testing Program, beating out last year’s numbers by over 7,000 tests,” she said. “This is a tremendous feat, considering the total restructuring of the testing program with the replacement of OPM contractors by internal USMEPCOM intermittent test administrators, saving millions of taxpayer dollars annually.

“Most important, however, is that each and every student test that we administer means that another young person may have the opportunity to gain direction in life by matching their desires with meaningful careers options,” Arabian said.

Patricia Moore, Eastern Sector education services specialist, said although the MEPS ESS and test control officer bear the primary responsibility, they could not post the numbers they

do without a lot of help from the staff.

“Obviously, every year it takes not only a collaborative effort between the ESS and the TCO, but also the leadership of the MEPS, the support of the testing section (and) other sections of the MEPS,” she said. They are all willing to support the program either as test administrators or going out and doing promotions to get interest in the program, marketing and the career workshop. It’s a collective effort.” she said.

Jennifer Kim, Western Sector ESS, said that while the command’s transition from using Office of Personnel Management test administrators to command-employed intermittent TAs caused a few “bumps,” MEPS staff members worked together to overcome obstacles.

“Because of the TA transition, we spread our testing out over the year a little bit more than loading it at the beginning of the year,” she said. “The enlistment and student testing in the MEPS worked hard together to make it happen.

“(They had) to cover the TA transition, getting those people trained, and covering all the test sessions until they were all on board,” Kim said. “I think that’s really key to what happened this year. To go through such a huge transformation and still make goal, and make it earlier, is an enormous accomplishment.”

Kim and Moore agreed that the battalion structure has benefitted the Student Testing Program, even though there is no designated battalion ESS or TCO.

“We do have designated subject matter experts in each battalion,”

“To go through such a huge transformation and still make goal, and make it earlier, is an enormous accomplishment.”

Jennifer Kim, Western Sector education services specialist on the challenge of meeting the student testing goal while switching to in-house test administrators.

Moore said. “Initially they asked us who we recommended as the battalion subject matter expert for student testing.

“No one person is an expert at everything, but we had to look at who was the most solid individual and maybe somebody who was strong in one particular area where that battalion needed extra support, say in marketing,” Moore said. “We came up with names for both the test coordinators and the ESS’s.”

Kim said battalions treat the designated subject matters experts as unofficial battalion ESS’s.

“They go to them to collect and disburse information to the other ESS’s and to be leaders in the battalion,” she said. “Those battalion subject matter experts are the emerging leaders of the ESS community.”

Although both women regard everyone involved in the Student Testing Program as “superstars,” when pressed they singled out a few examples of people who had excelled.

Moore cited the Atlanta, Louisville and Portland, Ore., MEPS as exceeding requirements, while Kim named the Los Angeles and Phoenix MEPS and two people who played a key role in developing a new goaling model.

Moore said Harriet Blakely, Atlanta ESS, actively promoted the program and effectively led her testing team.

“Atlanta crossed the threshold early because of their Mega Test Day, something they do every year, Moore said. “They continue to expand and grow.”

Greg Stegemann, Louisville ESS, sought help from the state of Kentucky to promote the Student Testing Program, Moore said.

“They’re actually up to over 150 percent of their assigned mission,” she said. “That is due in large part to the

support at the state level department of education in that they recognize it as something they use to measure career readiness. Since they pushed that initiative, the schools are more supportive than ever.”

Moore said she often calls on people to help someone who may be struggling in one area to provide additional training.

“Faith Durden, our Buffalo ESS, is phenomenal when it comes to online resources,” she said. “We use her to train people who aren’t as tech savvy, even though they need to use our Web site. She does a fantastic job of rising to the challenge of working with people out in the field.

Kim said the Los Angeles MEPS stands out.

“The ESS there is Vita Evans,” she said. “They made goal last year for the first time in several years and made it again this year. She made connections with people, opened new doors, and that testing section really works as a team. They’ve done phenomenal things out there, especially managing a program that big.

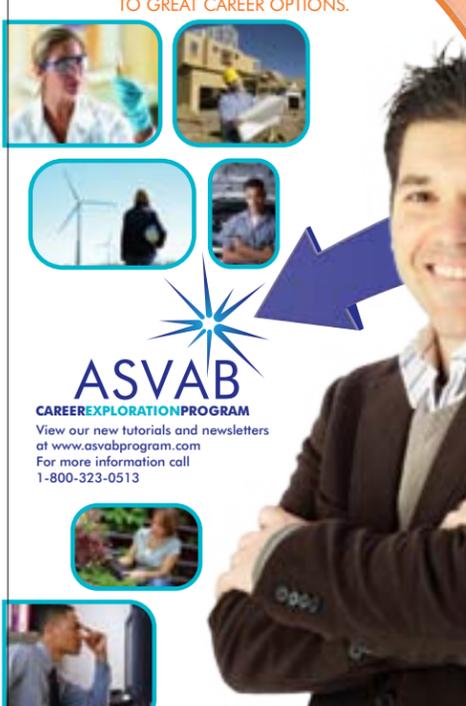
The Phoenix MEPS and its ESS, Kristine Wilson, were cited for having the most recruiter leads in Western Sector.

“That’s an accomplishment, too,” Kim said. “It’s a great area and they are supportive of the military in Arizona, but it’s a constant thing the ESS’s have to work on, to try to maintain those releasable options.”

Capt. Theresa Lewis, Western Sector commander, hand-picked two ESS’s for the goaling model.

“Two of the key players in that were Western Sector ESS’s,” Kim said. “Barry Kowald in San Antonio and James Sanders in Shreveport were part of a Tiger Team that helped get peer input on the goaling process.”

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IG team members get medals for helping fallen pedestrian

By Skip Wiseman
Messenger Associate Editor

A jaywalking New York City pedestrian caught a break when a van carrying a USMEPCOM Inspector General Team happened on the scene the morning of April 19 after she was hit by a car.

David Hamby, deputy command inspector general, asked the others in the van if they had heard what sounded like a car hit and a woman's scream. None of them had.

As they approached a traffic light, they saw a woman had been hit and was lying in the street with a broken leg.

Chief Petty Officer Erin Asidao, a Navy corpsman,

leaped from the van and ran to the injured woman to administer first aid. Shortly after that, Sgt. 1st Class Victor Gibson began directing traffic around the Asidao and the victim.

"She was trying to move around a lot and other pedestrians were trying to help her move. Drivers are yelling at us to get her out of the road, Asidao said.

"That's when Sergeant Gibson started to maintain traffic because people were yelling for us to get her out of the road.

"I checked to be sure she didn't have any spine injuries," she said. She could move her head and stuff like that. I just made sure I stabilized the leg until the ambulance got there."



Chief Petty Officer
Erin Asidao

Gibson's motivation was simple.

"I wasn't going to let them hit the corpsman," he said, referring to Asidao.

"It was rush hour. The only thing I did was direct traffic. They were honking horns. They were ready to run over people. I was standing under the red light right in the middle of the intersection."

It took 15 or 20 minutes for the ambulance to arrive. Gibson said it would have been longer if they hadn't



Sgt. 1st Class
Victor Gibson

managed to keep traffic moving around the scene of the accident.

Asidao said they never got a chance to get the victim's name or get an update on her condition.

Asidao and Gibson were presented Joint Service Achievement Medals at a headquarters award ceremony.

"We were really surprised to get the award," Asidao said. "We just did what we were supposed to do."

Stamps.com saves thousands, program could go Army-wide

By Skip Wiseman
Messenger Associate Editor

If you're looking for a good steward of the taxpayers' money, Luie Williams is your man.

Williams, the command's Official Mail and Distribution Branch manager, knows that small amounts of money add up quickly when you're dealing with thousands of pieces of mail.

Williams' saved the command \$10,000 in mailing costs in one quarter by using more efficient shipping methods and commercial software called stamps.com.

"In the mail consolidation alone, when you're making multiple shipments to one location, you get a better price when you consolidate versus one at a time to the same location," he said. "If we receive it today and can consolidate it for tomorrow's outgoing dispatch, we will send it out the next day."

The command had not done that in the past.

"It's challenging, without hindering the mission, to send everything the most cost efficient way," Williams said.

Williams, who joined the command three years ago, has attended the Department of Defense Postal Symposium. He got the idea to use stamps.com while attending one of the events.

"It's a big postal symposium," he said.

"They have vendors there. There was talk about everybody moving toward getting rid of (postal) meters across DoD and moving toward these electronic shipping features.

"I stopped by the vendors and asked a couple of questions," Williams said. "When I got back here to Chicago, I had the vendor stop by and we piloted



Luie Williams, USMEPCOM official mail and distribution manager, processes a package with stamps.com software.

it at nine MEPS. They loved it.

"We pay them for the software," he said. That takes away the physical meters with the exception of a small scale. It's a shipping solution that puts everything at your desktop. We receive a discount by acquiring their software through the General Services Administration."

Please see 'stamps.com,' next page

Phoenix NCO STEPs up to technical sergeant

By Skip Wiseman
Messenger Associate Editor

An Air Force NCO at the Phoenix MEPS is the first USMEPCOM member since 2005 to be promoted under the Air Force's Stripes for Exceptional Performers program.

Natasha S. Washington-Brown, a medical technician, was promoted to technical sergeant in March.

Washington-Brown was on leave when the promotion was announced because her two young daughters were on spring break.

"I hadn't really heard anything," she said, "so I just said 'forget it.' I'm going to do what I have to do – study and move up."

Capt. Michael L. Eide, Phoenix MEPS operations officer, couldn't resist having a little fun at Washington-Brown's expense.

He and Lt. Cmdr. Marco D. Spivey, MEPS commander, called her and put her on speaker phone when they learned she had been selected.

Rather than be straightforward with the news, Eide did something that is sort of an Air Force tradition – give the promotee a hard time before breaking the good news.

"I thought I told you to give me a call and let me know how you were doing," he said, recalling the conversation. "She was, like 'sir?' A tech sergeant would've kept her chain of command informed on how she was doing. That's when she knew she'd made tech. Of course, she screamed with excitement."

Spivey was proud Washington-Brown was selected for the honor.

"She is highly motivated, an effective leader, and gets almost



Tech. Sgt. Natasha Washington-Brown

immediate results on any tasking or challenge," he said. "She is very innovative. She figures out things that have the rest of us scratching our heads. If I had about 45 more Washington-Browns, I could run USMEPCOM."

Washington-Brown cross trained into testing and operations during a personnel shortage.

"She was working in the processing section," Spivey said. "She's a medical technician by trade, but we were having manning shortages in processing so she volunteered. She trained as a (human resources technician) and can run the front desk. She is very proficient in the job in operations."

Spivey said the MEPS moved her back to her primary duties after about six months so she could maintain proficiency in her specialty. But it wasn't long before other duties pulled her out of medical, this time to testing.

"She volunteered to be a test administrator and was out doing

student testing and interpretations," Spivey said. "I have a military member who is proficient in all sections of the MEPS. She mastered all the business in this place."

Washington-Brown drove the medical section to a 91 percent same day processing rate, which is above the command standard.

She also volunteered to serve as president of the Readiness Support Group and resurrected a program that was "in utter ruins," Spivey said.

When she became president, Spivey said, the group had about \$150. Under Washington Brown's leadership, it raised more than \$2,000.

"The second she took over the program, we began making money," Spivey said. "Membership grew. More members came into the group. She took that program from utter ruins to pretty optimal and its own animal when it comes to generating funds.

In addition to her contributions to the station, Washington-Brown carries a 3.8 grade point average as she nears completing her master of business administration degree.

The STEP program is designed to promote noncommissioned officers who have shown potential for greater responsibility. Less than 200 people service-wide are promoted annually under the program. People may be promoted to staff sergeant, technical sergeant or master sergeant under the program.

Mike Davis, chief of the Mission Support Division, Human Resources Directorate, said that to the best of his knowledge this is the first time since 2005 the command has someone promoted under STEP.

'stamps.com,' from previous page

The headquarters started using the software May 17, and the savings began immediately.

"The first discount we got is called commercial plus pricing," he said. "Let's say you took a three-ounce first class package to the post office. It would cost \$1.95. We're paying \$1.64."

Using an electronic shipping solution, which is the only way to get the lower rate, will save \$20,000-

\$25,000 the first year in first class mail alone, Williams said.

The command will pay \$1,540 a year of the software. Total cost for postage meters, which the software eliminates, was about \$126,000 a year plus the cost of having a dedicated phone line for each meter, Williams said.

"USMEPCOM will use the software at 55 locations throughout the command," he said. "The others

are on military installations and will continue to process mail through the systems available at the installations.

The money USMEPCOM saves could be just the beginning, Williams said.

"DoD is waiting to see how the program works for USMEPCOM," he said. "Tommy Kelly, the official mail manager for the Army is waiting on feedback from us as to the success of the program."

Kansas City honors soldier who gave his life in service

The Kansas City MEPS hosted a ceremony April 12 to officially dedicate the Spencer C. Duncan Ceremony Room.

Army Spc. Spencer Colson Duncan of Olathe, Kan.,



Spc. Spencer Duncan.

was born Feb. 19, 1990, in Merriam, Kan. He was a 2008 graduate of Olathe South High School. He attended Indian Creek Community Church, Olathe, and Blue Valley Baptist Church, Overland Park, Kan.

After graduating from high school, Spencer processed through the Kansas City MEPS June 10, 2008 to enlist in the Army Reserve and processed through the Kansas City MEPS June 10, 2008.

He received his initial basic training at Fort Knox, Ky., and completed Advanced Individual Training as a medium helicopter repairman at Fort Eustis, Va.

He worked at the Aviation Support Facility at New Century AirCenter in Olathe.

He initially served as an



Maj. Robert Baker, MEPS commander, and Master Sgt. Shawn Hall, senior enlisted advisor unveil a plaque during the dedication ceremony.



aircraft mechanic and later he trained to become a CH-47 Chinook door gunner.

His unit, Bravo Company, 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment based at New Century AirCenter in Gardner, Kan., was deployed to Operation Enduring Freedom in March 2011.

Duncan was one of 30 Americans killed in action on Aug. 6, 2011, when their Chinook helicopter was shot down in Wardak Province, Afghanistan.

He is survived by his parents, Dale and Megan Duncan, and his brothers, Marine Pfc. Tanner Duncan and Calder Duncan.

“Every applicant who passes through “Freedom’s Front Door” deserves the best possible customer service because by taking the oath of enlistment and entering military service, they make a commitment to serve their country and realize that service to country often means sacrificing, perhaps ultimately, the very

freedom they protect,” Maj. Robert E. Baker, MEPS commander, said.

“Today’s young men and women are unlike any other generation in our history,” he said. “For more than 10 years, we have been a nation at war supported by an all volunteer force.

“Each generation had its own wars and all have done so valiantly,” Baker said. “However, this is the longest period in our nation’s history that our armed forces have been supported by a generation that had a choice to serve or not.”

Dale Duncan gave all three of his sons a daily reminder to “make it count.” It is one of the last things that he said to Spencer before his death, and it is what made a difference in the life of his eldest son.

“For many young Americans, joining the military is their first major career decision,” Baker said. “Voluntarily knocking on and walking through Freedom’s Front Door is not easy, but they know that challenge and opportunity to better themselves and the country lie behind it. All current and future service members “make it count” by proudly serving and protecting their country—because freedom is not free!

Denver dedicates ceremony room in honor of fallen SEAL

The Gunner’s Mate 2nd Class (SEAL) Danny Dietz Ceremony Room was dedicated Jan 26.

Nearly 100 friends, family members and fellow service members attended the event.

Today Dietz’s picture overlooks the room where future service members take the oath of enlistment. His dedication serves as both a reminder and a challenge of the task ahead.

Lt. Col. Calvin Thomas, then-Denver MEPS commander, and Senior Chief Brian Hurrell, senior enlisted advisor, led the effort to dedicate the room to a fallen service member who had taken the oath of enlistment at the Denver MEPS. They reviewed more than 100 service records of individuals killed in action during the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. All warranted the dedication but they ultimately chose Dietz.

Dietz deployed with his special reconnaissance element in April 2005 to Afghanistan to support Naval Special Warfare Squadron 10.

On June 28, 2005, SEAL Team 10 was assigned to kill or capture a high ranking Taliban leader in Asabad, Konar Province, Afghanistan.

The team was spotted by anti-coalition sympathizers, who immediately reported their position to Taliban fighters. Confronted with direct contact by a much larger fighting force in a positional advantage, Dietz fought valiantly for his teammates. After being wounded by gunfire, Dietz continued to fight until he was mortally wounded.



Hall of heroes display in honor of Danny Dietz.



Cindy Dietz-Marsh and Dan Dietz Sr.



Lt. Col. Calvin Thomas, then Denver MEPS commander, and Senior Chief Brian Hurrell, senior enlisted advisor, hang a plaque in the newly dedicated ceremony room.

Kansas City staff volunteers at youth development center

Kansas City MEPS employees supported their community May 4 by volunteering at the Don Bosco Youth Development Center in the Pendleton Heights district of Kansas City.

At the end of the day, a total of 78 hours were donated including inventorying and categorizing donated library books, removing stumps and debris, laying down mulch and planting new fruit trees and flowers.

Workers were divided into groups. The first group went into the library and started to inventory and sort books.

During the summer months, the local children take a reading test that assesses their reading level rather than their grade level.

The donated books were researched to determine the reading level and then inventoried into a database.

Barcodes were printed and the books were shelved according to category (fiction, nonfiction, reference, etc.) and reading level. This allows the children to read books that interest them at their assessed reading level, rather than what books a school recommends for a grade level.

The next group was tasked with removing an old tree stump. Group members took turns digging around the stump and hitting it with a pick.

Behind the stump, the group spread mulch along the walkway to the main entrance. This walkway was also beautified by planting some shrubs.

The final group removed some smaller tree stumps and an old rusted sign. They cleaned up trash and planted fruit trees, shrubs, and flowers.

People driving by honked their horns in appreciation.

At the end of the day, everyone was tired but content with a sense of accomplishment.

One of the center coordinators said that all the workers there are part time employees and spend most of their time working with the children.

They only have one maintenance worker and the rest of the staff only have 15 to 30 minutes each day to take care of the other things such as maintain the lawn, bushes, etc.

She said during the entire summer, they would not have been able to complete what the MEPS volunteers completed in two hours during the entire summer.

The Don Bosco Youth Development Center helps children of all ages play, learn and achieve during out of school time.

More than 700 youth ages 5-18 participate in after school programs, special events, summer camp and youth-led projects.

Young adults 19-25 stay engaged through alumni and mentoring programs while learning life skills needed in adulthood.



Christopher Skidmore, travel specialist, (left), Sgt. Sergio Valasquez, test administrator, (rear) and Maj. Robert Baker, Kansas City MEPS commander, remove a tree at the Don Bosco Youth Development Center.



Caramen McDaniel, test administrator, sorts and catalogues books.

Boston joins local events to support community

The Boston MEPS staff joined two community outreach programs recently.

Five service members from Boston MEPS ran in the third annual 9K Run to Home Base May 20 at Fenway Park in Boston.

The Boston MEPS staff also volunteered June 13 at the Greater Boston Food Bank's James W. Hennigan Elementary School Mobile Pantry in Jamaica Plain, Mass.

The Home Base Program, in conjunction with The Red Sox Foundation and Massachusetts General Hospital, provides clinical care and support services to New England-area service members, veterans and families affected by combat or deployment-related stress or traumatic brain injury.

They also offer clinical and community education on these "invisible wounds of war" and conduct research in understanding

and treating post traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury.

The race began outside Fenway Park and ran along the Charles River before looping back to Fenway and heading inside the park, along the famous Green Monster, and finally finishing at home plate.

More than 1,400 runners and walkers took part and more than \$2 million was raised for this important cause.

At the food pantry, MEPS members helped unload trucks and set up a selection of fresh produce, staple items and frozen meats in a farmer's market style.

Volunteers helped individuals and families as they chose food items and then assisted them in carrying the items to their vehicles. The group helped in distributing food to more than 275 families who are state benefits recipients.



Boston MEPS staff members take a break inside Fenway Park after completing the 9K Run to Home Base. From left are Lt. Cmdr Richard Schmitt, MEPS commander, Staff Sgt. Edna Perkins, human resources assistant, 1st Sgt. Rebbia Parker, senior enlisted advisor, Lt. Jose Mercado, operations officer, and Capt. Timothy Hunt, assistant operations officer.



Volunteers from the Boston MEPS and staff members of the Greater Boston Food Bank pose after distributing food to underprivileged families. From left are Lt. Jose Mercado, operations officer, three members of the food bank staff, Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Perkins, operations NCO, Staff Sgt. Edna Cureton, human resources assistant, Tech. Sgt. Alfred Withrow, Air Force liaison, Capt. Timothy Hunt, assistant operations officer, 1st Sgt. Rebbia Parker and Lt. Cmdr. Richard Schmitt, MEPS commander.

Sioux Falls takes community involvement to a new level

April was a month for reaching out to the community at the Sioux Falls MEPS.

The station took part in four events – Operation Military Kids, also known as “Purple UP;” the MEPS staff hosted fourth and fifth graders for a career day visit; Maj. Trisha Meyer, the MEPS commander, visited fourth and fifth graders in their classroom at another school; and Staff Sgt. De Andrae Boyd, test coordinator, sang the national anthem at a civil rights conference.

Mike Huether, Sioux Falls mayor, hosted military children in his office for the “Purple UP” event.

Service members worked with the mayor’s office, community organizations and businesses to show a “wave of purple.” The MEPS staff dressed in purple as well as the headquarters and branches of a local bank.

Students from Ann Sullivan Elementary School visited the MEPS for the career day April 27 as part of Career Exploration Week.



Staff Sgt. De Andrae Boyd performs the national anthem at the United States Attorney’s Office Civil Rights Conference.

Meyer greeted the students, explained the station’s mission and gave an overview of what they would see during their visit.

The group went to the medical briefing where Petty Officer 2nd Class Casandra Lemp and civilian health technician Becky Allen told them about the medical portion of an applicant’s day.

The students tested the height and weight equipment, did the “duck walk,” and tested the breathalyzer.

After the medical tour, Jeff Christianson and Marge Mathers explained enlistment testing and the student testing program.

In the processing section, Capt. Dennis Slattery and Sgt. 1st Class TaRita Taylor demonstrated security procedures and the students learned how digital fingerprints are captured.

The afternoon ended with questions and answers



Capt. Dennis Slattery, operations officer and Sgt. 1st Class TaRita Taylor, operations NCO, put students through a security check.

in the ceremony room.

During Meyer’s visit to Garfield Elementary School she talked about her military experiences, awards, uniforms and cultural experiences.

She also talked about her

experiences during deployments to three countries and brought photographs from her deployments.

Meyer took her ruck sack, first aid pouch with supplies, eye protection, combat helmet and other



Petty Officer 2nd Class Casandra Lemp, a medical specialist demonstrates a breathalyzer to a young visitor.



Petty Officer 2nd Class Casandra Lemp, a medical specialist, teaching students how to do the “duck walk.”

items to show the class.

The students and their teacher, Angela Hall, invited Meyer to come back a few days later for a question and answer session and presented thank you notes and cards to her.

Hall sang the national anthem at the United

States Attorney’s Office Civil Rights Conference April 30.

The conference included guest speakers from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Christianson and Randy Schauer, test score technician, attended representing the MEPS.



Maj. Trisha Meyer, Sioux Falls MEPS commander, speaks to elementary school students during a visit.



Mike Huether, Sioux Falls mayor, displays the Operation Military Kids proclamation with young visitors to his office.

Memphis welcomes students for job shadow event

By Verna V. Nickelberry

The Memphis MEPS has hosted a Job Shadowing Day for the past four years, and this year was no different.

What began as a suggestion from Brig. Gen. Barrye L. Price, then the Eastern Sector commander, has become an annual event the MEPS has come to look forward to.

During the first year, the MEPS selected to work with the Junior ROTC students of Booker T. Washington High School, a local school within walking distance of the MEPS and the winner of a national contest in which President Obama delivered the

commencement speech for graduating seniors.

Many of the students return each year allowing the MEPS employees to see their growth. The staff can see a difference in the returning students.

When the MEPS staff started working with the students, they seemed a little unsure of themselves, but this year the students walked in with confidence and pride in their dress JROTC uniforms.

Looking to do more this year, the MEPS also reached out to White Station High School Junior ROTC students and invited them to participate.

The students had a chance to see firsthand what the Memphis MEPS does every day. After getting the commander's brief, the students took a tour of each section, witnessed several applicants taking the oath of enlistment and were given a personal mentor for the day. The Red Carpet treatment continued with the entire staff having lunch with the students before their return to school.

What started out as a suggestion has become a tradition and a way for the Memphis MEPS military and civilian members to give back to the community.

Special Visitors

Chicago distinguished visitors from Pentagon, Canada

The Chicago MEPS hosted distinguished visitors twice in less than a month.

The station hosted a group of Canadian recruiters April 30 and Lernes J. Hebert, The Defense Department's acting director of accession policy May 23.

The Canadian visitors, led by Col. Norman Saulnier were from the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group.

Saulnier is the deputy commander and chief of staff of the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group Headquarters.

They visited to learn how the United States processes personnel into the armed forces.

The visit included a command brief by Lt. Col. Cheryl Martinez, MEPS commander, which led to discussions about the differences between how the United States and Canada process people into the military.

Unlike the five branches of service in the United



Lt. Col. Cheryl Martinez, Chicago MEPS commander, and visitors from the Canadian Armed Forces pose for a photo in the ceremony room.

States armed forces, Canada has one unified branch that consists of sea, land and air commands. Canadian recruiters work together to recruit personnel into the Canadian armed forces.

It was also noted that the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group is responsible for processing its own applicants. In essence, there is no command like USMEPCOM in Canada.

The visit ended with

a tour of the MEPS, so the guests could observe applicant processing first hand.

Herbert advises the deputy secretary of defense for Total Force Management as it relates to readiness, National Guard and Reserve component affairs, health affairs, training and personnel requirements and management, including equal opportunity, morale, welfare, recreation, and

quality of life matters.

Hebert visited to familiarize himself with the MEPS mission and to understand the current shortages and needs of USMEPCOM, amidst budget cuts and hiring freezes. He observed the Chicago MEPS staff and the daily challenges it faces in processing members of the armed forces.

Hebert has served in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy since August 2003.

Before assuming his current duties, he was director of officer and enlisted personnel management.

Hebert, a retired Air Force colonel, served 24 years in personnel management.

His assignments include the Air Force Personnel Center, Air Combat Command, command tours with the 27th Fighter Wing, 4404th Wing (Provisional) in Saudi Arabia and the 7276th Air Base Group.

Syracuse supports two programs for wounded warriors

The Syracuse MEPS has ties to two programs for veterans in the community.

Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing and Team Red White and Blue both have a positive impact on local veterans.

According to Capt. Robert Burk, MEPS executive officer, the programs help form a link between veterans and the community.

Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing is a nationwide organization dedicated to the physical and emotional

rehabilitation of disabled active military service personnel and veterans through fly fishing, fly tying education and outings.

The program is available to disabled military members and veterans through partnerships with veterans hospitals, outpatient clinics and active duty Warrior Transition Units, Burk said.

The Syracuse and Fort Drum chapters reach more than 150 participants annually and have more than

75 active volunteers from the local community participating in the program.

Team Red White and Blue enriches the lives of wounded veterans and their families by supporting their reintegration process.

This is done by connecting the wounded vets to a reliable friend in the community.

Mentoring partnerships between veterans and community members help reintegration and relationship building. Team Red White and Blue uses athletic events to build awareness, raise funds and inspire others to join the team.

Weekly group runs



Fly tying lessons are part of Project Healing Waters.

are conducted on Central New York running trails. Athletic events include marathons, triathlons, adventure races and CrossFit workouts.



The Syracuse staff shows its support for Team Red White and Blue.



The finished product, ready to tempt trout.

Portland, Ore., donates books to youth challenge program

By Janice K. Carson
Portland, Ore.,
Education Services Specialist

The Portland, Ore., MEPS had a community service goal of one book for every cadet for the Oregon Youth ChalleNGe, a program that helps 156 at-risk Oregon students achieve a high school diploma or credits toward it.

Portland MEPS surpassed its goal, collecting more than 200 new and used books for the program. Maj. Davy Godfrey, MEPS commander, presented the donations to Glen "Skip" Butler, Oregon Youth ChalleNGe principal.

"When you can read, you can achieve," Butler said.

The emphasis on reading enables students to earn as many as eight high

school credits, a high school diploma or a GED. Each cadet is required to read 30 minutes per day and must complete at least two book reports.

"When you don't have television, you're forced to read," one cadet said, "but now I like to read."

Each student also participates in the ASVAB Career Exploration Program. The long-standing partnership between the Oregon Army National Guard and Portland MEPS made this community service project more rewarding.

Helping at-risk youth graduate from high school and become productive citizens is reflected in the Oregon Challenge High School motto: "A better Oregon, one youth at a time!"



Glen "Skip" Butler, Oregon Youth ChalleNGe principal, accepts a donation from Maj. Davy Godfrey, Portland MEPS commander.

Barbeque contest tempts then fills up hungry Amarillo staff

The Amarillo MEPS was filled with tempting aromas, but no one could pinpoint the source or who was responsible until the announcement.

“The annual barbecue contest will begin shortly.”

Contestants included Master Sgt. Detrom Garrett (last year’s winner), Petty Officer John Palacios, Capt. Yvette Riopel and Chief Petty Officer Jason Tillery.

Four sampling plates were set out for a blind taste test and voting at about 11:30 a.m. As the contenders waited anxiously, everyone else enjoyed small bits of scrumptious ribs.

The ratings were announced about 20 minutes later by Vernon Pickard, Readiness Support Group leader, starting with Tillery, whose secret ingredient was Ray’s sweet

barbecue sauce and two cans of cola.

In third place, Palacios’ offering proved tender and juicy with a hearty smoky undertone.

In close race, Riopel’s Korean style barbecue short ribs placed second.

First place once again belonged to Garrett, who smiled coyly, but declined to reveal his secret.



San Antonio celebrates!

The San Antonio MEPS had something to celebrate three months in a row. Senior Master Sgt. Tresse King, (left) 9th Battalion senior enlisted advisor spoke to the San Antonio staff in recognition of Women’s History Month March 21. Pete and Estela Gutierrez (below left) were honored April 28 as they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Mr. Gutierrez, the MEPS’ lead medical technician was also recognized for his 50 years of federal civil service. The MEPS partied again May 4 to observe Cinco de Mayo. The MEPS staff enjoyed tacos, burritos and Spanish rice and danced in the cafeteria. The staff also had sombreros, colorful paper doilies and other trinkets.



Wedding bells chime for Beckley MEPS couple

By Michael Cramer
Beckley MEPS Medical Technician

A joyful and a life-changing event took place April 18 for two special people at the Beckley MEPS.

Gunnery Sgt. Chad E. Dent, a Marine Corps Liaison at the MEPS, and Amanda S. Finkle, a MEPS medical technician, were married. Their devotion to each has been noticed by all who know the two and most knew this moment would happen.

The ceremony was officiated by the Rev. William A. Catus, MEPS lead medical technician, as friends and co-workers watched the couple commit to each other. The ceremony was held in the applicant waiting

area due to the number of attendees.

Processing was near completion and the MEPS staff took a pause to honor two of their own. The ceremony was followed by cake cutting and a toast with sparking apple cider.

The event was spearheaded by Cynthia Crook, medical technician, and Sgt. 1st Class Sandra Morgan, noncommissioned officer in charge of processing.



The Rev. William Catus pauses with Amanda Dent, Gunnery Sgt. Chad Dent and Brody, Mrs. Dent’s son.

The ceremony was especially memorable for Dent because he not only enlisted and shipped from Beckley but is creating his family here as well. The newlyweds will live in Beckley until Dent transfers.

Commander’s Commentary

‘Commentary,’ from Page 3 will not tolerate sexual harassment or sexual assault! I have instructed commanders and senior leaders that I expect them to take action to protect victims and punish perpetrators. I cannot be any clearer than that.

First and foremost, anyone in this command who is a victim of sexual harassment or sexual assault can feel free to report it to their sexual assault response coordinator without fear of reprisal. ANY AND EVERY REPORT WILL BE ACTED UPON and not minimized! Victims will be treated with dignity and respect. Let me offer a dire warning those who commit sexual harassment or sexual assault: perpetrators will be pursued, prosecuted and punished to the full extent of my authority.

Intervene, Act and Motivate! I. A.M. STRONG is the Army’s campaign to

combat sexual assaults, and has been implemented throughout USMEPCOM. The intent of I. A.M. STRONG is to engage all personnel in preventing sexual assaults before they occur. Grounded in our shared belief in the DoD, USMEPCOM, and the Service’s values, we are a band of brothers and sisters, placing mission first, never accepting defeat, never quitting and never leaving a fallen comrade. Our interdependence and shared respect among comrades frames who we are as a team and a command — a team that knows sexual assault is reprehensible and beyond toleration. Those who commit assaults hurt a member of our team and wound USMEPCOM. This criminal act is cowardly and damaging to the very moral fiber that gives USMEPCOM its innermost strength.

As uniformed and civilian members, and proud USMEPCOM teammates, we are duty bound to Intervene, Act and Motivate others to stop sexual assaults and the sexually offensive language and gestures that create an environment friendly to this abuse.

1. Intervene — If you are a victim or a witness to sexual assault or harassment, take action! Victims report the crime! Witnesses do not be uninvolved bystanders! We pay a lot of lip service sometimes to “taking care of our people,” this is one area where it applies 100 percent. Take care of your shipmate!

2. Act — First, protect victims! Seek medical help ASAP. Second, report the crime appropriately via either restricted or unrestricted procedures (uniformed personnel) or unrestricted (civilian personnel).

3. Motivate — Discuss

this issue with your teammates and co-workers; communicate your willingness to support victims and report incidents of SA/SH.

Finally, I just completed my 99th MEPS visit since I assumed command of USMEPCOM. I am truly amazed by the proud commitment, dedication and esprit-de-corps I see demonstrated at all levels of every MEPS I’ve visited. Our MEPS successfully execute our noble mission to ensure accession quality every single day, and continue to provide outstanding Red Carpet Treatment to our services applicants! Keep Charging Team!

Eric W. Johnson
Captain, USN
Commanding

Memphis hosts 24th annual joint partnership awards banquet

**By Capt. Noah Washington
Memphis Operations Officer**
The Memphis MEPS and military recruiting commanders continued to strengthen their bonds with local and educators in Tennessee, Mississippi and Arkansas. They co-sponsored the 24th annual joint partnership awards banquet with the West Tennessee Counseling Association.

As in years past, J.B. Smiley, Memphis MEPS education services specialist, and Jo Ann Boyd, president of the Counseling Association, co-narrated the event.

Command Sgt. Maj. Cornelius Mack from the Baton Rouge Army Recruiting Battalion was the guest speaker. He told the audience how gratifying it was to see so many people working together, and due to combined efforts, the military has exceeded its ASVAB testing and recruiting mission for 28 straight years.

He also said that educator partnership with the military goes a long way to ensure that students have multiple career choices.

He complimented and encouraged everyone to continue their mission of helping students through education, motivation, coaching, mentoring and being their cheerleaders for success.



The Navy Band Midsouth plays before the banquet.

One hundred fifty-eight counselors, principals and other guests attended the banquet to celebrate the accomplishments of educators and the military in promoting education, counseling and career opportunities for students.

Educators enjoyed dinner and entertainment by the Navy Band Midsouth, Fairley High School JROTC students and White Station High School Jazz Band.

During the awards portion of the banquet, Maj. Trina Gibbs, Memphis MEPS commander, Senior Chief Petty Officer Kelvin Turner, MEPS senior enlisted advisor, Ray Johnson, MEPS test coordinator, and recruiting commanders presented certificates of appreciation to counselors, principals and others who supported ASVAB Career Exploration Program and military recruiting services.

The Gibbs gave special recognition to two counselors who have given exceptional support to the program.

Dorothy Woods, counselor at Trezevant High School, Memphis, Tenn., and Michael Rodriguez, counselor at Lee Senior High School, Marianna, Ark., received the USMEPCOM Commander's Award of Merit.

First Sgt. James Arwood presented Terryl Safford, assistant principal



J.B. Smiley, Memphis MEPS education services specialist, shows off a presidential plaque presented to him in honor of his pending retirement.

of Wooddale High School in Memphis with the Tennessee Army National Guard special recognition award, and Harold Hall presented Jimmy Wilkins, superintendent of the Hughes School District with the Arkansas Army National Guard special award.



The White Station High School Jazz Band provides after-dinner entertainment.

The Counseling Association recognized outstanding counselors for the High School, Middle School, and Elementary School of the Year. The

awardees were Leslie Flemings, High School Counselor of the Year, Joseph "Skip" Ruzuka, Middle School Counselor of the Year, and Joy Ashbury, Elementary School Counselor of the Year. Randy McPhearson received the counselor's Life Time Achievement Award.

Smiley will retire Dec. 30, after 30 years of service. He was honored at the banquet with a plaque and letter from President Obama.

New Faces

Portland, Ore.

Stefano Talalotu
Position: Lead human resources assistant
Military service: 20 years as an infantryman and recruiter
Years of civil service: 5
Diversions: Spending time with family
First impression: "If I can sum it up in one word, it's service."

Randy Mueller

Position: Information technology specialist
Military service: Six years as an Army forward observer.
Diversions: Hunting and fishing.
First impression: "It's a riot and great."

San Juan

Maj. Malenm Cruz,
Position: Commander

Fond Farewells

Portland, Ore.

Janet Schwahn
Test Coordinator
Headed for: Retirement

San Juan

Lt. Siul Rivera
Executive Officer
Lt. Col. Angel Feliciano
Commander

Congrats

Albuquerque

Maj. Emilio Ruiz-Soriano,
MEPS commander, selected for promotion to lieutenant colonel.

Miami

Theresa M. Fallon, medical NCOIC, promoted to master sergeant, April 1.

Raleigh

Maj. Rolandis Crawl, MEPS commander, selected for promotion to lieutenant colonel.

Headquarters

Sgt. 1st Class Michael A. Garcia, Inspector General, Semi-Annual Military Member Award Winner

Fargo staff reaps rewards at Federal Executive luncheon

The Fargo-Moorhead Federal Executive Association hosted its annual awards luncheon in Fargo May 8.

The event honors the men and women who serve America's federal, state and local governments.

Government agency supervisors nominated people for their excellence.

The luncheon honored federal employees in Administrative-Operational Support, Professional-Scientific-Technical, Safety-Security, Team Award, Trade-Crafts, Managerial-Supervisory, Heroism-Valor and Law Enforcement.

The Fargo MEPS had winners in three categories:

■ Nancy Burette, MEPS budget technician in the Administrative-Operational Support category;

■ Dale Mowry, test control officer, in the

Managerial-Supervisory category; and

■ The overall Team Award, which recognizes collaborative efforts combining numerous areas in one organization.

The Team Award was given to the headquarters, operations, medical and testing sections of the MEPS.

The team leader was Maj. William T. Walsh, MEPS commander. The team was able to overcome difficult situations, including personnel shortages and frequent business process changes.

Fargo Mayor Dennis Walaker selected Burette as the Fargo-Moorhead Civil Servant of the Year.

Media attended the luncheon, and the story was carried by the local newspaper and news station.

MEPS of Excellence

First Quarter, Fiscal 2012

Category 1
Columbus
Fort Lee
Jacksonville

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.

Category 2
Cleveland
Fort Dix
Knoxville

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.

Category 3
Amarillo
Boise
Omaha

